



Tools for Working Groups

What Are Working Groups?

Working Groups are sub-groups reporting to the Steering Committee that help choose and implement strategies, engage community members, and track progress towards goals. Members are often relevant subject matter or community experts.

How to Use This Toolkit

The following resources are intended to serve as tools for Working Groups as they form, determine strategic direction, develop implementation plans, and identify measurement indicators. The creation of these tools was informed by FSG's experience working with a variety of organizations. They have been generalized to be applicable across contexts; however, because no two Collective Impact efforts are the same, these resources should be considered a starting place to be tailored to the unique circumstances of each initiative.

What Tools Are Included

This toolkit includes the following resources:

- **Description of Working Group Member Responsibilities** – to provide an overview of the role of Working Groups and the responsibilities of their members
- **Working Group Meeting Planning and Execution Steps** – to be used by action planning working groups to guide meeting execution and identify roles/responsibilities
- **Working Group Meeting Agenda and Notes Template** – to be used by action planning working groups for developing agendas, summarizing discussions, and assigning tasks after meetings
- **Working Group Meeting Debrief Template** – to be used at the conclusion of each working group meeting to plan for the next meeting (*new tool as of June 2015*)
- **Working Group Co-chairs Roles / Responsibilities and Planning Template** – a document that can help backbone staff discuss roles / responsibilities and a plan for working together on a monthly basis with their co to have well-planned and successfully executed working group meetings (*new tool as of June 2015*)
- **Action Planning Template** – to be used by action planning working groups to help define the team, develop strategies, create action steps, and define a measurement plan (*updated June 2015*)
- **Sample Instructions for the Development of Indicators** – to be used by the working group responsible for identifying indicators and/or key data points for shared measurement

For more information, please contact info@collectiveimpactforum.org.

Note: The materials in this toolkit were adapted from FSG's work with the Community Center for Education Results (CCER), the Health and Wellness Alliance for Children, and Operation Youth Success (Douglas County, NE) Collective Impact Initiatives. They are licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NoDerivs 3.0 Unported License.

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Responsibilities of Working Group Members

Strategy and Indicator Development

- Set boundaries and / or determine areas of focus for strategy development
- Review research on effective strategies (regionally and nationally)
- Use data to inform identification of common strategies and ongoing refinement
- Determine how the working group will measure progress and success

Implementation

- Develop action plans (i.e., specific monthly tasks and who will take them on) for each strategy identified
- Coordinate activities among working group member agencies and others in the community
- Identify funding sources and local agencies to support and/or execute strategies
- Identify other resources (e.g., materials, volunteers) needed to implement strategies
- Provide progress updates to the Steering Committee and respond to their feedback

Process

- Attend monthly 2-hour meetings (potentially 1-hour after strategies are selected and implemented)
- Commit to 6-12 months of Working Group membership
- Review pre-read materials prior to meetings and come prepared for engaged discussion, active listening, and respectful dialogue
- Support research and outreach between meetings as needed and agreed-upon

Leadership

- Champion the effort broadly in the community
- Where possible, align the actions of your agency to the goals, indicators, and strategies of the working group

Working Group Meeting Planning and Execution Steps

The below guide is meant to give a generic outline of the steps for planning and executing working group meetings, including interaction with Steering committee. While detailed, it is not meant to be a rigid guide. Often, working in collective impact means flexibly adapting to circumstances and momentum, and revisiting process and division of labor.

Action	Who	Timing
<i>Before meeting</i>		
Schedule meeting date and location (<i>schedule 3-4 months of meetings at a time so that members can plan to attend</i>)		1 month before meeting
Maintain current contact list of WG members, including reaching out to members with low attendance		On-going
Send calendar invite to members for meetings (<i>you might have to ask someone to send the actual Outlook invite</i>)		3-4 weeks before meeting
Create meeting agenda (<i>see detail below for detail on creating a meeting agenda</i>)		2-3 weeks before meeting
Hold call with co-chairs to review progress, meeting agenda, get feedback (see Working Group co-chairs roles / responsibilities and planning template for more detail)		1 week before meeting
Create meeting material (<i>may be a ppt, memo, copies of reports, etc.</i>)		1-2 weeks before meeting
Email any pre-read material/ meeting reminder to WG (<i>including asking for / reminding of HW assignments</i>)		3-5 business days before meeting
Finalize meeting logistics: lunch, conference line, attendee lists, printing of materials		1-2 days before meeting
<i>During meeting</i>		
Take attendance		During meeting
Take notes in WG meeting on meeting agenda		
Facilitate meeting, if needed		
Outline clear next steps at end of meeting for WG to agree upon		
<i>Immediately after meeting</i>		
Take photo of whiteboard/flip charts for reference if needed		Day of meeting if possible
Quickly have a debrief with co-chairs to capture immediate reactions/next steps		
Write down (see Working Group Meeting Debrief Template for more detail): <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The decisions made in the meeting 2. HW assignments 3. Any questions that arose 		
<i>After the meeting</i>		
Email followup to members with thanks, next mtg date, HW, material, etc. (<i>should come from what was written down immediately following meeting, but you may want to reference notes taken during meeting to be sure</i>)		2-5 days after meeting
Email or phone contact with those who didn't attend		2-5 days after meeting
Review notes from all WGs: find areas of overlapping places to work together, think about what needs to be communicated to SC co-chairs and others		3-7 days after meeting
Update master WG planning spreadsheet, if needed (e.g., new decisions on strategies, new contacts, etc.)		3-7 days after meeting
Answer questions from WG members between meetings		Ongoing
Schedule and conduct additional relevant conversations to build		Ongoing

relationships, answer research questions, make connections, etc.		
Using WG meeting agenda and notes taken on agenda, document the following for the WG cochairs to report to Steering Committee: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Major decisions 2. Next steps 3. Questions or asks for SC Success (an anecdotal story, a piece of data, something the group is just excited about)		1 week prior to SC mtg
Document SC action on the report (e.g., answers to questions, suggestions, feedback) to share at next WG meeting		w/in 3 days of SC mtg

Working Group Meeting Agenda and Notes Template

Working groups may want to follow this outline for a meeting agenda:

1. Meeting goals, welcome, introductions
 - a. Review goals of meeting
 - b. Is there anyone new to the group this month we should introduce?
 - c. Any other general housekeeping items to cover?

2. Review: decisions we made at the last meeting (note: this language should be consistent with what you put in the follow up email after the meeting)
 - a. How did we decide to focus our work (i.e., what we will do in the coming months, things we took off the table)?
 - b. What new data or information did we see? What did it tell us?

3. Discussion section: what are we covering today?
 - a. What big topics do we have to discuss?
 - b. What homework assignments do we have to cover? (see below for “Homework Tracker” template)
 - c. What have we learned in our implementation in the last month (e.g., takeaways from focus groups)?
 - d. What did the Steering Committee contribute to our “ask” last month?
 - e. What is the status of our strategies and our progress against our implementation plan?

4. Decision making: what do we need to decide today to move forward and what are the steps we need to take in the next months to make that happen?
 - a. Identifying challenges
 - b. Agreeing on next steps
 - c. Assigning owners to to-dos, including answering research questions, making connections, conducting an interview, etc.

5. Closure
 - a. Identifying accomplishments in past month (success, anecdotal or quantitative)
 - b. Identifying questions for SC (see below for “Reporting Template to Share with Steering Committee”)

At the end of a meeting, it may be helpful to follow this reporting template (see next page) for sharing the key takeaways and next steps with the Steering Committee.

REPORTING TEMPLATE TO SHARE WITH STEERING COMMITTEE

Working group name:

Meeting date:

<u>Agenda item / discussion topic</u>	<u>Major discussion points or decisions made</u>	<u>Next steps</u>	<u>Outstanding questions</u>

Another useful tool is the below “Homework Tracker” to clarify who is on point to answer outstanding questions among the working group.

HOMework TRACKER

Homework deadline for all:

Homework assignment / question	Who is in charge of answering

Working Group Meeting Debrief Template

Following each working group meeting, it is important to take 30-60 minutes to reflect on the meeting to distill key points, learnings, and next steps. This reflection should include thinking about the following items to help you synthesize the meeting for various audiences.

For the WG recap email (to go out within a week of the meeting):

- Key discussion points and decisions made
- Next steps for (1) homework assignments for WG members and the backbone staff between now and the next meeting and (2) what we may cover in the next meeting (i.e., draft agenda)
- Any other reminders that are critical (e.g., community events, webinars, etc.)

For the SC report out (to be shared verbally at SC meeting and / or in email follow up):

- A shorter version of the key discussion points / decisions made and next steps as outlined above
- Should be like an “elevator pitch” of what happened in the working group meeting that is geared towards a Steering Committee member

For internal workplanning purposes:

- Initial impressions of what next month’s meeting agenda might look like (i.e., topics we didn’t get to, burning issues that arose, guest speakers that were requested, next steps for discussion that came up). This should include a topic, objective, speaker, time allocated, etc.
- The specific next steps the backbone staff needs to take in the next month to advance this WG’s work (i.e., research, interviews, data to collect)
- A plan for engaging others in the WG to prepare their to-dos / next steps (e.g., helping a WG member collect data, conduct an interview, or prepare to present something from their agency / organization)
- Update any strategy documents based on the discussion (e.g., info sheets, website)
- Reflect on how the collective impact approach / WG structure are making the creation and implementation of these strategies stronger than it would have been otherwise in the old way of doing business (e.g., silos are being broken down, a connection was made)
- Reflect on how you felt overall after the meeting. What worked well? Where did concerns arise?

Working Group Co-chairs Roles / Responsibilities and Planning Template

Overview of the Working Group Co-Chair Role

The co-chairs of each working group (WG) are meant to serve as thought partners to the backbone staff facilitating the monthly WG meetings. The primary functions of the co-chair representing the Steering Committee (SC) are to help the backbone staff make connections across the various pieces of the effort's work, represent the SC perspective during WG meetings, and share details of the WG meeting discussions back with the SC. The primary function of the co-chair from the WG is to contribute content expertise to the WG meeting agendas, discussions, and decisions.

More specifically, co-chair roles include the following:

- Contribute to the development of the **agenda and content** for monthly meetings (i.e., serve as a thought partner to the backbone staff and help contribute issue area / content expertise)
- **Facilitate discussions and decision-making** during WG meetings – including speaking as a “leader” of the group when the conversation might get stuck, leading ice breakers, or facilitating / reporting out on smaller group discussions
- Contribute to **WG member management** as appropriate – which may include addressing a member's concern outside of a meeting or learning more about a member's role / experience as appropriate to help inform strategies
- Serve as an **ambassador for the effort's work** in the community – including speaking at community engagement events, updating community members on progress, or making a connection to important stakeholders in the community

In addition to attending the ~2 hour meeting per month, the co-chair role requires an additional investment of 2-4 hours / month, depending on the workload / stage of the group.

WG Monthly Workplan

The working groups have monthly meetings to discuss critical issues, focus their effort, and develop strategies to address the issues within their focus areas. Co-chairs can help support working group progress in various ways throughout the month. A typical month may look as follows:

Week 1 – Week of WG meeting

- Have an active role in the WG meeting (pre-determined in the preparation meeting – see week 3). This may include being a prominent voice during difficult discussions or leading a part of the meeting
- Make note of any WG members that may require additional attention in between meetings (i.e., they seem to have a lot of content expertise we should dig into more deeply, they expressed a concern we need to address offline)

Week 2 – week following WG meeting

During this week, the backbone staff will be working to synthesize the discussions / decisions of the WG meeting and send a follow up email to the WG. During this time, co-chairs will have a less active role but may:

- Schedule time to speak with WG members that require additional attention (see above)
- Work on individual “homework assignments” or other follow up items from the WG meeting

Note: the next two weeks (Weeks 3 and 4) cover the agenda setting, content creation, and facilitation plan creation for WG meetings. They are separated out here to illustrate that the agenda / content comes first, followed by facilitation. Since co-chairs will connect monthly over the phone or in person with the backbone staff, these topics may be all covered at once and not over two weeks' time as illustrated here. The specific meeting plans / logistics between the co-chairs of each WG and backbone staff will be discussed at the end of this document.

Week 3 – designing the agenda for next month's WG meeting

During this week, the backbone staff will translate the follow up items into an agenda and the required content for the next month's meeting. During this time, co-chairs will be engaged on setting the agenda. Specific activities may include:

- Sharing feedback on the proposed meeting objective and agenda. This would include reacting to the agenda items, content to discuss these items and facilitation approaches. Overall, co-chairs can serve as a sounding board to the backbone staff to ensure that the group is moving forward at the right pace and that everyone understands what the goal of the meeting will be
- Meeting with WG members as appropriate to advance a discussion or address a concern

Week 4 – preparing the facilitation plan for next month's WG meeting

During this week, the backbone staff will be finalizing the content (i.e., data, research, slides) for each WG meeting and the facilitation approaches for sharing this content with the group. During this time, co-chairs will be engaged on the facilitation plan. Specific activities may include:

- Volunteering to take on a specific role in the WG meeting. Roles to be divided among co-chairs and backbone staff include:
 - Introductions / welcome
 - Ice breaker activities
 - Facilitation of specific agenda items
 - Facilitation of breakout groups
 - Note-taking
- Providing feedback on which parts of the agenda may be contentious and ideas of how the group can best manage these discussions to get to the desired outcome of the meeting

Discussion questions for backbone staff with co-chairs after reviewing this document

- How might we specifically **customize the roles / responsibilities** of the co-chairs for this working group?
 - What specific strengths does each individual bring to the group? How might we best use these strengths?
 - What kind of time commitment might each individual be able to make in the next six months? How does that translate to roles / responsibilities?
 - Do we want to have static roles (e.g., one person always takes notes) or determine roles on a monthly basis?
- What should be our **logistical plan** for our pre-meeting check-in?
 - Do we want to meet in person or over the phone?
 - What days / times work best for everyone?
 - What is the best timing for us to meet – i.e., one week prior to the WG meeting, two weeks prior?
- What should be our **content plan** for our pre-meeting check-in?

- Do we want to check in on a high level agenda over email early on (i.e., one week after the WG meeting)?
- Do we want to discuss the meeting objective, agenda, content, and facilitation plan all at once (i.e., a longer meeting to go through everything)?
- What **outstanding questions** do co-chairs have about their roles and responsibilities?

Action Planning Template

This template provides a tool to be used by action planning working groups in determining implementing strategies to help reach the initiative's goals. The template consists of four sections to guide the structure and planning around the actions and strategies proposed by each working group. These will be filled out gradually and will evolve over time given community needs, but can be used as a tool to organize your work and communicate it with the Steering Committee and the broader community.

Working group name:

- Goal:
- Description:
- Rationale:
- Co-Chairs:

Date of Final Draft Action Plan: _____

Date Approved by Steering Committee: _____

Define the Team

Identify the members of your working group, including roles such as co-chairs, members, and leads of individual strategies/actions. This roster will evolve over time, as new strategies are identified and new ideas emerge for who needs to be involved for successful planning, adoption, and implementation of strategies.

Organization	Name	Title	Role (e.g., Chair, Member, Strategy Lead)

Develop Strategies

Each working group will identify a set of strategies and actions that will collectively contribute to progress toward the initiative goal. You will identify strategies that are both short- and long-term, and are assessed against a set of common criteria to ensure that the strategies are selected and sequenced in such a way so as to help meet the initiative goals.

Strategies could include a wide range of actions and approaches for improving outcomes for the target population, but should:

- **Be Evidence-Based:** grounded in research that demonstrates potential for dramatic change in youth outcomes
- **Build on Momentum:** have potential to make progress quickly and build upon existing momentum
- **Be Systems-Changing:** serve as starting point for broader systems-level change
- **Move at Scale:** have potential to significantly move one or more topline indicators for the CI initiative at scale
- **Be Collaborative:** benefit from collaboration
- **Identify Leadership:** have a clear lead organization with the commitment and capacity to move

Strategies can include:

- Convening the right people to organize / plan action steps
- Assuming the responsibility for implementing an action at one's own organization
- Coaching other institutions on how to adopt and implement strategies
- Sharing learning to inform implementation
- Providing analytical support such as collecting, analyzing and reporting data related to the strategy
- Tracking progress and highlighting issues for discussion about course correction

Note that you need at least one strategy in each of the following categories:

- **Short-Term/Quick-Win:** Expect implementation and outcomes in the next 3 months to 1 year
- **Long-Term:** Expect implementation and outcomes over 1+ years
- **Policy and Advocacy:** Pursued and implemented over any time period, at local or state, legislative or executive levels
- **Learning Strategy/Prototype:** Expect implementation and outcomes over the next 6 months. Opportunities to test a strategy in a targeted manner to learn and inform future strategies (target by geography, population, partners, etc.)

Short Term/Quick Wins (3 mos-1 yr)	Lead Org(s) / Indiv(s)	Support Org(s) / Indiv(s)	Target Due Date
1.			
2.			
3.			

Initial Long-Term Strategies (1+ yr)	Lead Org(s) / Indiv(s)	Support Org(s) / Indiv(s)	Target Due Date
1.			
2.			
3.			

Initial Policy and Advocacy Strategies	Lead Org(s) / Indiv(s)	Support Org(s) / Indiv(s)	Target Due Date
1.			
2.			
3.			

Learning Strategies / Prototypes	Lead Org(s) / Indiv(s)	Support Org(s) / Indiv(s)	Target Due Date
1.			
2.			
3.			

In what areas, if any, can we co-create strategies with the target population?	
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Create Action Plans

For those strategies that you are advancing in the next 12-18 months, an action planning template should be created. Action plans should outline the following:

- The target population for this strategy

Target population	Description	Estimation of size of population	Other consideration

- The specific agencies / organizations the working group should engage to implement this strategy

Agency / organization	Role in strategy	Behavior change required for strategy implementation

- Outstanding research questions or data the working group needs to move forward with this strategy

Research question / data needed	Discussion / next steps / plan to answer the question or gather the data

- The monthly tasks the working group is taking on to move forward with this strategy (note: this may include answering the research questions or collecting data)

Month	Goal	Steps to get there with owner(s)
1		
2		
3		

- An estimation of the resources required to implement this strategy

Define Measurement Plan

After developing strategies and determining near-term action items, collective impact leaders must also develop a measurement plan to help assess progress and gather insights for continuous learning. Some key definitions of measurement terms include:

Output: Evidence that the strategy is underway and being delivered effectively (e.g., number of people served).	Data Source: The data (e.g., government database, new survey).
Outcome: Changes in knowledge, attitudes, and behavior linked directly to the strategy or group of strategies (e.g., % of patients reporting daily use of control medication).	Data Collection Schedule: When data will be collected, and by whom.
	Target: If possible, the amount you hope to see the indicator increase or decrease, or the absolute number you hope to reach (e.g., 12% decrease, 300 children).

Working groups can use this template to articulate intermediate outcomes (e.g., behavior and policy changes) and long-term outcomes (e.g., population-level outcomes) that they want to see influenced by their collective impact planning efforts.

Overall Working Group Outcome Indicators

Outcome Indicator	Target	Data Source	Data Collection Schedule

In addition, working groups will want to track output indicators to assess whether a specific strategy is underway and being delivered effectively (e.g., number of people served).

Strategy-Level Output Indicators

Strategy or Related Strategies	Output Indicator	Target	Data Source	Data Collection Schedule

Sample Instructions for the Development of Indicators

(adapted from a community education initiative)

The preliminary mandate of this Working Group is to:

- Recommend the key **indicators** linked to success for this Working Group
- Identify **underlying research** that supports the selection of each measure
- Determine sources for **baseline data**
- Provide a high-level summary outlining **key aspects of the baseline data / trends**

Identify Indicators

The following should be used as a guide for indicator selection:

- The indicator must be a valid measure linked to success for the goals of this working group
- The indicator must be easily understandable to local stakeholders
- The data must be produced by a trusted source
- Priority is given to indicators that are comparable across the different districts, regions, or neighborhoods of the project, and that have the ability to be compared
- All or most of the indicators must be affordable to gather and report
- The data should be available consistently over time
- Each indicator should be able to be influenced to a significant degree by local action, and be useful in the day-to-day work of this Working Group and other relevant actors

If there are indicators that don't meet the outlined criteria or have no baseline data yet available but that the group feels strongly are important to monitor, please incorporate these on your list, along with a brief description of the Group's rationale for inclusion. All indicators proposed by the Working Group will be vetted by sector experts and tested by community members doing relevant work on the ground. A final list of the most powerful indicators will be compiled across Working Groups.

Lastly, please keep in mind that, while it is important to identify the most appropriate and effective indicators, it is also vital to move forward with this work in a timely manner. Therefore, we encourage you to do the best you can, recognizing that there will be an opportunity for further refinement throughout the course of this project.

Define Underlying Research

During this process, we are asking Working Groups to consider the strength of the research base for selecting each measure of success and determine together whether you have a minimum threshold for rigor of the research base. As the Working Group develops its prioritized list of indicators, please also compile a reference list documenting sources where you have identified evidence of the importance of these metrics for tracking progress towards *<insert overarching goal>*. If during the course of your work you find an especially informative data set or seminal study that is helping to shape your thinking and may be useful to other Working Groups, please share this information with *<Insert name of Backbone Organization>*.

Determine Sources for Baseline Data and Current Trends

Once this Working Group has identified the most critical indicators of success, please document key sources for tracking baseline data and trends. This information will provide the foundation upon which strategies for improvement can be drafted.

Outline Key Messages from the Baseline Data

As the Group analyzes the baseline data that relate to the selected indicators, please work to identify major themes, issues and findings. What are the most important messages that you would highlight about this data? What do they mean for our work?

Key Deadlines

[Insert as needed](#)