IMPACT KCK TOOLKIT

A Guide to Replication

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WELCOME

Welcome to the Impact KCK Toolkit. Impact KCK is a collective impact program established in Kansas City, Kansas, in 2015 to reduce homelessness among students in the Kansas City Kansas Public Schools (KCKPS). Impact KCK **reduced student homelessness** in KCKPS by **nearly 50%** in **less than three years**. This Toolkit is intended to help school districts and communities in the Kansas City region and throughout the country replicate Impact KCK's success.

ABOUT AVENUE OF LIFE

Avenue of Life is a faith-based nonprofit organization committed to breaking the cycle of poverty through community development. Established in 2013, Avenue of Life is centrally located in Kansas City/Wyandotte County, Kansas, near the offices of the Unified Government. It serves as the backbone organization for Impact KCK.

MISSION

To mobilize our community to equip and empower low-income individuals and families to be self-sustained and independent.

VISION

To be catalysts for transformation in our community by breaking the cycle of poverty through community development, collaborative partnerships, and wrap-around services.

GOAL

To facilitate the journey from hand-outs (emergency relief) in crisis, to hand-ups (individual betterment) for those ready to rise above their circumstances, to hand-offs (community development) to indigenous leaders of a transformed community.

AVENUE OF LIFE OFFERS TWO PRIMARY PROGRAMS:

The Equipping Center Program provides a comprehensive range of programs and services designed to meet the emotional, mental, physical, and spiritual needs of families throughout the urban core of Kansas City, Kansas. Wrap-around services include on-site nutritious meals, take-home nutritious meals (weekend food packs and frozen family meals), GED/ESL classes, fitness/nutrition classes, community events, neighborhood cleanups, weddings, funerals, worship services, employment services, financial classes, entrepreneurship training, summer programs for children, community gardens, and mental health and trauma-informed counseling services.Collaborative outreach space is offered to partnering organizations to provide their specialized services as well. The Equipping Center houses Impact KCK, which serves homeless children and youth from the Kansas City Kansas Public Schools.

The Business Training Center Program provides economic and community development for at-risk families in the urban core of Kansas City, Missouri. We provide job training, career-development, discipleship, job-fairs, apprenticeships, internships, recycling jobs, mentoring, neighborhood beautification, and economic development. The Business Training Center employs 12 full-time individuals who recycle 2000+ tons annually, which includes 50,000 mattresses. This program has been featured in *The Kansas City Star, The Kearney Courier, Greenability, and Midtown KC Pos*t, and has received the 2015 Missouri Outstanding Achievement Award in Environmental Excellence and was named the 2015 MARC Sustainable Success Story Honoree.

ABOUT IMPACT KCK

WHY REPLICATE IMPACT KCK?

Impact KCK is a successful community effort to reduce student homelessness in the Kansas City Kansas Public Schools (KCKPS). Launched in August 2015, Impact KCK reduced student homelessness by **nearly 50%** in its **first 2.5 years** of operation.

Impact KCK has been recognized by regional and national organizations as an effective program for addressing America's growing challenge with student homelessness. The L.P. Cookingham Institute of Urban Affairs in the Henry W. Bloch School of Management at the University of Missouri-Kansas City recognized Impact KCK's success in May 2018 with a Community Service Symposium that provided results of a recently completed program assessment and disseminated information about what has made Impact KCK successful.

National recognition has been provided by organizations such as the National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth (NAEHCY) and the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH). Further, Impact KCK has been featured on a Public Broadcasting System (PBS) segment of *Frontline*.[1] Impact KCK leaders are frequently contacted by school district and community representatives across the country with requests for information and assistance in replicating the program.

EFFECTIVE COLLABORATION THROUGH COLLECTIVE IMPACT

Impact KCK is based on the collective impact model for community change. Collective impact is a very specific form of collaboration relying on a backbone organization to ensure effective, accountable collaboration across diverse partner organizations. Avenue of Life, a faith-based nonprofit organization centrally located in Kansas City, Kansas, is Impact KCK's backbone.

Collective impact is a disciplined, strategic approach to addressing complex social problems such as student homelessness. It engages organizations and people across sectors in partnerships through a shared vision and a shared performance measurement system. These features make collective impact a powerful tool for harnessing a community's expertise, resources, and commitment in producing transformation.

TWO-GENERATION APPROACH

This community program addresses student homelessness and the need for housing stability to ensure successful educational outcomes with a two-generation approach.

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[1] Impact KCK recognition prior to May 2018 refers to Impact Wednesday and/or 1400 Diplomas. The program name Impact KCK was adopted to better describe the seamless relationship between Impact Wednesday and 1400 Diplomas.

Once students and their families are referred to Impact KCK by the KCKPS, they receive both emergency assistance and a program that addresses parents' ability to provide a safe, stable living environment based on self-sufficiency. Parents participate in classes ranging from personal budgeting to nutrition and health care. An employment class and assistance in getting and maintaining a job are also provided. Case management services include the entire family.

IMPACT KCK LEADERSHIP

Impact KCK's lead organization is Avenue of Life, a faith-based nonprofit committed to helping people and families overcome poverty and become self-sufficient. Leadership for the Impact KCK program is provided by Avenue of Life's Executive Director and Impact KCK Director.

Desiree Monize is the founder and Executive Director of Avenue of Life and has more than 18 years' experience in cross-sector management consulting, with 15 years' experience in nonprofit management. She is a visionary leader with a talent for rebuilding inefficient businesses with the effective leadership and strategies needed for healthy growth and expansion. She is passionately committed to urban ministry and community development. As CEO of a nonprofit with the aim of breaking the cycle of poverty through community development in Kansas City, Kansas, and Kansas City, Missouri, Desiree leads the Impact KCK collaborative. Desiree is also Principal for Vital Impact Consulting, a nonprofit and management consulting firm.

Alexis Stankovich is the Impact KCK Director at Avenue of Life in Kansas City, Kansas. Working directly with the Kansas City Kansas Public Schools' McKinney-Vento Liaison and a network of more than 30 partner organizations, Alexis oversees case management for homeless families and youth in the district. In the third academic year since Impact KCK's launch, Alexis coordinated collaborative case management which reached 401 families, housed 132 families, and employed 143 individuals. Alexis has a Master's in Social Work (MSW) from University of Missouri-Kansas City, lives in Wyandotte County, and is passionate about ending homelessness in her community.

IMPACT KCK ASSESSMENT

The L.P. Cookingham Institute of Urban Affairs in the Henry W. Bloch School of Management at the University of Missouri-Kansas City conducted an Impact KCK assessment for the purpose of identifying the key factors contributing to the program's success. The assessment provides details about the program's history, operations, and achievements, as well as presenting an analysis of the most important factors explaining Impact KCK's success.

Funding for the *Impact KCK Assessment* report was provided by the William T. Kemper Foundation. The report is available for download on the Cookingham Institute's website. Those intending to replicate Impact KCK will find it a source of information and inspiration as they work to address student homelessness in their communities. Access this report at www.bloch.umkc.edu/cookingham/.

INTRODUCTION

COLLECTIVE IMPACT AND COMMUNITY CHANGE

Impact KCK relies on the collective impact model for community change. Introduced by John Kania and Mark Kramer in 2011, collective impact is more than just collaboration. It makes use of decades of experience in addressing complex social problems and relies on the presence of a strong backbone organization to fulfill responsibilities for coordination and other critical aspects of collective action.

STUDENT HOMELESSNESS

Student homelessness affects school districts and communities throughout the United States, yet it often remains an invisible problem (Ingram, et al. 2016). Moreover, it is a growing problem. The number of homeless students grew dramatically from 2007 to 2014, more than doubling to reach more than 1.3 million in the 2013-2014 school year (National Council on Homeless Education 2017).

Student homelessness has multiple causes and represents the type of complex social problem collective impact was designed to address. Impact KCK provides an inspiring example of how a community came together across public, private, and nonprofit sectors to change the lives of homeless students and families with interventions producing housing stability and family self-sufficiency.

ABOUT THE TOOLKIT

This Toolkit has been prepared by the L.P. Cookingham Institute of Urban Affairs in the Henry W. Bloch School of Management at the University of Missouri-Kansas City with project sponsorship provided by the William T. Kemper Foundation. The Toolkit provides an opportunity for school district personnel and other community stakeholders to learn more about what it takes to launch a successful collective impact effort to reduce or end student homelessness. The interventions presented here take a two-generation, whole family approach, since creating housing stability and family self-sufficiency requires services for all family members.

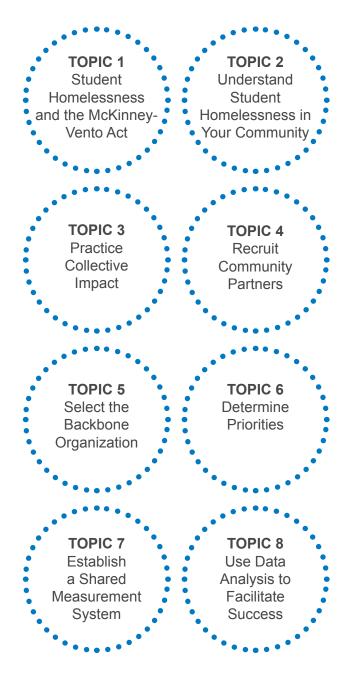Avenue of Life, the Impact KCK backbone organization, community partner organizations, the Cookingham Institute, and our project sponsor wish success for every school district and community throughout the country in creating opportunities for stable housing and family self-sufficiency. We encourage you to read on and become an active part of the solution for homeless students and their families.

USING THE IMPACT KCK TOOLKIT

The Impact KCK Toolkit will be most effective when shared and discussed in school districts and their communities. School superintendents, teachers, school homeless liaisons, and other school personnel are all part of the solution, as are community leaders, community organizations, and concerned members of the public.

Bringing groups together for a discussion of student homelessness in your community is the first step in a successful effort to reduce homelessness and introduce housing stability that will support each child and youth in their education through high school graduation and beyond. The Impact KCK Toolkit can serve as a basis for discussion and a foundation for action.

The Toolkit covers eight topics essential for success in using the collective impact model to address student homelessness at the community level:

TOPIC 1
Student Homelessness and the McKinney-Vento Act

TOPIC 2
Understand Student Homelessness in Your Community

TOPIC 3
Practice Collective Impact

TOPIC 4
Recruit Community Partners

TOPIC 5
Select the Backbone Organization

TOPIC 6
Determine Priorities

TOPIC 7
Establish a Shared Measurement System

TOPIC 8
Use Data Analysis to Facilitate Success

. . . .

HOMELESS DEFINITION

The definition of homelessness varies across federal programs administered by the U.S. Department of Education, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).[2] School districts must use the term as defined by the McKinney-Vento Act; this is the definition used by the U.S. Department of Education.

The McKinney-Vento Act (as amended) defines children and youth as homeless if they "**lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence** (within the meaning of section 103(a)(1)" **and** who meet the following guidelines:

(i)   children and youths who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; are abandoned in hospitals; or are awaiting foster care placement ["or are awaiting foster care placement" was removed from the definition by the Every Student Succeeds Act in December 2016, except in Arkansas, Delaware, and Nevada. The change of definition was scheduled to occur in those states on December 10, 2017 (NAEHCY 2016, 6)];

(ii)   children and youths who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings [within the meaning of section 103(a)(2)(C)];

(iii)   children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and

(iv)   migratory children (as such term is defined in section 1309 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965) who qualify as homeless for the purposes of this subtitle because the children are living in circumstances described in clauses (i) through (iii) (Pub. L. No. 107-110).

The McKinney-Vento definition of homelessness for children and youth is broader and more inclusive than that used in administering HUD programs. For instance, the McKinney-Vento homeless definition includes children and youth who are "doubled up" with another household— sometimes known as couch surfing—while the HUD definition does not.

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[2] HHS programs for runaway and homeless youth sometimes use defining criteria somewhat different than the McKinney-Vento Act in order to most effectively serve those groups.

MCKINNEY-VENTO ACT

The Stewart B. McKinney Act was signed into law by President Ronald Reagan in 1987. The Act provided communities with funding and technical assistance for sheltering homeless persons. The Act was amended in 1990, 1992, and 1994 to include specific protections for homeless students. The 1994 amendment gave homeless children the right to a free pre-school education and gave parents of homeless children and youth input into their children's school placement (National Coalition for the Homeless 2006).

The 1994 amendment also placed greater emphasis on accounting for the number of homeless children and youth for the purpose of identifying community needs and providing appropriate services. The Act was renamed the McKinney-Vento Act in 2001 by President Bill Clinton to honor the late Congressman Bruce Vento, a strong supporter of the Act (National Coalition for the Homeless 2006).

The McKinney-Vento Act was reauthorized in 2001 and signed into law by President George W. Bush as part of the No Child Left Behind Act in January 2002. The reauthorized Act expanded the definition of homelessness for children and youth and prevented school districts from separating homeless students from their housed peers (National Council on Homeless Education 2013).

The McKinney-Vento Act's rights and protections for homeless children and youth were strengthened by various federal laws, amendments, and reauthorizations since 2001. The most recent reauthorization occurred under the Every Student Succeeds Act signed into law in 2015 (Ingram, et al. 2016).

EVERY STUDENT SUCCEEDS ACT

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) clarifies rules and regulations related to the rights of homeless children and youth. Further, it increased funding for the McKinney-Vento Education for Homeless Children and Youth program from $70 million in 2016 to $85 million for 2017 (NAEHCY 2015).

ESSA also requires expanded and more flexible use of McKinney-Vento funds and increased support for pre-K

The Stewart B. McKinney Act was signed into law by President Ronald Reagan in 1987.

students. It introduces new rules related to foster care and the reporting of graduation rates specific to homeless students. Schools are required to appoint homeless liaisons who have the time and ability to fulfill their responsibilities to homeless students, as well as ensure that liaisons and other school personnel receive professional development on how to better identify and serve homeless students (Ingram, et al. 2016, 50).

School liaisons are required to "publicly disseminate the rights of homeless students" and requires them to refer homeless families or unaccompanied students to housing services. Further, ESSA provides parents or unaccompanied youth greater say in determining the "school of best interest" and the "school of origin" and ensures the transfer of all course credits (Ingram, et al. 2016, 50).

STUDENT RIGHTS UNDER THE MCKINNEY-VENTO ACT

The McKinney-Vento Act provides homeless students with certain rights. Further, it requires states to meet certain goals in serving homeless students as a qualifying condition for receiving federal funding. More specifically, section 722(f)(6) of the Act includes the following:

- The unique needs of each homeless child and youth are identified and met.
- Every homeless child or youth has equal access to opportunities to succeed in school.
- Homeless families, children, and youth receive all benefits they are eligible to receive, including academic, medical, dental, mental health, transportation, meals, clothing, etc.
- Homeless families, children, and youth are aware of their legal rights and the benefits provided them by the Act.
- School district staff are trained annually to understand their roles in relationship to homeless families and students and are aware of the legal rights and benefits provided homeless families and students by the Act.
- The general public is given notice annually of the rights and benefits provided homeless families, children, and youth, including freedom from stigmatization by peers and educational staff.

MCKINNEY-VENTO LIAISON RESPONSIBILITIES

The McKinney-Vento Act (section 722(f)(6)) describes the responsibilities of the school homeless liaison as follows:

- Advocate and mediate for homeless families, children, and youth
- Work with a state Coordinator to ensure local educational agencies comply with the requirements of the McKinney-Vento Act
- Collaborate with other district liaisons, school district staff, and representatives from area agencies committed to serving homeless children and youth.

Further, the National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE) has identified several personal characteristics contributing to success in fulfilling the role of the school homeless liaison:

- Time: to commit to the advocacy, research, and training duties of liaison
- Detail Oriented and Organized: for the work of identifying homeless children and youth and ongoing data collection and records management
- Program Management: experience and ability to manage multiple cases at one time

- Leadership: Ability to lead and motivate district personnel at all levels, including administrators and district officials
- Public Speaking: a spokesperson, speaks in open forums to the community on behalf of homeless families, children, and youth
- Compassion: for children and youth in general and for the life circumstances of those living in or near poverty who are experiencing homelessness in particular
- Collaborative Connector: a desire to network with members of local and state agencies on behalf of homeless families, children, and youth
- Legal Research and Analysis: the ability to read and analyze statutes and legal documents with a clear understanding of the McKinney-Vento Act under the Every Student Succeeds Act
- Experience: working in the educational system or working closely with educators
- Political savvy: understanding of school-specific policies and procedures to ensure student success and the ability to maneuver and advocate in academic circles on behalf of homeless students (Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction 2014).

SCHOOL LIAISONS REQUIRE HELP TO ACHIEVE SUCCESS

Experience highlights the fact that school liaisons—and even entire school districts—need help to achieve success in addressing the needs of homeless students and families. No single person or single organization can remedy the complex causes of student homelessness in isolation.

A recent report published by the L.P. Cookingham Institute of Urban Affairs at the University of Missouri-Kansas City provides insights about the assistance needed within the school district and in the community. These insights were gained through in-depth focus group sessions with school liaisons and counselors from a diverse group of school districts within the Kansas City bi-state metropolitan area.

Five key areas were identified as important to the success of liaison efforts to address the needs of homeless students:

1. Sufficient resources including staff support, budget, and community involvement

2. Engagement, coordination, and support from community partners

3. Adequate supply of housing options affordable to low-income families and available family shelter space

4. Assistance in administering complex transportation arrangements

5. Greater knowledge about policies and procedures among school administrators, staff, parents, service providers, and the community at large (Williamson and Guinn 2017).

TOPIC 2
Understand Student Homelessness in Your Community

Student homelessness is a fact of life in many school districts throughout the United States. Further, it more than doubled from 2007 to 2014 (NCHE 2017). While progress is being made in some communities, in others the number of homeless students continues to grow.

BEGIN WITH NATIONAL TRENDS

Hidden in Plain Sight: Homeless Students in America's Public Schools (Ingram, et al. 2016) provides an excellent introduction to the issue of student homelessness as a national policy problem. It is available for free download at http://civicenterprises.net/MediaLibrary/Docs/HiddeninPlainSightOfficial.pdf.

For further information on student homelessness, visit the National Center for Homeless Education's (NCHE's) website at https://nche.ed.gov. This site is regularly updated and includes contact information for NCHE program specialists.

ANALYZE COMMUNITY DEMOGRAPHICS

Understanding student homelessness also means gaining an understanding of your community's demographics, particularly with regard to population growth, race and ethnicity, and poverty. Local jurisdiction demographics are easy to obtain through the U.S. Census Bureau's American Factfinder. Go to https://factfinder.census.gov to search for your community's demographic data.

Population Growth Data

Population growth is a factor affecting school districts as well as the community at large. If your community is experiencing strong population growth, a portion of your new residents are likely to be lower-wage service sector workers. These workers and their families are at greatest risk of homelessness; this is exacerbated by the fact that rents and home prices tend to rise as more pressure is put on housing markets through population growth.

Communities with declining populations face their own challenges. Declining population can mean lower property values and lower tax revenues flowing to the school district and local government for education and essential services. Declining population can also result in neighborhood blight conditions, causing yet more neighborhood decline.

Calculate the percentage change in population by taking the figure for the most recent year minus the base year and then dividing the result by the figure for the base year. Multiply this result by 100 to get the percentage change. For example:

$$\frac{(2016 \text{ Population} - 2000 \text{ Population})}{2000 \text{ Population}}$$

X 100 = Percentage Change from 2000 to 2016

Race and Ethnicity Data

Race and ethnicity data are important in at least two ways when analyzing demographics for the purpose of addressing student homelessness:

1. Comparing the proportion of the community's population in each racial and ethnic group with the demographics of homeless students collected by the school district will allow the determination of whether certain racial or ethnic groups experience homelessness at a disproportionate rate given the relative size of their population within the community; and

2. Analyzing racial and ethnic data will make it possible to engage in appropriate planning to address homelessness with sensitivity to culture, language, and possible immigration status.

Poverty Data

Communities with lower levels of poverty are likely to have a lower proportion of homeless students and families. It is important to review not only the proportion (percentage) of individuals in poverty via data available through the U.S. Census Bureau website, but also the trend in poverty. In other words, is the percentage of individuals in poverty in your community rising, declining, or staying about the same?

Poverty data was once collected via the decennial Census long form; this practice ended with the 2000 Census. Poverty data are now collected more often through the American Community Survey. You may need to find poverty data separately from other demographic data on the Census website; the site is frequently updated, and sometimes links for accessing particular data are changed. Thus, we do not provide a link to poverty data here.

ANALYZE SCHOOL DISTRICT STUDENT HOMELESS DATA

It will be helpful to create a map of schools in your district with identifiable markers such as pre-school/Head Start, elementary, middle, or high school, or other designation using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) technology. If your group does not currently have this expertise, the local government planning department or school district may be willing to provide help with mapping.

Once a map of your community's schools has been created, an additional map with color coding showing the relative presence of homeless students and/or poverty (often measured by the proportion of students receiving free or reduced-price lunches) will also be useful in understanding which schools are facing the greatest challenges with student homelessness.

SCHOOL DISTRICT ADMINISTRATOR AND LIAISON INFORMATION

School district administrators and homeless liaisons are additional sources of information about student homelessness in your community. Although data capturing the numbers of homeless students by district is publicly available, it is also important to discuss trends, causes, and potential solutions with school district administrators and homeless liaisons. Their direct contact with students gives them a unique perspective that will contribute to the design of effective interventions. They will also be a source of information about any interventions already underway in their district.

Further, it is important to develop a working relationship with district officials for the purpose of sharing data. While publicly available student homelessness data may only be published once per year, the school district will have a running total. This will allow for tracking progress and meeting any challenges with increased numbers that may arise.[3]

... it is important to develop a working relationship with district officials for the purpose of sharing data.

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[3] The number of homeless students may be affected by a number of causes outside the control of the school district or the collective impact initiative. For instance, school districts may be affected by the influx of students and families made homeless by natural disasters such as hurricanes or fire. The number may also increase due to an in-migration of homeless students from neighboring school districts whose families are seeking housing solutions not offered in their original community.

The collective impact effort will also benefit from additional school district data. More details about suggested data collection are presented in Topic 7: Establish a Shared Measurement System. Establishing a data-sharing arrangement with school district officials early in the collective impact effort will make it possible to collect and analyze data critical to collective impact success in addressing student homelessness.

COMMUNITY SERVICE PROVIDER INFORMATION

Community service provider organizations working with children and families are sources of additional information important in the design of the collective impact initiative. Each organization will have its own perspective on the causes of student homelessness in your community, current programs serving homeless students and their families, and potential solutions.

> The list below presents suggestions for the type of organizations from which information might be collected. Since the types of organizations in any community may be different, this list is a starting point. There may be other organizations from which information will be collected.
>
> 1. Homeless shelters
>
> 2. Emergency assistance programs
>
> 3. Health-care providers (including medical, dental, vision, and mental health)
>
> 4. Foster care system organizations
>
> 5. Local public health department
>
> 6. Police or sheriff's department
>
> 7. State agency responsible for child and family wellbeing

BRIEFING DOCUMENT

The information collected as part of the process of understanding student homelessness in your community should be summarized in a concise briefing document. The briefing document can be shared with community leaders and the public at large; it will also be useful in recruiting the backbone and partner organizations. Having a single source of information about student homelessness in your community written in a way that is understandable by lay persons (in other words, not just education or social service professionals) will be an important part of building support for the collective impact initiative.

TOPIC 3 — Practice Collective Impact

The collective impact model is a set of specific, intentional practices designed to facilitate successful community action in addressing complex social issues. It is important to understand that while collective impact is a form of collaboration, all collaboration is not collective impact. In other words, collaboration among partner organizations must be **organized and implemented in a specific way** for the effort to be accurately described as collective impact. While many well-intentioned efforts to work together are collaboration, they are most often *not* collective impact. We hope that as knowledge about collective impact reaches more communities, collective impact will become the norm for collaboration, rather than the exception.

Collective impact was introduced by John Kania and Mark Kramer in 2011 and quickly became recognized as an effective means for addressing complex social problems facing communities. Kania (2014) describes collective impact as a "disciplined, cross-sector [collaborative] approach to solving social and environmental problems on a large scale." Collective impact requires that partners from the public, private, and nonprofit sectors form a strategic alliance and make a long-term commitment to a systematic and collaborative approach to problem solving (Kania and Kramer 2011).

Critical to understanding collective impact is the recognition that the authors who designed the approach describe it as both *disciplined* and *strategic*. One of the key features distinguishing collective impact from other collaboration is the presence of the **backbone organization**, which helps to ensure that collective action is both disciplined and strategic.

Five Conditions for Collective Impact Success

Successful collective impact initiatives have strength in the five conditions for collective impact success:

1. A common agenda

2. Shared measurement

3. Mutually reinforcing activities

4. Continuous communication

5. Backbone support organization (Kania and Kramer 2011)

WORKING TOGETHER FOR COLLECTIVE IMPACT

The first four conditions for collective impact success require shared action by all partner organizations. This applies to decision making, conducting program activities, and communication. Each partner organization must do its part across these conditions to ensure success.

A BACKBONE ORGANIZATION IS NECESSARY

The fifth condition for collective impact success is the presence of a backbone organization. This essential organization facilitates collective impact success by supporting partners in achieving the first four conditions. Moreover, the backbone reinforces the decisions and actions of partner organizations, helping the entire initiative to function with maximum effectiveness.

TOPIC 4	Recruit Community Partners

Recruiting strong community partners is essential to the success of any collective impact effort. There are multiple methods that can be used to identify and recruit partners, ranging from online research to informal conversations to formal meetings of various sizes.

ONLINE RESEARCH

Online research is a way to jump start the partner recruitment process. It is often helpful to visit the website for the homeless Continuum of Care[4] in your community to identify organizations providing social services and housing assistance. Many Continuums of Care publish their membership list on their website. Another source is the local United Way website, which may also list various types of service provider organizations. The state agency responsible for children and families may also publish information about local service providers.

INFORMAL CONVERSATIONS

Informal conversations, whether at gathering places such as worship services, school events, the workplace, or the local barbershop, can be a very powerful source of knowledge about potential partners worth recruiting. For instance, Impact KCK clients benefit from essential services provided by partners who were identified through such informal conversations about who was getting things done in the community.

FORMAL MEETINGS

The process of identifying and recruiting partner organizations will also typically include formal meetings. Some meetings may be one-on-one or with small groups. Other meetings may be larger, including a Call to Action such as that hosted in Kansas City, Kansas, prior to the launch of Impact KCK. Some of the key partners in that collective impact effort were identified as a result of the Call to Action.

BE ORGANIZED

The process of identifying and recruiting partner organizations will be aided by organizing information as it is collected. We recommend creation of a blank table at the outset of these efforts that can be printed off and used for note taking during meetings. The information gathered can then be inserted into an electronic document and shared with others involved with launching the collective impact effort.

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[4] Continuums of Care are federally-designated organizations that serve as a local conduit for federal homeless program funding provided through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

1. Organization name

2. Organization address

3. Populations served (for instance, infants, pre-school children, elementary school children, adolescents, young adults, parenting minors, or adults)

4. Services offered

5. Comments (any additional information useful to forming the group of collective impact partners can be noted in this column, including the organization's reputation for working with others, etc.)

REVIEW RESULTS

Progress in identifying and recruiting partner organizations should be regularly reviewed. It is important that those organizing the collective impact effort get together with multiple community stakeholders to review the list to determine whether there is anything missing.

Further, reviewing the list also means having frank discussions about which organizations are known for getting things done rather than simply being visible. Finally, it is also important to be frank about which organizations are known to be team players and likely to make good partners in working for community change. Once the list of potential partner organizations is complete, it is time to move on to community asset mapping.

USE COMMUNITY ASSET MAPPING

Community asset mapping is a community development tool made popular by John Kretzmann and John McKnight (1993). Social service providers and other organizations that may support the collective impact approach to addressing student homelessness should be listed in a document before mapping begins. The document can be arranged in a table format, with columns for organization name, address, services provided, and service domain.

The service domain column allows community asset organizations to be categorized for easy reference and will be useful when analyzing the community's strengths as well as potential gaps in services. We recommend using the domains provided in the Arizona Self-Sufficiency Matrix as adapted by Impact KCK partners. These 16 domains are provided in an Appendix to this Toolkit.

Community asset maps should include:

1. All schools identified in Topic 2 (Understanding Student Homelessness in Your Community)

2. Each potential partner organization

3. Each potential backbone organization, if identified at this stage

4. Public transportation routes, if available

It will be helpful if the map includes different shapes for different types of service providers and/or potential backbones. Color coding might also be used for this purpose.

The map will indicate the proximity of community asset organizations to schools, and to each other. If public transportation routes are available, the map will also include proximity to those routes. Some service providers will be more conveniently located than others. Combine this knowledge with your findings from discussions about the reputation of potential partner organizations for getting things done and being good to work with, and use the information to help you develop a list of those you will want to speak with first to explore a possible working relationship as a collective impact partner organization.

MAKING PARTNERSHIPS HAPPEN

Once you have identified a core set of initial partners, ask for a commitment. We recommend a commitment period sufficient for meeting the community's goals for both partner and backbone organizations. Consider using a simple Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) once the backbone organization has been identified; the MOU will be between the backbone organization (as representative of the collective impact initiative) and each partner.

Begin having regular meetings with the core set of partners. We recommend weekly meetings while the collective impact effort is being designed. The initial partners will work together to identify additional partners and the backbone organization.

In some communities, the backbone organization will be identified early in the collective impact design phase. In this case, backbone organization representatives will coordinate the work of making partnerships happen and convening partner meetings near the outset of the initiative. In other communities, the backbone organization will be selected after a core set of initial partners come together. For instance, Impact KCK's backbone organization was chosen by a vote of collective impact partners.

TOPIC 5 — Select the Backbone Organization

The backbone organization is essential for producing effective community change in response to a complex social problem such as student homelessness. Whenever possible, the backbone should be identified early in the collective impact program design phase.

Selecting the backbone organization is both science and art. The process is a science because there are technical issues to be examined, and art because there are qualitative issues that must also be considered. Your community will benefit from having a backbone with sufficient managerial expertise and financial resources. It will also benefit from having a backbone that is respected and trusted within the community and is known for getting important things done. This section provides guidance on this critical aspect of collective impact.

LOOK FOR CAPACITY

Organizational capacity includes a number of related factors. The list provided here is a starting point for analyzing potential backbone organization capacity; you may have other features you wish to add.

1. What is the organization's form? In other words, is it a 501(c)3 nonprofit, or perhaps a faith-based organization operating as a 501(c)3? Is it a public agency, and if so, is it a unit of local government? Is it a private sector (for-profit) organization?

2. When was the organization established?

3. Does the organization have a strategic plan? What period does the plan cover? Is it consistent with supporting a collective impact effort to end student homelessness in your community?

4. Check any potential backbone organization out by searching online filings with your state agency responsible for corporations; this is typically the Secretary of State. Is the organization's registration current? If they are a nonprofit, obtain their federal income tax form 990 for the past five (5) years. Obtain audited financial statements for the past five (5) years when possible. Review all documents looking for any positive or negative trends in their financing and operations.

5. Who makes up the executive-level management team? What are their qualifications? How much experience do they bring to their jobs? Do they have a reputation for working well with others and honoring commitments?

6. How much funding does the organization receive in the typical year? What are the sources of funding? Are any funding sources subject to downturns in the economy and/or potential withdrawal of public program dollars?

7. What is the staffing level? How many are full-time? How many are part-time? How many are volunteers? What types of expertise and experience do staff possess?

8. What organizations currently work with the potential backbone? What added capacity do these potential partnerships bring to the effort to end student homelessness in your community?

LOOK BEYOND THE MOST VISIBLE ORGANIZATIONS

Looking beyond the most visible organizations in any community is where the art comes into the process of selecting the backbone organization. This is a critical part of the backbone selection process and should not be overlooked.

Are there less visible "gems" known for quietly going about their business and getting important things done? Do community stakeholders indicate these organizations have the potential to work effectively as the coordinator of a complex network of partner organizations across all sectors? If so, give these less visible organizations careful consideration.

Whether the backbone will be a highly visible or less visible organization in the community is, of course, far less important than selecting the right fit. However, it is wise to consider the potential of less visible community organizations and the tangible and intangible assets they may bring to the table when making this crucial decision.

LOOK FOR TRUST CAPITAL

Trust capital is essential in building and operating an effective collective impact program and represents another area where art is applied in the decision making process. Frankly, the nature of funding for community-oriented organizations means that they are often far more accustomed to competition than to meaningful, coordinated collaboration.

One way to overcome an initial lack of trust among partner organizations is to select a backbone organization with a high level of trust capital among these partners. If each partner organization trusts the backbone organization, they can overcome an initial lack of trust with one or more of their fellow partner organizations. That rests on the fact that the backbone is responsible for coordinating activities so that collective goals are accomplished; moreover, the backbone is responsible for seeing that goals are accomplished in a fair way.

The level of trust capital associated with a potential backbone organization can be determined by having confidential conversations with a variety of community stakeholders through one-on-one meetings. Obtaining sensitive information of this nature is best done through one-on-one meetings, or, at most, through conversations with a small group of individuals who already have trusting relationships among themselves.

RECRUITING THE BACKBONE ORGANIZATION

Once you have identified one or more potential backbone organizations, have a private meeting with the organization's (or organizations') top executive (or executives) to explore the possibility of their group serving as collective impact backbone for the purpose of ending student homelessness in your community. Obtain input from key stakeholders—who may be part of the core set of initial partners—possibly in the form of a vote on which organization should serve as backbone. As an example, Avenue of Life, Impact KCK's backbone organization, was selected by a vote of the initial partner organizations.

Once selected, communicate with the top executive in the backbone organization and ask for a brief statement that can be shared with partners, potential partners, and potential funders stating their commitment to serving as the collective impact backbone organization. The length of the backbone organization's commitment should be consistent with the time required to reach the community's goal for ending student homelessness, as well as allow time for transition to a prevention focus.[5] It is important that a plan is in place for "prevention mode" prior to the end of the backbone's commitment period.

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[5] For example, Avenue of Life, Impact KCK's backbone organization, made a five-year commitment to ending student homelessness when the collective impact effort was launched. The backbone and partner organizations agreed that five years was the time period required to end homelessness for the 1,400 homeless students, pre-school children, and infants identified prior to program launch.

TOPIC 6 | Determine Priorities

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Successful collective impact efforts determine priorities early in the collaborative process. Priorities may be determined by the initial group of partners and then added to or otherwise adjusted as new partners come on board. It is vital that priorities be jointly decided and regularly communicated among partners.

Many communities will choose similar priorities for ending student homelessness, but there may also be differences. Here are some example priorities to stimulate discussion and decision making for serving homeless students and families:

1. Provide immediate emergency assistance, such as food, diapers, personal hygiene items, clothing, and shoes.

2. Facilitate temporary housing solutions within 48 hours of school district referral.

3. Meet urgent health care needs, including medical, mental health, and dental care, within 72 hours of referral.

4. Provide immediate assistance in accessing state-administered federal programs such as Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Medicaid, and child care vouchers.

5. Provide parents or guardians with assistance in finding and maintaining employment.

6. Assist referred families with a **permanent housing solution** through federally funded programs such as Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing (most often known as simply Rapid Re-Housing) or through state or local programs or private philanthropy.

7. Provide parents and guardians with essential life skills training opportunities such as budgeting, health care, employment, and nutrition/food preparation.

8. Provide family reunification services when appropriate for children and youth who have been separated from parents or guardians due to lack of housing stability.

TOPIC 7	Establish a Shared Measurement System

It is impossible to accurately determine progress towards goals or a program's overall impact without a shared measurement system. The backbone organization is responsible for (1) helping the collective impact partners determine what will be measured; and (2) implementing a system to collect, analyze, and disseminate results to partners and other stakeholders.

BEGIN BY AGREEING ON GOALS

The backbone organization should convene one or more meetings of all partner organizations to determine program goals. These goals may include an overarching goal such as, "End homelessness among students in five years or less." Other goals may be more detailed, such as, "Reduce absences among McKinney-Vento students by 25% in year one," or "Reduce homeless transportation costs by 25% by the end of year two."

Once goals are agreed by the collective impact partners, the backbone will facilitate the group's identification of program measures. This may be done during the same meeting in which goals are identified or in a separate meeting.
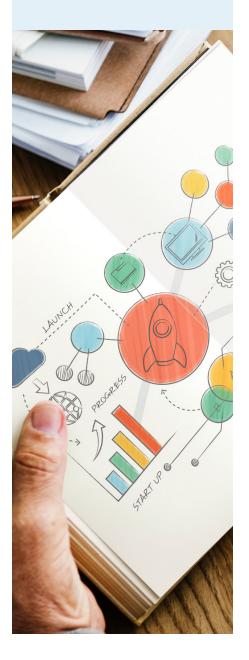
SELECTING MEASURES

Experience demonstrates that the things that are measured are the things that get done. In addition, determining measures to be used for any community program should always be based on the awareness that there can be unintended consequences for what is measured or how it is measured. Finally, there are costs associated with measurement. These costs are typically in the form of staff time but can include other costs. Each community must determine how they will balance the cost of the measurement system with its usefulness in supporting program achievements.

Carefully review goals and priorities and determine what *must* be measured and what measures would be "good to have" but are not essential at this time. Measures can always be added over time as the community's collective impact efforts get traction and backbone and partner organizations gain experience.

Some goals and priorities are more easily measured than others. While measuring the reduction in student homelessness year-over-year requires only an accurate count of the number of McKinney-Vento students for those years and the calculation of percentage change, other goals or priorities require more complex measurement.

The backbone organization will facilitate partners' selection of program measures. This includes reaching agreement about the frequency with which data will be collected and analyzed, as well as the schedule on which measurement results will be disseminated among partners.

The system would ideally be based on monthly data collection from all partner organizations.

The group will also want to determine whether they will disseminate program measurement results to the public, and if so, how often this will occur and what form the dissemination will take. Measurement results may be disseminated publicly through a website, presentations at public meetings, or through written reports. Many communities will choose to use more than one method for disseminating results.

EXAMPLE MEASURES

The list below provides examples of measures communities may wish to use. Each community may pick and choose from this list and add their own.

1. Total number of homeless students
2. Number of homeless students by level (pre-K, elementary, middle, and high school)
3. Number of homeless students by grade (pre-K through 12)
4. Number of homeless students by race or ethnicity
5. Change in attendance among McKinney-Vento students after launch of collective impact program
6. Change in attendance for students whose families secure permanent housing
7. Change in student performance (GPA) once permanent housing is achieved
8. Change in reading and math standardized test scores once permanent housing is achieved
9. Change in school district transportation costs following launch of collective impact initiative
10. Graduation rate of students whose families secure permanent housing

MEASUREMENT COORDINATION

The backbone organization will coordinate data collection and analysis activities necessary for program measurement. Alternatively, the backbone may engage the services of a local university or college or other reputable organization with the required expertise to perform this function. *Regardless of whether the backbone performs this responsibility internally or contracts it out, it is responsible for the quality of the data collection, analysis, and overall program measurement system.*

The backbone organization (or its contracted representative) will establish a system for collecting data early in the program.[6] The system would ideally be based on monthly data collection from all partner organizations. The backbone or its representative may set up a shared data entry portal using a free system such as Google Docs or purchase a proprietary data system.

The simplest method for operating the measurement system is for the backbone or its representative to collect data from the school district and each partner organization and to input it into one or more spreadsheets set up to make calculations and facilitate analysis. ***Regular quality control is essential.*** The backbone organization or its representative must regularly verify data accuracy with the school district and partner organizations. Further, the backbone organization and its representative (if any) must regularly verify the accuracy of data entered into the combined measurement system. Any discrepancies should be explored and either corrected or explained; written explanations should be kept in a summary document and retained throughout the life of the program.

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[6] If for any reason the measurement system is not established early in the process, it is still possible to establish such a system and use it moving forward. However, it is best if the collective impact initiative is able to track progress from the start.

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TOPIC 8 — Use Data Analysis to Facilitate Success

Data analysis is more than an accountability tool; it is a key element in a community program's success. Ways in which data analysis can be used to facilitate success in your community's efforts to end student homeless are presented below. These suggestions may also spark some ideas with you and your partners about ways you can use data to build success.

ACCOUNTABILITY

While we've already stated that collective impact data analysis is about more than accountability, accountability *is* a critical component of any program. Programs that produce reliable data on resources and performance experience greater trust within the community; they are also more appealing to philanthropic foundations and other sources of program funding.

PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

Data analysis also supports program management and innovation. When quality data analysis is conducted on a regular basis and shared with partner organizations, it provides early indicators of the aspects of programming that are working well, what needs to be fine-tuned, and what might need to be discarded or transitioned to another organization.

Analytical reports regularly shared by the backbone in meetings with collective impact partners facilitate discussion and help to identify both barriers to success and solutions. Further, insights gained from this reporting often lead to further program innovation.

PROGRAM FUNDING

The accountability and skillful, innovation-producing management of your collective impact program will be an important attraction for current and potential funders. Moreover, the results themselves can be used in educating potential funding sources about your program and its accomplishments, as well as in writing grant proposals.

MEDIA RELEASES

Collective impact partners may wish to make periodic media releases to educate the public about the issue of student homelessness and introduce the entire community to the efforts being made by the initiative. Media releases can also be used to update the community on progress being made in reducing or ending student homelessness. These releases will be useful in fostering growing support for the program. Growing support will increase the program's success and the success of the students and families served.

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Impact KCK Service Domains[7]

Impact KCK adapted the Arizona Self-Sufficiency Matrix for use in case management. The Impact KCK version includes the following 16 domains:

- Housing

- Employment

- Income

- Food

- Childcare

- Children's education

- Adult education

- Healthcare coverage

- Life skills

- Family relations

- Mobility

- Community involvement and social support

- Parenting skills

- Legal

- Mental health

- Safety

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[7] These domains were drawn from the Arizona Self-Sufficiency Matrix.

Project Sponsorship

L.P. Cookingham Institute of Urban Affairs

MISSION STATEMENT

The Cookingham Institute's mission is to advance scholarship and practice in urban policy and management through education, research, and service. Our work is based on our commitment to public service broadly defined and inclusive of multiple disciplines and stakeholders. In keeping with this commitment, we seek to provide a national example of excellence in urban scholarship and university-based community engagement.

SUPPORTING THE KANSAS CITY REGION'S EFFORTS TO END HOMELESSNESS

The L.P. Cookingham Institute of Urban Affairs in the Henry W. Bloch School of Management at the University of Missouri-Kansas City was established in 2006 to be a source of education, scholarship, and community engagement in urban policy and management. Under the leadership of Dr. Anne R. Williamson, the Cookingham Institute's Director and Victor and Caroline Schutte/Missouri Professor of Urban Affairs, the Institute became involved in supporting community efforts to address homelessness among children, youth, and families in 2015. In 2017, this work was extended to support the Kansas City region's efforts to end homelessness among all populations and continues as opportunities to engage with the community on this critical issue emerge.

SUPPORTING COLLECTIVE IMPACT FOR COMMUNITY CHANGE

The Cookingham Institute supports the collective impact model for community change. The model provides critical structure for collaborative efforts to address complex social problems.

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