Tools for Steering Committees

<u>What Is a Steering Committee?</u>

The Steering Committee is a group comprised of cross-sector community partners representative of the relevant ecosystem that provides strategic direction for the Collective Impact initiative and champions its work. Alternative terms for this group include Advisory Group, Advisory Council, and Leadership Table.

<u>How to Use This Toolkit</u>

The following resources are intended to serve as tools for the formation of a Steering Committee. Their development was informed by FSG's experience working with a variety of organizations. The tools 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.

<u>What Tools Are Included</u>

This toolkit includes the following resources:

- **Guide for Identifying Steering Committee Members** – to aid in the identification and selection of appropriate Steering Committee members

- **Description of Steering Committee Member Responsibilities** – to provide an overview of the role of the Steering Committee and the responsibilities of its members

- **Steering Committee Governance Agreement** – while optional, having Steering Committee members sign this agreement can indicate commitment to their role and responsibilities

- **Sample Steering Committee Meeting Agendas** – to provide guideline objectives for a series of six Steering Committee meetings; the number and specific content of meetings should be tailored to the context of each Collective Impact initiative

- **Discussion Guides** – to be used during the first and second Steering Committee meetings to help members share their personal motivations, identify key challenges and opportunities in the local environment, envision long-term initiative goals, and develop a common agenda.

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), Health and Wellness Alliance for Children, and Silicon Valley ALLIES Collective Impact Initiatives. They are licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NoDerivs 3.0 Unported License.

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Guide for Identifying Steering Committee Members

When identifying potential members of the Steering Committee, it is important to be thoughtful and deliberate, consider actors across a variety of sectors, and keep in mind that there are multiple ways to involve different participants beyond the Steering Committee. The sample stakeholder matrix below illustrates a variety of ways you can think about involving different types of stakeholders (e.g., government, nonprofits, businesses) in a combination of different roles (e.g., Steering Committee, Working Groups). In addition to selecting individuals based on their institutional roles, consider both formal and informal sources of power within communities, and remember that you are crafting a group of actors that will need to work well together.

Sample Stakeholder Matrix

	Government	Nonprofits	Business	Philanthropy	Existing Collaborations	Target Populations
Steering Committee						
Working Groups						
Champions						
Interviewees						

Responsibilities of Steering Committee Members

Guidance, Vision, and Oversight
- Develop and refine Common Agenda for change, including problem statement, goal(s), and guiding principles
- Use data to inform strategy development and learning
- Track progress of work using agreed-upon indicators at Steering Committee and working group levels
- Make connections between working groups to ensure coordination and efficiency
- Interact with the backbone entity on strategy, community engagement, and shared measurement

Leadership
- Consider how your individual organization or those in your network can align with the Common Agenda
- Serve as a vocal champion of the collective impact effort in the community

Process
- Participate in-person in regularly scheduled meetings (every 4-6 weeks)
- Review pre-read materials prior to meetings and come prepared for engaged discussion, active listening, and respectful dialogue
- Commit to year-long membership in the Steering Committee

Steering Committee Governance Agreement

As a Steering Committee Member of the *<Insert Name of Initiative Here>*, I agree to:

- **Adopt and support the *<Initiative>* goal:**
  - *<Insert detailed description of initiative goal>*
    e.g., "Our goal is to double the number of students in our county who are on track to graduate from college or earn a career credential by 2020. We are committed to nothing less than closing the unacceptable achievement gaps for low income students and children of color, and increasing achievement for all students from cradle to college and career."
- **Provide strategic guidance, vision, and oversight** for the *<Initiative Name>*, including:
  - **Developing and refining the Common Agenda for change**, including the problem, goal(s), and guiding principles
  - **Using data** to inform strategy development learning
  - **Tracking progress of the work** using agreed-upon indicators at Steering Committee and Working Group levels
  - **Making connections between Working Groups** to ensure coordination and efficiency
  - **Interacting with the backbone entity** on strategy, community engagement, and shared measurement
- **Provide leadership** by:
  - **Considering how my own organization** or those in my network can align to the Common Agenda
  - **Serving as a vocal champion** of the collective impact effort in the community
- **Play an active role** by:
  - **Participating in-person** at the regularly scheduled meetings (every 4-6 weeks)
  - **Reviewing pre-read materials** prior to meetings and coming prepared for engaged discussion, active listening, and respectful dialogue
  - **Committing to year-long membership** of the Steering Committee

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Printed Name: _____

Sample Steering Committee Meeting Agendas

These meetings are intended to begin after the Steering Committee (SC) has been formed and members have committed to participation. Note that it often takes communities several months to recruit Steering Committee members in advance of beginning this process.

Meeting 1

Objectives: Build rapport, understand the proposed initiative, and develop a shared vision.
Duration: Between 4 hours and a full day retreat. This agenda is designed for 4.5 hours
Note: It is good practice for the backbone (or facilitator if the backbone is not yet in place) to conduct one-on-one interviews with all Steering Committee members prior to the first meeting. In addition, Steering Committee meetings may be held in a consistent location, or can rotate so that different members of the SC "host" the meeting each month and have an opportunity to share their promising practices.
\<Insert Meeting Date and Time\>
\<Insert Address of Meeting Location\>

I.   Introduction – 15 minutes
   a. Welcoming Statements
   b. Overview of the Day

II.   Why It's Important for Me to Be Here Today – 35 minutes
   - *See associated Discussion Guide on page 10*

III.   Setting Our Intention – 30 minutes
   a. Discussion of Proposed Initiative and summary of pre-meeting interviews
   b. Overview of the Collective Impact Approach and Examples
   c. Initiative Structure and Planning Timeline

IV.   Scanning the Environment – 35 minutes
   - *See associated Discussion Guide on page 11*

V.   *Break – 15* minutes

VI.   Envisioning the Future – 2 hours
   - *See associated Discussion Guide on page 12*

VII.   Summary and Next Steps – 15 minutes

Meeting 2
Objectives: Identify the principles of the initiative and define the Common Agenda.
Duration: 3 hours
<Insert Meeting Date and Time>
<Insert Address of Meeting Location>

    I.   Welcome and Introduction – 10 minutes
          a.   Welcoming Statements
          b.   Overview of the Day

    II.   Collective Impact Review – 15 minutes

    III.   Identifying Our Principles – 20 minutes
- *The objective is to lead the group in a discussion to articulate guiding principles for the initiative, answering the question, "What are the core beliefs that will serve as the foundation for our work?"*

    IV.   Defining Our Common Agenda – 2 hours
- *The objective is to reaffirm the group's understanding of the problem, define a vision for the initiative, and begin to name specific outcomes.*
- *See Resources for Defining a Common Agenda on page 13*

    V.   Summary and Next Steps – 15 minutes

<u>Meeting 3</u>
Objectives: Refine the Common Agenda, present success stories from across the field, and understand system change levers.
Duration: 3 hours
<Insert Meeting Date and Time>
<Insert Address of Meeting Location>

    I.   Welcome and Introduction – 10 minutes
        a. Welcoming Statements
        b. Overview of the Day

    II.   Overview of Common Agenda, as designed to date – 45 minutes
- *The objective is to review and refine the Vision, Principles, and Outcomes generated during Meeting 2*

    III.   Success Stories – 20 minutes
- Share stores from other successful collective impact efforts in the field

    II.   Discuss Desired Future State of the System and Change Levers – 1.5 hours
- Share and discuss baseline data on the current state of the system and target outcomes
- *Discuss each phase along the initiative continuum. For example, a workforce development-focused effort could discuss: a) Participant Entry, b) Education and Training, and c) Career Entry and Advancement.*

    III.   Summary and Next Steps – 15 minutes

Guidance for Subsequent Meetings

The next several meetings, roughly through the end of the initiative's first 9 – 12 months, can take a variety of formats, depending on the content of the work, strength of trust and relationships, and the expertise of the group. Suggested objectives for these meetings include:

- Quick-Win Brainstorming
    - Identify potential small pilots or "quick wins"; these are an important part of an initiative beginning to work together
- Development of Working Groups
    - Identify the scope of the Working Groups (i.e., focus, objectives, roles and responsibilities)
    - Recruit participants for each Working Group
- Selection of Indicators
    - In some cases, indicators are selected by the Steering Committee; in other cases, Working Groups identify indicators, which are then approved by the Steering Committee
- Planning for Evaluation
    - Identify evaluation needs and, if appropriate, hire a third-party evaluator
- Articulation of External Communications Messages
    - Develop talking points and "elevator pitch" for Steering Committee members to champion the initiative within the community

Discussion Guides

Why Is It Important for Me to Be Here?

Given *<Insert Initiative Name>*'s purpose (see below), what excites you about *<Insert Initiative Name>* and motivates you to join the Steering Committee? How does our work relate to your values and core professional motivations*?*

It is important for me to be here today because:

<Insert Information on Initiative Goal>
E.g., the overarching goal is to connect English-Learner adults to high-need regional career pathways through a structured and coordinated multi-sector network across workforce development, education, business and labor, community-based organizations and support services.

Scanning the Environment
(Sample from a workforce development initiative)

Current Assets

What current strengths, assets and innovations should we build on?

- Other initiatives
- Best practices
- Existing partnerships / collaborations
- Sector Strategies

Challenges and Opportunities

What are the major trends, challenges and opportunities in the political, economic, social and technological context? This is a crucial foundation for our crafting a shared vision and strategy.

Please jot down a few key ideas:

Prompt categories:

- Needs and experiences of target population
- Policy opportunities and constraints – regional collaboration, funding and performance incentives
- Workforce needs and economic trends
- Institutional connectivity
- Social services (transportation, child care)
- Policy barriers and opportunities
- Funding
- Demographics
- Technology
- Service innovations and best practices
- Data systems

Envisioning the Future

It is January 2023, and you have been asked to speak at a press conference about the success of the *<Insert Initiative Name>* initiative and how it *<insert note on progress towards overarching goal>*.

What does success look like and feel like for our region? What are the major outcomes and results we've achieved?

Consider outcomes and success for:

- Target population group
- Receiving community members
- Businesses
- The provider system
- Community vitality
- Public support
- Economic health

What were some of the key improvements we made to achieve this success?

Consider strategies/priorities related to:

- Program design and innovation
- Collaboration and system alignment
- Funding
- Technology
- Policy change
- Human resources and development
- Outreach and awareness
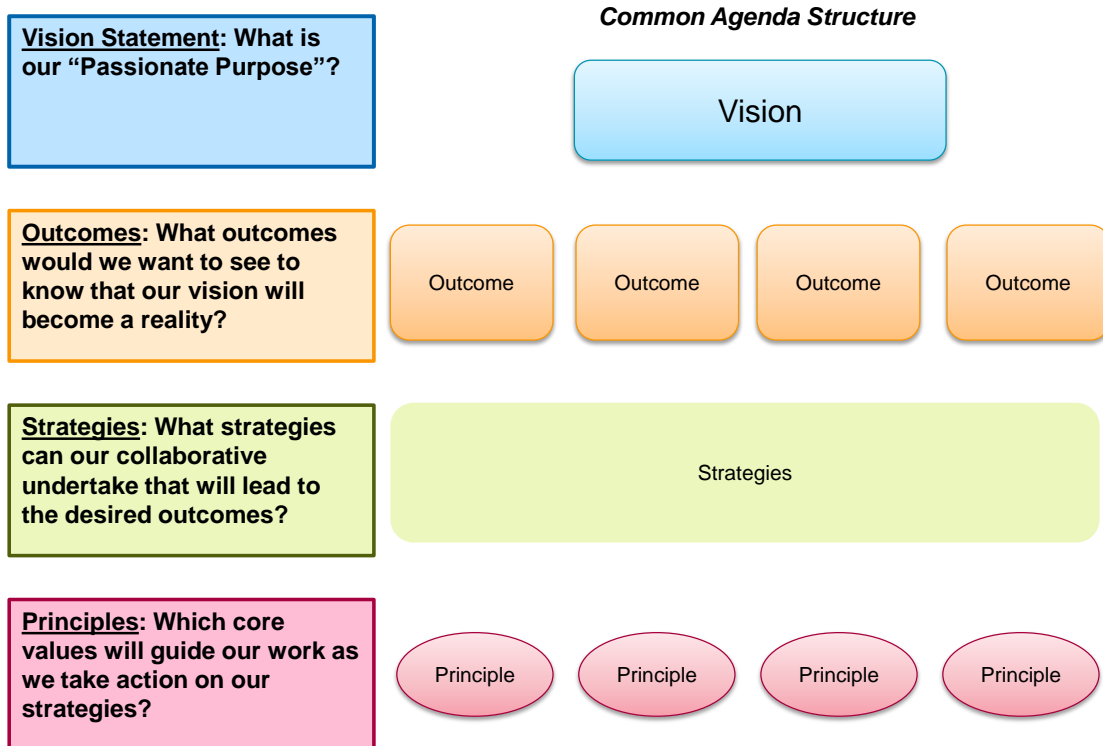- Support services

What was our role as the leaders of *<Insert Name of Initiative>* in creating or inspiring these outcomes and changes?

Consider areas such as:

- Innovation
- Communication and awareness
- Sustainability
- Implementation
- Advocacy

Developing a Common Agenda

The framework below provides a sample template structure for a Collective Impact Common Agenda, supported by a vision statement, specific outcomes, strategies to achieve those outcomes, and principles to guide the work. It can take several months to come to consensus on this full set of components, but providing this structure up front can help participants in the collaborative see the framework that will be created over the course of a series of planning meetings.

Common Agenda Structure

Vision Statement: What is our "Passionate Purpose"?

Vision

Outcomes: What outcomes would we want to see to know that our vision will become a reality?

Outcome · Outcome · Outcome · Outcome

Strategies: What strategies can our collaborative undertake that will lead to the desired outcomes?

Strategies

Principles: Which core values will guide our work as we take action on our strategies?

Principle · Principle · Principle · Principle

Brainstorming the Principles, Vision, and Outcomes

Small Group Discussion

- Break into small groups
- Recap of the problem (10 minutes)
  - Review the problem discussed last meeting
- Vision (20 minutes)
  - Each person will write their vision for others to see and we will discuss, working toward consensus in the small group on a vision statement
- Outcomes (15 minutes)
  - Generate a list of outcomes, organized by outcomes for the English learner, Employers, and System outcomes
- Summary and Prepare for Report Back (5 minutes)

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<u>Large Group Discussion</u>

- As a group discuss the following questions:
    1. What themes are emerging?
    2. Where are the areas of consensus?
    3. Where do we need further discussion?
- Through this conversation, the group will come together to work toward consensus on a vision and generate a list of outcomes.