



COLLECTIVE IMPACT AND WORKGROUP MANAGEMENT HANDBOOK

A Campaign of the Partnership for Strong Communities

Table of Contents

I.	Foreword from PSC	Page 3
II.	Collective Impact Model	Page 4
	1. Why Collective Impact works	
	2. Your role in Collective Impact	
III.	Reaching Home Campaign.	Page 6
	1. What we do	
	a) Role of the Backbone Organization	
	2. Campaign Structure and Roles	
	a) Workgroup Structure	
	b) Role of the Reaching Home Coordinating Committee	
	c) Role of the Workgroups	
	d) Role of the Task Groups	
	e) Membership Expectations	
IV.	Meeting Structure and Facilitation	Page 10
	1. Results-Based Facilitation	
	a) Role of Co-chairs/Facilitators	
	2. Communication within Campaign	
	a) Basecamp	
V.	Appendices	Page 14
	• <i>Collective Impact Article</i>	
	• <i>How to Lead Collective Impact Working Groups</i>	
	• <i>Reaching Home Agenda Template</i>	
	• <i>Task Group Charter Template</i>	
	• <i>Legislative Session Priorities Template</i>	
	• <i>Results Based Facilitation Handouts</i>	
	• <i>Reaching Home Structure Document</i>	
	• <i>Workgroup Project Inventory Tracking Document</i>	

I. Foreword

As an active participant in the Reaching Home Campaign you are joining a successful, dynamic, collective impact effort that has been hard at work since 2004. The Campaign has evolved and grown through multiple phases of progress since then. Starting with the goal of ending chronic homelessness, we only imagined a time when we could more aggressively target solutions to families with children, youth and other populations of people experiencing homelessness in the state. In seven years, the Campaign built strong public/private partnerships, greatly elevated the political and civic will, and advocated for the creation of over 5,000 units of permanent supportive housing.

Then, after a year of extensive planning, the Campaign launched Opening Doors in CT in 2012 with a statewide road map and set timeframes for how to make homelessness rare, brief and nonrecurring for those experiencing chronic homelessness, as well as for all Veterans, families with children, and youth. We aspired to reach these milestones while setting a path to end all forms of homelessness -- and finally be able to focus more heavily on preventing it from happening in the first place.

The Partnership for Strong Communities (PSC), the backbone organization of the Reaching Home Campaign, understood that we'd never be able to solve this complex social problem if we didn't address the structural issues that cause it, like increased demand for and decline in affordable housing options, housing and employment discrimination, residential segregation, and lack of access to mental health and substance services, to name a few. In 2006, PSC's HOMECT Campaign started the long game of working to reduce the misconceptions surrounding affordable housing and to expand affordable housing options through targeted municipal outreach and education. A core strategy being to reduce exclusionary and increase inclusionary zoning practices.

By 2019, both statewide Campaigns had made significant progress and reached some major milestones, like an end to Veteran homelessness, near end to chronic homelessness, historically low rates of homelessness, creation of the Incentive Housing Zone Program to expand housing options, and affordable housing planning grants to more than 70 municipalities, among others. HOMECT has embarked on a strategic plan to reduce the number of low-income families that spend more than half their income on housing costs, and Reaching Home is amid its third phase of evolution.

This third phase of which you are a part, includes the launch of a new statewide goal to make all homelessness in Connecticut rare, brief, and non-recurring by 2023, along with work to implement a new streamlined structure with a core area of focus on preventing individuals and families from becoming homeless by partnering with and helping to drive change in other systems.

Front of mind for Reaching Home - housing cost burdened families are at risk of homelessness and eviction and are disproportionately people of color. Eviction disproportionately impacts marginalized communities and has lasting impacts on families. Creating prevention approaches to effectively target those at risk of becoming homeless will help to ensure families avoid homelessness and remain stably housed.

We cannot reach our joint goals unless they're focused on the root causes and racial inequities found among those who experience homelessness and serious housing instability. We must increase partnerships with community-based organizations that serve and represent people of color and have participation by people of color at all levels, and we must create more meaningful partnerships with people with lived experience.

Only together, can we develop and advocate for long-term solutions that address the systemic issues that place people at high risk of homelessness. Thank you so much for being a part of this important work – we look forward to working with you!

Sincerely,



Kiley Gosselin, *Executive Director*



Alicia Woodsby, *Senior Policy Advisor*



Carline Charmelus, *Reaching Home Project Manager*



Danielle Hubley, *Policy Analyst*

II. Collective Impact Model

1. WHY COLLECTIVE IMPACT WORKS

“Collective Impact is the commitment of a group of actors from different sectors to a common agenda for solving a specific social problem, using a structured form of collaboration.”¹

Collective impact initiatives involve a centralized infrastructure or backbone support, a dedicated staff, and a structured process that leads to a common agenda, shared measurement, continuous communication, and mutually reinforcing activities among all participants.



¹ **Citation** - Kania, J. & Kramer, M. (2011). Collective Impact: Large-scale social change requires broad cross-sector Coordination, yet the social sector remains focused on the isolated interventions of individual organizations. Stanford Social Innovation Review.

2. YOUR ROLE IN COLLECTIVE IMPACT

Homelessness is a complex issue that requires the involvement of a broad spectrum of individuals and organizations, and the collective impact initiative is far removed from the isolated impact approach that presently dominates the social sector and that inhibits any major effort at comprehensive, large-scale change.

As a member organization of the Reaching Home Campaign, it is crucial that your organization weighs in and agrees on the shared goal to prevent and end homelessness and is willing to work collectively with partner organizations to achieve this goal.

The power of collective action comes not from the sheer number of participants or the uniformity of their efforts, but from the coordination of their differentiated activities through a mutually reinforcing plan of action.

For example:

In a 100 Day Challenge to end Youth homelessness, a group of organizations can focus on different aspects of the initiative.

One organization could take responsibility for organizing grassroots support and engagement, a second organization could provide training and technical assistance, and a third could focus on the policy and advocacy.

Although each organization has its own focus and expertise, they are able to bring their unique strengths together, remain consistent with the common agenda and informed by the shared measurement of results.

Each organization and their representative brings a unique perspective, skills, and abilities and covers a different aspect of the work.

As an organization, you are agreeing to be an active part in the statewide effort to prevent and end homelessness and be committed to operating under a collective impact model.

III. Reaching Home Campaign

1. WHAT WE DO

The Reaching Home Campaign is a dynamic community of stakeholders drawn together around the singular mission of ending homelessness in Connecticut. With more than 200 partners across 120 organizations representing a variety of sectors, Reaching Home works to develop policies, community support, and resources that will bring an end to homelessness in Connecticut.

The goal of the Reaching Home Campaign is to make homelessness in Connecticut rare, brief, and nonrecurring by 2023.

To achieve this goal, we must:

- *Ensure identification of all people experiencing homelessness, that no one experiences unsheltered homelessness, and that people don't enter homelessness in the first place.*
- *Continue to increase the number of people exiting homelessness into stable housing and reduce the length of time people stay homeless.*
- *Strengthen supports to individuals and families that help them to maintain housing stability by fostering income growth and employment success, so that they don't ever have to return to homelessness again.*
- *Learn from and meaningfully partner with people who have experienced homelessness, with a focus on equity.*

A. ROLE OF THE BACKBONE ORGANIZATION

How does P.S.C. assist the Workgroups/co-chairs? The collective impact model has been proven to be most successful when there is a backbone organization who helps operate the management and logistics of the campaign structure. The Partnership for Strong Communities was formed, in large part, to play this role and has been doing so since Reaching Home's inception. We are here to help! In addition to offering technical and logistical support, the role of the backbone includes the following six key components:

1. Guide vision and strategy
2. Support aligned activities
3. Establish shared measurement practices
4. Build public will
5. Advance policy
6. Mobilize funding

The Partnership also serves as a key partner and support to co-chairs and facilitators. The Partnership is available to assist in agenda setting and relationship management and help facilitate continuous communication between working groups and stakeholder partners. In the past the Partnership has also served as a partner in specific policy activities, and grant-writing/seeking efforts. Along with key partners, the Partnership helps lead and support legislative advocacy efforts throughout the year on behalf of the Reaching Home Campaign.

2. CAMPAIGN STRUCTURE AND ROLES

A. WORKGROUP STRUCTURE

The Reaching Home Campaign has **five Workgroups** in addition to a Coordinating Committee. The Workgroups help drive creative and collaborative solutions to prevent and end homelessness in Connecticut.

Resources Workgroup	Making the best use of existing federal and state funding streams and the expansion of existing/pursuit of new resources to meet statewide goals.
Data/Accountability Workgroup	Using the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), counts of homelessness and other data tools to review status and predict needs and success in meeting our goals.
CAN/Homeless Service Delivery System Workgroup	Aligning the Coordinated Access Networks (CANs) and continuing to improve our crisis response system, shorten length of stays and increase positive exits.
Prevention Workgroup	Preventing individuals and families from becoming homeless by partnering with and helping to drive change across multiple systems.
Sustainability Workgroup	Sustaining our successes by preventing those who have exited homelessness from becoming homeless again and sustaining permanent housing.

Membership for the standing Workgroups is limited to a range of 20-30 participants who represent key aspects of the system the Workgroup is focused on. It can be harder to coordinate larger numbers of people for meetings, and information can get lost if attendees do not have clear expectations for participation or the flow of communication. Both will be outlined in more detail in the following pages.

Overall, the Coordinating Committee helps the Campaign by providing guidance and a shared direction to the Workgroups. The Workgroups establish projects and coordinate with both the Task Groups and the Coordinating Committee. The Task Groups work to support time-limited initiatives set out by the Workgroups or can inform the Workgroups of a Task Group that might need to be launched.

Both the Work and Task Groups are a great space for encouraging new leadership opportunities for staff and community members, which can energize the effort and success of the Campaign.

B. ROLE OF THE REACHING HOME COORDINATING COMMITTEE

The Coordinating Committee helps coordinate the Reaching Home Campaign and provides guidance to Reaching Home Workgroups. Additional functions include:

- Approve major policies
- Finalize funding recommendations
- Assist Workgroups with agenda and direction
- Coordinate information flow between Workgroups
- Disseminate information
- Setting legislative agendas and priorities for sessions

C. ROLE OF THE WORKGROUPS

The Workgroups of the Campaign establish and monitor project Task Groups and report back to the Coordinating Committee. Additional functions include:

- Determining workload and priorities
- Drafting legislative recommendations
- Raising issues to be addressed in a Task Group
- Identifying data needs
- Maintaining communication with the other Workgroups and Coordinating Committee

D. TASK GROUP STRUCTURE

The Task Groups of the Campaign are meant to be time-limited groups focused on resolving a specific, established problem with a key set of deliverables and expected outcomes. Additional functions include:

- Identify systems efficiencies and barriers
- Identify funding needs and provide funding allocation recommendations
- Drive outcomes through established deliverables
- Deliver final recommendations to assigned Workgroup

Membership of the Task Groups can include Workgroup members and/or other relevant stakeholders with subject matter expertise.

Ideas can be generated at many levels, including but not limited to, the Coordinating Committee, any of the standing Workgroups, or directly from grassroots organizations and partners.

Task Group Formation and Charter:

In the event that a Workgroup determines a new Task Group needs to form, Workgroup members should utilize the **Charter Formation Template**, which seeks the following information:

- Problem Statement (*Why group needs to be convened*)
- Executive Summary (*Charge*)
- Deliverables (*Outline, scope of project and outcomes*)
- Timeline (*When to check in and begin planning for next steps/iterations of project*)
- Participants (*Could be exact names, or just relevant agencies they'd like at the table*)
- Convener (*Point person to contact around project Task Group*)

E. MEMBERSHIP EXPECTATIONS

Members are expected to play the following roles:

- Actively participate in all meetings for the Workgroup/Task Groups. Notify your co-chair, meeting facilitator or backbone staff person if you are unable to attend as soon as possible.
- Attend meetings in person as this is a critical element to ensuring meetings are as proactive/productive as possible and to fully engage in the Result-Based Facilitation approach (RBF), we utilize to format meeting structure. Ability to participate is limited when trying to use conference or video call-in options.
- Provide timely written or verbal feedback on issues or documents under discussion by the committee.
- Attend relevant technical training for Workgroup members.
- Make a concerted outreach effort to communicate regularly with the organization or agency they represent and a wide variety of relevant stakeholders to seek input, ideas, and keep them informed about the process and issues being discussed.

IV. Meeting Structure & Facilitation

The collective impact model is designed around the ideals of cross-system, collaborative, and integrative processes. When leading and facilitating Workgroup meetings within the approach of collective impact, it is important that everyone at the table feels like their voice and experience matters. When there is a limit on the number of people within a Workgroup, each person should have a distinct and relevant voice in the process.

1. RESULTS-BASED FACILITATION (RBF) GUIDELINES

*“Results Based Facilitation is a competency-based approach to participating in and facilitating meetings that get results...[RBF focuses] on meeting results by developing an accountability framework for commitments to aligned action. **RBF skills ensure that participants, conveners, and facilitators work together, entering a meeting with results in mind and leaving with action commitments in hand.**”* – Results Based Facilitation Book 1: Foundation Skills (p.3)

Benefits of using RBF Skills:

People who must work together to address urgent and important issues need a way to hold productive meetings that lead to positive outcomes, such as:

- *Stronger relationships*
- *Clearer communication*
- *Active participation*
- *Shared learning*
- *Exciting insights*
- *Creative problem solving*
- *Robust solution development*
- *Helpful conflict resolution*
- *Effective decision making*
- *Commitment to action*
- *Follow-through on commitments to action that produce results*

Liberating Structures Resource: Here is a link to a site called Liberating Structures. It provides a menu of thirty-three (33) different meeting facilitation tools. Facilitators and co-chairs may find some of the tools useful in structuring their meetings/conversations:

<http://www.liberatingstructures.com/>

A. ROLE OF FACILITATORS

A critical role of the RBF method is that groups own and act on decisions. To ensure that the decision-making authority is exercised by the group and not inappropriately held by a facilitator, RBF has a specific skill that defines how the facilitator role is held in meetings.

Components of neutral results-based facilitation includes:

- Supports the group's meeting results and purpose
- Creates a space for participants to speak without personal preference or other factors
- Gives the work back to the group and does not use his/her authority to pursue a personal agenda
- Refrains from using his/her expertise or authority to influence group decisions
- Helps the group make its own decisions
- Does not express agreements or disagreement verbally or nonverbally
- Announces to the group when he/she is no longer able to hold neutral

(Excerpts from RBF Foundation Skills and Competencies – Book 1)

B. ROLE OF THE CO-CHAIRS

The role of Workgroup co-chairs is critical to guiding the work of the group, facilitating the conversations, and allowing a space for experts or people with lived experiences to raise their voices and share their expertise.

Co-chairs are responsible for engaging in the following roles²:

- **Contributing to the development of the content and agenda** for each standing meeting – this means coordinating with the Backbone staff and relevant members/partners for the conversation
- **Managing members and nurturing relationships** within the Workgroup, including addressing member concerns outside of meetings, learning more about the roles and expertise they have to help inform strategies, encouraging multiple perspectives, and helping to move conversation along if/when it gets stuck
- **Cultivating a focus on equity** by fostering conditions for inclusion and trust, engaging the community and using data to understand disparities and inform strategies
- **Serve as a bridge** between the Coordinating Committee and the Task Group and Workgroup projects, seeking input from community members and key stakeholders, and updating members on the work their groups are engaged in

² **Citation** – Uribe, D., Wendel, C., and Bockstette, V. (March 2017). How to Lead Collective Impact Working Groups: *A Comprehensive Toolkit*; FSG Reimagining Social Change

Agendas:

The following template agenda format should help co-chairs, facilitators and participants organize thoughts, strategies and processes of the Workgroup. The agenda is broken up into **five standing categories:**

1. Additional Agenda Items *(A new development that is important to flag/discuss at the meeting or future meetings. Facilitator will add additional items to the New Business Category.)*
2. Progress/Updates *(Discussions of existing activities, projects or previously held events.)*
3. New Business *(New topics or ideas being discussed for the first time; it may/may not require a decision.)*
4. Action Commitments/Decisions *(Any pending decision that needs to be made by the group.)*
5. Public Comment *(Open the floor for members of the public to comment on current/future meeting content.)*

2. COMMUNICATION WITHIN THE CAMPAIGN

We understand that consistent internal and external communication is critical to keeping everyone informed and engaged in the work of the Campaign. We will be making a concerted effort to ensure that information on Campaign's work is shared via an array of communication channels.

Project tracking/process:

Each Workgroup will be responsible for maintaining a project tracking spreadsheet with all the projects that the Workgroup is working on. Each spreadsheet will be used by the Workgroup to manage and track the Task Group projects. At the meeting, co-chairs should build in a space to discuss the project tracking spreadsheet as a scorecard to track all the Workgroup and Task Group projects. The project tracking spreadsheet should be updated at least once monthly prior to each Workgroup meeting.

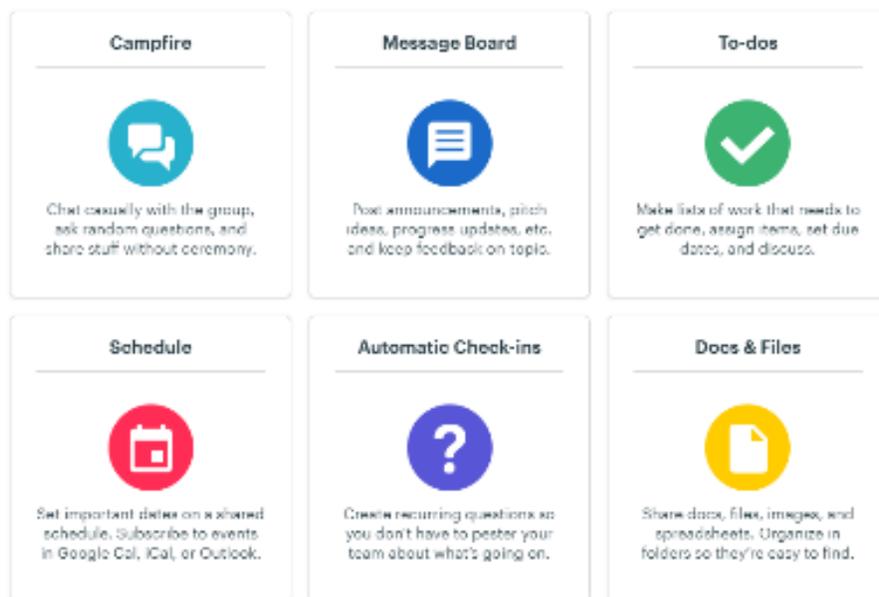
Basecamp:

We will be utilizing Basecamp as a communication and task management tool for each Workgroup.

Members can use Basecamp to:

- Schedule meetings
- Share updates, materials and resources (including agendas)
- Organize and edit documents
- Ask and answer questions
- Propose new ideas, and
- Stay on top of projects and to-dos
- Check in with Workgroup/Task Groups on project deliverables by utilizing the automatic check-ins

Workgroup members will be invited to join their Workgroup Basecamp Team/Project.



[change tools / add email forwards](#)

External Communication:

To share our progress on a regular basis, we will continue to add content on PSC's Newsletter, website, and news blasts. PSC will be posting the standing meeting schedules of each Workgroup on its website.

Workgroup members should make a concerted effort to regularly share the Campaign updates in their respective communication channels and networks.

V. Appendices

- Collective Impact Article
- How to Lead Collective Impact Working Groups
- Reaching Home Agenda Template
- Task Group Charter Template
- Legislative Session Priorities Template
- Results Based Facilitation Handouts