

First2 Network

A Collective Impact Framework

The First2 Network uses a Networked Improvement Community framework for Collective Impact that centers on improvement science, as described further in the First2 Network bylaws.

The whole NSF INCLUDES program is built on the understanding that together, we are greater than the sum of our parts. There are five elements of Collective Impact.

1. **Common agenda:** All participants share a vision for change that includes a common understanding of the problem and a joint approach to solving the problem through agreed-upon actions.
2. **Shared measurement:** All participants agree on how to measure and report on progress, with a short list of common indicators identified to drive learning and improvement.
3. **Mutually reinforcing activities:** A diverse set of stakeholders, typically across sectors, coordinate a set of differentiated, mutually reinforcing set of activities.
4. **Continuous communication:** All players engage in frequent, structured communication to build trust, assure mutual objectives, and create common motivation.
5. **Backbone support:** An independent, dedicated network staff provides support and key functions for the sustained operation of the collective impact initiative through six essential functions:
 - a. **Guiding vision and strategy:** The backbone team works together with the Steering Committee to provide data, prioritize opportunities for action, and adapt to changing context and systems in the overall vision and strategy of the effort. It is critical that the backbone prioritizes equity in its efforts to guide the vision and strategy, thereby ensuring that Steering Committee and working group members keep equity at the center of their strategies and actions.
 - b. **Supporting aligned activities:** The backbone facilitates dialogue between partners, provides direct support for Steering Committee and working group meetings as needed, and generally helps to coordinate the actions across the effort.
 - c. **Establishing shared measurement practices:** The backbone manages data collection among partners and supports the use of data for learning and evaluation of the effort.
 - d. **Cultivating community engagement and ownership:** The backbone cultivates broad relationships throughout the community in coordination with the Steering Committee and working group members, seeking to build an inclusive effort that authentically engages and fosters ownership within the community over the long term.
 - e. **Advancing policy:** As the collective impact effort matures, the backbone often plays a role supporting a policy agenda that impacts large systems and institutions in support of the effort's overall goal.
 - f. **Mobilizing resources:** The backbone plays a key role in developing resources for the initiative's sustainability, including fundraising for the backbone itself and

recruiting volunteers or other non-monetary support for the initiative. Backbone staff can also coordinate or support the fundraising efforts of members of the collective impact initiative.