

Policy Toolkit

A GUIDE FOR POLICY DEVELOPMENT



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Achieve Escambia

Escambia County, Florida

Alamance Achieves

Alamance County, North Carolina

Bold Goals

Birmingham, Alabama

Cradle to Career Partnership

Tucson, Arizona

Eastside Promise Neighborhood

Bellevue, Washington

E3 Alliance

Austin, Texas

Growing Together

Tulsa, Oklahoma

ImpactTulsa

Tulsa, Oklahoma

LatineEd

Mebane, NC

Learn4Life

Atlanta, Georgia

Mission: Graduate

Albuquerque, New Mexico

UP Partnership

Bexar County, Texas

RVG Focus

Harlington, Texas

Spartanburg Academic Movement

Spartanburg County, South Carolina

Step Forward

Shreveport, Louisiana

The Commit Partnership

Dallas County, Texas

United Way of San Antonio & Bexar County

San Antonio, Texas

* Icons designed by Leremy Gan



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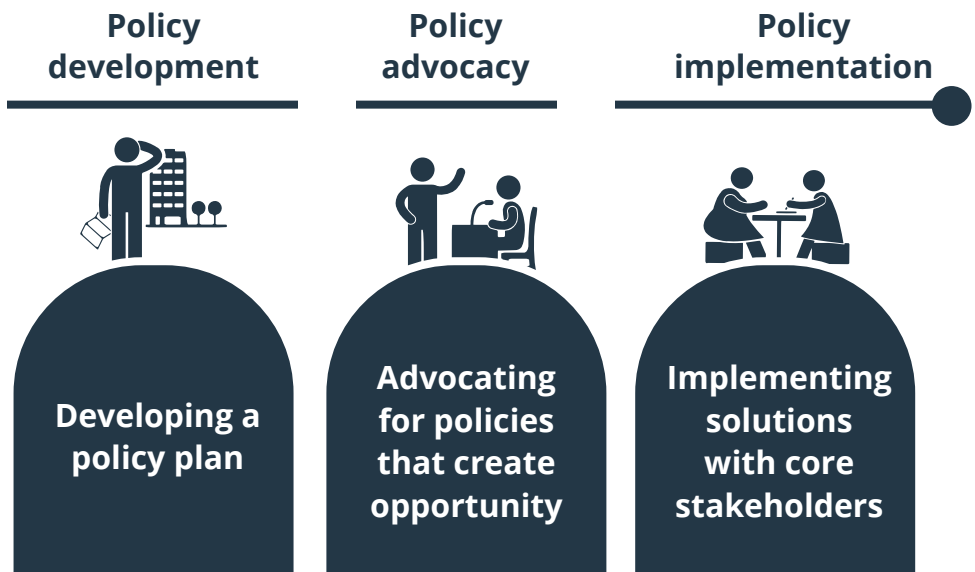


What is this toolkit?

This toolkit is a comprehensive resource for place-based partnerships and other coalitions embarking on or deepening strategic policy work alongside their communities.

The path toward policies that create opportunity is often not linear, but the framework in this toolkit can guide your process.

This toolkit features tools, worksheets and case studies for three identified policy phases:



Throughout this toolkit, you will find examples of what policy work looks like in practice. Many examples are from StriveTogether and PolicyLink network members, and are noted as such. Additionally, a community example is provided throughout the three phases and various activities to demonstrate a practical application of the toolkit to one specific issue: third grade literacy rates. While the case study is hypothetical, it is based on actual policy work on the issue.



How was this resource created?

Funded by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, this toolkit was a joint effort with StriveTogether and PolicyLink staff, co-created with community leaders within their networks.

The teams met throughout 2020 to discuss challenges, successes and insights to create a broad learning resource.

Through the feedback of local changemakers, this offering was framed and refined.



Who is this resource for?

This toolkit will benefit organizations that:



Have a strong understanding of their core mission and the long-term, population-level outcomes they're working toward



Have some experience with policy work and are looking to deepen their understanding of the policy space and expand their impact through policy efforts



Are aware of the different and unique 501(c)(3) and 501(c)(4) requirements in their states (see disclaimer below)

Disclaimer for 501(c)(3) and 501(c)(4) organizations

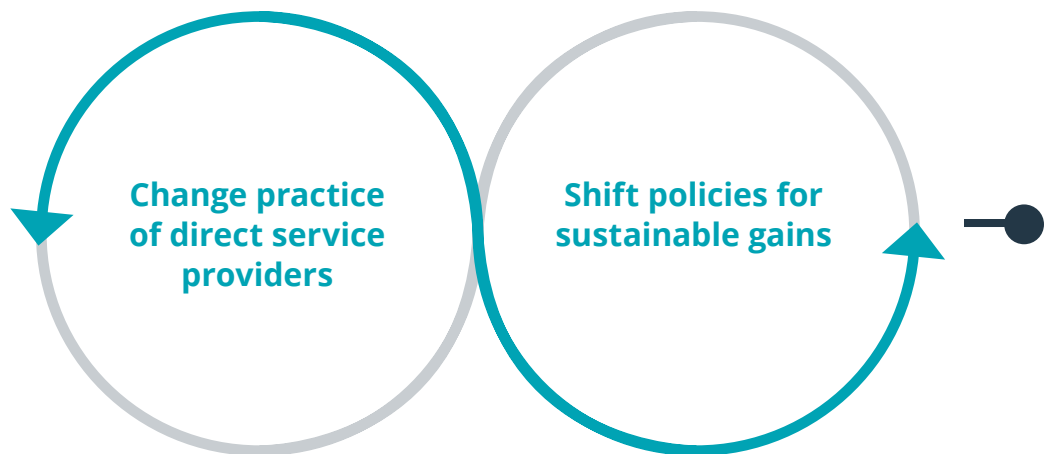
Policy work requires an understanding of the policy-related activities that are allowed for 501(c)(3) and 501(c)(4) organizations. Specific IRS regulations govern which activities are acceptable and which are prohibited for 501(c)(3) organizations. They also describe the compliance requirements for 501(c)(4) organizations and the ways that 501(c)(3) and 501(c)(4) organizations can interact.

Non-compliance with IRS regulations can result in severe financial and legal penalties. Your organization should be fully informed about these regulations before undertaking any policy activities.



How does it work? Framework overview

Through our partners' years of experience, we have learned many lessons regarding what leads to development of civic infrastructure and to the advancement of results in a community.



One key learning in this process has been that communities need to work on (1) both changing the practice of direct service providers as well as (2) shifting policies to make sustainable improvements in outcomes. These shifts also vary from region to region based on the unique needs of local communities. Results Count™ offers a strong frame to advance this work by grounding in data and building leadership, collaboration and adaptive competencies.



Identify a population-level result and policy-level strategies

Authentically work alongside community in policy work

Policy development

Policy advocacy

Policy implementation

Read this first: Framework overview

Before moving to policy work, center yourself around the result you want to achieve for a specific stakeholder group and create policies from specific strategies. Here is an example.

Population-level result

What result do you want to achieve for your community?

- All students are ready for kindergarten.

Indicators

What does the data show about where you've been and where you're headed?

- Only 75% of children test ready for kindergarten. Only 65% of Latine children test ready; that rate drops to 50% for Latine girls. The rates have been decreasing by at least 2% the last five years and will likely continue.

Factors

What is causing current outcomes?

- There is a lack of access to high-quality early child care centers in Latine neighborhoods.
- The kindergarten readiness assessment is designed for English speakers, impacting English language learners.
- The identification of reading difficulties is delayed due to lack of parental English literacy and miscommunication with families.

Strategies

Based on the factors, what are program- and policy-level strategies that would lead to better outcomes?

(Program level)

- Offer screening opportunities in community centers that families can easily access.

(Policy level)

- Offer the assessment in Spanish by Spanish-speaking assessors.

- Add high-quality early child care centers in Latine neighborhoods.

Then, take your policy-level strategies through the policy work cycle. The rest of this toolkit details this process.



Authentically work alongside community in policy work

This toolkit emphasizes the experiences of communities in both policy outcomes and the process of creating your policy. This focus on communities will help ensure your policy has a real impact on the individuals it's designed to serve.

Build relationships

Strong relationships support every phase of policy work. As you develop and carry out your policy plan, you should identify the key stakeholders, experts, decision-makers and other individuals or organizations connected to your issue who would be impacted by your policy proposal.

Deliberately work to understand their needs and perspectives to build your relationships with them. These relationships can inform and strengthen your policy, and when done well, can ensure your policy will be effective, adopted and fully implemented.

Co-develop with community

Community co-development is inviting and integrating the experiences and input of communities into all phases of policy work from development through implementation. Successful community co-development requires time and authentic engagement with community members.

Community co-development is critical to creating effective policies. Too often, policies are created by wellintentioned experts without full consideration and inclusion of the groups and communities who will ultimately live with it.

Build capacity

Building capacity means increasing the skills, knowledge or resources (time, relationships, funding, etc.) you have to complete your goals, and it is often necessary as organizations, communities and individuals begin new policy efforts.

The policy worlds — whether federal, state, local, legislative, executive or regulatory — have a lot of specialized processes and jargon. Your issue area may also have its own specialized terms or knowledge. Many different stakeholders in the policy process will need to build their capacities to effectively engage in the space and help make change.

“Doing the work on the front end of a project to ensure community members’ actions and perspectives are heard and used to take action is crucial.”

- Carlisha Williams Bradley
Impact Tulsa
Tulsa, Oklahoma

“Once the results [are] available, go to those most impacted by the results to get answers or next steps.”

- Kim Atchley
Spartanburg Academic Movement
Spartanburg, South Carolina

“Build capacity, because then if the funding goes away, the infrastructure of people has been organized, lifted up and empowered to sustain the work.”

- Kim Krupa
Achieve Escambia
Pensacola, Florida

Identify a population-level result and policy-level strategies



Collaboratively work alongside community in policy work

Policy development

Policy advocacy

Policy implementation

Policy development

The policy development phase is critical for laying a strong foundation for any successful policy effort. Thoughtful engagement with diverse stakeholders will help ensure your policy is effective and inclusive.

This toolkit will prepare you to:



Build and strengthen relationships with core coalition partners and broad community stakeholders

Co-create a preliminary version of your policy recommendation with your core coalition

Develop your knowledge of the policy process

Engage your community to help determine the most important policy priorities for your issue and potential solutions

Identify policy options (jurisdictions, feasibility and resources) that will impact the population-level result you are working to achieve

"We learned to adopt a wise mantra during our work: 'change at the speed of trust.'"

- Mary Ellen

*United Way of San Antonio & Bexar County
Pensacola, Florida*

At the end of the policy development phase, you will have:

A comprehensive policy agenda

A greater understanding of the policy process in your context

A preliminary description of the policy changes you want to enact

New and strengthened relationships with key stakeholders

A coalition of partners with clearly defined roles and responsibilities

Identify a population-level result and policy-level strategies

Authentically work and engage community in policy work

Policy development

Policy advocacy

Policy implementation

Policy advocacy

In the policy advocacy phase, you will use and build on the policy plan you created in the policy development phase to bring your policy proposal to the appropriate decision-makers and try to persuade them to adopt it.

This toolkit will prepare you to:

Modify your original policy proposal to accommodate amendments, revisions or necessary compromises



"[You achieve equitable policy through] local or state principles of action that deeply examine disproportionate negative effects on minoritized groups and that lead to the removal of barriers to student success for all students."

- Katherine Diaz
RGV Focus
Rio Grande Valley, Texas

Mobilize your community partners and supporters to make the case for your proposal through: direct action, providing letters or testimony, demonstrating and having individual conversations with key decision-makers

Hire/engage with a professional lobbyist or lobbying group

At the end of the policy advocacy phase:

Your proposal will have been adopted, modified or rejected by decision-makers. Bringing your issue and policy recommendations this far is a victory. Regardless of the outcome, you have more work to do in the next phase.

Identify a population-level result and policy-level strategies

Authentically work alongside community in partnership

Policy development

Policy advocacy

Policy implementation



Policy implementation

The policy implementation phase is the most overlooked piece of policy work, but is also one of the most important components. Even the best-developed policies will encounter challenges during implementation because the people who adopt the policy are rarely, if ever, also responsible for enacting it.

This toolkit will prepare you to:

Work with decision-makers in the implementation jurisdiction to interpret the intent of the policy



“There is a lot of passionate talk and a lot of great ideas, but without strong implementation, even the best plans fall flat.”

- Rebecca Parshall
Learn4Life
Atlanta, Georgia

Support the individuals and organizations responsible for doing the on-the-ground work

Conduct ongoing monitoring to ensure compliance

At the end of the policy development phase, you will have:

A clear implementation plan with roles and responsibilities of all partners identified

Governance rules and detailed budget(s)

An evaluation plan to monitor progress

How this kit works.

Making the work relevant:

Case studies:

In case study sections, you get a look into how OrganizationOne, a hypothetical community organization in Policy Land, USA, works in each step of the policy process. What connections can you draw to the work you are planning in your community?



Community stories:

Collected from community members engaged in this project, real-world stories show you how the phases of this process were implemented in real communities across the United States.



Community voices:

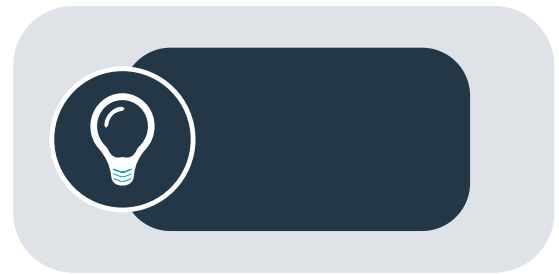
Throughout the creation process we held co-working sessions with community network leaders doing policy work. Quotes from these interviews are shared throughout this toolkit.



Navigating the toolkit

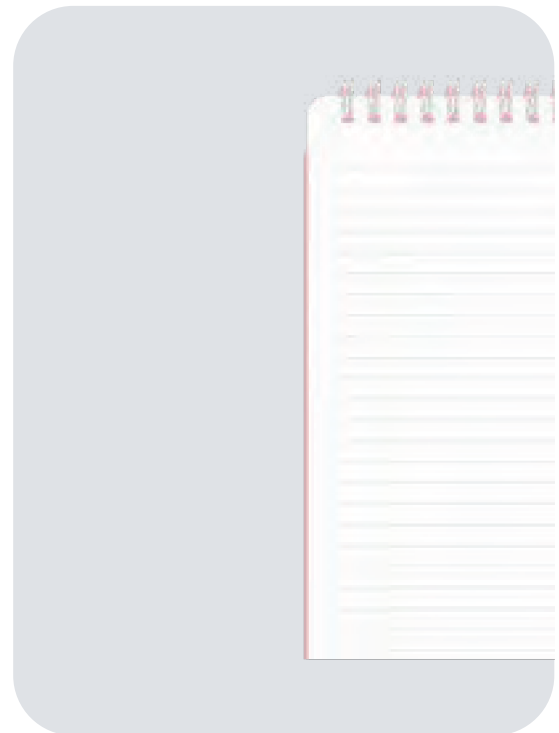
Tip boxes:

Look out for the light bulbs in each section that call out helpful tips to consider as you navigate the complexities of policy work.



Workbook pages:

Workbook pages give you a moment to stop and try out the policy work you just learned about. They are a way to manage each step incrementally as you pace yourself by using tools and worksheets. All tools can also be found in the workbook section at the end of this packet.



Policy development

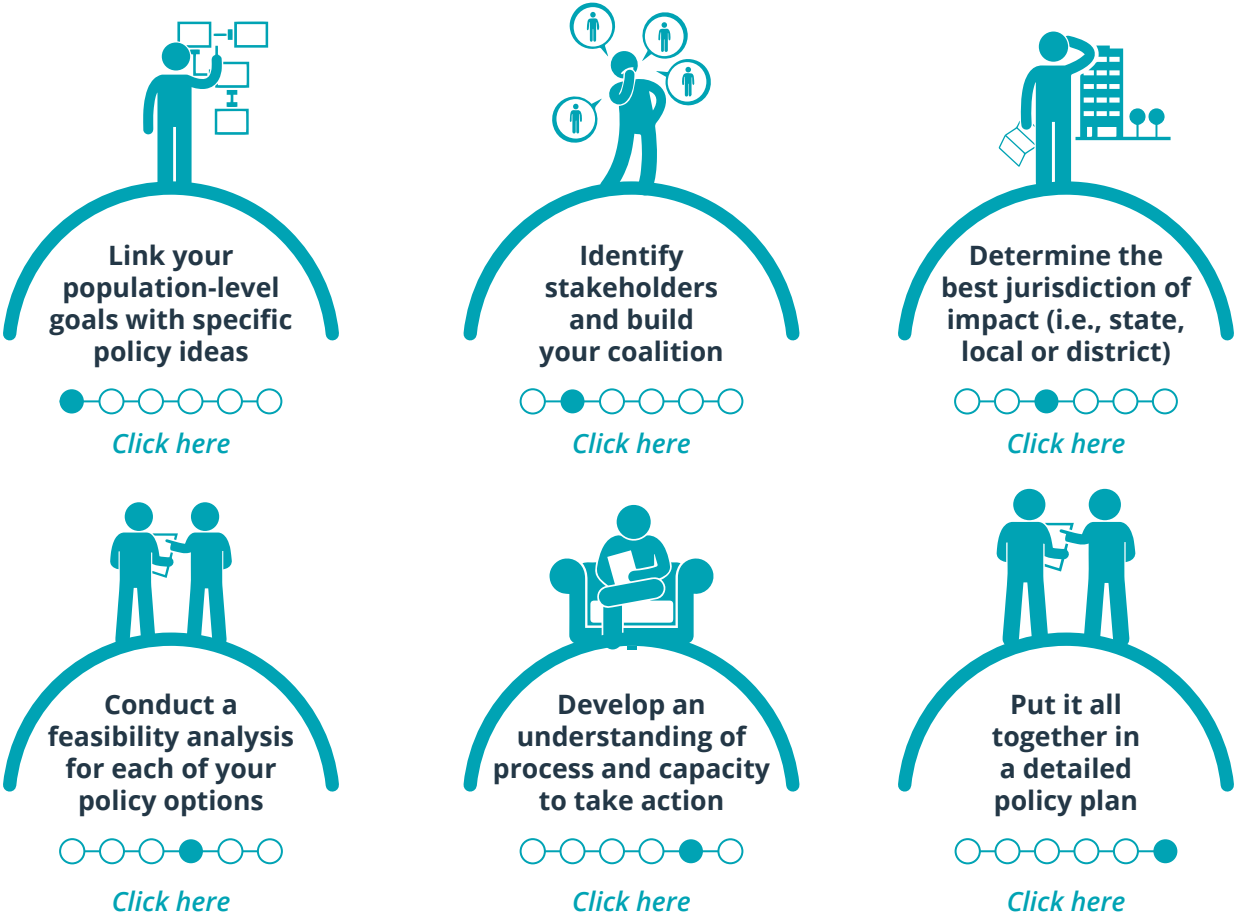
Creating a roadmap for your policy work



Policy development

In the policy development phase, you will create a roadmap for the rest of your policy work. It is important to have a variety of stakeholders included at the earliest stages of your policy work for a several reasons: to ensure you have the strongest policy proposal possible, to help your advocacy coalition have buy-in to the policy and to have a clear understanding of the scope of work that needs to be done in the next phases. Community input is also critical to building inclusive and effective policy solutions.

In this phase you will...



Disclaimer

Please ensure your organization fully understands and remains compliant with the IRS regulations on policy-related activities for 501(c)(3) and 501(c)(4) entities.





Link your population-level goals with specific policy ideas

OrganizationOne knew some of the different factors that resulted in low literacy outcomes from community conversations and reading research on the issue of struggling readers. They identified how the impacts were different for youth of color and those from low-income households. Overall, it became clear that third grade reading proficiency is a critical milestone for learning.

The coalition drafted details for the policy in close partnership and with input from community members, impacted stakeholders and implementers. They also had support from an invested state representative they knew would support their policy plan. This collaboration ensured the policy reflected the priorities of the community and the coalition. The proposal included the following:

- To address the need for more resources to support struggling readers, the policy committed additional state funds to go to each district based on the number of students behind grade level in grades K-3.
- The state is forbidden from requiring/mandating specific curricula for any district, so that could not be included in the legislation. However, to address the need for more high-quality and consistent reading curricula for students and teachers, the policy outlined additional funds set aside by the state for any district that wanted to adopt a curriculum that met the state's literacy standards. The state could then encourage districts to improve their literacy curricula through incentives instead of mandates.
- To address the need for parents to know about their children's reading progress, the policy created a new state testing requirement for districts to test students twice per year and added a mandate to inform the parents if their children were significantly behind grade-level standards.
- To monitor the policy's success, the policy allocated funds for a third-party evaluator to contract through the State Public Education Department to examine the policy's impacts and create an annual report for the department and the legislature.



Link your population-level goals with specific policy ideas



[Click here to access tool](#)



Put it into action! Factor analysis

What is this?

It's tempting to jump too soon into crafting solutions without understanding the underlying causes of our country's biggest social challenges. A factor analysis can allow for a strategic analysis of a systemic issue.

When do I need to use this tool?

Use this at the start of your process to ensure your policy initiative addresses the real story behind the data and disrupts the underlying causes of negative outcomes.

Step 2

Policy development

Identify stakeholders and build your coalition

Relationship development is a critical piece of the policy development phase. Broadening and deepening your partnerships in this phase will increase the chances that your policy is adopted.



It is important to have a variety of stakeholders included at the earliest stages of your policy work to help ensure you have the strongest policy proposal possible, your advocacy coalition has buy-in to the policy and you have a clear understanding of the scope of work that needs to be done in the next phases.

The depth of your relationship with different partners can range from working closely together to simply keeping them updated about major milestones.

Consider who is impacted by the issue you are trying to solve (e.g., community stakeholders such as students, parents, families or teachers), what decision-makers will have a role in adopting or rejecting your proposed solution and who will be responsible for implementing and monitoring the new policy.



The broader the variety of input, the more successfully you will be able to develop, advocate for and implement your policy solution as well as anticipate any challenges or objections to your proposal.

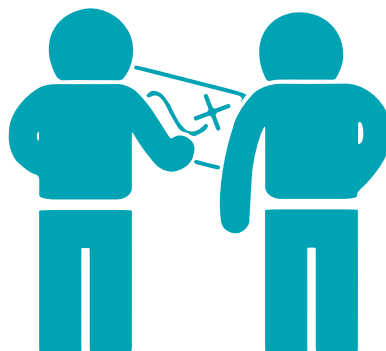
As you identify different stakeholders who will likely support your policy recommendations, also consider which individuals and groups may not support your policy. Work to understand their objections and, when possible, proactively address them in your policy plan.

Community stories



Identify stakeholders and build your coalition

In San Antonio, Texas, UP Partnership has identified and educated a variety of stakeholders through the use of fiscal mapping. Through easily accessible visual data, their fiscal map helps leaders and stakeholders understand current investments and gaps by identifying, tracking, analyzing and forecasting funding sources and funding needs for services that support children and youth. Now, their Strategic Funding Alignment Task Force can identify opportunities for flexibility within funding categories and recommend ways to fill gaps, mitigate COVID-19 impact and reduce inequities. Further expanding their coalition, the Strategic Funding Alignment Task Force has used this as an opportunity to support youth in understanding the historical flow of investments into their communities. Throughout this year, they have equipped youth with data and an understanding of how to interpret and apply the information to effectively advocate for bolder, smarter and more equitable investment patterns.



Identify stakeholders and build your coalition



[Click here to access tool](#)

Put it into action! **Stakeholder analysis**

What is this?

This is a mapping tool to assess the alignment of those you are engaging to the result you are trying to achieve.

When do I need to use this tool?

Use this as you are first beginning to build your policy coalition.

Step 3

Policy development

Determine the best jurisdiction of impact (i.e., state, local or district)



Like the concept of jurisdiction in a court of law, jurisdiction in the policy sphere refers to the government entity that has control over the issue you want to change. You may already have an idea of which jurisdiction you'd like to work with for your policy recommendations, but try to keep an open mind as you begin to craft your policy agenda. You don't need to be committed to a specific jurisdiction until the end of this phase, so be ready to explore multiple paths to your ultimate policy goals.

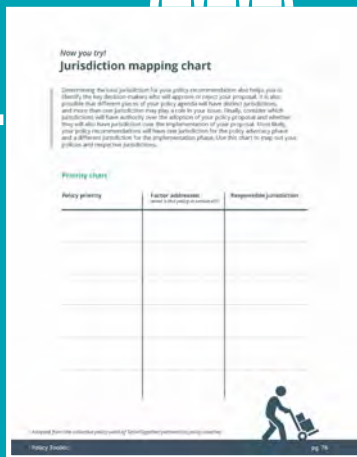
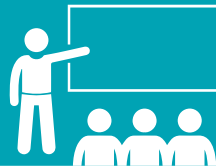
When thinking about policy jurisdictions, most people think about passing legislation, but many other government entities enact policies too. While they may not be as flashy or well-known as legislative changes, policy changes made through regulatory or executive entities can have equally important and widespread impacts.

Policy jurisdictions have different levels and branches. When determining who has jurisdiction over your issue, consider both the level and branch of government to determine the best balance of spread and complexity for your context (see tool on next page).

Determining the best jurisdiction for your policy recommendation also helps you to identify the key decision-makers who will approve or reject your proposal. It is also possible that different pieces of your policy agenda will have distinct jurisdictions, and more than one jurisdiction may play a role in your issue. Finally, consider which jurisdictions will have authority over the adoption of your policy proposal and whether they will also have jurisdiction over the implementation of your proposal.

Most likely, your policy recommendations will have one jurisdiction for the policy advocacy phase and a different jurisdiction for the implementation phase.

Determine the best jurisdiction of impact



[Click here to access tool](#)

Put it into action! **Jurisdiction mapping chart**

What is this?

This chart is a mapping tool that allows you to visually link factors to each policy priority and its resulting jurisdiction.

When do I need to use this tool?

This tool is a helpful mapping tool as you are strategically planning out the boundaries of each policy initiative.



Determine the best jurisdiction of impact (i.e., state, local or district)

The large coalition met for multiple half-day sessions to build their knowledge, consider options at different levels (state, local or district) and to start identifying initial policy details. The conversation started with an option to do local-level policy with the state's largest school districts. This option could have made sense because the coalition members had very deep and meaningful relationships with communities and leaders in these areas, but this would leave out a large portion of the state.

They considered whether they could successfully work at the local level with more districts. However, having a large impact at this level would be nearly impossible because there were more than 100 different districts in their state, and the coalition did not have pre-existing relationships with most of them. The coalition considered enacting statewide regulations through the State Board of Public Education which would impact all students in the state. However, they quickly realized that for any policy to be successful, it would need additional funds, which the State Board couldn't allocate.



Step 4



Policy development

Conduct a feasibility analysis for each of your policy options

The purpose of a feasibility analysis is to determine how likely each of your policy options are to be adopted and to identify the biggest barriers that will stand in your way.

The major components in a feasibility analysis are political feasibility and financial feasibility, but depending on your context there may be other important factors you evaluate with your coalition partners. Barriers and drawbacks exist for any policy option, so don't use your feasibility analysis to try to create the perfect policy with no opposition or barriers. Instead, use the analysis to identify if any of your proposals are absolute non-starters (most often due to cost or political opposition –see Troubleshooting section at the end of this chapter) and to minimize or anticipate the biggest challenges you will face in getting your ideal proposal adopted by the decision makers in your jurisdiction.

In your analysis, examine the feasibility of implementation as well. Consider the level of complexity and the stakeholders involved with enacting your policy proposal the way it is intended.

“I think the conditions for change have to be present and a catalyzing factor, like [how] a legislative champion or media coverage lifts an issue to the forefront. At that point, relationships are key to move something forward. Will the structure be there to capitalize on the opportunity?”

- Ricky Hurtado

LatinxED

Mebane, North Carolina

Conduct a feasibility analysis for each of your policy options



[Click here to access tool](#)



Put it into action!

Readiness checklist

What is this?

This checklist helps communities assess their readiness for a campaign for a local dedicated children's fund. It is organized around three key components: public will, motivation of your coalition and assessments of need and funding mechanisms.

When do I need to use this tool?

This tool is helpful when you are ready to begin designing your ballot measure.

Step 5



Policy development

Develop understanding of process and capacity to take action

Learning about the policy process takes ongoing effort. This step is especially important if you identified that your jurisdiction is something you haven't worked with in the past.



You can certainly develop your knowledge of the policy process and the nuance of your policy jurisdiction by doing formal research, but the informal processes and priorities are also important to consider.

Some of these informal processes and priorities may include the ways different policymakers prefer to be contacted, or the the best approach to deliver your message in order to make the greatest impact. For example, consider whether the best approach to communicate your message is through one-on-one meetings, group settings, joining already established gatherings or a different approach altogether. Make sure you also deepen your understanding of the process to implement your policy if it is adopted.

“It is very difficult to successfully develop policy with community when they have not been afforded the luxury of competently understanding the subject matter to allow them to be full participants.”

- Kirk Wester
Impact Tulsa
Tulsa, Oklahoma

Community stories



Develop an understanding of process and capacity to take action

In order to build the capacity of community members to meaningfully participate in their policy development, Growing Together (Tulsa, Okla.) intentionally removes as many barriers to participation as possible. When they hold forums, Growing Together provides child care, food and often a small payment for participants' time. They also strive to ensure that their community member leaders facilitate the forums to allow for participants to access messaging in an easily understandable way. These efforts have specifically played out in the development of Growing Together's neighborhood improvement plan. To ensure co-creation with their community, they hosted listening sessions led by neighborhood facilitators. These listening sessions allowed for community members to rank, discuss and refine their top issues for neighborhood improvement.

Develop an understanding of process and capacity to take action

ACT! Quick

[Click here to access tool](#)



Put it into action!

ACT! Quick assessment

What is this? ACT! Quick is a short version of the Advocacy Capacity Tool (ACT) that is designed to be completed in less than 15 minutes.

Completing this tool provides an overview of your organization or coalition's current capacity — or readiness — to engage in advocacy work.

When do I need to use this tool?

This tool is helpful when you are in the planning process to determine your capacity for the work.

Step 6



Policy development

Put it all together in a detailed policy plan



Once you have completed the other activities in the policy development phase, you will have all the information you need to create a detailed policy plan for each of your proposed policy solutions. This plan will guide you through the next phases of your work. Be sure to chart out key deadlines for the policy advocacy and implementation phases, including who will be responsible for the major activities.



Remember:

In your final policy proposal, make sure you have included mechanisms to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of your policy after it is adopted and implemented. Some policies have specific requirements for evaluating policy implementation and impact.

“Ensure that strategic action plans, responsibilities and feedback loops are built into the process. Establishing nextstep action plans has to include who is responsible for completing what action and within what timeframe.”

- Kim Atchley

*Spartanburg Academic Movement
Spartanburg, South Carolina*



Put it all together in a detailed policy plan

OrganizationOne worked with the broad coalition of supportive stakeholders and determined each group's capacity and role to engage in the policy work going forward. Responsibilities included: community engagement and education, building relationships with key decision-makers, training and mobilizing school and district leaders, sending coalition updates and calls for action. They included important milestones and goals throughout the plan.



Checkpoint questions

Before you move to phase two, policy advocacy, make sure you can answer these questions:



- Have you identified your policy solution — or a list of possible solutions — and determined the specific link to your population-level goals?

- Have you scheduled regular times to revisit your policy plan and long-term, population-level goals?

- Do you know who the different individuals and organizations interested in your policy issue are? Have you started to build or strengthen relationships with them?

- Do you have a core coalition of supporters to help develop and champion your policy?

- Have you identified potential opposition to your proposal and developed ways to address their concerns or overcome their efforts to oppose your proposal?

- Have you determined the feasibility of your policy ideas and refined or modified your proposal accordingly?

- Do you know under which jurisdiction your policy proposal will be decided?

- Do you have a strong understanding of how the policy process works in your jurisdiction?

- Do you have a detailed policy plan that lays out the roles and responsibilities of your coalition and key stakeholders? Does it include important objectives and deadlines for the policy advocacy and policy implementation phases?



Policy advocacy

Strategically advance your initiative



Policy advocacy

The advocacy phase builds on the strong foundation you established in the policy development phase. The specific activities for this phase will depend on your unique context and policy issue. All of your advocacy activities should be done strategically to advance your recommendation and give it the greatest chance for success. Throughout this phase, continue to engage your coalition, partners and diverse community stakeholders.

In this phase you will...



Identify and cultivate champions for your recommendation

[Click here](#)



Meet with decisionmakers and key influencers and maximize your time with them

[Click here](#)



Record all the work your coalition completed and identify what you could have done differently

[Click here](#)



Pivot to your context

[Click here](#)

The advocacy activities you do in this phase depend on your specific context and policy issue. If you're unsure what strategic activities to pursue, work with your coalition to identify the most effective and useful advocacy efforts. Using this information, you can then engage in a variety of other advocacy activities to strategically push your issue and policy recommendations forward.

Disclaimer

Please ensure your organization fully understands and remains compliant with the IRS regulations on policy-related activities for 501(c)(3) and 501(c)(4) entities.

Step 1



Policy advocacy

Identify and cultivate champions for your recommendation



Working closely with supportive policymakers or their influencers will dramatically increase the chances that your recommendations are adopted. Ideally, you will work closely with the key decision-makers in your jurisdiction. If that's not possible, then connect with individuals or groups who are close to the decision-makers and are able to bring your issue to their awareness. Having close connections to policymakers will help you:

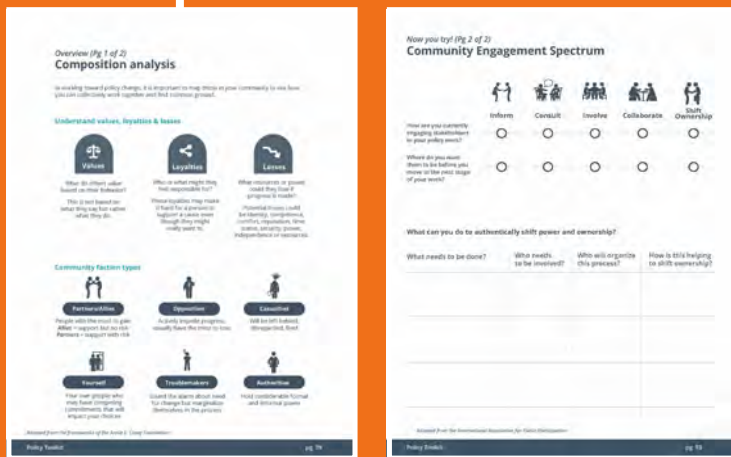
- Understand the political landscape surrounding your issue
- Identify what strategic activities are most likely to persuade other policymakers to support your recommendation
- Be aware of the nuances of the policy process in your jurisdiction, including important dates and milestones to ensure you comply with different government or bureaucratic requirements

As you learn more about the political process, strategies and critical dates and requirements, be sure to update your policy plan and make any necessary adjustments to the roles and responsibilities of your coalition partners.

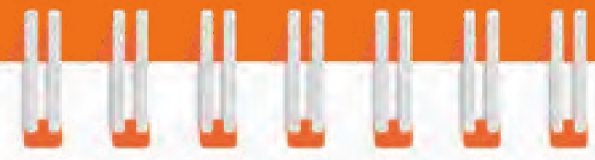
“This is where networking is important. All of the connections with legislators came from community partners. An introduction from someone who knows someone makes for a more meaningful connection than a cold call.”

- Teri Wimborne
Mission: Graduate
Albuquerque, New Mexico

Identify stakeholders and build your coalition



Click here to access tool



Put it into action! Composition analysis

What is this?

This tool maps the values, loyalties and potential losses of those who will be involved with or affected by your policy proposal.

When do I need to use this tool?

Use this when you need help planning for working strategically with key stakeholders and finding common ground.

Step 2



Policy advocacy

Meet with decision-makers and key influencers and maximize your time with them

If you have a meeting with a decision-maker or influencer who is considering supporting your proposal, congratulations! This is an exciting opportunity. To make the most of it, learn about the decision-maker and be prepared to speak to their unique motivators. Show how your policy proposal relates to what is important to them, which may include:



- The principles behind the issue
- The amount of community support for your proposal — it can be very powerful to bring an advocate from the impacted community for your issue to share their experience and how your proposal will impact them
- The financial impacts of your proposal
- The relation of your proposal to other issues they care about

Address their concerns about your proposal. If they raise a concern or question that you can't answer immediately, don't worry and don't try to make something up on the spot. Just ask for the best way to get in touch and follow up after your meeting with a response.

Describe the impact your proposal will have for their specific constituents. Overall estimates of the benefits can help make the case for your full proposal, but policymakers often want to know how a policy will affect their specific voters. Try to have a few data points on how your policy will impact their communities.

Remember:

Policymakers and broader community members have to balance many different, and often competing, interests. They also may not be motivated by the same things that motivate you or your coalition to support your issue. Consider the things that motivate them and try to “meet them where they are.” Some people will be persuaded by the principle of the issue and their desire to do the right thing. Others will be more interested in the financial reasons for supporting a new policy. Whenever you talk about your policy, try to address the variety of factors that might motivate someone to support it. For example, you might say, “In addition to being the right thing to do for our community, this policy will save taxpayers money in the long run.”





Meet with decision-makers and key influencers and maximize your time with them

With their policy proposal written in more detail, the coalition prepared for meetings with policymakers by working to understand their districts and the potential impacts their early literacy proposal would have on their specific constituents.

Working closely with their key representative, they identified two potential Senate sponsors and other key House and Senate members who might be interested in supporting the proposal. The coalition secured a Senate sponsor for their proposal and began the drafting process with legislative staff.

The coalition divided the list of other potential supportive policymakers (it was not feasible for a single group to complete all these meetings) and held multiple meetings with key members of the House Education Committee and the Chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee. The proposal would need their support to be successful. In meetings with these policymakers, whenever possible, the coalition showed the legislator which individuals and groups in their community helped to shape the proposal.

The coalition received support from most of these legislators — some more emphatic than others. The coalition faced opposition for the proposal in the Senate Education Committee, so they worked with the sponsors to create amendments that would allow the bill to pass through the committee to the full floor.





Continued...

Meet with decision-makers and key influencers and maximize your time with them

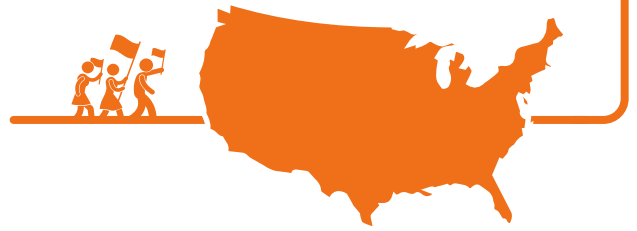
Some members of the committee would not support the policy with the full revenue, so the sponsors and coalition decided to make a concession and target resources only to the students identified as having the most significant reading difficulties in the early grades.

Districts would not receive additional resources for students who were only slightly behind the reading targets. The coalition also had to reduce the amount of money allocated for incentivizing districts to adopt high-quality literacy curricula, and had to eliminate the budget for a third-party program evaluation. Instead, they created a requirement that the State Public Education Department submit its own annual report to the legislature on the progress of the policy.

The bill faced strong opposition in the House and Senate Education Committees from a large urban school district that did not want the state to have additional control over their teaching process. Through public testimony from parents and teachers, the coalition convinced reluctant policymakers that the trade-off of increased state control was important to help support struggling readers and improve early literacy outcomes. Otherwise, the outcomes would not successfully impact all students.



Community stories



Meet with decision-makers and key influencers and maximize your time with them

A great example of this activity in action can be seen in UP Partnership in Bexar County, Texas, as they support young leaders to build youth capacity and create a platform for sharing their ideas with policymakers. UP Partnership has created a series of local events to provide capacity-building supports to young people, as well as to offer platforms through which they can advocate for their visions and hopes with policymakers.



Step 3



Policy advocacy

Record all the work your coalition completed and identify what you could have done differently



Once your advocacy efforts are complete, you have the opportunity to document your coalition's and other stakeholders' work. It is also a critical moment to identify what you did well and how you could improve in your next policy effort. Whether your policy proposal was adopted or not, take the time to reconvene your key coalition and stakeholders to conduct a retrospective analysis (also sometimes called a postmortem).

It's always disappointing if you go through the policy development and advocacy phases and your policy is not adopted. However, this doesn't mean that your policy efforts were unsuccessful. If your policy wasn't adopted by the necessary decision-makers, you still have many opportunities to learn, regroup and try again with greater knowledge and skills.

"[Give] time to think, reflect and plan as a team to help build that needed capacity for the work ahead."

- **Thymai Dong**
E3 Alliance
Austin, Texas



Record all the work your coalition completed and identify what you could have done differently



Overview (Pg 2 of 2)
 How you try
State coalition metric
 Deciding policy priorities

Tier	Criteria	Types of engagement
Level 1 1-2 partners	<p>Impact: This will primarily impact one goal or task for the organization.</p> <p>Readiness: There is consensus of the legislative, community support and a clear difference in perspective and a need for collaboration and shared leadership.</p> <p>Alignment: Your partners and your own are aligned and your objectives are aligned.</p> <p>Agreement: Your partners have agreed to a timeline that allows them to get up to speed and advance the priority before the year-end.</p>	<p>Coalitional support: - coordinated activities - shared resources and information - cross-institutional support - additional support is provided or needed - "power sharing" activities</p> <p>Member organization commitment: - regularly engaging and maintaining - sharing and providing information - regular, timely and after meeting - following through on meeting with - participants to follow through on the team, - holding regular to address all - ongoing to involve other critical - while, cross-institutional - from regular meetings - for continuous active and participating in - strategic development</p>
Advocate 2-3 partners	<p>Readiness: Impact is described clearly. Resources, or members of leadership, or community members have been identified and a priority setting or policy engagement has been positioned on the road.</p>	<p>Coalitional support: - coordinated activities - shared resources and information - cross-institutional support - additional support is provided or needed - "power sharing" activities</p> <p>Member organization commitment: - regularly engaging and maintaining - sharing and providing information - regular, timely and after meeting - following through on meeting with - participants to follow through on the team, - holding regular to address all - ongoing to involve other critical - while, cross-institutional - from regular meetings - for continuous active and participating in - strategic development</p>
Support	<p>Alignment: Individual organizations have agreed to a timeline that allows them to get up to speed and advance the priority before the year-end.</p>	<p>Coalitional support: - coordinated activities - shared resources and information - cross-institutional support - additional support is provided or needed - "power sharing" activities</p> <p>Member organization commitment: - regularly engaging and maintaining - sharing and providing information - regular, timely and after meeting - following through on meeting with - participants to follow through on the team, - holding regular to address all - ongoing to involve other critical - while, cross-institutional - from regular meetings - for continuous active and participating in - strategic development</p>

Revised from the previous work by The Governmental and Institutional...
 Policy Toolkit pg 44

[Click here to access tool](#)



Put it into action! State coalition metric

What is this?

This guide helps you decide priorities and assess the commitment that will be required for each type of priority.

When do I need to use this tool?

Use this metric chart as you are allocating resources and capacity so you can appropriately allocate resources.

Step 4



Policy advocacy

Pivot to your context



The most important task in this phase is to align your advocacy activities with your strategies to persuade the policymakers in your jurisdiction. In order to achieve this goal, you may consider some of the activities listed below. Select the ones that you have capacity to execute well and that have the best chance of being persuasive, then adapt them to fit your unique context.

- Host or sponsor a town hall meeting or community meeting
- Create a letter-writing campaign
- Offer education to policymakers to help them better understand your issue
- Present data or reports
- Prepare and give testimony
- Establish a media or communications strategy



Remember:

Continue to engage broad, diverse stakeholders and members of the impacted community in your advocacy activities. Personal stories and examples of how your policy will impact peoples' lives are often some of the most compelling and impactful advocacy activities.



Pivot to your context

Meetings with the key representative and their staff helped the coalition realize that they needed to increase awareness of the needs of struggling readers. Most people, even legislators, didn't recognize early literacy as a critical milestone or as a problem for so many young students. So, they started to develop a plan to get op-eds in local papers and online to talk about the state's low literacy rates and the long-term and disproportionate impacts on different groups of students. Some were written by experts and others were written by parents and teachers who had direct experiences with the challenges of low literacy.

When the policy began the legislative process in the House, the coalition prepared parents and teachers to write and give testimony throughout the legislative process (during committee hearings) and to speak with legislators about their support for the policy during individual meetings.

The coalition also created a communications plan to get the word out through social media for concerned citizens to sign their support for the policy. This effort was a little hectic and rushed because they hadn't planned to do it earlier in the process. The coalition had to quickly divert additional funds to pay for promoted notifications and posts on several sites, but the effort was extremely helpful when they needed to demonstrate the community's support to different legislators.



Community stories



Pivot to your context

For Growing Together (Tulsa, Okla.), this work centers around the action teams deploying and advocating for their policy agenda. They are supported by community organizers and community leaders. For example, their community wanted greater Latine representation in the Tulsa Public Schools Board. Even though it is a majority Latine district, the district had never had a Latine board member. The community network mobilized and made it happen.

In their work to change advanced math curriculum design and implementation, E3 Alliance in Texas has found that sustaining relationships is key during the policy advocacy phase. They recognize that showing grace and flexibility goes a long way while asking their districts to implement some large changes.



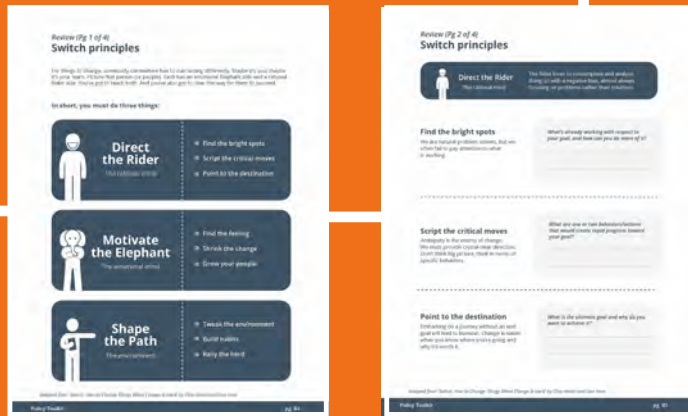
Troubleshooting

A common challenge in advocacy work is how unpredictable and fastpaced the process can be. Hearing dates or times can change with only a few hours' notice. Agenda items can be added or removed without warning. Key decision-makers might refuse to share whether they plan to support or oppose your recommendations. It is important to stay flexible and be willing to adapt your approach quickly. Working closely with a policymaker or lobbyist can also help minimize uncertainty, as they often have access to insider information about what's going on and why.

“In our Internet Access Task Force, stakeholder leads were matched to key advocacy areas. Some led efforts to draft efforts for the state applications, some advocated to and with the Tulsa Housing Authority, some led presentations to Tulsa City Council for getting funding approvals and earmarks for key initiatives. Others led advocacy at key institutions and sectors such as at the university level, business, school district or public service entities like Tulsa Transit.”

- Carlisha Williams Bradley
Impact Tulsa
Tulsa, Oklahoma

Pivot to your context



[Click here to access tool](#)



Put it into action! Switch handout

What is this?

In strategic policy work, you must be able to work creatively to motivate and inspire change in many who are not accustomed to new ways of working. This guide provides three distinct actions and nine different methods to do so.

When do I need to use this tool?

This is a helpful resource to reference as you plan meetings with stakeholders who are resistant to the change you're working toward.

Checkpoint questions

Before you move to phase three, policy implementation, make sure you can answer these questions:



Did you update your stakeholders on the final result of your policy efforts and inform them how they can continue to work with you on this issue?

Have you thanked your supporters for their engagement and efforts?

Do you understand the motivators of key decision-makers? If they supported your policy, do you know why and what they expect to see through implementation? If they opposed your proposal, do you know what, if anything, could have changed their minds?

Have you completed a retrospective analysis with your coalition and core stakeholders?

Finish strong

Regardless of the outcome, be sure to update your stakeholders on the final result of your policy efforts and how they can stay engaged. Also make sure that you have thanked the supporters for their engagement and efforts.

If your policy was ultimately not adopted in the policy advocacy phase, make sure you complete the post-action analysis and regroup with your coalition partners and community stakeholders. You can reassess the options to move forward in another policy cycle, but you will not have the opportunity to work on implementation until your policy has been adopted.

Policy implementation

Measuring impact and staying accountable



Policy implementation

Implementation is one of the most overlooked steps in the policy process. After so much work to draft, support and adopt a policy, it can feel like the work is done. But staying engaged with the policy through implementation is critical to ensure it functions as intended and achieves positive impacts for communities.

Implementation is complex and multi-level. Issues with practical applications always arise that need to be resolved at the implementation stage. This is totally normal! No policy can describe all the details that need to be developed during implementation, and some policies are left intentionally ambiguous so that the stakeholders responsible for implementation have the flexibility to use their expertise to ensure the policy works well.

However, this ambiguity can lead to challenges with implementation. Often, the jurisdiction responsible for implementing the policy is not the same as the one that adopted it. As a leader in developing the policy with a coalition of stakeholders, you have important insights that can help the implementation be smooth and successful.



Disclaimer

Please ensure your organization fully understands and remains compliant with the IRS regulations on policy-related activities for 501(c)(3) and 501(c)(4) entities.

Step 1



Policy implementation

Review your jurisdiction analysis

In the policy development phase, you analyzed the different jurisdiction options and successfully determined the jurisdiction responsible for adopting your policy recommendation. In the implementation phase, revisit your analysis of which jurisdictions are responsible for enacting your policy. Now that your policy has been adopted and you know exactly which jurisdiction will be charged with implementation, you may need to revise your analysis. Also, consider reassessing who the key decision-makers are in the jurisdiction and identify if any have changed since your initial analysis.

Case study



In retrospect, the coalition realized that they should have been more prepared with their communications plan to show statewide support for the issue of early literacy. They also realized that they had largely neglected building new relationships with implementers at this point. They would now have to increase their efforts to engage with new stakeholders at the State Public Education Department and in many districts as they began to understand and implement the policy.

Step 2



Policy implementation

Build your knowledge of the implementation process and grow your relationships with implementers

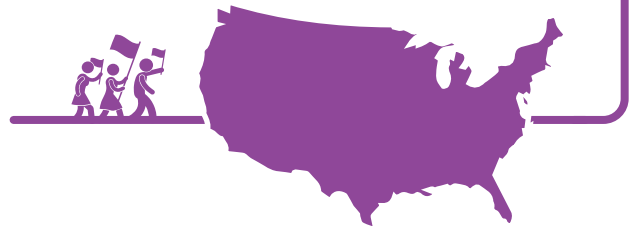


Because implementation is complicated and multilevel, make sure you have a strong understanding of how policies get translated from paper into reality. This often involves regulatory processes, which can be complex and tedious. Leaders in state departments or offices are extremely familiar with these nuanced processes and can be a valuable resource to you.

“I believe showing that we are willing to be flexible and extend grace as needed goes a long way in sustaining the good relationships.”

- **Thymai Dong**
E3 Alliance
Austin, Texas

Community stories



Build your knowledge of the implementation process and grow your relationships with implementers

In their attendance policy work in central New Mexico, Mission: Graduate has found that offering support to implementers is integral to success. They have offered this support through school-based attendance team conferences held twice per year, which have helped build relationships with school staff and increased district implementation buy-in. District feedback and engagement is evidence of this buy-in. For example, when surveying all 91 attendance teams regarding their needs as they implemented the new attendance law during the pandemic, Mission: Graduate received 126 responses. Additionally, they held a virtual workshop on implementation of the law during the pandemic and 300 people attended. They have used the pre- and post-survey data from the workshop to support teams in implementing the attendance law.



Remember:

As you develop your understanding of the process, strengthen or build new relationships with key decision-makers at the different levels of implementation. For example, the State Department of Education may be responsible for determining the general regulations for the policy's implementation, but local district leaders may control the specific details and oversee explaining the policy change to teachers, students and parents. Develop relationships with as many of the key implementers as possible so that you can continue to clarify and advocate for the policy change and its goals at all levels.



In retrospect, the coalition realized that they should have been more prepared with their communications plan to show statewide support for the issue of early literacy. They also realized that they had largely neglected building new relationships with implementers at this point. They would now have to increase their efforts to engage with new stakeholders at the State Public Education Department and in many districts as they began to understand and implement the policy.

Step 3

○ — ○ — ● — ○
Policy implementation

Continue to engage partners and stakeholders in the process



It's important to continue engaging your coalition and stakeholders during the implementation phase. Just as elected officials want to hear from their constituents when considering a policy, decision-makers in the implementation phase often want to hear from stakeholders who will be impacted by the policy change. Rules may even exist that require their decisions to be open for feedback from the public. Your coalition and policy supporters are already experts on this issue and can offer valuable perspectives on the details of the policy and its fundamental intent.

Coalitions, partners and supporters can play other important roles during implementation as well. Remember, the individuals implementing your policy may have never heard about it, and they almost always have other responsibilities in addition to learning about and enacting your policy. Continue to advocate for the policy and educate broader groups of stakeholders about its significance and meaning.

Case study



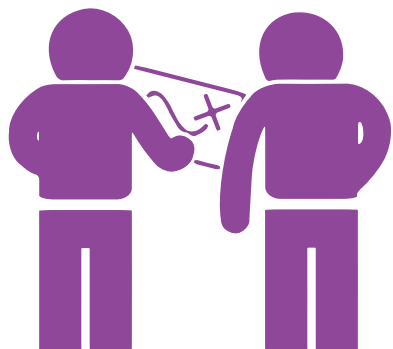
The coalition created press releases and social media posts to thank their supporters: legislators who voted for the bill, individuals and organizations who signed their support and community partners who offered early input about their experiences with early literacy. In several cases, coalition leaders also conducted individual outreach to thank legislators, funders and key supporters. Their messages highlighted the importance of implementation and the work required to monitor implementation. They also advocated for how the policy should be put into effect as the State Board of Public Education created detailed regulations for implementation.

Community stories



Continue to engage partners and stakeholders in the process

In Austin, Texas, E3 Alliance’s Blueprint Leadership Council is comprised of representatives from education, law enforcement, health and housing. They also have parents as members. This diverse representation through multiple community sectors allows them to more effectively implement policy, and they intentionally share with the council how their feedback is used in E3’s policy work.



Continue to engage partners and stakeholders in the process



[Click here to access tool](#)

Put it into action! Community Engagement Spectrum

What is this?

This framework highlights how much power shifting exists within your community partnerships.

When do I need to use this tool?

Use this tool at all stages of your work to ensure you are not inadvertently hoarding ownership.

Step 4



Policy implementation

Assist efforts to evaluate the program or conduct your own evaluation



The biggest goal of the implementation phase is to ensure that the policy works as intended. Evaluation is the best tool to determine if this goal is achieved.

If you were able to build in an evaluation component in your policy proposal, you will have a clear mandate to monitor and assess the success of the policy. Depending on the circumstances and resources, this evaluation could be done by the implementers or a third party.

However, don't assume that the evaluation will work smoothly without oversight. Continue to work with the implementers to ensure that the evaluation plan is thorough and measures the most important aspects of the policy as well as the outcomes it hopes to achieve. If the policy did not include an evaluation provision, you can work with the implementers or independently to determine how to monitor the policy and track whether it is meeting its goals.

“Practitioners are challenged to be active listeners. To consider how to structure their inquiry in a manner that draws out the experiences of the impacted. These experiences and challenges should form the bedrock of policy development.”

- Kirk Wester
Growing Together
Tulsa, Oklahoma



Assist efforts to evaluate the program or conduct your own evaluation

Ultimately, the modified bill — with a reduced allocation — was adopted by the legislature and signed by the governor. The coalition was, of course, thrilled! After taking time to celebrate and rest, they reconvened to discuss the outcome and review their process. They gathered the testimony, news stories, published articles, list of supporters and final vote counts for the policy.

The coalition monitored the rulemaking process for their bill, which was mostly smooth and aligned with the legislative intent. However, one area presented a significant challenge: the policy adopted by the state legislature said that the additional revenue from the bill should go to literacy supports for the most struggling readers, but it didn't specify how the funds needed to be tracked or accounted for. In implementation, the State Public Education Department recommended that the regulations would not require districts to demonstrate that the revenue was being used for literacy supports because it would be too burdensome.

The coalition felt that without strong requirements about how the new revenue could be spent, the funds were likely to be put in a general pot of resources and not used for serving the purpose of the bill, specifically for struggling readers. The coalition held meetings with two of the board members, drafted and presented testimony from parents and school leaders about the importance of these funds at public meetings and reengaged the list of bill supporters to submit online comments on the proposed regulations.

Over the course of the next three years, the coalition continued to meet regularly, but with less frequency than during the policy development and advocacy phases. They discussed implementation and what they were hearing about the policy from stakeholders and impacted community members.



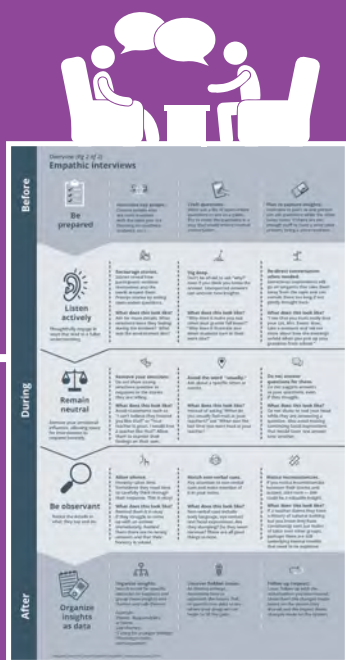
Continued...

Assist efforts to evaluate the program or conduct your own evaluation

Through conversations about the policy's implementation with parents and teachers, the coalition partners heard repeatedly that the policy seemed to be successfully supporting the most struggling readers. However, teachers still felt their educational training did not adequately prepare them to teach reading to their general classroom. While teachers knew that students would have extra supports from reading specialists if they were significantly behind in reading, they were not confident in their abilities to adequately teach reading or provide intervention to those students who were not categorized as being significantly behind.

The coalition recognized that their policy to support struggling readers was a strong step in their population-level goal of all students reading on grade level by the end of third grade, but they realized that they needed to provide K-3 general classroom teachers (not reading specialists) more supports and adequate training. Raising this concern with different education experts, the coalition began forming a policy proposal to address the need for better literacy training for pre-service teachers.

Assist efforts to evaluate the program or conduct your own evaluation



[Click here to access tool](#)

Put it into action!

Empathic interviews

What is this?

An empathic interview focuses on stories and explores the emotions and motivations underlying people's behavior in order to identify specific needs.

When do I need to use this tool?

Use this tool when you are seeking data on community impact to improve or design an intervention.

Workbook

Tools and resources for your reference



Glossary

Community at large

All who play a role in researching, writing, changing or implementing policies. This diverse set of individuals comes from a range of power structures, incomes and roles that ultimately influence the target community.

Feasibility

The likelihood that a proposed policy will be adopted. Feasibility estimates should be based on a variety of factors and take into consideration the different needs and challenges of decision-makers, coalition members and community stakeholders.

Issue environment

The openness to addressing your issue among the general population, key stakeholders and decision-makers. When the issue environment is favorable, you have a better chance of making progress on related policies. If the issue environment is unfavorable, it will be more difficult to get support for your proposal. Some long-term policy efforts start by working to shift the issue environment in a positive direction by creating constituent and community support for the issue so that elected officials also have to be supportive or risk electoral consequences.

Jurisdictions

The level of government and authority of elected officials and decisionmakers that will determine the scope and scale of your policy solution.

Policy

Institutional, local, state or federal principles of action that intentionally create pathways to opportunity by supporting systemic change that leads to family success.

Political capital

The amount of intangible power an individual or organization has accumulated to push for policy. Political capital can be earned, saved and spent.

Relationships

The connections between organizations and individuals. You may already have some important relationships; others you may need to develop.

Resources

The combination of capacity, funds, knowledge, partnerships and political capital that you will likely need to be successful at each stage.

Results

The ideal outcome at the end of each policy phase.

Target community

Those directly impacted by the successes or challenges the partnership is working to shift or scale.



Factor analysis

People often jump from identifying a problem (e.g., low achievement in third grade reading rates) to crafting solutions (e.g., attendance campaign) without understanding the underlying causes of our country's biggest social challenges. A factor analysis can allow for a strategic analysis of a systemic issue to ensure that stakeholders use data and expertise to uncover the real story behind a trendline and the leverage points for change.

Uncovering factors

The key questions to ask during a factor analysis are "What is the context for this trend? What is happening in our community/system around this data over time?" Asking these questions will help to identify and uncover the factors. Specifically, there are two ways to consider factors related to a trendline:

- *What forces are positively impacting the trendline?*
- *What forces are negatively impacting the trendline?*

5 why's

Using the "5 why's" — a simple underlying cause analysis process where partners ask why five times — can help get below the surface of an identified factor and reveal the underlying issue. (e.g., why aren't students attending school? Because of limited transportation options. Why are there transportation challenges? etc.)

(1) Why is your target population facing "x" outcome?

(2) Why is this so?

(3) Why is this so?

(4) Why is this so?

(5) Why is this so?

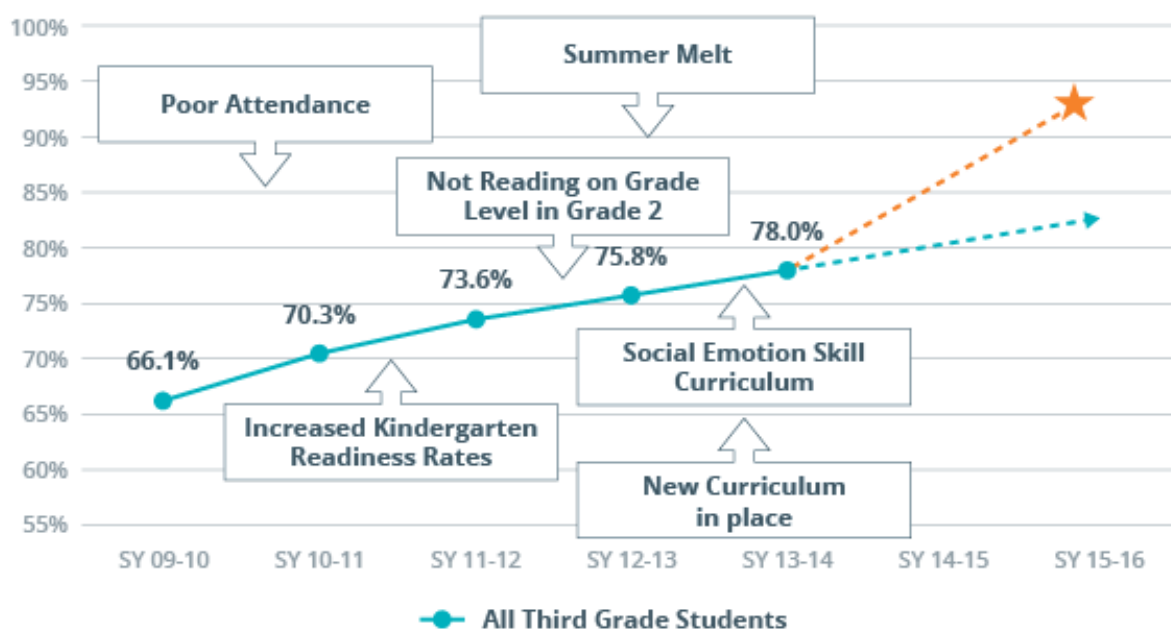


Adapted from the frameworks of the Annie E. Casey Foundation

Factor analysis

Example – 3rd grade literacy

The goal of a factor analysis is to look at data over time to understand system performance (is performance increasing? flat? decreasing?) and the underlying causes of those patterns and trends. An example of this type of analysis is below:



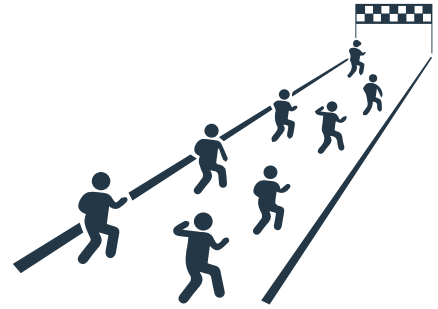
Targeted factor analysis

Repeating the same process for a specific population within a system (e.g., Hispanic or Latine students) can allow stakeholders to dig into the targeted factors that need to be addressed for these specific populations. This can be a powerful way to target strategies to improve outcomes and eliminate disparities.



Now you try! Stakeholder analysis

Use this worksheet as a mapping tool to assess the scope and alignment of those you are engaging to in the beginning phases of your policy work.



Stakeholder <i>(name + community/org)</i>	What is their contribution to your overall result?	What are the interests of the organization or community they represent?	Who are they most loyal to? (Who is their constituency?)
<i>Don't forget to map yourself!</i>			

Now you try!

Jurisdiction mapping chart

Determining the best jurisdiction for your policy recommendation also helps you to identify the key decision-makers who will approve or reject your proposal. It is also possible that different pieces of your policy agenda will have distinct jurisdictions, and more than one jurisdiction may play a role in your issue.

Finally, consider which jurisdictions will have authority over the adoption of your policy proposal and whether they will also have jurisdiction over the implementation of your proposal. Most likely, your policy recommendations will have one jurisdiction for the policy advocacy phase and a different jurisdiction for the implementation phase. Use this chart to map out your policies and respective jurisdictions.

Priority chart

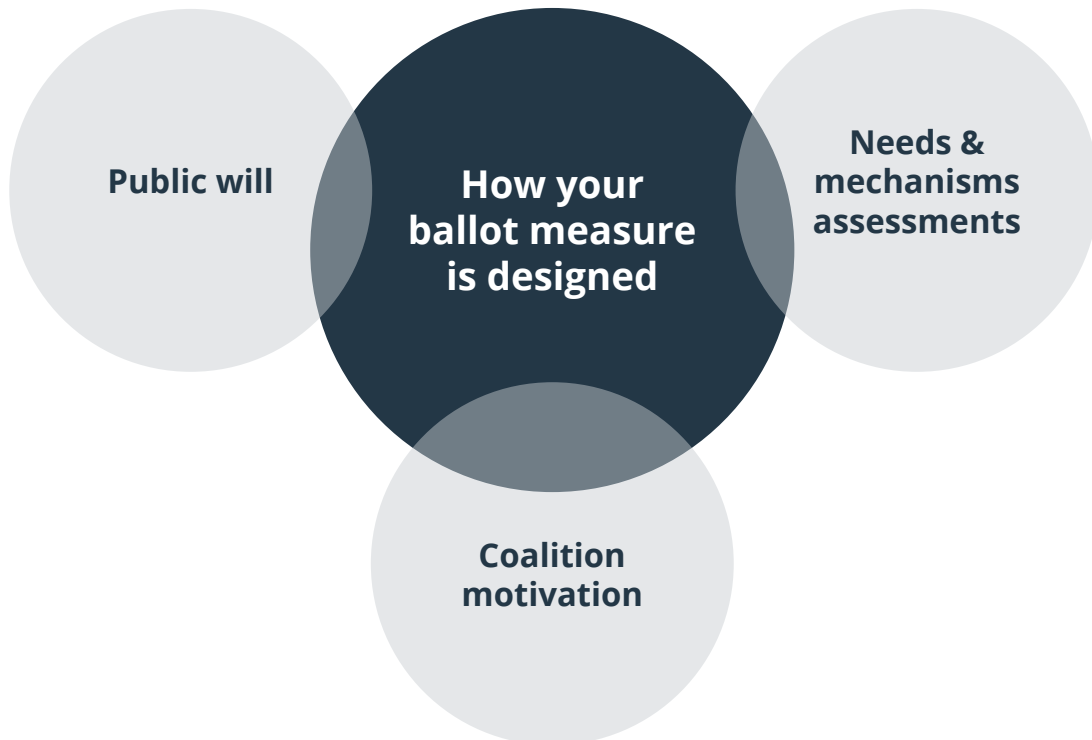
Policy priority	Factor addressed <i>(what is this policy in service of?)</i>	Responsible jurisdiction



Adapted from the collective policy work of StriveTogether partnership policy coaches

Readiness checklist

This readiness checklist is organized around three key components: public will, motivation of your coalition, and assessments of needs and funding mechanisms. These critical elements and activities will help you determine how to design your ballot measure and campaign.



While you do not need to be able to answer “yes” to each of the following questions in order to begin your campaign efforts, we suggest that you eventually address them all.



Readiness checklist

Assessment | *Have you assessed the needs of children and youth in your community and the mechanisms by which you could levy a local dedicated fund?*

- Have you recently assessed the needs of children and youth in your community?
- Have you recently identified gaps in funding (possibly via a fiscal map) for children and youth in your community?

Public will | *Have you determined voter preferences and influences?*

- Have recent events motivated or energized the public around child and youth issues?
- Has an organization in your community done any message testing around child and youth issues?
- Have you done polling on voters' views on a range of children's issues and services?
- Have you done polling to identify public willingness to support certain kinds of taxes or fees?
- Have you identified trusted champions in your community that are or can be engaged to speak to either the public or policymakers with credibility?

Coalition motivation | *Where is the energy and momentum of your coalition?*

- Do you have a network or coalition that works together on a wide range of children and youth issues?
- Does your community contain an organization willing to take on a leadership role in this effort (convene coalition, fundraise, guide)?
- Has your community identified shared goals/outcomes for children and youth?
- Does your community have a detailed plan that lays out a shared vision for children and youth?
- Do you have at least two of the following four groups at the table?
 - Local policymaker(s) — e.g., mayor, city council member, county executive, county commissioner
 - Local intermediary(ies) — e.g., coalition, collective impact partnership, advocacy organization
 - Local funder(s) — e.g., foundations, corporate philanthropy, United Way, local business leader(s)

Adapted from ChildrensFundingProject.org

Composition analysis

In working toward policy change, it is important to map those in your community to see how you can collectively work together and find common ground.

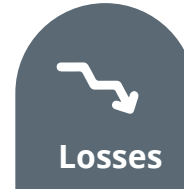
Understand values, loyalties & losses



What do others value based on their behavior?
This is not based on what they say but rather what they do.



Who or what might they feel responsible for?
These loyalties may make it hard for a person to support a cause even though they might really want to.



What resources or power could they lose if progress is made?
Potential losses could be identity, competence, comfort, reputation, time, status, security, power, independence or resources.

Community faction types



Partners/Allies

People with the most to gain
Allies = support but no risk
Partners = support with risk



Opposition

Actively impede progress, usually have the most to lose



Casualties

Will be left behind, disregarded, fired



Yourself

Your own people who may have competing commitments that will impact your choices



Troublemakers

Sound the alarm about need for change but marginalize themselves in the process



Authorities

Hold considerable formal and informal power

Now you try! (Pg 2 of 2)

Composition analysis

Use this worksheet to identify people who:

- 1) Have a point of view or a stake in your work
- 2) May or may not have a point of view in the work but share strong ties with the people involved
- 3) Have formal or informal power in the system
- 4) Will be affected directly or indirectly by improving your outcome
- 5) Have something to lose if your work is successful



Stakeholder faction type

Yourself, partner/allies, opposition, casualties, troublemakers, authorities



What are their values?

What do they value based on their behavior?



Who/what are they loyal to?

Who might this person feel responsible for?



What are their potential losses?

What could this person lose if progress is made?

<hr/> <i>(name + faction type)</i>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
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Partnership roles in policy, advocacy and mobilization

There are four primary roles that place-based partnerships and coalitions can play in influencing policy change to get better outcomes for young people. Use these as you take up policy work in your community.

Data expert



Taking on the data expert role makes it possible for a partnership to work behind the scenes and remain politically neutral, while providing support to the effort. Place-based partnerships are excellent sources of educational data expertise, and sound data is an essential component of advocacy and policy work.

Partner convener



The convener role partnerships play every day gives them the skills, infrastructure, contacts and community credibility to bring people together around advocacy and policy work. Place-based partnerships convene groups of leaders, practitioners and members of different sectors of the community to tackle complex systemic issues.

Community mobilizer



Strong connections in the community give place-based partnerships the trust and respect needed to educate and mobilize community members. Bringing the community into the policy change efforts can help ensure that change is done with, rather than to, those impacted by the policy.

Advocate



Place-based partnerships play an advocate role in policy change by guiding conversations to focus on results for kids rather than politics. Often, the community's perception of the partnership as a politically neutral entity helps them be an effective advocate, creating space for conversations with leaders about evidence-based practices that improve outcomes and close disparities.

Adapted from the StriveTogether Theory of Action™

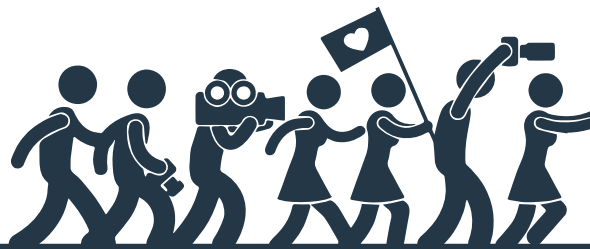
State coalition metric

Deciding policy priorities

Collectively aligning our efforts is crucial as we attempt to unite organizations and policymakers to advocate for data-proven practices that will improve outcomes.

We do this by:

- (1) Collecting and analyzing information to determine critical leverage points
- (2) Gathering stakeholder perspectives to create solutions
- (3) Mobilizing community and state leaders to action



To effectively reach these goals, our priorities must be strategically chosen so we can appropriately allocate resources. To allocate those resources, the proposal below serves as a guide to help decide the coalition's priorities and to help members assess the commitment that will be required of them for each type of priority. Of course, each organization has the agency to support additional policies it feels are critical to its constituents. The proposal merely describes a continuum of engagement for the collective coalition body: "Lead," "Advocate" and "Support."

State coalition metric

Deciding policy priorities

Tier	Criteria	Types of engagement
<p>Lead <i>1-2 policies</i></p>	<p>Impact: This will positively impact your goals at scale</p> <p>Feasibility: There is momentum in the legislature, community support can make a difference in passage, and a member organization is well-poised to lead (e.g., research, subject matter expertise, etc.)</p> <p>Alignment: Your partners and stakeholders are well-aligned and a minimum of two-thirds of community members have approved (for a member that opposes, they could opt to not advance the priority within its own base)</p>	<p>Centralized supports:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dedicated lobbyist focus - Centralized content and collateral developed - Customized data analysis and tools to assist organizations - Additional research conducted as needed - Power mapping conducted <p>Member organization commitment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Regularly engaging and mobilizing - grasstops and grassroots stakeholders before, during and after session for legislation - Hosting events or meeting with policymakers to inform them on the issue, soliciting support to advance bill - Engaging in media outreach (e.g., social media, press releases, etc.) - Where applicable, providing content for communications and participating in strategy development
<p>Advocate <i>1-2 policies</i></p>	<p>Well aligned to impact as described above. However, a minimum of two-thirds of community members have not labeled (but at least one-half has labeled) as a priority and/or an existing organization is not well-poised to take the lead</p>	<p>Centralized supports:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lobbyist monitors progress and keeps group apprised - Existing data used to build tools and analysis that reinforce the case to support <p>Member organization commitment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Individual organizations, at their discretion, are sharing and mobilizing within networks - Providing content for communications and participating in strategy development
<p>Support</p>	<p>At discretion of individual organizations for those that do not fall into the buckets above</p>	<p>Organization discretion, but would not fall within main purview of coalition. For topics that intersect, you can provide central convening support to advance discussions and ensure alignment.</p>



Adapted from the policy work of The Commit Partnership in Dallas County, Texas



Switch principles


For things to change, somebody somewhere has to start acting differently. Maybe it's you; maybe it's your team. Picture that person (or people). Each has an emotional Elephant side and a rational Rider side. You've got to reach both. And you've also got to clear the way for them to succeed.

In short, you must do three things:

 <h2>Direct the Rider</h2> <p>The rational mind</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Find the bright spots○ Script the critical moves○ Point to the destination
 <h2>Motivate the Elephant</h2> <p>The emotional mind</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Find the feeling○ Shrink the change○ Grow your people
 <h2>Shape the Path</h2> <p>The environment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Tweak the environment○ Build habits○ Rally the herd

Adapted from 'Switch: How to Change Things When Change is Hard' by Chip Heath and Dan Heath

Switch principles



Direct the Rider
The rational mind

The Rider loves to contemplate and analyze, doing so with a negative bias, almost always focusing on problems rather than solutions.

Find the bright spots

We are natural problem solvers, but we often fail to pay attention to what is working.

What's already working with respect to your goal, and how can you do more of it?

Script the critical moves

Ambiguity is the enemy of change. We must provide crystal-clear direction. Don't think big picture, think in terms of specific behaviors.

What are one or two behaviors/actions that would create rapid progress toward your goal?

Point to the destination

Embarking on a journey without an end goal will lead to burnout. Change is easier when you know where you're going and why it's worth it.

What is the ultimate goal and why do you want to achieve it?

Adapted from 'Switch: How to Change Things When Change is Hard' by Chip Heath and Dan Heath

Switch principles



Motivate the Elephant
The emotional mind

The Elephant is easily spooked and dislikes actions with no immediate benefit. They need reassurance to avoid demoralization.

Find the feeling

Knowing something isn't enough to cause change. Motivation is fuel. People are rarely motivated by information. It's emotion that moves the Elephant.

What existing motivation can you tap? How can you spark more if it? How can you sustain it over time?

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Shrink the change

The Elephant is daunted by big changes. Break down the change into tiny steps to create momentum.

What are one or two behaviors/actions that would create rapid progress toward your goal?

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Grow your people

A sense of ownership builds trust and interest. Cultivate a sense of identity and instill the growth mindset.

Who is contributing input to decision making and planning? How can you involve more individuals?


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Adapted from 'Switch: How to Change Things When Change is Hard' by Chip Heath and Dan Heath

Switch principles



Shape the Path
The environment

The Path should be a clear vision to lead the Rider and the Elephant. Change will not happen if no destination is in place.

Tweak the environment

Shape the environment in 1,000 tiny ways to make the right behavior a little bit easier. That might mean: an on-call campaign support team, a better IT system, some new signage, a clever checklist or anything else you can think up.

How can you shape the Path to make progress easier?

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Build habits

When behavior is habitual it doesn't tax the Rider. Look for ways to encourage habits.

What are one or two behaviors/actions that would create rapid progress toward your goal?

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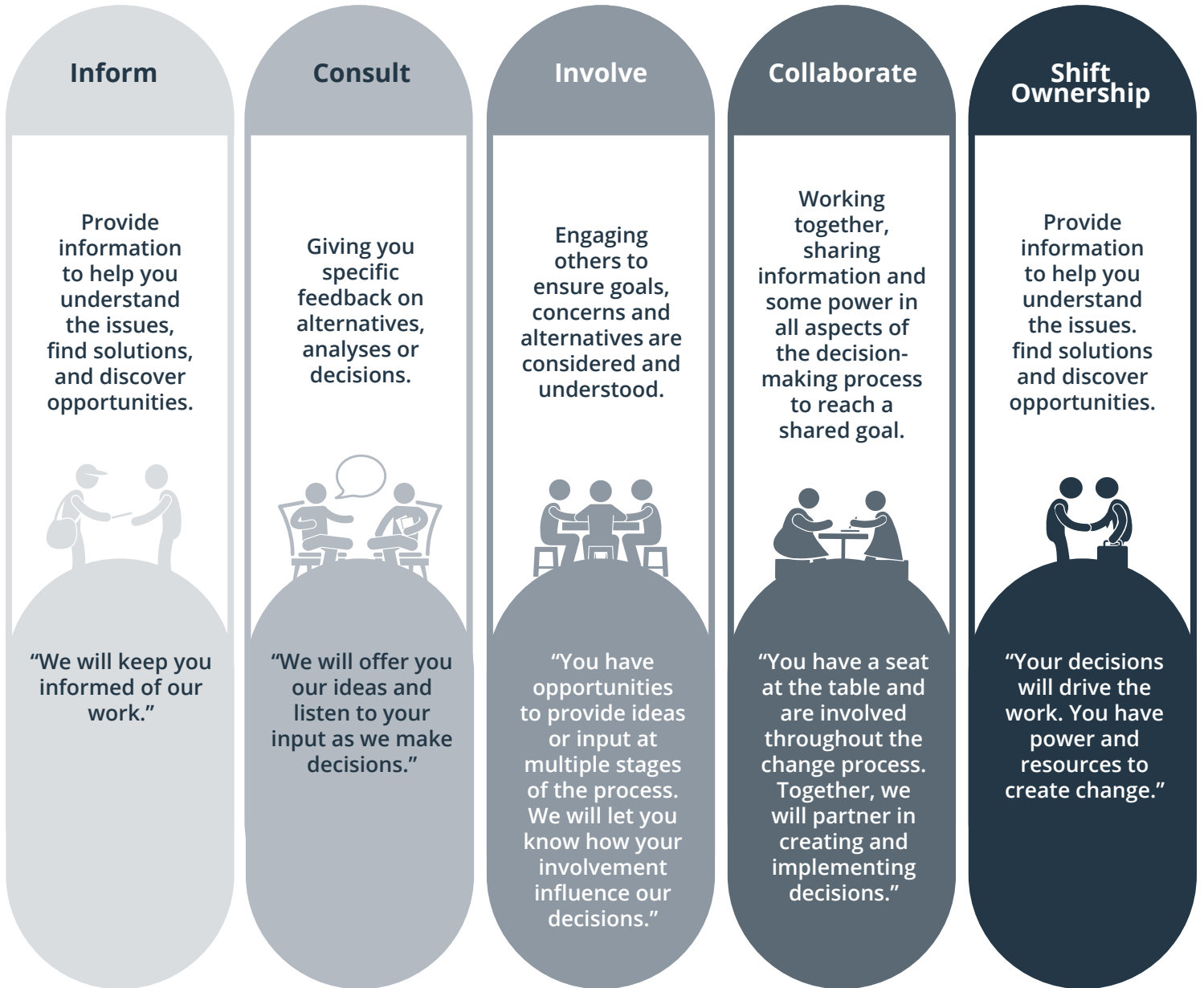
Rally the herd

Behavior is contagious — but only if it's visible. Spotlight people who are leading your change effort. Use systems and publicity to promote positive peer pressure.

How can you rally your Rider and Elephant?

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Community engagement spectrum



Adapted from the International Association for Public Participation

Community engagement spectrum



Inform



Consult



Involve



Collaborate



**Shift
Ownership**

How are you currently engaging stakeholders in your policy work?



Where do you want them to be before you move to the next stage of your work?



What can you do to authentically shift power and ownership?

What needs to be done?

Who needs to be involved?

Who will organize this process?

How is this helping to shift ownership?

What needs to be done?	Who needs to be involved?	Who will organize this process?	How is this helping to shift ownership?

Adapted from the International Association for Public Participation

Empathic interviews

What are empathic interviews?

An empathic interview focuses on stories and explores the emotions and motivations underlying people's behavior in order to identify specific needs.

How are empathic interviews different from regular interviews or feedback surveys?

In an empathic interview, the interviewer envisions themselves in the experiences of the person they're interviewing. They seek to understand the participants' emotions, conditions in which they experienced those emotions and the reasons for their actions. While it may begin on a micro scale, this data helps the interviewer gain a holistic, macro view of the system and the ways it affects all users.



Potential benefits

Engage community voice.
Sometimes individual voices of the community can be overlooked. Empathic interviews help programs remain user-centered.

Cultivate ownership.
Stakeholders feel more ownership of interventions when they see that their personal feedback leads to change.

Authentically build trust.
Helps stakeholders feel heard and understood, while giving your team the value of knowing the events happening on the ground.

Expedite results.
With direct insights, you can target interventions to meet specific users' needs.

Self assess

Are my interviews/surveys already empathic?

- Are responses collected verbally (instead of written)?
- Do you collect responses face to face (or by video chat)?
- Is there space for participants to share personal experiences?
- Are insights carefully organized and acted upon afterwards?

If you answered no to any of the questions above, you could be engaging your stakeholders more empathically.

Adapted from the StriveTogether Empathic Interview Guide 2019

Empathic interviews

Before



Be prepared



Interview key people.
Choose people who are most involved with the topic you are focusing on (teachers, students, etc.).



Craft questions.
Write out a list of open-ended questions to use as a guide. Try to order the questions in a way that would mirror normal conversation.



Plan to capture insights.
Interview in pairs so one person can ask questions while the other takes notes. If there are not enough staff to have a note taker present, bring a voice recorder.



Listen actively

Thoughtfully engage in ways that lead to a fuller understanding.



Encourage stories.
Stories reveal how participants envision themselves and the world around them. Prompt stories by asking open-ended questions.

What does this look like?
Ask for more details. What emotions were they feeling during the incident? What was the environment like?



Dig deep.
Don't be afraid to ask "why?" even if you think you know the answer. Unexpected answers can uncover new insights.

What does this look like?
"Why does it make you sad when your grades fall lower?"
"Why does it frustrate you when students turn in their work late?"



Re-direct conversation when needed.
Sometimes respondents will go on tangents that take them away from the topic and can remain there too long if not gently brought back.

What does this look like?
"I see that you must really love your cat, Mrs. Evans. Now, take a moment and tell me more about how the evenings unfold when you pick up your grandson from school."

During



Remain neutral

Remove your emotional influence, allowing space for interviewees to respond honestly.



Remove your emotions.
Do not show strong emotions (positive or negative) to the stories they are telling.

What does this look like?
Avoid statements such as "I can't believe they treated you like that!" or "Your teacher is great. I would love a teacher like that!" Allow them to express their feelings on their own.



Avoid the word "usually."
Ask about a specific times or events.

What does this look like?
Instead of asking "When do you usually feel mad at your teachers?" ask "When was the last time you were mad at your teacher?"



Do not answer questions for them.
Do not suggest answers to your questions, even if they struggle.

What does this look like?
Do not shake or nod your head while they are answering a question. Also avoid making convincing facial expressions that would favor one answer over another.



Be observant

Notice the details in what they say and do.



Allow silence.
Honesty takes time. Sometimes they need time to carefully think through their response. This is okay!

What does this look like?
Remind them it is okay if they struggle to come up with an answer immediately. Remind them there are no wrong answers and that their honesty is valued.



Watch non-verbal cues.
Pay attention to non-verbal cues and make mention of it in your notes.

What does this look like?
Non-verbal cues include body language, eye contact and facial expressions. Are they slumping? Do they seem nervous? These are all good things to note.



Notice inconsistencies.
If you notice inconsistencies between their stories and actions, take note — this could be a valuable insight.

What does this look like?
If a teacher claims they have a history of cultural training but you know they have consistently sent out students of color over other groups, perhaps there are still underlying mental models that need to be explored.

After



Organize insights as data



Organize insights.
Search notes for specific obstacles or supports and group these insights into themes and sub-themes.

Example:
Theme: Responsibility at home
Sub-themes:
"Caring for younger siblings"
"Working to help with expenses"



Uncover hidden issues.
As themes emerge, determine how to approach the issues. Pull in quantitative data to see where your program can begin to fill the gaps.



Follow up (repeat).
Later, follow up with the stakeholders you interviewed. Show them the changes made based on the stories they shared and the impact those changes made on the system.

StriveTogether®

Every child. Cradle to career.

StriveTogether is a national network of community partnerships that join together neighbors, including youth and families, nonprofits, employers, schools and more, to work toward a future where youth can thrive in their communities. Cradle to Career Network members change the way their communities work together by building connections, sharing resources and using data to put more young people on a path to economic mobility. Our work helps young people meet seven key life milestones so that they have the opportunities they need to reach their goals, and, ultimately, thrive.

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