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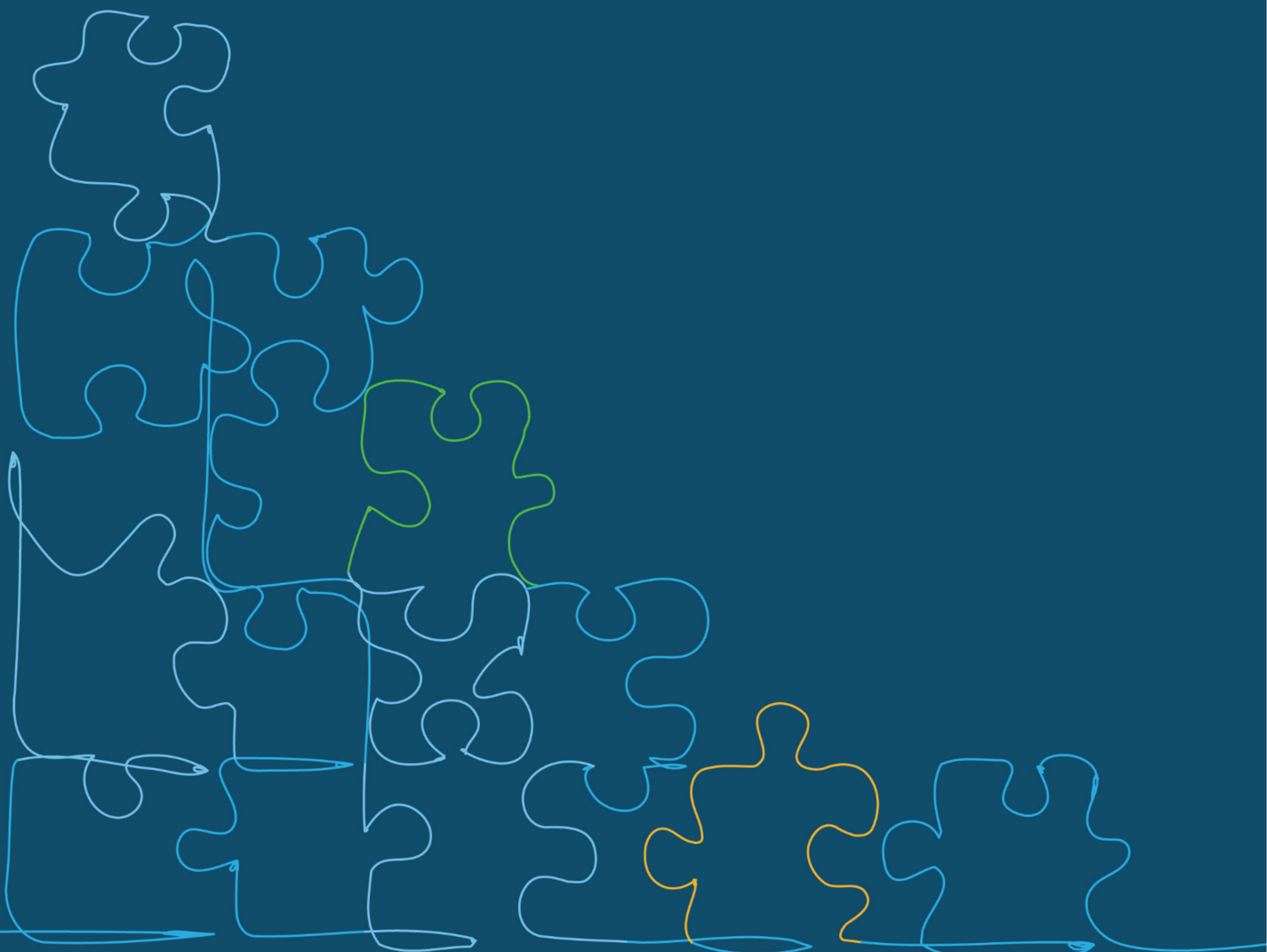

BOOSTING UPWARD MOBILITY

A PLANNING GUIDE FOR LOCAL ACTION

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Acknowledgments

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Finally, this guide would not have been possible if not for the foundational research conducted by members of the Dramatically Boosting Mobility from Poverty project and the US Partnership on Mobility from Poverty.

Errata

This report was corrected on December 15, 2022. On pages 3 and 4, we moved some text in each step to appear with its proper step (i.e., some text that previously appeared with Step 1 actually applies to Step 2, some text in Step 2 actually applies to Step 3, and so forth). We also corrected the description of figure 16, on page 123, to include the correct colors.

Introduction

Are you a member of local government who wants to increase upward mobility in your community? If so, this guide can help you better understand impediments to upward mobility and build a cross-sector team that can plan, advocate for, and implement a set of systems changes focused on bringing all members of your community out of poverty and creating more equitable results.

Boosting upward mobility and narrowing racial and ethnic inequities in our communities are some of the foremost challenges of our time. Stagnating rates of economic mobility in the US in recent decades have cast doubt on the promise that talent and hard work lead to advancement. Research shows that the poorest adults are unlikely to rise to the middle of the income distribution, much less to the top (Acs and Zimmerman 2008; Bradbury 2016). And children growing up in families living in poverty are far more likely than other children to experience poverty as adults (Acs, Elliott, and Kalish 2016; Ratcliffe and McKernan 2010; Wagmiller and Adelman 2009).

Everyone deserves the chance to improve their lives: to move up and out of poverty, be valued and feel they belong, and have the power and autonomy to shape the decisions that affect their future. But people striving to achieve upward mobility face a web of interconnected barriers that often impede or undermine their best efforts. For most people experiencing poverty in the US today, opportunities to achieve greater economic success, power, autonomy, and dignity are blocked by long-standing structural barriers, not by a failure of individual effort. Poverty, precarity, and inequality are not inevitable consequences of market economies nor are they substantially the result of individual deficits or behaviors by the people experiencing these conditions. Instead, these outcomes are largely caused by public policies and institutional practices that can be changed.

Centuries of discriminatory policies and practices against people of color have produced persistent racial disparities in outcomes. For example, slavery, government-sanctioned occupational segregation of workers of color, Jim Crow laws, and the exclusion of people of color from New Deal programs and union membership have disproportionately concentrated people of color in low-wage occupations (Spievack et al. 2020). The practice of redlining—denying mortgage loans to people in certain neighborhoods based on the race, ethnicity, and immigration status of its residents—as well as the construction of segregated public housing, unfair zoning laws, and the subsidization of white-only suburbs by the government have created stark and persistent racial disparities in homeownership, wealth, and school funding (Deich, Fedorowicz, and Turner 2022; Rothstein 2017; Spievack et al. 2020) and have isolated people of color into neighborhoods of concentrated poverty. And disproportionate policing of communities of color and harsh sentencing laws have led to mass incarceration of people of color—particularly Black and Latinx people—through the criminal legal system, which has facilitated continued repression rather than rehabilitation (National Research Council 2014).

Policies and programs aimed at helping people navigate existing systems and surmount structural barriers provide critical benefits to some individuals and families but leave barriers in place for many, therefore failing to achieve adequate population-level gains or reductions in racial inequities. Current programs help too few of those in need, provide support in too few of the dimensions where support is needed, offer benefits at levels that are too low to allow most people to achieve enduring economic mobility, and fail to target the root causes of inequities in our communities. Because barriers to mobility are upheld by our current systems and structures, removing those barriers will require both systems change and an equitable approach to support that gets it to those most in need.

Taking a systems-change approach means looking at how systemic failures intersect. For example, an issue such as low workforce participation may stem from a combination of low education rates, poor transit access, unreliable child care options, low wages, and workplace discrimination. And many of these systemic failures were caused and are perpetuated by racist beliefs, norms, policies, and practices that have produced deep and persistent racial inequities in our communities.

Solving such multifaceted problems requires not only addressing the root causes of failures within a particular system but also working *across* systems to address intersecting and compounding issues. Increasing workforce participation, for example, may call for a transportation department to both expand public transit access along its existing lines and collaborate with a housing department to align new residential developments with these transit options. In turn, the housing department might collaborate with child care providers to determine where to locate new day care centers.

Clearly, bringing about systemic change to boost upward mobility is no simple task, and large-scale change cannot be made by government alone. But counties and cities have powerful data, policy levers, and capacity that can catalyze this change. You can bring this resource to your community to kick off the development of a local **Mobility Action Plan (MAP)** in collaboration with local nonprofits, community-based organizations, philanthropy, research organizations, the private sector, and residents.

Who Is This Guide For?

We developed this guide with you—the user—in mind. It provides practical advice for people driven to boost mobility from poverty and asking, “Where do I start?” More specifically, this guide is intended for city and county government leaders who can plan, advocate for, and implement a set of policy and program changes—informed by the Mobility Metrics (explained in the next section)—that are focused on boosting mobility from poverty.

How Can You Use This Guide?

This guide will lead you through a planning process that involves building a cross-sector team, gathering and analyzing data, conducting community and stakeholder engagement, and identifying needed systems changes so that you can create a MAP, which will set forth strategic actions to boost mobility from poverty and advance equity in your community. You can see sample MAPs on the Boosting Upward

Mobility website at https://upward-mobility.urban.org/. The MAP and its planning process are rooted in the Urban Institute's Framework for Boosting Mobility and Advancing Equity as well as the Mobility Metrics, a set of 26 data points that highlight conditions related to poverty, mobility, and equity in a given community.

Each section of this guide is a step in the Mobility Action Planning process: The Mobility Action Planning process is rooted in the Urban Institute's experience helping communities boost mobility from poverty and advance racial equity.

In Step 1, you'll learn about our Framework for Boosting Mobility and Advancing Equity, which includes our three-part definition of mobility from poverty, the key pillars and predictors of upward mobility, the Mobility Metrics, our planning principles, and the types of actors to engage in this work.

Step 2 will introduce the Mobility Metrics in greater detail and show you how to use them to gather insights about mobility in your community. Surfacing preliminary insights about mobility in your community is a key step toward understanding how to begin the Mobility Action Planning process.

Step 3 will guide you to assess your municipality's readiness to act and help you to identify capacities and readiness conditions to build up within your municipality. Creating sustainable systems change within your municipality and among partner organizations requires a certain level of capacity and commitment.

In Step 4, we will walk you through how to build your Mobility Coalition. Removing systemic barriers demands a holistic approach that addresses multiple levers for change through a coordinated strategy with stakeholders from many different policy domains and sectors.

Step 5 will provide you with methods for gathering data to supplement the Mobility Metrics that can get the Mobility Coalition on the same page about what the key issues are in your community. Once your Mobility Coalition is assembled, it's important to develop an initial understanding of local mobility conditions as a group.

In Step 6, we will share best practices for deepening the coalition's analysis and engaging with the community at every phase of this work. Building on the Mobility Coalition's initial understanding of mobility issues will require engaging with more stakeholders and community members and gathering and analyzing qualitative data.

Step 7 will guide you in selecting your strategic actions. Identifying a set of comprehensive strategies that consider the full range of a community's needs and assets requires a clear theory of change and logic model that demonstrate how and why the selected strategies will lead to the change your municipality hopes to see.

In Step 8, we will train you in how to measure progress and consider how to sustain momentum once the MAP is released. Tracking change over time requires a portfolio of measurement tools that includes different but interconnected measures and an understanding of how to track progress toward eliminating disparities.

In Step 9, **we'll provide you with considerations around finalizing and releasing your MAP.** Once you've gone through all the above steps, you'll need to consider the format for your final MAP as well as a plan for releasing it.

Step 10 **provides some initial steps the Mobility Coalition can take to increase the sustainability of your MAP.** Finally, once your MAP is released, your Mobility Coalition will need to maintain momentum around implementation.

Throughout the guide, we will **bold** key elements of the upward mobility framework and use the following symbols to highlight examples, areas of caution, and steps where the community should be engaged:

Key Concepts: The lightbulb symbol points to **examples** that illustrate key concepts.

Community Members: The people symbol indicates **community engagement** activities.

Attention: The magnifying glass symbol points to **areas of caution** where close attention should be paid.

We will also include web links throughout the guide to share targeted resources and examples from cities and counties across the country.

How Did We Develop This Guide?

The guide is built on a foundation of research from the US Partnership on Mobility from Poverty, hosted by the Urban Institute with funding from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The Partnership, which completed its work in spring 2018, gathered insights from research, practice, and people who have experienced poverty about what it would take to dramatically increase mobility from poverty in the US.

To validate and operationalize our framework for Boosting Mobility and Advancing Equity, Urban selected eight inaugural counties in 2021 to form the Upward Mobility Cohort:

CA	ALAMEDA COUNTY	CA	RIVERSIDE COUNTY
MO	BOONE COUNTY	FL	ST. LUCIE COUNTY
PA	PHILADELPHIA COUNTY	OH	SUMMIT COUNTY
MN	RAMSEY COUNTY	DC	WASHINGTON, DC

With Urban's technical assistance, the counties have assessed critical barriers to mobility and identified necessary areas for systems change. These insights informed each county's MAP. We have gathered lessons learned from the technical assistance process to inform the creation of this guide.

STEP ONE

Learn about Our Approach to Boosting Mobility and Advancing Equity

The first step in the Mobility Action Planning process is familiarizing yourself with our approach, which includes three main elements: (1) the **Framework for Boosting Mobility and Advancing Equity**—the core knowledge base around which this work is focused—which (a) presents key pillars and predictors of upward mobility and a broad definition of mobility that includes measures of economic success, power and autonomy, and belonging and (b) centers racial equity; (2) **planning principles** that will help you and your team stay focused on critical aspects of boosting upward mobility; and (3) recommendations for a set of **actors** to engage in order to develop a full and nuanced understanding of barriers to mobility and identify the right solutions for overcoming those barriers.

Having a shared approach helps focus and strengthen collective action for boosting mobility from poverty and advancing equity. Throughout this guide, we will help you harness and apply our approach to your Mobility Action Planning. This approach will help you

- **champion** evidence-informed systems change that will remove barriers blocking upward mobility and equity;
- **engage partners** who are committed to this work for the long haul;
- **change the narrative** on poverty in your community;
- **identify a set of comprehensive solutions** that respond to the root causes of inequities and the full range of a community's needs and assets;
- **build your and your partners' capacity** to track progress over time and adjust your work as needed; and
- **stay focused** on your goals and hold yourself and your partners accountable for action.

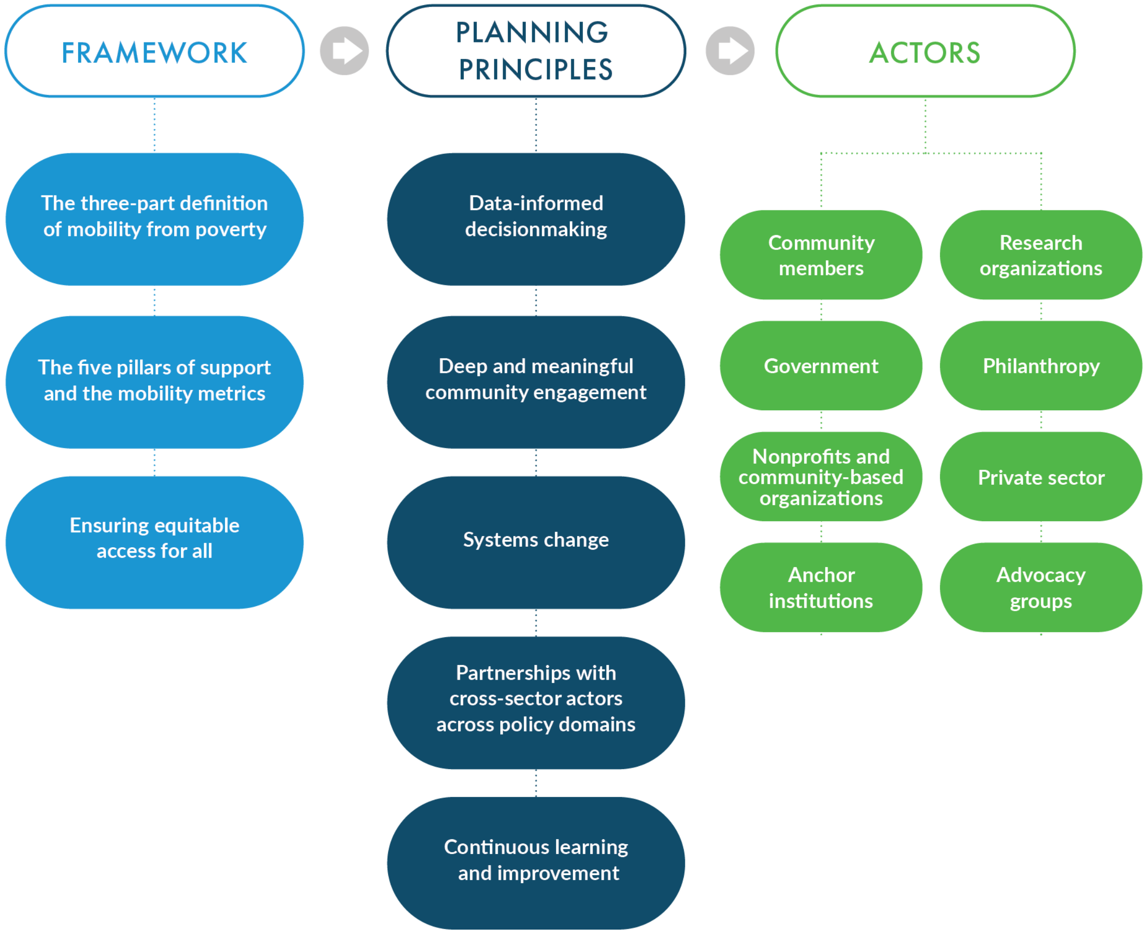


Figure 1: Our Approach for Boosting Mobility and Advancing Equity.

Step 1.1 Familiarize Yourself with Our Framework for Boosting Mobility and Advancing Equity

The Framework for Boosting Mobility and Advancing Equity is the core knowledge base around which this work is focused. It was developed by distinguished scholars and Urban Institute researchers, field-tested by people working in local governments across the country, and updated to more explicitly center racial equity and the local systems that either block or boost the efforts of individuals and families to achieve mobility. The framework has three key elements, based on a deep foundation of research and evidence. These elements will be referenced in **bolded, light-blue font** throughout this guide.

The first element of the framework is the **three-part definition of mobility from poverty,** advanced by the US Partnership on Mobility from Poverty. This definition holds that meaningful and sustainable mobility from poverty requires movement across three mutually reinforcing dimensions: **economic success, power and autonomy, and being valued in community**

Economic success: Having rising income and assets.

Power and autonomy: Having control over one's life, the ability to make choices, and the collective capacity to influence larger policies and actions that affect one's future.

Being valued in community: Feeling the respect, dignity, and sense of belonging that come from contributing to one's community.

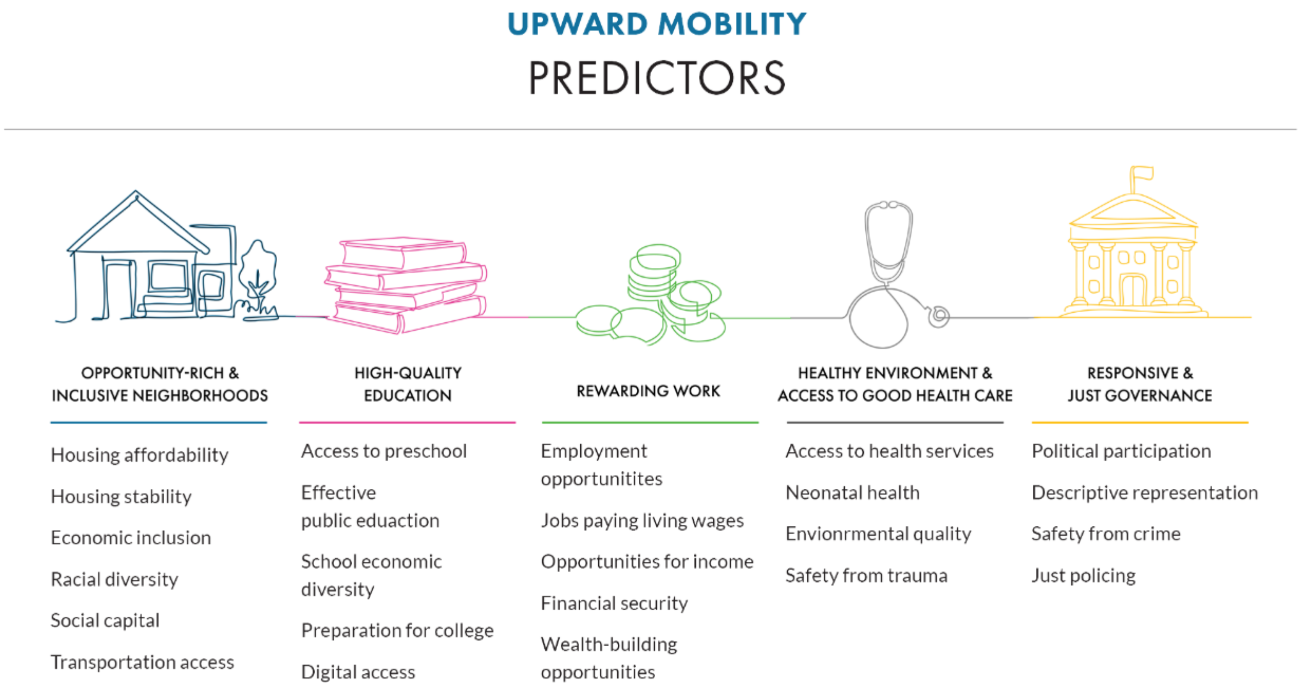


Figure 2: The Framework for Boosting Mobility and Advancing Equity.

The three dimensions of this definition are inseparable. In other words, work that serves only to promote new economic opportunities but does not consider how to increase power/autonomy and belonging among residents with low incomes may not sufficiently boost mobility from poverty and advance equity. Similarly, work that seeks to engage residents in decisionmaking but does not also consider whether they can financially afford to participate or are positioned to benefit from the outcomes may not effectively boost mobility from poverty or advance equity.

The national **Educare** early childhood program is an example of a program that promotes all three dimensions of upward mobility. Providing families with steady, reliable, year-round child care may increase labor force participation and, as a result, increase household income. The program also supports the capacity of primary caregivers to cope with stress and exercise increased agency by taking parents through goal-setting activities and training them to tell their stories. Finally, the program helps parents and children feel valued in their community because it creates informal networks for building social capital. To see an analysis of other programs that promote all three dimensions of mobility from poverty, see Boosting Upward Mobility from Poverty: Exemplars.

The second element of the framework is actually a group of three elements: the **Five Pillars of Support, the Predictors,** and the **Mobility Metrics**. Local communities aspiring to boost upward mobility and narrow equity gaps should focus on building or bolstering five essential and interconnected pillars of support that families and individuals need to achieve economic success, power, and dignity.

The Five Pillars of Support are as follows:

Opportunity-rich and inclusive neighborhoods: Inclusive and well-resourced neighborhoods play a central role in shaping families' stability, their access to social and economic opportunities, and their children's chances to thrive and succeed. Neighborhoods are where children experience critical stages of socioemotional and physical development, where social ties form, and where people access resources and life opportunities (Minh et al. 2017). The ability to find and afford quality housing, to feel welcomed and respected in one's community and social circles, and to have equitable access to local resources all reflect essential aspects of an inclusive neighborhood.

High-quality education: Education—from prekindergarten through postsecondary—provides a crucial avenue to economic and social mobility. High-quality preschool programs, elementary schools, and high schools boost academic achievement, college enrollment, and adult success (McCoy et al. 2017). Schools also provide children and teens with networks of friends, peers, and mentors, helping to shape their social identity and feeling of belonging (Grusky, Hall, and Markus 2019). And adults can continue to build skills and credentials throughout life, expanding their prospects for upward mobility (Baum, Ma, and Payea 2013).

Rewarding work: Jobs and wages constitute the primary source of income and economic security for most people in the US today. Steady work enables people to gain skills and experience so they can advance to higher-paying jobs, building both income and wealth to support their families and boost their children's prospects (Chenevert and Litwok 2013; Mincer 1975). Work can contribute to one's sense of personal autonomy and power and provide feelings of accomplishment and dignity. Reliable income and sufficient savings enable people to better weather life's inevitable challenges and disruptions and to provide a stable and supportive home for their children (Lerman and McKernan 2008).

Healthy environment and access to good health care: Good and stable health helps people of all ages surmount life's challenges, excel in school and on the job, ensure their families' well-being, and fully participate in their communities. Environmental quality reduces people's risk of health complications that may undermine school or work performance (Evans and Kantrowitz 2002). Access to and utilization of health services can help parents ensure their children receive basic care through critical formative years (Devoe et al. 2012) and enable adults to obtain tests needed for early detection of diseases, enhancing the likelihood of effective treatment (Ettner 1996).

Responsive and just governance: Governance that is attentive to the needs of all community members and residents who are deeply engaged in collective decisionmaking are hallmarks of a community that supports upward mobility (Pastor, Terriquez, and Lin 2018). A responsive local government empowers the people it serves by ensuring their concerns are addressed. By allocating resources equitably, local governments can help ensure all residents have good prospects for economic success (Hajnal and Trounstine 2010). And when public institutions that are intended to serve and protect communities act with justice and restraint, residents feel they are valued and respected members of the community (Goff et al. 2019).

Communities interested in boosting mobility from poverty and advancing equity must develop a plan that is inclusive of all five pillars. To help communities assess their baseline and measure progress along each of these pillars, a working group of distinguished scholars identified key **predictors** that are strongly associated with the five pillars—and that can be influenced by state and local policies in the near term—and a set of 26 **Mobility Metrics**. The table below highlights the primary uses of the metrics, which are covered in depth in the next step of this guide.

Compare	Prioritize	Highlight interconnections
…your community's metrics with those of peer communities so you can assess the extent of the local mobility challenge and build public support for tackling it	…mobility predictors where the community's attention and action can have the greatest impact	… among predictors from different policy domains to recruit partners and identify the roles different actors can play
Set targets	**Reveal**	**Monitor**
…for improving local mobility metrics and narrowing inequities as part of a strategy for meaningful changes in investments, policies, and practices	…persistent racial inequities and the structural barriers that perpetuate them	…the metrics over time, to assess your community's progress and hold local stakeholders accountable

The third element of our framework is a focus on **ensuring equitable access to upward mobility for all, including people of color and other marginalized groups**. By now, the challenges and disadvantages faced by communities of color are more widely acknowledged in policy discussions. Here we present some key terms and definitions that we will use throughout this guide:

Racial equity: Racial equity is both an outcome and a process. As an outcome, racial equity is when people receive just treatment, receive fair compensation for their contributions, and can reach their maximum social and economic potential regardless of race or where they live.

As a process, we achieve racial equity by removing the structural barriers that prevent people of certain racial and ethnic groups from reaching their maximum social and economic potential and by meaningfully engaging these groups in decisionmaking.

Inequity: An unfair or unjust outcome that is caused by structural or institutional policies, practices, and barriers.

Structural racism: The historical and contemporary policies, practices, and norms that create and maintain the dominant position of white people in US society and perpetuate inequities among people of different races and ethnic backgrounds. The compounding effects of structural racism are why we see racial disparities in many outcomes today.

Step 1.2 Get Acquainted with Our Planning Principles

In addition to the core elements that underscore the necessity of undertaking this work, we also follow a set of planning principles based on our research; our experience working with actors trying to make systems change at the state, local, and federal levels; and the lived experiences of people experiencing poverty and structural racism. These principles will be referenced in **bolded, dark blue font** throughout this guide.

Data-informed decisionmaking: The use of data to prioritize areas of greatest need, highlight interconnections across policy domains, set targets for improvement, and monitor progress over time. The data that inform such decisionmaking can be both quantitative (for example, local administrative data, national Census data) and qualitative (for example, insights derived from community engagement focus groups or community advisory boards, surveys, or storytelling).

Deep and meaningful community engagement: A process by which community members come together to reflect on and make decisions about the future of their community. When done properly, this process is accessible, fair, engaging, redistributes power, uplifts local values and knowledge, and builds trust among community members.

Systems change: A fundamental shift in practices, underlying values, or norms by local actors that can reshape policies, processes, relationships, and power structures and addresses the root causes of racial and economic inequities in our communities.

Partnerships with cross-sector actors across policy domains: Engaging with different types of stakeholders (e.g., from the public, private, nonprofit, and philanthropic sectors) across multiple policy areas.

Continuous learning and improvement: The continuous gathering and use of information to assess and reflect on progress, improve organizational practices and services, and drive better outcomes in the long run.

In addition to our planning principles, a few key assumptions underlie our overall approach. Based on our research, our experience working with actors trying to make policy change at the state, local, and federal levels and listening to people with lived experiences of poverty and structural racism, we know that boosting mobility from poverty and advancing equity cannot occur without the following:

- Addressing the root causes of inequities in our communities
- Changing the narratives about people of color and people with low incomes
- Acknowledging that systems are run by people, so efforts to shift mental models and behaviors are critical to changing systems
- Creating space for reflection and learning in performance management systems
- Investing in the capacity-building of community members and nonprofit organizations
- Being realistic about how budgets, political cycles, and public will can impact work
- Bringing about policy change at all levels of government

Step 1.3 Consider the Various Actors Needed for Collaboration

Although government has a primary role to play in boosting upward mobility, there is increasing recognition that other actors can bring unique resources, expertise, and social capital to this mission. Many local governments have built cross-sector, cross-policy teams to take on poverty from all sides. These actors will be referenced in **bolded, light green font** throughout this guide.

In this guide, you'll encounter various ways to work collaboratively with local leaders from some of the following groups (which are not mutually exclusive):

Government

Your upward mobility work may include elected representatives or staff from city, county, or state government or other organizations and agencies like public school systems, housing authorities, economic development agencies, and regional planning authorities. The focus of this work is local in nature, but representatives of the federal government (for example, program managers of locally based federal programs like Choice Neighborhoods or Promise Neighborhoods) may be invited to join the work.

- Government officials can use their policy and regulatory authority to draft laws and create programs that enable systems change. They can use government resources to scale effective strategies, collect and analyze administrative data to understand how well government programs are working, and convene diverse stakeholders around particular issues.

Community Members: A "community" can refer to a group of people living in a specific geographic area or who share characteristics such as race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, faith, or political ideology. A community could also be made up of people who work for the same company, belong to the same social clubs, or attend the same school.

- Community members can cocreate policies and programs with policymakers and other stakeholders by participating in community visioning exercises and deliberative forums, sharing their lived experience and providing feedback on plans, helping collect and analyze community data, and serving on citizen panels. Community members also have the power to hold stakeholders accountable by voting in local elections, donating to campaigns, and organizing.

Nonprofits and Community-Based Organizations

Local and national nonprofits may include charitable and direct service organizations, volunteer service organizations, labor unions, chambers of commerce, and child care organizations. They may be based around a specific issue (such as homelessness) or they may serve an intermediary role and provide technical assistance to boost the capacity of other organizations. Intermediaries are organizations that work to link groups working on the same topics or in the same geographic areas. Community-based organizations, or CBOs—such as community development corporations, community development financial institutions, social service providers, advocacy groups, and neighborhood groups—are typically structured as nonprofits and work at the local level to meet community needs.

- Nonprofits and community-based organizations can use their programmatic expertise and relationships in the community to help elevate issues of concern for residents and connect them to resources. Service-providing organizations deliver public programs and services to community members. Nonprofits that serve an intermediary role can provide training and technical assistance and conduct policy research.

Advocacy Groups

Advocacy groups are organizations that advocate on behalf of a specific cause. Because they are typically nonprofit organizations, they may also function similarly to the nonprofit and community-based organizations listed above. Their goal is to elevate and promote policy priorities to powerful private and public actors who can draft policy and enact systems change in favor of their goals.

- Advocacy groups can help provide research on a specific policy topic. They are also helpful in building support for priorities and holding other actors accountable in following through on their commitments. They may also help develop and execute narrative change strategies.

Philanthropies

Philanthropies are organizations that provide financial support to other organizations that is typically charitable in nature.

- Philanthropies can contribute financial support to a cause and can use their status to advocate for policy change. Through their relationships with grantees, philanthropies can encourage program evaluation and promote specific goals and outcomes. Philanthropies can also play important research and development functions by funding local pilot projects.

Research Organizations

Research organizations include universities, think tanks, and advocacy groups that can assist with collecting and analyzing data and evaluating programs and policies.

- Research organizations can provide training and technical assistance, collect and analyze data, evaluate programs and policies, and conduct original research on a specific policy topic. Research organizations may also serve as neutral conveners that bring groups together around a specific policy topic.

Anchor Institutions

Anchor institutions are the local for-profit and nonprofit organizations that have a significant and long-standing presence in a community, such as universities, health care systems and hospitals, financial institutions, religious organizations, and arts and cultural organizations.

- Anchor institutions can use their status in a community and their political and financial capital to support cross-sector goals. They are often major regional employers and buyers of goods and services, which gives them additional power over mobility-boosting systems. They may also play a convener role and lend financial or technical capacity to support other actors.

Private-Sector Actors

Private-sector actors are businesses whose primary interest is in gaining profits. Their funding largely comes from investors and product sales, and they are responsive to the supply and demand requests of the market. Private-sector actors include banks, major companies, and developers.

- Private-sector actors, especially large regional employers and housing developers, can support specific policy agendas or interventions and adopt equitable business practices (for example, living-wage policies). They may also contribute financial support or other resources to supporting social causes. Private-sector actors may need to be brought in with a persuasive strategy that sells them on their value to the work and that aligns with their goals and principles, which are naturally more profit oriented.

Step 1.4 Understand the Key Components of a Mobility Action Plan

The purpose of the planning process laid out in this guide is to help you create your MAP. The final MAP document will include the following sections:

How we got here: A description of the steps you took to learn about mobility conditions in your community, including why you decided to pursue the work and who has been involved.

Summary of upward mobility findings: A summary of the key findings from your exploratory research. The summary should be written in a narrative format that interweaves the quantitative data with the qualitative data and tells a story about how your current mobility conditions (both good and bad) were created and are sustained, who they impact most, and what outcomes they're leading to.

Theory of change and/or logic model: A theory of change articulates how a group believes change happens in their community or organization. It reflects a set of assumptions that connects preconditions (what you need for change to happen) to expected outcomes (the improvements you want to see in your city or county). A logic model is a tool that displays a project's inputs, activities, outputs, and outcomes in a brief visual format.

Measurement plan: A table that includes a list of the inputs, outputs, and outcomes from your logic model with agreed-upon indicators for how you will track success and a list of sources from where you will gather this information and that assigns responsibility for who will track progress.

Sustainability considerations: A short section that shares how you plan to steward and sustain the actions described in the MAP, including responsible actors and the resources needed.

The content for each of these sections will come from the activities you undertake throughout the Mobility Action Planning process, which are detailed in each of the subsequent steps of this guide. For each step, as relevant, we'll include boxes like this one:

MAP Component: How We Got Here

to signal the relevant content from your planning process that will inform each section of your final MAP.

Now that you've become familiar with our Framework for Boosting Mobility and Advancing Equity, our planning principles, the types of actors who should be engaged in this work, and what the MAP will include, you'll want to gain an initial understanding of issues related to mobility and poverty in your own community. In the next step, you'll learn more about our Mobility Metrics and how they can help you gain an initial understanding of conditions in your community.

STEP ONE REVIEW CHECKLIST

- ☐ You possess a strong understanding of the Framework for Boosting Mobility and Advancing Equity, including **the three-part definition of mobility from poverty, the Five Pillars of Support and the Predictors,** and the **Mobility Metrics.** This may require you to have read some of the additional materials linked in this section.

- ☐ You are familiar with the five planning principles for Mobility Action Planning, including **data-informed decisionmaking**, **deep and meaningful community engagement**, **systems change, partnerships with cross-sector actors across policy domains**, and **continuous learning and improvement**.

- ☐ You understand the various types of cross-sector actors that might be engaged throughout the Mobility Action Planning process, including **government, community members, nonprofits and community-based organizations, advocacy groups, philanthropies, research organizations, anchor institutions,** and **private-sector actors.**

- ☐ You have reviewed the types of content that will be included in your Mobility Action Plan, which will be informed by each step of this guide and should be written and released at the completion of the planning process.

STEP TWO

Use Mobility Metrics to Surface Insights

In the previous step, you learned about Urban Institute's Framework for Boosting Mobility and Advancing Equity. As a second step, you will learn more about our Mobility Metrics, including how we developed them, how to access them, and how to use them to gain preliminary insights about mobility issues in your community.

Step 2.1 Learn How We Developed Our Mobility Metrics

In Step 1, you learned that one of our recommended planning principles is **data-informed decisionmaking**. We champion the use of both quantitative and qualitative data because it can help actors prioritize areas that most need support, highlight interconnections across policy domains, set targets for improvement, and monitor progress over time. In this vein, we have developed a set of 26 evidence-based **Mobility Metrics** to help local governments track progress on mobility in their communities. **Mobility Metrics** stem from the **Five Pillars of Support**, discussed in Step 1.

The pillars were identified in 2019 by an Urban Institute working group composed of 11 distinguished scholars with expertise in economics, sociology, political science, and psychology and with diverse perspectives with respect to race, geography, policy domains, and political ideology. The working group systematically reviewed various factors that influence mobility from poverty for adults, families, and children. The group's ultimate aim was to connect the longer-term mobility outcomes identified in the five pillars to specific measures that can be tracked in the short and medium term.

The next step in that process was identifying key predictors that are strongly associated with the five pillars and that can be influenced by state and local policies in the near term. These predictors can be used to convert high-level concepts into areas for action. The working group came up with 24 predictors across the five pillars.[1]

Pillar: Opportunity-rich and inclusive neighborhoods

Predictors: housing affordability, housing stability, economic inclusion, racial diversity, social capital, and transportation access

Pillar: High-quality education

Predictors: access to preschool, effective public education, school economic diversity, preparation for college, and digital access

Pillar: Rewarding work

Predictors: employment opportunities, jobs paying living wages, opportunities for income, financial security, and wealth-building opportunities

Pillar: Healthy environment and access to good health care

Predictors: access to health services, neonatal health, environmental quality, and safety from trauma

Pillar: Responsive and just governance

Predictors: political participation, descriptive representation, safety from crime, and just policing

Finally, the working group assigned each of the predictors at least one observable metric that could measure how a community fares according to each predictor, both at baseline and over time. The group proposed metrics that were valid measures of the predictors, collected at regular intervals, available for important subgroups and subareas in cities and counties nationwide, and not overly sensitive to residential moves in and out of jurisdictions. Importantly, the proposed metrics also reflected structural conditions rather than individual-level outcomes.

To vet the proposed metrics, the Urban Institute held a series of discussion sessions and webinars with policymakers, researchers, and practitioners in San Francisco, New Orleans, Chicago, and Cleveland. Participants considered the relevance and potential value of the metrics to local changemakers and generated important insights about how they could inform local advocacy, planning, action, and accountability. These insights were used to refine the initial metrics further. Ultimately, the process resulted in 26 **Mobility Metrics** that are supported by strong evidence of predictive relationships to mobility and can be influenced by local and state policies.

OPPORTUNITY-RICH AND INCLUSIVE NEIGHBORHOODS

Predictor	Mobility Metric
Housing affordability	Ratio of affordable and available housing units to households with low, very low, and extremely low income levels
Housing stability	Number and share of public school children who are homeless
Economic inclusion	Share of people experiencing poverty who live in high-poverty neighborhoods
Racial diversity	Index of people’s exposure to neighbors of different races and ethnicities

Social capital	Number of membership associations per 10,000 people Ratio of Facebook friends with higher socioeconomic status to Facebook friends with lower socioeconomic status
Transportation access	Transit trips index Transportation cost index
HIGH-QUALITY EDUCATION	
Predictor	**Mobility Metric**
Access to preschool	Share of children enrolled in nursery school or preschool
Effective public education	Average per-grade change in English Language Arts achievement between third and eighth grades
School economic diversity	Share of students attending high-poverty schools, by student race or ethnicity
Preparation for college	Share of 19- and 20-year-olds with a high school degree
Digital access	Share of households with broadband access in the home
REWARDING WORK	
Predictor	**Mobility Metric**
Employment opportunities	Employment-to-population ratio for adults ages 25 to 54
Jobs paying living wages	Ratio of pay on the average job to the cost of living
Opportunities for income	Household income at 20th, 50th, and 80th percentiles
Financial security	Share of households with debt in collections
Wealth-building opportunities	Ratio of the share of a community's housing wealth held by a racial or ethnic group to the share of households of the same group.

HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT AND ACCESS TO GOOD HEALTH CARE	
Predictor	**Mobility Metric**
Access to health services	Ratio of population per primary care physician
Neonatal health	Share of low-weight births
Environmental quality	Air quality index
Safety from trauma	Deaths due to injury per 100,000 people

RESPONSIVE AND JUST GOVERNANCE	
Predictor	**Mobility Metric**
Political participation	Share of voting-age population who turn out to vote
Descriptive representation[2]	Ratio of the share of local elected officials of a racial or ethnic group to the share of residents of the same racial or ethnic group
Safety from crime	Reported property crimes per 100,000 people and reported violent crimes per 100,000 people
Just policing	Juvenile arrests per 100,000 juveniles

Although the **Mobility Metrics** are designed to measure progress toward the **Five Pillars of Support**, their quality and availability are not uniform across all communities in the US. To better understand how these metrics reflect their local reality, users of this guide should pay close attention to the data quality documentation provided with each set of local metrics.

To observe important inequities in the data, scholars from the Urban Institute's Racial Equity Analytics Lab recommend that all data gathered are disaggregated by race and ethnicity, across multiple domains, and at the smallest geographies possible. Being able to examine data and community outcomes by race, ethnicity, and other factors allows us to better identify patterns that could be masked by aggregate data. For example, in areas where white people account for the vast majority of the population, a positive community-level metric could mask worse outcomes for Black, Hispanic, or Indigenous populations because the reported value is averaged across the whole community. Presenting metrics at the community-level and by race or ethnicity illuminates racial disparities in outcomes that might not have been captured otherwise. Beyond exposing racial disparities, disaggregated data also allow for better program and policy targeting, implementation, and monitoring according to the needs of different subgroups.

For more on the importance of disaggregation of data by race and ethnicity, see https://www.urban.org/racial-equity-analytics-lab.

To the extent possible, the Mobility Metrics draw on nationally available sources so that local governments can compare reliable and consistent data with other cities and counties nationwide. Importantly, some of the Mobility Metrics rely on data that may not be available for all geographic units at the ideal frequency, recency, reliability, or level of disaggregation. Depending on the data available about your community, it may not always be properly adjusted for changes over time in jurisdictions' demographic compositions.

Even with these limitations, the Mobility Metrics perform a valuable function: they provide communities with a tool for surfacing areas of strength and weakness across multiple domains. They aim to catalyze important conversations about boosting mobility from poverty.

Step 2.2 Access the Mobility Metrics for Your Municipality

As a first step, you should access your municipality's Mobility Metrics on https://upward-mobility.urban.org/data.

Step 2.3 Make Note of Preliminary Insights

The next step involves looking at the data and making note of outcomes in the data. The purpose of this step is to become more familiar with the Mobility Metrics and to gain a high-level view of mobility issues in your community. You can then use this information to communicate to your department the importance of creating a MAP to boost mobility in your community.

A brief **Mobility Metrics Data Review Guide** is included at the end of this section to help you record your notes. The example insight below demonstrates the type of information you might find when reviewing your Mobility Metrics.

Pillar: Healthy environment and access to good health care
Predictor: Neonatal Health

Mobility Metric: Share of low-weight births

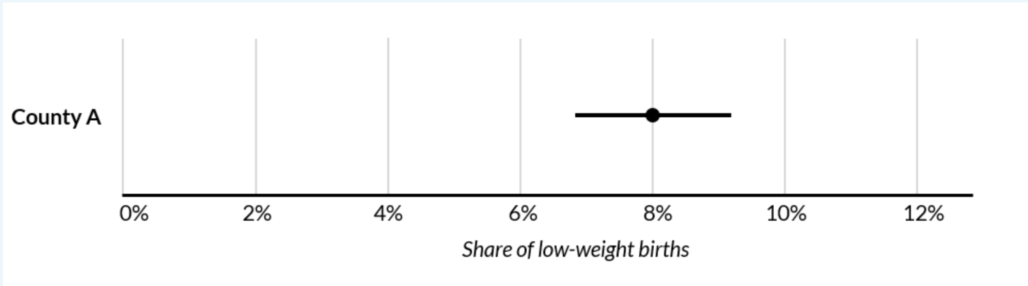


Figure 3: Share of low-weight births in County A

This graph shows us that in County A, 8 percent (plus or minus 1 percentage point[3]) of all babies are born with low weights (less than 5 pounds 8 ounces). One question that might immediately come to mind is whether this share of low-weight births is being experienced equally by babies of all races and ethnicities across County A? To find out, take a look at this metric disaggregated by race and ethnicity:

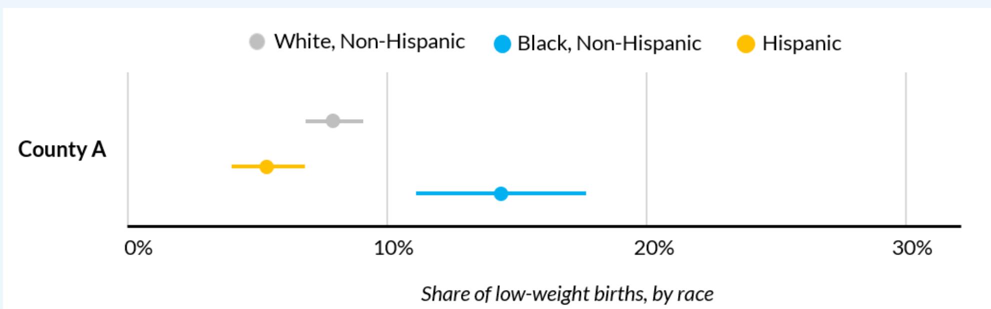


Figure 4: Share of low-weight births in County A, by race

This graph shows us that although less than 10 percent of white and Hispanic babies are born with low weights, over 14 percent of Black babies are born with low weights. Disaggregating our original birth statistic by race and ethnicity paints a much more detailed and informative picture of what is happening in County A. We can see that a greater share of Black, Non-Hispanic babies are born with low weights. This disparity reveals that poor neonatal health is a particularly serious challenge for Black families and highlights the importance of digging deeper to understand what conditions and challenges are contributing to that outcome. As you review your own data, make note of disparities you see in the disaggregated data.

Step 2.4 Compare Your Data with Data from Other Jurisdictions

Another key step at this preliminary phase is to put local data into context. It can be difficult to interpret how meaningful **Mobility Metrics** outcomes are without comparing them to outcomes for other localities. By observing how other communities compare with your own across the same metrics, you can get a clearer sense of the range of outcomes that can be expected for each measure. Some factors you might consider in selecting peers include similarities among various dimensions, such as geographic proximity, size, overall population, population density, socioeconomic and racial diversity, or similarities in structures of governance. When comparing your jurisdiction with your peers', remember to consider their metrics within their local context as best as possible. For example, you might compare your metrics data to data from a jurisdiction with a similar population density to your own, but that jurisdiction might have a larger immigrant population or higher incomes because of their main industries of employment. As a final step in the preliminary data gathering process, note in your **Mobility Metrics Data Review Guide**, included at the end of this step, how your jurisdiction's mobility data compares with the data of two or three other localities. Your preliminary insights will prepare you for the next step in the MAP process: assessing your readiness to act.

STEP TWO REVIEW CHECKLIST

- ☐ You understand how and why the **Mobility Metrics** were developed
- ☐ You have accessed the **Mobility Metrics** for your jurisdiction
- ☐ You have noted preliminary insights about local outcomes on your Mobility Metrics Data Review Guide and noted how your jurisdiction compares to two or three others

STEP TWO

Supplemental Materials

1. Mobility Metrics Data Review Guide
2. Descriptive Representation: Collecting Data to Construct Your Mobility Metric

Mobility Metrics Data Review Guide

What stands out to you about these metrics data? How do they reflect (or not reflect) your existing opinions on mobility in our jurisdiction?

Walking through each metric, where do outcomes differ by race or another form of disaggregation (e.g., age, gender, zip code)? Which disparities interest or concern you the most, and why?

How does your county compare with peer counties? What was most notable to you about these differences?

Descriptive Representation: Collecting Data to Construct Your Mobility Metric

As mentioned, you can choose to use or collect local information to help further inform your understanding of mobility conditions in your community. As a metric, "Descriptive Representation" refers to a ratio of the share of local elected officials of a given racial or ethnic group to the share of residents of the same racial or ethnic group in your community. This ratio is a valuable insight: research shows that when the demographic characteristics of elected officials match that of their constituents, people feel more able to exercise power over the actions of their government (Gleason and Stout 2014). This metric is widely used by political scientists to reflect the extent to which groups are represented by their communities' elected leadership.

To calculate this metric, you should divide the numerator (a count of the number of elected officials that belong to each racial or ethnic subgroup) by the denominator (your local population numbers by race and ethnicity). If you are interested in creating the Descriptive Representation metric, here are some steps you can follow:

If you do not already possess an exhaustive list of local government officials, use the official web portal for the federal government (https://www.usa.gov/local-governments) to look up and record every individual who holds elected office in your jurisdiction.

Using their public contact information, send out correspondence asking for each official to self-identify their race or ethnicity. Sample language for this email is provided here:

> *Dear XX,*
>
> *My name is YY, and as an employee of ZZ, I am collecting information to better understand our local status on boosting upward mobility from poverty in our community. We are conducting this analysis using the Urban Institute's Mobility Metrics Dashboard, which provides data on 26 metrics associated with upward mobility. We need your help to complete one of these metrics, Descriptive Representation. This metric refers to the share of local elected officials of a given racial or ethnic group to the share of residents of the same racial or ethnic group in your community. Research shows that when the demographic characteristics of elected officials match those of their constituents, people feel more empowered and involved with the actions of their government. By answering the following questions, you will help us gain insight to how well our local racial and ethnic communities are represented by their elected leadership.*
>
> *Please answer the following:*
>
> *Do you identify as Hispanic or Latinx?*
>
> - Yes
> - No
>
> *Among the following races, with which do you identify? (Please select all that apply)*
>
> - Black or African American

- Asian
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
- White
- Other race

Many thanks in advance for your participation.

If you are unable to collect or complete this information through direct outreach (due to lack of response), consider filling in the gaps or consolidating this information by independently gathering the race/ethnicity of each elected official as reported in public outlets or self-reported through their websites or public communications. Because this approach provides less reliable information, it is important to note that data gathered this way would be of poor quality. For further documentation or information on data quality, please consult your municipality's Mobility Metrics.

STEP THREE

Ensure Your Local Government Is Ready to Undertake This Work

At this point, you have a preliminary understanding of some mobility issues in your community. If you feel moved to rally your local government colleagues to join you in undertaking a full Mobility Action Planning process, you're now what we call a Mobility Advocate! Before you call on municipal leadership to assemble a team to carry out this work or make any official announcement regarding the Mobility Action Planning process, you should work with leadership to take stock of what conditions, supports, and commitments are in place to help the process succeed and where your municipality might need to develop further before proceeding.

Much research has been conducted to understand the necessary conditions for effecting large-scale change. We've also learned from our work with the Upward Mobility Cohort that certain readiness conditions are essential to have in place before building a broader team and engaging publicly about this work. There are also necessary readiness conditions for carrying out this work according to our Framework for Boosting Mobility and Advancing Equity; doing so involves centering our **three-part definition of mobility from poverty** (**economic success**, **power and autonomy**, and **being valued in community**), using **Mobility Metrics** and other data to inform decisionmaking, and striving for **racial equity**.

The readiness conditions for a successful Mobility Action Planning process are as follows:

- A clear commitment from local government leadership
- Preparedness for cross-sector partnerships across policy domains
- Sufficient organizational capacity to undertake this work
- An organizational culture that can support large-scale change
- Buy-in from staff across departments
- A desire to build a shared understanding of structural racism and racial equity
- Knowledge of the skills and capacity necessary for data gathering and analysis
- Dedicated resources for meaningful community engagement
- A commitment to ongoing learning and improvement.

Your municipality might already have some or all of these conditions in place, but it may not, and that's okay. The purpose of Step 3 is to determine whether these conditions are in place and, if they aren't, to determine which areas your municipality needs to develop before moving ahead with this work. Many of these conditions are simply commitments from leadership and/or government staff to undertake critical aspects of the work ahead. At the end of this section, you'll find a Readiness Assessment you can use to evaluate the readiness of your local government and identify any areas for strengthening further.

Step 3.1 Gain Commitment from Local Government Leadership

Clear commitment from government executive leadership (e.g., the mayor, city manager, or county executive) and department heads is a necessary condition for moving forward with the Mobility Action Planning process. Getting government leadership on board with taking on a major planning process will require you as the Mobility Advocate to provide a clear, evidence-based explanation for why the process is necessary and how it will help the municipality live up to its values and promises to the public. The preliminary analysis you undertook with your **Mobility Metrics** can help with this, as can our Framework for Boosting Mobility and Advancing Equity. Some of the additional resources below can help with casemaking, as can the information about mobility issues in the Introduction and Step 1 of this guide.

- Boosting Upward Mobility: Metrics to Inform Local Action
- Boosting Upward Mobility: Exemplars
- Boosting Upward Mobility Release Event
- Boosting Mobility and Advancing Equity Through Systems Change
- Upward Mobility website
- Exploring Approaches to Increase Economic Opportunity for Young Men of Color: A 10-Year Review
- What Would It Take to Overcome the Damaging Effects of Structural Racism and Ensure a More Equitable Future?

You might also share some of the Mobility Action Plans from the Upward Mobility Cohort. Beyond a verbal commitment, leadership must also commit to dedicating sufficient resources—in terms of finances, infrastructure, time, and training—to the process. If possible, it would be helpful for you as the Mobility Advocate to propose ways to identify some of these resources in the budget.

Step 3.2 Prepare to Engage Cross-Sector Partners across Policy Domains

Government alone cannot sufficiently create all necessary conditions for boosting people out of poverty. Strong cross-sector partnerships across policy domains can help you brainstorm new ideas; gain expertise in content areas where you have less familiarity; and connect with residents who can help shape the

Mobility Action Planning process. As mentioned in Step 1 of this guide, partners can come from a wide range of sectors, including the following:

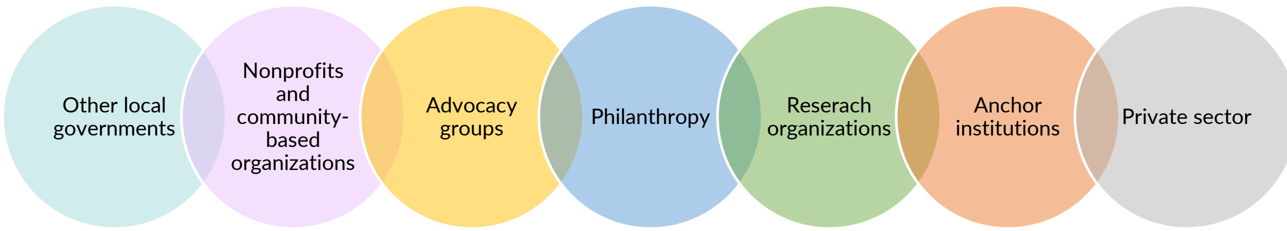


Figure 5: Sectors from which to invite partners for the Mobility Coalition

In **Lansing, Michigan,** the BOLD Lansing initiative supports upward mobility by empowering students and families to attend college and become financially independent. The initiative brought together a wide range of partners who support students and families along different steps of the educational ladder and across the domains of financial well-being, neighborhoods, education, and work. The initiative's partners include the Lansing School District, the City of Lansing's Office of Financial Empowerment, a local credit union, the Capital Area United Way, the Capital Area College Access Network, and the Community Economic Development Association of Michigan.[4]

The Mobility Advocate should work with leadership to consider external organizations with whom the municipality might partner on the project. Standing together with a broad coalition of community leaders, including members of the business community, anchor institutions, financial institutions, private-sector actors, advocacy groups, and nonprofits can show the public that the municipality intends to have a coordinated strategy that impacts the actions of a wide swath of public-serving organizations. Ideally, partners will represent multiple domains covered by the **Mobility Metrics**. Partners should also be those who can commit to this work for the long haul, because not all of the actions that are needed to boost mobility from poverty can be done by government.

Assessing the municipality's ability to be a *good* partner is an important element of ensuring your readiness to act. Often when engaging partners, the norm is to ask how *they* can be good partners to you. However, forging strong partnerships requires doing the opposite—asking how *you* can be a good partner to *them.*

Step 3.3 Ensure Sufficient Organizational Capacity

Organizations need sufficient capacity to take on large-scale systems change work. The Project Management Institute defines organizational capacity as the people, processes, technology and support resources, physical resources, and organizational systems available to support an initiative (Combe 2014). Although you will be engaging external partners as part of your planning process, perhaps the most important capacity consideration for launching this work is whether there are municipal staff who can dedicate significant time to facilitating the Mobility Action Planning process on top of their existing priorities (staff roles are discussed further in Step 4). Relatedly, it's important to consider whether staff have relevant knowledge or experience to undertake this type of work and what additional trainings or resources might be helpful in building knowledge.

As highlighted in the Project Management Institute definition, it's also important to think through the necessary systems and processes—including policies, procedures, and practices—that can support this planning effort. Your municipality will need to facilitate the planning process, even if certain tasks are actually carried out by external partners. Consider whether there are municipal staff who have experience with and are capable of managing large projects and facilitating meetings with external partners. If additional capacity is needed, consider how your jurisdiction might train or recruit staff with these skills.

Step 3.4 Determine Whether Your Organizational Culture Can Support Large-Scale Change

It is important to assess whether the municipal government's organizational culture will support the necessary systems changes required in the Mobility Action Planning process. What does it mean to have a culture that is ready to plan for and implement large-scale change? Research conducted in the field of implementation science has found that there should be "a degree of alignment between cultural norms and the proposed change" (Combe 2014) and that organization members should be "psychologically and behaviorally prepared to take action" (Weiner 2009). What's more, research has found that organizations that want to change (rather than those that merely have to change) have the most success (Weiner 2009).

Local governments that are culturally ready to take on large-scale change processes will promote energy and excitement across departments about moving away from the status quo. Leadership can actively invite staff to contribute ideas and speak openly about what practices or processes aren't working—particularly among past change initiatives.

Step 3.5 Help Leadership Gain Staff Buy-In Across Departments

It will be helpful for all staff to have a clear understanding of *why* your city or county wants to undertake a Mobility Action Planning process around this specific framework and how it will help the municipality live up to its values and promises to the public (Combe 2014). An introduction to our approach (including our framework, planning principles, and the suggested actors to work with) from the municipality's executive leadership can signal the importance of the work. Leaders can gain staff buy-in by identifying organizational champions who will bridge work across departments and provide opportunities for staff to give input and shape key project priorities.

Depending on the size of the municipality, leadership may consider inviting municipality staff to a brownbag to learn about the **Mobility Metrics** and our approach, or they could send out an all-staff email that shares information about the proposed work. At the brownbag, be sure to share a sign-up sheet for staff who are interested in being part of the work. At the end of this step, we provide a sample outreach email to staff and sample talking points that elected officials and other local leaders can use to talk about why they have chosen to take this work on in the supplemental materials at the end of this step.

In Upward Mobility Cohort participant **Washington, DC**, the Office of Planning and the Deputy Mayor of Planning and Economic Development, the co-leads for the District's Upward Mobility project, hosted an interagency kickoff meeting at the start of the initiative where department heads and their staff could learn more about the **Mobility Metrics**, discuss project goals and deliverables, and determine a structure for future cross-departmental engagement. Ultimately, the interagency group brought together representatives from 15 agencies monthly for the duration of the project.

Step 3.6 Confirm a Desire among Government Staff to Build a Shared Understanding of Structural Racism and Racial Equity

Making systems change requires that local governments take the time to learn about, reflect on, and acknowledge their role in creating and sustaining **racial inequities**. This is particularly challenging because **structural racism** is so deeply embedded in at all levels of American government and because people who have historically benefited from it may not want to see movement away from the status quo. As the City of Portland's Racial Equity Toolkit states, "Past harm is likely to still have current day impacts on people's quality of life and most certainly on communities' lack of trust in government."[5] Organizations that want to prioritize racial equity must have a willingness among staff across departments to talk about race, racism, and privilege and confront histories of systemic racism in your community.

Although your municipality does not need to have "completed" this work already—in fact, investigating structural racism and privilege is an ongoing process—it is imperative that government leadership commits to building a shared understanding of structural racism in your community throughout the Mobility Action Planning process. Municipal governments can use several resources to host discussions among staff, examine past and current policies creating inequities, and undertake a shared analysis about race and racial inequity in their communities. Organizations like the Government Alliance on Race and Equity, Race Forward, the Frameworks Institute, and PolicyLink offer a number of resources, and we share a few of our favorites here:

- Communicating about Intergenerational Urban Poverty and Race in America: Challenges, Opportunities, and Emerging Recommendations
- The State of Michigan's Racial Equity Toolkit
- Advancing Racial Equity and Transforming Government: A Resource Guide to Put Ideas into Action (GARE)

- Building the We: Healing-Informed Governing for Racial Equity in Salinas
- Smithsonian Magazine's 158 Resources to Understand Racism in America
- National Museum of African American History & Culture's Talking About Race site
- Washington Race Equity & Justice Initiative's Organizational Race Equity Toolkit

In **Fresno, California**, the Fresno DRIVE Initiative, a 10-year community investment plan to develop an inclusive, vibrant, and sustainable economy for residents, began its work by hosting "Shared Analysis" sessions in which members of its executive committee reflect on their own experiences with race and racism and work toward a common framework and language for understanding and communicating about race and equity matters in their community.[6]

Step 3.7 Identify the Skills and Capacities Necessary for Data Gathering and Analysis

The Mobility Action Planning process will involve gathering, cleaning, storing, and analyzing additional data sources beyond the **Mobility Metrics** data. Assessing the municipality's ability to assign ownership over the analysis, safe storage, and organization of the quantitative and qualitative data that will need to be collected (and learned from) is a key aspect of assessing your readiness to act. Oftentimes, there will be one or more partners best suited for these tasks, but when necessary, it can be valuable to consider investing time or money into expanding government capacity to collect, analyze, and visualize data in ways that can improve your ability to learn, plan, and adapt your MAP.

Step 3.8 Dedicate Resources for Deep and Meaningful Community Engagement

As stated at the outset of this guide, **deep and meaningful community engagement** is defined as "a process by which community members come together to reflect on and make decisions about the future of their community. When done properly, this process is accessible, fair, and engaging and redistributes power, uplifts local values and knowledge, and builds trust among community members."

Achieving the dimensions of "power and autonomy" and "being valued in community" means creating opportunities for community members to make choices about their lives and contribute to efforts that shape their community. Achieving these two dimensions is not solely an outcome for this work, it is also an *input* that shapes how the MAP should be developed.

Engaging the community requires that the municipality has set aside adequate funds to cover staff time to plan and execute engagements and funds to compensate community members who will participate. Community engagement activities should also be carefully coordinated across departments and even with external partners to minimize participation fatigue among community members. Step 6 will cover best practices for community engagement in greater depth.

Step 3.9 Commit to Ongoing Learning and Improvement

As one of our key planning principles, **continuous learning and improvement** is defined as "the continuous gathering and use of information to assess progress, improve organizational practices and services, and drive better outcomes in the long run." Methods for learning from the MAP and improving practices will be covered in greater detail in Step 8. For now, leadership needs to acknowledge the long-term horizon for this work and commit to engaging in a continuous learning and improvement process through which the municipality reflects on its work and makes changes as needed.

Step 3.10 Assess Your Readiness to Act

There is no magic threshold for determining when each of the above steps can be considered complete, but the Readiness Assessment at the end of this section can serve as a guide. It is ultimately up to each jurisdiction to determine whether the appropriate conditions for readiness are already in place, where there may be gaps, and how to go about filling them. It is also important to consider whether the project should launch even if some conditions are not met or whether your municipality doesn't appear ready to take on this work just yet.

If you find that you have met *most* of the readiness conditions, you may proceed further with officially launching your Mobility Action Planning process while crafting a plan to develop your missing readiness conditions in the course of the project.

If you find that you have met *some* of the readiness conditions but remain extremely interested in taking on this work, you might begin by crafting a preparedness plan where you focus on building up your missing readiness conditions and then come back to this work when you've made progress.

Based on our own experiences and the experiences of the counties in the Upward Mobility Cohort, we have found that proceeding further without having many of these readiness conditions in place means it is highly unlikely you will be able to develop a Mobility Action Plan that has the scope, scale, buy-in, and solutions necessary for achieving meaningful results toward boosting mobility from poverty and reducing racial inequities in your community.

If you find that you have met *few to none* of the readiness conditions, we highly recommend postponing the next steps.

STEP THREE REVIEW CHECKLIST

- [ ] You (the Mobility Advocate) have shared the readiness conditions with leadership and understand the steps necessary to meet these conditions.
- [ ] You have worked with leadership to complete the Readiness Assessment to determine your jurisdiction's current level of readiness for moving ahead with the Mobility Action Planning process.
- [ ] Based on the outcome of your readiness assessment, leadership has determined whether to proceed with the Mobility Action Planning process, start with a preparedness plan, or postpone further action until a later date.

STEP THREE

Supplemental Materials

1. Readiness Assessment
2. Sample Internal Launch Language
3. Talking Points for Department Heads and Elected Officials

Readiness Assessment

Readiness condition	Readiness steps	What do you need to address to ensure you have the conditions needed for success?
A clear commitment from local government leadership	☐ Mobility Advocate has shared **Mobility Metrics**, findings, and Framework for Boosting Mobility and Advancing Equity with executive leadership ☐ Executive leadership has explicitly agreed to begin a Mobility Action Planning process ☐ Executive leadership has gotten buy-in from department heads ☐ Mobility Advocate and/or leadership has identified and committed resources to fund the development of a Mobility Action Plan	
Preparedness for cross-sector partnerships across policy domains	☐ Mobility Advocate has taken stock of current municipal partnerships that could be critical to the success of this work ☐ Mobility Advocate has surveyed municipal leadership (even if informally) to learn about whether staff have the time, resources, and humility to manage new relationships ☐ Mobility Advocate has considered ways that local government can be a good partner	
Sufficient organizational capacity to undertake this work	☐ Leadership has assessed whether there are staff who can facilitate the Mobility Action Planning process, and if needed, identified resources to add staff capacity ☐ Mobility Advocate and/or leadership has assessed relevant skills and knowledge among existing staff ☐ Mobility Advocate and/or leadership has identified potential trainings or resources to support knowledge-building and capacity of staff	

Readiness condition	Readiness steps	What do you need to address to ensure you have the conditions needed for success?
	☐ Mobility Advocate has examined policies, procedures, and data systems to ensure sufficient infrastructure is in place for supporting the planning process	
An organizational culture that can support large-scale change	☐ Leadership believes there is a general culture among staff that welcomes progress and improvements to the status quo ☐ Leadership is prepared to actively invite staff to contribute ideas and speak openly about what practices or processes aren't working	
Buy-in from staff across departments	☐ Leadership has identified organizational champions who will bridge work across departments and provide opportunities for staff to give input and shape key project priorities ☐ Organizational champions have shared the approach for Boosting Mobility and Advancing Equity with staff across departments ☐ Organizational champions and/or leadership have held brownbags or other information-sharing sessions to discuss the approach ☐ There is a structure or process in place for future cross-departmental engagement with the process	
A desire to build a shared understanding of structural racism	☐ Leadership has explicitly expressed a commitment to working toward dismantling structural racism and boosting mobility from poverty ☐ The government has publicly acknowledged its role in creating racial inequities (i.e., with a municipal declaration) ☐ The city or county provides opportunities for individual or team-based learning about structural racism, the policies, norms, and	

Readiness condition	Readiness steps	What do you need to address to ensure you have the conditions needed for success?
	practices that have held structural racism in place, and diversity, equity, and inclusion principles ☐ Individual or team-based learning about structural racism and diversity, equity, and inclusion is required for all staff ☐ Mobility Advocate and/or leadership have a plan for hosting discussions among staff, examining past and current policies, and undertaking a shared analysis about race and racial inequity with staff	
Knowledge of the skills and capacity necessary for data gathering and analysis	☐ Mobility Advocate and/or leadership understand the tenets of data quality and what capacity is necessary for assessing the quality of any supplemental data collected ☐ Mobility Advocate and/or leadership understand the importance of secure data storage infrastructure and protocols, as well as analysis software ☐ Mobility Advocate and/or leadership has identified possible funds for training, recruiting, or dedicating staff with the technical skills to clean, integrate, or leverage supplemental data as needed ☐ Mobility Advocate and/or leadership has considered the types of graphics and data visualizations that might be useful for communications	
Dedicated resources for deep and	☐ Mobility Advocate and/or leadership have identified potential funding sources for hosting events and compensating community members and staff for their time	

Readiness condition	Readiness steps	What do you need to address to ensure you have the conditions needed for success?
meaningful community engagement	☐ Municipal staff have experience conducting deep and meaningful community engagement, or Mobility Advocate and/or leadership has considered how to develop that capacity among staff or identify an external partner with these skills.	
A commitment to ongoing learning and improvement	☐ Executive leadership has explicitly committed to undergoing continuous evaluations and assessments related to the Mobility Action Planning process ☐ Mobility Advocate has identified any existing evaluation protocols within local government ☐ Mobility Advocate and/or leadership have identified staff and/or external partners with experience in evaluation, learning, and performance management	

Sample Internal Launch Language

Starting this month, we will be launching a new planning process to boost upward mobility from poverty and reduce racial inequities in [city/county]. This planning process will utilize data from the Urban Institute's Boosting Upward Mobility from Poverty and Advancing Equity project to identify key racial and ethnic disparities and barriers to boosting mobility from poverty in our community. We are launching this planning process because [city/county] is falling behind on indicators that demonstrate how likely someone in our community is to advance out of poverty. We plan to use this opportunity to assess systems in our community against the Mobility Metrics and identify weaknesses or gaps. This project will not duplicate planning already being done by our government.

Rationale for the new planning process

Details about execution of the work

Working with nonprofit, business, philanthropic, anchor institution, and faith-based leaders in our community, we will publish a Mobility Action Plan next year that plots a new course forward for [city/county] and addresses the systems and policies that have created barriers to advancement in our community. This effort will be coordinated alongside the [city's/county's] comprehensive planning effort and build off of last year's poverty action plan.

Who can be involved

This effort will be run by the Department of Human Services. DHS will be creating a cross-departmental working group to engage staff across all county departments. Staff at all levels are invited to attend working group meetings—your expertise and knowledge of departmental strategies will be necessary to identifying gaps in our current policies and programs.

The [municipal leader] has set aside $300,000 for the execution of the mobility action planning process and development of the Mobility Action Plan. These funds will be used for staff training, new technology to support the gathering and analysis of local data, the development of cross-sector partnerships, and staff time on the project, as well as for pass-through funds that we can use to engage nonprofit partners and community members.

Talking Points for Department Heads and Elected Officials

Purpose: These talking points can help Mobility Advocates, department heads, elected officials, and other leadership provide a high-level overview of why their city or county should take on the work to develop a Mobility Action Plan that proposes strategic actions to boost upward mobility from poverty. These points can be adapted as needed.

What Is a Mobility Action Plan?

- A Mobility Action Plan (MAP) is a document that details the strategic actions we will take to boost upward mobility and promote racial equity in our community. It is developed through a Mobility Action Planning process that our government will undertake with cross-sector partners and community members.
- We will use a set of evidence-based, community-level Mobility Metrics developed by the Urban Institute, in combination with other local data and community and stakeholder engagement, to draft a MAP for our community. The MAP will propose new evidence-based strategies to achieve our community's goals.

Why Should We Take on This Work?

- Now is the time to tackle inequities in our community that result from longstanding structural racism, discrimination, and disinvestment. Addressing these inequities will boost the economic competitiveness and prosperity of everyone in our community.
- Our government and many other governments across the country have contributed to inequities by developing racist and discriminatory policies and failing to rectify the disparities that these policies have created.
- These inequities disproportionately impact [people of color, people with low wages, immigrants, youth, people with mental and physical disabilities, people who are justice-involved, the elderly, and people living in rural communities] in our community. When inequities exist in our community, everyone suffers, and our economy is not as strong as it can be.
- With a comprehensive approach that changes the way we and our partners work, we can boost mobility from poverty and reduce racial disparities. Government cannot do this alone—we need everyone in our community to work together.
- Our leaders have the right tools and teams in place to provide resources that promote upward mobility from poverty.

How Do We Do This Work?

- We will undertake an [insert length of time] Mobility Action Planning process, where we will develop partnerships with cross-sector actors across policy domains, conduct deep and meaningful community engagement, access and use data to inform our decisions, and continuously learn and improve from our challenges and successes.

- Boosting mobility from poverty is a pressing need in our community that demands action now. Although we will work with urgency to tackle challenges in our community, boosting mobility from poverty for everyone will likely take years. We commit to doing this work as long as it takes to improve prosperity, health, belonging, and quality of life for everyone.

Who Does This Work?

- We will develop a coalition of committed regional actors, including other local governments, anchor institutions [like the local hospital and university], nonprofits and community-based organizations, research organizations, philanthropic partners [like the local community foundation], members of the private sector, and advocacy groups.
- Collaborating with these key partners will grant us greater access to
    - a diverse group of community members who can help us learn about what's working and what's not,
    - better data that can provide a more complete picture of conditions in our community,
    - more resources and capacity for boosting mobility from poverty, and
    - the levers we need to make lasting systems change.

STEP FOUR

Build Your Coalition for Systems Change

Creating and sustaining the conditions for boosting people out of poverty requires an all-hands-on-deck approach.

Developing your own Mobility Action Plan (MAP) will require you to engage not only other government stakeholders but also external stakeholders whose unique perspectives on community challenges and work across the systems that hold poverty and inequity in place can help you identify and implement the right strategic actions. This is why one of our planning principles is **partnerships with cross-sector actors across policy domains** and why we've emphasized the roles of nonprofit, philanthropic, anchor institution, and private-sector partners throughout this guide. Indeed, one of the chief values of having external partners is that they can help ensure the work will continue beyond the span of a single county executive, council, or mayoral administration.

The fact that poverty persists in the US and that inequities continue to widen in many communities means significant reforms are necessary for reshaping the institutions and systems that affect residents' lives. Bringing about **systems change**—a fundamental shift in practices, underlying values, or norms by local actors that reshapes policies, processes, funding, relationships, and power structures—requires partners to think, act, and collaborate differently than they may have before. Places that make only small program or policy adjustments but otherwise maintain the status quo will likely find their approach insufficient for truly boosting mobility from poverty.

Of course, change for change's sake is unlikely to win many allies, and it won't necessarily boost mobility or advance equity. Systems change should be motivated by the fact that status quo policy approaches have not led to better outcomes for people or communities. Although not every partner will be committed to systems change, all should be invested in improving communities. With that in mind, partners in this work should be prepared to find common ground with organizations with differing ideas of what or how big changes should be.

This section offers a guide to building a cross-sector team capable of creating systems change and boosting mobility from poverty in your community. Moving forward, we'll call the group responsible for executing the mobility action planning process (and some of the MAP strategic actions) the Mobility Coalition. Your Mobility Coalition should expect to spend anywhere from six months to two years on the Mobility Action Planning process (each county in the Upward Mobility Cohort spent between 18 and 21 months developing its MAP). The Mobility Coalition may also decide to keep meeting *after* the MAP has been released to continue coordinating around strategic action implementation, monitoring progress toward goals, and conducting continuous learning and evaluation activities. This section, however, focuses on the responsibilities of the Mobility Coalition during the Mobility Action Planning process.

Coalition members may be involved in the following activities during the Mobility Action Planning process:

- Gathering and analyzing data
- Engaging community members to lift up priorities, analyze data, and contribute to developing solutions
- Interviewing key stakeholders to learn about best practices
- Gaining buy-in from local leadership
- Inventorying current programs, policies, and practices
- Developing communications and other outreach strategies
- Conducting policy research to learn about evidence-based solutions and best practices
- Identifying funding sources for potential strategies
- Drafting the MAP
- Disseminating the MAP among their partners and with community members with whom they work

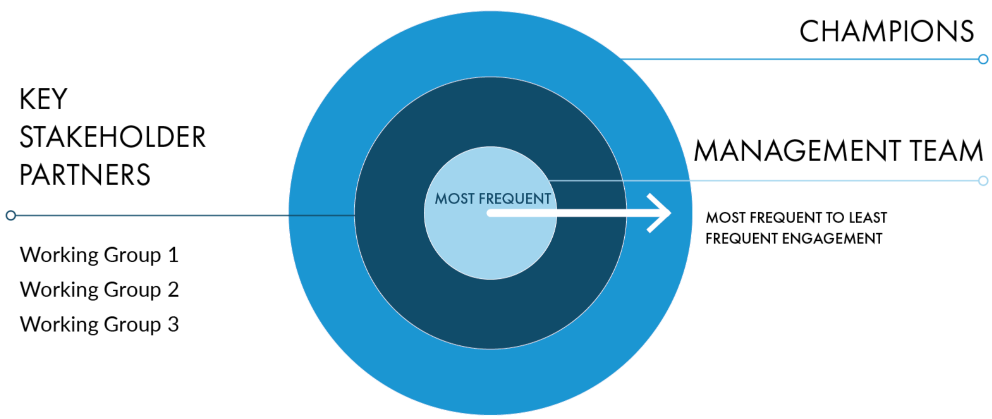


Figure 6: Sample Mobility Coalition diagram

Your Mobility Coalition will be made up of three groups:

1. The Management Team
2. Key Stakeholder Partners
3. Champions

The exact structure of your Mobility Coalition will vary according to the needs of your work. However, the image above with concentric circles demonstrates the frequency at which you should engage each of these groups: the management team is central to the work and will meet most frequently, while the champions are tertiary partners who should be engaged the least frequently (but still at critical junctures in the work). The section below contains more information on each of these groups.

Step 4.1 Assemble the Management Team

Gathering your management team is the first step in forming the full Mobility Coalition. The management team can be composed solely of government staff, but you might also engage consultants or people from partner organizations to fulfill some of these roles. Ideally, anyone you recruit will have relevant experience and the connections, authority, and access to information required to advance the work. Below, we describe some of the key roles that make up the management team and discuss why you might invite external partners or consultants to play some of these roles.

Project Manager

The Project Manager is the operational lead of the entire Mobility Coalition and is responsible for developing the workplan, identifying and liaising with the various working group leads, making sure everyone follows through on their commitments, and troubleshooting challenges. They do not necessarily need to be a government employee, but if a nongovernment person is identified to be the right project manager for the work, they will need the authority and information to lead from outside of government. The graphic below highlights some of the necessary qualities of a good project manager:

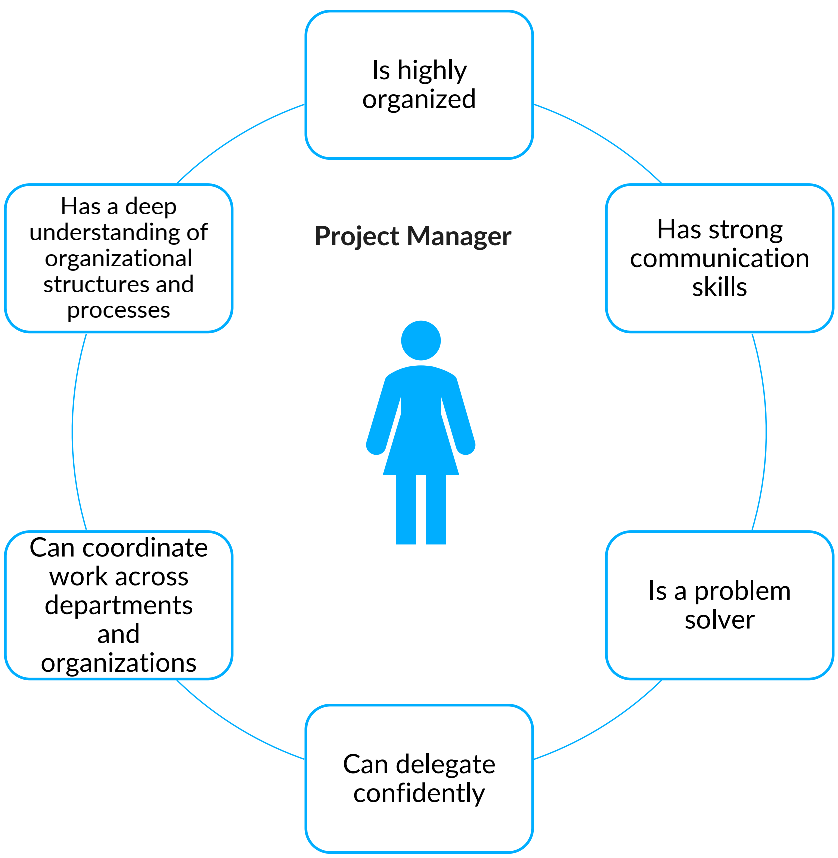


Figure 7: Qualities of a good project manager

Ideally, the person identified as the Project Manager for the Mobility Coalition will be able to devote a significant amount of their workload to the role. Managing many deliverables across departments and organizations requires significant dedication, capacity, and coordination.

Other Management Team Roles

In addition to the Project Manager, several other management team roles may be helpful in executing the core activities of this work. They can be fulfilled by government staff, but the local government may also decide to hire a consultant or engage an external partner. This is especially advisable in situations where no one within local government has time to manage aspects of the work or where an external partner might have better connections or assets.

The paragraphs below offer suggestions on what your other management team roles might be and which external partners might best fill them, should you choose not to have these positions located within government. (We would recommend that they not all be fulfilled by government staff so as to share power across different organizations in your community.) They are based on the roles in the Mobility Coalitions of the Upward Mobility Cohort. Although most of these functions are essential to the work, jurisdictions should consider how to operationalize them because local resources and capacities will vary.

Data Lead

The Data Lead will manage the collection, analysis, and visualization of data as well as the development of a mechanism for regularly gathering and updating data and tracking success metrics. This person should have experience with data disaggregation, using data for storytelling and community engagement, and with executing data sharing agreements. **Research organizations, anchor institutions, universities,** or **other local government** staff might be good places to look for a Data Lead.

Community Engagement Lead

The Community Engagement Lead will plan and possibly facilitate the community engagement activities. This person should have extensive knowledge of engagement methods, be familiar with principles of inclusive and equitable engagement, and have connections to community-based organizations in the city or county. **Nonprofits** or **community-based organizations** might be good places to look for a Community Engagement Lead.

Communications and Outreach Lead

The Communications and Outreach Lead will coordinate both internal and external communication regarding the Mobility Coalition's work. This person should be familiar with communications channels across the region, including social media and platforms used by harder-to-reach populations like English language learners, people without access to internet, and the elderly. **Philanthropies** or **anchor institutions** might be good places to look for a Communications and Outreach Lead.

Upward Mobility Cohort participant **Summit County** hired a marketing consulting firm specializing in culture change and diversity, equity, and inclusion to help with community engagement facilitation and writing the MAP.

Upward Mobility Cohort participant **Philadelphia** engaged a nonprofit partner that provides workforce development programming to help plan and execute their community engagement with formerly justice-involved individuals who had experienced housing instability.

Upward Mobility Cohort participant **St. Lucie County** hired a communications and political polling firm to help with stakeholder surveys, engagement, and the facilitation of meetings and focus groups.

Upward Mobility Cohort participant **Boone County** hired a data and performance management consultant to advise them on results-based accountability and help them conduct a Data Walk.

Learning and Evaluation Lead

The Learning and Evaluation Lead will oversee the codevelopment of success measures (along with the Data Lead and other relevant stakeholders and community members) and create an evaluation plan for the Mobility Action Plan strategic actions. They will also facilitate continuous learning and improvement activities so that the Mobility Coalition can modify strategies over time. This person should have experience with multiple forms of evaluation, organizational improvement, and information-gathering methods, including developmental evaluation, randomized controlled trials, performance management, results-based accountability, qualitative research and interviewing, and systems change. Research organizations or philanthropies might be good places to look for a Learning and Evaluation Lead. The Data Lead may also be the right person to lead the Learning and Evaluation process (described later in this step). If you decide to keep these functions separate, the Data Lead and Learning and Evaluation Lead should work closely together to develop the monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for this work.

Each member of the management team may also decide to organize their own small operations team to provide additional capacity. For example, the Data Lead might gather a group of data analysts from across the government and its partners to assist with data gathering, cleaning, and analysis. The Community Engagement Lead might assemble a small management team composed of individuals from local nonprofits or community-based organizations who have experience working closely with community members. Before leads ask others to contribute time to management team roles, they should have a clear sense of what support they need, how much time and energy they're asking of people, and how they'll work to minimize the burden on these individuals given that doing this work is not their primary job. They should communicate expectations clearly in the request.

Engaging external support can bring critical knowledge and assets to the effort and fill management gaps when the county or city is constrained. If you decide to go this route, you'll need to make sure external partners have the relationships and authority to operative effectively in their roles. To enable their success, you should help set up their introductory meetings, make sure they understand how government decisions are made, figure out logistics such as document sharing and the cadence of check-ins, and support and elevate their requests when necessary to make sure tasks are completed on time.

Step 4.2 Identify Key Stakeholder Partners

Your Key Stakeholder Partners are the members of the Mobility Coalition charged with executing most of the tasks during the mobility action planning process. They may be organized into smaller working groups to lead the research, development, and writing of specific pieces of the MAP. Remember, it is important to think of the government as the host and convener of the Mobility Coalition rather than its lead. For the purposes of this work, the local government is the "backbone organization"—a term coined by nonprofit advisory firm FSG that refers to the "supportive infrastructure for a collective impact initiative."[7]

In the paragraphs below, we present how to identify and engage Key Stakeholder Partners.

Keep in mind that this group will likely grow or change once you've done a deeper dive into your data (discussed in the next step) and know what your key priorities and activities will be. Revisit this list at the end of Step 6 and add members to the Coalition as needed.

In forming a new Mobility Coalition, it's helpful to begin by learning who is currently working on the issues you're hoping to address and whether they might be appropriate partners. No one wants to be part of yet another project that duplicates efforts already under way. Rather than reinventing the wheel, talk to your partners about how you might align your efforts and fill important gaps. There may be a collective impact initiative in your community, such as in the Riverside County example below, that is already working on some of the policy issues you hope to tackle. In that event, engage relevant groups early to see how you might collaborate to advance your mutual goals, and be prepared to make the case for how working with you will benefit their cause.

Lift to Rise is a collective impact organization based in **Riverside County, California**. The organization was founded in 2014 when a group of community-based organizations serving Riverside County's Coachella Valley came together to discuss using a collective impact approach to address issues like housing instability and economic insecurity. The initial work focused on housing instability and transformed the County's ability to successfully partner with cross-sector organizations. Together with Lift to Rise, they built a powerful collective-action network of more than 50 regional stakeholders who collectively developed a cross-sector housing agenda that is still in operation.

Three years after this work started, Riverside County and Lift to Rise adapted the successful collective-action model for their participation in the Urban Institute's Upward Mobility Cohort, using lessons learned from extensive community listening and qualitative research and working with resident leaders to shape their priorities around economic opportunity and mobility. They relied on existing partnerships with local stakeholders to reach residents with lived experience and utilized Lift to Rise's analytic capacity to understand relevant data. Importantly, the County shared resources from the Mobility Cohort grant directly with Lift to Rise to support dedicated staff for resident engagement, data analytics, and project management. By building on an existing collaboration, Riverside County and Lift to Rise were able to move quickly to identify priorities, locate additional datasets, and facilitate community engagement and collective action planning. Lift to Rise was able to bring in other important partners, including the Desert Healthcare District and the InlandSoCalHousing Collective.

You can create a stakeholder inventory by brainstorming a list of the various local actors working on mobility from poverty. Feel free to use the **Stakeholder Inventory Worksheet** at the end of this step to assist with your brainstorming.

Larger cities and counties—and some smaller communities—may have an abundance of existing and potential partners they can include in their inventory. Given our approach for Boosting Upward Mobility and Advancing Equity, you might begin by identifying potential partners whose work is focused on promoting **power and autonomy** and **being valued in community**, who have a strong **racial equity** approach, who are well regarded among community members for delivering high-quality programs, and/or who have experience with **data-informed decisionmaking** and working with multiple partners. A single partner doesn't need all of these capacities, but the Mobility Coalition should be made up of individuals that cover these areas.

On the other hand, engaging a broad range of stakeholders may not be achievable right away, especially if the local government does not have a culture of external partnership or the leadership to advocate for it (see Step 3). You may also work in a city or county with a particularly large bureaucracy and a lot of its own capacity to conduct this work. In this case, you might initially engage external partners on an ad-hoc basis. External partners can still be helpful if they are brought in at critical junctures and given meaningful opportunities to share ideas, advice, and feedback. This approach can also help the city or county build the relationships and trust necessary to create a more robust coalition.

As you brainstorm, consider adding stakeholders to your inventory from the following types of organizations:

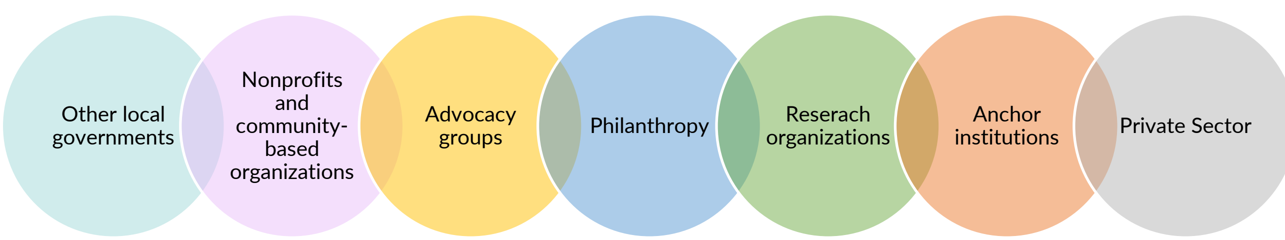


Figure 8: Sectors from which to invite partners for the Mobility Coalition

…from the following domains:

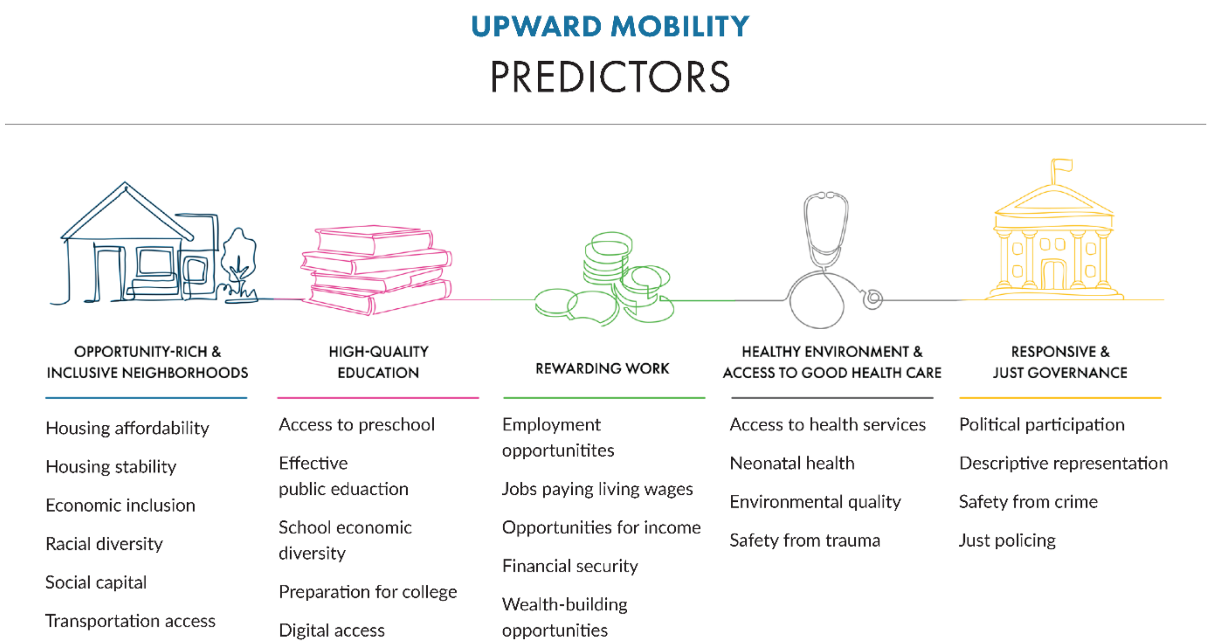


Figure 9: Upward Mobility Predictors

…and who serve or represent the following key population groups:

- People of color
- People with disabilities
- English-language learners
- Workers making low wages
- People experiencing housing instability or homelessness
- Disengaged youth
- People who involved with the justice system
- LGBTQ+ people
- People age 65 and older

If your list of partners looks long, that's okay! This is just the inventory step. From here, you'll narrow the list by looking for "critical partners," without whom you would not be able to execute the Mobility Action Planning process; successfully identify policy, practice, and programmatic gaps; or implement the ideas that you eventually develop.

To identify critical partners, ask these questions about the potential individuals and organizations listed in your inventory:

- **Aligned initiatives:** What activities or initiatives does the organization undertake that might align with our efforts to boost mobility from poverty and bring about **racial equity**? Do they currently have an internal- or external-facing racial equity initiative or conduct **deep and meaningful community engagement**? Does their work focus on promoting **power and autonomy** and **being valued in community** among participants? Are they focused on **systems change**?
- **Assets:** What assets might this stakeholder bring to the partnership? Assets might include things like research and analytic capability, staff, financial resources, political clout, key relationships, strong connections to community members, fundraising capacity, experience creating a narrative change campaign, convening power, **data-informed decisionmaking**, or a strong racial equity approach.
- **Partnership:** How would the potential partner benefit from working with the local government?
- **Motivations:** What motivates this organization? Who or what are they accountable to and what drives them to action?
- **Roles:** Are there individuals working for this organization who have critical frontline or technical knowledge that will be key to transforming systems and responding to community members' needs?

Once you've had a chance to respond to these questions regarding potential partners, some will likely stand out as being most critical to invite to your Mobility Coalition. Because you will need to revisit the initial list of partners throughout the Mobility Action Planning process, it's fine to start out with a slightly smaller group and add others over time. Eventually, you might break the key stakeholder partners into working groups centered around specific community priorities or activities.

Another thing to keep in mind is that some of the organizations on the list might be good candidates for a "keep informed" category. Organizations in this category need not be formally engaged as part of the Mobility Coalition but should be kept in the loop about work being completed as they may still be responsible for implementing elements of the MAP.

Community members as Mobility Coalition members: Once you have selected specific organizations to join the Mobility Coalition, we encourage you to work with them to bring in community member partners as well. For the purposes of this project, "community members" are people who are currently experiencing poverty, were previously in poverty, and/or are people of color who have experienced discrimination and barriers to success as a result of structural racism, discrimination, and prejudice. Community members can contribute unique perspectives that those who have traditionally held wealth or power cannot. Although these individuals may work for organizations that could already be considered key stakeholders on the project, ideally you will invite community members to participate as individuals who have engaged with local services and systems designed to alleviate poverty.

To identify individual community members who could serve on the Mobility Coalition, you might begin by asking for recommendations from nonprofit or community-based organization partners.

When engaging community members in a leadership role, it is important to pay participants for their time and expertise (because they may not be participating in their professional capacity like the other Coalition members are) and provide them with the materials, information, and/or training to understand the various systems and predictors you'll be working on. Extra attention should be paid to how power dynamics in the Mobility Coalition might discourage community members from speaking up or block opportunities for them to lead pieces of the work. The onus to mitigate this challenge is on the management team, not the community members.

Note that inviting community members to join the Mobility Coalition is *supplemental to* doing community engagement on this project. You will still need to engage a wider group of community members to inform your MAP. This process will be covered in more detail in Step 6.

Step 4.3 Identify Champions

Champions make up the final category of Mobility Coalition participants. Champions need not attend every planning meeting, but they should be influential individuals who can support critical aspects of the work, such as determining direction and scope, persuading individuals who are difficult to bring in to the work, seeking buy-in from elected officials, reviewing the MAP, and launching the MAP publicly. Below are some qualities of a good champion:

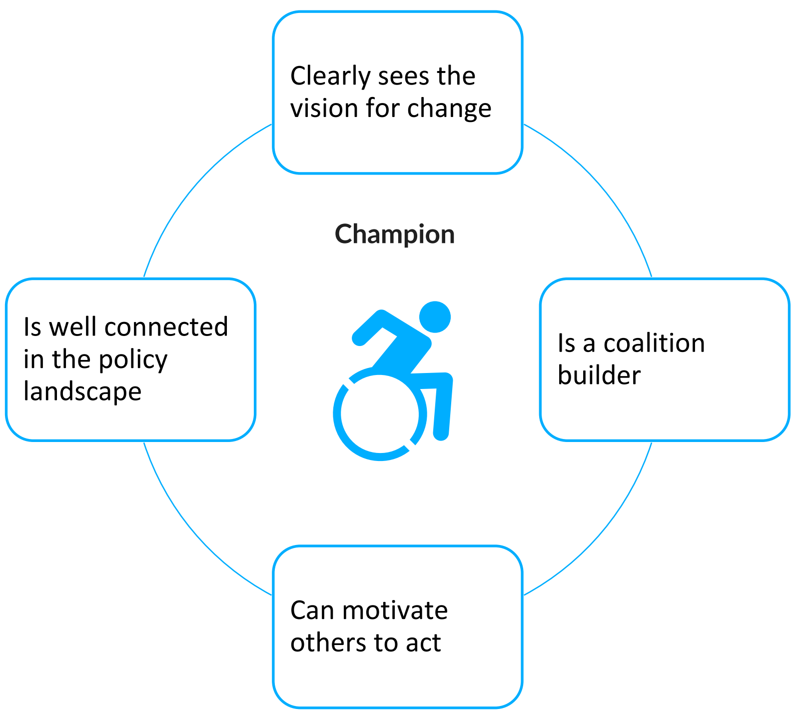


Figure 10: Qualities of a good champion

Champions have several responsibilities:

- Coordinating and convening additional stakeholders who may not have worked together before
- Liaising with policymakers and elected officials to gain their buy-in for the work
- Advocating publicly for the work, especially with individuals who need to be persuaded of its importance or persuaded to participate
- Fundraising for the strategic actions in the MAP
- When needed, helping to enact policy change
- Sharing progress updates and reporting on early wins

Like the key stakeholder partners, champions may be found both within and outside of government. There may be champions within partner organizations whose job is to help promote the work of the Mobility Coalition or advocate for specific policies or programs publicly. For example, many community foundations have served as the champions for local inclusive economic development and education initiatives. However, because this work will be launched by the local government, it is critical for there to be at least one strong champion—and ideally several—within government.

Step 4.4 Make the Request

Joining the Mobility Coalition requires a substantial commitment of time, trust, and social capital. Thoughtfully framing the ask to each potential partner or champion is key to starting the Mobility Coalition off on the right foot. Whoever has the most direct relationship with the identified partner or champion should make a direct, personalized request that includes a rationale for the invitation, shares what resources or support they will be given in exchange for partner's or champion's time and expertise, introduces them to the Project Manager, and proposes how the city or county is planning to share power during the work.

Invitations should also include a note about what makes this effort different from others the government has undertaken. For example, many successful cross-sector initiatives began because local leaders became aware of some startling statistic about their community and decided to take action to address it. As you prepare to launch your Mobility Coalition, consider sharing the some of your **Mobility Metrics** from Step 2 to illustrate why change is needed.

The **Charlotte-Mecklenburg** Opportunity Task Force was launched in response to the Equality of Opportunity study published by Harvard University and the University of California, Berkeley. The study ranked the Charlotte area as the worst region for upward mobility for children born into the lowest income quintile out of 50 of the largest metropolitan areas in the US (Chetty, Hendren, Kline, and Saez 2014). Upset by the clear evidence of segregation and intergenerational poverty, the county commission chair and a group of nonprofit leaders decided to launch a task force to investigate the problem and recommend a plan of action for the County (Opportunity Insights 2020).

The Urban Institute's 2018 research on economic mobility in California's largest cities revealed that **Fresno** ranked last out of 59 cities for economic and racial disparity.[8] In response to this poor ranking and to the call by California Governor Gavin Newsom to develop a comprehensive economic plan for the whole state, a group of civic, community, and business leaders came together to launch the DRIVE Initiative, a 10-year investment plan to develop an inclusive, vibrant, and sustainable economy for residents of the greater Fresno region.[9]

At the end of this Step, we provide a **Sample Outreach Letter** in the supplemental materials.

Step 4.5 Launch the Mobility Coalition

In the first few months that the Mobility Coalition is active, it will be important to make time for a few kickoff activities (listed below in a recommended sequential order). We have included some sample agendas at the end of this step that can help you set up your first few meetings. We also provide links to external resources that can help you develop an agenda or session plan.

Get Acquainted

People working closely together will need time to get to know one another and understand how each partner fits into the overall puzzle. You may want to create opportunities for partners to present about their organization's work and why they care about boosting mobility from poverty and advancing equity, especially because some partners will be new to working with the county or city or will not have had opportunities to join similar coalitions in the past. Making space for team building and introductions will help ensure new voices don't get sidelined and are treated equitably in decisionmaking.

Discuss Expectations and Roles

It is important to make space at the outset for partners to discuss their expectations and hopes for the Mobility Coalition. In particular, the coalition should plan to discuss expectations about the frequency of meetings, which communication platforms they will use, what role each member will play in the coalition, and how decisions will be made. Although it may be typical for the local government to set expectations in isolation, we encourage a more collaborative approach to developing shared norms and expectations. Although you won't write the full MAP until you've completed all phases of the planning process, it will be important to identify whose role it is to eventually assemble the pieces and write any additional text needed to put together the final MAP. Start to think about who this should be so they can prepare themselves for the role.

Determine How Decisions Will Be Made

The coalition will need to define how decisions will be made, who gets to provide input, and who makes final calls. Coalitions could adopt a consensus model, use majority rule, or leave the government lead to decide after considering input from others (see Step 7 for more information about decisionmaking models).

Begin Developing Common Values and Narratives

As has been pointed out in much of the literature on systems change, tackling a complex problem without a shared understanding of its cause can lead to fragmented and/or inadequate solutions. Removing the barriers that systems have created and sustained requires partners to develop common values and agree on a cohesive narrative about what has caused the community's challenges. It's likely that people in your Coalition will have different understandings about how **racial inequities** came to be and that they will have varying levels of comfort talking about privilege or experiences with racism. Shared Analysis is a discussion approach through which participants learn about the history of racism in their community, establish a common framework and language for discussing race and equity matters, develop strategies for discussing tough subjects in a respectful and honest way, and learn how to redefine leadership structures and roles so as to create **racial equity**–focused strategies.[10]

Strive for Mutually Supportive and Sustainable Partnerships

The following principles, gathered from the literature on collective action, racial equity, and stakeholder engagement, will be key to building and working with your team for systems change:

- **Ask not (only) what your partner can do for you**. Typically, we partner with organizations that offer something we need—we may want to leverage their networks or utilize some of their funding and resources to amplify our own goals. However, creating strong and resilient partnerships and sustaining work over several years requires partners to mutually reinforce one another's work. Developing strong, mutually supportive relationships with your partners will promote coordination and equity in your policy development. In practice, this means assessing your own resources, networks, and capacities to see what you can share with others and showing up to events hosted by your partners in support.
- **Commit to racial equity as both a process and a goal.** Setting a goal to create more racially equitable outcomes in your community while not addressing how individuals in your Mobility Coalition think about, embody, and practice equity will likely lead to insufficient solutions. What's more, it's likely that each person in your coalition will have very different opinions about and experiences of racial equity. To create an effective and cohesive coalition, you must seek to build a common understanding of what equity means to the group and how each person's identity might contribute to their understanding of equity, build trust among coalition members and with community leaders and members, invite individuals to the coalition who can share lived experience and content expertise, and commit to disaggregating data and conducting **deep and meaningful community engagement**.
- **Focus on continuous learning and improvement as a path to systems change.** The systems that block racial equity and mobility are complex and dynamic. Actively learning whether organizational structures, relationships, or industry norms are hindering you or helping you achieve your goals and then adapting approaches as needed is critical to doing this work well. This requires taking time to reflect on how partnerships are working and what could improve coordination.

- **Share power authentically.** Although the local government may be the coordinating body of this work, you should include external partners at every stage, giving them real ownership and opportunities to inform and shape decisions.
- **Be patient.** Forging sustainable partnerships cannot be done quickly. It's important to take the time to learn about your partners and their values, goals, and approaches to the work. Even after launching your Mobility Coalition, be patient with one another—creating the conditions to boost mobility from poverty and advance equity will likely take years. Carefully forging your partnerships early on and devoting work to maintaining them will lead to more meaningful collaboration over time.

STEP FOUR REVIEW CHECKLIST

- [ ] The Management Team has been assembled.
- [ ] Key stakeholder partners, community members, and champions have been invited to join the Mobility Coalition.
- [ ] The Mobility Coalition has officially launched with an initial meeting.
- [ ] All roles and decisionmaking processes have been determined.
- [ ] There is a plan in place to develop shared values and narratives on the Mobility Coalition.

STEP FOUR

Supplemental Materials

1. Sample Partner Outreach Letter
2. Launching the Mobility Coalition Sample Agendas
3. Stakeholder Inventory Worksheet

Sample Partner Outreach Letter

Dear Tamika,

The City has decided to launch a new cross-sector, cross-domain partnership focused on boosting mobility from poverty and advancing equity for residents with low incomes and residents of color. Though efforts to boost mobility have been going on for decades in the city, recent data from the Urban Institute show that over 50 percent of our residents have debt in collections and that our median incomes are the lowest among cities of a similar size. What's more, only 40 percent of 3- and 4-year-olds are enrolled in nursery school or preschool. This problem is particularly acute for children of color.

Rationale for the ask

These data are proof that what we've been trying isn't working. It's time for a reset on our work so that we can better align initiatives among the various organizations working in the city, focus on changing systems and ending structural racism, and become more coordinated in our application for the resources we need to do this work. We recognize that the City has a lot more work to do on this front, which is why we wanted to invite you to join our new Mobility Coalition, which aims to boost mobility from poverty and advance equity over the next five years. We are specifically interested in having Homes for Vets as part of our team because of your exemplary work—we've seen how you have used data-informed decisionmaking in locating homeless services and have heard that you have some of the best supportive services out there. We at the City and others in the group have a lot to learn from you.

We know you already have a lot of work on your plate and we value what you might bring to this partnership. We are proposing to give your organization $25,000 per year for your participation. We have also been thinking about how to make sure that this effort is a true partnership. Although the City will serve as the backbone organization to coordinate and manage the work, we will be asking various partners to lead subgroups, present their work, and provide the needed practical expertise to ensure the identified solutions fit the communities that need them.

What resources or support you're giving them

How the city is planning to share power with partners

On that note—if you decide to accept my offer, I was wondering if I might invite you to lead a session at our kickoff meeting. Thank you for the work you do in our community and for considering my request,

City Council Member Jones

Launching the Mobility Coalition Sample Agendas

Use the sample agenda and some of the suggested prompts below to develop your own agendas for your initial Mobility Coalition meetings.

Introductions and Team Building

- Welcome remarks
  - Project Manager
  - City or county champion
- Introductions
  - Introduce yourself: Name, pronouns, and affiliations
  - Ice breaker questions:
    - What motivated you to join this work as a coalition member?
    - What do you hope to learn from your peers through this work?
    - What do you hope we accomplish as a coalition?
    - What are you most proud of in the work that you're currently doing?
- Work Overview
  - Present the Framework for Boosting Mobility and Advancing Equity and your community's Mobility Metrics
  - Preview that several early meetings will be spent learning about and discussing the Framework
- Q&A
- Next steps

Discussing Expectations

- Welcome and Goals
- Introduce Management Team leads
- Discuss workstyles
  - How do you prefer to receive and communicate information?
  - How do you engage best with others?
  - What opportunities or constraints does your department or organization create for our work?
  - How does the approval process work for your department or organization?
- Agree on norms that will guide the relationships between people on the Mobility Coalition

- Collaboratively set expectations for the Coalition
    - How frequently should our Coalition meet so as to advance the work and not overburden members who have other responsibilities?
    - Which forms of communication does your team or office use?
    - Which forms of communication do you like using most? Why?
    - What does a respectful relationship between Coalition members look like to you?
    - What does a disrespectful relationship between Coalition members look like to you?
    - How should we decide what and when we share our work publicly?
    - How much time can we reasonably expect you to spend on this work each month?

Deciding How Decisions Will Be Made

- Welcome
- Ice breaker
    - What is a value you hold that you want to see come through the coalition decisionmaking process?
- Discuss how various partners typically make decisions
    - Who gets to provide input? Who has the final call?
- Present different decisionmaking methods
    - Consensus model
    - Majority rule
    - Unanimous support
    - Simple majority or plurality
    - Internal government authority
- Debate and agree on the decisionmaking model that the Mobility Coalition will adopt
- Determine Accountability Measures
    - Who is accountable when decisions are not properly met or implemented?
    - How will responsibilities be delegated and distributed across the Coalition?

Stakeholder Inventory Worksheet

Instructions: Use this worksheet to brainstorm a list of potential partner organizations to join your Mobility Coalition. As you start, we encourage you to consider potential partners broadly to include those already doing this type of work, partners that the local government has never worked with before, and those who may oppose your cause but whose participation will be critical to success. Below we highlight some questions you can ask yourself to identify partners to bring into your coalition and what value they would add. They should be answered based on your preliminary review of the Mobility Metrics data and returned to once you've conducted a more comprehensive analysis of the available data in your community.

Part 1: Identify Target Groups and Who Can Support Action

1. Which of the following groups of people are falling behind according to the Mobility Metrics?
   - ☐ People of color
     - A specific racial or ethnic group____
   - ☐ People with disabilities
   - ☐ English-language learners
   - ☐ Workers making low wages
   - ☐ People experiencing housing instability or homelessness
   - ☐ Disengaged youth
   - ☐ People involved in the justice system
   - ☐ Residents with low incomes
   - ☐ Middle-class residents
   - ☐ Other______________________________

2. Which of the following predictors is of greatest concern to you?
   - ☐ Housing affordability
   - ☐ Housing stability
   - ☐ Economic inclusion
   - ☐ Racial diversity
   - ☐ Social capital
   - ☐ Access to preschool
   - ☐ Effective public education
   - ☐ School economic diversity
   - ☐ Preparation for college
   - ☐ Digital access
   - ☐ Employment opportunities
   - ☐ Jobs paying living wages
   - ☐ Opportunities for income
   - ☐ Financial security
   - ☐ Wealth-building opportunities
   - ☐ Access to health services
   - ☐ Neonatal health
   - ☐ Environmental quality
   - ☐ Safety from trauma
   - ☐ Political participation
   - ☐ Descriptive representation
   - ☐ Safety from crime
   - ☐ Just policing

3. What assets does your Mobility Coalition need?
   - ☐ Research and analytic capacity
   - ☐ Staff
   - ☐ Financial resources
   - ☐ Political clout
   - ☐ Strong connections to community members
   - ☐ Experience conducting deep and meaningful community engagement
   - ☐ Fundraising capacity
   - ☐ Convening power
   - ☐ Data-informed decisionmaking experience
   - ☐ A strong racial equity approach
   - ☐ Data sharing
   - ☐ Other________________________

Part 2: What Existing Partnerships Do You Have?

Use this section to list the names of the stakeholders with whom you currently have a good partnership and who serve one of your target populations, does work in one of the priority predictors, or has assets that would benefit the work of the Coalition.

Organization name	Type of organization	Target populations served	Domains of work	Assets
e.g., Forest City Asset Builders	Nonprofit	Disengaged youth, residents with low-incomes, people of color	Financial security, housing stability	Strong data-sharing capabilities; experience conducting deep and meaningful community engagement
e.g., Forest City Community College	Anchor Institution	Residents with low-incomes, English Language Learners, workers with low-wages	Employment opportunities, opportunities for income	Convening power, research and analytic capacity, political clout

Part 3: Where Are There Opportunities to Build New Partnerships?

Use this matrix to identify partners who can help advance this work and who serve one of your target populations, does work in one of the priority predictors, or has assets that would benefit the work of the Coalition.

	Organization name	Target populations served	Domain of work	Assets
Nonprofit and CBOs				
Anchor institution				
Faith-based community				
Other local government				
Philanthropy				
Research organization				
Private sector				
Advocacy organization				

Part 4: How could these partners' participation benefit the work of the Coalition?

Start listing your existing or potential partnerships in the matrix below and identify how their participation could benefit the work of the Coalition. Using the questions in Step 4.2 of this guide, complete this exercise for as many partners as you'd like.

Identified partner	Aligned initiatives	Motivations for joining	Roles	Barriers to partnership/how they're a good partner
Ex. Forest City Asset Builders	Wealth-Building for All campaign	They want to expand their wealth-building programming to a wider audience in the city	Forest City AB Director as champion; Forest City AB Data	They have a long history of work in this space that we can learn a lot from. However,

Identified partner	Aligned initiatives	Motivations for joining	Roles	Barriers to partnership/how they're a good partner
			Analyst as Data Team Lead	they may be skeptical of people for whom this work is a newfound interest.
Ex. Forest City Chamber of Commerce	Forest City Small Business Loan program	They want to increase their contacts with key stakeholders in the city.	Forest City Chamber Director as Communications Lead	They have the ear of the business sector in our city and can help us bring these critical actors into our strategy. However, they may be reticent to support some of the more progressive policies advocated for by this group.

Part 5: Develop Your Invite List

Based on the outcomes from these exercises, a few organizations or people will likely stand out as being critical to invite to join your Mobility Coalition. (Remember that you may also find individuals or organizations on this list who instead belong in a "keep informed" category.) Reviewing your notes from above, create a final list of invitees to join the Mobility Coalition. You should also use your notes about what assets they can bring and what makes them a good partner in your outreach letters.

Potential coalition member	Organization	Who will send invitation?

As mentioned, because you will need to revisit the initial list of partners throughout the MAP development process, it's fine to start out with a slightly smaller group and add others over time.

STEP FIVE

Develop an Initial Understanding of Local Mobility Conditions

Now that the Mobility Coalition has been assembled and launched, it is time to begin building a shared understanding of local mobility conditions among the group. Pairing the **Mobility Metrics**—which provide a surface-level understanding of issues—with supplementary local data and information (such as administrative data, historical records, inventories of current action, or survey data) and qualitative insights from your community can help you identify the causes underlying the problems and successes you witness or diagnose.

Before you consider what strategic actions can address poverty and racial inequities in your community, you must first create a comprehensive set of insights about the conditions blocking mobility from poverty and equity in your community. This section will guide you through the steps to developing the Summary of Upward Mobility Findings section of your Mobility Action Plan. The Summary of Upward Mobility Findings should holistically address local challenges to upward mobility and equity, requiring a comprehensive approach that

- reflects the **three-part definition of mobility from poverty**, including economic success, power and autonomy, and being valued in community;
- centers **racial equity** and engages impacted communities in decisionmaking;
- uses **continuous learning and improvement** practices to assess progress, improve organizational practices and services, and drive better outcomes; and
- is thoughtful about the interconnections of multiple policy issues reflected in the predictors.

Understanding local mobility conditions is an iterative process that may involve multiple cycles of working internally as a Mobility Coalition and engaging with external stakeholders. We encourage you to regularly revisit the activities from this step throughout the Mobility Action Planning process to continually refine your analysis. You can see examples of the Summary of Upward Mobility Findings from our Upward Mobility Cohort here: https://upward-mobility.urban.org/mobility-action-plans.

Step 5.1 Review Your Local Mobility Metrics as a Coalition

The first step in building a shared understanding of local mobility conditions is for each Mobility Coalition member to access and review the **Mobility Metrics** on their own. As a reminder, the Mobility Metrics for your jurisdiction can be accessed at http://upward-mobility.urban.org/data.

To have individual members record their reflections on the metrics, pass out the Mobility Metrics Data Review Guide found at the end of this section, which is similar to the Mobility Metrics Data Review Guide from Step 2 but also includes prompts for group discussion about additional data sources. It is most useful to introduce this guide as a flexible resource designed to both inspire and capture the Mobility Coalition's thoughts and reflections, rather than as a rigid rubric.

Next, the coalition will come together to discuss their reflections as a group. If your coalition has engaged a Data Lead, they should facilitate this process because they will best understand and notice data pitfalls and opportunities. For example, it is important to understand what the numbers in a given metric mean. If the outcome is a ratio, is it better to be closer to zero or to one? If it is a percentage, is it better for it to be lower or higher? The Data Lead should read the Mobility Metrics documentation and footnotes on the Mobility Metrics data page to learn more about what the data show. Members with less experience may benefit from some explanatory text as well as a group discussion to help them understand and interpret the numbers they see in the tables and charts provided. The Mobility Coalition may also decide to engage a research organization or anchor institution partner to help with this process.

The Data Lead should also consider (1) whether the entire team ought to participate in this exercise, and (2) the amount of time needed to complete it. For example, another viable alternative is to have a few key members answer the questions and circulate the document for comments and feedback to save other stakeholders' time. The Data Lead should also set expectations by clearly communicating how individual responses will be shared (if at all) before they start the exercise.

For a step-by-step walk through of how to use the below Guide alongside the Mobility Metrics, please refer to Steps 2.1 to 2.3.

Before the discussion, the Data Lead should compile the insights, questions, and potential data sources brainstormed by each member in isolation. Once the Data Lead or Project Manager has received responses from all members, the full Mobility Coalition should gather to compare responses and discuss. In preparation for this convening, see **Preparing for Your Mobility Metrics Coalition Meeting** included in the supplemental materials for this step. The goal for these discussions is to come to a consensus or form an initial narrative about the critical barriers to upward mobility in your community based on what Mobility Coalition members have gleaned from the Mobility Metrics. The gaps and uncertainties in this narrative will highlight where you will need to invest in gathering more and/or different information, a process that will be covered in more detail in Step 6.

Step 5.2 Identify and Collect Supplemental Data Sources

Although the Mobility Metrics can be a helpful starting point for understanding local conditions, they provide only a surface-level understanding of issues and cannot illuminate underlying causes. The Mobility Metrics are based on data from nationally available sources, which makes it easy to see how a community compares to other places across the country but limits the set of variables included and their specificity to local contexts. In any given predictor, the factors that influence people's outcomes are various and multifaceted. Pairing the Mobility Metrics with supplementary local data (such as administrative data, historical records, or survey data) and qualitative insights from your community can help you identify the causes underlying the problems and successes you witness or diagnose.

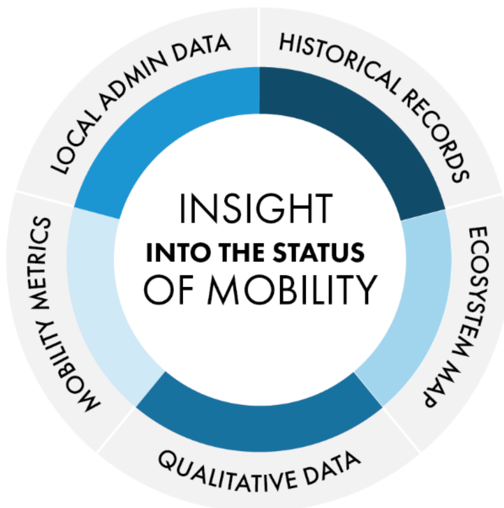


Figure 11: Insight into the status of mobility

Having reflected and filled out their individual Discussion Guide, Mobility Coalition members will have brainstormed potential data assets that can be tapped for further information and insight. In preparation for the Mobility Metrics Coalition Meeting, the full coalition should gather to compare responses and agree on a plan, including roles and responsibilities, for gathering additional local data. In preparation for this convening, see the **Sample Agenda to Determine Next Steps for Data Collection** at the end of this step.

Again, the Mobility Coalition's Data Lead is best positioned to navigate the collection and analysis of supplemental data because they will better understand and notice data pitfalls and opportunities. The Data Lead may wish to organize a separate Data Team consisting of Coalition members or data staff from their organizations who are able to do the legwork of gathering the supplemental data. Furthermore, consider that depending on the regulatory structures of security barriers they face, data procurement processes could take months, especially if data-sharing or data-use agreements need to be negotiated.

Factor in this lead time when setting expectations, determining deadlines, and evaluating the capacity of the responsible party over time. If data exist that prove impossible for the Data Team to collect at this time but would be critical information to have for understanding mobility from poverty in your community, make note of this. You can include gathering that data as a potential strategic action in your MAP. For more information on building a data team and writing data-sharing or data-use agreements, see these resources:

> Getting the Most Out of Your Community's Administrative Data: A series of five publications that can help states, municipalities, and local organizations identify, link, and analyze the administrative data sources in their communities to better track the outcomes of the social services they deliver.

NNIP Lessons on Local Data Sharing: A short blog post on lessons learned about data sharing from the National Neighborhood Indicators Partnership.

NNIP's Collection of Data-Sharing Agreements: A catalog of sample memorandums of understanding and data-sharing agreements from the National Neighborhood Indicators Partnership.

As you evaluate which of the potential supplementary data options to pursue, remember that quality is more important than quantity. When constructing the suite of Mobility Metrics, researchers at the Urban Institute had to evaluate and discard many potential alternative data sources that fell short of the standard of quality you need to rely on insights these data might provide. To get a sense of what data sources may not be worth pursuing, please consult the report that documents that process.

It is also important to carefully consider your needs, priorities, and logistic feasibility before investing time into collecting and analyzing further information. When evaluating a potential supplementary data source, consider the following questions:

1. Are these data going to give you insights that you cannot find with information you already have access to?
   a. What information gap would these data fill?
   b. Is this information gap a high priority, or something it would be nice to learn?
2. Are these data available at the geography of interest to you?
3. Are these data representative of the entire community?
   a. Could there be populations or areas that the data misrepresent or leave out because of how they are collected?
4. Are these data timely and relevant?
   a. How far back do these data go?
   b. Will these data continue to be collected consistently in the future?
   c. When was the most recent collection of the data source?
   d. Have these data been collected reliably and consistently over time?
5. Do these data exist in a format compatible with your systems and analysis capacity?
   a. How and where are these data stored?
   b. Does this storage method affect its accessibility?
6. Are these data housed by a partner organization?
   a. Are they held by an organization that would be willing to contract with your team for access and could easily provide it?

   b. Does your Mobility Coalition provide points of contact or access to such organizations?

7. Are there any data privacy laws (i.e., HIPAA) that govern the use of this data?

   a. If yes and it is not available at the person-level, could you ask partners to share a summary of the data?

   b. If a high-level summary of the data is all you can access, will it still be helpful to you?

Throughout the process of identifying and collecting supplemental data, the Data Lead should be sure to consider the relationships within or connected to your Mobility Coalition that might directly or indirectly provide access to data:

Government partners **can shed light on** Mobility Metrics **and access additional data to supplement those metrics.** They may know of existing memorandums of understanding or data-use agreements that you can leverage to access relevant information.

Anchor institutions **may hold data that can be used to assess local conditions.** For example, hospitals collect data about the communities they serve in a Community Health Needs Assessment. Universities may have data through university-run research projects. Universities may also have some technical capacity for gathering and analyzing data.

Nonprofits and community-based organizations **typically collect programmatic data to understand the success of the programs they deliver.** If possible, you might consider working with a group of nonprofits and CBOs to systematize their collection of data so it can be aggregated at the city or county level.

Philanthropic partners **may be a funding source for this work.** They may be able to support nonprofit and CBO partners in expanding their data collection efforts, as mentioned.

Research organizations **can play a key role in assessing data quality and in planning and implementing original data collection.** They can also conduct evaluations about currently operating interventions to assess their effectiveness or impact.

Private-sector companies **can provide local data to paint a fuller picture of community conditions**. However, because of laws that regulate the collection and sharing of personal data, you should engage them early in data-gathering discussions.

Advocacy groups **can be a key source of historical context on data and information on a specific policy topic.** However, because of their nature as advocacy groups, you should consider other sources of information that can complement their data advocating for a specific cause.

Community members **already in the Mobility Coalition can suggest additional metrics that align with key mobility predictors.** They can share lived experience and help the rest of the coalition understand whether Mobility Metrics outcomes align with community experiences. They may also be able to suggest other local data sources.

Step 5.3 Analyze Your Supplemental Quantitative Data

Once your Data Team has had a chance to gather the supplemental quantitative data you prioritized to fill knowledge gaps (which may be several months after your initial discussion about what you need), they will need to link this new information to the **Mobility Metrics** and reassess early conclusions with this added information and context. The team should then present these conclusions to the Mobility Coalition. As a result of this work, each person in the Data Team should be able to write a summary about the supplemental data they gathered for their metric of interest, like the example seen here:

The Neonatal Health Metric for our county shows that a larger share of Black Non-Hispanic babies—14.6 percent—are born with low weights, which is 100 percent higher than for white babies (7 percent).

After convening to determine our shared concerns around limited understanding of the underlying factors driving the statistic we saw, our team gathered additional national and locally available data to learn more about the combination of barriers that contribute to low-weight births and lack of access to maternal health care. We worked with partners internal to our county's government and with external community partners who serve mothers and newborns to identify other **Mobility Metrics** and local data that could help us understand more about the root causes of the problem:

Mobility Metrics:

- household income at 20th, 50th, and 80th percentiles
- ratio of population per primary care physician
- air quality index

Supplemental Quantitative Data:

- access to health care during pregnancy and after birth (disaggregated by race and age)
- share of women enrolled in the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children out of those eligible
- the number of pregnant women in homeless shelters or who identify as unstably housed
- rate of health insurance coverage
- share of pregnant women with comorbidities
- maternal age at delivery
- rate of exposure to lead (disaggregated by race and district)
- number of births to teen mothers
- availability of free birth control

After reviewing all the data that our County Data Team was able to collect, there is a still a gap in knowledge about the quality of health care that pregnant women receive. In particular, we are interested in learning more about the experiences of Black women in receiving prenatal care.

When examining data that can be disaggregated by subgeography but not by race or ethnicity, consider visualizing it in a geographic heatmap if you are able to do so (example below). You can overlay a population map (e.g., by race or another characteristic) to examine variations or disparities that might trigger new questions or hypotheses. If you don't have population data available by relevant populations, try to examine your aggregated data with the lens of local insight: Where are neighborhoods with a high immigrant population? Which neighborhoods have disproportionate shares of nonwhite residents, have low-ranked public schools, or lack community resources? How might the characteristics within these geographic areas interact? By asking yourself these questions, you create space for other considerations and explanations and set the groundwork for more accurate data collection in the future as well as better-informed policy and program decisions. When searching for connections, rely on population demographics, homeownership data, and other evidence rather than on cultural assumptions or internalized stereotypes held about certain neighborhoods in your area.

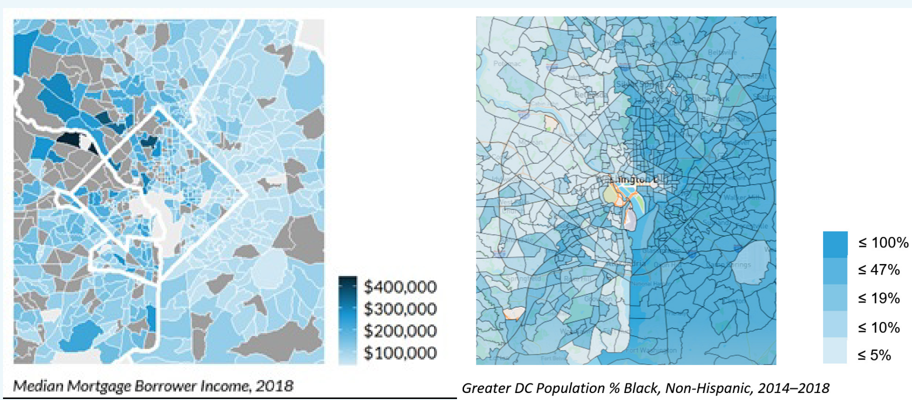


Figure 12: Median mortgage borrower income map of Washington, DC (left) as compared to a map of the share of Black, non-Hispanic residents by Census Tract in Washington, DC (right). Maps from the Urban Institute.

These maps visualize two different kinds of information broken down at the same geography in the greater Washington, DC, area. On the left, median income for mortgage borrowers is available at the census tract (i.e., neighborhood) level but is not disaggregated by race. On the right is a demographic population map of the same region that shows the percentage of the Black, non-Hispanic population per tract. A comparison of these two maps shows a correlation between neighborhoods where median mortgage borrowers have an average of less than $100,000 incomes and those with higher Black populations. Because these datasets are not linked and not at the individual level, they offer a less precise way to assess mortgage borrower income by race, but they can still be used to draw high-level conclusions about the race of low-income mortgage borrowers.

Sometimes data are not available at the level of specificity to observe deeper levels of variation or disparity. This may be the case for several reasons. Sometimes, there are too few data points or observations to compute a metric with reasonable accuracy. Other times, the data were never collected to begin with, such as when a survey or administrative data source fails to ascertain race or ethnicity or lumps diverse groups together. For example, a data point showing a statistic for the "Asian American Pacific Islander community" will group all Asian American and Pacific Islander ethnic groups together. How Korean Americans fare, however, might be very different from how Vietnamese Americans fare or from how Pacific Islanders fare.[11] A lack of disaggregation hinders your ability to understand these nuances. When faced with a lack of disaggregated data, it is still important to find a way to interrogate how structural racism, discrimination, prejudice, and implicit bias may be playing a role in the story the data tells and in what data gets collected. Wherever possible, you should collect local datasets that can help inform your understanding of local conditions. Qualitative information, which can be collected from myriad sources such as interviews, surveys, town halls, and focus groups, can also be used to better inform the context around quantitative data outcomes or gaps in information. Gathering this type of data is covered in more detail in Step 6.

By the end of Step 5, the Mobility Coalition should have collected and analyzed additional quantitative data and developed an initial shared understanding of key mobility issues in your jurisdiction. All of this work will prepare the coalition to deepen this understanding and bring in new, varied insights on local mobility issue, which is the focus of Step 6.

STEP FIVE REVIEW CHECKLIST

- [ ] The Mobility Coalition has reviewed and discussed the **Mobility Metrics** as a group.
- [ ] Supplemental data sources have been identified and collected.
- [ ] The Data Lead has led a process to analyze and integrate supplemental data.
- [ ] The Mobility Coalition has a baseline understanding of mobility issues and is prepared to begin gathering insights from the broader community.

STEP FIVE

Supplemental Materials

1. Preparing for Your Mobility Metrics Coalition Meeting
2. Sample Agenda to Determine Next Steps for Data Collection

Preparing for Your Mobility Metrics Coalition Meeting

The following is a list of considerations for convening your Mobility Coalition to determine next steps for data collection:

1. Schedule Mobility Coalition meetings at times where participants can fully engage.
    - Consider Mobility Coalition member calendars and schedule this convening at a time when they can give the process enough attention. Avoid times of the month or year when hard deadlines for other tasks create a high demand for team members' time. If you have community members on your Mobility Coalition, be sure to ask them what hours of the day work best for their schedules, because they may not be able to take off of work or need to find child care in order to attend.
    - If relevant, consider local election timelines and external stakeholder demands when determining the frequency of meetings, assignments, or time given to action items and deadlines. Being proactive around both capacity and pace will help avoid unnecessary confusion, competing interests, or a lack of engagement.
2. Ensure time for reflection and identification of next steps.
    - Plan the meeting agenda with enough time and space for all attendees to share reflections *and* identify next steps. "Next steps" are often the last item on an agenda and are at risk of being rushed or poorly communicated. Build in extra time and address this goal proactively to help ensure this doesn't happen. See the Sample Agenda to Determine Next Steps for Data Collection below, which can help you determine next steps.
3. Assign clear roles to Mobility Coalition members.
    - Give coalition members clear roles when it comes to creating the agenda, facilitating discussion, taking notes, and other logistics. If possible, share the facilitation responsibilities to maximize team engagement and contributions.
    - Depending on the size and interests of your Mobility Coalition, it may make sense to separate the coalition members into smaller discussion groups based on their policy domains of expertise. This can be done within this convening or prepared beforehand. Having smaller groups allows coalition members to discuss logistics and nuances within a particular domain that may not be apparent to the larger group (this includes alternative data sources from programs of interest). These smaller groups can also be a great foundation upon which to build out more formal "Working Groups" when your team starts working on solutions (see Step 7).

Sample Agenda to Determine Next Steps for Data Collection

Meeting Title: Convening to discuss metrics and potential supplemental data sources

Meeting Objectives:

- Mobility Coalition members will share and discuss their responses to the metrics data.
- Mobility Coalition members will discuss implications, gaps, potential avenues for additional data, and decide on next steps.

Time	Activity	Facilitator
X:00 – X:20 **(20 minutes)**	Round robin introductions & sharing of Key Takeaways ▪ Present an overview of the agenda & the goals of the meeting. ▪ Ask everyone to share their main takeaways from their responses to questions 1–3 on the “Data Review” worksheet.	*Choose a facilitator best suited to share each component of the agenda.*
X:20 – X:30 **(10 minutes)**	▪ Have participants share their questions about the metrics. ▪ Facilitate open discussion of potential answers. Note any discussion of gaps or lack of insight—these are areas that can be informed by additional data collection.	
X:30 – X:45 **(15 minutes)**	Discuss the additional data sources that each member noted in their worksheet (question 5). ▪ Keep note of which sources can (a) best inform the metrics and conditions on the ground, and (b) be collected in a reasonable time frame.	
X:45 – X:55 **(10 minutes)**	Assign individuals who will be responsible for collecting the supplemental data.	
X:55 – Y:00 **(5 minutes)**	Determine whether you will need additional meetings to clarify roles or flesh out goals. Discuss who will need to be present for these follow-ups. ▪ Identify who will schedule the additional meetings.	

After the meeting:

- The Data Lead or assigned facilitator should send around meeting notes, including assigned data collection plan and responsibilities, and any dates for future meetings.
- The Data Lead or facilitator should follow up on all agreed action items with the people responsible or check in with the person who will be doing follow-up.

STEP SIX

Build a Fuller Picture of Mobility Conditions in Your Community

In the previous step, your Mobility Coalition reviewed the **Mobility Metrics** as a group and started to collect supplemental quantitative data to build an initial understanding of local mobility issues. Step 6 focuses on deepening that understanding to build a fuller picture of mobility conditions in your community. Think of this process like putting together a puzzle; each data source represents a different puzzle piece, and you get closer to seeing the entire puzzle by assembling as many pieces as you can.

Now that you have your Mobility Metrics puzzle piece and some of your supplemental quantitative data puzzle pieces, you need to assemble information from other sources, such as historical records about policies and programs that may have created structural barriers to equity and mobility from poverty; program evaluations; qualitative information gleaned from surveys, focus groups, and other community and stakeholder engagement activities; ecosystem maps that show networks and relationships between organizations in the mobility from poverty ecosystem; and narratives that underpin systems of power and oppression. Assembling insights from these different data sources will help you

- gather deeper insights about outcomes you see in the Mobility Metrics data,
- understand how community members would prioritize local needs,
- build trust with communities who have lost trust in government,
- learn about what harmful narratives are being used to rationalize certain policies or inaction,
- understand what systems are creating and sustaining inequities,
- learn about your community's assets and strengths, and
- make the case for selecting strategic actions.

Each substep below presents activities for effectively gathering the information you'll need to meet the above goals. You may not need to do all these anew for this work as some of this information may exist already from other initiatives. You should consult the Mobility Coalition members to learn about what insights are already available and which you feel will be the most helpful to gain to learn more about conditions in your community.

Step 6.1 Break the Mobility Coalition into Smaller Working Groups

Breaking the Mobility Coalition members into smaller "working groups" can provide more focus and accountability around collecting supplementary sources of information and having in-depth discussions analyzing the data. These groups can meet for as long as you deem necessary (within the constraints of your goals and timeline), and with whatever frequency makes sense for the partners involved. Note that working groups can be reorganized as needed.

The goal of each working group should be to

1. interrogate, discuss, and come to a shared understanding of what is shown in the data and information collected; and
2. discuss what programs, practices, and policies each stakeholder has insight into or purview over that have created or sustain these conditions.

When convening working groups, make sure to prioritize cross-sector partnerships. Be intentional when naming working groups or inviting engagement. For example, instead of calling a group the "Housing Group," which may only resonate with subject-matter experts, consider expanding the scope to the predictor level (for example, "Opportunity-Rich and Inclusive Neighborhoods") which could sound more inclusive to developers, researchers, and nonprofit organizations alike and includes not just housing but also economic inclusion, transportation access, and social capital. If your language is more inclusive of system-wide factors, you are more likely to encourage engagement across multiple policy domains. Working with a diverse range of colleagues or stakeholders can help challenge assumptions, check biases, and illuminate opportunities for systems change that may not have surfaced otherwise.

At some point between goals 1 and 2 above, the Project Manager should facilitate peer sharing sessions between representatives from each Working Group. Each representative can outline what their group has discussed and spend time identifying similar patterns, overlapping themes, and issues that may have cross-predictor solutions or underlying causes. These meetings can end with a directive for each representative to report back to their Working Group any insights they gleaned about what other factors may be influencing their specific outcomes. These insights will help direct each group's thinking and open their thinking to interventions that may be outside their expertise or range of oversight. These meetings and interactions should result in an initial Summary of Upward Mobility Findings from each Working Group or subject area, which can be aggregated into one concise narrative once they have been finalized.

Step 6.2 Collect Qualitative Information through Stakeholder Engagement

In your efforts to identify the underlying causes of observed outcomes, we suggest engaging additional stakeholders outside of the Mobility Coalition who may have specific knowledge and perspectives to share (e.g., service providers, frontline staff, advocacy groups, business leaders). Soliciting those perspectives can help you understand the historical factors that have led to current conditions in your community and gain deeper insight into what they see in their day-to-day work and what's working and what's not. Engagement can be conducted using various methods like interviews, focus groups, and surveys.

Upward Mobility Cohort participant **Washington, DC**, partnered with three community-based organizations to lead stakeholder engagement with residents in their three priority domains of housing, workforce and adult education, and financial well-being. These engagement activities included focus groups, surveys, and interviews with affected residents. The District also worked directly with more than a dozen CBOs through interviews, focus groups, and a roundtable discussion. The community-based organizations included organizations that focus on community development, workforce training, affordable housing construction and operations, youth and adult education, and human services.

As you engage stakeholders in your community, don't forget to share information about the upward mobility work you're doing, offer opportunities for them to participate in the Coalition, and be respectful of their time and expertise. See a sample **Stakeholder Focus Group Discussion Guide** at the end of this step.

Step 6.3 Collect Qualitative Information through Community Engagement

Building a fuller picture of mobility issues in your community requires extensive and thoughtful community engagement. This substep suggests methods for working with community members to gather qualitative data that can shed more light on the **Mobility Metrics** outcomes. The Community Engagement Lead on the Mobility Coalition should oversee this piece of the work. To aid with this activity, we include a **Community Engagement Plan Template** at the end of this step.

Before getting to the specific methods for engaging community members in this work, we share below some engagement best practices, inspired by the work of the Kirwan Institute, PolicyLink, Chicago Beyond, our colleagues at the Urban Institute, the Fresno DRIVE Race Equity Plan, Helen "Skip" Skipper of the NYC Justice Peer Initiative, and one of the authors of this guide:

- **Clarify who "the community" is for this work.** In short, it's everyone who lives or works in a certain geographic area. However, given the history of structural racism, discrimination, and disinvestment in the US, the community members you should especially seek to engage for the MAP are people of color, individuals with low incomes, people with disabilities, immigrants, English-language learners, people experiencing housing instability or homelessness, disengaged youth, people involved in the justice system, and anyone else with lived experience of poverty or discrimination. When preparing to do community engagement, make sure you know who your primary communities of interest are and whether there are subgroups within those communities that are disproportionately affected by poverty and structural racism (for example, within the Asian American and Pacific Islander community, the Cambodian American population may experience worse outcomes than the Korean American population). Analyzing the Mobility Metrics and consulting with key stakeholders such as nonprofits and community-based organizations can help you to figure out who these groups are if you don't already know.

- **Take time to learn about the community's history of engagement or disengagement.** Before beginning community engagement, it is important for the Community Engagement Lead to learn about what efforts have been conducted in the past and how these were perceived by the community. The Mobility Action Planning process does not exist in a vacuum, and it is important to understand whether there has been an absence of community engagement or if the people you are seeking to engage have been *over*engaged or *over*researched and may suffer from participation fatigue. Both of these realities may lead to community members feeling skeptical of new engagement efforts or distrusting power-holders in the community. The guidebook "Why Am I Always Being Researched" from Chicago Beyond is a great resource to learn about how to shift the power dynamic in the way community organizations, researchers, and funders uncover knowledge. Another reason to learn about the community's history of engagement is so that you can build off of learnings from those efforts to launch your round of engagement. When doing this, you should be clear about what is unique or additive about this community engagement effort.

  The *Investing in Us: Resident Priorities for Economic Mobility in Detroit* report by the University of Michigan's Poverty Solutions research center is an example of how to learn about what the community wants without conducting new community engagement activities. Instead of starting a process from scratch, the researchers acknowledged that Detroit residents had been sharing their thoughts on their city in a variety of public spaces over the last few years and worked to gather and summarize these thoughts from 129 neighborhood-level plans, 60 citywide plans, news articles, YouTube videos, and public meeting recordings.

- **Prepare thoroughly for community engagement work.** The Fresno DRIVE Race Equity Plan makes the key point that "a precondition for community engagement is 'readiness' in terms of critical capacities (e.g., organizational capacities, funding, human resources, and infrastructure, such as space)."[12] Before engaging community members, ensure your team has thoughtfully and appropriately prepared for what is needed. This includes budgeting for community engagement activities, bringing in community partners to help facilitate if needed, coordinating engagement activity schedules with external partners so you don't confuse residents, and securing locations for in-person engagement activities. The Community Engagement Lead or others responsible for this work should have experience conducting **deep and meaningful community engagement**, and if they do not, the Mobility Coalition should consider how to develop this capacity or how to partner with external organizations that already have these skills.

- **Facilitate ongoing engagement.** One of the most common mistakes that local governments can make when doing community engagement is engaging community members too *late* in the decisionmaking process and not following up to share how the engagement shaped these decisions, if at all. You've probably heard complaints from community members during town hall meetings because the government is presenting an already-baked plan that won't really be changed based on community members' perspectives. Rather than just gathering feedback on a settled plan, conduct community engagement early and often. Implementing an input-design-feedback-action loop is critical for designing interventions that are responsive to the priorities of your community.
- **Center racial equity in the engagement and Mobility Action Planning process.** Decades of racist policies, discriminatory practices, and redlining have led to disinvestment in communities of color. The harms of disinvestment have been compounded by the failure of government planners and other key stakeholders to engage residents of color in policy and planning decisions. Redressing these wrongs requires an intentional focus on racial equity at every step of the engagement and development process. This includes ensuring that outreach to potential participants reaches households that represent the demographics and diversity of the city or county, learning about historical inequities in your community, uncovering implicit biases and assumptions that community leadership may hold, and working to share power in the decisionmaking process.
- **Prepare everyone to participate meaningfully in the engagement.** To create a more equitable experience for those involved in the community engagement process, people must feel they are well prepared for the experience and know what to expect. Residents should be provided with the training and resources they need to participate in strategic planning discussions and with time to become comfortable with topics before being asked to engage. Facilitators should also take care to provide as much transparency as possible about how notes will be recorded and shared so that participants understand what will happen with the information they share.
- **Treat people with lived experience as the experts.** So often when community members with lived experiences of discrimination, racism, and structural disadvantage are asked to participate in community engagement activities, they are paid paltry sums of money for their participation or entered into lotteries for prizes where not everyone who participates will receive compensation. Yet these individuals *are* your subject matter experts and should be treated as such. Plan to compensate participants as if they were consultants on your projects. Of course, compensating participants fairly and in a timely manner requires that these costs have been budgeted for at the beginning of the work. Aside from compensation, you should also provide transportation or transit passes for participants to get to meetings, child care during the meetings, and food.

- **Seek to redress power differences and share power among participants.** Power affects a person's community engagement experience in many ways. Race, class, age, occupation, language ability, and wealth can affect how comfortable someone feels sharing in a meeting, can create expectations about how much someone thinks their voice should be heard, and can influence what feedback facilitators take most seriously. The engagement facilitator should seek to redress power differences by sharing knowledge that one party may have with the other, making sure everyone understands the engagement process and their role in it, and utilizing unique engagement structures that upend the traditional town hall structures that limit meaningful engagement.
- **Invest in developing community members' power and autonomy and belonging**. Boosting upward mobility and achieving systems change and **racial equity** will only come about if community members have sustained, in-depth opportunities for engagement and can build their own power and social capital over time. To invest in developing community members, look for nonprofit and community-based organization partners to facilitate your community engagement activities who also have the capacity to build emergent leaders among the participants.

Now that you are familiar with best practices for meaningful community engagement, read on for some recommended community engagement methods.

Data Walk

A Data Walk is a method of sharing and discussing data developed by the Urban Institute that has several objectives: to share key data and findings with community residents and program participants, to ensure a more robust analysis and understanding of the data, to help inform better programming and policies to address both the strengths and the needs of a particular community or population, and to inspire individual and collective action among community agents (Murray, Falkenburger, and Saxena 2015). Held in a public forum, a Data Walk presents data and information to a community through posters or another visual format to allow individuals to engage with, analyze, and ask questions about information relevant to their lives. These can be a great, interactive ways to invite residents, researchers, service providers, and others to engage with metrics and have conversations around what these insights mean for their community. See the Upward Mobility Cohort participant **Boone County, Missouri's Data Walk Posters** at the end of this step for examples on what these might look like.

When planning a Data Walk, make sure a broad range of voices are represented. Which subpopulations does your **Mobility Metrics** data highlight as being particularly positively or negatively affected? Are there populations not highlighted in the data that you are concerned about? Which populations or organizations may be well-positioned or empowered to act when motivated by knowledge? Which populations or organizations are likely most disenfranchised already? Are there populations that would benefit from greater insight into their community and environment? Consider personnel employed at different levels of access and area of work when soliciting organizations, service providers, businesses, and government departments.

By engaging community members in a Data Walk, you can bring to light new insights about the data that your key stakeholder partners on the Mobility Coalition don't see. Note that you may want to hold more than one Data Walk with different groups, in different locations, or at different phases of the information-gathering and analysis process.

Survey

You might consider conducting surveys with community members, either to collect original data that can be used for analysis or to solicit input. It's important to pick a survey style and scope that suits both your goals for data collection and your capacity for implementation. Rigorous, randomized surveys can offer more information at scale from a representative sample of your community, but they can be complicated and expensive to perform. You might consider whether partner organizations host existing surveys that you can add questions to.

On the other hand, if you are not too concerned with generalizability and mainly want to use a survey to engage the community, generate useful insights, and capture ideas, less statistically rigorous approaches may be sufficient. For example, consider an opportunistic survey of people leaving a specific venue in a particular neighborhood.

Conducting a "community-engaged" survey effort takes this one step further by involving community members and residents in the design and administration of the survey. For more information about how to design and use this style of survey, consult this Urban Institute resource. More considerations about surveys can be found in the **Supplementing Your Metrics: Original Survey Data** info sheet at the end of this step.

Focus Group

Consider hosting focus groups to collect community members' thoughts on mobility and equity conditions in their community. Focus groups can be conducted independently or even incorporated into existing community events, like a Data Walk, for example. Focus groups can take many forms but may include a short presentation on the "why" and "what" of your work, what is different about this effort from previous initiatives the community may have seen or participated in, and small-group discussions on certain questions or topics led by community leaders. To make the most of your time in focus groups, you may consider sending participants a short survey ahead of time so that you can gather demographic information on them to ensure representation among your interviewees.

When conducting a focus group, you might choose to guide participants through the same questions the Mobility Coalition used to collect their thoughts on the **Mobility Metrics** data (see Step 5). Or you could repeat the intervention inventory activity from Step 6.4 to learn about the organizations, programs, and services that community members interact with that the Mobility Coalition may have missed.

Mobility Metrics data led Upward Mobility Cohort member **Summit County** to focus on issues related to juvenile justice and mental health. The county partnered with a marketing firm to facilitate focus groups with professionals working on these issues and supplemented those qualitative data by partnering with a survey firm to conduct collect original data on both topics with an oversample of people experiencing poverty. The survey found people experiencing poverty had more days of poor mental health and felt less safe than residents not experiencing poverty.

Be prepared to have both a Discussion Facilitator and a Notetaker to capably guide the conversation and record as many thoughts as possible. When reviewing recordings or notes from a focus group, make sure to proactively consider which voices are loudest and whether that is inherently causing their opinions to receive more weight and attention than others. When reviewing qualitative information, always interrogate your habits and assumptions to make sure you do not perpetuate misunderstandings about why certain conditions exist. For more information about focus groups, consult this Urban Institute resource.

As a research organization, the Urban Institute is required to seek Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval when conducting qualitative research with human subjects, particularly those where the research subjects are from a vulnerable population. An IRB is an administrative body established to protect the rights and welfare of human research subjects. Whether city or county governments need to submit community engagement activities for IRB approval is a bit of a gray area. However, many of the IRB requirements for research studies, such as asking participants for verbal consent to participate, sharing the benefits and risks a participant might experience from participating in the engagement, and letting a participant know what will happen with what they share (i.e., where it will be saved, who can see it) are all best practices that you should implement when doing Data Walks, surveys, focus groups, or other community engagement activities. Please see the sample **Community Member Focus Group Discussion Guide** at the end of this step to see an example of what this looks like.

Step 6.4 Gather Other Qualitative Data to Understand the Systems and Prevailing Narratives in Your Community

Now that you have insights from key stakeholders and members of your community, you may also choose to gather other qualitative information to learn more about the systems and prevailing narratives in your community that are holding up the mobility and equity challenges. Read on for some recommended methods for gathering this information.

Intervention Inventory

One task the Mobility Coalition may undertake is taking an intervention inventory for your jurisdiction. An intervention inventory is a comprehensive list of all the interventions that are currently operating within, or being funded by, a given jurisdiction. Here we use the term "intervention" broadly to mean policies, programs, practices, initiatives, partnerships, and pilots. An ideal inventory should capture key information about each intervention, such as the name, description, operational scope, target audience, how it incorporates the three-part definition of mobility from poverty, whether it explicitly targets **racial equity**, and its current level of effectiveness based on its internal evaluation goals. See the **Intervention Inventory Template** at the end of this step. Later in this step, we recommend repeating this activity with community focus groups to gather additional interventions the Working Groups may have missed.

Once you are finished filling out your inventory, gather your Mobility Coalition members to discuss the inventory and determine how they align with your initial understanding of conditions in your community. Summaries formed in siloed Working Groups should be interrogated when the full coalition convenes to share insights across groups. Make sure to prioritize the identification of intersections and patterns between metrics. Address any conclusions or shifts in thinking in each Working Group's "Summary of Upward Mobility Findings," such as in the example below:

The Neonatal Health Metric for our county shows that a greater percentage of Black Non-Hispanic babies (14.6 percent) are born with low weights, which is nearly 50 percent higher than for white babies (7 percent).

To understand what our county is doing to address this disparity, we met with individuals from the following organizations:

- Community Health Administration
- Continuum of Care
- Experienced material and neonatal service providers
- Department of Housing and Community Development
- Office of Public Health

This group of stakeholders helped us conduct an inventory of County and external partner interventions that fall within the policy spheres affecting these metrics and helped us engage other key stakeholders and service providers to learn more. We have compiled a brief sample of insights from this stakeholder engagement:

- The County's Homeless Services Reform Act limits access to family shelters to pregnant women who are in their third trimester of pregnancy, meaning that women in their first and second trimesters are not eligible for family shelters.
- Women of color in the County enter prenatal care later than their white counterparts. Programs and practices need to improve access to and resources for early prenatal care for women of color.
- The continuum of care is good at placing pregnant women who are homeless in permanent supportive housing quickly, however, due to staffing issues in our county health department, these women have not received their prenatal counseling visits as intended.

Consider that this initial insight about low-weight births may be further informed by future insights that are uncovered as you make your way through other metrics and as you incorporate supplemental information. In the case of this disparity, once you have examined other environmental factors, it is important to reexamine your original findings with the status of those factors in mind. For example, disparities in access to quality medical care or to quality jobs with benefits (such as health insurance) are structural inequities that could be at the root of the outcome we see with low-weight births. Without identifying how these different insights inform each other and intersect, you will limit your capacity to target and design lasting, systemic, and sustainable change later on.

The steps you've taken to analyze the data and landscape your community's current interventions will likely lead you to inviting new members to the Mobility Coalition.

At this point, you might be wondering how big of a coalition is too big? Unfortunately, there is no easy answer to this. You'll need to consider how to broaden the coalition to the size that will be inclusive of the people and organizations that will be needed to identify appropriate solutions and sustain those solutions in the long term while also ensuring the coalition can meet regularly and advance the work. The larger the coalition, the more coordination and communication is needed from the Management Team.

As you home in on where you need support and expertise, and consequently invite new or different stakeholders to the table, Project Manager may find it helpful to maintain an ongoing list of active versus supplemental members. Throughout this process, continue to divide or organize the coalition in any way that is manageable and best meets the evolution of your goals and needs.

Contextual Analysis

Contextual analysis refers to analyzing the many overlapping factors and local contexts that influence evidence-based policy decisions. In order to perform contextual analysis while evaluating the information you've collected, you ought to consider the various factors that provide *context* for the insights you examine. These include

- the greater political atmosphere;
- historical background (e.g., regulations, first-hand accounts, population change);
- the relationship between public institutions and various relevant stakeholders;
- shared assumptions and shared culture;
- organizational capacity (staffing and expertise);
- regulatory environments and the momentum of management or processes; and
- financial, technological, and infrastructural resources

To see an example of this analysis being performed in the context of political party assistance and development, see this report developed by the National Democratic Institute.

Community Asset Mapping

Community Asset Mapping is a tool for understanding what assets exist in your city or county that are currently serving your community members' needs. Various approaches to Community Asset Mapping exist, but all are designed to capture the full landscape of opportunities, needs, and strengths in a given community. Assets may refer to institutions, infrastructure, community groups, parks, churches, grocery stores, clinics, community centers, and the talents and capacity of local residents. The key to identifying assets is to clarify what makes them valuable and for whom. Community mapping exercises are also meant to empower local residents by encouraging them to be the main spokespeople and advocate for changes or continued support. For further information about Community Mapping and a case study example of implementation, please consult the Preston City Council Community Mapping Toolkit.

Ecosystem Mapping

An "ecosystem" refers to any network of connections between various actors, such as governments, nonprofits, and various other stakeholders both in and outside your Mobility Coalition, and ecosystems are strong inputs for learning about the relationships and systems that exist in your community. Mapping an ecosystem can help you visualize and leverage local connections and may reveal touchpoints, blockages or opportunities that may not be clear to you until you better examine how and why certain parties interact the way they do.

Ecosystem mapping can also help you clarify roles and levels of contribution across a pipeline of partnership, determine gaps in grant funding, and much more. The scope and depth of your ecosystem map should depend on the key factors you are trying to identify or deconstruct. Mapping an ecosystem with the broader community can also be incredibly valuable because doing so could surface insights from various perspectives. For more information on Ecosystem Mapping methods and case studies, please see Guide to Civic Tech and Data Ecosystem Mapping.

Narrative Power Analysis

Narrative Power Analysis is a method for analyzing the narratives that currently underpin the systems of power within which they operate and breaking them down into constituent assumptions and components. It is based on the idea that people understand the world and their role within it through stories and that stories therefore have great power to either maintain the status quo or disrupt expectations of how things "should be." See this resource from Doyle Canning and Patrick Reinsborough for more information about Narrative Power Analysis and this worksheet designed to guide this process.

Step 6.5 Draft an Initial Summary of Upward Mobility Findings

Once you have gathered the rest of your information on community conditions, the Mobility Coalition should integrate this information with the initial quantitative analysis from Step 5 and draft your Summary of Upward Mobility Findings for your Mobility Action Plan. It will be up to the coalition to decide how to present this information, but it should be presented in a narrative format that links findings across predictors and presents how your community's systems are upholding these conditions. See samples of this text in the Upward Mobility Cohort MAPs online at https://upward-mobility.urban.org/mobility-action-plans.

Step 6.6 Follow Up with Community Members to Share the Upward Mobility Findings

Once the Mobility Coalition has developed a first draft of the Summary of Upward Mobility Findings, it will be important to share them back with community members to validate them and ensure that the Mobility Coalition has accurately captured what is going on. Sharing back with community members can help bolster trust between local government and community members, foster avenues for stewardship, and create a feedback loop demonstrating the value of community knowledge for priority setting.

To validate the upward mobility insights, consider hosting another round of community engagement events across your jurisdiction. Ideally, you can recruit community members who were *already* engaged in activities to make clear that voices were heard. However, it is also appropriate to host a public meeting that is open to everyone. To recruit community members who were already engaged, ask your Community Engagement Lead or community engagement partners and facilitators to email or text people about this opportunity to reengage with the work.

All the same best practices for community engagement still apply. You should also be sure to give everyone the information they need to be well-informed about your work. This includes starting the event with a presentation of why your city or county undertook this work and what activities you conducted or data sources you inspected to learn more about conditions in your community. Be thoughtful in your presentation of the insights and honest about what you found, and be sure to highlight community assets in addition to deficits. Think of ways to share power with attendees, such as by offering community members leadership roles at the event or considering unique engagement formats, like the World Café, Fishbowl Discussion, or Data Walk, that don't rely on the traditional town hall dynamic.

Here is a sample text or email message the Community Engagement Lead might send to community members you would like to reengage:

> *Hi Melanie! This is Juan from the Forest City Upward Mobility team. You might remember me from the Helping Hands meeting that you attended a few weeks ago. I'm reaching out because we would love to engage you again for this work. On Thursday, March 19th from 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.,*

> *we will be hosting an event to present the findings from the community engagement that you and others participated in over the past few months and from our data gathering. We hope to validate our findings to ensure that we heard what Forest City community members said and brainstorm with you about what our next steps should be. Participants will receive a $25 grocery store gift card at the end of the event as a recognition of your expertise and insight. We will also provide a free dinner at the event. The event will be held at the 7th Ward Community Center, which is wheelchair accessible. Feel free to bring family and friends!*

Be sure to engage a skilled facilitator for the event as well as someone to take detailed notes. Short presentations are fine, but try to avoid creating an event where people in power talk *at* attendees for too long. The goal here is for the leads to listen and seek clarification and additions to the information collected. A skilled facilitator can help mediate discussions between people whose experiences are very different from one another or who may feel that their lived experience is not reflected in the information gathered. They can also help redirect as needed to keep the conversation on track.

A sample **Upward Mobility Findings Community Vetting Meeting Agenda** can be found at the end of this step.

Step 6.7 Write the Relevant Components of Your Mobility Action Plan

The notetakers should summarize the key takeaways from all of the above activities and synthesize them. From there, the Mobility Coalition can draft two pieces of text for your Mobility Action Plan: (1) the "How We Got Here" section, which describes the activities you undertook to learn about mobility conditions in your community, including why you decided to pursue this work and who has been involved and (2) a revised version of the Summary of Upward Mobility Findings section, which summarizes the key findings from your exploratory research that you will conduct in this step.

MAP Component: How We Got Here

MAP Component: Summary of Upward Mobility Findings

The Summary of Upward Mobility Findings should be written in a narrative format that interweaves the quantitative data with the qualitative data and tells a story about how your current mobility conditions (both good and bad) were created and are sustained, who they affect most, and what outcomes they're leading to.

Step 6.8 Make a Plan for Sustaining Engagement with the Community

Now that your Mobility Coalition has begun conducting **deep and meaningful community engagement** to inform your MAP, you should plan to embed opportunities for community members to engage throughout the remainder of the process. The following sections of the guide will highlight community engagement opportunities as they arise, but the table below provides an overview of what types of engagement will be most valuable at this and subsequent steps as well as what skills and capacities community members may be able to develop through participation.

MAP Phase	Why engage residents at this phase?	Community engagement methods	Community member capacity-building
Step 4: Build your coalition for systems change	▪ To give them key leadership roles throughout the entire Mobility Action Planning process	▪ Community Advisory Board	▪ Connections with community leaders ▪ Leadership and decisionmaking skills ▪ Negotiation
Step 6: Build a fuller picture of mobility conditions in your community	▪ To gather insights about why the data are what they are ▪ To ensure a more robust analysis and understanding of the data ▪ To uncover new information sources ▪ To learn about gaps in the available information	▪ Data Walk ▪ Focus Groups ▪ Community-Engaged Surveys ▪ Community Mapping ▪ Ecosystem Mapping	▪ How to analyze data tables, charts, and maps and research the history of structural barriers to mobility in their community ▪ See a fuller picture of their community—beyond just their own day-to-day experience ▪ Learn about which systems may be influencing their well-being and opportunities
Step 7: Determine your strategic actions	▪ To understand how community members would prioritize local challenges ▪ To better allocate funding and resources ▪ To build trust in government ▪ To uncover unique solutions to community challenges ▪ To solicit feedback on an intervention's design and implementation ▪ To develop early buy-in for the strategies that will be proposed in the MAP	▪ Community Visioning ▪ Youth Council ▪ World Café ▪ Crowdsourcing ▪ Focus Groups	▪ Social networks ▪ The power to influence the overarching goals of this project and how resources are allocated ▪ Learn about government policymaking levers, jurisdictions, budgets, and processes ▪ Have real opportunities to create and shape policy

MAP Phase	Why engage residents at this phase?	Community engagement methods	Community member capacity-building
Step 8: Develop your Measurement Plan and consider sustainability	▪ To share power and information with community members about what works ▪ To build trust that government is seeking impact, not just new programs	▪ Citizen Science ▪ Focus Groups ▪ Community-Engaged Surveys ▪ Co-Producing Research	▪ Research and evaluation techniques
Step 9: Finalize and release your Mobility Action Plan	▪ To gather support for the strategies in the MAP ▪ To help share the MAP's strategies with a wide range of community members and organizations	▪ Workshopping ▪ Citizen Juries ▪ Social Media	▪ How to critically review government documents ▪ How evaluation plans map to outcome tracking and accountability ▪ Public speaking
Step 10: Sustain momentum	▪ To demonstrate accountability to the MAP's stated actions ▪ To learn how the changes made are impacting their intended beneficiaries ▪ To address implementation or scope challenges early on and course correct if needed	▪ Community Advisory Board ▪ Community-Engaged Surveys	▪ Build relationships with other community members and with government staff

Additional Community Engagement Resources from the Urban Institute

- Community Engagement During the COVID-19 Pandemic and Beyond
- Trauma-Informed Community Building and Engagement
- Fostering Partnerships for Community Engagement
- Youth Engagement in Collective Impact Initiatives
- Community-Engaged Approaches to Evaluating a Collective Impact Effort
- Community Voice and Power Sharing Guidebook

By this point, your collected mobility findings should paint a holistic and comprehensive view of your community, as informed by the diversity of perspectives, data, and feedback you have solicited along the way. Step 7 will cover how to take these insights and use them to determine strategies for action.

STEP SIX REVIEW CHECKLIST

- [ ] The Mobility Coalition has broken into Working Groups.
- [ ] The Working Groups have engaged key stakeholders for further insights.
- [ ] The Community Engagement Lead and/or Project Manager has reviewed best practices in community engagement.
- [ ] The Community Engagement Lead and/or Project Manager has used the Community Engagement Plan Template to create a plan for gathering qualitative data from members of the community.
- [ ] The Mobility Coalition has conducted community engagement to gather further insights.
- [ ] The Mobility Coalition has gathered other qualitative data to understand the systems and prevailing narratives in your community.
- [ ] The Mobility Coalition has analyzed the qualitative data and integrated it with your quantitative analysis.
- [ ] The Mobility Coalition has followed up with community members to share the full set of findings and gather additional feedback.
- [ ] The Project Manager and/or other relevant members of the Mobility Coalition have begun drafting the How We Got Here and Summary of Upward Mobility Findings sections of the Mobility Action Plan.

STEP SIX
Supplemental Materials

1. Stakeholder Focus Group Discussion Guide
2. Community Member Focus Group Discussion Guide
3. Intervention Inventory
4. Community Engagement Plan Template
5. Sample Data Walk Posters: Boone County, Missouri
6. Supplementing Your Mobility Metrics: Original Survey Data
7. Upward Mobility Findings Community Vetting Meeting Sample Agenda

Stakeholder Focus Group Discussion Guide

1. Tell us about your organization and what programming and services you provide.
2. What populations do you primarily serve?
3. What do you think are the strengths of your organization in serving these populations?
4. In your experience, what are the best ways to connect with the populations you serve?
5. How does your organization advance upward mobility?
6. How would you say your program helps community members feel that they have power and autonomy or feel valued in community? How does it promote economic success?

This project is focused explicitly on naming and addressing racial inequities in our community. We define racial equity as both an outcome and a process. As an outcome, racial equity is when people receive just treatment, receive fair compensation for their contributions, and can reach their maximum social and economic potential regardless of race or where they live. As a process, we achieve racial equity by removing the structural barriers that prevent people of certain racial and ethnic groups from reaching their maximum social and economic potential and by meaningfully engaging these groups in decisionmaking.

7. Based on this definition, what racial inequities do you observe in your work?
8. What do you see as the biggest challenges to addressing those inequities?
9. Based on what you know about [city/county's] programs, if you could choose one program to provide greater investment to advance racial equity and bolster upward mobility, what program would that be? What, besides additional money, would that program need to thrive?
10. What populations do you think are not well served by [city/county] programs?
11. What programs in [city/county] have more demand than they can meet? What programs are underutilized? In your opinion, should these programs be eliminated, or do they need better marketing?

Community Member Focus Group Discussion Guide

The discussion guide below was drafted by the Washington, DC, Upward Mobility Project team for their community-based organization partners to use when facilitating community member focus group discussions. The guide includes many best practices for other places doing community engagement to replicate, including a description of the project, language to achieve the participant's consent and share information about confidentiality, information about what potential risks or benefits the participant could experience from participating in this research effort, details about where the notes from the discussion will be shared and who has access to them, and the question bank.

I. Project Overview

The DC Upward Mobility Project is an interagency project to boost upward mobility outcomes for residents of color and align the District's programs, policies, and investments together to enhance their impacts. Through its participation in this project, the DC government is receiving technical assistance from the Urban Institute to develop and deliver a Mobility Action Plan in June 2022. The District is focusing on three priority areas for this project: housing, financial well-being, and workforce and adult education.

Our organization [insert facilitating organization name] is partnering with the DC government on this project and is working to ensure residents are engaged in the process and can share their experiences. We will facilitate today's conversation. Today, we are focusing on [insert domain of focus: housing, financial well-being, and workforce and education] programs. We will ask you questions about how you and the communities you are a part of think about topics such as prosperity from poverty and how the DC government can best support more residents to achieve prosperity through its programs, policies, and investments.

II. Voluntary Participation & Confidentiality

Your participation in today's activity is completely voluntary and confidential. We will take notes to remember what you share, but we will not identify you by name in our notes. When our session is over, our team will summarize the information you and your fellow participants share without revealing any of your names or identities. We will keep everything that you say confidential—no one at our organization or the District will identify you by name in anything we write.

Choosing to participate or not participate will not impact your involvement in any programming or services you may be a part of in the District. Also, you can choose to leave today's activity at any point if you do not wish to continue, and you will still receive compensation for showing up today.

[If DC Government Staff are present] We are partnering with the District government for this project on upward mobility. Staff members from the District government are in attendance today to observe this activity as a part of their project support role. Staff will not share any of your personal information in relation to what you share here today.

We cannot guarantee that what you say will not be repeated by others in this discussion group, but we strongly urge each of you to respect the privacy of others in the group and not repeat anything you hear in this discussion outside the group.

[If engagement is virtual] We ask that each of you also try to give each other as much privacy as possible by minimizing how much other people around you might be able to hear or see of the conversation—maybe by going into a room with a closed door, using headphones, or otherwise finding a private space. Further, we have asked you all to log in to our virtual room today to ensure that only permitted attendees are allowed in the virtual discussion.

III. Risks and Benefits

It is important that we explain any risks or benefits related to this focus group. Participating in this focus group has limited potential risks. These risks include: (1) someone could find out you participated in this focus group and (2) someone could find out what you said. However, we will not tell anyone outside our small team who participated. We will not include your name in our notes or in any report. We will not record these sessions by video or sound. Our summary of what is said here will describe people's experiences in general and will not identify you personally. When we use quotes in our reports, we will not include any details that could identify you, including your name.

The benefits of participating in this focus group include the opportunity to provide feedback on an important topic—how to increase prosperity in the District and in your community—and to possibly improve the programming and services for people who are experiencing poverty. You may also benefit from increased awareness and connections to District government and community organizations and programs. We will also provide you with [list the specific compensation provided by the facilitating organization] as a recognition for your contributions and expertise today.

IV. Data Security for Data Collected

Answers from the pre–focus group surveys will be used solely for the purposes of ensuring demographic representation in the focus groups, and we will not use this information in connection with comments made in the focus group. We will take written notes today to make sure we are capturing what you share, and we will anonymize and summarize them before sharing out with any other partner agencies or Urban Institute staff and including them in any internal or public reports. Data will be summarized to highlight key findings and important metrics such as the number of people who participated in the focus group and the key demographics of the participants in the group. The DC government will store these notes in a private online drive that only project team members can access and delete them by no later than June 2022 when the project is completed.

You can choose to provide personal contact information, such as emails or phone numbers, to learn about relevant resources or connect further with our organization, but that is entirely optional. Your contact information will be kept separate from any notes or materials from today's focus group.

V. Consent

Do you have any questions or concerns about what we plan to do today?

Do you consent to participate in our discussion today?

VI. Focus Group Question Bank

[Note: Facilitator will select questions from the question bank below to form their focus groups. The questions below are all of the possible questions the facilitator could cover, and this list is comprehensive to allow the facilitator to have some flexibility in the questions they focus on. Questions tagged as "*Required*" must be asked.]

Questions about Self and Community

- Tell us about yourself.
- What roles do you play in your community? [Facilitator will need to provide some context here and examples -- "I am a volunteer at my church. I am a teacher at a local school. I am active in my community garden program."]
- Tell us about your community.
- How long have you lived in your community?
- What are some of the assets (or strengths) within your community that have been supportive to you or that you value?
- What are aspects of the community you would like to see strengthened or changed?
- What do you think it would take to strengthen your community?
- *Required*: If there was one change you would want to see in your community, what would that change be?

Upward Mobility Questions

This project is focused on helping more residents achieve prosperity, and the next few questions will focus on how you and your community thinks about prosperity.

- *Required*: What does it mean to you to achieve prosperity? [Alternative question: What does it mean to you to help people out of poverty in DC?]
- Are there aspects of who you are that informs how you see prosperity?
- Are there barriers that make it harder for people in your community from achieving that prosperity?
- What has helped people in your community overcome barriers or challenges to upward mobility from poverty?

Program-Specific Questions

Now we are going to discuss different [insert domain: housing, financial well-being, or workforce and education] District programs. When we talk about programs, we mean the many different programs that the District government may have, not just the programs that [name of facilitating organization] delivers or administers on behalf of the District government.

- *Required*: Are there programs that have helped you or people in your community achieve stability or upward mobility? What are those programs? [Prompts: are there [insert domain: housing, financial well-being, or workforce and education] programs that have you or people in your community achieve stability or upward mobility?
- What part of the [insert domain: housing, financial well-being, or workforce and education] program did you like the most?
- What part of the [insert domain: housing, financial well-being, or workforce and education] program did you like the least?
- What are aspects of these [insert domain: housing, financial well-being, or workforce and education] programs you would like to see strengthened or changed?
- What are your ideas on how to improve these programs? [Prompts could include the following: Are there approaches you would recommend? For example, more training for staff, increased evaluation of those programs to make sure they are reaching their goals.]
- *Required*: Are there programs or services you would like to see in your community? [Alternative: Are there gaps in existing programs or services that you would like to see addressed in your community?]
- *Required*: If you needed to find resources in your community to help yourself or a family member address a challenge, where would you start? [Alternative: Where have you gone to obtain information about resources in your community in the past?]
- What type of [insert domain: housing, financial well-being, or workforce and education] programs do you want to learn more about?

Wrap Up

In our final minutes, is there anything else you would like us or the District government to know about your community or your thoughts on what it will take for everyone in your community to thrive?

We would like to share the findings from this focus group and the other focus groups that are being conducted as part of this project with you when we are finished. How would you like to be updated on the findings of this project? [Prompt: through email, paper mail, etc.]

[Facilitator will then collect contact information for participants who would like to share their information to stay updates or receive information about District programs. Facilitators will note again that this contact information will be separate from the notes taken from the focus group.]

Intervention Inventory

It's likely that there are already some ongoing efforts to address some of the challenges you see in the data. To learn about what work is already being done to address the mobility challenges on which you are focusing, it's important to inventory existing work related to your key priority areas. Completing this inventory will likely involve having discussions with the people responsible for each effort to learn more about them and how they're working. Please note that this inventory process may need to happen concurrently with the data analysis so that the results from both processes can be reviewed together in a timely manner.

Once the inventory has been assembled, bring together your Mobility Coalition and host a discussion about the interventions that were shared. The discussion should seek to identify strengths, opportunities, and gaps related to the specific mobility insights your information gathering has highlighted. In this discussion, consider the following:

- Has this intervention been operating long enough to see the impacts you're hoping to see?
- Is this intervention adequately targeted, resourced, or scaled to address challenges?
- Is there a gap that these interventions aren't serving (this could be a specific population, income-group, or specific neighborhood)?
- Are there linkage issues between programs that could lead to a benefits cliff?
- Are there *too many* interventions in this space that could be overlapping or causing confusion for residents?
- Are these interventions addressing the root causes of inequities?
- Are there funding or staffing opportunities or challenges that make this program either an undesirable resource or a contender for improvement?
- Are there particularly successful interventions that could be scaled, better resourced, and/or evaluated?

Intervention name	Scale	Organizational steward, host or lead	Predictor and 3-part definition alignment	Equity elements	Community engagement elements	Success measure	Evaluation
Policy							
Plan							
Program							
Project							
Practice							
Pilot							

Community Engagement Plan Template

Although a Community Engagement Plan is not a formal part of your Mobility Action Plan, your Community Engagement Lead may wish to draft a one to set forth the activities that the Mobility Coalition will undertake to engage community members throughout the lifetime of the Mobility Action Planning process. A Community Engagement Plan should discuss how to inclusively engage with community members with varying backgrounds and lived experience, which engagement methods will be used, who is leading the overall engagement and associated activities, how partner organizations may contribute to the engagement, and key ethical considerations for engaging marginalized community members. It should be reviewed by other members of the Mobility Coalition before it is put into action.

In preparing this plan, you will undergo the following steps:

- Phase 1: Define Your Goals
- Phase 2: Prepare for Engagement
- Phase 3: Select Your Engagement Method

Phase 1: Define Your Goals

- Describe how engaging the community aligns with your Mobility Coalition's mission and work.
- Identify how engaging community members will contribute to your understanding of local mobility conditions.
    - Are there any specific outcomes you expect from this engagement?
    - Describe the types of community members you want to engage
- Share how you will engage a range of people throughout your community, especially communities that have experienced structural racism and those with lived experience of poverty.
    - How do you plan to identify the community members you want to engage?
    - How will you ensure that your engagement strategy reflects the geographic diversity of your community?
    - Who is often left out of these conversations, and how can you create space for them to get involved?
- Write your goals related to community engagement.
    - Are your goals specific, measurable, and realistic?
    - How will you know whether you have achieved your goals?

Phase 2: Prepare for Engagement

- Build on previous work.

    - What recent community engagement activities can you draw insights from so you don't need to repeat those exact efforts?
    - Will you be reengaging community members that the Mobility Coalition has already engaged?
    - How will you build on what you've previously learned?
- Describe the extent to which individuals engaged will be involved in the Mobility Action Planning process.
    - Will they gather and analyze quantitative or qualitative data?
    - Can they help you set priorities for the future or identify strategic actions for your MAP?
    - Can they help you disseminate the MAP and its recommendations once it's published?
- Describe which community engagement best practices you will use to conduct your engagement.
- Outline your plans to maintain engagement with the community throughout the lifetime of this initiative and beyond.

Phase 3: Select Your Engagement Methods

- Select one or more engagement methods to use throughout your Mobility Action Planning process.
- Explain how your selection aligns with your goals.
- Describe the steps, timeline, and responsible actors for each planning and implementing each activity.
- Describe how you will follow-up with community members after the activity.
- Consider how you will train or prepare your participants so that they can participate meaningfully in the activity.
- Consider how you will compensate the participants.

Sample Data Walk Posters: Boone County, Missouri

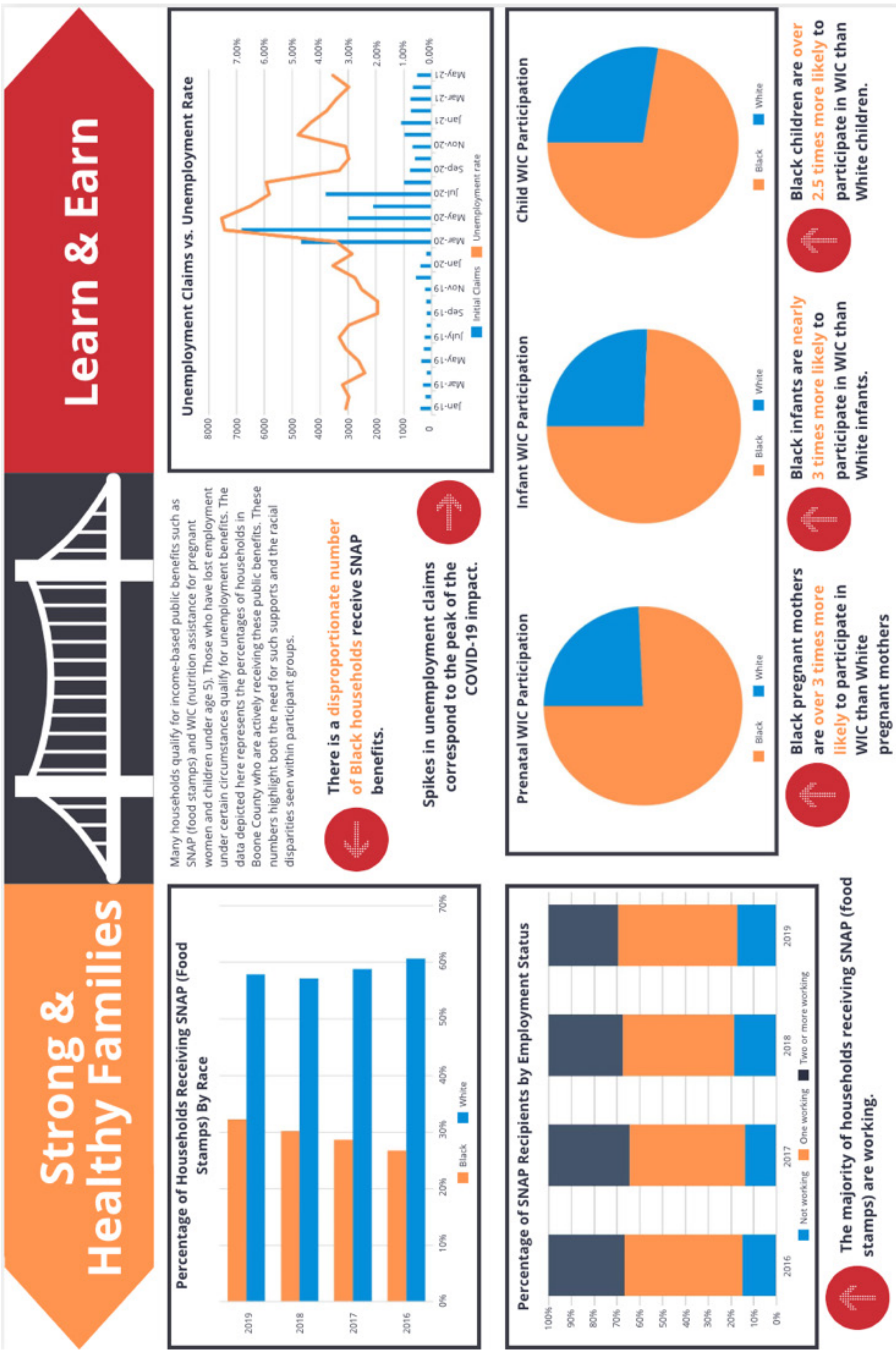


Figure 13: Data Walk posters from Boone County, Missouri

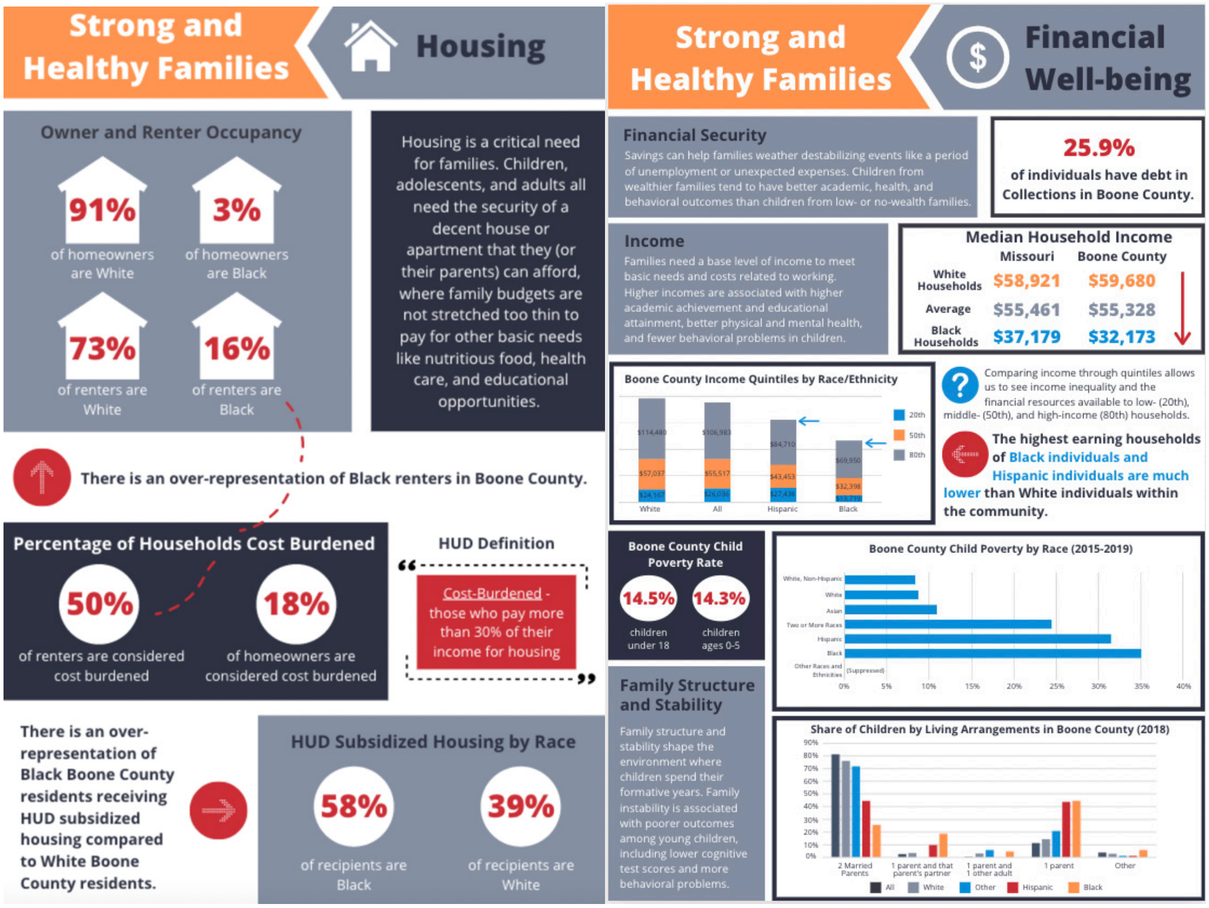


Figure 14: Data walk posters from Boone County, Missouri

Supplementing Your Mobility Metrics: Original Survey Data

When developing a survey, you must take the following steps:

1. **Determine what you hope to do with the data**. To inform decisions about target populations, survey modes, and scale, you must answer the following questions:
    a. What kinds of questions do you want to ask?
    b. Who or what groups do you want to provide information for?
    c. How will this collected data inform future programs or interventions?
    d. Who or what groups do you want to know more about?
    e. For example, if you want to understand the answers to a question by race, you will need a large enough sample size for each racial subpopulation.
2. **Consider timing and incentives**. Make sure to weigh the pros and cons when deciding the length of the survey and how long it will take respondents to complete the questions. Be considerate when choosing what incentive you might be able to offer survey-takers to thank them for their participation and recognize their expertise.
3. **Consider your budget**. What range of funds do you have to spend on a survey? Will this funding be sufficient to sustain the survey effort at certain intervals (i.e., annually or every few years) moving forward? Are the data still valuable if you cannot continue to collect it over time?
4. **Consider partnerships**. By partnering with a local survey firm or university, you can get assistance in development and administration of your survey. However, you may need to develop a subcontract or data-sharing agreement to engage some partners.
5. **Consider mode of delivery**. Surveys can come in many forms, such as online; in person; or by mail, phone, or text message. Consider what survey mode will best reach the respondents from whom you want the greatest response.
6. **Consider details that improve outreach, access, and engagement**. These include foreign-language translations to improve accessibility for local immigrants or English-Language learners and proactive consideration of local expectations or political climate. Field the survey at a time of year to best suit community capacity and interest.

For further information about surveys, please consult this Urban Institute resource: https://www.urban.org/research/publication/preparing-and-fielding-high-quality-surveys.

Sample Upward Mobility Findings Community Vetting Meeting Agenda

This sample agenda can be used to host an Upward Mobility Findings Presentation to community members.

Date:

Time:

Location:

Accessibility accommodations:

I. Welcome, Agenda Overview, and Goal-Setting

Welcome participants to the meeting and thank everyone for sharing their time and expertise. Provide a high-level overview of what will happen at the meeting and share what the intended end goal is for the meeting: for community members to hear the full set of findings gathered from the various data-gathering methods and have a final opportunity to seek clarification or make additions to what was gathered. Let them know that someone will be taking notes and that they can share their contact information if they would like to receive a written copy of the final summary report. Inform them of any confidentiality protocols you have in place and whether their names will be written down when they participate today.

II. Upward Mobility Findings Presentation (keep to less than 20 minutes)

Two options for facilitating:

1) Use slides to present summaries of the upward mobility findings,

OR

2) Hang posters around a room with the findings and let people walk around themselves in a 'Data Walk' format. Participants can be given sticky notes to either ask questions about the information or add an additional insight.

Remember to present the data-gathering methods that were used to gather the findings and a summary of who was involved in this effort. This is also a great place to ask partners to play a role, especially if they were engaged in leading part of the data-gathering efforts.

III. Discussion and Q&A

Offer a chance for attendees to ask clarifying questions about what they're seeing. If someone is questioning the validity or accuracy of the data, don't get defensive—instead ask them why, based on their community's experience, they don't believe the data to be true. Host a discussion among the participants about what is there. Here are some sample questions:

- Do these data represent your community's experience? Why or why not?
- Is this surprising? Why or why not?
- Is there something you would add to what we have here that you feel represents your community's experience?

- What else would you want us to know about _____ that we haven't already captured?

IV. Close Out, Thank You and Next Steps

Thank the participants for coming. Tell them what will happen with the findings and the additional information that you gathered today and what the Mobility Coalition's next steps are. Tell them how you plan to share a copy of the findings with them and collect contact information if people would like to receive your final summary report. Let people know about what future opportunities there are to engage with the work. Make sure that service providers are present to offer people information about services or answer specific questions as they leave.

STEP SEVEN

Determine Your Strategic Actions

The goals of Steps 5 and 6 were to gather quantitative and qualitative information to create a fuller picture of conditions in your community that block or promote mobility from poverty and advance equity. In this step, we will guide the Mobility Coalition in selecting your strategic actions:

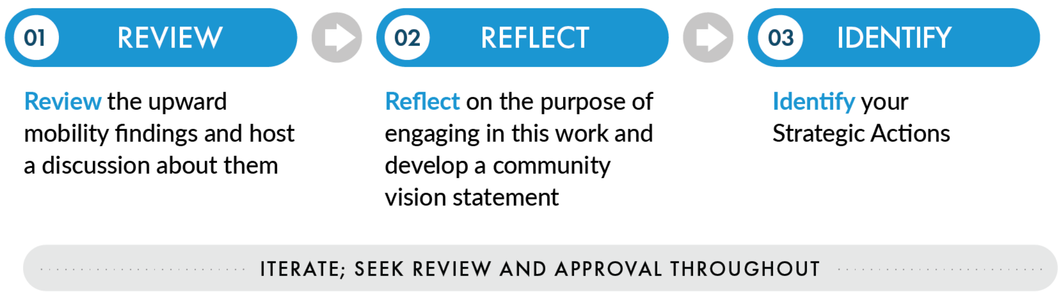


Figure 15: The process for selecting strategic actions for the Mobility Action Plan

This step is quite intensive, so it may be helpful to host a day-long retreat or a series of meetings over the course of several weeks. The Project Manager should also consider how to engage the Mobility Coalition members and champions to lead different parts of the gathering, ensuring that it's not just a government-led discussion.

Not all of the activities included below are absolutely necessary to create a MAP. We include them here because we know from experience working with our Upward Mobility Cohort that they are effective and can improve the quality and outcomes of the strategic actions you select. However, you may not have time to do them all, or some may overlap with work your coalition has already performed. Consider the steps and resources below as a set of possible tools for doing this work.

> Please note that the guidance in Step 7 (Determine Your Strategic Actions) and Step 8 (Develop Your Measurement Plan and Consider Sustainability) should be used in tandem. Each of the strategic actions you select in Step 7 will need appropriate success measures to track progress, and Step 8 details how to determine these measures. We recommend referring back and forth between these steps as you work. If you haven't already, you may want to identify a person or people responsible for gathering all the notes from Step 7 and saving the final versions so that they can be gathered into the MAP later on.

As you begin the process of selecting your priorities and identifying the specific strategic actions that will make up your MAP, the Mobility Coalition should remember the following:

- **Work iteratively and collaboratively.** The process of identifying the right solutions, vetting those ideas, revising them, and identifying more solutions will take time and require a lot of patience, especially if the Mobility Coalition is large. The process probably won't proceed in a straight line from start to finish—it will most likely require the group to double back, make adjustments, and incorporate those adjustments into next steps. However, collaboration and frank conversations about the way things really work in your community will be the key to success.
- **Keep people at the center.** Throughout this section, we guide you in identifying the right strategic actions for your MAP given the systems change conditions in your community. This might make it seem like the systems change and interventions are the center of the work, but don't lose sight of what you're really trying to accomplish: better outcomes for the people in your community who need them most.

Step 7.1 Review and Discuss the Final Upward Mobility Findings as a Coalition

At the end of Step 6, members of the Mobility Coalition should have shared the Upward Mobility Findings with the community and incorporated any final insights. Now, you'll want to reconvene as a coalition to discuss the findings, including the root causes of the inequities you see in the data, what you heard from community member stories, and how the findings interconnect across policy domains and stakeholders.

It might be helpful to engage a skilled facilitator for the discussion, because people in the room might have different feelings or opinions on why inequities exist in the community. Be aware that these can be uncomfortable conversations, and they might become contentious, so the coalition may have to work through real tensions or conflicts to arrive at a shared acknowledgement of community conditions and the current mobility from poverty ecosystem. This can take time, but skipping over it may undermine the long-term success of the effort.

The discussion might cover some of the following questions:

- What policies, laws, and institutional practices created and sustain the insights we see? Who were those policies and practices created by? For what purposes were they created?
- What is the prevailing narrative about poverty in our community? About people of color? Why does this narrative exist? How do these narratives get perpetuated?
- What values and constraints dictate the way each of us does our work now?
- How can we reflect a new way of thinking about our community challenges and strengths? What are we still not talking about that we should be?
- How might conditions in one policy domain block or facilitate progress in another?

Step 7.2 Develop a Community Vision Statement

To move successfully from challenging discussions to a shared plan for action, it will be helpful to refocus everyone's attention on the original vision for this work. The activity below can facilitate a reflection process and lead Mobility Coalition members in developing a community vision statement.

A **community vision statement** is a forward-looking statement describing what you want your community to look or be like when your work is done. It is different than a mission statement in that it does not describe the purpose of the Mobility Coalition's work or act as a roadmap for how to get to your goals. Instead, it paints a vibrant picture of your destination. Your vision should be ambitious, easy to understand, and demonstrate why your work is important.

If done well, a purposeful vision can

- inform strategic decisions, aligning efforts with goals and values;
- inspire people while still being achievable;
- help gain buy-in and support from partners, stakeholders, and community members; and
- help push coalition members through rough patches by reminding them why they're doing this.

Here is an example of community vision statements from the Upward Mobility Cohort:

> Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: "Philadelphia strives to be a city where every resident is healthy, safe, and has economic prosperity and a good quality of life. We aim to be an equitable city that eliminates the barriers to health, safety, and connectedness that exist based on race and ethnicity, disability status, age, and gender identity."

If you need help drafting a community vision statement, see **Creating a Community Vision Statement** at the end of this step, which includes instructions for codeveloping your statement.

Step 7.3 Create Your Theory of Change

With your vision in mind, the next step is to discuss *how* change happens in your community, which should lead you to consider the types of interventions that will be most effective in your specific political and policy context. A helpful activity to facilitate this discussion is to create a theory of change.

A theory of change articulates how a group believes change happens in their community or organization. It reflects a set of assumptions that connects preconditions (what you need for change to happen) to expected outcomes (the improvements you want to see in your city or county).

Do you really need a theory of change? We think so! A theory of change is important because it acknowledges there are conditions and environmental factors (e.g., politics, funding, or relationships) that can either contribute to or inhibit the success of change efforts.[13] It is a powerful tool that can help you

- challenge underlying assumptions about what it will take to create the desired change;
- reinforce stakeholder buy-in;
- create an accoutability framework for your strategic actions;
- stay the course throughout the entirety of your work;
- address the context and causes of challenges in your community, not just the symptoms; and
- effectively communicate your rationale for choosing specific strategic actions to different audiences.

If you need help drafting your theory of change, see **Codevelop your Theory of Change** and a sample theory of change at the end of this step.

With the Upward Mobility Insights, community vision statement, and theory of change complete, your Champions should take these pieces to elected officials, department heads, and organizational leads. In case those recipients are not already aware, your Champions should be sure to describe how these pieces were developed and who was involved.

Step 7.4 Develop a Systems Change Logic Model

Now that you have a clear vision for where your community should be and a theory of change that articulates your community's view of how change occurs, it's time to develop a systems change logic model, a tool that can help you identify a set of strategic actions that align with the outcomes and impact you hope to have with your work. (In Step 8 you will use your logic model as the foundation for a Measurement Plan.) Like your work in previous steps, developing your logic model should be an iterative process and will likely require several rounds of review and revision. How is a systems change logic model different than a regular logic model? That's a great question! In the logic model example below, you'll notice that when talking about the impact we want to make, we write impact statements about *people* because they are the reason we ultimately do this work. However, the next levels in the logic model—the outcomes/goals, outputs, strategic actions, and inputs—are about the systems changes you'd like to see that will lead to the impacts.

To create your logic model and determine your strategic actions, you'll start by articulating the intended impact of the work and then working backward toward the strategic actions (and eventually inputs) that will get you to those impacts. The table below is a simplified example of a logic model containing examples for one pillar; your full logic model will contain elements from all of the pillars. Below the table, there are more details about each level of the logic model.

POPULATION IMPACT	EXAMPLE
▪ The long-term consequences of your work that may take anywhere from 3 to 10 years or more to achieve ▪ Population-, community-, or environment-level changes you hope to bring about in your city or county	▪ All residents achieve financial well-being
SYSTEMS OUTCOMES/GOALS	↓
▪ The medium- to long-term systems changes required for the impact to be achieved	▪ Jobs pay living wages that support the cost of living and allow for savings ▪ Jobs provide benefits, including paid sick time, and opportunities for advancement ▪ Quality job opportunities are abundant and match the skills of the local workforce ▪ Banks and financial institutions offer quality, nonpredatory financial products
SYSTEMS OUTPUTS	↓
▪ The short-term, more immediate results that could plausibly lead to your outcomes/goals	▪ Employers increase wages in X # of new jobs to match the local living wage ▪ Employers create X # of new jobs with benefits and opportunities for advancement ▪ Banks and financial institutions enroll X # of new members in savings accounts with low to no fees ▪ The state or local government enacts a state or local earned income tax credit to boost the after-tax income for more workers
STRATEGIC ACTIONS	↓
▪ The activities you and your partners will implement to achieve your intended outputs	▪ Conduct research to determine what the local living wage is ▪ Engage with anchor institutions and major employers to discuss opportunities to raise wages ▪ Implement universal basic income to supplement wages below the living wage

	▪ Partner with local banks and financial institutions to offer new low- to no-fee products and enroll new clients with low incomes ▪ Form a coalition with the other municipal financial empowerment offices in our state to advocate for a state-level earned income tax credit
INPUTS	↓
▪ The resources or investments needed to complete the strategic actions	▪ Research budget and research partner ▪ Data on local wages and cost of living, disaggregated by race, industry, gender, and neighborhood ▪ Partnerships with anchor institutions, banks and financial institutions, and major employers ▪ Research on universal basic income and best practices for implementation ▪ Connections to other city financial empowerment offices

POPULATION IMPACT

Your intended impacts will be drawn from what you learned in your upward mobility findings and should answer the question: "what do you hope your community conditions will be as a result of your work?"

If you've never thought about impacts before, here are some things they should include:

- **A population-, community-, or environment-level change that will help you achieve your community vision**. Your impacts should be something that multiple stakeholder partners—not just government—can work toward.
- **A population or geographic focus**. Note that many city and county impacts include the phrase "all people" to express that their goal is to achieve equality in outcomes. However, you might decide to write impact statements that narrow in on a specific population or geography for additional focus, particularly if the goal is to address a longstanding inequity.
    - For example: residents with low incomes living in rural parts of the county, people of color, residents in districts 5 and 6, people with mental health challenges, single mothers

SYSTEMS OUTCOMES/GOALS

With this guidance in mind, you can begin brainstorming your goals. A goal is a positive statement focused on achieving a specific outcome, not an *opportunity to* achieve that outcome. GARE's Racial Equity: Getting to Results guide states that goals and priorities, "should be about the condition itself, not the choice or possibility of the condition (i.e., 'educated' versus 'the opportunity to be educated'). Saying 'the opportunity to' reinforces the notion that community members experience disparate outcomes because of choices they make rather than because of institutional and/or structural racism." Remember, because we are trying to change systems to create the population impact we hope to see, your goal statements should answer the question, "what does a well-functioning system look like? What results would it produce?" Here are some examples of systems outcomes/goals:

- The financial aid application process is accessible and easy to use.
- Educators adopt trauma-informed teaching to foster empathy and build healthier learning environments.
- Housing is free from lead and other mental and physical health hazards.

There are many ways you can go about selecting your systems goals, and you should choose the one that you like best. Here is one sample exercise a facilitator could use:

1. The facilitator asks each member of the Mobility Coalition to quietly write down three or four key systems goals.
2. The facilitator solicits these goals from coalition members, writes them on sticky notes, and places them on chart paper. Alternatively, they can use an online idea collection tool like *Jamboard*, *Mural*, *Miro* or *Trello*, provided everyone can use it. They should write all ideas down even if they are repetitive.
3. The facilitator asks the group to note similarities across the ideas presented and regroups the sticky notes so that similar ideas are next to each other.
4. The facilitator works with the group to narrow down the clusters of goals until there are no more than 10. If the facilitator sees goals that are actually outputs (or even strategic actions or inputs) they should move those sticky notes off to the side to be incorporated at the correct level of the logic model.
5. If the group is struggling to narrow down the list to specific goals, the facilitator might decide to have coalition members fill out a prioritization matrix for the goals presented. One example of a prioritization matrix looks like this:

Selection criteria	Data-informed decisionmaking	Racial equity	Partner buy-in	Political feasibility	Funding	Community vision
Prompt	*How do the data support the need for this goal?*	*How will this goal address racial inequities?*	*Whose support will be critical for the success of the goal? Do we have that support, or do we think we can gain it?*	*Is there support for this goal from elected leadership and organization heads? Is this goal aligned with efforts or plans from elected leadership?*	*Are there existing or potential funding streams that could support this goal?*	*How will this goal reflect our community's vision?*
Goal #1						
Goal #2						
Goal #3						

Each group fills out the rows for the ideas assigned to them and the facilitator aggregates the notes onto one matrix that everyone can see.

6. The full group comes back together to discuss the ideas in the matrix, again working to narrow down the list using the Coalition's decisionmaking method (see **Launching the Mobility Coalition Sample Agendas** at the end of Step 4).

Once the Mobility Coalition's goals have been developed, the Champions should take them to the elected officials, department heads, and organization heads that they work with to seek any feedback or advice on the direction the coalition is going. Note that soliciting the approval needed at this stage may take several weeks or months, and the coalition members may need to reconvene to modify or change some of the goals put forth based on how these meetings go.

SYSTEMS OUTPUTS

Outputs are the short-term results that can plausibly lead to your desired goals/outcomes. If you are not meeting your outputs, you will need to correct course, as you won't be able to achieve the outcomes that you want. To write your outputs, think about what would need to happen in the short term to achieve your medium- and longer-term goals. Specifically, think about what changes would need to be made to the system to lead you to the goals you hope to achieve. For example, in our sample logic model above, think about what it would take for jobs to pay living wages that support the cost of living and allow for savings.

For one, wages would likely need to increase. To turn that into an output, assign it to an actor who would be responsible for making that change. So in our example, the output becomes "employers increase wages in X # of new jobs to match the local living wage."

Focusing on outputs alone shows that you can get people into a system, but not that you can get them out of it.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

Identifying your strategic actions is the next step in developing your Logic Model. Strategic Actions are the activities that you and your partners will undertake to achieve your systems outputs. This step will likely involve several iterations as Mobility Coalition members meet to brainstorm ideas, vet the ideas with community members and leadership, revise and rank the ideas, and finally outline each strategic action's key steps, responsible actors, and associated success measures (Step 8 will help you with this last part). Keep in mind that although creating or revising policies and programs might be part of an effort to change systems, **systems change** is ultimately about a fundamental shift in practices, underlying values, or norms that changes the way work is done.

To facilitate the development of strategic actions, the Project Manager might decide to divide the Key Stakeholder Partners into working groups that are focused on a specific goal. Each working group can be advised by a Champion who has experience working on that topic. Groups should review the findings from the previous steps that are most relevant to their assigned goal and regularly revisit the community vision statement and theory of change. Of course, if the Project Manager decides to divide the work this way, it will be critical for the working groups to continue meeting as a full Mobility Coalition at regular junctures to promote the cross-pollination of ideas and collaboration among the groups and avoid silos.

The graphic below shows an example process for determining strategic actions. The large light-blue circles indicate when the Mobility Coalition should meet, and the small darker blue circles are steps that the working groups can complete on their own. Although this is represented as a linear process, it will likely be more iterative.

Figure 16: Process for determining strategic actions to include in the Mobility Action Plan

In the next few sub-sections, we provide additional guidance on how the Mobility Coalition might select strategic actions.

What's Working Already?

As you identify strategic actions, it's important to consider what actions the city or county and its partners are already taking that appear to be working well. Ideally, you flagged some of the successful strategies that came up during the information-gathering phase and can return to that list. Strategies that are already being implemented can be reassessed with an eye toward elevating them for inclusion in the MAP. To do this, reflect on the following questions:

- What evidence do we have that this strategy is already effective? Is this evidence sufficient to support its inclusion in the MAP? Remember that evidence can include both qualitative and quantitative findings and doesn't need to come from a randomized controlled trial or quasi-experimental evaluation. Ideally the evidence can show impact (e.g., is anyone better off?), not just that enrollment or attendance rates are high.
- How might we increase the effectiveness of this strategy? Does it need to be better linked with other strategies? Does it need to be better rooted in systems change? Does it need to be scaled? Does it need to be better targeted? Does it need to be better resourced in some way? If it's run by a partner organization, does it need to be taken up by the government? Or, are there learnings that can be shared across organizations that operate similar types of strategies? Does it need to be evaluated by an external organization for us to learn more about its effectiveness?

Another helpful tool you can use to assess your programs is our **Upward Mobility Program Assessment** found in the supplemental resources for this step.

Once you've assessed existing programs, you should be able to draft a relevant strategic action that can be considered for your MAP. Here is an example:

> *During the information-gathering phase, we learned that community members participating in the Save for My Home program, run by Forest City Asset Builders, had very high praise for the program. In particular, they liked the financial coaching component of the program and the opportunity to meet with banking advisors on-site at the community center to set up their home savings account. Forest City Asset Builders' annual reports show that 75 percent of program participants were able to save for a down payment within three years of completing the program. Because this program aligns well with our goal to boost homeownership in Forest City, we propose include the following strategic actions in our MAP: first, we propose funding Forest City Asset Builders to conduct a survey with program participants about the structural barriers they face when accessing a home. Second, we plan to connect the Save for My Home program coordinators with the MySafeHome program coordinators so they can strategize how to educate families about the free home assessments and weatherization grants offered by MySafeHome.*

Finding New Ideas

Working groups can use several different idea generation methods and sources to identify new strategic actions:

Review evidence resource libraries: Evidence resource libraries, also known as clearinghouses, are online resources where a third-party organization—typically an intermediary, research organization, or university—has aggregated a list of evidence-based interventions or strategies. Typically, the resource libraries will tag each intervention to demonstrate the rigor of the evidence or the specific type of lever being used (e.g., policy, program, practice, partnership, or evaluation). Ask your research organization partner if they know of a resource library you might reference. The following are great examples of evidence resource libraries:

- The Urban Institute's Upward Mobility Evidence Resource Library
- Results for America's Economic Mobility Catalog
- County Health Rankings' What Works for Health tool
- The University of California at San Francisco's Social Interventions Research & Evaluation Network Evidence & Resource Library
- The National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance's What Works Clearinghouse
- The Council of State Governments' What Works in Reentry Clearinghouse
- PolicyLink's All-In Cities Policy Toolkit

Look for promising strategies from peer communities. There is great work being done in nearly every community across the country, and much of it may not show up in evidence clearinghouses because it is never formally evaluated. However, other forms of evidence can point to the efficacy of a strategy, including analytical evidence, administrative data, and feedback from citizens and stakeholders. To look for promising strategies being implemented in peer communities, Working Group members might search online for reports written by research organizations or intermediaries that aggregate best practices in a specific policy field. Here are a few examples:

- The National Association of Counties' County Levers to Drive Economic Mobility
- The National League of Cities' Cities in Action Case Studies
- Results for America's Economic Mobility Catalog Case Studies
- The US Partnership on Mobility from Poverty's publications

Mobility Coalition members may also be members of professional groups or communities of practice that could be a source of promising interventions. For example, there is a Guaranteed Income Community of Practice that convenes guaranteed income stakeholders, including policy experts, researchers, community and program leaders, funders, and elected officials to promote learning and collaboration in the arena of unconditional cash transfer programs.[14] If you're working with a school or other education partner, for example, you might see if that institution belongs to StriveTogether, a network of community cradle-to-career partnerships that regularly convenes for peer-learning exchanges.

Think-pair-share: For this method, members reflect and come up with as many ideas as they can independently before partnering with someone else in the group to share their ideas and generate more together. Finally, they share ideas with the larger group. When everyone has had a chance to share their ideas, the group can review the list of ideas to eliminate any ideas that are duplicates or ask clarifying questions if they don't understand an idea.

Out-of-the-box brainstorming: This method has group members answer the prompt: "If money, politics, or time wasn't a concern, I would …" The goal here is to get people to be as creative as possible and generate ideas that haven't been tried before.

Crowdsourcing: Crowdsourcing is a community engagement method that can be done either in person or online. With crowdsourcing, a facilitator can post a list of questions or key priorities that need new ideas, and community members can share their ideas. If this is done in person, the facilitator can post the questions around a large room and give attendees sticky notes that they can write ideas on and post them next to the corresponding questions. Some city governments have also set up crowdsourcing platforms online where residents can share ideas anonymously and then others can up-vote the ideas they like. Crowdsourcing ideas from frontline staff is also a great method for identifying new strategic actions, because these individuals are the ones implementing programs and practices on a daily basis. See examples here for how some cities have used crowdsourcing.

One note of caution when using a community engagement technique like crowdsourcing is to be aware of who from the community is most likely to participate in this type of forum. People who show up to an event like this may not be representative of the general community. Specifically inviting people who have been most impacted by discrimination, structural racism, and disinvestment will help you to make sure you're gathering ideas from people who will be affected by the ideas.

Key Considerations for Identifying Strategic Actions

As you engage with Working Group members to identify strategic actions that will boost mobility from poverty and advance equity in your community, there are a few key considerations to keep in mind:

- **Strike a balance between "sure things" —ideas that you are almost certain can be accomplished—and longer-term aspirations**. Although boosting mobility from poverty and advancing equity won't happen overnight, it's important to have "sure things" on your list of strategic actions that can demonstrate the success of your work and help to build momentum among the Mobility Coalition for longer-term efforts.
- **Make sure strategic actions can actually achieve the scale of your goals**. For example, if your goal is to "ensure that all expecting mothers have access to prenatal healthcare" but your strategic actions will only affect a small number of mothers, then either that goal is not appropriate or that action is not significant enough.
- **Focus on systems change**. Remember from our framework that systems change is "a fundamental shift in practices, underlying values, or norms by local actors that reshapes policies, processes, relationships, and power structures." Similarly, the Government Alliance on Race and Equity says that places should aim for "transformative approaches"—those that "cut across multiple institutions, focus on policy and organizational culture, alter the ways institutions operate, and shift cultural values and political will."[15] As you brainstorm strategic actions, consider those that change relationships, disrupt traditional power and decisionmaking structures, and create new processes and practices. Keep in mind, too, that real systems change results from multiple, specific actions that add up over time.
- **Remember that systems are run by people**. Expecting systems to change without a change in human behavior or mindset is futile. The "Water of Systems Change" paper by John Kania, Mark Kramer, and Peter Senge calls mindsets "mental models," defined as "habits of thought—deeply held beliefs and assumptions and taken-for granted ways of operating that influence how we think, what we do, and how we talk."[16] If your goal is to eliminate structural racism within your county or city, you may need to spend time educating key stakeholders and people in power about structural racism and training them to become more aware of their own privilege and implicit biases. As you brainstorm strategic actions, consider what actions could involve individuals who hold power or work within systems (i.e., educational opportunities for program staff, board members, or leadership), keeping in mind that many of these individuals might already be on your Mobility Coalition.

- **Don't forget about narrative change**. Narrative change is arguably the most important yet most overlooked strategic action that a group of key stakeholders can take. The narratives that people hold in their heads about why certain groups of people have less wealth than others or why some people are left behind while others succeed can either help to support a specific change agenda or prevent solutions from making transformative change. For example, if the prevailing narrative in your community is that people experiencing poverty are lazy and just need to 'pull themselves up by their bootstraps,' you might find that passing universal basic income legislation is difficult. On the other hand, if the prevailing narrative in your community is that people experiencing poverty face barriers to accessing the supports they need to mobilize out of poverty, then you might be more successful in passing policies that address those systemic barriers. Resources from organizations like the FrameWorks Institute and The Opportunity Agenda can help you to think about a narrative change strategy.
- **Think about what the private sector can do**. Make sure to brainstorm potential actions that the private sector could take on, beyond just funding pilot initiatives or donating money. Engaging the private sector in this work is especially important because many of the systems that prevent and support people from achieving mobility from poverty are run by private-sector actors. For example, employers in your region could create new employment pipelines or training initiatives, or they could adopt policies or practices that support employees and their families (for example, by building more robust employee benefits programs or requiring managers to post schedules a certain amount of time in advance to create more predictability for workers). Hopefully you can come up with strategies that invite the private sector to make changes voluntarily. But you should consider whether there are strategic actions that *mandate* or *incentivize* private action.

While the Mobility Coalition comes up with ideas for strategic actions, champions can reconnect with elected officials, department heads, and organization heads to share updates about the direction the work is taking. The champions might even consider whether to invite any of these individuals to a coalition meeting. Of course, if this happens, the Project Manager will need to think through how to handle the new power dynamics present.

Review and Select the Strategic Actions

After generating ideas, the Mobility Coalition should meet to refine and narrow the strategic actions that will go into the logic model. Before reviewing the merits of potential strategies, coalition members might prepare one-page "idea briefs" that include the departments, agencies, or organizations that would be responsible for implementation (recognizing that a strategy could be multipronged and have more than one implementing organization) and the inputs (the list of resources, funding, or staff capacity) that would be needed to ensure proper implementation and sustainability.

If you need help selecting which actions to include in your logic model and in your final MAP, see Selecting Strategic Actions for the MAP at the end of this step, which includes a few different resources you can use to select your actions.

Ideally, you will identify a subset of strategies that are feasible to adopt, align with Mobility Coalition priorities, change systems, and could plausibly lead to your proposed outcomes. There may also be a subset of strategic actions that you recognize as high impact but that are not feasible to include in your MAP at this time. In this case, you might decide to include “pre-steps” to these actions in your MAP by describing what could be done now to implement them in the future. For example, your county might decide that you would like to introduce a jobs pilot program but that you don’t have enough industry information to do so and would need to conduct more interviews and research to gather that information. Here are some questions to think through:

- What were we not able to gather or learn that we would need to know before we could develop the right strategy? How might we develop a plan to get this data, information, or evidence?
- What partnerships, buy-in, or resources do we not have now that we would need to successfully adopt this action?

Here is an example for how this might result as a strategic action:

> *We learned from our stakeholder interviews and workforce development data collection efforts that a living-wage jobs pilot could be a beneficial addition to our county’s workforce development programming. However, we were not able to gather enough information about which industries have the best pathways for workers with low wages to advance to stable, higher-paying jobs. As such, one of our strategic actions will be to complete an industry ‘pathways to higher wages’ study so we can learn more before launching a pilot. Our anchor institution partner, Forest State University, will lead the study in partnership with the Forest County Workforce Development Board. Once we have the results of the study, we will reassess whether we can launch the pilot next year.*

INPUTS

Once the Mobility Coalition has identified which of the strategic actions will go into the MAP draft, the group should identify the necessary inputs for implementing the actions. Inputs can include things like funding, staffing, partnerships, political will, technology, evaluation capacity, data, and regulatory approval. You should have a specific list of inputs needed for each strategic action in your MAP, and these should all be measurable (even if the measure is about quality, rather than quantity). To develop this list, answer the following questions:

- What department or partner should lead the effort to adopt and implement? What other partners or departments need to be involved? What level of staff will be needed?
- What technology, staffing, or infrastructure is needed to operate this action?
- Does the city or county already budget for this? If not, can funds be reallocated, or will you need a new source of funding to implement this idea?

Here are some sample inputs you might expect to see in a logic model:

$X CDBG funds

Buy-in from X nonprofit director, Y hospital CEO, and Z city housing director

Data sharing agreement with the county/city health department

X number of hours for a community engagement coordinator

Step 7.5 Seek Review and Approval of Your MAP Logic Model

Before the logic model can be finalized and added to the MAP, there are a few more steps that the Mobility Coalition will need to take to seek review and approval of the final set of ideas being put forth in your logic model.

Community Member Review*:* While the Mobility Coalition is working to generate strategic actions for the logic model, the Community Engagement Lead should begin planning how to share the strategic actions with the public. Ideally, the draft actions will be shared across the full geography of the jurisdiction with a special emphasis on those community members who are most likely to be affected by their implementation. The Community Engagement Lead should carefully develop a plan for this community review stage to ensure community members have plenty of opportunities and ways to engage. This might include hosting both in-person and virtual events, having a "Strategic Action Walk" (which is like a Data Walk, but presenting the strategic actions instead of the **Mobility Metrics** data), using online crowdsourcing platforms, or using community partners to help engage key populations for more targeted review events. You might also consider utilizing citizen juries to consider the proposed strategic actions and present their own recommendations before the Mobility Coalition (see *this resource* from the US Environmental Protection Agency for more detail on how to host a citizen jury) or engaging frontline staff to ensure their approval of the selected strategies. As with other community engagement events hosted throughout this work, it will be important for the facilitator to share with participants an overview of the steps taken to reach the strategic action recommendations.

Leadership Review

For your efforts to succeed, you must gain commitments from elected officials and partner organizations to adopt, implement, and fund the strategic actions. The process for seeking review will vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction, but it's important for the Project Manager to build sufficient time for leadership review, especially if the recommendations need to be voted on by a council or board before they can be formally adopted. Hopefully, leadership has been engaged throughout the process so that there are no major edits or changes made to the core strategic actions. However, the Project Manager and other Working Group leads should expect and prepare for pushback on specific strategic actions. They should plan to reconvene the coalition once the appropriate review and approvals have been completed so that they can make final revisions.

Step 7.6 Write the Relevant Components of Your Mobility Action Plan

At this stage in the process, you'll want to gather your notes and materials and draft the versions of your community vision statement and theory of change and/or logic model that will appear in your MAP.

MAP Component: Community Vision Statement

MAP Component: Theory of Change and/or Logic Model

STEP SEVEN REVIEW CHECKLIST

- ☐ The Mobility Coalition has reviewed and discussed the final Upward Mobility Findings as a group.
- ☐ The Mobility Coalition has drafted a community vision statement.
- ☐ The Mobility Coalition has created its theory of change.
- ☐ The Mobility Coalition has developed a logic model.
- ☐ The Mobility Coalition has brainstormed and selected its strategic actions.
- ☐ The Mobility Coalition has vetted its strategic actions with the community and with government leadership.
- ☐ The Mobility Coalition has prepared a version of its community vision statement and theory of change and/or logic model for the MAP.

STEP SEVEN

Supplemental Materials

1. Creating a Community Vision Statement
2. Creating a Theory of Change
3. Upward Mobility Program Assessment
4. Selecting Strategic Actions for your MAP

Creating a Community Vision Statement

The activity described below can support your Mobility Coalition members in informally sharing what they hope and want for the future of your community. The activity can be adapted and adjusted as needed for your group and can help build excitement and energy around the work you are doing together.

Step 1: Engage the group in individual reflection on the community's past and future.

You can start this process by asking group members to begin reflecting before the meeting. At the start of the meeting, allow a few minutes for reflection for group members to reconnect with any thinking they have already done.

Step 2: Reflect on the past.

Consider using the questions below to guide a group discussion (you can include additional questions, but try to keep the overall list to no more than six or seven):

1. What are some of the notable moments of this past year or few years for our community?
2. What are some of your organization's accomplishments?

Step 3: Visualize the future.

Lead the coalition in thinking about their hopes and aspirations for the next five years that will advance upward mobility and racial equity in the community. Tell the group that in 3 years (or 5 years, or 10 years, depending on your MAP implementation timeline) a local news host will do a special report on your community, highlighting your progress on upward mobility and equity and successful interventions you have implemented to address community challenges. Keeping in mind what they shared in Step 2, give the group 3–5 minutes to write down what this news host would say. You can also prompt them with more specific examples like: "Take our visitors first to a new child care facility. What is going on? How has this made a difference in the community?"

Step 4: Find common themes.

Ask participants to share their future visions with the group. Once everyone has shared, identify the common themes and record them on a medium everyone can see. These will provide key words to include in the vision statement.

> Facilitation tip: Much research indicates that visual cues help us better retrieve and remember information. So consider engaging a graphic facilitator who can capture your discussion visually. Graphic facilitators use a combination of graphics such as diagrams, pictures, symbols, and writing to lead a group to a goal. You can then display the resulting artifact at all your meetings as a means to keep the group focused and grounded in your vision for the future.

Step 5: Finalize your vision statement.

Allow the group a few minutes to reflect on the key words and themes identified and draft their own vision statements. Write down all the draft vision statements. Ask the group to vote on their top choices for further refinement.

Facilitation tip: Don't let the group get too caught up in semantics. If you reach a stalemate, take a break or end the meeting. Have the core team wordsmith and bring the statement back to the group. This is where it is important for everyone to have a clear sense of who has the authority to make the final decision.

Step 6: Confirm final buy in.

Once you have the final vision statement, do a quick check around the room to see where people are. Ask people to show a thumb up if they are excited and support the vision, a thumb turned sideways horizontally if they support the vision, and a thumb down if they do not support the vision.

Creating a Theory of Change

Use the instructions below to facilitate a session to develop a theory of change. In the boxes below, we provide examples of what your theory of change could look like and include blank boxes where you can develop your own theory of change.

Step 1. Prepare for the conversation.

- Make the space of the meeting as comfortable as possible. If in person, consider how to seat everyone to create a sense of community and collaboration towards a common goal (e.g., consider round tables over square/rectangular ones that could create a sense of competition). If online, make sure you use technology everyone is familiar with or give participants a walkthrough and a simple way to engage with the technology you will use (e.g., if using a collaborative platform, assign them an easy task to complete before the meeting).
- Refresh everyone on the decisionmaking model you agreed to at the end of Step 4.
- Make sure to provide enough breaks and opportunities for folks to step away and check their email. For most people, problem-solving fatigue tends to set in at the two-hour mark, so you should be sure to have a plan for frequent breaks and to carefully monitor energy levels.

Step 2. Review your community vision statement.

Your community vision statement is your aspirational and ambitious statement about where you want your community to be in the future. To build a theory of change, you'll start with your community vision statement and work backward toward your inputs.

Forest City will be a place where all residents can be healthy, happy, valued, and financially secure.

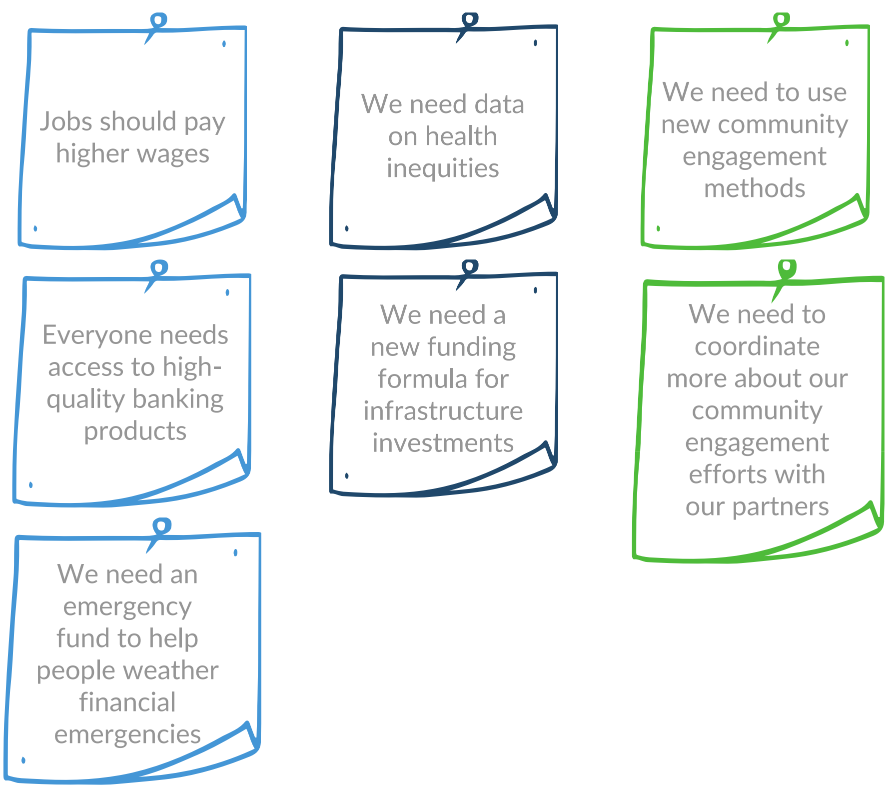
Step 3: Identify the outcomes.

Start by identifying the improved outcomes you want to see in your county or city. Have your participants think back to the visioning exercise you completed already or answer the question "what will you see if you are living in the county or city that you envisioned?"

Sample outcome statements	Your outcome statements
▪ Increase in the number of city residents with low incomes claiming the earned income tax credit ▪ City resources allocated to achieve health equity in our city ▪ Better community engagement practices and coordination with partners.	

Step 4: Define what needs to change to reach these outcomes.

Provide the group with sticky notes (physical or virtual) to write down their ideas about what needs to change in your community for you to realize these outcomes and achieve your community's vision. This will allow you to group ideas based on similarities. As a group, agree on the ideas to keep. The sticky notes below are just examples of what people might suggest.



Step 4. Identify the necessary preconditions for making these changes.

Go through each idea identified in the previous step and ask the group what the necessary preconditions are for making these kinds of outcomes a reality. A precondition is a condition that must be fulfilled before something else can happen.

Sample preconditions	Your preconditions
▪ Major employers need to see the value in raising wages. ▪ Banks need to remove fees or entry requirements that prevent people from opening bank accounts. ▪ We need banks in our community that are willing to construct branches in low-income neighborhoods. ▪ We need to include an emergency fund in our budget. ▪ The City needs to revise its participant data collection to include questions about race, ethnicity, gender, and disability for all programs. ▪ We need to partner with the local hospital to get additional data. ▪ We need to map our current infrastructure investments by neighborhood. ▪ We need to learn more community engagement methods. ▪ We need to identify which local nonprofits are currently doing community engagement.	

Once you have a good list of preconditions, attempt to group the preconditions into similar themes that represent **the main types of preconditions that must be in place for you to achieve your community's vision**. It's okay for a precondition to be used for several different kinds of conditions.

For example, the above list of preconditions could be grouped into the following themes:

- Major employers, local banking institutions, and other anchor institutions must be included in our work and seen as key partners for success.
- Our budget is an essential tool for achieving the policy and programmatic change we want to have.
- We need as much disaggregated data as possible about access to our city's programs, services, and amenities.
- We need the right staff and technology to analyze our data, identify disparities, and understand trends.

- We must value learning and take time to learn ways to work differently.
- We need strong relationships with nonprofit and community-based organization partners.
- We need to have a foundation of knowledge about the causes of racial inequities in our community.

Step 5. Clarify your assumptions.

Theories of change are rooted in assumptions—things that are accepted to be true without proof. According to Paula Richardson, Director of Collaborative Evaluation, Learning and Impact at international NGO Salanga, assumptions, "whether they are conscious or unconscious, are important drivers behind our work and they are determined by our values, experiences, and beliefs…Our personal and professional beliefs shape our mental models and inform how we understand change to happen; they influence the role we see for ourselves (and our organization), and what we assume other actors in the system will or won't do, and the strategies we choose."[17]

One of the biggest values of developing a theory of change is that it creates an opportunity for you to state your assumptions out loud and for others to share either their acceptance or rejection of those beliefs. Your MAP will be more effective if your assumptions about how and why change will happen are discussed, aligned with your outcomes, and agreed upon by the full group. Consider what assumptions you are making about the following:

- The conditions and preconditions required for change
- The links between your conditions for change and your expected outcomes
- The potential reach of your work
- The roles played by your Mobility Coalition partners and the relationships between the partners, leadership, and the community
- The beliefs, values, and perspectives that have shaped your theory of change (i.e., How are you centering **racial equity** in your approach?)
- The staff and other resources you need and/or have available

As you go through this exercise, keep in mind that people on your Mobility Coalition will have different assumptions—that is to be expected. Everyone in your coalition has different identities, experiences, and histories that shape their beliefs about how change happens. Getting everyone to share their own assumptions will likely be a very personal experience and may even be challenging. However, stating these beliefs openly and having candid conversations about how change happens is a critical step in identifying the right strategic actions for your MAP.

It might be more difficult to get people to agree on a common theory of change than on a shared vision for what the future of their community should be. When the conversation gets off track or heated, leverage the common ground you have identified through the process of creating your vision statement as a way to remind the group that they are all working together to achieve that vision of your county or city.

Write your sample assumptions by answering the prompt, "we assume that….."

Sample assumptions	Your assumptions
▪ Major employers and banking institutions in our region are willing to forgo some profits in exchange for increasing overall prosperity in our community. ▪ We will not have sufficient funds in our budget for new programs, additional staff, and the technology we need, so we will need to seek other funding. ▪ Our data privacy laws will permit us to collect the type of data we want to collect. ▪ Our leadership will accept and allow us to make time throughout our day for learning. ▪ Nonprofits and community-based organizations want to partner with us. ▪ Everyone is open and willing to learn about the history of racism in our community.	

Additional guidance on how to lead your Mobility Coalition members in stating their assumptions about the work can be found in this resource from LinkedIn.

Step 6: Produce your diagram and narrative

Theories of change are effective because they are visual roadmaps that make it easier to understand complex interventions. When developing your theory of change, consider your audience and how they will process the information. To bring your theory of change to life, consider using software like Canva or Piktochart that can help you map out your theory of change (and later, your logic model). You should write each element of your theory of change as a nouns rather than a verb. See the made-up example of Forest City below.

Take care when publishing and making your theory of change publicly available. For example, consider how people might access and use it, and make sure it's available in an accessible format. You should also include a narrative that describes the process you used to develop the theory of change, a short, written summary of what it includes, a description of who was involved in its development, what your assumptions were, and a link to your monitoring and evaluation plan once it gets posted.

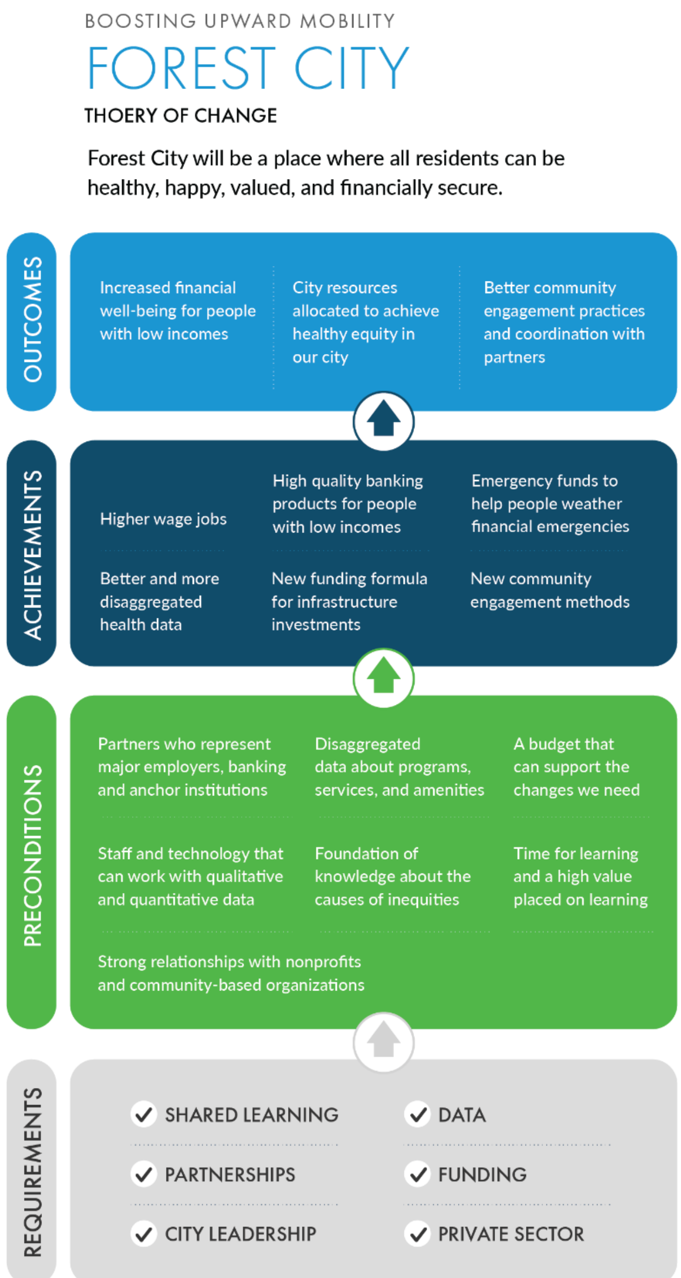


Figure 17: Sample theory of change

Using Your Theory of Change

Your completed theory of change should be used to (1) guide the selection of your strategic actions, and (2) communicate succinctly about your work and the change it is intended to make in the policy ecosystem and in your community.

Other examples of Theories of Change:

- St. Louis County Public Health and Human Services Community Health Assessment and Action Planning Improvement Plan
- Tenderloin City – Health Improvement
- King County, WA
- Fresno DRIVE (this full DRIVE Race Equity Plan also includes an example of how to translate a theory of change into a scorecard for evaluating whether a potential strategic action aligns with the theory of change).

Upward Mobility Program Assessment

This assessment can be used to help local government stakeholders understand whether their programs embody the principles and factors that evidence shows boost mobility from poverty.[18] As you use this assessment, please remember this is **not** a program evaluation tool and will not tell you whether your programs are boosting mobility from poverty. Places interested in understanding the answer to this question might consider engaging evaluators or internal research teams to design and execute an impact evaluation. This assessment is also not a budgeting or prioritization tool. Keep in mind that one program is insufficient for boosting mobility from poverty. Rather, places seeking to boost mobility from poverty and advance equity must be prepared to make transformative, systems-level changes. The goal of this assessment is to understand whether your program environment is suitable and to what extent it can bolster mobility from poverty and advance equity.

How to Use this Assessment

Select a program that your jurisdiction operates that is intended to support mobility from poverty and equity. Respond to the series of questions below and write down your responses in the spaces provided. Terms in **bold** text are defined in the key terms box just to the right of where the term is used. Once you are finished responding to the questions, review your responses to identify areas of strength and elements your program might be lacking. You can find additional resources about each of these question groups at the end of the document.

Program Name:

Operating Department:

Other Program Information:

Assessment Group 1: Alignment with the Three-Part Definition of Mobility from Poverty

Does your program positively affect your participants' **economic success**? How?	
Does your program positively affect participants' **power and autonomy**? How?	
Does your program help participants to feel a sense of **being valued in community**? How?	

Key Terms

Three-part definition of mobility from poverty: Meaningful and sustainable mobility from poverty encompasses three dimensions: economic success, power and autonomy, and being valued in community.

Economic success: Adequate income and assets that support individuals' and families' material well-being.

Power and autonomy: Control over one's life, the ability to make choices, and the collective capacity to influence larger policies and actions that affect one's future.

Being valued in community: Feeling the respect, dignity, and sense of belonging that come from contributing to and being valued by people in one's community.

Assessment Group 2: Program Evidence Base & Continuous Learning

What **outputs** are you tracking for this program?	
Which of the **Mobility Metrics** or **predictors** do these outputs align with?	
What are the intended **outcomes** of this program?	
What evidence do you have that your intended outputs and outcomes will help advance upward mobility?	
Has a **program evaluation** been conducted on this program? If yes, what type of evaluation was conducted and what was found? If not, does it replicate a program from another place that *has been* evaluated?	
What is the evidence base behind this program?[19]	

Key Terms

Outputs: the short-term, more immediate results produced by your strategic actions that could plausibly lead to your outcomes/goals.

Mobility Metrics: A set of 26 indicators that reflect predictors of upward mobility. The Mobility Metrics were developed by a Working Group of distinguished scholars and staff at the Urban Institute.

Predictors: Policy factors that research shows boost long-term upward mobility at the community level.

Outcomes: The measurable effects that a program will accomplish for people or places.

Program evaluation: A method of determining a program's effects on the people, families, or communities it serves. Program Evaluation is a discrete effort that answers a predetermined set of questions, and typically involves collecting data beyond what is routinely collected during program implementation (Tatian 2016).

Do you have a mechanism for regularly gathering and analyzing program data? For example, you might use a survey, intake form, satisfaction interviews, or a regular data review. Do you have ways to adjust the program in response to poor results?	
What will be the process for collecting data and analyzing it over time? Will there be money to continue this analysis even if the program itself ends? This is important to detect effects that would only be measurable after the intervention has ended.	

Assessment Group 3: Community & Practitioner Engagement

Have direct service providers (for example, program staff or grantees) been engaged to help shape the program or provide feedback on the program's delivery? If so, how were they engaged?	
Have community members or program recipients been	

engaged to shape the program or provide feedback on its delivery? If so, on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being no community engagement, 3 being you solicited feedback from community members on the program, and 5 being you engaged community members in the *design and delivery* of the program, how would you rate your community engagement? Please describe your engagement in more depth.	

Assessment Group 4: Scale of Impact

Who does the program support (i.e., residents with incomes below 50 percent of the area median income, Asian American and Pacific Islander residents, residents living in the Tall Oaks neighborhood, residents receiving Medicaid, etc.)? How many people does the program currently serve? What share of the eligible population does the program serve?	

If it were feasible, would you want to expand this program to reach more people? If yes, what is needed (e.g., political capital, financial resources, council approval)? If no, why not?	
Are there nongovernmental programs that are similar to this program (for example, run by nonprofits)? If yes, would you consider aligning efforts to increase the scale of your work?	
If there are other aligned programs, have you worked to learn about and, if possible, adopt best practices from these programs?	
How will this program be funded in the future: through the regular budgetary process or through new federal, state, or foundation grants?	

Assessment Group 5: Targeting Inequities

Does this program allocate resources, services, or funds based on a **universal approach**, a **targeted universal approach**, or a **targeted approach** aimed at eliminating disparities? Please describe.	
How is the program designed to be **culturally appropriate** for the communities it aims to serve?	
Does this program address the **root causes of inequities**?[20] If yes, how does it do that?	

Key Terms

Universal approach: An approach where an intervention or service is available to everyone without regard to their group membership, status, or income (powell, Menendian, and Ake 2019).

Targeted universal approach: An approach where program designers set universal goals but apply targeted approaches for achieving them based on the varying circumstances of different groups (powell, Menendian, and Ake 2019).

Targeted approach: An approach that singles out specific populations or makes provisions for selected groups. These programs are generally tailored to the needs of the people it aims to serve (powell, Menendian, and Ake 2019).

Culturally appropriate programming: Programming that is designed to reflect the culture, community norms, traditions, and values of the populations it aims to serve.

Root causes of inequities: The underlying causes that create an unfair or unjust outcome. Root causes can include institutional policies, practices, or barriers; structural and individual racism; discrimination; conscious and unconscious bias; and unequal distribution of power and resources.

Assessment Group 6: Removing Barriers

What have you heard about any obstacles (unintentional or intentional) that program participants face when accessing this program? How might you address these barriers?	
Does this program help participants meet **immediate, basic needs**? Meeting basic needs may be a necessary precondition to ensuring participants can access and make use of other services.	

Key Terms

Immediate, basic needs: The fundamental things that people need to subsist, such as having enough to eat, being able to pay housing and utility bills, having a safe place to live, being able to pay for medical costs, and being able to pay debts.

Assessment Group 7: Mitigating Unintended Consequences

Does the program intersect with other programs/policies outside of its policy area? If yes, is there a **cliff effect**[21] that could limit both programs from achieving their intended purpose?	
Does the program have the potential to lead to **displacement** or **gentrification**? If so, how do you plan to mitigate this risk?	

Key Terms

Cliff effect: When a family's income increases above a program's eligibility requirements, but the new wages are less than the benefits the family loses.

Displacement: Forced or involuntary household movement from a place of residence. For example, people can be displaced by being evicted (forced displacement) or by unaffordable rents (involuntary displacement) (Cohen and Petit 2019).

Gentrification: Transformation of areas historically inhabited by marginalized groups, usually racial or ethnic or class groups, into areas used by the dominant class or racial or ethnic group. Gentrification is usually characterized by increased investments in areas that have long experienced disinvestment (Cohen and Petit 2019).

Upward Mobility Program Assessment Additional Resources

Assessment Group 1: Alignment with the Three-Part Definition of Mobility from Poverty

- Boosting Upward Mobility: Metrics to Inform Local Action Summary (Urban Institute)
- Measuring Mobility from Poverty (US Partnership on Mobility from Poverty)

Assessment Group 2: Program Evidence Base & Continuous Learning

- Performance Measurement to Evaluation (Urban Institute)
- Performance-Based Strategies: Defining Terms and Comparing Common Strategies (Urban Institute)
- Economic Mobility Catalog (Results for America)
- Evaluating Programs and Impact with Promise Neighborhoods (Urban Institute)

Assessment Group 5: Targeting Inequities

- Next 50 Catalyst Brief: What Would It Take to Overcome the Damaging Effects of Structural Racism and Ensure a More Equitable Future? (Urban Institute)
- Targeted Universalism: Policy & Practice (Haas Institute at the University of California Berkeley)
- Action Learning Guide: Understand and Identify Root Causes of Inequities (County Health Rankings & Roadmaps)
- Building Culturally Relevant Nutrition Assistance on Tribal Lands (Urban Institute)

Assessment Group 6: Removing Barriers

- Many Families in Arlington, Virginia, Struggle to Afford Basic Needs. A Flexible Safety Net Can Help (Urban Institute)

Assessment Group 7: Mitigating Unintended Consequences

- Reducing the Cliff Effect to Support Working Families (Aspen Institute)
- The Cliff Effect in Arlington (Arlington Community Foundation)
- Guide to Measuring Neighborhood Change to Understand and Prevent Displacement (National Neighborhood Indicators Partnership)
- To Understand a City's Pace of Gentrification, Look at Its Housing Supply (Urban Institute)

Selecting Strategic Actions for Your MAP

A few different tools can help you select strategic actions for your logic model.

Feasibility versus Impact Matrix

To create this matrix, Mobility Coalition members should use butcher block paper or a platform like Jamboard, Miro, or Mural to draw a matrix that has two axes like the one below. One axis will describe the feasibility of a strategic action and the other will describe its potential impact.

As you think about feasibility, consider the following:

1. **Politics and election cycles**: Might the current administration adopt this strategic action? If you are in an election year, might a new mayor or county executive could be convinced to continue work on this action?
2. **Funding**: Are funds available you can use for this strategic action? If so, do they come from a source that is renewed every year, or would you need to reapply for funds to sustain the work? If funds are not already available for this action, could you obtain funds for the work?
3. **Buy-in and support**: Do you have the staff or partnerships to adopt this strategic action? Do your key organizational partners support this strategy? If not, could they be brought on board? Do you have community support for this action? Do your nonprofit and CBO partners have the capacity to deliver specific strategies?
4. **Infrastructure**: Do you have the necessary infrastructure (i.e., space, equipment, technology, staffing) to properly execute this strategy?

As you think about impact, consider the following:

1. **Targeting:** Is this action going to reach the intended group(s)? Will it reduce disparities?
2. **Root causes:** Will this strategy redress the root causes of a problem?
3. **Scale:** Is this action big enough to reach all of those who need it?
4. **Systems change:** Is this action going to change practices, values, or norms? Is it going to remove structural barriers and redress inequities?

Coalition members will place all of the strategic actions on the matrix. The Mobility Coalition might decide to advance the actions that fall on the right side of the matrix. These will be the most feasible to implement, are most likely to achieve the impact the coalition is hoping to create, or are lower impact but highly feasible to complete and therefore could be good quick wins.

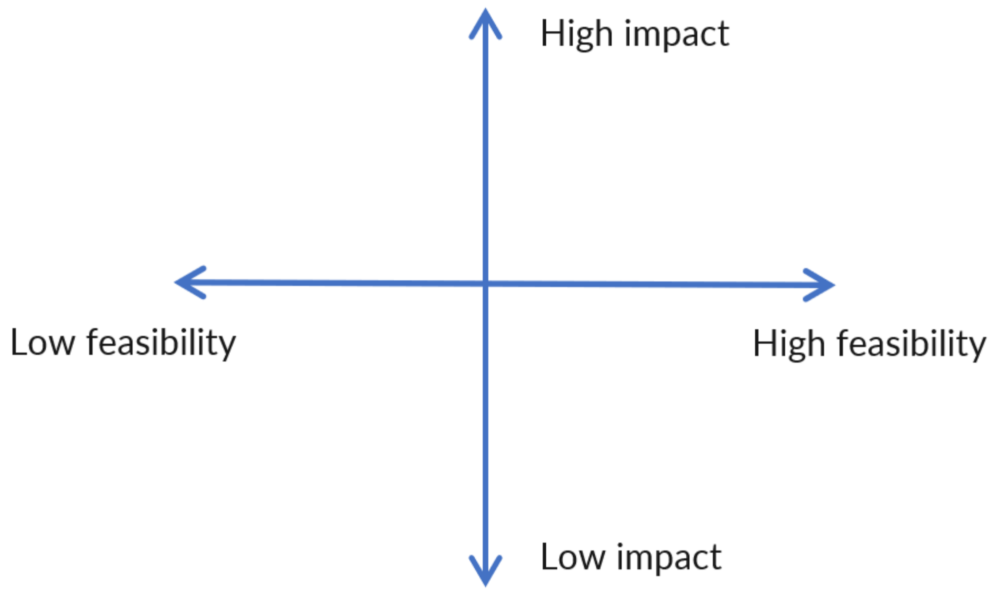


Figure 18: Feasibility versus impact matrix

Forcefield Analysis

Another exercise that can be used to determine whether you have enough support for a strategic action is a forcefield analysis. This is a tool for understanding the various forces working in favor of or against a specific strategic action. Here are the steps for conducting a forcefield analysis and an example:

Step 1: Write down your proposed strategic action or the issue you'd like to change

At the top of the table, write down the strategic action that you'd like the group to discuss.

Step 2: Identify forces for the proposed action or change

Think about the kinds of forces already driving change on this idea or that would support change. These can be internal and external (e.g., strong partnerships) and can be people, organizations, programs, policies, or conditions that will support the action.

Step 3: Identify forces against the action or change

Now brainstorm the forces already resisting this type of idea or change or that would not support changing the way things work (e.g., limited resources for sustainable funding).

Let's create a sample table on how a city might boost wealth among people of color by increasing homeownership.

	Force for change	Force against change
People or organizations	Nonprofit organizations ▪ Forest City Neighborhood Housing Services ▪ Boys and Girls Club ▪ Habitat for Humanity Funders ▪ Forest City Community Foundation ▪ Forest City United Way Public Partners: ▪ City Hall ▪ Forest City Public Library ▪ Forest City Public Schools	▪ Forest City Landlords Association ▪ Several community members ▪ Resistors within City Hall
Programs or policies	▪ Continuum of Care ▪ State Housing Development Authority down-payment assistance program and flexible mortgage options. ▪ Forest City Neighborhood Housing Services programs on homeownership counseling, financial coaching	▪ Zoning laws that are inhibiting the supply of housing ▪ Housing commission lacks the authority to move the needle on housing and only plays an advisory role ▪
Conditions	▪ Affordable home prices relative to the state ▪ 145 residential vacant lots in the Land Bank ▪ Buy-in from the City ▪ Group of renters that can be pipelined into homeownership	▪ Large median income gap between white- and black-headed households ($60K and $30K, respectively) ▪ Largely segregated neighborhoods

STEP EIGHT

Develop Your Measurement Plan and Consider Sustainability

In Step 7, you were guided to develop your community vision statement, theory of change, and logic model. Step 8 guides you in creating a Measurement Plan with which to track progress toward your goals and to draft a short section on sustainability that describes how you will sustain the momentum generated during the Mobility Action Planning process. The ongoing measurement and evaluation of the progress of MAP's strategic actions is essential to effective implementation and, ultimately, success. Creating a Measurement Plan based on the Logic Model you defined in Step 7 will provide a guide for accountability, continuous learning, and any necessary alterations on your way to impact. Ideally, every input, output, and outcome you defined for the strategic actions in your Logic Model will have a matching measure of progress that will make up your Measurement Plan.

Below, you will learn about sources and methods for choosing your progress measures for each component in the Logic Model as well as who to assign responsibility for gathering measurement data and reporting progress. You'll also learn ways to communicate results as they occur in the short, medium, and long term throughout implementation, and you'll learn how to adapt based on progress reported along the way

Please remember that Section 8 should be used in tandem with Section 7 as you are building your Logic Model.

As you develop your Measurement Plan, remain mindful of our Framework for Boosting Mobility and Advancing Equity, which we outlined in Step 1. For your actions to be successful, they should challenge racial inequities, contribute to change at the systems level, and improve the lives of the people you serve. The best way to track the outcomes of the time, energy, money, and planning invested into your strategic actions is to proactively define what progress means for each strategic action while keeping these principles in mind.

Step 8.1 Develop Your Measurement Plan

Your Measurement Plan should have two main components: (1) a measurement table that lists the measures you will use to track progress on your strategic actions and (2) a description of who will be charged with measurement and evaluation activities as the MAP actions are implemented and how they will do it. The Learning and Evaluation Lead on the Mobility Coalition should oversee the development of the Measurement Plan, taking care to ensure all stakeholders remain engaged and informed throughout the planning and measurement process. The Data Lead will also be critical in identifying measures of progress. They may choose to engage a team of individuals well suited to advise in this role based on their experience, understanding of the actions, or involvement with the process. This is a great opportunity to solicit the help of **research organizations**, **anchor institutions** (such as universities or hospitals), or other **community-based organizations** that specialize in gathering and analyzing data on your chosen strategic actions. These partners can suggest measures, raise questions about feasibility and capacity, and help clarify definitions at this stage in the process. Though this phase may involve specialized expertise, the full Mobility Coalition should be continually engaged and informed throughout. Ultimately, the full Mobility Coalition will give final approval to the measures and plans.

To build the Measurement Plan, this team should go through the draft Logic Model and assign measures to the inputs, outputs, and outcomes that will help the coalition understand whether progress is being made. Progress measures must use reliable and consistently collected and calculated data to enable evaluation and comparison over time. If any of your measures are ratios, you must ensure that the data source and collection for both the numerator and the denominator remain consistent. It is also important to consider how long you will need to track the information and how feasible it will be to continue collecting it at the same standard with which you begin.

Some of the data sources you used to uncover insights about mobility in your community in Step 5 may be helpful here. If the Mobility Coalition found something in the data that inspired a strategic action, that same data source may be a good contender for tracking progress over time. Valid data for measuring progress can come from a variety of potential sources, such as the following:

- Publicly available national data sources, including the **Mobility Metrics**
- Local administrative data
- Qualitative evaluations such as survey or poll data
- Direct observation, focus groups, and community reporting
- Documenting notable actions, policy reforms, and/or implementation efforts
- Internal data on costs, staffing, and/or participation in programming, community events, and more

Keep in mind that to adequately target systems-level change, the measures you choose ought to be specific, supported by data and evidence, easy to use, and should measure the something about the system that underlies a program, not just a program itself. For further information on what types of measures best capture systems change, consult this Urban Institute brief, "Boosting Mobility and Advancing Equity through Systems Change" (Deich, Fedorowicz, and Turner 2022).

INPUTS

Input measures may reflect the amount or quality of the resources, human labor, relationships, technology, or investments being applied to implement the strategic action. Examples of input measures include dollars spent, number of staff, technology needed, and partnerships.

OUTPUTS

Output measures are likely to rely on administrative data that are locally collected and should measure how much of something was done or how well it was done. Output measures are where you might track the development of new partner relationships, increases in staffing or other resource capacity, and changes being made to the structure or hierarchy of decisionmaking. Examples of output measures include number of workshops facilitated, satisfaction ratings of programs, or number of people served.

OUTCOMES/GOALS

Outcome measures should capture the consequences of outputs. The measures for which you choose to track progress on outcomes should help reveal whether the intended people are being helped or intended conditions are being changed. Measures that track outcomes also include the status of policies that block or support your impact goals, and changes in prevailing narratives or norms. Frequently, you may use the **Mobility Metrics** as outcomes measures, or you may select other measures that are more likely to show change in the shorter term. Examples of outcomes measures include median household income, poverty rate, crime rate, or overall health.

Below, we provide a sample measurement table filled out based on the example strategic actions described in the Logic Model in Section 7. The columns in light blue show the measures assigned to each component of the Logic Model.

Financial Well-Being Example: Measurement Table

Strategic action	Inputs	Input measure	Outputs (short-term goals)	Estimated timeline	Output measure	Outcomes /goals (short- and medium-term)	Estimated timeline	Outcome measure	Impact (long-term goal)
Conduct research to determine what the local living wage is	Research budget Research partners Data on local wages and cost of living, disaggregated by race, gender, or neighborhood	Amount of research budget spent Local living-wage determination	Employers increase wages in X number of new jobs to get close to, or match, the local living wage	6 months	# of institutions and employers committed to, or having already, raised wage # of jobs with increased wages # of jobs paying living wage or higher	Jobs pay living wages that support the cost of living and allow for savings Jobs provide benefits, including paid sick time, and opportunities for advancement	18 months – 2 years	# of county residents working jobs with cost-of-living wages or higher # of county residents with savings Median household income # of county residents that claim the state-level earned income tax credit # of county residents in jobs that provide adequate benefits	All residents achieve financial well-being
Engage with anchor institutions and major employers to discuss opportunities to raise wages	Partnerships with anchor institutions, banks and financial institutions, and major employers	# of institutions and employers solicited # of institutions and employers partnered (e.g. committed to raising wage) # of jobs paying living wage or higher	Employers create X # of new jobs with benefits and opportunities for advancement	12 to 18 months	# of institutions and employers committed to, or having already, raised wage # of jobs with increased wages # of jobs paying living wage or higher				
Form a coalition with the other municipal financial empowerment offices in our state	Connections to other city financial	# of offices solicited # of offices partnered	The state or local government enacts a state or local EITC to boost the after-	12 months	# of organizations signed on to partnership				

Strategic action	Inputs	Input measure	Outputs (short-term goals)	Estimated timeline	Output measure	Outcomes /goals (short- and medium-term)	Estimated timeline	Outcome measure	Impact (long-term goal)
to advocate for a state-level EITC	empowerment offices	Qualitative assessment of strength of each partnership	tax income for more workers		# of low income county residents targeted with outreach				
Partner with local banks and financial institutions to offer new low- to no-fee products and enroll new clients with low incomes	Connections to local banks and financial institutions	# of offices solicited # of offices partnered Qualitative assessment of strength of each partnership	Banks and financial institutions offer quality, non-predatory financial products	12 months	# of organizations signed on to partnership # of low income county residents targeted with outreach	Banks and financial institutions enroll X # of new members in savings accounts with low- to no-fees	1-2 years	# of low- or no-fee accounts opened for low-income county residents	

Even after you have chosen measures to the best of your ability, keep in mind that this process is flexible to adjustment. You may discover that your strategies have shifted course significantly enough to require new measures or that different measures better reflect your strategic actions' goals, more accurately capture impact, or are simply more feasible to collect and track. If so, you should adapt your approach accordingly. If there is a lot of ambiguity around what measures of success would be best for a given strategic action, consider piloting the process with a wider selection to examine the effectiveness of the success measures defined, with a plan to revise or narrow down your scope once you have collected more experience and insight.

After completing the Measurement Table, the Mobility Coalition should clearly define who is responsible for data collection, outcome analysis, and sharing progress in a timely manner so the coalition can adjust as needed. Because several individuals may be charged with measurement and evaluation, you may find it helpful to fill out a RACI chart (available in the supplemental materials for this step) for each measure so it is clear who is responsible, accountable, consulted, and informed in data gathering.

Finally, your Measurement Plan should include the necessary steps required to gather data and track progress throughout the lifetime of implementation. This may include finalizing data-sharing agreements, determining funding resources and sustainability, projecting needed staff capacity, or planning to survey community members. For example, if you plan to use surveys or focus groups to understand outcomes for community members (such as by asking if people are better off than they were before), make sure to include the timing and resources required to execute those plans.

Once your internal team has put together the draft Measurement Plan, the Evaluation Lead should host a meeting with your Mobility Coalition to solicit approval for it. The Mobility Coalition should approve the final set of measures after debating the merits and drawbacks of each recommendation and coming to a consensus around which measures are the most logistically feasible, are most sustainably collectible, capture the outcomes related to your priorities, and will provide enough information for continuous learning.

Step 8.2 Reengage the Community

Deep and meaningful community engagement remains an important step even as you are developing and finalizing your Measurement Plan. You might also ask community members their advice on which measures are most important to them to include in your Measurement Plan. When engaging community members or soliciting feedback through a qualitative assessment, we suggest these general guidelines:

1. Be sure to include frontline staff and people who work in the organizations that implement programs and policies.
2. Consider offering incentives such as a meal, snack, or temporary child care to improve participation or thank participants for their time and effort. Incentives should be proportional such that they compensate participants for their time but do not coerce participation.

3. When drafting questions, examine your language and content for clarity, accessibility, objectivity, and collectability. If you have a Mobility Coalition member with expertise in this area, reach out to them for help or advice.
4. Share your final determinations with the community as a “gut check” that any conclusions or interpretations hold up under public scrutiny.

Step 8.3 Establish Processes for Reporting and Accountability

Your Measurement Plan will primarily function as a tracker of progress for your strategic actions and will help ensure accountability among relevant stakeholders. By defining the frequency of reporting for the measures you choose for each outcome, output, and input, you have started to set up a schedule for collecting, reporting, and sharing progress. As you prepare to release your MAP publicly, it’s important to have a plan for how and when you will engage stakeholders and the community to inform them of the ongoing results of this effort.

When determining your plans for sharing and learning, the Learning and Evaluation Lead should consider how, when, and to whom these progress measures will be reported and communicated. Will these measures be reported to the full Mobility Coalition with a consistent frequency? At what point will certain successes or failures be communicated to the public? Who will make that decision, and how can your team be proactive and thoughtful about the language used in those communications? Which measures could demonstrate the need for a pivot if the intervention doesn’t appear to be producing the impact you’re hoping for?

Be timely and transparent with updates on the progress and failures of your strategic actions, because these are the key insights on which your continuous learning will be based. For many efforts, especially in the early years of implementation, it may be hard to determine whether you are witnessing success or failure, because these terms are subjective to various descriptions and perspectives. Nevertheless, general trends as well as stasis are important to track and report on.

As with earlier stages in this planning progress, you should remain intentional about regularly informing the broader Mobility Coalition and the public about the progress of your efforts. This will help you maintain community investment in the project, increase trust between the community and the coalition partners, and create regular feedback loops to learn what’s working and what’s not. We recommend the following reporting frequencies for different components of your MAP:

- **Biannually:** Every six to eight months, report on the inputs and outputs for each strategic action. Make sure to answer the following:
    - Are we doing what we said we were going to do?
    - Have we held ourselves accountable for shared responsibilities?

    - (Internally) Are there any adjustments that need to be considered or made to budgets, scheduling, staffing, or planned measurement?

- **Annually:** Approximately every year, report on the outputs for each strategic action, first to stakeholders and then to the public. Answer the following:
    - What outputs and outcomes are we seeing?
    - Have we addressed what is not working?
    - Do we need to modify any inputs or actions?
- **Every three to five years:** Every few years, report on your progress toward outcomes. Create a public progress report that details any achievements that deserve celebration and any inputs or actions that required adaptation. Answer the following questions:
    - What positive changes are we seeing among the community or population we hope to impact?
    - What persistent challenges exist that may require a new approach or new thinking?
    - What have we learned about the systems change ecosystem in our community?

Any plan for reporting progress will be contingent on the timeline and frequency of reported results (based on data collection and evaluation) and should consider what method of dissemination will be most likely to reach, and be understood by, target audiences and the community at large. For further guidance and insight on how best to tailor communications that support your goals, please consult this Urban Institute brief, Framing Communications to Drive Social Change (Peiffer and Gallagher 2021). For further guidance on how to strategize communication efforts, please consult this Urban Institute resource and this Policy Impact Plan Template.

Step 8.4 Consider Sustainability

Before releasing the MAP publicly, consider how the Mobility Coalition will sustain momentum around its strategic actions. We know from the work with the inaugural Upward Mobility cohort that sustainability is a primary concern when creating a MAP. Mobility Coalitions want to ensure that interest and enthusiasm in the work does not fade once the plan is released. Community members want equity efforts to be accountable and follow through on their plans.

One way to plan for MAP sustainability is to consider internal and external dynamics for the “who” and the “how” for each of your strategies. The table below illustrates how these dynamics overlap and questions to consider when they do.

	Internal	External
Who	**Questions to consider:** Who from our team is best positioned to ensure this work continues? Are there plans for the work to continue if staff or leadership changes? **Might include:** Internal government working groups, internal government champions, internal project leads	**Questions to consider:** Which partners are needed to ensure this work continues? Where are there gaps in our internal team that could be filled by external people? **Might include:** Champions outside of local government, community advisory boards, nonprofits, funders with aligned priorities
How	**Questions to consider:** Where is our team well positioned to carry out this work, and are there gaps? What do we still need to learn? What does my team need to do to ensure this work continues? **Might include:** Team trainings, internal feedback loops, redundancy in responsibilities, leveraging data, grafting MAP strategies over existing initiatives, MAP adoption and launch activities	**Questions to consider:** What needed work cannot be executed within our local government to sustain this plan? What can partners provide to sustain our MAP strategies? Is there adequate funding outside of the government to sustain the work? **Might include:** Regular community feedback sessions, investment from private parties, service delivery with nonprofits

Source: Lee Evans, "What Does It Take to Design a Sustainable Mobility Action Plan?" (Washington, DC: Urban Institute, 2022), https://upward-mobility.urban.org/what-does-it-take-design-sustainable-mobility-action-plan.

Other Sustainability Considerations

Your range of strategic actions likely involve many different organizations with different levels of staffing and capacity. However, for implementation to be effective, continuity and sustained engagement are key to the execution of those actions. It is important to help your partners stay motivated and engaged by highlighting short-term successes as they occur. It's equally important to encourage flexibility in the face of unexpected barriers, so that medium- and long-term goals aren't undermined by short-term failures.

When reporting on the progress of any strategic action, it is important to be specific about who is responsible for the outcomes, who was impacted, and most importantly, the value and importance of these results in the context of your long-term goals. By identifying both implementing staff and funders who allow the work to continue, you will create a positive feedback loop that will validate and maintain funder interests and ensure that the resources needed to achieve success are not lost to time or disinterest.

Step 8.5 Make a Plan for Continuous Learning and Evaluation

Assessing the progress of the strategic actions in your MAP is not a discrete process contingent on specific intervals of reporting; it should be ongoing once your actions are under way. By continuously tracking progress, the Mobility Coalition will learn how things are going and adapt to any signals that actions or measures are not going as hoped. Any failures to achieve an intended goal or benchmark are critical opportunities for learning. Importantly, such moments are valuable touchpoints for considering whether you are falling short because of (1) exogenous factors outside of your control, (2) ineffective implementation, or (3) unrealistic or misguided expectations about how change occurs (as laid out in your Theory of Change).

Additionally, continuous learning is important because it helps you to track not only whether things are succeeding or failing but also *why* they are succeeding or failing. By asking staff responsible for implementing strategic actions why they think things are working or not working, you will gain critical insights about the conditions and systems characteristics needed to boost mobility from poverty and advance equity. For more on continuous learning, see the Continuous Learning Framework at the end of this step, which details three progressive types of learning.

Step 8.6 Write the Relevant Components of Your MAP

As you near the end of your Mobility Action Planning process, you'll want to prepare the versions of your measurement plan and sustainability considerations that will appear in your Mobility Action Plan.

MAP Component: Measurement Plan

MAP Component: Sustainability Considerations

Your sustainability considerations may also include your plans for continuous learning and improvement. See the supplemental materials at the end of the section for templates that can help you write these sections.

STEP 8 REVIEW CHECKLIST

- ☐ The Mobility Coalition has created a Measurement Plan by assigning measures to the input, output, and outcome elements of the logic model.
- ☐ The Mobility Coalition has shared the Measurement Plan with the community for feedback.
- ☐ The Mobility Coalition has established a plan for reporting and accountability.
- ☐ The Mobility Coalition has made a plan for continuous evaluation and learning.
- ☐ The Mobility Coalition has considered sustainability.
- ☐ The Mobility Coalition has created a version of its measurement plan and sustainability considerations to be included in the final MAP.

STEP EIGHT

Supplemental Materials

1. Continuous Learning Framework
2. RACI Chart
3. Blank Measurement Table

Continuous Learning Framework

Use the guided questions below to reflect on how well your strategic actions are going.

Type of learning	Questions
Single loop *These insights point you to strategies for improving logistics and execution*	What are we learning about what we are doing? 1. What are the strengths and limitations of our strategic actions? 2. What are the strengths and limitations of the relationships and processes we have leveraged to implement our strategic actions? 3. What are the strengths and limitations of the capacity and resources we currently have?
Double loop *These insights will give you a better understanding of context and the relationships you must strengthen or leverage*	What are we learning about our assumptions, understanding, and thinking? 1. What challenges are we trying to address with our implementation? How or why do these come up? 2. What are the systems, or in what context, is our challenge embedded? How does this inform our choices? 3. What are the strengths and limitations of our current measurement strategy? 4. What are the strengths and limitations of our current implementation strategy?
Triple loop *These insights point you to the landscape that is informing your work and the assumptions that need to reinforced or challenged*	What are we learning about how we are being? 1. What emotional triggers are tied to this strategic action? 2. What habitual responses inform this action and its measurement? 3. What social norms and group dynamics are relied on during implementation and measurement? 4. What individual or shared values (or narratives) are informing the implementation or measurement of this action?

*** This worksheet has been adapted from The Tamarack Institute.[22]

RACI Chart

Fill out the table using the letters R, A, C, and I to assign responsibilities for certain measures to specific organizations.

- Responsible (R) parties do the work required to complete the activity.
- Accountable (A) parties delegate the work, provide support, and hold responsible parties accountable to deadlines and requirement.
- Consulted (C) parties periodically provide input on the activity based on their level of expertise or involvement with relevant activities.
- Informed (I) parties are those who are kept in the loop on all progress that is made.

Measure	Individual or organization 1	Individual or organization 2	Individual or organization 3	Individual or organization 4
Input measure				
Output measure				
Outcome measure				

Blank Measurement Table

The following is a blank template that you can adapt as necessary to clearly identify the progress measures for each aspect of the logic model underpinning each of your strategic actions.

Strategic action	Inputs	Input measure	Outputs (short-term goals)	Estimated timeline	Output measure	Outcomes/goals (short and medium term)	Estimated timeline	Outcome measure	Impact (long-term goal)

STEP NINE

Finalize and Release Your Mobility Action Plan

Congratulations! If you've made it this far, your Mobility Coalition has agreed on where you want your community to be in the future and you have a strong set of strategic actions that will get you there.

Hopefully, you've had someone taking careful notes throughout this process and saving the final versions of your Summary of Upward Mobility Findings, Theory of Change, Logic Model, and Measurement Plans so you can pull together your full Mobility Action Plan.

Step 9.1 Determine the Format of Your Final MAP

What your MAP looks like is ultimately up to your Mobility Coalition. You might bring in a designer who can help you think of how to present the MAP to your audience in an accessible way. You might also consider whether to produce two different products—one that is more technical for policymaker and practitioner audiences and one that is for a general audience. Whatever you decide, your Mobility Action Plan should include at least the following:

How we got here: A description of the steps you took to learn about mobility conditions in your community, including why you decided to pursue the work and who has been involved.

Summary of upward mobility findings: A summary of the key findings from your exploratory research. The summary should be written in a narrative format that interweaves the quantitative data with the qualitative data and tells a story about how your current mobility conditions (both good and bad) were created and are sustained, who they impact most, and what outcomes they're leading to.

Theory of change and/or logic model: A theory of change articulates how a group believes change happens in their community or organization. It reflects a set of assumptions that connects preconditions (what you need for change to happen) to expected outcomes (the improvements you want to see in your city or county). A logic model is a tool that displays a project's inputs, activities, outputs, and outcomes in a brief visual format.

Measurement plan: A table that includes a list of the inputs, outputs, and outcomes from your logic model with agreed-upon indicators for how you will track success and a list of sources from where you will gather this information and that assigns responsibility for who will track progress.

Sustainability considerations: A short section that shares how you plan to steward and sustain the actions described in the MAP, including responsible actors and the resources needed.

You may also decide to include other components in your MAP, including

- a continuous learning and improvement plan (see Step 8 for additional guidance);
- a description of how historical inequities in your community came to be (some counties in our cohort merged these insights into the Summary of Upward Mobility Findings Section or the How We Got Here section, but you may decide to have a separate section for these); and
- appendices with data tables, your intervention inventory, or links to relevant materials from your community.

Examples of county MAPs from the inaugural Boosting Upward Mobility cohort can be found at https://upward-mobility.urban.org/mobility-action-plans.

Step 9.2 Make a Plan for Releasing Your MAP Publicly

As you prepare to finalize and release the MAP publicly, consider the following:

- **MAP authorship**: Will members of the Mobility Coalition be attributed as coauthors of the MAP, will they be signatories, or will they write letters of support that can be attached to the document?
- **Branding**: How can you indicate in the MAP's branding that this is meant to be an evergreen plan? Should you label it as being developed by the current mayoral or county executive leadership or as the city or county's plan (discouraging the next administration from discarding it)?

- **Key terms**: Is there a list of key terms and definitions for the terms that should be included at beginning of the MAP? This is especially helpful for terms like “equity,” “inclusive,” and “systems change” that are often used differently by different groups.
- **MAP web page**: Where will the MAP live online? Are there other documents that should accompany the MAP when it is published, such as an FAQ, sample talking points, notes about how it was developed, a list of partner organizations, or contact information for other groups who want to get involved? Will the webpage host a dashboard or some other reporting mechanism to share updates on the progress of implementation and changes to the community’s **Mobility Metrics**?
- **Dissemination**: Should the city or county host a press conference, press release, or social media campaign to share the MAP? What other communications platforms or strategies could be useful for sharing the MAP publicly?

Community engagement: How might you share the final MAP with community members who participated in and contributed to the MAP’s development? Could you host a special release event just for them? How might you keep them updated on the MAP’s implementation progress? Are there community members who have been engaged throughout the MAP’s development who could be “MAP ambassadors” and help share information about the plan with their own networks?

- **Adoption**: Should the City or County Council adopt the MAP through legislative action? Is a related budgetary appropriation needed for the strategies included in it?
- **Celebrating partnership**: Could you plan a publication celebration for the Mobility Coalition members to celebrate their partnership and accomplishments and thank them for their commitment?

Step 9.3 Ensure Your Messaging Is Engaging and Appropriate

Media, political, and academic language around government, policy, and program performance can be saturated with a focus on shortcomings, failures, incompetence, and disappointment. Although these sentiments stem from real frustrations—many of which you are working to address by embarking on systems change—baseline limitations in messaging and public communication can prevent a given community from seeing, understanding, and learning from important examples of public policy work.

Framing challenges in what some social scientists call a “deficit model” preemptively assigns blame and responsibility to the deficiencies of individuals (or specific populations) rather than to the failures or limitations of the socioeconomic system within which they live and operate (Song and Pyon 2008). Deficit framing has a history of oversimplifying complex issues and falsely ascribing blame to ableist or racist beliefs that already exist in society. Remember that the ways we look at, talk about, and evaluate public work can serve to validate, question, or oppose biases that undermine equitable work. When reporting successes, failures, or milestones for the MAP, make sure to emphasize the root causes and systemic context informing each outcome.

Step 9.4 Release Your MAP!

You've done the work, now you get to put your MAP out into the world! By this point, you've done so much community and stakeholder engagement that you have an eager audience awaiting the outcome. You may wish to hold a special release event, where you invite those who have participated along the way to join in the celebration.

The next step, Step 10, is the final step in the Mobility Action Planning process. It focuses on how the Mobility Coalition can sustain momentum following the release of the MAP.

STEP 9 REVIEW CHECKLIST

- [ ] The Mobility Coalition has determined the final format of the MAP.
- [ ] The Mobility Coalition has planned for releasing the MAP.
- [ ] The Mobility Coalition has ensured its messaging is appropriate and engaging.
- [ ] The Mobility Coalition has released the MAP!

STEP TEN

Sustain Momentum

This guide is designed to provide knowledge and practical guidance to local government leaders as they create their Mobility Action Plan. The plan, created in collaboration with other local partners and informed by local data and community perspectives, is your actionable roadmap to implement systems change that can boost mobility from poverty.

The MAP creation process can be a forcing mechanism for change across the local government and other planning partners outside of government. The approach, framework, and **Mobility Metrics**, introduced in Steps 1 and 2, create a shared understanding of the factors that boost mobility from poverty. The assessment and team building work described in Step 4 ensures that factors that support or detract from your readiness to act are identified early and that the team will be diverse in expertise, experiences and bring important capacities to the work. Steps 5 and 6 support understanding the specific mobility and equity issues in your community. This knowledge base helps ensure that local government and their partners are beginning this planning process from a place of common understanding. The decisions made through the planning process described in Steps 7 and 8, specifically on which strategic actions will be prioritized and how success will be defined, measured, and sustained, are embedded into the MAP itself. This final step looks ahead at how the Mobility Coalition can sustain momentum now that the MAP has been released.

As we mentioned in Step 4, your Mobility Coalition should continue to work together in some form to sustain momentum around MAP implementation. Coalition members may be involved in the following activities over the long term:

- Where applicable, implementing policies, programs, and practices
- Meeting with key stakeholders and partners to see how implementation is proceeding
- Continuing to advocate for the strategies included in the MAP
- Engaging community members to provide feedback on how solutions are being implemented
- Developing reporting and accountability structures
- Overseeing continuous learning and improvement activities to learn from implementers and community partners
- Arranging for evaluators (either internal or external) to assess the success of the strategies
- Monitoring program data
- Communicating about progress and lessons learned
- Revising strategies to reflect new learnings

Below, we recommend actions the Mobility Coalition can take to sustain momentum during implementation.

Step 10.1 Report on Early Wins

Finding and reporting on early successes of MAP activities is a great way to build and sustain momentum and enthusiasm for the work. Leverage any internal or external feedback loops you established in MAP planning to publicize early wins. In the earliest stages, these will likely be activities rather than outcomes or detectable mobility from poverty. But valuing outcomes does not have to come at the expense of celebrating progress. Report on new programs launched, how existing programs are evolving, or how new spaces are being created to support the MAP.

- Consider: Who in your community can effectively communicate on early wins? What platforms can you use to share updates?

Step 10.2 Build on Your Foundation

The planning process you engaged in to create the MAP built a strong foundation that you can preserve through sustainability planning. Reimagine the mission of the Mobility Coalition to focus on sustainability. Redefine roles and responsibilities of working group members to align with the needs identified in the "internal/external/who/how" exercise above. Consider how you can create shared responsibility and accountability across multiple partners for sustaining MAP work.

- Consider: Who from our team is best positioned to ensure this work continues? Where is our team well positioned to carry out this work, and are there gaps? What do we still need to learn?

Step 10.3 Protect the Work from Political Cycles

Administration changes are a fact of life in every local government. To help ensure the MAP can be sustained beyond the next election, resist the pressure to closely connect this work to the current administration. It may be difficult to convince current leadership this is the right strategy, but the more the MAP is associated with an elected official, the more likely it will be deprioritized by successors. It can help to embed career (i.e., not appointed) staff into MAP implementation leadership roles to preserve institutional knowledge across multiple administrations.

- Consider: Are there plans for the work to continue if staff or leadership changes? What does my team need to do to ensure this work continues?

Step 10.4 Support Continuous Community Engagement

Community engagement should not end when the MAP is published. Identify questions and decision points after implementation that should be shaped by the communities already engaged in MAP planning. Identify ways you can continue to share power and responsibility with communities on a long-term basis. By keeping the public informed about the progress of your efforts, you are sustaining community investment in the project, increasing trust between the community and your government, and leaving room for community feedback to continue to inform the process.

- Consider: What needed work cannot be executed within our local government to sustain this plan? How can we continue to share power and responsibility with our community? Which outside partners are needed to ensure this work continues? Where are there gaps in our internal team that could be filled by external people?

Step 10.5 Demonstrate the Need for Sustained Funding

When highlighting the progress of any strategic action, be specific about who is responsible for the outcomes, highlight who was impacted, and most importantly, reemphasize the value and importance of these results in the context of your long-term goals. By identifying both implementation staff and the funders who allow the work to continue, you will create a positive feedback loop that will validate and maintain funder interests and will ensure that the resources needed to achieve success are not lost to time or disinterest.

- Consider: What can outside parties provide to sustain our MAP strategies? Is there adequate funding outside of the government to sustain the work?

Congratulations! You are now on your way to boosting upward mobility and advancing equity! Be patient. Change is slow and you will hit roadblocks along the way. Know that you have the right tools in your toolbelt and the right partners at the table (and the ability to invite more as needed). You are joining many counties and cities across the country hoping to boost mobility from poverty and advance equity—together, we can improve outcomes for all our neighbors and advance **racial equity** in our communities.

Notes

[1] Ongoing scholarship is needed to systematically quantify the magnitude of each predictor's impact on long-term outcomes (within and across generations), to fully understand the causal mechanisms through which predictors affect outcomes, to explore how these mechanisms may differ for different groups of people or in different community contexts, and to assess the effectiveness of policy levers through which communities can influence these predictors.

[2] The descriptive representation metric requires local contribution of demographic information. For more insight into how to construct this metric, please see the Supplemental Materials for this section.

[3] The tails you see before and after each dot in the data visualizations of Data Example 1 represent the confidence interval of each of these estimates. Knowing the objective truth about what we want to observe is impossible, but data get us enough information to form a reasonable estimate; those estimates are the dots in the graph. The confidence interval, represented by the tails in the graph, is the whole range within which the "true value" of this measure would fall if the estimate that we have were not quite accurate. Longer tails imply higher uncertainty for the estimate you are looking at. It is also important to note that when the tails of multiple observations do not overlap (such as in the second graph of this example, where data are disaggregated by race and ethnicity), the differences you see in the estimates are significant. If the tails had been overlapping, the true value of one estimate could potentially be the same value of the other, and we could not have full confidence that the values are truly different from one another. When interpreting your metrics and associated visualizations, read the provided documentation and rely on the insights and expertise of your data lead and other relevant coalition members to make sure you capture these details while analyzing the information.

[4] "Financial education and counseling: Lansing MI," Results for America Economic Mobility Catalog, accessed September 30, 2022, https://catalog.results4america.org/case-studies/financial-empowerment-lansing.

[5] "City of Portland Racial Equity Toolkit," City of Portland, accessed February 20, 2022, https://www.portlandoregon.gov/oehr/71685.

[6] "DRIVE Race Equity Plan," Fresno DRIVE, accessed May 15, 2021, https://drive.google.com/file/d/1lltj1AJPR7ufCDENTmf48U34rlfS3JhW/view.

[7] "Backbone Starter Guide: A Summary of Major Resources about the Backbone," Collective Impact Forum and FSG, accessed May 16, 2021, https://collectiveimpactforum.org/resource/backbone-starter-guide-a-summary-of-major-resources-about-the-backbone/.

[8] Erika C. Poethig, "How Local Philanthropy is Addressing Fresno, California's Severe Economic Inequities," Urban Wire, accessed, January, 20, 2021, https://www.urban.org/urban-wire/how-local-philanthropy-addressing-fresno-californias-severe-economic-inequities.

[9] "About," Fresno DRIVE, accessed November 10, 2021, https://www.fresnodrive.org/about.

[10] "DRIVE Race Equity Plan," Fresno DRIVE, accessed May 15, 2021, https://drive.google.com/file/d/1lltj1AJPR7ufCDENTmf48U34rlfS3JhW/view.

[11] Charmaine Runes, "What's Behind the Wealth Gap in Asian American and Pacific Islander Communities," Urban Wire, accessed March 30, 2022, https://www.urban.org/urban-wire/whats-behind-wealth-gap-asian-american-and-pacific-islander-communities.

[12] "DRIVE Race Equity Plan," Fresno DRIVE, accessed May 15, 2021, https://drive.google.com/file/d/1lltj1AJPR7ufCDENTmf48U34rlfS3JhW/view.

[13] "Theory of Change vs Logic Model," Analytics in Action, accessed May 17, 2022, https://analyticsinaction.co/theory-of-change-vs-logic-model.

[14] "A Community Built on Trust," Guaranteed Income Community of Practice, accessed May 17, 2022, https://gicp.info/.

[15] Ryan Curren, Julie Nelson, Dwayne S. Marsh, Simran Noor, and Nora Liu, "Racial equity Action Plans: A How-to Manual," Local and Regional Government Alliance on Race & Equity, accessed December 5, 2021, https://www.racialequityalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/GARE-Racial-Equity-Action-Plans.pdf.

[16] John Kania, Mark Kramer, and Peter Senge, "The Water of Systems Change," FSG, accessed April 12, 2021, https://www.fsg.org/resource/water_of_systems_change/.

[17] Paula Richardson, "How to Identify Assumptions in Your Theory of Change," LinkedIn, accessed April 29, 2022, https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/how-identify-assumptions-your-theory-change-toc-paula-richardson.

[18] Other stakeholders, like nonprofits, philanthropies, and community-based organization, may also use this assessment, though some of the questions may not apply based on the geography they serve or the size of their programs.

[19] Information on the evidence-base of some programs can be found in scholarly journals, from impact evaluations or randomized controlled trials, or in evidence resource libraries—catalogs that aggregate scholarly research on a topic to provide evidence for specific policies or programs. Examples of evidence resource libraries include the Urban Institute's Boosting Upward Mobility Evidence Resource Library, Results for America's Economic Mobility Catalog, and County Health Ranking's What Works for Health tool.

[20] See "Understand and Identify Root Causes of Inequities," County Health Rankings and Roadmaps, accessed October 30, 2022, https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/take-action-to-improve-health/learning-guides/understand-and-identify-root-causes-of-inequities#/ .

[21] Mary Bogle, Emily Bramhall, and Jorge González-Hermoso, "Many Families in Arlington, Virginia, Struggle to Afford Basic Needs. A Flexible Safety Net Can Help," *Urban–Greater DC* blog, June 1, 2021, https://greaterdc.urban.org/blog/many-families-arlington-virginia-struggle-afford-basic-needs-flexible-safety-net-can-help.

[22] Mark Cabaj, "Evaluating Systems Change Results: An Inquiry Framework," Tamarack Institute, accessed April 10, 2022, https://www.tamarackcommunity.ca/library/paper-evaluating-systems-change-results-an-inquiry-framework.

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