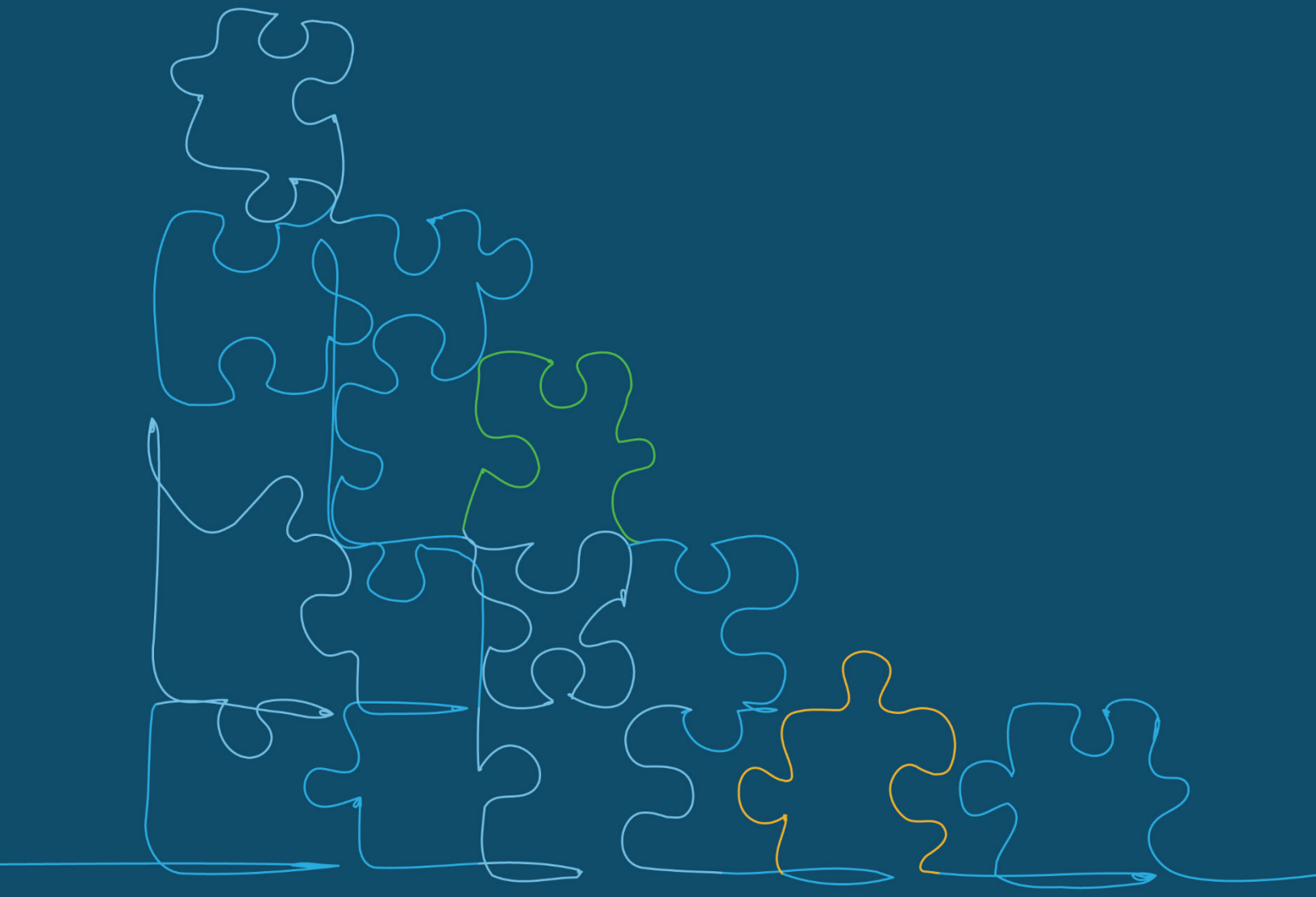
URBAN INSTITUTE

NOVEMBER 2022
*(corrected December 15, 2022)*



BOOSTING UPWARD MOBILITY

# A PLANNING GUIDE FOR LOCAL ACTION

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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.