

BOOSTING UPWARD MOBILITY

A PLANNING GUIDE FOR LOCAL ACTION

Table of Contents

01

Introduction

- 02 Who Is this Guide For?
- 02 How Can You Use This Guide?
- 04 How Did We Develop this Guide?

05

Our Approach to Upward Mobility

- 06 Familiarize Yourself with Our Framework for Boosting Mobility and Advancing Equity
- 10 Get Acquainted with Our Planning Principles
- 11 Consider the Various Actors Needed for Collaboration
- 14 Understand the Key Components of a Mobility Action Plan

17

Use Mobility Metrics to Surface Insights

- 17 Learn How We Developed Our Mobility Metrics
- 21 Access the Mobility Metrics for Your Municipality
- 21 Make Note of Preliminary Insights
- 23 Compare Your Data with Data from Other Jurisdictions
- 25 Supplemental Materials

29

Ensure Your Local Government Is Ready to Undertake This Work

- 30 Gain Commitment from Local Government Leadership
- 30 Prepare to Engage Cross-Sector Partners across Policy Domains
- 31 Ensure Sufficient Organizational Capacity
- 32 Determine Whether Your Organizational Culture Can Support Large-Scale Change

32 Help Leadership Gain Staff Buy-In across Departments

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

34 Identify the Skills and Capacities Necessary for Data Gathering and Analysis

34 Dedicate Resources for Deep and Meaningful Community Engagement

35 Commit to Ongoing Learning and Improvement

35 Assess Your Readiness to Act

37 Supplemental Materials

45

Build Your Coalition for Systems Change

47 Assemble the Management Team

50 Identify Key Stakeholder Partners

54 Identify Champions

55 Make the Request

56 Launch the Mobility Coalition

60 Supplemental Materials

69

Develop an Initial Understanding of Local Mobility Conditions

69 Review Your Local Mobility Metrics as a Coalition

70 Identify and Collect Supplemental Data Sources

74 Analyze Your Supplemental Quantitative Data

78 Supplemental Materials

81

Build a Fuller Picture of Mobility Conditions in Your Community

- 82 Break the Mobility Coalition into Smaller Working Groups
- 83 Collect Qualitative Information through Stakeholder Engagement
- 83 Collect Qualitative Information through Community Engagement
- 88 Gather Other Qualitative Data to Understand the Systems and Prevailing Narratives in Your Community
- 92 Draft an Initial Summary of Upward Mobility Findings
- 92 Follow Up with Community Members to Share the Upward Mobility Findings
- 93 Write the Relevant Components of Your Mobility Action Plan
- 94 Make a Plan for Sustaining Engagement with the Community
- 99 Supplemental Materials

114

Determine Your Strategic Actions

- 115 Review and Discuss the Final Upward Mobility Findings as a Coalition
- 116 Develop A Community Vision Statement
- 116 Create Your Theory of Change
- 117 Develop a Systems Change Logic Model
- 129 Seek Review and Approval of Your MAP Logic Model
- 130 Write the Relevant Components of Your Mobility Action Plan
- 132 Supplemental Materials

155

Develop Your Measurement Plan and Consider Sustainability

- 155 Develop Your Measurement Plan
- 160 Reengage the Community
- 161 Establish Processes for Reporting and Accountability
- 162 Consider Sustainability
- 164 Make a Plan for Continuous Learning and Evaluation
- 164 Write the Relevant Components of Your MAP
- 166 Supplemental Materials

170

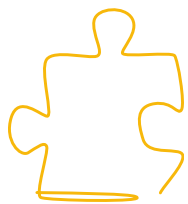
Finalize and Release Your Mobility Action Plan

- 170 Determine the Format of Your Final MAP
- 171 Make a Plan for Releasing your MAP Publicly
- 172 Ensure Your Messaging Is Engaging and Appropriate
- 173 Release Your MAP!

175

Sustain Momentum

- 176 Report on Early Wins
- 176 Build on Your Foundation
- 176 Protect the Work from Political Cycles
- 177 Support Continuous Community Engagement
- 177 Demonstrate the Need for Sustained Funding



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:

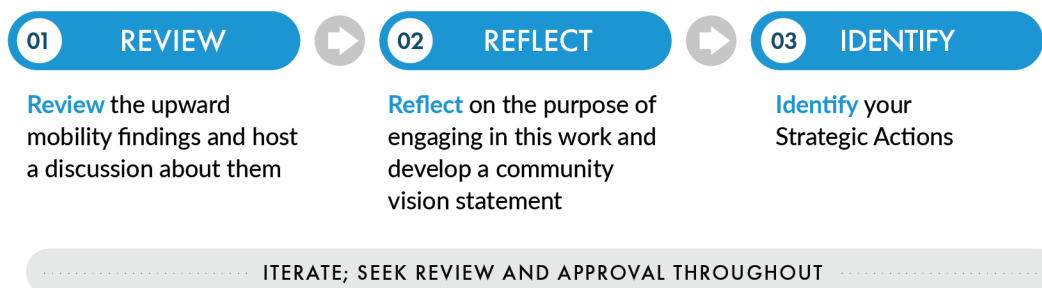


Figure 15: The process for selecting strategic actions for the Mobility Action Plan

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 accountability 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
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All residents achieve financial well-being 	
SYSTEMS OUTCOMES/GOALS		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The medium- to long-term systems changes required for the impact to be achieved 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 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		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The short-term, more immediate results that could plausibly lead to your outcomes/goals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 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		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The activities you and your partners will implement to achieve your intended outputs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 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 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 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 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The resources or investments needed to complete the strategic actions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 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	<i>How do the data support the need for this goal?</i>	<i>How will this goal address racial inequities?</i>	<i>Whose support will be critical for the success of the goal? Do we have that support, or do we think we can gain it?</i>	<i>Is there support for this goal from elected leadership and organization heads? Is this goal aligned with efforts or plans from elected leadership?</i>	<i>Are there existing or potential funding streams that could support this goal?</i>	<i>How will this goal reflect our community's vision?</i>
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.

- 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.

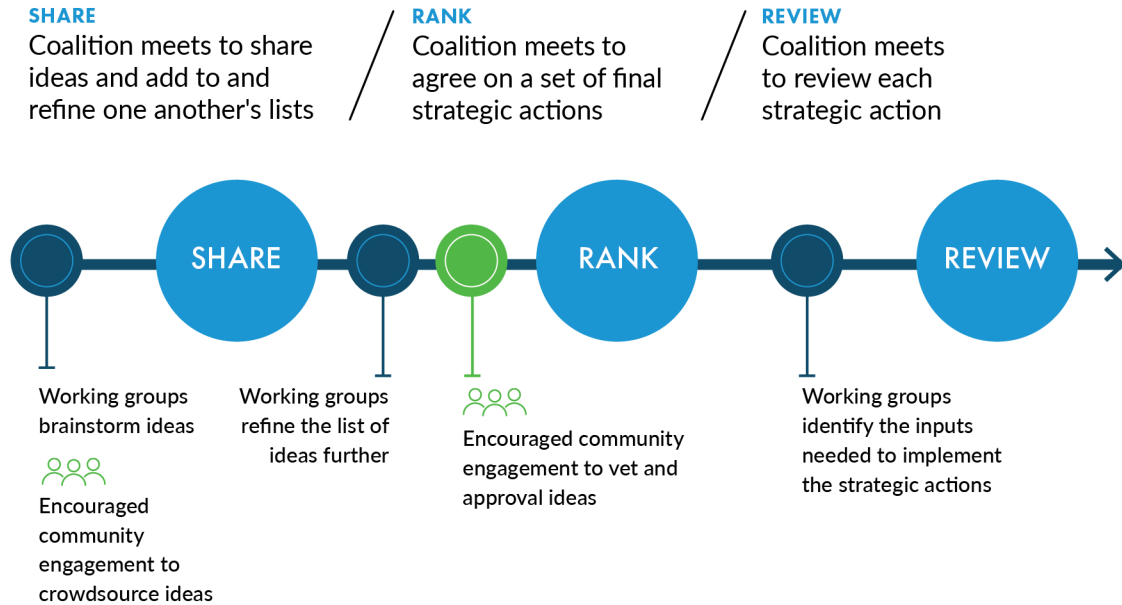


Figure 16: Process for determining strategic actions to include in the Mobility Action Plan

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.

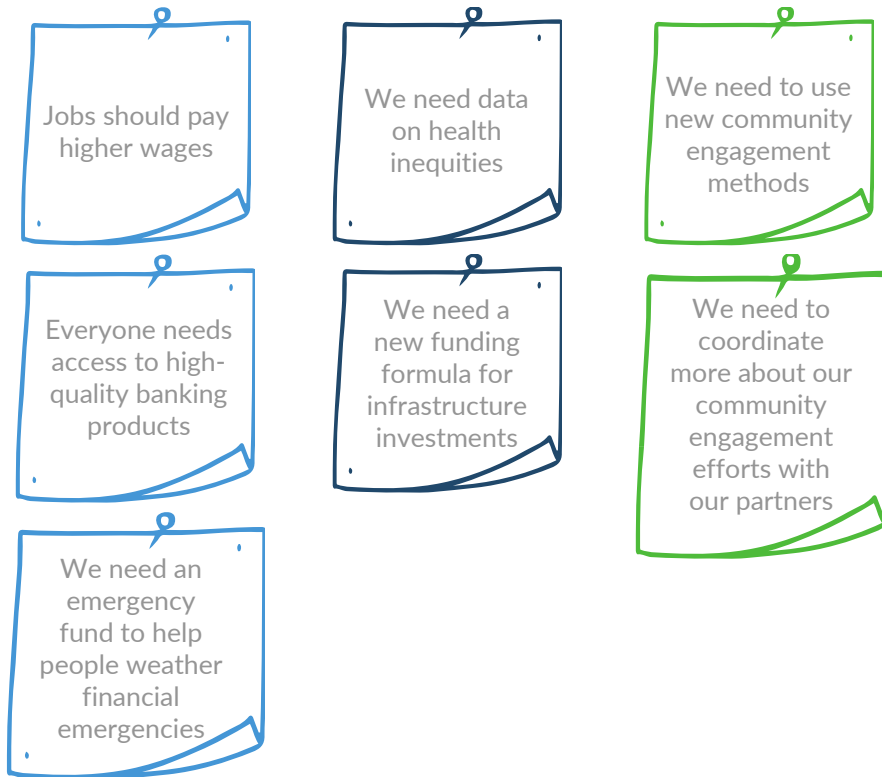
Step 3: Identify the outcomes.

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
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 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
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 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
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 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.

BOOSTING UPWARD MOBILITY

FOREST CITY

THEORY OF CHANGE

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

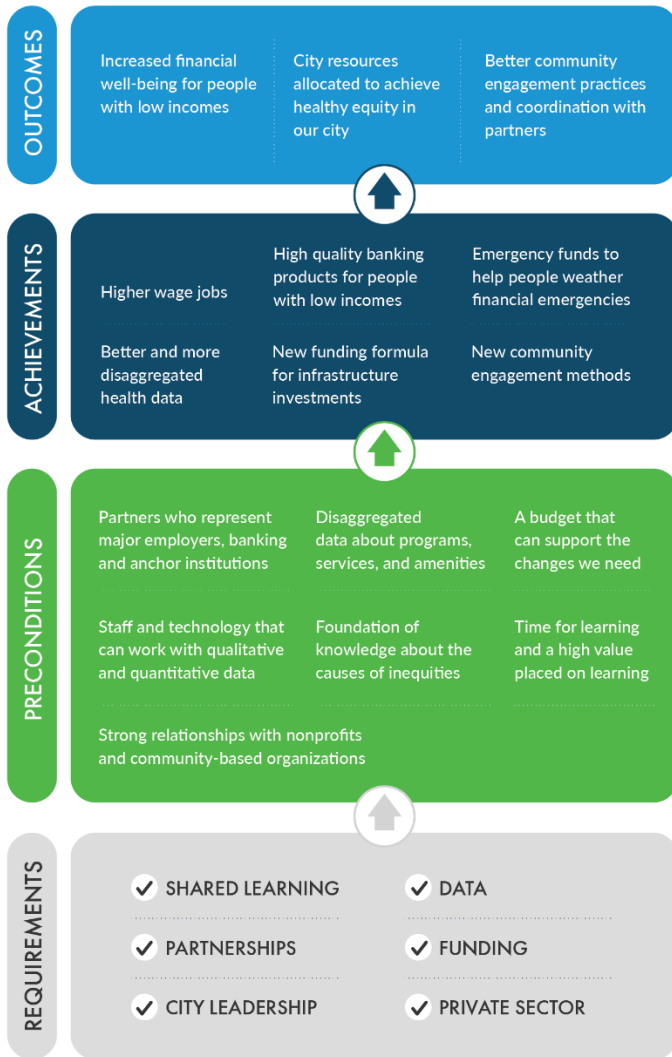


Figure 17: Sample theory of change

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

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

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 <i>has been</i> 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).

<p>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?</p>	
<p>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.</p>	

Assessment Group 3: Community & Practitioner Engagement

<p>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?</p>	
<p>Have community members or program recipients been</p>	

<p>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 <i>design and delivery</i> of the program, how would you rate your community engagement? Please describe your engagement in more depth.</p>	
--	--

Assessment Group 4: Scale of Impact

<p>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?</p>	
---	--

<p>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?</p>	
<p>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?</p>	
<p>If there are other aligned programs, have you worked to learn about and, if possible, adopt best practices from these programs?</p>	
<p>How will this program be funded in the future: through the regular budgetary process or through new federal, state, or foundation grants?</p>	

Assessment Group 5: Targeting Inequities

<p>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.</p>	
<p>How is the program designed to be culturally appropriate for the communities it aims to serve?</p>	
<p>Does this program address the root causes of inequities?²⁰ If yes, how does it do that?</p>	

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

<p>What have you heard about any obstacles (unintentional or intentional) that program participants face when accessing this program? How might you address these barriers?</p>	
<p>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.</p>	

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

<p>Does the program intersect with other programs/policies outside of its policy area? If yes, is there a cliff effect²¹ that could limit both programs from achieving their intended purpose?</p>	
<p>Does the program have the potential to lead to displacement or gentrification? If so, how do you plan to mitigate this risk?</p>	

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.

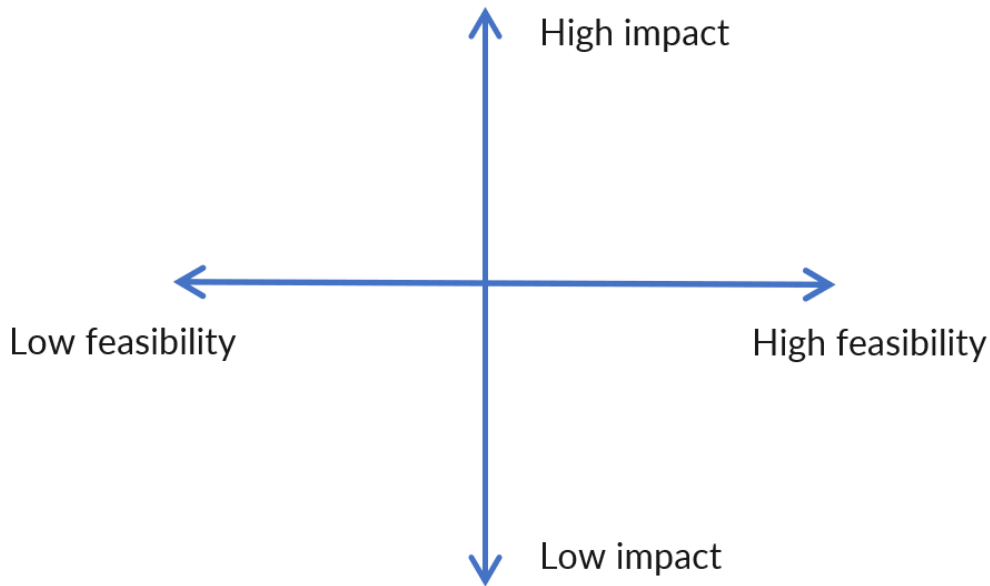


Figure 18: Feasibility versus impact matrix

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	<p>Nonprofit organizations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Forest City Neighborhood Housing Services ▪ Boys and Girls Club ▪ Habitat for Humanity <p>Funders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Forest City Community Foundation ▪ Forest City United Way <p>Public Partners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ City Hall ▪ Forest City Public Library ▪ Forest City Public Schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Forest City Landlords Association ▪ Several community members ▪ Resistors within City Hall
Programs or policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Large median income gap between white- and black-headed households (\$60K and \$30K, respectively) ▪ Largely segregated neighborhoods