MY BROTHER'S KEEPER
Community Challenge

Implementation Guide

STEP 1:

Build Understanding

CRADLE-TO-COLLEGE-AND-CAREER APPROACH

The disparities between children from poor families and those from non-poor families are significant and pervasive, but targeted, continuous intervention at multiple life stages has the potential to eliminate these disparities across the cradle-to-career continuum.[1]

On the path to adulthood, there is no single moment that defines or determines future success. Recent research suggests positive impacts result from evidence-based interventions at multiple critical junctures along the way. Promise Neighborhoods grantees and other organizations are implementing cradle-to-college-and-career strategies that are increasing school attendance, improving academic performance, and raising high school completion and college enrollment rates.[2]
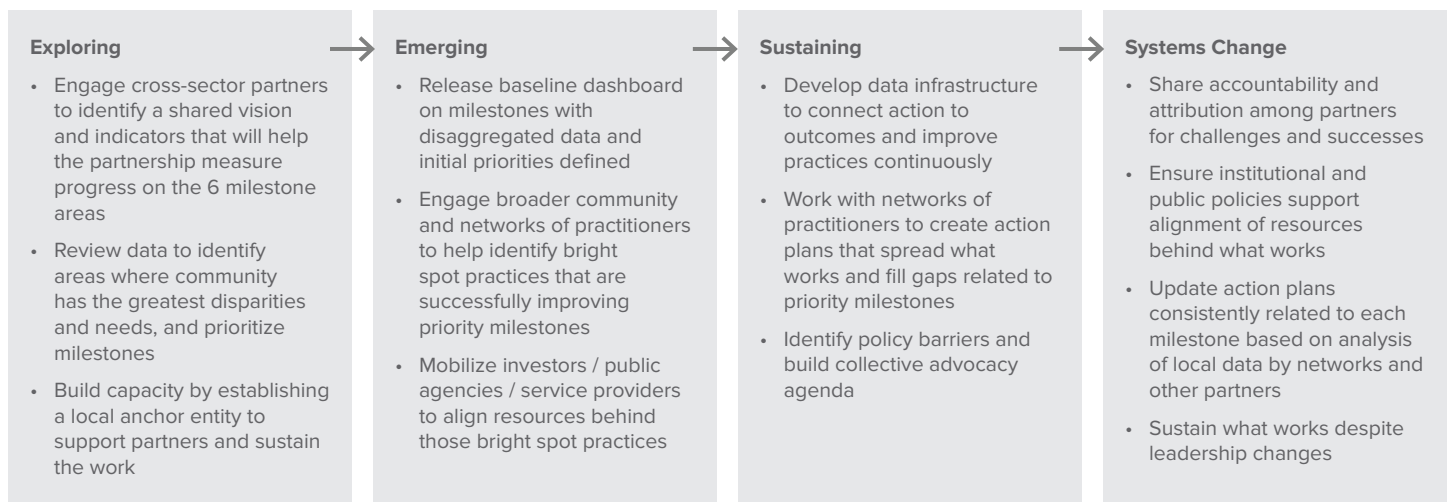
In order to successfully achieve outcomes across milestones, you must carefully consider the tangible implementation approach you will take, in order to drive sustainable, systemic change.

KEY PRINCIPLES[3]

1. **Engage the Community:** The work of a successful community partnership must be grounded in the context of the community. Partnerships engage a broad array of community voices through building awareness and information sharing; involving and mobilizing the community towards improvement; and co-developing solutions and strategies with community members.

2. **Focus on Addressing Locally Defined Disparities:** Disparities in student achievement should be identified by each partnership using local data and place-based context. Partnerships make intentional efforts to investigate and address root causes of disparities in achievement.

3. **Develop a Culture of Continuous Improvement:** The work of the partnership focuses on the use of local data, community expertise, and national research to identify areas for improvement in a constant and disciplined manner that ensures continued investment in practices that work.

4. **Leverage Existing Assets:** The partnership builds on existing resources in the community and aligns resources to maximize impact, including public, non-profit, and private resources.

DRIVING SYSTEMIC CHANGE[4]

To turn these Key Principles into action requires weaving together various existing programs into a comprehensive solution that will lead to improvement across MBK milestone areas being targeted in your community. Below is a Theory of Action for MBK Community Challenge work that outlines the key steps to realizing sustained impact:

Exploring	Emerging	Sustaining	Systems Change
• Engage cross-sector partners to identify a shared vision and indicators that will help the partnership measure progress on the 6 milestone areas	• Release baseline dashboard on milestones with disaggregated data and initial priorities defined	• Develop data infrastructure to connect action to outcomes and improve practices continuously	• Share accountability and attribution among partners for challenges and successes
• Review data to identify areas where community has the greatest disparities and needs, and prioritize milestones	• Engage broader community and networks of practitioners to help identify bright spot practices that are successfully improving priority milestones	• Work with networks of practitioners to create action plans that spread what works and fill gaps related to priority milestones	• Ensure institutional and public policies support alignment of resources behind what works
• Build capacity by establishing a local anchor entity to support partners and sustain the work	• Mobilize investors / public agencies / service providers to align resources behind those bright spot practices	• Identify policy barriers and build collective advocacy agenda	• Update action plans consistently related to each milestone based on analysis of local data by networks and other partners
			• Sustain what works despite leadership changes

[1] *The New Civic Infrastructure, Strive Network, Summer 2012.*
[2] *My Brother's Keeper Task Force Report, May 2014.*
[3] StriveTogether Theory of Action.
[4] Adapted from StriveTogether Theory of Action.

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STEP 2:
Identify Leading Practices

ELEMENTS OF SUCCESS[5]

No matter the issue at hand, several key elements to consider in designing your community strategy include:

1. Clear Goals:
Clear, ambitious, and achievable goals should be established at the outset to foster discipline and focus

2. Emphasis on Place:
Hanging opportunities in places is an essential component to any initiative focused on improving outcomes for youth

3. Authentic Youth and Community Engagement:
Youth should afforded meaningful opportunities to shape the initiative's direction

4. Committed Leadership:
Resourceful Individuals with both a deep personal commitment to the initiative's goals target populations and a clear vision for a better future should be placed in key leadership positions within the initiative

5. Support from Elected Leaders:
Involvement of high-level elected leaders can bolster efforts to improve outcomes, add prestige to such efforts, and attract new funding

6. Engaging Local Intermediary Organizations:
Local intermediary organizations with the ability to bring together diverse stakeholders — institutions that bring capacity in data, policy, best practices, and fundraising to community change efforts — should be engaged as key partners in the initiative

7. Leveraging Expertise of Organizations and Networks:
The knowledge, expertise, and connections of local, state, and national organizations and networks should be leveraged to enhance the initiative

8. Policy and Systems Reform:
Policy and systems reforms must be implemented to effect broad-based, sustained change

9. Strategic Use of Data:
Data disaggregated by race, age, and gender can be a key tool in designing and assessing your strategy to ensure all youth are meeting the MBK milestones and have the opportunity to succeed

PROGRAMMATIC SUCCESS IN THE FIELD

The following programs are highlights received from organizations participating in the MBK Community Challenge. Their efforts are not sponsored, supervised, or independently evaluated by the U.S. Government.

Snapshot 1: Portland, OR

In Portland, cross-sector partners in the All Hands Raised partnership focused on specific organizational actions to improve high school graduation rates and eliminate high school graduation rate disparities. The district engaged every staff member in courageous conversation training. The graduation gap for students of color has closed from 14.3 percent to 9.5 percent. In several large high schools, the gap is gone.

Key Takeaways

• Lessons on mobilizing individual and collective community efforts have now been applied to attendance. Partners now know key practices to eliminate chronic truancy and the Department of Health and Human Services redeployed existing staff to employ them at scale to achieve results

Snapshot 2: Milwaukee, WI

The Milwaukee Succeeds cradle-to-career partnership realized only 15 percent of the city's third-graders were proficient in reading. Tested literacy coaches began working with teachers to improve outcomes, and as a result, 75 percent of children doubled literacy scores in two target schools. The program is now expanding to other schools.

Key Takeaways

• Started small by working intensively with two schools to learn, and then expanded intentionally and with rigor

• District is leading and modeling how to use data to improve and expand work

[5] *PolicyLink Elements of Successful Boys and Men of Color Initiatives, April 2014.*

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STEP 3:
Take Action

TURNING THEORY INTO ACTION: INSTITUTIONAL RESOURCES

Now that you've got the knowledge, it's time to turn the Cradle-to-College-and-Career Approach into a reality for your community. Below is a collection of resources that may be helpful as you consider your strategy for driving real and meaningful change in your community.

*These resources include information and examples from nongovernmental sources. These resources are provided for informational purposes only. Inclusion of nongovernmental information and resources does not indicate endorsement by the White House or the U.S. government of entities, their products or services, and the **information contained at referenced sites does not necessarily reflect the official views of the U.S. government.***

Building an Accountability Structure Toolkit

This toolkit from StriveTogether is designed to help leaders understand the importance of an accountability structure; view different types of structures and their respective advantages and disadvantages; understand and outline the roles and responsibilities that need to be accommodated in a structure; clarify the decision making roles of different groups in the accountability structure; develop necessary agreements that need to be in place to operationalize an accountability structure; and create an accountability structure that fits their partnership's needs and context. **This is not a U.S. Government guidance document.**

Access Accountability Structure Toolkit here:
http://www.strivetogether.org/accountability-structure-toolkit

Access Key Partner Reservations / Motivations here:
http://www.strivetogether.org/sites/default/files/images/Key%20Sector%20Motivations_JB.pdf

Measuring Performance – A Guidance Document for Promise Neighborhoods on Collecting Data and Reporting Results

From the nongovernmental Promise Neighborhoods Institute, this guide provides advice for communities on data collection strategies, sources, and methods for the field. High quality, consistent data collection is key to the larger field of place-based efforts, helping to coordinate our efforts, regardless of specific initiative, and develop high-quality, consistent processes that get results for children and families in communities across the country. **This is not a U.S. Government guidance document.**

Access Measuring Performance – A Guidance Document for Promise Neighborhoods on Collecting Data and Reporting Results here:
http://www.promiseneighborhoodsinstitute.org/