



Collective Impact Accelerator *Using Data for Advancing Progress in Collective Impact*

You are invited to participate in a **12-month action learning cohort focused on using data for advancing progress in collective impact**. The Collective Impact Forum, an initiative of FSG and the Aspen Institute Forum for Community Solutions, is developing a “Collective Impact Accelerator” to improve how collective impact funders, backbone teams, and other partners use data to learn and strengthen their work in collaboration with others, ultimately contributing to achieving greater impact in communities.

The **goals** of the Collective Impact Accelerator are to:

- **Build the capacity of backbone leaders, funders, and other partners** to effectively use data as a key strategy in collective impact contributing to improved results for communities.
- **Create a supportive peer learning community** where backbone teams, funders and/or partners have candid conversations and learn with one another about using data in collective impact.
- **Identify promising practices that will be shared broadly with the field** to support backbone leaders, funders, and other practitioners interested in using data in collective impact.

This Collective Impact Accelerator will be **limited to participants from 10 separate collaboratives** (including one funder and up to two backbone/data partners from each collaborative). Participants will meet for **three in-person working sessions from November 2019 to November 2020**, and will also join **three peer learning calls** during months when there is not a working session. Participants will identify an area of their collaborative where they will focus on using data, and **participants are expected to commit time in between the Accelerator meetings and calls to make progress on their identified action learning project** for their collaborative.

The participation fee is \$10,000 for each collaborative (for two representatives) or \$12,500 for each collaborative (for three representatives). This fee covers the meeting costs and staff time to plan for and facilitate all calls and meetings. Participants will cover their own travel and accommodation costs.

Mark your calendar for these key dates:

- **[Applications](#) will open on May 29 and close on July 26, 2019.**
- **Join an informational call on June 18 or June 26** to learn more before applying. Call-in details are included at the end of frequently asked questions section below.
- **We will select 10 participating collaboratives (including one funder and up to two backbone/data partners per collaborative) by August 16, 2019.**
- **The first full-day in-person meeting** will take place on Tuesday, Nov. 12, 2019 in Chicago, IL (with reception and dinner the night before).
- **The second in-person meeting** will take place on Tuesday, May 5, 2020, in Minneapolis, MN (with reception and dinner the night before).
- **The third in-person meeting** will take place in October/November 2020 in Washington, D.C. (date will be confirmed by late 2019 based on selected accelerator participants' availability).

See below for **frequently asked questions** about the Collective Impact Accelerator.

Why Focus on “Use of Data” as the Topic for This Collective Impact Accelerator?

The use of data across partners is a core element of the collective impact approach. In fact, the central use of data – for both collaborative learning and accountability – is often the element of collective impact that practitioners report to be the most differentiating from the other collaboratives in which they have worked. Through our engagement with funders and practitioners in the Collective Impact Forum community, we understand that collective impact initiatives are using a variety of types of data – including collecting data through public databases, shared measurement systems, evaluations, research studies, and in informal conversations – to learn, inform, and improve their work.

However, it is clear that meaningful use of multiple types of data is also one of the most challenging elements of collective impact. For example, findings from the 2017 Collective Impact Forum member survey showed that shared measurement (one type of data) was the least developed of all 5 conditions of collective impact. The 2018 research study “When Collective Impact Has an Impact”¹ reinforces the state of the field described above. This study found that the meaningful use of data plays a central role in helping collective impact initiatives achieve systems change and population level impact. This research found that the sites with the strongest evidence of contribution to population level impact had implemented robust data strategies, had developed shared measurement approaches for their work, and prioritized data as essential to achieving population level change. However, this research study also found that only 56% of the 25 sites studied had mature shared measurement processes, and many struggled with using multiple types of data to improve their work.

We believe that an important step in supporting the field is to support the **capacity development and facilitate peer learning about the ways in which collective impact initiatives are using data to learn and improve their work**, ultimately contributing to achieving greater impact in communities.

What Topics Related to Data Will Participants Address in This Collective Impact Accelerator?

We anticipate that participants will generate a set of “learning questions” that are most important for the group to address as a peer cohort. Potential questions that the group will address include:

- What types of data are collective impact initiatives using to inform their work?
- What is the focus of the data collection activities?
- Who determines what data is important for the collaborative to gather?
- How is the collaborative using the data for learning and improvement?
- How do collaboratives create a culture for participants to truly use the data and adapt work accordingly, and hold each other accountable for progress?
- How is a priority on equity incorporated into all data identification, collection, and use?

At the conclusion of this action learning process, based on feedback from Collective Impact Accelerator participants, the Collective Impact Forum will develop a field-wide resource that will distill insights for the field more broadly. We will disseminate the key resources and tools to FSG’s and Aspen’s networks.

¹ When Collective Impact Has an Impact: A Cross-Site Study of 25 Collective Impact Initiatives – Executive Summary” ORS Impact and Spark Policy Institute. March 2018

What Are the Benefits of Participating in This Collective Impact Accelerator?

Benefits of participation in the Collective Impact Accelerator include:

- **Building capacity for using data in collective impact:** Participants will identify a practical action learning project that they will trace throughout the 12-month Collective Impact Accelerator – bringing unique value to participants’ organizations and collective impact initiatives.
- **Access to experts and knowledge:** The Collective Impact Forum will identify experts on strategic learning and evaluation, use of data, and other data-related topics identified as priorities by participants, who will join various meetings and calls for the Collective Impact Accelerator.
- **Deepening peer relationships:** Build relationships with other funders and backbone team members who are prioritizing the use of data in their collective impact initiatives. Through in-person meetings and peer assist phone calls, you will have the opportunity to more deeply connect with and receive feedback from your peers.

In addition, the Collective Impact Forum will build upon our extensive experience designing and facilitating communities of practice. Participants from previous Collective Impact Forum peer learning communities shared positive feedback on how a learning cohort influenced their relationships, knowledge, and practice:

- *“(The action learning process) accelerated our movement. Having a project with a timetable was very helpful in that regard.”*
- *“The Action Learning Lab allowed us to be removed from the day to day hustle, and fully submerge ourselves in peer learning, innovative thinking and bringing back actionable solutions.”*
- *“I have enjoyed connecting to a network of peers who have similar goals and share similar challenges.”*

What Are the Expectations for Collective Impact Accelerator Participants?

For those who are selected to participate in the Collective Impact Accelerator, participants will commit to the following:

- **Commit the same two or three representatives from your collaborative to participate in the Collective Impact Accelerator:** To ensure that learning and discussions are deeply embedded within each collective impact initiative, we ask for the commitment and participation of two or three team members from your collective impact initiative in the Collective Impact Accelerator. **One of the two representatives should be a funder, and the other one or two representatives should be members of the backbone team or data partners** for the collective impact initiative.
- **Attend three, in-person meetings from November 2019 to November 2020:** These meetings will be designed to bring content from subject matter experts to the Collective Impact Accelerator, as well as support peer learning about data, learning, and continuous improvement across participants. We are designing the Collective Impact Accelerator meetings to provide a small group environment to share with and learn from each other. Therefore, we ask that participating collective impact initiatives **bring the same funder/backbone team representatives to each in-person meeting**. Meeting dates include:
 - **November 2019:** Reception and dinner on Monday, Nov. 11, in Chicago, IL, followed by a meeting on Tuesday, Nov. 12 from 8am to 4:30pm CST. Note: This precedes Independent Sector’s Upswell Conference on Nov. 13-15 in Chicago.
 - **May 2020:** Reception and dinner on Monday, May 4, in Minneapolis, MN, followed by a meeting on Tuesday, May 5 from 8am to 4:30pm CST. Note: This precedes the 2020 Collective Impact Convening on May 6-8 in Minneapolis.

- **October/November 2020:** The third in-person meeting will take place in October/November 2020 in Washington, D.C. (date will be confirmed by late 2019 based on accelerator participants' availability).
- **Identify an action learning project focus area:** Participants will identify an area of their collaborative where they will focus on using data, and use this as an action learning area that they specifically trace through the learning experience. Over the course of the Collective Impact Accelerator, the group would be sharing their learning and seeking advice from peers and the faculty team (from the Collective Impact Forum and other select experts).
- **Participate in three peer-assist calls:** We will hold three calls, in non-meeting months, that will serve as peer coaching sessions for participants to trouble-shoot issues they are having with using data in collective impact. The first Collective Impact Accelerator call will take place in January 2020.
- **Pay the participation fee of \$10,000 for two representatives or \$12,500 for three representatives:** This participation fee will cover the meeting costs and staff time to plan for and facilitate all Collective Impact Accelerator calls and meetings. In addition, participants will cover their own travel and accommodation costs. The registration fee for the 2020 Collective Impact Convening on May 6-8 in Minneapolis is included in the cost of this accelerator.

What Is the Ideal Participant Profile by Stage and Role in Collective Impact?

The participants in this Collective Impact Accelerator should be working on **mid-to-late stage collective impact initiatives** (e.g., their collaborative has an agreed-upon common agenda, has clearly defined strategies and working groups, has begun to develop a shared measurement system, and is actively learning and adapting as a group). We expect that each collaborative has already moved past the initial “planning” stage and is well into the “implementation” stage of collective impact.

We anticipate that we will focus some of the group discussions on funder/backbone power dynamics and how to effectively resource data-focused work in collective impact. Therefore, **it is important that each participating collaborative have both the funder and backbone perspective** in their group.

We are designing the Collective Impact Accelerator meetings to provide a small group environment to share with and learn from each other. Therefore, we ask that participating collective impact initiatives **bring the same representatives to each in-person meeting**. No more than **three total representatives** can participate from each collaborative, so that we can maintain our desired small group learning environment.

What Is the Application Process, and How Do I Learn More Before Applying?

- [Applications](#) will open on **May 29** and close on **July 26, 2019**.
- Join an **informational call from 4-5pm EST on Tuesday, June 18, or 4-5pm EST on Wednesday, June 26**, to learn more before applying. You can opt into one of these two calls to learn more:
 - **Collective Impact Accelerator – Informational Call #1: Tuesday, June 18, from 4-5pm EST:** sign up at <https://bit.ly/2GYSfak> for call-in details for this call on June 18
 - **Collective Impact Accelerator – Informational Call #2: Wednesday, June 26, from 4-5pm EST:** sign up at <https://bit.ly/2GUJE45> for call-in details for this call on June 26
- We will **select the participating initiatives (one funder and 1-2 backbone/data team members from 10 different communities) by August 16, 2019**.

If you have other questions, please contact the Collective Impact Forum’s Robert Albright at robert.albright@collectiveimpactforum.org or 919.606.1013.