

using data to meet the COVID-19 crisis

GREEN BAY, WISCONSIN



StriveTogether Cradle to Career Network member Achieve Brown County creates a shared vision and common framework for improving outcomes from cradle to career in the Green Bay area. Among other efforts, it has built a **community information system** for combining individual-level data across the public and private sector; it has facilitated key partnerships among three county health care systems to standardize developmental screening and care; and it has created a partnership between four school districts to develop a standard system of mentoring. Through these and other efforts, Achieve Brown County works to ensure equity in a county in which all young people can succeed.

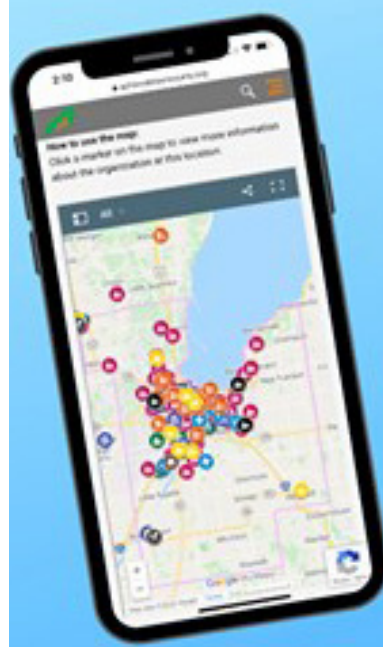
This case study shows how Achieve Brown County leveraged its exceptional data and networking capacity to map both the needs and the opportunities exposed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

MAPPING COMMUNITY DATA

With a coverage area that stretches from the farmlands of Brown County to the city on the shores of Green Bay, the network Achieve Brown County (ABC) has had a lot going on this year. Working to boost opportunity and achievement from pre-kindergarten through college, this StriveTogether Cradle to Career Network member has been developing an innovative platform that combines student data with that of major health providers to learn how health and mobility affect the education of children in this region of upper Wisconsin.

Each partner in the effort has signed on to a major data-sharing agreement in the first — and what is believed to be the only — such agreement of its kind: a sharing of data from eight public school systems and, from three health systems, data about things like hospitalizations, immunizations and doctor visits. It had been a challenge getting the school data in particular, and ABC is now in the early stages of entering it and analyzing it.

ABC's work has been groundbreaking and important in a county in which 45% of Black residents live below the poverty line. Brown County is also increasingly diverse because of an influx of Latinx immigrants and Hmong and Somali refugees,



COVID-19 Resource & Response Map



The Brown County COVID-19 Resource and Response Map is designed to demonstrate and assess how organizations from all sectors across the county are responding to the COVID-19 crisis and meeting the many needs of community members.

along with Native Americans, many of whom work in the county's meatpacking plants.

The income disparities in the county are stark, with the urban center of Green Bay and its highest concentration of people of color facing the biggest barriers to educational achievement. The hope is that layering health data onto school statistics like these will lead to explanations, then collaborative solutions.

And then came the pandemic. "And we were like, 'What do we do now?'" said Spencer Bonnie, executive director of ABC. "We asked, 'How do we move our legacy work forward, but also how do we step up and show up and respond in a way that helps our community right now?'"

Thanks to the data infrastructure ABC had already

built and the strong partnerships it had already formed, the network was well positioned to respond.

The organization's immediate answer to the pandemic was to create a COVID-19 Resource and Response map, a user-friendly, Google-based visual of Brown County that allowed all the partners to submit information about how they were responding, what resources they had and what resources they needed. In this way, all members of the community could go to one central location and easily see what was happening where.

First and foremost, the map was designed to provide a current snapshot of Brown County during the pandemic, for people to see and understand how various organizations in a number of sectors

were responding. But just as important, it served to collect data and information so that organizations could find opportunities for alignment and collective action.

The response team gathered data from about 100 organizations over a period of two months, put it all online, then pulled together a collective response team of two dozen representatives from an equal number of partners across the community to look at the information with an eye toward solving problems together.

A handful of opportunities instantly rose to the top. One was the need for child care for school-aged children. The other was the existence of a stark digital divide. Both presented enormous challenges to student learning and well-being.

As Brown County's young people made the transition to virtual learning, many had parents working from home who couldn't supervise them, or who had to work outside the home, or who held down multiple jobs to make ends meet. These parents had no one to watch their children, who now were at home all day. Even those parents who were home were hard-pressed to give the children the support and attention they needed.

An action team was assembled to collectively address the problem. The team brought together providers, including the local YMCAs and Boys and Girls Clubs, to explore ways to align efforts and generate funds and other resources to support them.

One outcome of this work was a collaborative grant proposal to a large meatpacking plant that employs a large number of immigrant and refugees had been significantly affected by the virus. The number of positive cases in Brown County had surged past 600 one day in April, with half of those cases linked to meatpacking plants. The hope was that the plant, along with other funders, would invest in new or expanded

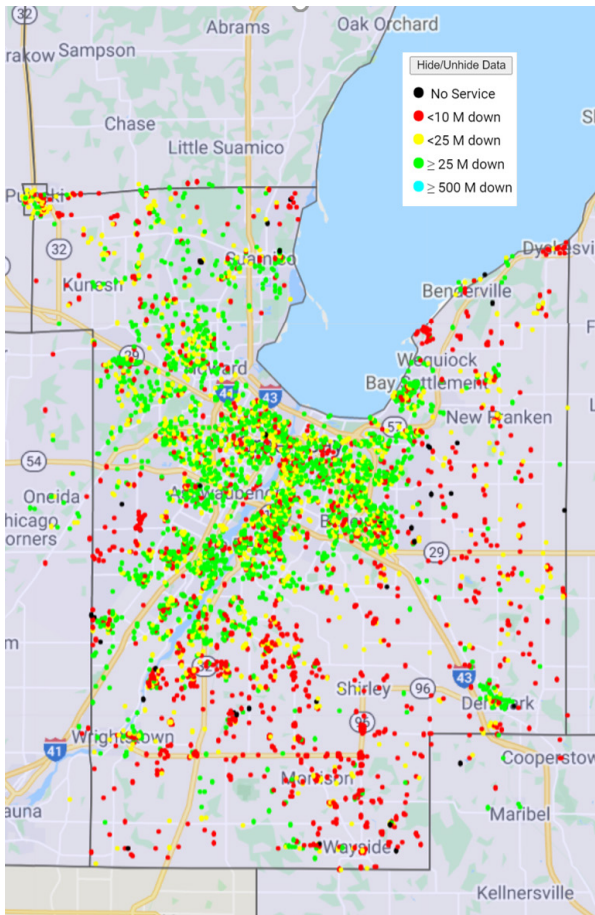
child care facilities, particularly those that served children before and after school. And now that students will be returning to at least a blended learning model, the centers are seen as places that can help students recover academically. Funding is expected to come through soon, said Bonnie.

Just as it revealed shortcomings in child care, the pandemic map shined a harsh light on the lack



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– Spencer Bonnie, executive director of ABC



This Internet Speed Map discloses the Internet speeds at a home or business. Internet speeds that fall below the FCC standards are eligible for federal and state grants and the data from these speed tests will be used for grant applications by Brown County, Wisconsin.

of internet capacity and access in many Brown County communities. So, in addition to its child care team, the partnership added a digital access team. This team convened representatives from Brown County and across northeast Wisconsin — from businesses, schools, higher education institutions and others — to find ways to connect students to the internet, which was now a lifeline to their education.

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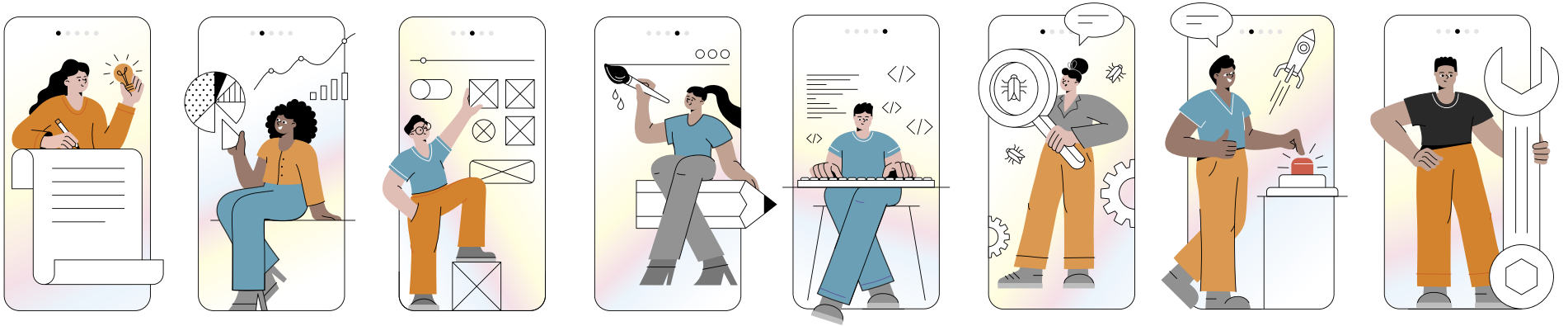
ABC made the information for the resource and response map exceptionally easy to gather, analyze and use. The team sent organizations a link to a Google form, and when ABC received the information, it simply copied and pasted it to immediately populate a pin on the map. By hovering over the pin, users can get useful information about a variety of local institutions.

For instance, a click on “Wise Women Gathering Place” in Green Bay shows that this nonprofit serves victims of domestic violence and other crimes by providing them with food, shelter, hygiene and advocacy services. It describes its needs as “food that doesn’t need refrigeration or complex cooking,” gift cards to grocery stores and fast food restaurants, face masks and disinfecting products. It describes the needs it addresses as economic support, transportation

and technology. A click on another pin brings up Pioneer Elementary School, which reports that it provides free breakfast, lunch and dinner to children under 18, and that for children learning virtually the meal pick-up takes place from 11 a.m. to noon daily at Ashwaubenon High School.

ABC was also able to aggregate all this information and view it from a collective impact perspective. “We asked where there was overlap and alignment and where is there a need for the same resources in both places,” Bonnie said. Then the team asked: “How do we then leverage that to develop collaborative response? So it was born out of the whole idea of collective impact, and it amplified the efforts of multiple entities throughout the community.”

ABC is hoping to make other uses of the resource and response map that tie back to its existing data-gathering efforts. First, using a grant from a local foundation, it plans to connect the pandemic-related information to the community information system it co-owns with the United Way. Now, the data in the community information system is sourced in what Bonnie says are “typical data collection ways,” meaning that it’s governed by strict data use and sharing agreements. In other words, the data is quantitative, as with school attendance records, whereas the information in the pandemic map is more often qualitative. Yet the latter is no less important, which is why ABC is working to combine the two.



“It’s ‘soft,’ but the data we are getting from the resource and response map is still data, and it tells a story, so the more we can integrate that hard data with the soft data, the better picture we are able to paint, and the better decisions we are able to make.” – Spencer Bonnie, executive director of ABC

“We want to integrate all of that data to paint a bigger picture of what is really going on in our community,” Bonnie said. “It’s ‘soft,’ but the data we are getting from the resource and response map is still data, and it tells a story. So the more we can integrate that hard data with the soft data, the better picture we are able to paint, and the better decisions we are able to make.”

ABC also wants to develop a visualization platform that will allow its partners to see not only their own information but also that information integrated with others. Bellin Health, for example, wants to see its body mass index data against data entered by other health care systems and school districts in an effort to address the area’s childhood obesity problem. ABC wants to see more data — health,

pre-kindergarten, early reading and math, attendance, etc. — in combination with each other. Looking at data related to pre-kindergarten, for instance, users of the maps and dashboards can get a clear picture of how often children are moving during their early years, as well as compare the quality of pre-kindergarten offerings.

Now, the data comes back in the form of tables and Excel spreadsheets, but ABC wants to develop maps and dashboards that allow users to see the information in way that makes for more efficient and effective interpretation. “That’s where it connects back to the [pandemic] map,” Bonnie said, “because the map in its simplest form is a visualization tool that allows people to see information in a way that helps them.”

What other information is ABC looking for as it analyzes data to improve cradle-to-career opportunities for young people? Bonnie says they don’t necessarily know until they find it. With new data comes new questions, fresh insights and more potential ways to collaborate on solutions.

“As we do more of this I suspect we are going to uncover more opportunities that lead us off into different directions. That is the potential of both the response map and the community information system.”

Data, Bonnie says, will inform the actions they take to have the “greatest impact on outcomes for the greatest number of young people.”

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