StriveTogether®

Theory of ACTION™

6th Revision

Getting better results for every child, cradle to career

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Place-based partnerships in the StriveTogether Cradle to Career Network bring together neighbors, including youth and families, nonprofits, businesses, schools and more, to work toward a future where youth can thrive in their communities. With support from a backbone, these partnerships change the way their communities work together by building connections, sharing resources and using data to help more young people meet seven cradle-to-career milestones and reach economic mobility.

Partnerships implementing the StriveTogether Theory of Action™ effectively demonstrate the following principles as they work to build and strengthen civic infrastructure:

- Access to opportunity
- Community engagement and local context
- Outcomes-focused systems approach
- Public sector adoption

PILLAR	CORE CONCEPT	EXPLORING	EMERGING	SUSTAINING	SYSTEMS CHANGE	SYSTEMS TRANSFORMATION
Shared Community Vision	Vision development and expansion	1.1 A clear vision for improved cradle-to-career outcomes is co-developed by a cross-sector partnership — including youth and families.	2.1 The partnership engages with organizations and residents from across the community to develop awareness of the cradle-to-career vision.	3.1 The vision is championed by organizations across sectors. 3.2 Community members are mobilized to improve outcomes.	4.1 A diverse set of organizations and community members demonstrate commitment to the cradle-to-career vision.	5.1 Multiple organizations, sectors and community members demonstrate commitment and ongoing accountability to the vision and the community.
	Partnership alignment and accountability	1.2 A diverse set of partners — inclusive of youth and family perspectives — are organized around a clear set of roles and responsibilities.	2.2 Partners carry out their roles and responsibilities in support of the cradle-to-career vision.	3.3 The community is regularly updated on the partnership's vision, strategies and progress toward improving cradle-to-career outcomes. 3.4 Youth and families are involved in cradle-to-career vision and strategy refinement.	4.2 Partners take ownership and responsibility for the partnership's successes and challenges. 4.3 Youth and families are collaborators in cradle-to-career vision and strategy refinement.	
Evidence-Based Decision Making	Community-wide culture of data	1.3 The partnership identifies population-level indicators for measuring progress toward improved cradle-to-career outcomes.	2.3 The partnership collects, analyzes and publicly shares data for cradle-to-career indicators — disaggregated by race, income, gender, place, educational attainment, employment status and other demographics. 2.4 The partnership identifies systems indicators to understand ways that organizations can shift practices, policies, resources and power structures.	3.5 The partnership publicly shares cradle-to-career indicators and systems indicators to assess progress, explore disparities and understand factors that affect cradle-to-career outcomes. 3.6 Partners are equipped with capabilities to share and use data, including youth and family perspectives.	4.4 Sharing and use of data — including youth and family perspectives — is institutionalized within and across partners.	5.2 A culture of data use drives action and is sustained and spreads across the community.
	Partnership data and technology infrastructure		2.5 The partnership develops a data strategy with local partners and identifies opportunities for data sharing.	3.7 The partnership's people, processes and technology enable data sharing and use within and across partners.	4.5 The people, processes and technology are sustained to facilitate data sharing and use within and across partners.	
Collaborative Action	Framework for collaborative improvement	1.4 Formal cross-sector workgroups, inclusive of youth and family perspectives, are established to to improve cradle-to-career outcomes.	2.6 Workgroup members are clear about their roles and responsibilities in outcomes-focused efforts. 2.7 Workgroups have the collaboration skills necessary to facilitate data-informed aligned action.	3.8 Partners use data and collaborative improvement cycles to test and refine outcomes-focused strategies for adoption and adaptation.	4.6 Collaborative action workgroups are sustained or evolve over time.	5.3 Institutional and public policies, practices and resources that advance improved outcomes are spread and sustained.
	Scale and spread of institutional policies, practices and resources		2.8 Workgroups use data, including youth and family perspectives, to identify focus populations, underlying systems factors and strategies to improve outcomes.	3.9 Partners take aligned action to shift policies, practices, resources and/or power structures to improve outcomes.	4.7 Partners within and across sectors align resources and scale policies and practices that advance improved outcomes.	
	Development, advocacy and implementation of public policies and resources		2.9 The partnership engages with local, state and/or federal leaders who influence public policies and resources.	3.10 The partnership has identified strategies for advancing public policy priorities toward improved outcomes. 3.11 The partnership has the infrastructure necessary to develop and advocate for public policy change to advance improved outcomes.	4.8 Local, state and/or national policies change to advance improved outcomes. 4.9. The partnership aligns public resources toward strategies that that demonstrate improved outcomes.	
Investment and Sustainability	Backbone operations and partnership talent strategies	1.5 A backbone is established and capacity to launch a cradle-to-career, place-based partnership is in place.	2.10 The backbone capacity exists to support daily management, finances, data needs, facilitation, communication and engagement with the community.	3.12 The backbone is equipped and staffed to support the long-term success of the partnership.	4.10 The partnership demonstrates continued performance and resilience amid changing local contexts.	5.4. The partnership maintains operational sustainability and multiple years of revenue from a variety of sources amid changing local contexts.
	Backbone and partnership fund development and sustainability	1.6 The partnership engages funders to support backbone operations and strategies to build civic infrastructure.	2.11 The partnership has multiple revenue sources to support backbone operations and strategies to build civic infrastructure.	3.13 Multiple years of funding are secured to sustain backbone operations and strategies to build civic infrastructure.	4.11 Multiple years of funding from a variety of sources are secured to sustain the partnership amid changing local contexts.	

A validated framework for place-based partnerships: The StriveTogether Theory of Action™

StriveTogether first released the Theory of Action™ in 2013 to provide place-based partnerships with a road map for creating change. This framework was built from insights from communities across the Cradle to Career Network, and it evolves as the Network advances and learns together.

This latest iteration, the sixth revision to the Theory of Action™, was informed by the experiences and perspectives of network members. It aims to provide greater clarity on the steps to building and sustaining civic infrastructure to put more youth on a path to economic mobility. To achieve this, communities must transform systems — making fundamental and institutionalized shifts in policies, practices, resources and power structures — to improve cradle-to-career outcomes for young people.

StriveTogether®

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