

Tools for Lead/Backbone Agency

Backbone Effectiveness: 27 Indicators

Guide Vision and Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partners accurately describe the common agenda Partners publicly discuss / advocate for common agenda goals Partners' individual work is increasingly aligned with common agenda Board members and key leaders increasingly look to backbone organization for initiative support, strategic guidance and leadership
Support Aligned Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partners articulate their role in the initiative Relevant stakeholders are engaged in the initiative Partners communicate and coordinate efforts regularly, with, and independently of, backbone Partners report increasing levels of trust with one another Partners increase scope / type of collaborative work Partners improve quality of their work Partners improve efficiency of their work Partners feel supported and recognized in their work
Establish Shared Measurement Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shared data system is in development Partners understand the value of shared data Partners have robust / shared data capacity Partners make decisions based on data Partners utilize data in a meaningful way
Build Public Will	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community members are increasingly aware of the issue(s) Community members express support for the initiative Community members feel empowered to engage in the issue(s) Community members increasingly take action
Advance Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Target audience (e.g., influencers and policymakers) is increasingly aware of the initiative Target audiences advocate for changes to the system aligned with initiative goals Public policy is increasingly aligned with initiative goals
Mobilize Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funders are asking nonprofits to align to initiative goals Funders are redirecting funds to support initiative goals New resources from public and private sources are being contributed to partners and initiative

Lead/Backbone Organization - Misperceptions

The role and functions of lead/backbone organizations can often be misunderstood, particularly in the early stage of Collective Impact initiatives. The most common misperceptions are:

- The backbone organization sets the agenda for the group.
- The backbone organization drives the solutions.
- The backbone organization receives all the funding.
- The role of backbone can be self-appointed rather than selected by the community.
- The role of the backbone is not fundamentally different from “business as usual” in terms of staffing, time, and resources.