



SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA
GRANTMAKERS

Center for
Strategic
Partnerships



**STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN
2019-2022**





Center for
Strategic
Partnerships



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Special Thanks

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THE CENTER'S FOCUS AREA

Children, youth and families using an equity lens to guide our work.

MISSION

To support cross-sector collaborations that transform Los Angeles County systems, policies, and practices to improve outcomes for children, youth, and families using an equity lens to guide our work.

VISION

A Los Angeles County that, public and private alike, seamlessly serves our residents, providing them the support they need to thrive.

OUR PARTNERS

The Center sits at the intersection of Los Angeles County and philanthropy, with homes in the Chief Executive Office funded by seven County departments and Southern California Grantmakers funded by twenty foundations.

COUNTY PRIORITIES



Child Protection: Enhancing the County's safety network by adopting and implementing recommendations of the County's Blue Ribbon Commission on Child Protection, including establishing the Office of Child Protection to improve the lives of children and families.



Health Integration: Streamlining and integrating access to high quality and comprehensive health services by integrating the Departments of Health Services (DHS), Mental Health (DMH) and Public Health (DPH).



Homelessness: Responding to and reducing the incidence of homelessness among the County's most vulnerable population, including establishing the Office of Homelessness and approving the Homelessness Initiatives' 51 strategies to confront the issues surrounding homelessness.



Justice Reform: Diverting individuals from County jails to supportive services, reducing the incidence of jail violence, and increasing transparency and accountability of the Sheriff's Department.



Environmental Health Oversight and Monitoring: Strengthening environmental monitoring and oversight, empowering communities, improving regulatory enforcement, and reducing toxic emissions.



Immigration: Protecting and advancing the well-being of County Immigrant residents by establishing the Office of Immigrant Affairs.



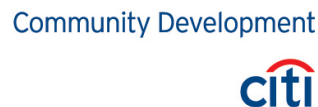
Sustainability: Provides an aspirational strategic vision (*OurCountyPlan*) for making Los Angeles County a healthier, more livable, economically stronger, more equitable, and more resilient sustainable region.

PARTNERS

PUBLIC SECTOR



PRIVATE SECTOR



Our Charge and Our Potential Together

The Center for Strategic Partnerships (*Center*) is a first-of-its kind venture in Los Angeles County. It is an entity at the intersection of the County and philanthropy designed to support collaborations between these two sectors. Leaders in each sector are committed to improving lives of Los Angeles County residents through systems, policy, and practice innovations. They created this Center as a mechanism to help them better partner with each other knowing that each adds value to the success of the other.

We are at a unique moment in time in this County. Leaders from both sectors are among the most forward-thinking, innovative and collaborative this County has ever seen. We are also at a historic moment where the County and philanthropy are willing to face and name the historical discrimination that created deep inequities, and to pursuing innovations that address these inequities and lead to justice. Our potential together is unbounded.

The Center's charge is to harness that potential, within our focus area, through collaborations that lead to better outcomes.

Our Beginning and Our Focus Now

We were born of a death in the child welfare system that spurred this County and philanthropy to get serious about cross-sector collaboration. We showed that it worked through a three-year pilot that brought 24 foundations together with seven County Departments investing over \$5 million for innovations that changed lives. We have now been charged to take this model and bring it to the seven priority areas of the Board of Supervisors: (1) Child Protection; (2) Health Integration; (3) Homelessness; (4) Justice Reform; (5) Environmental Health Oversight and Monitoring; (6) Immigration; and (7) Sustainability. We will work in these areas, focusing on **children, youth and families using an equity lens to guide our work.** (See Appendix I for definition of equity lens.)

What We Will Do

We will inspire and support cross-sector collaborations, we will foster a culture of collaboration, and we will learn through measuring our impact. We will co-create transformative innovations that reflect the highest priorities of systems change for our Departments and philanthropy within our focus area. We will foster a culture of collaboration within the County and philanthropy by providing connections, support, and technical assistance to help build their collaborative muscle. Finally, we will measure our impact using a family of measures to help us learn and grow.

How We Will Do It

We will work closely with our partners, guided by an Advisory Council, and expand our reach through enlisting the help of partners as Strategic Liaisons and Ambassadors. (See our *Operations Manual, Appendix II, for details.*)

Goals & Strategies

I. Support the highest-priority cross-sector collaborations to transform systems, policies and practices to improve outcomes for children, youth and families using an equity lens to guide our work

The Center’s “North Star” is to support cross-sector collaborations that are the highest priorities of the County and philanthropy within the Center’s focus area. We will seek to build collaborations that help each achieve their goals together. We will focus on collaborations that bring in not only all sectors, but that also help collaboration across County departments.

- Strategy I.1** Identify highest priorities of our County departments within our focus area.
- Strategy I.2** Identify highest priorities of our philanthropic partners within our focus area.
- Strategy I.3** Seek alignment in these priorities using the Opportunity Filter as a guide.
- Strategy I.4** Shape, build, and launch Joint Initiatives that transform systems, policies and practice to improve outcomes.

II. Foster a culture of collaboration within the County and other sectors through introductions, education and technical assistance.

All of the Center’s County and philanthropic partners agree that each sector is more impactful through collaboration. Learning from past experience, we will work to build the muscle of each sector to collaborate with one another. We will be intentional about fostering this culture change and extending it to other sectors. We will do this through introductions, education, and technical assistance.

- Strategy II.1** Look for, and take advantage of, opportunities in existing forums to train all sectors about the others.
- Strategy II.2** Make introductions and host convenings between the sectors, not just with leadership, but key staff who are actively involved in the day to day work.
- Strategy II.3** Provide technical assistance to each sector to support and guide them in working with the other.
- Strategy II.4** Be a convener of other strategic partnership offices to enhance alignment and share best practices.



III. Measure our impact using family of measures to provide multiple perspectives on the achievement of our desired end state.

We will measure the impact of our work both through process measurements that quantify our efforts and, more importantly, through outcome measurements that seek to tell the story of impact of the initiatives we support. We will also incorporate population-level measurements of well-being into our narrative. We know that population-level measures are impacted by far more than the part we play, but counting them will help keep us grounded in the goals we all seek to achieve, better well-being across the County. Further details on proposed measurements can be found Appendix II.

- Strategy III.1** Measure the number of partners, partnerships, and funding co-invested as well as trainings and technical assistance provided.
- Strategy III.2** Through outside evaluators and support from our implementing partners, measure the policy, practice and/or systems change and the resulting change in outcomes for real people from the joint initiatives.
- Strategy III.3** Leverage existing and burgeoning efforts in the County and other sectors seeking to tell population-level stories relevant to the Center's focus on children, youth and families with an equity lens.

Appendix I

HISTORY OF PILOT; BACKGROUND FOR STRATEGIC PLANNING; AND CENTER'S FOCUS AREA

History of the Pilot Phase

The Center for Strategic Public-Private Partnerships (*as it was called then*) became operational on April 1, 2016 as a pilot in the newly formed Office of Child Protection. Born out of recommendations in the Blue Ribbon Commission following the shocking death of eight-year old Gabriel Fernandez, the Center was created to spur collaborations that would support innovations, systems change, and lead to better outcomes for children and families either in or at risk of entering the child welfare system.

During this pilot phase, Southern California Grantmakers served as a fiscal sponsor for the Center – providing a wide range of assistance including fiscal oversight, administrative assistance and strategic advice. During this same pilot period, the Center built partnerships between seven key County departments (*plus LAHSA and First 5 LA*) and 24 private sector partners. Together they co-invested over \$5 million, not including leveraged County investments and time, to improve the lives of vulnerable children and families.

These investments came through what the Center came to call “Joint Initiatives”, which are project-based partnerships between the public and private sector for innovative systems change in the County. Essentially, a Joint Initiative arose when the public and the private sector together agreed on a problem that they were interested in solving and then came together to design an innovation in how the County works to solve it. The private sector funds the catalytic investments leveraging County systems changes. Joint Initiatives typically came to the Center through its partners. Either the County identified a problem that it was having difficulty solving on its own, or an innovation that it sought and wanted support in achieving, or a private sector partner identified opportunities that it was seeing in the community where the County could do more. In both instances, the Center's role was to bring both sectors together to co-create a solution.

In July 2018, two years into the three- year pilot, the LA County Chief Executive Office (CEO) issued a report assessing the Center's work. This assessment included a comprehensive review of the Center's publications, financial reports and reports to Center stakeholders as well as interviews with Center staff and a facilitated focus group and discussion with over 50 representatives from philanthropic partners, County departments and public agencies. The CEO reported that participants valued the Center and its positive impact on LA County children and families and that stakeholders from both sectors felt the Center should continue to operate within the County. With this feedback, the CEO report recommended making the Center a permanent part of the County, moving of the Board Directed Priorities, and maintaining the joint funding model with philanthropy through Southern California Grantmakers as the Center's private sector home. The Board of Supervisors unanimously adopted this recommendation on September 18, 2018 by a Motion introduced by Supervisors Hilda L. Solis and Sheila Kuehl.

Center's Strategic Planning Process

The CEO's Report directed the Center to engage in a Strategic Planning Process. The Center, through funding from Blue Shield Foundation of California, secured the services of Lisa Cleri Reale, a longtime Los Angeles based Consultant, to help shepherd the Strategic Planning process and to facilitate the various meetings. In addition, the Center brought in Consultant Sandy Escobedo to map existing initiatives within the County relevant to the Center's work.

To determine what further action should be taken, the Center convened a Strategic Planning Steering Committee (*Steering Committee*) comprised of public and private sector representatives to frame the foundation of the Strategic Plan. In November 2018, the Steering Committee began an inclusive and transparent process engaging in discussions and developing recommendations for a Strategic Plan.

Specifically, the Steering Committee's process involved:

- 13 Steering Committee members representing the County and private philanthropy as well as the Center staff.
- 8 meetings from November 2018 to April 2019 representing more than 27 hours, at which Los Angeles County department staff, foundation staff, and Center staff shared data and information, listened to stakeholder feedback and engaged in discussion related to the Board's directive.
- 2 Consultants including an outside facilitator to manage timing, move agendas and ensure effective participation during each Steering Committee meeting.
- Notes taken at each meeting and distributed to Steering Committee members as well as posted on a central Dropbox site.

The Steering Committee's process was enhanced by the individual skills that members brought to the table as well as the valuable information each shared along with their diligence and passion for being a part of the process and for wanting to improve the lives of Angelinos. All official agendas, notes and other materials presented to the Steering Committee were distributed at meetings and made available on the Dropbox site.

In addition to the substantive process discussed above, Center staff, in conjunction with the Consultant, interviewed over 20 stakeholder members of the County and philanthropic community as well as civic leaders from throughout the County. The Center also engaged the Center for Nonprofit Management to convene key nonprofit leaders who shared their perspectives in both face to face and webinar settings. This Strategic Development Plan incorporates all stakeholder input.

Defining the Center's Scope of Work

A major component of the strategic planning process was determining the contours of the Center's expanded scope of work. In the Center's pilot, it was housed in the Office of Child Protection and limited its purview to that area. The Board Motion directed the Center to expand its scope of work beyond child welfare to include all Board Directed Priorities, defined as follows:

"A Board Directed Priority is the Board's collective response to complex challenges that have adverse impacts on the health, safety, and well-being of County residents and/or its institutions, and which can only be adequately addressed on a regional level and are not being sufficiently addressed through existing County services, programs or other resources. In order to adequately address these challenges, a sustained focus, enhanced collaboration within the County, and stronger partnerships with the private sector are required."

The Board of Supervisors have adopted seven priorities; they are:

- **Child Protection:** Enhancing the County's safety network by adopting and implementing recommendations of the County's Blue Ribbon Commission on Child Protection, including establishing the Office of Child Protection to improve the lives of children and families.
- **Health Integration:** Streamlining and integrating access to high quality and comprehensive health services by integrating the Departments of Health Services (DHS), Mental Health (DMH) and Public Health (DPH).
- **Homelessness:** Responding to and reducing the incidence of homelessness among the County's most vulnerable population, including establishing the Office of Homelessness and approving the Homelessness Initiatives' 51 strategies to confront the issues surrounding homelessness.
- **Justice Reform:** Diverting individuals from County jails to supportive services, reducing the incidence of jail violence, and increasing transparency and accountability of the Sheriff's Department.
- **Environmental Health Oversight and Monitoring:** Strengthening environmental monitoring and oversight, empowering communities, improving regulatory enforcement, and reducing toxic emissions.
- **Immigration:** Protecting and advancing the well-being of County Immigrant residents by establishing the Office of Immigrant Affairs.
- **Sustainability:** Provides an aspirational strategic vision (*OurCountyPlan*) for making Los Angeles County a healthier, more livable, economically stronger, more equitable, and more resilient sustainable region.

The Center was directed to work in each of these areas, but because of its small size, it was also directed to find a “common thread” that would allow it to focus its efforts. A very robust dialogue ensued over several Steering Committee meetings and with many stakeholders about what this “common thread” should be. Again and again, both sectors, at all levels, came back to two core principles.

First, that children, youth, and families should remain a focus. The Center’s work started there and so maintaining a focus on children, youth and families but expanding beyond the child welfare space felt natural, organic, and impactful. It allowed the Center to build on existing relationships, knowledge, and projects. A focus on children, youth, and families also made sense because partners in both sectors were engaging in innovative and new work around children and families. Finally, stakeholders felt that the Center has a unique role to play in giving voice to children’s needs, which stakeholders felt were too often unheard. Center stakeholders recognized that this focus would, by definition, leave out single adults. However, they determined that, at a future point, as the Center evolves, the scope could be expanded further.

The second core principle that came up repeatedly is that an equity lens should guide the Center’s work. This will allow the Center to focus its efforts on those who have been left behind, those facing the greatest barriers, those most in need of support. It would allow for targeted universalism, an opportunity to take universal goals and target our efforts where they are needed most. Many partners, in both sectors, have made equity an explicit and intentional approach to their work. This makes sense. Various forms of discrimination – sexism, racism, LGBTQ discrimination, and disability discrimination, just to name a few – plague us. As the Advancement Project states in its seminal Race Counts Project, “As the state’s racial makeup and needs have completely transformed over the past 40 years, many of our public institutions and policies remain stuck in the past. Despite our state’s reputation as the “Golden State”, generations of low-income communities of color have long been excluded from California’s promise. But California has a long history of reinventing itself to meet the moment. We are, once again, at a critical juncture between retreating from or seizing our mantle as America’s future.” As the Race Counts study demonstrates in stark terms, Los Angeles County has a long way to go in rectifying historical inequities. Our partners want to see the Center be a part of that effort.

Stakeholders wanted the Center to be clear about what it meant by equity and landed on the following definition adapted from PolicyLink:

EQUITY: providing access and opportunity as well as identifying and eliminating barriers that prevent just and fair inclusion into a society in which all can participate, prosper and reach their full potential.

The Center’s Focus Area

The Center will move forward in its next phase addressing all seven of the Board Directed priorities with a focus on **children, youth and families using an equity lens to guide our work.**



Appendix II OPERATIONS MANUAL

This “Operations Manual” outlines the mechanics of how the Center will work over the next three years and how it will utilize its valued partners.

How We Will Achieve Our Goals

Support High-Priority Cross-Sector Collaborations with the guidance of an Advisory Council and the Use of an Opportunity Filter.

Stakeholders have a sense that the Center has only begun to scratch the surface of change and that to achieve its potential; it needs to deepen the engagement of its partners and focus its efforts on high-priority deeply impactful initiatives. We will work closely with each of our partners to understand their priorities and then employ an Opportunity Filter and the guidance of an Advisory Council to help us determine what initiatives to take on.

Advisory Council

We will be guided by an Advisory Council of six rotating philanthropic partners along with the President and CEO of Southern California Grantmakers and a representative of the County’s Chief Executive Office. The Council is intentionally intimate so that it can be nimble. It will meet three times a year and be available for consultation and advice in between meetings. The Council will approve the Center’s private sector Core Operations budget and provide guidance and feedback for the Center Director particularly with regard to which potential initiatives rise to the level of a Center project. This group will not be involved with the day-to-day operations but will participate in high-level decision making and serve as a buffer for Center staff for the more difficult challenges that will naturally arise during the Center’s operation as well as assist in peer-to-peer fundraising.

Opportunity Filter

The model of reimagined activities described above, along with the expanded scope that now includes seven Board priorities, requires a guide to help manage requests. Stakeholders landed on an “Opportunity Filter.” It consists of a series of six concise questions designed to elicit the potential impact of a given Opportunity. The questions are focused on key items like whether or not the request has significant support, if the opportunity will result in measureable outcomes and whether there is sufficient capacity. The Advisory Council would help guide the Center staff in determining whether an opportunity meets all six criteria.

The criteria for considering an opportunity are as follows:

1. Does it advance a Board Directed priority?
2. Would its success result in measurably improved outcomes for children, youth, and families and does it address inequity and advance justice?
3. Would it create innovative and significantly impactful systems, policy, or practice change?
4. Is it one of the highest priorities for County executives such that they are willing to commit to sustainably supporting the innovation?
5. Is it one of the highest priorities for partners in philanthropy such that they are willing to invest social capital as well as significant resources?
6. Does the Center have the capacity to move forward with this request?

Fostering a Culture of Collaboration

As the Center moves to the Chief Executive Office, becomes more well known, and expands its scope, the demand for its engagement will undoubtedly increase. This Plan sets out a model and criteria by which the Center and its stakeholders can spur more collaboration as well as navigate the numerous requests for support.

This plan sets out a reimagined scope of “business services” designed to enhance collaboration particularly with those who are already deeply engaged with the issues. These services will also assist in changing the culture and increasing collaboration between the sectors as well as within the County itself.

To achieve the goal of spurring greater collaboration and meeting increased demand, this Plan proposes broadening the Center’s activities. In its pilot phase, the Center had primarily devoted its efforts to building Joint Initiatives. Convenings and connecting was a secondary activity. As the Center moves into its next phase, Stakeholders want to see the Center do more in the way of space-making, intentional culture change and relationship building between the sectors. They want not just an expanded scope; they also want to see the Center reimagine its work to include intentional relationship building and education between the sectors.

Specifically, stakeholders want to see the Center expand beyond simply building Joint Initiatives into more intentional culture change. They suggested expanding the repertoire of “business services” to include activities such as educating the private sector about the County and vice versa, providing more spaces for representatives of the sectors to meet each other, educating the private sector about the County and vice versa, providing introductions and advice about connecting and, of course, continuing to build select Joint Initiatives.

This expansion of activities will actually better enable the Center to meet the charge of the increased scope because it will create alternative, less labor-intensive paths, to spur collaboration. Under this model, and as explained in more detail below, Center staff will be quite selective and focused in the work that they undertake and on which they spend significant time.

Embedded in this set of activities is the concept that the Center does not need to be part of every partnership. It cannot be nor should it be. In addition, the Center has not been, and will not be, a gatekeeper. Rather, it will, through this expanded set of activities, help to spur further collaborations that do not require direct and continuous Center involvement. This will then enable the Center staff to focus its time and efforts on Joint Initiatives that have potential for deeper impact and meaningful systems change while remaining nimble and moving quickly.

How We Will do This Work

The Center will do its work through its core Center Staff members, as-needed consultants funded through philanthropy, and the backbone support from Southern California Grantmakers. In its pilot phase, the Center operated with two core Center Staff members who were jointly supported by the County and the private sector and a small cadre of part-time consultants funded through the private sector. Both the County and philanthropy have committed additional resources for the next phase of the Center’s work.

The County has significantly increased its support in this next phase. It is fully funding three Center staff members housed in the Chief Executive Office. The County also provides infrastructure and support through equipment and office space. It includes the Center in relevant support structures and meetings.

Philanthropy has likewise increased its level of support, which is key to the Center’s ability to expand its scope and deepen its impact. This support allows Southern California Grantmakers to provide increased backbone support for the Center through providing high-level strategic advice and connections, submitting grant proposals and reports, providing logistical and scheduling assistance with convenings, accounting support, and other administrative tasks. Philanthropic funding also allows the Center to engage additional as-needed consultants to support initiatives and priority areas. It will also allow the Center to engage communications and evaluation consultants. Philanthropic funding will allow the Center to more actively engage and convene its partners to build relationships with each other as well as engage and support community. Finally, philanthropic funding will allow the Center the creative and nimble capital for small initiatives that are an essential part of the Center’s reimagined work.

This expanded capacity from the County and philanthropy will be augmented by the following strategies.

Partner with Existing Efforts

The Center will work in partnership, as it did in its initial phase, with existing efforts. Los Angeles County is fortunate to have existing tables of public-private partnerships in some of the spaces in which the Center has been working and where the Center's expanded scope will take it. In the Center's pilot phase, it was invited to co-convene alongside and partners with existing tables bringing a new and different dynamic to these tables. Specifically, in the Center's first three years, it partnered with:

- **Home for Good Funders Collaborative** – *Transition Age Youth Housing*
- **Partnership for Early Childhood Investment** – *Prevention work*
- **Liberty Hill** – *Youth Diversion and Development*
- **LANsync** – *Connecting County to federal and state grant opportunities*
- **Fostering Together Network** – *Recruiting and Retaining Resource Families*
- **SCG Funder Groups** on *Juvenile Justice, Child Welfare and others*

In addition, to the above efforts, the Center was also invited to participate in an exciting new initiative, **Bold Vision 2028**. This is a multi-sector effort to build a 10-year plus initiative that is meant to fundamentally and positively improve the lives of a generation of children and youth in Los Angeles County by 2028. It seeks to create a just, more equitable future for all kids, regardless of their race or where they live. This initiative is bringing together public and private partners from across the County. The Center is excited to be a part of the work and envisions tremendous synergies.

The Center also began a partnership in its pilot phase with the **Quality and Productivity Commission**. We supported partnerships that received funding through the Commission thus helping to leverage County dollars invested by the Commission. We will continue that partnership in the next phase of our work.

Similarly, we have begun working more with the newly formed **Arts Department**. Arts is cross-cutting and a healing modality that undergirds the transformations we seek. We will continue to nurture that connection. We will also continue to work with the **Office of Child Protection** as a key partner in child protection efforts. We have been and will continue to work closely with the **Los Angeles County Office of Education**, and its foundation along with the **Los Angeles County Public Library** and its foundation. We did work in the pilot with the **Department of Parks and Recreation** and will continue to seek partnerships there. We are also aware of the many related efforts happening in our cities and our school districts and will seek ways to partner with these entities where our initiatives align.

Center Ambassadors and Strategic Liaisons

As referenced above, stakeholders recognized that the Center, by its very definition, is composed of partner agencies and foundations with representatives who can support the Center through their time and expertise. In addition to the senior-level partners who will comprise the Advisory Council, there are many other partners whose staff can assist in two additional ways: as Center Ambassadors or as Strategic Liaisons. These roles provide partners an additional opportunity to engage and support the Center's mission.

Center Ambassadors

A Center Ambassador is someone who will be the eyes and ears for the Center and sometimes its voice. Many of the Center's funding partners are already sitting at various tables across the County and raising the visibility of the Center during conversations and dialogues. Several of the Steering Committee members have advocated for the Center in this way and they endorsed the establishment of a Center Ambassadors program. Center staff would provide the Ambassadors with an orientation and would conduct regular teleconference check-ins with them as a group both to update them on the work of the Center and, even more importantly, to hear updates from them about what is happening in their public and private spaces. This fills an important need for the Center in that one of its values has been as a connector. Center staff was able to play that role when it just had one area of focus. With seven areas of focus, Center staff needs help in continually understanding the landscape impacting their work and the Center and its current partners are a natural resource for this. The initial cohort of Ambassadors will be comprised of current Steering Committee members who have expressed interest in remaining engaged with the Center's work.

Strategic Liaisons

A Strategic Liaison is someone who will assist the Center in building Joint Initiatives. They would be staff members of County Departments or foundations who would be allowed to support the Center's work. These Strategic Liaisons would roll up their sleeves to help develop proposals, bring together convenings and work at connecting partners. The role of these Liaisons will evolve organically depending on need and each Liaison's capacity.

We would not need to seek any additional funding for these Strategic Liaisons as they would continue to be employed by their Department or foundation. This model engages our partners more effectively and has the added benefit of increasing the number of individuals who gain deeper understanding of another sector, thus impacting a culture shift. It also has the added benefit of substantive and valuable professional development for those who participate.

The plan is to develop a set of specific roles and responsibilities for the Liaisons and ensure that they are trained and oriented to feel comfortable in carrying out the duties. The Liaisons would convene regularly as part of the Center's team. This will provide a space for collective wisdom across the Center's work. Having County and foundation employees serve as Liaisons increases long-term engagement among stakeholders. Liaisons will also alleviate the Center's capacity challenges by providing another level of coverage.

Community Input

The Center did not formally engage with the non-profit community or community directly in its pilot phase. Stakeholders believed that community engagement is essential to deepening the Center's impact in its next phase. This thinking is informed by the feedback received from focus groups run by the Center for Nonprofit Management during the Strategic Planning process. This thinking is also aligned with the belief of many stakeholders that listening to community and community-based organizations (CBOs) is a critical step toward having impact.

The Center is fortunate to have multiple paths through which it can achieve this engagement. Many of its partners are doing deep work in this area and the Center can benefit and learn from these efforts. It will seek to work with its partners to be a part of their community engagement efforts. In addition, the Center will convene a group of CBO leaders as a non-profit sounding board to provide their unique insights about the issues and initiatives on which the Center is working.

Communications Strategy

Without exception, all of the stakeholders interviewed as well as the Center staff, agree that communication should be stronger moving forward. In some cases, stakeholders felt that they were not aware of the Center's current work and outcomes. In other circles, the Center remains a best-kept secret and even among its supporters, there is room to share more success stories. It was determined that a bifurcated and staggered communications strategy, targeting both internal and external stakeholders, should be implemented. Ultimately stakeholders believed that a communications consultant should be engaged to further develop this plan and to implement it.

Metrics to Determine Success

The Center will develop a family of measures to evaluate its work. They will include:

- **Process Measures** to allow the Center to understand the activity it supports. Measurements will include the number of partners, partnerships, and funding co-invested as well as trainings and technical assistance provided.
- **Outcome Measures** to allow the Center to understand the impacts of the initiatives its partners support. Measurements will include, wherever possible, the outcomes for real people from the joint initiatives supported. We will also seek to measure policy, practice and systems changes.
- **Population-Level Measures** to allow the Center to stay focused on the North Star of better well-being across the County. Here the Center will work with Bold Vision 2028, the CEO's Strategic Integration Branch's measurement of the County's Strategic Plan, and other existing population-level measurements in the public and private sector relevant to our focus.



While the Strategic Planning process has begun a robust set of metrics to measure the Center's success in achieving outcomes, the Steering Committee was also impressed with the evaluations shared by Michigan's Office of Foundation Liaison. Michigan's Office partners with a University to regularly schedule a formal evaluation every few years to assess its work and implement any necessary course corrections. Not only have their evaluations helped them determine their collective impact but they have also identified opportunities for improvement and barriers to success. Lastly, all stakeholders and the Steering Committee acknowledged that patience is key and that no substantive outcomes will be measured overnight. This will be a long-term investment and will require outside evaluators – a necessary but additional expense for the Center's operating budget.

Conclusion

During its pilot years, the Center for Strategic Partnerships validated its worth to the community and was acknowledged as a great success – leaving its stakeholders with a desire to see it continue and expand its work. The Strategic Planning process proved to be a robust and dynamic exercise. It provided Center staff a unique opportunity to engage a dynamic and skilled group of stakeholders, step back and assess its previous accomplishments, determine its strengths, where there are gaps and also dream of the future.

Starting with an expanded and aggressive scope of work, the Center has created a Plan that is aspirational but also feasible with the right set of resources, strategic thinking and patience. The Center will implement new criteria and screening mechanisms to determine where to expend its resources. It will create specific individual and systems wide metrics to determine future success. It will engage its partners in a more creative way and will communicate to its internal and external stakeholders with a more dynamic communications plan. It will develop creative methods to enhance its capacity and assist its dedicated and passionate staff. And it will implement all of this thoughtfully and strategically – prioritizing its work over the next three years with an eye toward outcomes and systems changes but not rushing the delicate balance of its work.

Focusing on children, youth and families using an equity lens to guide our work, the Center will continue to play a major role to spur collaboration between the sectors. This Plan represents both an expansion of a clearly successful model and a fresh start toward an even stronger and more innovative institution that can help its partners realize their potential for impact.