

READINESS ASSESSMENT

This readiness assessment is designed for a group considering using the collective impact approach to determine if collective impact is the right approach for the social issue, and the extent to which the conditions for success are in place for the initiative to succeed. This tool is most valuable when completed by a group of stakeholders committed to addressing a specific social or environmental issue, and the results and implications are discussed together.

This assessment is comprised of three sections, intended to be discussed in sequence.

1. *Is Collective Impact the appropriate approach for pursuing your goals?*

There are many forms of collaboration, each suited to address different types of social and environmental issues. Collective impact as an approach is appropriate for addressing complex, large scale social and environmental issues at scale. And, because collective impact requires significant investment of time and resources, it is important to determine if the approach makes sense for your work before embarking on the journey.

2. *Do the pre-conditions for Collective Impact success exist?*

In studying and working with organizations interested in doing collective impact work, much of initiatives' success is dependent on have the right conditions and context for the work. Three key elements have emerged as critical pre-conditions: the presence of influential champions, sufficient resources to support the planning process and collective impact infrastructure, and the urgency to address the issue in new and different ways. For practitioners that do not have these pre-conditions in place, we strongly suggest focusing on cultivating these elements before beginning a robust collective impact planning process.

3. *Are the nuts and bolts for collective impact already in place?*

If your group has determined that collective impact is the right collaborative approach to use, and the pre-conditions are in place, we suggest taking stock of the extent to which the following elements are in place to being your work.

1. *Collective Impact is an approach to pursuing your collaborative's goals if ...*

...A core group of partners is committed to making a measurable impact on a specific social or environmental problem

...Making progress addressing this social issue at scale (i.e., across the state / region / city) requires the involvement of nonprofits, philanthropy, the public sector, and the private sector

... Making significant progress against this issue requires systems change, and greater alignment and connection between many organizations

...Successfully making progress requires both scaling effective work across organizations, as well as identifying new innovative solutions

If the answer to the statements above is “yes,” continue on to the next section of the assessment.

If the answer to the statements above is no, consider a different change approach from collective impact. This worksheet has a list of resources on other types of collaboration.

2. *Are the pre-conditions for Collective Impact in place to set your initiative up for success?*

Are there influential champions or catalysts that can bring cross-sector leaders and beneficiaries together and begin a collaborative planning process?

• Yes

• No



The following resources provide helpful guidance for identifying and cultivating champions and catalysts for your work:

- **Channeling Change** article
- Memo on **Cultivating Influential Champions**

Are resources secured (financial, human capital) to support the planning process and potential backbone infrastructure for at least one year, in addition to a long term (5 year) commitment to the issue?

• Yes

• No



Please reference the **Resource Development / Fundraising** items in the Collective Impact Forum Library

Is there urgency for addressing the issue in new and different ways, demonstrated by a frustration with the existing situation by multiple actors including policymakers and funders?

- Yes

- No



Please reference the memo on **Creating Urgency**

As mentioned above, it is critical that the following three pre-conditions for collective impact success are in place before beginning a collective impact initiative.

For practitioners that do not have these pre-conditions in place, we strongly suggest focusing on cultivating these elements before beginning a robust collective impact planning process.

If you have the preconditions for collective impact in place, you can now take stock of the presence of the “nuts and bolts” for collective impact.

3. Are the Nuts and Bolts of Collective Impact Already in Place?

Is there a history and culture of collaboration amongst potential organizations in the collective impact initiative?

- Yes, history / culture of collaboration
- Limited history / culture of collaboration

Is there a neutral convener who has the respect of the stakeholders who must come together to address the issue?

- Already in Place / Committed
- Under consideration, or not yet sure

Is there an existing backbone support structure, or a logical organization identified by multiple key leaders that could effectively take on this role?

- Already in Place / Committed
- Under consideration, or not yet sure

Do relationships exist that will enable engaging a broad, cross-sector group of actors to lead the collective impact initiative?

- Yes / Already engaged
- Currently pursuing, or limited potential

Are stakeholders committed to using data to set the agenda and improve our work over time?

- Yes / Data is available and stakeholders use it to make decisions
- Some or limited use of data

The resources on the Collective Impact Forum’s Getting Started page can help you strengthen the elements above.