

ADVANCING MOBILITY FROM POVERTY

A TOOLKIT FOR HOUSING AND EDUCATION PARTNERSHIPS





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This resource also was informed in part by the thoughtful research of the Urban Institute, including case studies of local housing and education partnerships that are included throughout the text. Urban Institute's research on local partnerships also is reflected in a research brief: **[Aligning Housing and Education: Evidence of Promising Practices and Structural Challenges](#)**, released mid-2020.

For more information about Enterprise Community Partners and this toolkit, please contact:
Alexa Rosenberg, Senior Director of National Initiatives | arosenberg@enterprisecommunity.org
or Lindsay Eilers, Director of Impact Assessment & Evaluation | leilers@enterprisecommunity.org

For more information about StriveTogether, please contact: Colin Groth, Executive Vice President of Strategy and Development | grothc@strivetgether.org

For more information about the Ballmer Group, please contact: Jeff Edmondson, Executive Director of Community Mobilization | jeffe@ballmergroup.com

Design: Aaron Geis

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FOREWORD

As a society, we often try to solve social challenges in silos. All you have to do is look at how our government is organized to see that. Education has its own agency. Housing, the same. So do criminal justice, health, and workforce. Yet, there is growing recognition that these sectors are intertwined. In fact, realizing improved outcomes in any one of these sectors at a scale we would hope for requires thoughtful and sustained collaboration across many of them.

This has never been more apparent as we face two pandemics that have particularly affected housing and education. The first pandemic, COVID-19, has led families to be home for extended periods. With education now taking place at home, the stability, quality, and affordability of housing has never had a more direct impact on how a child can and will perform academically. Common sense, as well as research, tells us that even when a child can safely attend school five days a week, these same factors impact their ability to learn.

The second pandemic, white supremacy and systemic racism, has also highlighted how closely education and housing intersect. Our country's long history of intentional disinvestment in neighborhoods populated primarily by people of color – one of the most blatant examples being redlining – has created barriers to wealth creation through homeownership that puts far too many families one missed paycheck away from eviction. No family, especially those with children, can learn and grow educationally under such toxic stress.

Enterprise Community Partners and StriveTogether have worked together over the last 18 months to support communities as they take on challenges across the education and housing sectors to improve outcomes for children and families in practical yet significant ways. These organizations have learned not just from their previous experience and research, but also from direct technical assistance work with three communities – Dayton, OH; Racine, WI; and Memphis, TN – about what is needed for partners to work together across these sectors in data-driven, intentional ways to improve outcomes at scale.

This toolkit is exactly that: a tool. It will not create change all by itself. It will take partners working together and using this tool to guide their work to achieve real change. Both Enterprise and StriveTogether will use this tool in the communities where they work as a resource to meet them where they are and take the steps needed to improve outcomes at unprecedented scale. We invite you to do the same in your work to improve your community and the lives of those that call it home.

This is just a start, as we hope to partner with more sectors as well. There is no doubt you will find useful examples and resources here to help you show that seemingly intractable challenges across two sectors can indeed be solved. With the backdrop of these pandemics, we should feel a sense of urgency and purpose to take further action. Now more than ever, it is clear that we must stop thinking in silos and start getting to real and sustainable solutions.

Jeff Edmondson

Executive Director of Community Mobilization

Ballmer Group



○ INTRODUCTION

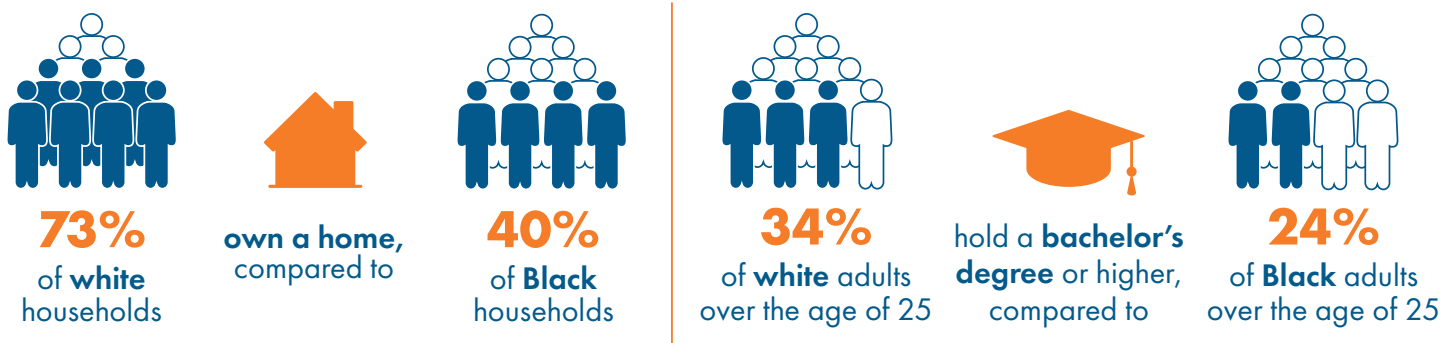




INTRODUCTION

Children and families across the United States experience racial and economic disparities that stem from a complex web of systems designed to perpetuate inequities. High rates of family homelessness, low rates of high school graduation and stagnating incomes all point to systems that fail to serve a large portion of the U.S. population — particularly people of color. Although economic growth has propelled some communities forward, systemic challenges and persistent disparities remain a defining issue for many. Wealth disparities are divided along racial lines, with the average white household earning 10 times more than the average Black household.¹

This racial wealth gap is the direct result of historical injustices and biased policies that are present in numerous systems, including in housing and education. Evidence of these biased systems surrounds us and is readily apparent in the disparate housing and education outcomes experienced by families across the United States. Examples of these disparities are illustrated in the graphic below.²



The stark reality of these disparities has not gone unnoticed. Although both the housing and education sectors are on the front lines of addressing these challenges, much of this work has been done in silos. Collaborative partnerships between these sectors offer a promising pathway for addressing the root causes of generational poverty.

This toolkit highlights case studies of emerging partnerships between housing and education organizations focused on a set of shared outcomes — or shared goals — that enable organizations from both sectors to come together to close disparity gaps and enable economic mobility in their communities. The toolkit offers resources and examples for others looking to engage in similar collaborations.

Defining Economic Mobility

Economic mobility typically is measured in quantifiable or economic terms, such as increases in income, assets or wealth. Although useful for measurement, these terms fail to capture the full context of the disparities and systemic challenges that influence an individual's ability to improve their economic status. The US Partnership on Mobility from Poverty, a partnership funded by the Gates Foundation and supported by the Urban Institute, expanded this definition through its collaborative work in 2018.³

The partnership — composed of leaders in academia, the faith community, philanthropy and the private sector — defined mobility from poverty using three interrelated principles: *economic success*, such as higher income and greater wealth; *power and autonomy*, referring to an individual's sense of control over the trajectory of their lives; and *being valued in community*, or a person's sense of belonging.⁴ Throughout this toolkit, the term "economic mobility" is intended to reflect all three aspects of mobility from poverty.



Source: US Partnership on Mobility from Poverty

“The Partnership’s collective ambition is that all people achieve a reasonable standard of living with the dignity that comes from having power over their lives and being engaged in and valued by their community.”⁵

- US PARTNERSHIP ON MOBILITY FROM POVERTY



A Pathway to Economic Mobility

Housing and education are important foundations for future success that underpin many aspects of mobility from poverty. With stable, well-connected and affordable housing, individuals and families can save money, access needed resources, improve their health, remain rooted in community, and even build wealth and access equity through homeownership. Research demonstrates that an individual's housing stability during childhood directly affects their education experiences and future economic well-being as an adult.⁶ With quality education, children can build confidence, develop interpersonal skills, pursue academic achievement and access opportunities for future growth.

With growing wealth and income inequality, the need to improve economic mobility for households with lower incomes becomes more urgent each year. For both the housing and the education sectors, structural racism, continued disinvestment, and persistent racial and economic disparities often are glaringly evident in urban and rural communities alike. The deliberate physical and economic segregation of people of color, in particular of Black Americans, has created high rates of residential and educational segregation. The resulting concentration of poverty has inhibited neighborhood investment and led to poor quality housing and under-resourced schools.⁷

In the housing sector, disinvestment in minority neighborhoods and discriminatory practices like redlining have been well documented for decades, resulting in an enormous loss of wealth for generations of people of color. In education, the achievement gap, disparate college attainment rates, and unequal school spending remain critical disadvantages and challenges. Nearly half of Black children, at 45 percent, attend high-poverty schools. This is more than five times the rate of white children attending high-poverty schools, at 8 percent, and is only one indication of many in a system that has perpetuated segregation and fails to serve all children and families equitably.⁸

As the housing and education sectors begin to partner and align their work toward economic mobility, it is critical to bring racial equity to the forefront. This toolkit focuses on racial equity as an outcome for families, an approach to systems transformation and a key part of the cross-sector partnership process.



The recognition that stable, affordable housing is needed to achieve good educational outcomes — and that better educational outcomes are needed for improving the life trajectories of low-income children — provides the ideal mission alignment between affordable housing providers and schools.⁹

- KATHERINE O'REGAN
Former Assistant Secretary for Policy Development and Research,
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development



Aligning National Partners to Support Local Solutions

This toolkit emerged from a collaboration among Ballmer Group, Enterprise Community Partners and StriveTogether, driven by a belief in the power of cross-sector partnerships to transform inequitable systems. Cross-sector partnerships are increasingly recognized as a way to go beyond the work of addressing disparities to focus more intentionally on root causes, bringing together stakeholders from different industries, perspectives and backgrounds. Supported by Ballmer Group, Enterprise Community Partners and StriveTogether have worked to bring together housing and education partners at the local level, centered on the goal of advancing economic mobility for households with low incomes.

This toolkit is based on strong evidence and informed by the work of communities exploring and implementing housing and education partnerships (see [Appendix G](#) for more information). This resource reflects the contribution of expertise and research from the Urban Institute, conducted in collaboration with Enterprise, and captured in the following brief: [Aligning Housing and Education: Evidence of Promising Practices and Structural Challenges](#), released in mid-2020. The toolkit also includes lessons from Enterprise's engagement in supporting cross-sector collaborations across the country. The toolkit's approach to partnership and systems transformation is also heavily influenced by the [StriveTogether Theory of Action™](#).



Focusing on one issue alone will never bring about the change we hope to see.¹⁰

- BALLMER GROUP



KEY PARTNERS

- **Ballmer Group** supports efforts to improve economic mobility for children and families in the United States who are disproportionately likely to remain in poverty. Through philanthropy and civic activism, [Ballmer Group](#) supports organizations and initiatives at a regional and national scale.
- **Enterprise Community Partners, Inc. (Enterprise)** is a proven and powerful nonprofit that improves communities and people's lives by making well-designed homes affordable and connected to opportunity. As a social enterprise, [Enterprise](#) brings together the nationwide know-how, policy leadership, partners, donors and investors to multiply the impact of local affordable housing development. Over more than 35 years, Enterprise has created 662,000 homes, invested nearly \$53 billion and touched millions of lives.
- **StriveTogether** is a national movement with a clear purpose: helping every child succeed in school and in life, from cradle to career, regardless of race, ethnicity, ZIP code or circumstance. [StriveTogether](#) partners with nearly 70 communities across the country, providing coaching, resources and rigorous approaches to create opportunities and close gaps in education, housing and more.
- **Urban Institute** is a nonprofit research organization focused on economic and social policy research. [Urban Institute](#) is a trusted source for unbiased, authoritative insights that inform consequential choices about the well-being of people and places in the United States.

Toolkit Overview

Organized into two primary sections, this toolkit is intended as a resource for individuals and organizations seeking to build and advance cross-sector partnerships to accelerate the achievement of shared outcomes. The first section provides background information on the housing and education sectors, including an overview of funding sources, regulation, governance structures and common actors. This section also outlines the housing and education outcomes that Enterprise Community Partners and StriveTogether seek through their work, offering a useful starting point for identifying shared outcomes and aligning work.

The second section of the toolkit is organized around stages of developing and implementing housing and education partnerships focused on shared outcomes. Through Enterprise’s work in providing technical assistance and capacity building for housing and education collaboration, as well as Urban Institute’s related

research, five key stages of partnership emerged as a common trajectory for housing and education partnerships. These stages move from assessing existing conditions to understand local needs to using the power of partnership to advocate for systems change. It is important to note that individuals and organizations may move through these stages in a different order than presented here due to the local context or partnership opportunities.

The following table summarizes the partnership stages and highlights how each can connect to the [StriveTogether Theory of Action™](#), an established framework that shows how youth-focused collaborations can advance through a series of six “gateways” toward systems transformation. The toolkit’s partnership stages complement the theory of action and focus specifically on the steps that housing and education practitioners can undertake to develop and implement a partnership focused on shared outcomes.



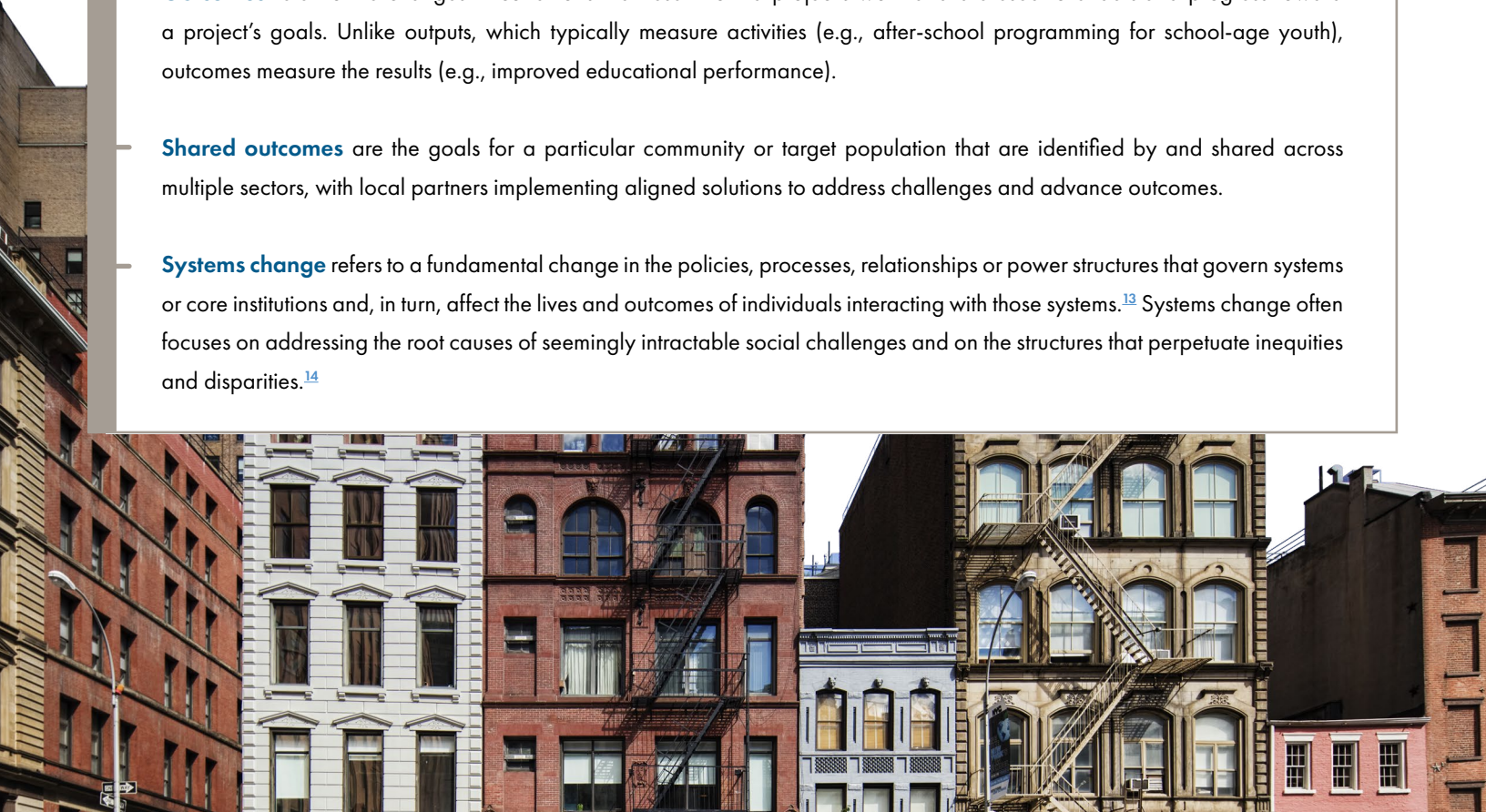


SUMMARY OF PARTNERSHIP STAGES

 <p>Assess Existing Conditions</p>	<p>STAGE 1 focuses on understanding local conditions and identifying community opportunities and barriers, which in turn helps to identify the types of outcomes that organizations might want to prioritize jointly in cross-sector work.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corresponding <i>StriveTogether Theory of Action™</i> Gateway: Exploring
 <p>Identify and Engage Partners</p>	<p>STAGE 2 moves from understanding local conditions to exploring collaboration by identifying and engaging with potential partners to address community opportunities and barriers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corresponding <i>StriveTogether Theory of Action™</i> Gateway: Exploring
 <p>Prioritize and Develop Shared Outcomes</p>	<p>STAGE 3 reflects the process of identifying shared outcomes that serve as a common goal and primary focus for partners in their cross-sector work.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corresponding <i>StriveTogether Theory of Action™</i> Gateway: Exploring or Emerging
 <p>Partner and Implement Cross-Sector Solutions</p>	<p>STAGE 4 outlines the key components necessary to implement cross-sector solutions to make progress toward shared outcomes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corresponding <i>StriveTogether Theory of Action™</i> Gateway: Exploring or Sustaining
 <p>Sustain Partnerships for Systems Change</p>	<p>STAGE 5 emphasizes the need for ongoing resources and commitments to sustain the benefits of cross-sector work and pursue broader systems change.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corresponding <i>StriveTogether Theory of Action™</i> Gateway: Systems Change, Proof Point, or Systems Transformation

KEY TERMS

- **Backbone organizations** serve as facilitators or leaders of work across multiple organizations or sectors in a community. Backbone organizations help align the work taking place, guide vision and strategy, and establish shared measurement, among many other aligned efforts.¹¹
- **Collective impact** refers to initiatives or partnerships that bring organizations together across sectors in a deliberate, structured manner, with the intention of addressing shared goals and creating social change.
- **Economic mobility** typically refers to the ability of an individual or a household to change their economic status over time, resulting in greater financial security. Recent efforts have broadened this definition to include the concepts of power and autonomy, as well as being valued in community.¹²
- **Equity** refers to the absence of differences or unjust treatment between groups or communities. Groups may be differentiated by such factors as socioeconomics, race or ethnicity, and geography. Unlike equality, which aims to treat all groups the same, equity, particularly racial equity, seeks to address past injustices and repair systems that have resulted in inequitable outcomes.
- **Gateways** refer to stages in the **StriveTogether Theory of Action™** framework. Gateways identify the benchmarks needed to help communities build and sustain “cradle to career” civic infrastructure, moving from exploring partnership to transforming systems and improving economic mobility.
- **Outcomes** refer to the changes in conditions that result from a project’s work and are used to understand progress toward a project’s goals. Unlike outputs, which typically measure activities (e.g., after-school programming for school-age youth), outcomes measure the results (e.g., improved educational performance).
- **Shared outcomes** are the goals for a particular community or target population that are identified by and shared across multiple sectors, with local partners implementing aligned solutions to address challenges and advance outcomes.
- **Systems change** refers to a fundamental change in the policies, processes, relationships or power structures that govern systems or core institutions and, in turn, affect the lives and outcomes of individuals interacting with those systems.¹³ Systems change often focuses on addressing the root causes of seemingly intractable social challenges and on the structures that perpetuate inequities and disparities.¹⁴



HOUSING AND EDUCATION OVERVIEW





UNDERSTANDING THE HOUSING AND EDUCATION SECTORS

Both the housing and education sectors can offer an important foundation for future success for individuals and families. Although the two sectors operate very differently to provide supports and services, they often share common goals. Stakeholders in both sectors have identified a lack of understanding of each sector’s fundamental characteristics as a key barrier to collaboration. To address this barrier, housing and education 101s are included in the appendices and summarized in the following pages as a reference on each sector’s constituencies, motivations and limitations.

Public vs. Private Goods

Public education is free and compulsory for most minors across the United States. While school quality varies significantly, often due to differing state standards and disparities in local tax revenue and budget priorities, all children are guaranteed education through the public school system. In contrast, housing is treated as a market-based commodity without guarantee, leaving hundreds of thousands of households to experience homelessness each year.

Because housing is not treated as a right, housing access and quality are heavily influenced by policy and local market conditions. As a result, the gap between what some households can afford and the housing available is significant. Unsurprisingly, this can result in families being forced into homelessness or inadequate housing conditions. Although some publicly funded housing assistance is available, these programs serve only 23 percent of families who are income qualified, leaving more than 17 million renters with low incomes to navigate the private housing market without needed housing support.¹⁵

Funding and Regulation

Funding and regulation for the public education system are established mainly at the state level, leaving the federal government and school districts with a discrete set of funding and decision-making responsibilities. The housing sector, by comparison, is greatly decentralized. Affordable housing may be funded, owned or operated by governmental entities, private companies, investors, nonprofits or some combination (e.g., public-private joint ventures), all with distinct regulations, oversight and funding mechanisms.

Geography and Outcomes

Both the housing and education sectors are affected by, and contribute to, inequities across and between neighborhoods and districts. Vast differences in quality and access typically are linked directly to the wealth and racial demographics of a given area — evidence of systems that can perpetuate disparities rather than offer mobility from poverty. This variation means that outcomes for children and families may be disparate from one school or neighborhood to the next, even within the same city or region.

Overview of the Housing and Education Sectors

The following table provides an overview of key aspects of the housing and education sectors. Additional information is included in [Appendix A](#), Housing 101, and [Appendix B](#), Education 101.

KEY QUESTIONS	AFFORDABLE HOUSING	PUBLIC EDUCATION
<p>How is this sector defined?</p>	<p>Affordable housing refers to housing that costs no more than 30 percent of a household’s income. Affordable housing may be funded by local, state or federal programs, or it may be unsubsidized but available at an affordable price from private landlords in the housing market.</p> <p>Affordable housing is provided by a combination of stakeholders, including nonprofit and mission-driven actors that may target affordability for lower-income households, as well as public-sector actors who often focus on filling gaps left by private market activity.</p> <p>Public housing, one of the most well-known housing programs, is just one of many types of affordable housing programs offered to low-income households.</p>	<p>Public education is offered to children free of charge by the government and is considered compulsory across the United States. Schools providing taxpayer-funded education include public, magnet, charter and virtual schools.</p> <p>Public education typically is offered to students in prekindergarten through 12th grade, although the starting age for public education varies across localities.</p> <p>Although education begins formally with elementary school, learning actually begins with parents and caregivers and continues with child care, nursery school or preschool. A range of private and publicly funded programs offer services for families with children who are under the age of 5 or who have not entered prekindergarten or kindergarten.</p>
<p>Whom does this sector serve?</p>	<p>Affordable housing providers often focus on households with the greatest need and lowest incomes. Although millions of very low-income households spend more than one-third of their income on housing, just under one-quarter of very low-income renter households that are eligible for federal rental assistance actually receive it.</p>	<p>Public education is available to all children across the country. In 2016, more than 50 million students attended nearly 100,000 public elementary and secondary schools across the United States. Although public education is available nationwide, school quality varies greatly by geography.</p>
<p>How is this work funded?</p>	<p>A number of federal, state and local programs support the creation or operation of affordable housing, including public housing, housing choice vouchers, project-based rental assistance and the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit.</p> <p>Often referred to as subsidized housing, these programs vary significantly — some operate publicly owned units, others provide financial assistance directly to qualifying tenants or building owners, while others provide tax credits and other financing to support the construction or rehabilitation of affordable units.</p>	<p>Education funding depends on how the federal, state and local funding streams of schools interact with other policies and the demographics of the state and district.</p> <p>States typically expect local jurisdictions to generate revenues for public schools through property or income taxes. Many smaller or historically impoverished localities have limited tax bases to generate school revenue. As a result, this funding structure can create significant funding disparities for public education within and across regions, often exacerbating existing inequities.</p>

KEY QUESTIONS

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

PUBLIC EDUCATION

How does access to housing relate to education, and vice versa?

Where you live often dictates where you go to school. Decades of discriminatory government policies have led to racially segregated neighborhoods and cities, greatly limiting the ability of people of color to access high-quality public education. By contrast, higher performing, well-resourced schools typically are located in higher cost neighborhoods with concentrations of white residents.

While school enrollment policies vary by school district, many are based entirely on a student's place of residence. As school funding often is driven in part by the local tax base, a school's geography typically is a strong determinant of its access to resources. As such, school funding policies can further perpetuate existing disparities that stem from racial and economic segregation by neighborhood.

What is the impact of this sector on families?

Affordable housing can have a significant impact on residents' physical and mental well-being, financial and household stability, and employment opportunities. Housing assistance has been proven to reduce homelessness, housing instability and overcrowding, thus leading to other positive outcomes.

Children in families that lack stable, affordable housing have been shown to perform less well in school and have limited access to enrichment activities for out-of-school time, leaving them at a disadvantage that ultimately affects their ability to achieve economic mobility from poverty.

Education funding and access to quality education are directly related to positive outcomes for children, beginning with early childhood education through high school and post-secondary preparation. For example, for younger learners, early childhood education is associated with kindergarten readiness and later school success. For secondary students, those who complete high school are more likely to work full-time year-round and earn more than students who do not complete high school.

Overall, children in families without access to quality education have been shown to have fewer employment and wage-earning opportunities later in life, greatly limiting their economic mobility from poverty.

Leveraging Housing and Early Learning to Create Opportunity

Enterprise Community Partners works closely with nonprofit partners and affordable housing developers across the country, seeking ways to solve affordable housing challenges and address a range of community needs, including strengthening access to education.

In 2017, Enterprise launched the Home & Hope initiative in the Pacific Northwest to address the region's critical shortages of affordable housing and early learning centers. The Home & Hope initiative convened partners across sectors to outline the need for co-locating early learning centers and affordable housing and facilitated partnerships to create a pipeline of development projects that meet these needs. The initiative worked with public-sector partners to identify public and tax-exempt sites that could be designated for these development projects. This initiative also led to the creation of state and county grant programs to ensure funding for the new early learning centers, building in sustainability for the partnership over time.

To learn more about the Home & Hope initiative, please view the following report on the Enterprise website:

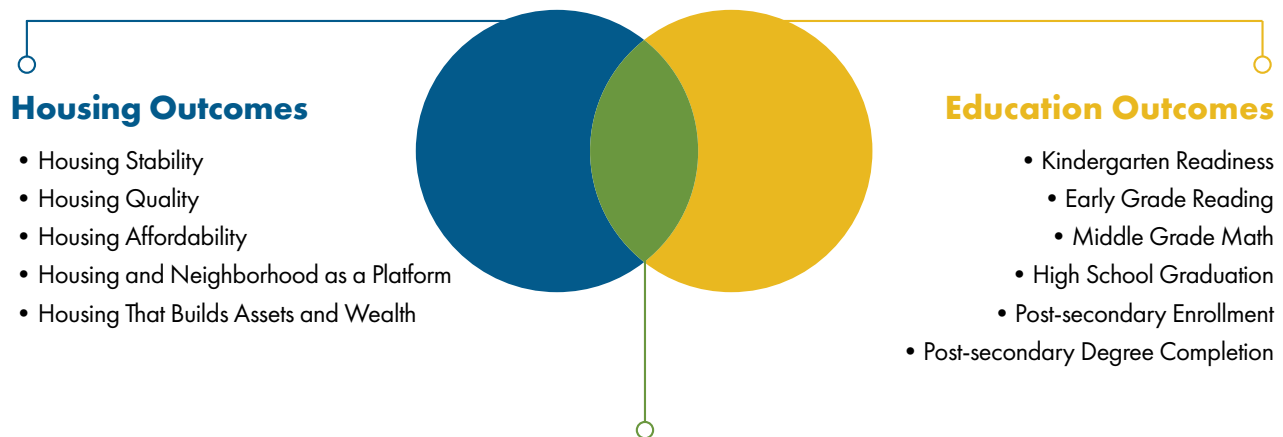
[Home & Hope: Creating Early Learning and Affordable Housing Together.](#)



Exploring Housing & Education Outcomes



Enterprise and StriveTogether use housing and education outcomes to help guide and measure the impact of our work. While not exhaustive, the outcomes below are grounded in evidence and offer a starting point for identifying shared outcomes in cross-sector work. The following pages summarize each outcome in brief and a full description of the housing and education outcomes is included in Appendices C and D.



Shared Housing and Education Outcomes

Each community's shared outcomes will reflect its unique assets, challenges and goals. This toolkit provides a framework to help communities identify and develop the shared outcomes that best serve their cross-sector goals, using the above outcomes as a starting point. Examples of shared outcomes include the following:

- Kindergarten readiness for children living in subsidized housing
- Stable housing for students experiencing homelessness or near homelessness
- Increased high school graduation rates for students living in public housing
- Increased attendance and education performance for children living in poor-quality housing

Housing Outcomes

The housing outcomes described below reflect the combined research and experience of Enterprise and the Urban Institute and outline the ways in which housing and related neighborhood factors impact outcomes for individuals and families. While the “cradle-to-career” education outcomes in the next section reflect a linear progression in educational attainment during an individual’s life, housing outcomes are interconnected but not necessarily chronological.

HOUSING OUTCOMES	INDICATORS	EXAMPLE METRICS
Housing Stability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in Homelessness • Multiyear Stability • Reduction in Evictions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of people who are homeless on a single night (HUD Point-in-Time counts) • Change of address in student school records (Local educational agency, school or district) • Eviction rates (Eviction Lab)
Housing Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to safe and healthy housing • Reduced exposure to environmental toxins 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of families living in deeply distressed or substandard housing (American Housing Survey) • Proximity to environmental hazards (Environmental Health Hazard Index)
Housing Affordability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of cost burden • Reduced crowding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number and percentage of families spending more than 50% of their income on housing (American Community Survey) • The number and percentage of families living in overcrowded units (American Community Survey)
Housing and Neighborhood as a Platform	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to neighborhood amenities and resources • Neighborhood safety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) retailers (SNAP Retail Locator) • Number of violent crime incidents within a half mile of a student’s home (Uniform Crime Reporting Statistics)
Housing That Builds Assets and Wealth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to home equity • Credit and asset building 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homeownership by race/ethnicity (American Community Survey)



HOUSING OUTCOME: HOUSING STABILITY

Housing stability refers to the ability of residents to live in their homes as long as they choose, without being forced to move due to cost, evictions or other unwanted reasons. Specific indicators are included below.

Indicator: REDUCTION IN HOMELESSNESS refers to an individual's or household's ability to remain stably housed, with a "fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence."¹⁶ The experience of homelessness is challenging to endure and can result in negative long-term outcomes, particularly for children and youth.

Example Metric: Number of people who are homeless on a single night within a particular geographic area | Source: [HUD Point in Time counts](#)

Indicator: MULTIYEAR STABILITY refers to an individual's or family's ability to live in their home as long as they choose, without being forced to move due to cost, evictions or other unwanted reasons. Stability over time is particularly important for children, because frequent moves can have detrimental impacts on health, education, employment and overall well-being.

Example Metric: Student turnover within a particular school or district | Source: Local educational agency, school or district

Indicator: REDUCTION IN EVICTIONS indicates fewer involuntary moves that are initiated when a landlord expels renters from a property, whether due to lack of payment, a landlord's decision to terminate a lease or a renter's violation of rental agreements. Low-income families paying more than half their income toward housing are particularly vulnerable to evictions and the resulting housing instability.

Example Metric: Eviction rates | Source: [Eviction Lab](#)

HOUSING OUTCOME: HOUSING QUALITY

Housing quality that protects and promotes one's health is free of structural issues and hazards, including severe temperatures and lack of insulation, pests, exposed wiring, mold or mildew, and missing safety features (e.g., fire extinguishers and carbon monoxide detectors). Specific indicators are included below.

Indicator: ACCESS TO SAFE AND HEALTHY HOUSING refers to housing that helps to protect and promote a family's health and is free of major defects. For children, poor housing quality has been linked to worse health outcomes, which, in turn, affect physical and mental development, school attendance, academic performance, and long-term educational outcomes.

Example Metric: Number of families living in deeply distressed or substandard housing | Source: [American Housing Survey](#)

Indicator: REDUCED EXPOSURE TO ENVIRONMENTAL TOXINS refers to mitigating exposure to such toxins as radon, lead and air pollution, whether within one's home or in the surrounding neighborhood. Segregated neighborhoods with unequal access to resources often experience greater exposure to hazards, resulting in disparate outcomes for children and families of color.

Example Metric: Social vulnerability to environmental hazards | Source: [Enterprise OPPORTUNITY360 Community Dashboard](#)

HOUSING OUTCOME: HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

Housing affordability is defined as paying no more than 30 percent of one's income toward housing costs each month, freeing up resources for other household needs. Specific indicators are included below.

Indicator: LACK OF COST BURDEN signifies that households are spending no more than 30 percent of their income on housing. Households experiencing a housing cost burden often have to reduce spending in other areas, ultimately affecting their health, educational attainment, professional advancement and overall economic well-being.¹⁷

Example Metric: The percentage of families spending more than 30 percent of their income on rent, disaggregated by race | Source: [Enterprise OPPORTUNITY 360 Community Dashboard](#)

Indicator: REDUCED CROWDING often is related to the availability of affordable housing and refers to having fewer than 1.5 persons per room living in a home,¹⁸ although definitions may vary by culture or preference. Crowded living conditions can impact physical and mental health, educational performance and overall long-term economic success.

Example Metric: The percentage of families living in overcrowded homes | Source: [Enterprise OPPORTUNITY360 Community Dashboard](#)

HOUSING OUTCOME: HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOODS AS A PLATFORM

Housing and neighborhoods as a platform recognizes the unique impact of the location of a person's housing on their access to quality schools, jobs and other benefits. Specific indicators are included below.

Indicator: ACCESS TO NEIGHBORHOOD AMENITIES AND RESOURCES includes access to education, transportation, health care and quality jobs, among many other factors. Many high-poverty neighborhoods lack these amenities and resources, limiting access to opportunity and resulting in negative long-term outcomes, particularly for children.

Example Metric: Access to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) retailers | Source: [SNAP Retail Locator](#)

Indicator: NEIGHBORHOOD SAFETY refers to neighborhoods with low levels of crime, violence and other threats to physical security, such as unsafe sidewalks or streets, that can have a strong influence on resident outcomes. Families with low incomes and few housing options may be confined to segregated, unsafe neighborhoods and can suffer negative outcomes as a result.

Example Metric: The number of violent crime incidents within a half mile of an individual's home | Source: [Uniform Crime Reporting Statistics](#) or locally available crime data

HOUSING OUTCOME: HOUSING THAT BUILDS ASSETS AND WEALTH

Housing that builds assets and wealth contributes to household members' ability to deploy resources to meet their needs and achieve their goals (e.g., to deal with predictable and unexpected repairs or pursue educational or entrepreneurial goals). Specific indicators are included below.

Indicator: ACCESS TO HOME EQUITY refers to the ability to build equity through homeownership; through stable, affordable loan products or cooperative ownership agreements; and through home value appreciation over time. Although the legacies of racial discrimination and neighborhood segregation have resulted in unequal access to home equity, access to home equity can be a powerful contributor to long-term economic mobility and security.

Example Metric: Homeownership by race/ethnicity | Source: [Enterprise OPPORTUNITY360 Community Dashboard](#)

Indicator: CREDIT AND ASSET BUILDING fosters financial security and resiliency for families, allowing them to better manage expected or unexpected expenses through bolstered savings and to access debt financing at lower costs. This financial stability can enable families to put money toward daily needs or longer-term investments, such as education, improving long-term outcomes for children.

Example Metric: Household wealth | Source: [Survey of Consumer Finances, Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System](#)



Education Outcomes

The education outcomes presented here were developed by StriveTogether. The seven outcomes described below are organized along a progression from “cradle-to-career,” within a single framework for educational achievement over an individual’s life. Notably, this progression differs from the interconnected but non-linear housing outcomes in the previous section. Other education outcomes may measure educational systems more broadly, focused on school funding and resources, teacher preparation and effectiveness, or school buildings and infrastructure.

EDUCATION FRAMEWORK	OUTCOMES	EXAMPLE METRICS
Cradle-to-Career Achievement	• Kindergarten Readiness	• Kindergarten readiness assessments (Local education agency, school or district)
	• Early Grade Reading	• Third-grade reading assessments (Local education agency, school or district)
	• Middle Grade Math	• Sixth-grade state assessments (Local education agency, school or district)
	• High School Graduation	• Graduation rate (Local education agency, school or district)
	• Post-secondary Enrollment	• Enrollment in a four-year college or university within 16 months of graduation (Local education agency, school or district)
	• Post-secondary Degree Completion	• Four-year completion rate at four-year colleges and universities (National Student Clearinghouse and other privately operated post-secondary tracking services)
	• Employment	• Employment rate (Enterprise OPPORTUNITY360 Community Dashboard)

EDUCATION OUTCOMES: CRADLE-TO-CAREER ACHIEVEMENT

The cradle-to-career framework represents the roadmap of a student’s journey through educational achievement to successful employment, with each outcome building on the previous outcome.

Outcome: KINDERGARTEN READINESS affects future academic achievement and life success. Children develop fundamental skills in early childhood that build strong foundations for reading, counting and social interactions. Studies show that as a child’s kindergarten readiness scores improve, third-grade reading and math scores rise accordingly.

Example Metric: Pre-K Enrollment | **Source:** Local education agency, school or district

Outcome: EARLY GRADE READING and overall literacy are critical to a child's academic success. Children in the early grades begin to transition from learning to read to reading to learn. Reading at grade level is one of the strongest predictors of later success in school, with data showing the link between disparities in literacy during the early grades and persistent achievement gaps.

Example Metric: Performance on third-grade reading state assessments | Source: Local education agency administrative data

Outcome: MIDDLE GRADE MATH has become an important milestone for high school persistence, academic achievement, college attainment and readiness for the workforce. Research indicates that students who successfully complete middle grade math perform better in geometry, advanced algebra, trigonometry and calculus. A child's math curriculum also has a strong link to college enrollment.

Example Metric: Performance on eighth-grade math state assessments | Source: Local education agency administrative data

Outcome: HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION allows graduates to earn higher wages and see better results in other measures of personal and social welfare, such as health and relationships. High school graduation also impacts families, as increasing the educational attainment of parents has been shown to improve their children's academic and social outcomes.

Example Metric: Four-year cohort graduation rate | Source: Local school districts

Outcome: POST-SECONDARY ENROLLMENT marks a critical transition in the cradle-to-career pipeline. Students of color and those in low-income households are less likely to pursue education beyond high school. As more careers require additional preparation, it is critical to ensure access to options and financial aid information for four-year degrees, two-year programs and technical certifications.

Example Metric: Enrollment in a two-year college within 16 months of graduation for [Promise Neighborhood](#) high schools | Source: [National Student Clearinghouse](#) and other privately operated post-secondary tracking services

Outcome: POST-SECONDARY DEGREE COMPLETION is more valuable than ever, because degrees and certifications open doors to meaningful jobs and stable futures. Workers with at least a bachelor's degree can earn more than individuals with only a high school diploma, and post-secondary attainment also leads to improved health and social outcomes. Society benefits from a more educated population, including lower crime rates and more community involvement.

Example Metric: Six-year post-secondary completion rate (at four-year colleges and universities) | Source: [National Student Clearinghouse](#) and other privately operated post-secondary tracking services

Outcome: EMPLOYMENT, particularly when post-secondary graduates are connected to good jobs, is the ultimate goal of the cradle-to-career pipeline. Students who are employed within a year of graduation are on their way to achieving self-sufficiency. When a community's workforce is fully engaged, the entire community is stronger.

Example Metric: Labor market engagement and employment rate | Source: [Enterprise OPPORTUNITY360 Community Dashboard](#)

Amplifying Cross-Sector Collaboration

Identifying shared outcomes or goals helps to build consensus among diverse partners and facilitate coordinated programmatic, financial and policy efforts to affect change and amplify impact. Collaborating around shared outcomes also helps to illuminate interdependencies across multiple partners or sectors. For example, many education-focused organizations increasingly recognize the difficulty of improving kindergarten readiness if families are living in unstable, unaffordable or poor-quality housing. By measuring and tracking progress toward shared outcomes, partners can benefit from continuous learning and demonstrate their impact over time.¹⁹

The following case study highlights how the goals of two distinct sectors can be brought together as a shared outcome. The Venn diagram included in the case study will be used throughout the toolkit to illustrate examples of shared outcomes between housing and education partners.

The grand challenges of our time also present a striking opportunity for new processes of co-creating change and new outcomes.²⁰

- JEANINE BECKER AND DAVID B. SMITH

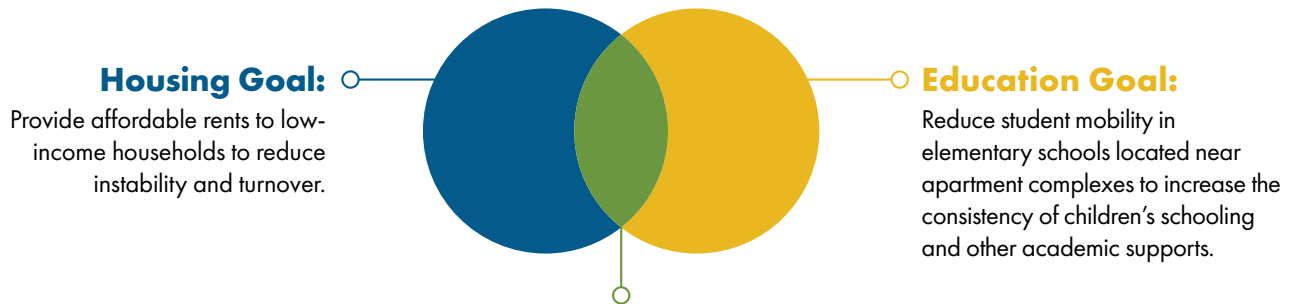
Case Study: After-School Programming in Affordable Housing Complexes

Lead Organization: Star-C

Location: Atlanta, Georgia

“An education model with an affordable housing solution,” **Star-C** is a nonprofit in Atlanta, Georgia, that coordinates community services at affordable housing complexes. Star-C identifies and works with private landlords who own or manage market-rate apartment complexes near schools experiencing high rates of student mobility or transiency. Through this partnership, private landlords agree to keep rents affordable and cover half the costs for community services,

including after-school programs, community gardening, and health and wellness navigation. Affordable rents and community services can help families achieve stability and reduce student mobility and transiency. In turn, Star-C coordinates the programming and covers the remaining service costs through donations and grants. Star-C also partners with community-based organizations and school districts to provide additional services and student support.



Shared Housing and Education Outcome: Through landlord partnerships, Star-C’s programming will stabilize apartment communities and **reduce rental turnover**, allowing local schools to experience **reduced student transiency**.



○ ADVANCING HOUSING
AND EDUCATION
PARTNERSHIPS





MOBILIZING PARTNERSHIPS FOR HOUSING & EDUCATION

The partnership stages outlined in the following pages reflect common phases of work in creating and implementing housing and education partnerships, ultimately leading to systems change and advancing economic mobility for children and families. Although these stages are not inclusive of all elements of cross-sector partnership, they reflect key areas of focus for housing and education practitioners seeking to better align their work. Even though the stages are numbered, it is important to note that progression through partnership is rarely linear, and organizations may focus on aspects of multiple stages at the same time, as seen in the example from Memphis, Tennessee, included on page 30.


The toolkit offers considerations and suggested resources for addressing the complexities of each stage. Each partnership stage also highlights an example from the field, illustrating how housing and education organizations can align in pursuit of shared outcomes.

Understanding Partnership Readiness


The following assessment tool can help housing and education organizations determine their readiness for, or progress within, different stages of partnership. This tool reflects components of the [StriveTogether Theory of Action™](#), which identifies four principles that are central to building partnerships and impacting outcomes, included here and integrated throughout the toolkit:


- **Engage the community** by including a broad array of community voices and perspectives to understand local challenges and co-develop solutions.
- **Advance equity** by identifying systemic inequities and disparities, coordinating work to eliminate disparities and transforming systems.
- **Develop a culture of continuous improvement** using local data, evaluation and community feedback to regularly identify areas for improvement, and invest in practices that work.
- **Leverage existing resources** to align work for maximum impact toward shared outcomes.


The questions in the readiness assessment depicted here reflect these principles and highlight key elements of each stage. Considering these questions can help readers identify which partnership stage, and therefore which aspect of the toolkit, is most relevant to their work.

PARTNERSHIP STAGE	KEY QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER
 <p>Assess Existing Conditions</p> <p>Stage 1 focuses on understanding local assets and opportunities and identifying community needs, which, in turn, helps to identify the types of outcomes that partners might want to prioritize jointly in cross-sector work.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOAL SETTING: Have we considered goals for the assessment? Have we determined how the assessment’s goals will inform the cross-sector work? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> LOCAL CONDITIONS: Do we understand local housing and neighborhood conditions and the problems that we are trying to solve through cross-sector partnership? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TARGET POPULATIONS: Have we identified a target population or a disparity to address through a housing and education partnership? Has this focus also been identified by community members? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY VOICE: Does the assessment of existing conditions include representative voices and input from communities where work is likely to take place? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE DATA: Have we collected quantitative and qualitative information to help inform our understanding of local conditions across multiple sectors, including assets and challenges? <i>[This can include a review of existing reports and needs assessments, analysis of neighborhood data, community and stakeholder engagement, etc.]</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RACIAL EQUITY: Have the data collected been disaggregated by race whenever possible? Have we explored the stories behind the data to uncover the root causes keeping disparities in place?

PARTNERSHIP STAGE	KEY QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER
 <p>Identify and Engage Partners</p> <p>Stage 2 moves from understanding local needs to identifying and engaging with potential partners for cross-sector collaboration to address those needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="576 241 1502 367">✓ LOCAL STAKEHOLDERS: Do we understand the “landscape” of local stakeholders across multiple sectors (e.g., housing, education, community development) and the power structures within a community (e.g., who has decision-making and funding authority)? <li data-bbox="576 388 1502 514">✓ DIVERSE REPRESENTATION: Have we reached out to a diverse set of housing and education stakeholders to develop partnerships for this work, including representation from the communities where work is likely to take place? <i>[This may reflect ongoing engagement with stakeholders from Stage 1.]</i> <li data-bbox="576 535 1502 661">✓ EXISTING PARTNERSHIPS: Are there existing coalitions or ongoing cross-sector initiatives with similar goals or interests, particularly among housing and education stakeholders? <i>[This may suggest joining an existing coalition, or reassessing the landscape of existing collaboration after outcomes have been selected in Stage 3.]</i> <li data-bbox="576 682 1502 808">✓ POWER AND AGENCY: Do we understand the power dynamics among our partner organizations? Have we considered strategies to ensure that all organizations have agency in the cross-sector partnership?

PARTNERSHIP STAGE	KEY QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER
 <p>Prioritize and Develop Shared Outcomes</p> <p>Stage 3 reflects the process of identifying a shared outcome that serves as a common goal and primary focus for partners in their cross-sector work.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="576 976 1502 1123">✓ OUTCOMES AND ACCOUNTABILITY: Have we identified shared housing and/or education outcomes that directly address local disparities (including racial disparities)? Have we identified outcomes with quantitative and qualitative indicators that can serve as a common goal with a measurable target, allowing us to be held accountable for improving outcomes through our cross-sector work? <li data-bbox="576 1144 1502 1249">✓ PROGRAM PLANNING: Have we clearly identified how our work will achieve the intended shared outcomes? <i>[This can include the development of a logic model or project plan, for example.]</i> <li data-bbox="576 1270 1502 1375">✓ BASELINE ASSESSMENT: Have we shared the assessment of existing conditions with the community, in a baseline report card or similar publication, to gain feedback and inform shared outcomes? <li data-bbox="576 1396 1502 1501">✓ COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: Have we engaged community members and other partners to gain input on and support of the shared outcomes? Have we considered strategies for ongoing community engagement? <li data-bbox="576 1522 1502 1585">✓ ORGANIZATIONAL ALIGNMENT: Do the shared outcomes align with the mission and strengths of each organization involved?

PARTNERSHIP STAGE	KEY QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER
 <p>Partner and Implement Cross-Sector Solutions</p> <p>Stage 4 outlines the key components necessary to implement cross-sector work to make progress toward shared outcomes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="573 247 1498 373">✓ COMMUNITY IMPACT: Will the partnership benefit the target population and address the challenges/problems identified by the assessment of existing conditions conducted in Stage 1? Have we considered the potential unexpected harm that might result from our partnership or shared work and sought input on how to mitigate it? <li data-bbox="573 401 1498 464">✓ SUPPORT AND RESOURCES: Do we have support from organizational leadership, initial funding and staff capacity to support implementation of the cross-sector work? <li data-bbox="573 491 1498 617">✓ PARTNER RESPONSIBILITIES: Has the role that each partner will undertake to achieve the shared outcomes been clearly defined, along with the accountability of each partner's leadership? Does this accountability structure encourage equitable power dynamics? <li data-bbox="573 644 1498 800">✓ PROGRESS MONITORING AND DATA SHARING: Are we able to implement ongoing outcome measurement and reporting to track progress toward shared outcomes? Have we engaged principles from collaborative or continuous improvement as we monitor progress? Have we established agreements on and a process for data sharing? Do we regularly share data with our partners? <li data-bbox="573 827 1498 953">✓ IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE: Have we developed a realistic implementation timeline that reflects ongoing community engagement? Have we identified and/or tested organizational and programmatic changes that are necessary to support implementation? <li data-bbox="573 980 1498 1064">✓ MESSAGING AND COMMUNICATION: Have we developed key messaging to describe our partnership goals and activities that will help cultivate ongoing community engagement?

PARTNERSHIP STAGE	KEY QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER
 <p>Sustain Partnerships for Systems Change</p> <p>Stage 5 emphasizes the need to secure ongoing resources and commitment to sustain the benefits of cross-sector work and pursue broader systems change for greater impact.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="573 1255 1498 1381">✓ SUSTAINABILITY: Have we developed a sustainability plan and identified committed funding and staff capacity to continue implementation of this work and achieve the intended results, including systems change? How will we mitigate harm if the partnership's work in the community must end? <li data-bbox="573 1409 1498 1514">✓ ONGOING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: Are the community members and populations affected by this partnership engaged and represented in the ongoing implementation of this work, with effective two-way communication between partners and the community? <li data-bbox="573 1541 1498 1646">✓ CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT: Do we use outcome data and other information collected during implementation to continuously inform and improve our work? Have we adapted our strategies based on what we've learned from initial implementation efforts? <li data-bbox="573 1673 1498 1757">✓ DATA INFORMED: Are community data and the indicators for our partnership's shared outcomes accessible, disaggregated by race, and shared with relevant partners and other sectors to inform action and reduce disparities? <li data-bbox="573 1785 1498 1911">✓ POLICY AND SYSTEMS CHANGE: Have we identified and/or taken action to change local, state or national policies to improve community-level outcomes? Are these policies designed to address disparities and eliminate barriers to the equitable distribution of resources?

Advancing Mobility from Poverty in Memphis, Tennessee

As part of Enterprise and StriveTogether's partnership, Enterprise staff have been working with communities in StriveTogether's national network, providing technical assistance as local partners come together to address shared housing and education outcomes. An example from Memphis, Tennessee, is highlighted here to illustrate how the collaborative work of local organizations has led to an emerging cross-sector partnership. At the writing of this toolkit, the Memphis partnership was focused on the third partnership stage: preparing to prioritize shared outcomes, identify strategies for achieving them, and determine partner roles and responsibilities.

The partners initially involved in this collaboration include—

- [Seeding Success](#), a StriveTogether network member, focused on transforming cradle-to-career systems, that seeks to ensure that every child and their family have the support and resources they need to reach their full potential.
- [Urban Strategies, Inc.](#), a not-for-profit organization that specializes in results-informed human services development, planning and strategy implementation as part of comprehensive neighborhood revitalization.
- Local housing and government agencies, through [The Memphis Housing Authority](#), [City of Memphis](#) and [Shelby County Government](#).

PREPARING FOR PARTNERSHIP

As this growing partnership continues to progress, it is useful to reflect on the core elements that have facilitated collaboration:

- **Leadership and staff capacity from an established organization.** The reputation of Seeding Success as an experienced convener of diverse groups and as a trusted, data-driven partner brought legitimacy to the emerging housing and education collaboration, and dedicated staff time helped facilitate partner engagement.
- **Prioritization of community voice.** The organizations involved already had staff committed to community initiatives and were engaged in ongoing relationships in the communities where their cross-sector work potentially would be targeted. The partners brought this prioritization of community-driven initiatives to their collective work, while also focusing on the broader systems change needed to advance economic mobility.
- **Existing capacity for working with data.** The staff of Seeding Success included those with analytic capabilities, and Seeding Success had existing data-sharing agreements with local education partners, which facilitated access to a broader range of data for assessing the local context through the dual lenses of housing conditions and educational experiences.
- **A commitment to economic mobility and systems transformation.** The organizations involved already were focused on addressing racial disparities to advance mobility from poverty for children and families. A shared recognition of the crosscutting influence of residential segregation and other socioeconomic and racial disparities has allowed these organizations to consider the role of various sectors in addressing inequities.

PROGRESSING IN PARTNERSHIP

Though this partnership in Memphis is currently focused on the third stage, partners have collaborated on aspects of each of the five partnership stages. The partnership's progress and preparations for implementation and sustainability over time are summarized here, offering a reminder that partnership progress is rarely linear.

Stage One: Assess Existing Conditions

As a starting point, local partners came together to assess existing conditions, first outlining goals for the assessment that reflected a strategic focus on specific populations (e.g., residents of public housing and students in households with low incomes). The assessment focused on a quantitative analysis of housing costs, affordability and quality, which revealed racial inequities and the severity of housing challenges and shortages in Memphis.

Stage Two: Identify and Engage Partners

To better understand community priorities, Enterprise's technical assistance included a series of more than 40 semistructured interviews with local organizations working on issues related to housing and education. This stakeholder engagement provided valuable context for the data analysis conducted in Stage 1 and gave the core team of partners the opportunity to gather more information about existing power structures and coalitions. Findings from the interviews then were presented to a broader group of partners to discuss opportunities for and barriers to partnership.

Stage Three: Prioritize and Develop Shared Outcomes

In addition to understanding local priorities and identifying partners, the stakeholder engagement interviews conducted in Stage 2 also helped to sharpen the partnership's focus on outcomes in target communities. An example of the outcomes-focused discussion guide used for these interviews is included in [Appendix F](#). Following this initial engagement, the partners now are preparing workshops that will bring community organizations together to define shared outcomes, identify progress indicators and consider pilot interventions to advance those outcomes. The workshops will feature data collected through the assessment of existing conditions as context for the discussions.

To better understand the interplay of housing and education challenges locally, the partners have continued to refine the assessment of existing conditions to more closely investigate student mobility and the relationship between neighborhood housing challenges and school attendance zones.

Stage Four: Partner and Implement Cross-Sector Solutions

Although the partners in Memphis have not yet progressed toward implementation, a number of earlier efforts have prepared them well for the upcoming stages. For example, the assessment conducted in Stage 1, as well as existing data-sharing agreements, will enable partners to structure the data collection and outcome measurement needed for their aligned work. Partners also have begun to consider different options for governance structures that will support their strategies to achieve shared outcomes.

Stage Five: Sustain Partnerships for Systems Change

The partnership's initial work also has laid the foundation for the final stage of sustaining partnerships for systems change. As a StriveTogether network member, Seeding Success has helped to embed key principles from the [StriveTogether Theory of Action™](#) in the partnership's work, from engaging with community and advancing equity, to developing a culture of continuous improvement. Looking ahead, the partnership will seek additional funding to ensure that staff can continue to convene partners, share information and data, and implement cross-sector strategies.



ASSESS EXISTING CONDITIONS

Corresponding StriveTogether Theory of Action™ Gateway: **Exploring**

Stage 1 outlines the steps for gathering data and community input to better understand local needs, opportunities and strengths. By more closely examining a cross-cutting issue such as housing access, school quality, neighborhood safety or income inequality, an organization or partnership can gain a better sense of how an issue impacts a community. This closer understanding provides context for identifying shared outcomes between the housing and education sectors, setting clear goals for cross-sector collaboration and providing a baseline for tracking progress over time.

Approaches, Considerations and Resources

SETTING GOALS FOR AN ASSESSMENT

Before starting an assessment, it is important to connect goals for the assessment with the larger body of work it will inform. Goal setting provides a needed focus, enabling organizations to collect and analyze information that is most relevant to the intended purpose. Without considering specific goals in advance, assessments can incorporate unnecessary information and become too unwieldy for analysis.

Goals for an assessment focused on housing and education might include the following:

- Researching how socioeconomic and racial disparities vary across schools or neighborhoods to help define a target population or geography for cross-sector work.
- Identifying the neighborhoods within a city or region that are most at risk of evictions, displacement or gentrification, which may have corresponding impacts on school enrollment.
- Exploring the reasons for high rates of student mobility at a particular school or within a school district, which may have underlying causes related to housing.

ENGAGING THE COMMUNITY

When assessing existing conditions, even if relying on resources that already exist, it is critical to consider the input of those who live and work in the communities of focus. Community engagement is ideally initiated at the start of an assessment process, helping to inform both the direction and content of an assessment. It may be helpful to consider engagement along a continuum ranging from informative, in which community members are made aware of the objective of the work, to empowering, in which community members have a direct role in decision-making.²¹

Engagement can generate valuable information that organizations may not otherwise have access to, allow comparison between community input and research findings and lay the groundwork for an ongoing relationship with the community. Surveys, focus groups, participatory asset mapping, systems mapping, community charettes and a public forum on a particular issue are all examples of proactive community engagement. Engagement strategies are explored in more depth in Stage 2.



ASSESSING EXISTING CONDITIONS

An assessment of existing conditions can take a variety of forms, depending on the context and availability of information. Assessments may include quantitative data, such as census demographics or data from a school district, or qualitative information gained through interviews, document review or community engagement. Considering data disaggregated by race is strongly recommended, when possible, to better understand disparities and target equity-focused work accordingly.

Comprehensive Assessments

Housing and education organizations may consider a wide range of topics when assessing existing conditions, with the goal of gaining a comprehensive understanding of a community's strengths and challenges. A comprehensive assessment is useful when initiating work in a new area or when seeking a fresh look at the local context to identify possible focus areas for future work.

Before undertaking an assessment, it is useful to consider the target geography or scale of the analysis — such as a neighborhood, school district or county — as this ultimately will determine the types of data and information that can be collected. An assessment also can include a comparison with information about other geographic areas, such as city- or state-level data, to provide context.

Questions that organizations can consider to better understand challenges in their community include the following:

- **Demographic:** Who lives in the area of focus (consider such characteristics as age, sex, race/ethnicity and family size)? Has the population in this community changed in recent years? Do resident perceptions of recent demographic changes reflect trends from quantitative data sources? Where do children in this area live and go to school?
- **Economic:** What percentage of households are living below the poverty line, and how have poverty levels changed over time? What is the median household income in this area? What is the employment rate? Who are the largest employers in the area, and what are the most common types of jobs?
- **Education:** Are high-quality and affordable early education and child care facilities available? How are public schools performing in the area of focus? Are schools over- or underenrolled? What is the educational attainment of the local population?

- **Housing Market:** What housing options are available in the local market? What percentage of households are cost-burdened (spending more than 30 percent of their income on housing)? What is the breakdown between households that rent or own their home? What is the rate of homelessness in the area, and how has it changed over time?
- **Neighborhood:** Are there disparities in transit service levels by neighborhood? What are average commute times to work? What is the neighborhood's [Walk Score or Bike Score](#)? What is the proximity to food retail, such as grocery stores or farmers markets? Where are the parks or public recreation facilities, and how are they used?
- **Community Leadership and Vision:** What organizations are leading work in the area of focus, and what is their approach to housing and education? Who are the formal and informal community leaders? What is their perspective on the key assets and challenges in the area? Have local organizations already established goals for their work?

Issue-Focused Assessments

Unlike the breadth of a comprehensive assessment, an issue-focused assessment investigates the underlying causes of one salient issue, such as family homelessness, evictions or high school graduation rates. An issue-focused assessment is useful for organizations or partnerships that already have identified a critical community challenge they want to better understand. Examples of issue-focused assessments are included in [Appendix E](#), under resources for Stage 1.

RESOURCES FOR ASSESSING EXISTING CONDITIONS

An important step in assessing community conditions is to identify existing resources that can provide valuable insight. The following list includes suggestions of resources for housing- or education-focused assessments.

- **Strategic and Consolidated Plans:** Strategic plans or vision documents created by local government, nonprofit organizations or anchor institutions, such as universities or hospitals, can be a helpful way to understand local conditions and goals. States and local jurisdictions that receive federal funding often are required to create consolidated plans, which are public documents that assess needs and challenges. These plans offer valuable context on local data and decision-making. Examples of sources for consolidated plans include the following:
 - » [Community Planning and Development Consolidated Plans, Annual Action Plans, and Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Reports](#) | **Department of Housing and Urban Development:** To qualify for numerous HUD funding streams, states and local jurisdictions submit reports and plans that offer useful information on local community development needs and housing market challenges.
 - » [Every Student Succeeds Act \(ESSA\) State Plans](#) | **Department of Education:** Under the ESSA, states are required to submit to the U.S. Department of Education consolidated plans that include goals for student achievement and data on student populations.
- **Local or Regional Data:** Local or regional data may be available online in indices, dashboards or databases and may be hosted by school districts, universities or local research centers, for example. These resources can be helpful for understanding local goals and identifying data sources and possible partners. Examples of such data sources include the following:
 - » [Information and Data Overview](#) | **New York City Department of Education:** New York City's Department of Education offers a website that includes a variety of data at the school and district levels and features test and graduation results, attendance data, demographic information, and other relevant surveys and reports. This website is a useful example of the types of local data that an organization might seek in answering important questions about students and families.
- » [Housing Market Indicators Data Portal](#) | **Institute for Housing Studies at DePaul University:** DePaul University's Housing Market Indicators Data Portal offers a detailed look at housing data in the Chicago region, ranging from types of housing stock to foreclosure filings, which can be explored by geography. This level of detail can be useful for understanding the housing characteristics of a given area, which can help determine appropriate strategies for stabilizing families through housing.
- » [Urban Displacement Project](#) | **University of California, Berkeley:** The Urban Displacement Project maps the areas in the San Francisco Bay Area that are experiencing displacement, characterized as low-income or moderate-to-high income census tracts. Many cities or regions facing displacement pressures have started to look more closely at the data that indicate the vulnerability of their populations and neighborhoods, which allows users to identify areas that may need targeted anti-displacement strategies.
- **National Data:** National data sets on housing and education, hosted by national nonprofits or federal agencies, are widely available and often contain local or regional data in the form of online databases or downloadable reports. Suggested national data sources that can be helpful resources in conducting an assessment are described in [Appendix E](#), under resources for Stage 1.

BUILDING ON AN ASSESSMENT

When completing an assessment, it is helpful to revisit the initial goals and carefully consider the key findings that have emerged. Assessments often reveal gaps in knowledge that may reveal potential partnership opportunities or the need to engage in additional research or community engagement for a more nuanced perspective on the local context. Whenever possible, sharing the findings of an assessment is a powerful way to broaden knowledge and engage with the community.

The following are examples of wide-ranging community needs assessments, published formally as written documents. Other methods of sharing assessments publicly might include short briefs, memos or presentations at community meetings.

- [Alexandria, Virginia – Community Needs Assessment](#) | **2019 Economic Opportunities Commission:** The Economic Opportunities Commission of Alexandria, Virginia, submits an annual needs assessment to the State of Virginia as part of the city's Community Services Block Grants obligations. The needs assessment covers four key areas: affordable housing, food security, child care and health care. Findings are based on a community survey administered to residents living below the poverty line.
- [City of Tacoma, Washington – Community Needs Assessment](#) | **City of Tacoma, Washington:** The City of Tacoma's August 2016 community needs assessment focuses on three primary topics: homelessness and household stability, workforce development, and human and social wellness. The assessment pulls information from previous city plans and policies, local and national data sources, and stakeholder interviews with city staff.





Case Study: Early Childhood Initiative (ECI)

Lead Organization: Akron Metropolitan Housing Authority

StriveTogether Network Representation: Summit Education Initiative

Location: Summit County, OH

After hearing Geoffrey Canada from the renowned [Harlem Children’s Zone](#) speak in 2007 about educational disparities and inequities experienced by families of color and children in lower-income communities, the leadership of the [Akron Metropolitan Housing Authority \(AMHA\)](#) was inspired to take action. AMHA conducted an assessment of existing conditions, examining resident outcomes, local conditions and community needs and considering the potential role that AMHA could play in promoting educational success. As part of this process, AMHA reviewed resident data and found that a significant number of children living in AMHA housing were at risk of poor school performance and involvement in the justice system.

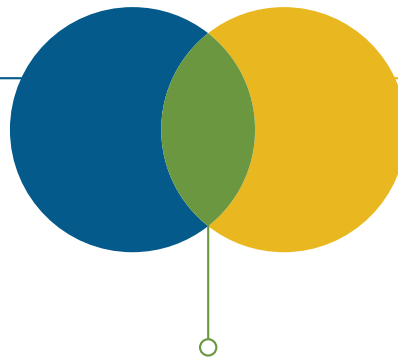
In response to the assessment findings, AMHA partnered with a wide range of county stakeholders to create an Early Childhood Initiative (ECI) with programs offered to AMHA residents, including home visitation services, early childhood family outreach events and a program that addresses maternal mental health. This initiative included the development of on-

site programming to engage and support children and families to complement the academic support they receive in the classroom. As the partnership and programming have grown, ECI, led by AMHA, moved to expand community involvement and now requires that ECI’s advisory board include families living in AMHA properties.

In addition, ECI partnered with [Summit Education Initiative \(SEI\)](#), a local education nonprofit and member of the [StriveTogether Cradle to Career Network](#). SEI began reviewing AMHA data on an individual student level and building predictive models of student progress. These data have helped to inform the ECI and improve programming to ensure that more children are entering kindergarten at grade level. SEI also has worked to expand participation in ECI by going to local churches to raise awareness among community members. After reviewing existing conditions in AMHA housing complexes and communities, AMHA was able to leverage a cross-sector partnership to respond to challenges with a broad range of targeted services and supports.

Housing Goal:

Ensure that children living in Akron Metropolitan Housing Authority units are not at greater risk of poor school performance or involvement in the justice system than non-Housing Authority residents.



Education Goal:

Increase third-grade reading levels, school attendance and engagement in academic learning opportunities for children living in Housing Authority units.

Shared Housing and Education Outcome:
The Early Childhood Initiative will ensure **kindergarten readiness for children living in subsidized housing** through early childhood programming and home visiting services.


 STAGE
2

IDENTIFY AND ENGAGE PARTNERS

Corresponding StriveTogether Theory of Action™ Gateway: **Exploring**

Stage 2 focuses on identifying and engaging with current and potential partners interested in working toward shared outcomes. For many partnerships, Stages 1 and 2 may happen concurrently as organizations align their understanding of community challenges. This stage offers an opportunity to consider the groups most affected by housing and education policies — whether they pertain to race and ethnicity, geography, socioeconomic, or other factors — and ensure that their voices are represented as the partnership develops. In addition to organizational partners, youth, families, residents and community leaders are important stakeholders to include when developing partnerships and cross-sector solutions.

Approaches, Considerations and Resources

IDENTIFYING PARTNERS

For organizations seeking to identify new partners to implement solutions across sectors, the considerations described below can help guide this process. Assessing existing conditions, as outlined in Stage 1, is one way to identify and engage with potential partners who are likely to be interested in working together toward a common goal. [Appendix E](#), under resources for Stage 2, provides a summary of many common housing and education organizations to consider when developing partnerships. These include public housing authorities, community development corporations, school districts and education backbone organizations, or organizations that serve as facilitators or leaders of work across multiple organizations or sectors in a community.

- **Community Leadership and Representation:** Community leadership can include tenant associations, resident advisory councils, religious leaders, neighborhood watch groups, parent-teacher associations, youth groups, families and community leaders. Key questions to consider include the following:
 - » Have we considered the power dynamics of the organizations that comprise our partnership?
 - » Does our partnership include consistent and diverse representation and leadership from the community or population that we are intending to serve?
- **Geography of Partnership:** Geographic differences can be noticeable, particularly when housing and education stakeholders come together in partnership. While education stakeholders may operate at the school district level, housing stakeholders often target a smaller area, posing a potential spatial mismatch in the populations served by each organization. Key questions to consider include the following:
 - » Have we identified organizations that work in our area of focus and identified geographic differences among potential partners?
 - » How will geographic differences affect the implementation of our partnership and sustained community engagement?
- **Existing Partnerships:** Existing partnerships might include housing authorities working with school districts on data-sharing procedures, affordable housing providers working with nonprofit organizations to provide educational support as part of resident services programming, or a local Continuum of Care Program working to coordinate services for individuals and families experiencing homelessness (see the summary of common housing and education partnerships in [Appendix E](#) for more detail). Key questions to consider include the following:
 - » Are any existing partnerships focused on serving the target community or population? If so, can we work with them to avoid duplication of effort?
 - » Is a local or regional foundation supporting local work? If so, which organizations and partnerships are they supporting?
- **Service Providers:** Service providers can include food banks, job counseling services, homeless shelters, after-school programs, faith institutions and other social service organizations. Key questions to consider include the following:
 - » Which individuals, organizations or institutions have existing experience serving our community, even if their work is outside the housing or education sector?
 - » Is there any ongoing cross-sector service provision, such as resident services offered at an affordable housing development?
- **Additional Stakeholders:** Additional stakeholders may include local government agencies focused on public safety, food security or transportation; city or town councils; local and regional foundations and philanthropies; cultural institutions and arts organizations; and anchor institutions, such as hospitals, universities and large employers. Key questions to consider include the following:
 - » Who are the local or regional stakeholders with decision-making authority or funding relationships that work in our community, within and beyond the bounds of housing and education?
 - » How can we secure additional support to ensure that all partners have sufficient resources to participate in the collaboration?

TOOLS AND RESOURCES FOR ENGAGING PARTNERS

A number of approaches are useful to consider when identifying and engaging with potential partners. To start, we recommend the [OPPORTUNITY360 Community Engagement Toolkit](#), published on Enterprise’s website, to explore a range of resources for engaging with residents and stakeholders to better understand community dynamics and address local challenges.

The following list highlights several strategies, with examples from housing and education partnerships. [Appendix E](#), under resources for Stage 2, offers additional guidance for each of these engagement tools — as well as for establishing partnerships more generally, including formalizing a partnership structure — and other examples that can inspire thinking in your own community.

- Focus Groups:** Focus groups are a useful tool to understand multiple perspectives on a particular topic through a facilitated small-group discussion. By bringing together multiple stakeholders, such as parents or local residents, to discuss an issue, focus groups can provide valuable input, help build relationships with community members and begin to identify possible steps forward.
- Stakeholder Mapping:** Stakeholder mapping exercises are a way to create a visual representation of the various stakeholders who affect or are affected by relevant issues, thereby helping to identify possible partners for collaboration. The stakeholder mapping process can also serve as a guide for community engagement when assessing existing conditions, as in Stage 1.
- Surveys:** Surveys can be used to better understand the perceptions, needs and priorities of a population and to establish a baseline to track change over time. Surveys can be administered to particular sets of individuals — such as youth, parents or neighborhood residents — and on differing scales, such as at a school, in a housing development or across a neighborhood.
- Network and Systems Mapping:** Similar to stakeholder mapping, network and systems mapping helps to visualize not only the stakeholders involved in a given community, but also the relationships between stakeholders and their influence over such systemic issues as funding or policy. These maps also can focus on the intersection between key issues within a given area and the factors that influence them, making them helpful references when seeking systems change, as seen in Stage 5.
- Participatory Asset Mapping:** Participatory asset mapping is a tool that allows groups of community stakeholders to visualize, or map, the assets and strengths of a community to help build partnerships and achieve collective goals. Some examples of assets include a community school, a local nonprofit organization, a library or a neighborhood park.
- Hosting Community Events:** In addition to seeking potential partners, organizations might also consider joining or hosting an open house, meeting, or workshop where staff can meet with residents and other stakeholders to describe their organizations, explain their motivations for cross-sector work and begin a conversation about the possibilities of partnering.





Case Study: College Housing Assistance Program

Lead Organization: Tacoma Housing Authority

StriveTogether Network Representation: Graduate Tacoma

Location: Tacoma, Washington

The College Housing Assistance Program (CHAP) at the [Tacoma Housing Authority \(THA\)](#) was established following the publication of a nationwide study that revealed high rates of housing insecurity and homelessness among the student body at Tacoma Community College. Upon learning more about the housing needs of local community college students, the housing authority’s executive director saw a potential role for the agency and initiated conversations with community college staff. With a student body of more than 12,000 students, Tacoma Community College was receptive and motivated to work with THA to address students’ housing needs.

As the housing authority and college began discussing students’ housing insecurity, the elements of CHAP started to come together. Through CHAP, the housing authority now provides a total of 250 housing subsidies to students experiencing or at risk of homelessness, including those who are exiting the justice

system. THA also has identified eligible rental properties where students can use the housing subsidies, negotiated with landlords and helped connect participating students with additional resources, such as free furniture. In turn, the community college provides participating students with academic case management and tracks student outcomes according to determined metrics of success, including persistence (quarter-to-quarter enrollment), grade-point average, graduation rates and transfer rates.

CHAP represents an expansion of THA’s involvement with education providers, which started with engagement at the elementary school level to better serve young children. CHAP has expanded to work with the University of Washington Tacoma and Bates Technical College and has gained additional support from [Graduate Tacoma](#), a local education nonprofit and member of the [StriveTogether network](#).

Housing Goal:

Increase housing stability for students experiencing homelessness or near-homelessness through expanded provision of housing subsidies.

Education Goal:

Ensure that students experiencing homelessness or near-homelessness are able to receive academic support and graduate with a degree and a skills base that prepares them for eventual employment.

Shared Housing and Education Outcome:
Students experiencing homelessness or near-homelessness and their dependents will be stably housed, lowering their housing cost burden and allowing them to focus on academic achievement and preparation for employment.



PRIORITIZE AND DEVELOP SHARED OUTCOMES

Corresponding StriveTogether Theory of Action™ Gateway: **Exploring or Emerging**

Stage 3 addresses the important step of identifying a shared outcome or set of outcomes to serve as a common goal for cross-sector partners. With the common purpose of serving children and families, particularly those with the greatest need, the housing and education sectors have many opportunities to work together toward shared outcomes. A shared outcome not only provides a primary focus for aligning work across different organizations and sectors, but also creates the opportunity to set a measurable target for tracking progress toward that goal.

Approaches, Considerations and Resources

IDENTIFYING AND PRIORITIZING SHARED OUTCOMES

Although organizations may not progress through the stages of partnership in a linear fashion, some of the steps and resources identified earlier in the toolkit may be useful references during this stage. In particular, assessing existing conditions can help partners understand the needs and challenges that are most pressing and relevant for their work, helping partners to identify and prioritize a shared outcome. Key considerations and suggested steps and resources for identifying and prioritizing shared outcomes include:

- Identify Shared Outcomes:** At this stage, it is important to consider which housing or education outcomes are most relevant to the challenges that the target community is facing and the missions and strengths of the organizations involved. Many stakeholders find it difficult to prioritize a shared outcome when there are many needs to address. By revisiting earlier assessments or existing example outcomes frameworks, a partnership can begin to see the universe of possible options for shared outcomes.

SUGGESTED RESOURCE:

Housing and Education Outcomes: The outcomes outlined earlier in the toolkit (pages 16–22) provide a useful starting point for considering the outcomes that may be most relevant for cross-sector solutions. [Appendices A and B](#) include additional detail on each of the housing and education outcomes, including a summary of the connection between the housing and education outcomes and examples of metrics for each.



- **Engage Stakeholders:** An important consideration in any stage, community engagement is particularly valuable to the development of shared outcomes. An initial step is to understand community-identified needs, followed by gathering community feedback on and endorsement of the shared outcome(s) identified for cross-sector collaboration. Sharing a baseline assessment, such as the needs assessment conducted in Stage 1, can be a helpful introduction when discussing outcomes. Overall, engagement can help ensure that a shared outcome or set of outcomes is aligned with community needs and that the partnership has the community support needed for successful implementation.

SUGGESTED RESOURCES:

Facilitated Workshops and Outcomes Discussions:

Facilitated workshops provide the opportunity for a backbone or lead organization to engage with partners and community members to discuss and prioritize shared outcomes in a group setting and ensure community representation. When engaging with multiple partners to identify a shared outcome, it may be helpful to use a discussion guide for interviews or small-group meetings, ensuring a consistent approach to gathering feedback across groups. A guide also helps when initiating conversations about the range of outcomes that local stakeholders are focused on, which later can lead to the identification of shared outcomes. An example of an outcome discussion guide that can be tailored for use in specific communities is included in [Appendix F](#).

Ongoing Community Engagement: Strategies for engaging community members in the identification and prioritization of shared outcomes can include hosting a community meeting to discuss the proposed shared outcomes, either as a facilitated workshop (described above) or as part of a broader meeting that is open for public discussion. Another strategy is to convene a group or “board” of community members to provide ongoing review and feedback. Community members can include youth or parents, tenant or resident association members, leaders of a school’s parent association, or leaders of a neighborhood advisory council.

- **Plan an Approach:** It is helpful to consider the steps that partners can take toward implementing shared outcomes to ensure alignment with each partner’s strengths and resources. For organizations struggling to prioritize a focus on one outcome over another, identifying activities associated with each potential outcome is a helpful way to start. Articulating activities through a draft plan or logic model can help in identifying the distinctions and trade-offs of pursuing one outcome over another and in determining which shared outcomes best align with the missions of the organizations involved, thereby facilitating decision-making. Additional resources for planning an approach are included in [Appendix E](#).

SUGGESTED RESOURCE:

Logic Model: A logic model illustrates expected relationships between an organization’s resources, the activities or policies implemented, and the expected changes or results. The logic model also provides a foundation for conducting an evaluation of program results, discussed in Stage 5 on page 52. For organizations that already have identified a shared outcome, such as reducing student mobility, creating a logic model allows each partner to consider how they can contribute resources and leverage strengths to pursue a shared strategy.



Case Study: Impact KCK

Lead Organization: Avenue of Life

Location: Kansas City, Kansas

In 2014, the Kansas Department of Children and Families convened leaders of 80 different agencies across Wyandotte County, home to Kansas City, to discuss community challenges. Following that initial meeting, county-level agencies and service providers then conferred regularly and used asset-based community development planning processes to design and launch the cross-sector initiative known as [Impact KCK](#). This process enabled the partners to identify and classify community resources, build strategic partnerships and coordinate services. Through an asset-based approach, the partners developed cross-sector goals and coalesced around two key shared outcomes: increased access to stable housing and decreased child poverty.

Through this collaboration across county agencies and service providers, the Impact KCK initiative co-located its services and formed a one-stop resource center that provides support and wraparound services to students and families experiencing homelessness or housing instability. Students and families often

are referred to the resource center by the Kansas City Public Schools' McKinney-Vento Program liaison. Families bring their referral to Impact KCK, where they can obtain housing support and other services from the initiative's network of agencies. Partners in the initiative have created "host navigator" staff positions that help families navigate the agencies and services that make up Impact KCK. The navigators also track the collaborative's overall progress toward reducing childhood poverty and increasing high school graduation rates. The chief executives of all partner organizations and the host navigators meet monthly to review progress.

After the initiative was first launched, Impact KCK further refined its primary outcomes to focus on alleviating student homelessness. This target was aligned with a 2015 call to action from Kansas City's mayor known as "1400 Diplomas," which focused on providing stable housing for the 1,400 students across the county experiencing homelessness.

Housing Goal:

Increase access to stable housing for homeless and unstably housed students and their families.

Education Goal:

Reduce child poverty and increase high school graduation rates.

Shared Housing and Education Outcome:
Alleviating student homelessness to address childhood poverty and increase high school graduation rates.

STAGE
4

PARTNER AND IMPLEMENT CROSS-SECTOR SOLUTIONS

Corresponding StriveTogether Theory of Action™ Gateway: **Emerging or Sustaining**

Stage 4 moves from identifying shared housing and education outcomes to implementing cross-sector solutions. When organizations come together around a shared priority or a set of shared outcomes, it is essential to ensure that the partnership itself can support these goals and carry out cross-sector solutions through established partnership roles, a consensus-driven partnership structure, and thoughtful implementation and outcome measurement.

Approaches, Considerations and Resources

PARTNERSHIP ROLES

Although there is no single approach to establishing partnership roles in cross-sector work, facilitating transparent discussions and documenting roles and responsibilities are critical steps and can help ensure that partnerships have the support and resources needed to move forward.

When establishing roles within a housing and education partnership, it is vital to identify an organization or individual that can serve in a leadership or coordination role. Backbone organizations often play this role, as, typically, they already work across sectors and may have staff who can help manage collaborative work. Organizations that might be well positioned to lead or coordinate a housing and education partnership include the following:

- Existing backbone organizations (e.g., [StriveTogether network member organizations](#)).
- Public agencies (e.g., housing authorities, countywide social services offices, state housing or education departments).
- Locally active foundations or philanthropies.
- Active community development corporations or community-based organizations.
- Active service organizations (e.g., United Way, YMCA, Boys and Girls Club).

When considering the range of roles needed to implement a cross-sector partnership, it is vital to include a diversity of perspectives, individuals and organizations to represent a given community and to ensure that power dynamics are considered and balanced in the partnership structure. Beyond leadership and coordination, other common roles within cross-sector partnerships include community outreach liaison, data and measurement director, project manager, technical assistance provider, communications director and fundraiser. For an example of how cross-sector roles and staffing can be shared across agencies, consider the collaboration of multiple state agencies in the case study on the Homework Starts with Home initiative, described in Stage 5 on page 57.

Cross-sector partnerships also may consider establishing a steering committee with additional stakeholders that are representative of the community, thus building in transparency about the partnership's work and creating an opportunity for community input. An example of an advisory board with community representation is included in the case study on the Early Childhood Initiative presented in Stage 1 on page 37. Links to guidance on establishing partnership roles are also included in [Appendix E](#), under resources for Stage 4.

It is important to recognize that many organizations — particularly complex, public partners like school districts or housing authorities — typically are not designed or funded with cross-sector collaboration in mind. For these partners, testing or piloting organizational and programmatic changes may be a helpful approach to trying out a new form of collaboration. Even smaller efforts, such as piloting new data-sharing agreements, can invite early collaboration, help make quick adjustments and demonstrate small successes. Regardless of the approach, it is important to remember that bureaucratic challenges may arise, and partners will need to manage expectations about how quickly new initiatives can be implemented.

PARTNERSHIP STRUCTURE

Cross-sector partnerships take many forms, and some organizations may seek a formal partnership structure and agreement when beginning their collaborative work. A structure can help create clarity, organization and consistent communication. In addition to formalizing the role of a backbone or lead organization to serve as the primary coordinator, the partnership can define additional roles or groups to provide structure and accountability:

- Leadership table or board of directors.
- Steering committee.
- Advisory council.
- Operations council.
- Data teams.

A partnership structure may be as simple as defining a backbone organization to help convene stakeholders, identifying a set of working groups to address shared outcomes, and creating a community steering committee to offer feedback and input. For more information on this type of structure, resources and guidance are included in a presentation developed by Community Action Partnership and the FSG consulting firm on [Collective Impact Roles and Developing Your Common Agenda](#).

PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS

One way to formalize partnerships is through a partnership agreement, such as a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), to outline the aims of the partnership, the determined roles and the key elements of the planned work. Even if not all project elements are in place, the process of discussing and creating an agreement or MOU can help partners clarify expectations and identify gaps in the partnership design.

For an example of how roles and expectations can be established through an MOU, consider the work of the Partnership for Children & Youth on its Housing and Education Initiative, included as the case study for this Stage (page 50). Guidance on and examples of MOUs also are included in [Appendix E](#), under resources for Stage 4.

PARTNERSHIP RESOURCES

As partnerships focus on their structure and management, discussions on resources and fundraising are both practical and necessary. Although dedicated funding can enable partners to set aside sufficient staff capacity to prioritize and implement the work, partnership may nonetheless seem unrealistic for organizations with limited resources and staff capacity. Absent the funding or capacity needed for a more formal partnership, cross-sector collaborations can focus first on aligning their separate work before establishing and implementing shared work; or they can seek out other opportunities to collaborate, such as serving on organizational boards, city- or county-level committees, or attending coalition meetings.



IMPLEMENTATION AND OUTCOME MEASUREMENT

A critical part of implementing partnerships around shared outcomes is tracking progress over time, which can help partners make adjustments and remain accountable to one another and the community they serve. Key elements and steps for outcome measurement include the following:

- Identify indicators:** To measure progress, partners need to identify specific indicators that align with the shared outcomes and determine appropriate data sources. For a more comprehensive view of progress, partnerships may benefit from identifying qualitative indicators or measures. Qualitative measures of progress can include such key milestones as a successful organizational change, community feedback, dedication of additional funding or expanded community partnerships.
- Establish data-sharing agreements:** Creating a data collection and measurement plan can help determine the types of data-sharing agreements that may be necessary for effective measurement. Data sharing is particularly important in cross-sector partnerships when organizations have not previously exchanged data and may need to overcome bureaucratic or legal barriers to be able to do so.

SUGGESTED RESOURCE:

The Housing and Education Outcomes outlined in [Appendices C and D](#) include examples of metrics for each of the housing and education outcomes referenced in this toolkit.

SUGGESTED RESOURCE:

Examples of and guidance for creating data-sharing agreements are included in [Appendix E](#), under resources for Stage 4. These examples include case studies of collaboration and data sharing between education and homeless service providers.

- Create a data collection and measurement plan:** Developing a data collection and measurement plan is an important process that helps to set expectations for data collection, data sharing and ongoing reporting between partners. It is best to ensure that data can be disaggregated by income and race whenever possible, enabling partners to better understand the population they are serving and to measure progress toward reducing racial disparities and inequality.

SUGGESTED RESOURCES:

Examples of data collection and measurement plans are included in [Appendix E](#), under resources for Stage 4, as a starting point for organizations to work from.

- Adopt continuous and collaborative improvement models:** Continuous improvement is an approach that incrementally assesses progress and adjusts strategy and implementation. StriveTogether uses the concept of *collaborative improvement* to identify the adaptive challenges that create barriers to equitable results for children and families. The four components of this collaborative improvement approach are racial and ethnic equality, [Results Count](#)[®], continuous improvement, and human-centered design. Ongoing outcome measurement helps organizations monitor progress, remain flexible as challenges arise and focus efforts on achieving the greatest impact. This process could lead partners to refine the shared outcomes originally articulated to better reflect the impact they are trying to achieve.

SUGGESTED RESOURCES:

Examples of resources and approaches to continuous and collaborative improvement are included in [Appendix E](#), under resources for Stage 4, including two case studies from StriveTogether network members in [Utah](#) and [Central Texas](#).



Case Study: The Housing and Education Initiative

Lead Organization: Partnership for Children & Youth

Location: California (statewide)

Focused on educational support in public and affordable housing communities, the Housing and Education (HousED) Initiative began in 2010 as an engagement between the [Partnership for Children & Youth](#) (PCY), an advocacy and capacity-building organization in California, and Eden Housing, a nonprofit housing provider with developments in the California cities of Hayward and Richmond. At the time, Eden Housing sought training and support from PCY to develop after-school programming for students living in its developments. As the program grew, additional affordable housing developers and public housing authorities expressed interest in collaborating with PCY on housing-based education initiatives.

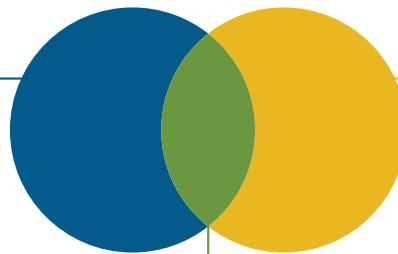
Through HousED, PCY now works with housing agencies, educators, community members and government agencies to increase the accessibility and quality of educational

supports in public and affordable housing communities across California. PCY enters into MOUs with its housing partners, establishing clarity on the action plan for the education initiative, data assessment plan and the time committed to work with HousED on coaching and training. This also allows PCY to ensure consistency in the standards it implements across all partnerships and initiatives, regardless of the site.

Overall, the HousED initiative places a careful focus on training, standards and quality improvement. This emphasis is readily apparent in HousED’s approach, which includes: cultivating systems of continuous learning through a data-driven, continuous quality improvement process; building the capacity of current and future leaders in public and affordable housing; and achieving results for students through enrichment programming that positively impacts healthy development, school engagement and academic outcomes.

Housing Goal:

Provide affordable housing for families with school-age children living in public and affordable housing developments.



Education Goal:

Provide enrichment programming that positively impacts healthy development, school engagement and academic outcomes for youth.

Shared Housing and Education Outcome:

Providing housing-based educational supports and academic enrichment will support healthy child development, promote school engagement and **improve academic outcomes for youth living in public and affordable housing developments.**





SUSTAIN PARTNERSHIPS FOR SYSTEMS CHANGE

Corresponding StriveTogether Theory of Action™ Gateways: **Sustaining, Systems Change, Proof Point and Systems Transformation**

Stage 5 brings together the integral work of the previous stages. As partnerships carry out aligned work and report on expected outcomes, partners will naturally look toward the next steps. To ensure that partnerships can continue to work effectively and create systems change, a compelling case must be made for the partnership's impact and the necessity of the work. This section offers considerations for securing sustainability and using evidence to advocate systems change.

Approaches, Considerations and Resources

SUSTAINING THE WORK

The implementation of cross-sector work is just the beginning. As shared work gains traction, partnerships can drive broader systems change through continued engagement and expanded focus. Key elements and steps for sustaining the work include the following:

- Identify ongoing resources:** Identifying dedicated resources, such as through a local funder or in collaboration with a public institution, will allow organizations to maintain aligned work and even consider new or broadened approaches to addressing desired systems change. Dedicated resources also allow a partnership to continue its commitment to inclusivity, whether by funding staff time for ongoing community engagement or minimizing the administrative burden on smaller organizations by funding project management.

SUGGESTED RESOURCE:

In [Building Impact: A Closer Look at Local Cross-Sector Collaborations for Education](#), the Teachers College at Columbia University has compiled examples of funding sources, strategies and expenses from eight different cross-sector collaborations focused on education, with greater detail on pages 71–74.

- Clarify and adjust partner roles:** As work proceeds, partner organizations may find themselves considering a number of important questions to clarify how partners will continue their shared work. How will the partnership structure change over time? Will additional staff or funds be needed? Who is responsible for ensuring that the work will continue, and how often will this group convene? What are the continuity plans for managing staff and organizational turnover? What additional partners do we need to engage to sustain and improve this work?

SUGGESTED RESOURCE:

One way to reconsider partnership roles is to revisit the partnership roles and structures outlined in Stage 4. Additionally, the Intersector Project has [The Intersector Toolkit](#) on its website to help support cross-sector collaborations, with a section on “Establishing a Governance Structure” that can help to prompt needed reflection when clarifying and adjusting partner roles.

- Scale solutions and pursue systems change:** A key question that partnerships will face in moving forward is how the work itself will proceed, retain community engagement and contribute to larger systems change. When cross-sector solutions have been implemented, partnerships may ask themselves, How do we learn from our past work to improve existing programs, scale effective solutions and support policy development that contributes to needed system change? Tools in the following section, on using evidence and evaluation findings, also can help partners plan to scale their solutions.

SUGGESTED RESOURCE:

In its [Cross-Sector Partnership Assessment](#) survey, Living Cities encourages partnerships at any stage to reflect on their partnership and makes suggestions for changes that may be required moving forward, such as commitments for future work. This tool can be used as an interactive survey or as a planning and discussion guide to enable groups to reflect jointly.

USING EVIDENCE TO DRIVE SYSTEMS CHANGE

In many cases, organizations come together not only because they seek alignment and greater impact around a specific outcome, but also to create broader systems change, focused on addressing the root causes of structural challenges that perpetuate inequities and disparities.²² Collaboration between the education and housing sectors is no exception and offers a promising opportunity to make progress in dismantling systemic inequities that stand in the way of economic mobility for individuals and families.

Measuring outcomes and monitoring ongoing progress can generate the evidence needed to drive systems change. Having evidence of effective solutions positions cross-sector partnerships to advocate policies that address systemic inequities and usher in broader systems change.

Partnerships can take a number of steps to use evidence more effectively to drive systems change, with examples included here and additional guidance and examples of evaluations of cross-sector collaborations included in [Appendix E](#), under resources for Stage 5.

- Understand the system:** Systems mapping, or network mapping, is a visual exercise to identify the individuals and organizations that are key stakeholders within a community and the connections and power dynamics between them, similar to a stakeholder map. These maps help identify the intersection and alignment of key issues within a given geographical area and the factors that influence them. Systems mapping exercises are useful in considering the entry points for seeking systems change to influence policy and funding decisions, because they encourage careful consideration of the power structures in place.
- Bring in evidence:** Evaluations are a powerful tool to reflect on a program’s progress, influence programmatic and funding decisions, and inform the scaling of successful interventions, as well as policy development and advocacy. Evaluations require careful consideration of an initiative’s intended goals and potential impact and can range in the level of effort, time and budget required. Evaluations may be conducted internally by staff or externally by third parties, depending on staff capacity, funding and the level of objectivity needed for the evaluation.

SUGGESTED RESOURCES:

As part of its [Systems Thinking Toolkit](#), FSG focuses on “actor mapping” as one of several tools to better understand a system, including identifying the momentum, blockages and opportunities and helping participants clarify ways forward toward systems change.

In a related blog on [Tools for Supporting Systems Thinking and Change](#), FSG offers brief descriptions of six tools (including actor mapping) to help readers determine which might best suit a partnership’s systems change approach.

The subject of an evaluation is an important consideration, because evaluations can focus on improving the implementation of an initiative or on assessing its outcomes. For example, in the case of a cross-sector collaboration, an implementation or process study would assess the effectiveness of the partnership itself to help guide continuous improvement. In contrast, an outcomes evaluation would assess the outcomes in the partnership’s target community and could be used to inform future work or advocacy efforts.

Effective evaluations require thoughtful planning and execution to ensure that they can meet their intended purpose. An evaluation plan is a useful tool that outlines the research methods, data collection and data analysis required to complete the assessment. In addition to the resources included here, additional guidance on planning, scoping and conducting an evaluation is included in [Appendix E](#), under resources for Stage 5.

SUGGESTED RESOURCES:

[The Step-by-Step Guide to Evaluation: How to Become Savvy Evaluation Consumers](#) | W. K. Kellogg Foundation:

In this evaluation guide, published by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation, organizations can learn more about the elements of an evaluation, including methodologies, staffing and the role of staff and stakeholders.

[Evaluation Capacity Diagnostic Tool](#) | Informing Change:

As organizations begin to engage with evaluation activities, considering an organization’s or partnership’s capacity for evaluation is critical. In this tool, Informing Change outlines different dimensions of capacity to help organizations understand their own evaluation expertise and need for support before proceeding.

[Developing an Evaluation Plan](#) | Community Tool Box, Center for Community Health and Development at the University of Kansas:

One of many resources in the Community Tool Box, this resource includes a series of helpful questions to consider when compiling an evaluation plan.

[Project Monitoring and Evaluation](#) | access²innovation network:

The access²innovation network provides an overview of monitoring and evaluation in the context of partnership, including a detailed guideline that explains steps to developing an evaluation framework.

- **Communicate for policy and systems change:** Cross-sector partnerships can leverage anecdotal evidence, program documentation, and evaluation and outcome data to spur policy change and other system-level improvements. When organizations can point to documented examples of proven approaches to service delivery — or to barriers in local systems— they can more effectively advocate systems change and contribute to the development of new policies. Although many organizations may not have the resources for a full-scale evaluation, they still have an opportunity to drive systems change by highlighting compelling stories that demonstrate the necessity of their work. Evidence and data of all kinds can be used to make a powerful case for changes to new or proposed policies and funding decisions. For example, the documented experiences of children and families, as seen in the following case study about Project Hope, proved to be a useful advocacy tool. Even in the absence of a formal process, using the principles of evaluation can be a helpful place to start.

The following evaluation reports offer examples of how housing- and education-focused project evaluations can be documented, summarized and used to develop recommendations for future work or future systems change. Additional examples of evaluations and resources using evaluation data are included in [Appendix E](#), under resources for Stage 5.

RELEVANT EXAMPLES:

[The Youth Count Texas! Project: Process Evaluation Report](#) | Texas Network of Youth Services

[Housing First Collaborative Year One Evaluation Report](#) | Charles and Helen Schwab Foundation

[Student and Family Stability Initiative Year One Evaluation Report](#) | King County Housing Authority & Highline Public Schools



Case Study: Services Collaborative for Students Experiencing Homelessness

Lead Organization: Project Hope

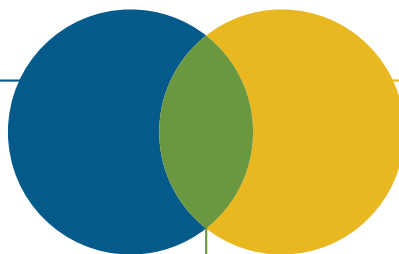
Location: Boston, Massachusetts

Project Hope is a multiservice agency focused on supporting economic mobility for women with children in low-income households. Initially founded as a family homeless shelter, Project Hope has expanded to offer a wide range of educational and workforce development services. Through its Housing Services department, Project Hope leads a collaborative of local partners, including the Boston Public Schools and service and housing agencies. The collaborative is focused on identifying students experiencing homelessness and targeting services to help their families stabilize their housing and support progress toward their education goals. Partners in the collaborative include public school staff — such as homeless liaisons, principals, social workers and guidance counselors — and staff at local agencies, including city departments.

In addition to providing coordinated services to students and their families, the collaborative also has advocated policy change, petitioning the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to lift the family cap on cash benefits for families with low incomes who participate in the state’s Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children (TAFDC) program, making it possible for families to receive benefits for children they have while receiving — or soon after receiving — benefits.²³ Because of the collaborative’s knowledge of children and families experiences with homelessness and its representation across multiple sectors, Project Hope was able to leverage connections with partners and successfully advocate systems change, removing barriers to economic mobility for children and their families.

Housing Goal:

Provide shelter, services and stable housing for homeless students and their families.



Education Goal:

Support homeless students and their families to promote school attendance and improved performance.

Shared Housing and Education Outcome:

Combining housing, supportive services and school coordination for homeless students and their families will **improve school attendance and performance.**



Case Study: Homework Starts with Home

Lead Organization: Minnesota Interagency Council on Homelessness

Location: Minnesota (Beltrami, Cass and Red Lake Counties; and West Central Minnesota Continuum of Care)

The release of the 2010 report, “Heading Home: Minnesota’s Roadmap for Ending Homelessness,” by the Minnesota Interagency Council on Homelessness, spurred the creation of a series of state-level action plans that prioritized collaboration between local school districts and crisis programs. Both the State Commissioner of Education and the Commissioner of Housing saw this as an opportunity to continue state-level efforts to reduce student mobility, improve student attendance and, in turn, improve student performance.

The two commissioners worked closely with other state agencies to pilot and launch an initiative known as “[Homework Starts with Home](#).” The initiative provides rental assistance through the state’s Housing Trust Fund and supportive services to families with school-age children through a Family Homeless Prevention and Assistance program. This support ensures that families spend no more than 30 percent of their household income on rent and gain access to additional services, such as case management using a two-generation approach.

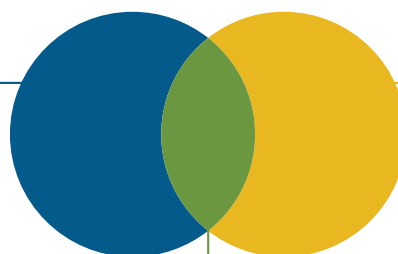
Recognizing the challenges of funding and implementing cross-sector collaboration, Minnesota’s Department of Education

created a three-year grant program to incentivize and provide financial resources for local collaborations under the Homework Starts with Home initiative that has been written into the state budget. The Department of Education hosts a staff member from Minnesota Housing, the state’s housing finance agency, to coordinate and administer grants to local collaborations composed of school districts, local government agencies and housing providers. The initiative requires grant applicants to articulate how they will partner with each sector to serve eligible youth and families and to track school attendance and performance through state assessments. Grant dollars go toward housing assistance; personnel, including case managers and social workers; and program operations, including technical assistance and capacity building.

Homework Starts with Home has enabled cross-sector partnership and steps toward systems change at both the state and local levels, with long-term sustainability through ongoing commitments of staff and resources from multiple state departments, along with new collaborations in local communities across the state.

Housing Goal:

Identify and support homeless and unstably housed families with school-age children.



Education Goal:

Reduce student mobility and increase school attendance and performance.

Shared Housing and Education Outcome:

Local collaboratives of school districts, local governments and nonprofits will **reduce school mobility** and **improve school attendance and performance** by providing rental subsidies and supportive services for families with school-age children.



LOOKING AHEAD

It is our sincere hope that this toolkit serves as a useful resource for aligning the important work of the housing and education sectors to support mobility from poverty for children and families across the United States. This toolkit is intended to create greater awareness of the opportunities and challenges in bringing these two distinct sectors together, while providing the steps and resources to support these critical partnerships.

Throughout the toolkit, we have provided case studies of how local leaders in the housing and education sectors have come together around common goals and shared outcomes. These case studies offer a picture of the diversity and impact of cross-sector collaboration as it is implemented in communities across the country. This work is crucial in building support among elected officials, policymakers and the public to substantively transform the systems that have led to the inequities and racial disparities experienced by children and families nationwide.

Enterprise, in collaboration with StriveTogether, will continue to support the local efforts of housing and education partnerships and publish resources and tools for the housing and education sectors to use in this work. This collaboration will focus on engaging and aligning the two sectors around economic mobility from the ground up. Together, we can work to build the future that our children and future generations deserve.

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APPENDIX A: HOUSING 101

What is affordable housing?

“Affordable housing” can mean different things to different people. Terms like “workforce housing” are used widely, also. At its essence, “affordability” refers to a household’s ability to pay for housing and still have money remaining for other monthly necessities. Housing typically is defined as “affordable” when it costs no more than 30 percent of a household’s income. Households that spend more than 30 percent of their income on housing are considered to be “cost burdened,” while those that spend more than 50 percent of their income on housing are considered to be “severely cost burdened.”¹ For renters, housing costs refer to rental payments and utilities. For homeowners, housing costs include a mortgage payment (including interest), taxes, insurance and utilities, in addition to other relevant costs such as homeowner association fees.

Housing cost burden can mean fewer resources available each month for such necessities as food, transportation and health care, especially for low-income households. Cost burden cuts across renter and homeowner households alike. Although this 101 focuses primarily on affordable rental housing, many programs and policies also support affordable homeownership. A summary of affordable homeownership programs is provided at the end of the following section on common programs that support affordable housing.

Across all types of affordable housing, the need far outweighs the supply. As recently as 2017, for example, an estimated 20.5 million renter households were cost burdened, while an additional 17.3 million homeowners were cost burdened in 2018.² Data from 2019 reveal that 567,715 individuals were experiencing homelessness, with 30 percent of these individuals in families with children.³ In 2017, less than one quarter of all very low-income renter households that were eligible for federal rental assistance actually received it. Waitlists for public housing and housing choice vouchers (described in the following section) can be years long, if they are open at all. According to one estimate, approximately 4.4 million households were on public housing authority (PHA) waitlists in 2016.⁴

It bears noting that the burden of an inadequate supply of affordable housing, from high housing cost burdens to homelessness, falls disproportionately on nonwhite individuals and communities of color. To illustrate this inequity, consider that although nearly one in four Black households is severely cost burdened — spending more than half of their income on housing — this is true for just one in 10 white households.⁵ And African Americans make up more than 40 percent of the population experiencing homelessness, even though they represent only 13 percent of the population overall.⁶ This disproportionate burden is the result of decades of discriminatory and segregationist policies, a legacy that perpetuates disparities to this day.

SUBSIDIZED AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Housing subsidies address cost burden by reducing or limiting housing costs, which can include utilities. Housing is considered “subsidized” if financial assistance is used to maintain affordable rents for households at certain income levels (most often for low- or moderate-income households). Subsidies can be tied to the building or unit (“project-based subsidies”) or can be granted to specific households (“tenant-based subsidies”). Project-based subsidies typically are provided to finance the development of the project or to support ongoing property maintenance, in exchange for affordability restrictions (i.e., limits on the rents that can be charged for those units, and limits on the incomes of people who can live there) on a certain number of units in the property. Tenant-based subsidies generally target specific eligible populations (e.g., low-income households or persons with disabilities) and allow households that receive the assistance to choose where they live, so long as they find a landlord that is willing to accept the subsidy. Common project- and tenant-based subsidy programs are explored further in the next section on programs that support affordable housing.

To help understand the role of subsidies in creating and maintaining affordable housing, the Urban Institute has a useful online tool titled [The cost of affordable housing: Does it pencil out?](#) that explores the deficit of affordable housing units across the United States.

UNSUBSIDIZED AFFORDABLE HOUSING

It is important to note that not all affordable housing is subsidized. In addition to subsidies, housing costs also can be reduced or suppressed through policies, processes and broader market conditions that impact the cost of development and property maintenance and, in turn, the price residents pay. Housing that does not receive direct subsidy also may be available at an affordable price from private landlords in the housing market, without any subsidy or government support to operate these housing units. In some areas, in fact, this can be the predominant form of affordable housing because of the limited amount of subsidy available compared to the need for affordable housing. These properties may be affordable to lower-income households without subsidy for several reasons, generally relating to the characteristics of the property or the surrounding neighborhood. For instance, the properties may be in poor physical condition, disconnected from amenities or resources like transportation or job centers, or located in a neighborhood that historically has not been considered desirable. In many cases, these neighborhoods suffered from disinvestment as a result of decades of discrimination and systemic racism in the housing sector.

Unsubsidized affordable housing units can be at risk of loss if they are not taken care of and deteriorate past the point of livability or if they are converted to market rate units in response to or in anticipation of growing demand, which can lead to higher cost burden or displacement for existing low-income residents. Programs and policies for the preservation of affordable housing can help protect these units and prevent displacement, regardless of market changes.

What are the most common programs that support affordable housing?

Multiple federal, state and local programs support the creation or operation of subsidized housing for households with varying income levels and characteristics. The most common federal programs are summarized in the table below and are described in greater detail on the following pages. Descriptions of additional state and local programs, as well as affordable homeownership programs, are also included at the end of this section on common programs that support affordable housing.

PROGRAM	HOUSING UNITS (MILLIONS)	ADMINISTRATION AND FUNDING	ELIGIBILITY AND RENT RESTRICTIONS
Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC)	3.13 ⁷	Administered by a state or local tax credit allocating agency (such as a state housing finance agency), LIHTC is funded through tax credit expenditure, enabled by the Internal Revenue Service.	<p>Eligibility: Households earning up to 80% of the Area Median Income (AMI),⁸ as long as the average overall income of residents in a given property is 60% of AMI or below.</p> <p>Rent: A household is responsible for paying 30% of the qualifying household income (based on the AMI eligibility tied to the unit).⁹</p>
Housing Choice Voucher program (HCV)	2.2 ¹⁰	Administered locally by a public housing authority (PHA), with funding and oversight by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the HCV program enables qualifying households to receive a subsidy (known as a housing assistance payment) to apply toward a rental unit on the private market. ¹¹	<p>Eligibility: Households earning no greater than 50% of AMI.</p> <p>Rent: A household is responsible for paying the difference between the rent charged by the landlord and the housing assistance payment authorized by the PHA.¹²</p>
Project-Based Section 8 Rental Assistance (PBRA)	1.2 ¹³	Administered by a contract administrator or HUD, the PBRA is funded by HUD and provides affordable homes to qualifying low-income households at select privately owned properties.	<p>Eligibility: Households earning no greater than 80% of AMI.</p> <p>Rent: A household is responsible for paying 30% of monthly income.¹⁴</p>
Public Housing	1.13 ¹⁵	Administered by the local PHA and funded through HUD, public housing is the nation's oldest subsidized housing program.	<p>Eligibility: Households earning no greater than 80% of AMI (and 40% of newly admitted families must be at 30% of AMI or below).</p> <p>Rent: The majority of households are responsible for paying 30% of their income toward rent. PHAs may require lower rents based on extenuating circumstances, with a minimum of \$50 monthly.</p>

LOW-INCOME HOUSING TAX CREDITS

The Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program is the primary source of financing for the construction and preservation of affordable housing in the United States. Jointly administered by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and state-authorized tax credit allocation agencies, the LIHTC program provides a tax incentive for investors to invest in the acquisition, construction or rehabilitation of affordable housing for low-income households.¹⁶ Two levels of tax credits are available, known as 9% or 4% tax credits. While the 9% tax credit is used most commonly for new construction, the 4% tax credit typically is reserved for rehabilitation projects and financing through tax-exempt bonds. See the 2018 Urban Institute report titled [The Low-Income Housing Tax Credit: How It Works and Who It Serves](#) for a comprehensive summary of the tax credit program. LIHTC developments are owned and operated by private entities, including for-profit housing developers or nonprofit community development corporations.

Although no operating subsidy is provided to the owner or operator of the housing, the LIHTC program ensures affordability through rent restrictions. As tax credits alone often are not enough to close the gap between development costs and deeply affordable rents, most LIHTC properties have many layers of financing — often including multiple forms of federal or state subsidy — ensuring deeper affordability for low-income households. In fact, many states and localities offer funds specifically designed to help close this gap, sometimes referred to as “gap financing.” Additional types of state and local support for housing are outlined in the following pages.

Rent restrictions for LIHTC units are based on what is considered affordable at different percentages of the area median income (AMI), rather than the income of a specific tenant. Projects financed through LIHTC must commit to maintaining affordability for renters with low incomes for at least 30 years. Under this commitment, however, properties are subject to only a 15-year compliance period, during which a state housing finance agency is able to take away or “recapture” a tax credit if LIHTC regulations are not met. Following this 15-year compliance period, property owners may choose to opt out of the program through what is known as a *qualified contract*, making these properties vulnerable to losing their rent restrictions and affordability under the LIHTC program.¹⁷ Many housing advocates at the state and federal level have argued against qualified contracts, arguing that they undermine the intended affordability aims of the program.

Nonetheless, some states may require or prioritize longer affordability periods when awarding tax credits. These criteria are articulated in the state’s Qualified Allocation Plan (QAP), which is required under the LIHTC program and is updated annually to reflect state and local priorities for affordable housing development across a range of categories, including housing location or populations served.¹⁸ For information on state QAPs, the [Novogradac Affordable Housing Resource Center](#) links to each state’s QAP in its online database.

HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAMS

The Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program is a federally funded program that is administered by PHAs and allows eligible individuals and families to afford housing in the private rental market. A housing choice voucher covers the difference between the rent a tenant can afford (i.e., 30 percent of their monthly income) and either the gross rent charged or the PHA's payment standards for that type of unit, whichever is lower. Payment standards are intended to reflect the cost of renting a moderately priced unit in the local housing market and, thus, vary by locale.¹⁹ In markets with rapidly increasing housing costs, however, payment standards may not keep pace with local housing costs.

The HCV program includes tenant-based vouchers (TBVs) and project-based vouchers (PBVs), both of which are overseen by HUD's [Office of Public and Indian Housing](#). Funded by congressional appropriations to HUD, the HCV program serves approximately 2.3 million households annually.²⁰ Overall, at least 75 percent of Housing Choice Vouchers must go to households at or below 30 percent of AMI. TBVs and PBVs are described in greater detail here:

- **Tenant-based vouchers (TBVs):** Households receiving TBVs are able to select and rent units in the private market and put just 30 percent of their income toward rent and utilities. The rest of the gross rent is covered by the PHA (up to the limit of a set payment standard) and paid directly to the private owner.²¹ To qualify for a voucher, individuals first must apply through their local PHA, often facing closed applications or enduring long waitlists, given the overwhelming demand. If and when households are granted a housing voucher, they generally have 60 days to find a unit that meets their needs and HUD's basic standards and "lease up."²²

The availability and accessibility of TBVs relies on working directly with landlords in the private rental market, which can be challenging. Some PHAs may have difficulty finding willing landlords or working with landlords to establish payment procedures and ensure that inspections are conducted in a timely manner. Households with TBVs may struggle to identify a landlord who will accept vouchers. Without the protections incorporated into local regulations — often known as "source of income" protections — landlords have the right to refuse voucher holders, and do so at a high rate.²³ Even with source of income protections, voucher holders are denied at higher rates than those without subsidies, particularly in more desirable neighborhoods.²⁴

- **Project-based vouchers (PBVs):** Generally, a housing authority has the ability to designate or "project-base" up to 20 percent of its overall authorized voucher units to specific housing developments. Notably, some exceptions or exemptions apply that allow PHAs to project-base additional units if they meet certain criteria, such as connecting units to supportive services.²⁵ Typically, developments are selected to be able to receive PBVs through a competitive process managed by the PHA.²⁶ PBVs can be assigned to new or existing construction and are tied to specific housing units with housing managers or owners who enter into a contract with the PHA to rent to eligible families. In some cases, PHAs own properties with PBVs. Households living in PBV units put 30 percent of their income toward housing and the PHA covers the rest of the required rent.²⁷ Should a household in a unit with a PBV choose to move out, the unit remains eligible for the rent subsidy and can be occupied by another qualifying low-income household.²⁸

PROJECT-BASED SECTION 8 RENTAL ASSISTANCE

Similar to PBVs, the Project-Based Section 8 Rental Assistance (PBRA) program enables qualifying low-income households to rent units in privately owned buildings. PBRA properties are privately owned and receive operating subsidy from HUD through a multiyear housing assistance payment (HAP) contract. Although HUD receives congressional appropriations annually to fund the renewal of HAP contracts for PBRA,²⁹ Congress has terminated HUD's authority to sign new contracts.³⁰ This termination means that — unlike the PBVs described previously, which can support new construction projects — no additional PBRA units can be added to the current supply unless current public housing units are converted to PBRA units, such as under a redevelopment program known as Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD). PBRA is overseen by HUD's [Office of Multifamily Housing](#) and units are owned by private, for-profit owners; nonprofit owners; or PHAs with long-term contracts.³¹ Similar to the other Housing Choice Voucher programs described above, eligible households living in PBRA units put 30 percent of their income toward rent.³²

PUBLIC HOUSING

Although the term “public housing” is used widely, the term refers to a specific type of federally funded, permanently affordable and deeply subsidized housing. Created by the United States Housing Act of 1937, public housing is the nation's oldest subsidized housing program. PHAs administer the program on a local level, providing rental units in PHA-owned properties to households below 80 percent of AMI. PHAs are required to target at least 40 percent of new admissions to households at or below 30 percent of AMI. Individual housing agencies also may create admissions preferences for individuals experiencing homelessness, households led by elderly persons and people with disabilities, or working families.³³ As of 2016, PHAs served more than 1.13 million households nationwide via the public housing program.³⁴ Of those households, 91 percent were considered very low income (below 50 percent of AMI), while 72 percent were considered extremely low income (below 30 percent of AMI), a reminder of the role that public housing serves in housing some of the nation's most vulnerable households.³⁵

Unlike other affordable housing programs, public housing is funded solely through federal dollars and is characterized by public ownership of housing units, in addition to permanent affordability. Housing authorities receive two types of grants from congressional appropriations to HUD, referred to as operating and capital funds.³⁶ The Public Housing Capital Fund subsidizes physical development and maintenance, and the Public Housing Operating Fund provides an ongoing rental subsidy through an annual contributions contract (ACC) between HUD and a given PHA.^{37,38} Although operating and capital funds are intended to cover the gap between resident rent payments and operations and maintenance costs, the reality is that recent funding allocations have failed to fully meet the needs of aging PHA properties. Estimates place the current capital backlog of needed physical repairs and renovations at close to \$70 billion,³⁹ increasing by approximately \$3.4 billion annually.⁴⁰

Additionally, the federal government is no longer funding the development of new public housing units and instead is encouraging PHAs to redevelop and modernize properties through public-private partnerships and other financing approaches. In some cases, PHAs may be able to combine federal redevelopment funds, tax credits and other investments to construct new public housing. For the past several decades, PHAs have been able to leverage other competitive federal funding to support the refurbishment, redevelopment or conversion of public housing into other forms of subsidized housing, through such programs as [HOPE VI](#), [Choice Neighborhoods](#) or the [Rental Assistance Demonstration \(RAD\)](#).⁴¹

OTHER FEDERAL HOUSING PROGRAMS

Numerous federal agencies manage programs that award funds to states and local jurisdictions to support affordable housing, many more than are highlighted in this 101. In addition to HUD and the IRS, other agencies include the U.S. Departments of Agriculture, Veterans Affairs and the Treasury.⁴² Additional information on federal housing programs is summarized in [Federal Funding for Affordable Housing](#), a resource from the [Local Housing Solutions](#) site managed by The NYU Furman Center and Abt Associates. For programs that are specific to rural areas, this list of [Federal Rural Housing Programs](#) from the National Housing Conference is a useful reference.

The list below details additional programs managed by HUD that advance the preservation and production of affordable housing.

- **Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Programs:** One of HUD's longest running programs, the [CDBG program](#) provides annual grants to states and local jurisdictions, including cities and counties. Governments are able to apply CDBG funds toward a range of community and economic development needs, including housing.⁴³ At least 70 percent of CDBG funds awarded locally must be used for activities that benefit individuals with low and moderate incomes.⁴⁴ States and localities set priorities for the allocation of CDBG funds through the Consolidated Planning process, which is required by HUD and occurs every five years, with annual updates.
- **Home Investment Partnerships Program (HOME):** [HOME](#) is managed by HUD and provides grants to states and local jurisdictions to fund a range of affordable housing activities, including tenant-based rental assistance, housing construction and support for public housing, among other uses. These funds often are used in partnership with nonprofit organizations and can be used as grants, direct loans or security deposits, as well as loan guarantees or other forms of credit enhancement.⁴⁵ State and local priorities for HOME funds also are set through the Consolidated Planning process, as seen in the CDBG program above.
- **Housing Trust Fund (HTF):** HUD allocates funds annually to a national [Housing Trust Fund](#). States and other state-designated entities are able to apply for grants through the Housing Trust Fund, which can be used for the production or preservation of affordable housing, with at least 80 percent of each annual grant dedicated to affordable rental housing.⁴⁶

A number of federal programs also target housing for particular vulnerable populations, such as the elderly or those living with AIDS. Several such programs are summarized below.

- **Housing Opportunities for Persons With AIDS (HOPWA):** The [HOPWA program](#) provides federal funding to eligible states, local governments and nonprofit organizations to provide housing and other related supportive services to individuals or families living with AIDS.
- **HUD–Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH):** The [HUD-VASH program](#) combines rental assistance through the HCV program with supportive services from the U.S. Department of Veterans affairs and is aimed at providing stable, affordable housing and case management for veterans who are experiencing homelessness.
- **Section 202 and Section 811:** The [Section 202](#) and [Section 811](#) programs aim to support affordable housing and supportive services for the elderly and populations with disabilities, respectively. Section 202 serves low-income elders over the age of 62. Section 811 serves adults with disabilities with low and extremely low incomes.

AFFORDABLE HOMEOWNERSHIP PROGRAMS

Although this 101 focuses primarily on affordable rental programs, affordable homeownership is nonetheless an important element of the housing sector and a critical area of focus for building equity and wealth for families with lower incomes. For households of color, in particular, homeownership has been kept out of reach for decades due to structural racism and discriminatory practices. A summary by the Urban Institute offers a powerful visual of the Black homeownership gap across the United States: [Mapping the Black homeownership gap](#).

Affordable homeownership refers to policies and programs at the federal, state and local levels that enable low- and moderate-income households to access homeownership that is affordable given their household income. Affordable homeownership programs typically intend to make progress on four key elements: affordability, wealth creation, secure tenure and mobility; the last refers to a household's ability to sell their affordable home and move into other housing in a neighborhood of their choosing.⁴⁷ Although many programs focus on helping homebuyers, particularly first-time homebuyers, to access affordable homeownership, local governments and nonprofit organizations also have programs that help homeowners with low and moderate incomes to stay in their homes, through housing counseling, foreclosure mitigation, or support for home upkeep and repair. Programs in support of affordable homeownership are included below, along with suggested resources or examples of programs.

- **Support for first-time homebuyers**, such as mortgage interest rate deductions or closing cost and down payment assistance. These financial supports often are offered by state and local governments to qualifying homebuyers and help to make homebuying feasible for households with lower incomes.

SUGGESTED RESOURCES

[Local Homebuying Programs](#) | HUD

[Homeownership](#) | NeighborWorks America

- **Shared equity models**, such as community land trusts and housing trusts. Shared equity models create affordability for homebuyers through an initial subsidy, typically from a government or nonprofit entity. This affordability is ensured in the long term through resale restrictions in which the homebuyer agrees to share any home appreciation with the entity managing the program. Under a community land trust model, homebuyers purchase the home but lease the land from the trust, making the purchase more affordable and allowing the trust to retain affordability when the home is sold.

SUGGESTED RESOURCES

[Shared Equity Homeownership](#) and [Community Land Trusts](#) | Grounded Solutions Network

[Shared Equity Models Offer Sustainable Homeownership](#) | Office of Policy Development and Research, HUD

[Affordable Homeownership: An Evaluation of Shared Equity Programs](#) | Urban Institute

- **Sale of affordable, deed-restricted properties**, with resale restrictions held by government agencies or nonprofit organizations, such as community development corporations (CDCs) or Habitat for Humanity affiliate organizations. Similar to the shared equity models described previously, the use of deed restrictions ensures affordability over the long term.

SUGGESTED RESOURCES

[Sustaining Homeownership: The Experience of City-Based Homeownership Programs](#) | Carolina Reid, Community Investments, Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco

[Qualifications for Habitat Homeownership](#) | Habitat for Humanity

- **Resident ownership models**, such as cooperative housing, limited equity cooperatives or resident-owned communities. Resident or cooperative ownership models enable households to have democratic control over multifamily housing buildings or other housing developments, such as manufactured home parks. Limited equity cooperatives refer to cooperative ownership that enables low- and moderate-income households to purchase a share of a property at a below-market rate.

SUGGESTED RESOURCES

[About Cooperatives](#) | National Association of Housing Cooperatives

[The State of Shared Equity Homeownership](#) | Emily Thaden, Shelterforce

[What's a ROC?](#) | ROC USA

- **Affordable lending** practices can help to make homeownership a reality for families with lower incomes. Programs through Federal Home Loan Banks or State Housing Finance Agencies, in addition to local governments and community lenders, often tailor services to homebuyers with lower incomes, offer straightforward loan products, and can help to lower lending costs for qualifying homebuyers.

SUGGESTED RESOURCES

[Affordable Mortgage Lending Guide: Products Offered by State Housing Finance Agencies](#) | Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation

[Affordable Housing Program](#) | Federal Housing Finance Agency

It is important to note that, although homeownership remains a cornerstone of wealth building in the United States, this is a very different proposition for households of color, and particularly for those living in segregated, historically red-lined communities.⁴⁸ In areas where property values may be low, stagnant or even declining, the proposition of gaining home equity through homeownership is much more challenging. Additionally, although affordable homeownership programs offer an important entry point into homeownership for individuals who might not otherwise qualify, these programs also may limit the equity that homeowners can build, due to resale restrictions or other deed requirements. Nonetheless, these programs often are considered to be less financially risky for low- and moderate-income homebuyers because they provide straightforward loan products that are purposefully structured to be affordable to the homebuying household.

STATE AND LOCAL HOUSING PROGRAMS

In addition to the federal programs described in the previous sections, many state and local housing programs support the accessibility and availability of affordable housing locally. Although federal funds and programs for affordable housing reach millions of households annually, the need for housing support nonetheless far exceeds the supply. Local governments have a range of tools at their disposal to promote affordable housing, from indirect incentives to direct development approaches. Examples and suggested resources for local housing programs and policies are included below. Helpful information on state and local housing policies is summarized on the [Local Housing Solutions](#) site.

- **Inclusionary zoning** laws promote the creation of affordable housing by encouraging or mandating that developers set aside a determined percentage of housing units to be rented or sold at below-market prices.

SUGGESTED RESOURCES

[Exploring Inclusionary Zoning's Effect on Affordable Housing](#) | Office of Policy Development and Research, HUD
[Inclusionary Zoning](#) | Urban Institute
[Housing and Health: The Role of Inclusionary Zoning](#) | HealthAffairs

- **Housing trust funds** are funds established by local governments (city, county, state) to receive public funding dedicated specifically to supporting the preservation and production of affordable housing. Typically, funds are flexible and can be used for affordable rental or homeownership.

SUGGESTED RESOURCES

[Housing Trust Funds: The Basics](#) | National Housing Conference
[Opening Doors to Homes for All: The 2016 Housing Trust Fund Survey Report](#) | Housing Trust Fund Project, Center for Community Change

- **Rental assistance programs** administered locally resemble housing choice vouchers, described earlier, but are funded and managed by local governments. Because federally funded programs serve only one in four eligible households, city and state programs are intended to broaden the reach of much-needed housing support.

SUGGESTED RESOURCES

[State and City Funded Rental Housing Programs](#) | National Low Income Housing Coalition

- **Public land disposition** refers to the strategic decision of local governments to dispose, or designate, publicly owned land or buildings specifically for the development of affordable housing.

SUGGESTED RESOURCES

[Use of Publicly Owned Property for Affordable Housing](#) | Local Housing Solutions
[Using Public Land to Create Equitable Communities: Policy Best Practices](#) | Craig Adelman and Devin Culbertson, Living Cities

- **Land banks** are public or nonprofit organizations that acquire and manage property that can be designated or developed for public use, such as affordable housing.

SUGGESTED RESOURCES

[Land Banks Overview](#) | Local Housing Solutions
[Land Banking](#) | County Health Rankings

What types of organizations typically work in housing at the local level?

Numerous organizations work in housing at the local level as owners, managers, developers, advocates, service providers or lenders. Depending on the community, these organizations may have varying roles and levels of coordination. The table below describes the roles of many common housing organizations and the geographic areas they serve.

HOUSING ORGANIZATION	DESCRIPTION OF ROLE	GEOGRAPHIC AREA SERVED
Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs)	CDFIs are private financial institutions that are dedicated to affordable lending practices. These institutions lend to a range of community businesses, including those involved in affordable housing development. CDFIs have four main sectors that are active in local affordable lending: community development banks, community development credit unions, community development loan funds and community development venture capital funds.	National, regional or local
Continuums of Care (CoCs)	CoCs are planning bodies that coordinate funding for housing and services for individuals and families experiencing homelessness at a local level, typically within a city, county or metropolitan area. Approximately 400 CoCs operate across the United States. ⁴⁹ Competitively funded by HUD through the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Grants program, the CoC program aims to bring organizations together into a local coalition aimed at ending homelessness. ⁵⁰ CoCs may include state and local agencies, nonprofits, philanthropies and, often, a local public housing authority (PHA). CoCs identify the service and housing needs of the population experiencing homelessness and coordinate emergency shelter, transitional housing and permanent supportive housing. CoCs also are responsible for a biannual count of the population experiencing homelessness in its service area, as well as for an annual count of the emergency systems, transitional housing and shelter beds in the area. These counts are maintained in a local Homeless Management Information System and are an important resource for understanding needs and redirecting services, funding and other resources to best meet local needs. ⁵¹	State, regional or local
Homeless Service Providers	Homeless service providers offer support services to individuals and families, including shelter and other services. Homeless services and shelters often are run by nonprofit organizations, or local and state governments, with funding allocated by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. In addition to government funding, philanthropic giving plays a large role in funding nonprofits and other agencies providing homeless services and shelter.	Regional or local
Housing Advocates and Cross-Sector Coalitions	Housing advocates and cross-sector coalitions work to direct funding to affordable housing and influence policy change and regulations that spur affordable housing development and benefit people living in poverty.	National, state, regional or local
Housing Developers, Owners and Community Development Corporations (CDCs)	Housing developers and owners can be nonprofit organizations or for-profit entities that build or preserve affordable housing using federal, state or local programs. CDCs are nonprofit organizations dedicated to community revitalization that often focus specifically on the development of affordable housing.	National, state, regional or local

HOUSING ORGANIZATION	DESCRIPTION OF ROLE	GEOGRAPHIC AREA SERVED
Local Government Agencies and Elected Officials	Local government agencies provide funding for affordable housing; for example, dedicating land or funding for housing development, providing local housing vouchers, or assigning other emergency funding to address homelessness. Common agencies involved in housing-related decisions include departments of housing, departments of planning or economic development, and mayor’s offices, as well as city councils. Local governments also dictate development regulations that affect the location and scale of housing, such as density and height limits, parking requirements, and permitting.	Local
Public Housing Agencies (PHAs)	<p>PHAs administer the public housing program and Housing Choice Voucher program at the local level. Overall, approximately 3,300 public housing agencies administer programs locally across the United States.⁵² For many years, PHAs managed a traditional portfolio of public housing units, but these agencies have started to diversify and are involved in other forms of housing assistance, including the HCV program, state and local housing programs, and other development or redevelopment efforts in their jurisdictions. In fact, some PHAs may manage only public housing, or only voucher programs.</p> <p>The Moving to Work (MTW) Demonstration exempts select PHAs from certain public housing and HCV rules, giving them greater flexibility in their use of federal funds. In many cases, PHAs use their MTW status to implement innovative programs, establish partnerships with local schools and other organizations, and hire additional staff.</p>	State, regional or local
Service Providers	Service providers offer supportive services to households living in affordable units. A housing owner or property manager typically works with service providers, whether public agencies or nonprofit organizations, to engage with residents and offer services on-site. Many affordable housing developments have a staff member or contractor dedicated to managing resident services.	Regional or local
State Housing Agencies	State housing agencies, sometimes referred to as state housing finance agencies, can administer local housing development or assistance programs, financing for housing development, and state-level tax credits for property development through the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit program.	State or local
Tenant Advocacy Organizations and Tenant Associations	<p>Tenant advocacy organizations, such as Legal Aid or other fair housing organizations, advocate on behalf of individuals or groups of tenants to, for example, address discrimination and uphold fair housing laws, prevent unlawful evictions, or petition for higher standards of housing quality.</p> <p>Tenant associations are organizations made up of residents living in a particular building, development or geographic area. Tenant associations often advocate for resident needs, inform residents of their rights, communicate with tenants and property owners, and help to facilitate changes, such as building improvements.</p>	Regional or local

How is affordable housing regulated?

No single governing body or process oversees affordable housing locally. Depending on the program, oversight and accountability vary greatly. Because subsidized affordable housing programs are administered at the federal, state and local levels, regulations and compliance standards vary, although many follow standards established by HUD. When affordable housing developments utilize multiple funding programs, they must meet all relevant standards for compliance and reporting. A brief summary of regulations for several of the most common housing programs (described previously in the section on common programs that support affordable housing) are included in the table below:

PROGRAM	REGULATORY OVERSIGHT	SUMMARY OF REGULATIONS
Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC)	Internal Revenue Service, state housing finance agencies and investors	For the LIHTC program, developers must submit projects that qualify under a state's Qualified Allocation Plan (QAP), which awards funding based on specific standards and sets out requirements for eligibility over time, including long-term affordability. Depending on the entity that syndicates the tax credit for the LIHTC program, the development then will be inspected by an asset management team, ensuring that the building is maintained at a reasonable standard.
Housing Choice Voucher (HCV)	Public housing authorities (PHAs) and U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)	The HCV program is regulated nationally by HUD and administered locally by PHAs, which must ensure that tenants are income-qualified and that the units owned by private landlords meet federal housing quality standards, with reasonable market rents. ⁵³ The HCV program is overseen by HUD through the Office of Housing Choice Vouchers, part of the Office of Public and Indian Housing.
Project-Based Section 8 Rental Assistance (PBRA)	HUD or Performance-Based Contract Administrators (PBCAs)	PBRA contracts are executed directly with property owners and administered either by HUD or PBCAs. PBCAs are select state and local housing authorities that have been assigned the right to administer PBRA contracts under HUD oversight. ⁵⁴ Oversight includes monitoring of the physical condition and financial operations of the PBRA properties. ⁵⁵
Public Housing	PHAs and HUD	Public housing is regulated nationally by HUD and administered locally by PHAs, which are responsible for ensuring that tenants are income-qualified and that buildings are maintained at a reasonable standard. For example, HUD's Real Estate Assessment Center (REAC) provides local PHAs with a standardized physical inspection that allows greater accountability regarding building quality and resident satisfaction in public housing properties. Public housing is overseen by HUD through the Office of Public and Indian Housing.

How is housing provided for individuals or families experiencing homelessness?

Assistance is provided to individuals and families experiencing homelessness through a variety of programs. Enrollment in these programs is dependent on the needs of any given individual or family and the available resources at the time they enter the homelessness system locally. The main distinctions between the various homeless programs are the length of stay or financial assistance provided and the scope of supportive services offered. Common programs include the following:

- **Emergency Shelter:** Emergency shelter, in which individuals and families are offered shelter in a homeless facility for a set period of time, often is the first entry point into the homeless system. Although emergency shelter may offer only limited private space and limited shared living space, it nonetheless is a critical service for individuals and families who experience homelessness. Defined as temporary spaces, with limited space for children to do homework or play, research has found that emergency shelters are unhealthy for family stability and child well-being.⁵⁶
- **Transitional Housing:** Transitional housing is designed to provide shelter to individuals or families experiencing homelessness for up to two years. As the name suggests, transitional housing offers subsidized housing with supportive services designed to help individuals or families experiencing homelessness secure employment, become self-sufficient and transition out of the homelessness system. Transitional housing ranges from independent units to congregate living facilities. The program often requires job training or employment as part of eligibility for the housing, which can pose a barrier to entry for those currently experiencing homelessness.
- **Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH):** PSH provides the longest and most in-depth support for individuals and families transitioning out of homelessness through permanent affordable housing (with no set time limit) that includes access to supportive services tailored to meet residents' needs. In the case of households with children, PSH programs primarily serve families that include parents with disabilities that render them unable to maintain stable housing without additional support.
- **Rapid Re-housing:** Focused on providing immediate housing stability, rapid re-housing is an intervention that helps individuals and families exit the homeless shelter system quickly. Rapid re-housing programs place individuals or families into housing and provides short-term help with housing expenses, including rent arrears, ongoing rent assistance and moving costs. Although this approach has been shown to be very successful for families, it is not a long-term solution for households that are unable to access regular employment and afford market rents.

What is the impact of affordable housing on families?

Affordable housing can have a significant impact on resident health, overall stability, mental health and employment opportunities. Housing assistance has been proven to reduce homelessness, housing instability and overcrowding, which can then contribute to other positive outcomes for children and families.⁵⁷ For families with children experiencing homelessness, a vast body of research points to the interconnectedness of housing status and children’s development.⁵⁸ Housing assistance often ensures stability – which, in turn, leads to improved educational performance, mental and physical health, and overall child well-being.⁵⁹ In some cases, HCVs also may enable families to live in safer, lower-poverty neighborhoods with access to higher-quality schools and other services, which may facilitate better life outcomes.⁶⁰

In contrast, a lack of affordable housing or housing discrimination in higher-opportunity areas may lead families to live in overcrowded or lower-quality housing in distressed – and often highly segregated – neighborhoods. Research has shown that living in a lower-poverty neighborhood can positively impact a child’s economic outcomes later in life.⁶¹

Embedding additional services in affordable housing programs is one way to further improve resident outcomes. Within the public housing program, several programs are geared toward helping residents gain self-sufficiency and economic mobility. The [Family Self-Sufficiency program](#) creates an interest-building escrow account for participating residents who receive workforce training, job search assistance and other services to support increased income, all while maintaining access to rental subsidy.⁶² [Jobs Plus](#) is another program that aims to connect residents to jobs with case management services.⁶³ Many PHAs also have a [Resident Opportunities and Self-Sufficiency \(ROSS\) Grant Program Coordinator](#) who assesses resident needs and coordinates local resources.⁶⁴

Many of the above programs seek to offset or directly address a structural challenge of subsidized housing, in which residents may have a disincentive to increase household income out of fear of losing their rental subsidy entirely. The structure of subsidized housing programs may create a “cliff effect,” in which a marginal increase in a household’s income can lead to a steep decrease in or loss of their housing subsidy. With a demand for affordable housing that far exceeds supply, and a lack of housing assistance for households earning moderate incomes, the cliff effect illustrates the harsh realities of the current housing market. Households receiving assistance are required to report changes in income so that adjustments can be made to their payment standard, which may inadvertently disincentivize earning higher wages. Given that the average income of public housing households was just \$14,444 in 2016, rental adjustments and loss of subsidies can be detrimental to very low-income households, regardless of minor boosts in income.⁶⁵

How does access to housing relate to access to education?

It should come as no surprise that where you live greatly influences where you can attend school. Access to education often is directly related to access to housing, particularly to housing location. Decades of discriminatory government policies have led to racially segregated neighborhoods and cities across the country, greatly limiting the ability of children and families of color to access high-quality public education.⁶⁶

Historically, local jurisdictions often chose to locate public housing on cheaper land in resource-poor areas, creating pockets of concentrated poverty. Highway construction further isolated many public housing communities. This has caused the majority of public housing to be located in urban areas that are racially and economically segregated, which corresponds with limited access to high-performing schools. According to HUD data, the average neighborhood poverty rate for public housing units (using census tracts as a proxy for neighborhoods) was 33 percent, significantly higher than the national poverty rate of approximately 12 percent.⁶⁷

Currently, funding, regulatory and political constraints continue to make it difficult to develop and preserve affordable housing, public housing or otherwise, in neighborhoods that offer the greatest opportunity and amenities to residents, including quality education. Today, low-poverty communities across the country attempt to maintain this spatial mismatch, a legacy of discriminatory redlining, through local zoning decisions that prevent the construction of multifamily housing. In addition to restrictive zoning that prevents multifamily housing, residents of low-poverty communities also may oppose new, dense construction, a practice often known as “not in my backyard,” or NIMBYism. By preventing multifamily housing, these jurisdictions and their residents make it more difficult and costly, if not impossible, to develop affordable housing for renters with lower incomes in their neighborhoods. These practices, often referred to as exclusionary zoning, preserve existing patterns of neighborhood segregation and largely prevent children and families in low-income households from accessing amenity-rich neighborhoods and equitable educational opportunities.

“Housing mobility” is one approach to linking access to housing to access to education, among other opportunities. Tenant-based vouchers, for example, are intended to increase a tenant’s housing mobility, enabling them to access housing in a neighborhood of their choosing. As compared to the average neighborhood poverty rate of 33 percent for public housing units, the average poverty rate for voucher holders is slightly lower, at 24 percent, although still well above the national average.⁶⁸ Ultimately, voucher holders’ use of their voucher may be constrained by such program requirements as payment standards, which limit the amount of monthly housing assistance that a family can receive. In higher-cost neighborhoods — often those that offer greater access to opportunity and high-quality schools — voucher holders are responsible for paying the difference between the payment standard and the total rent. Because most families in low-income households are unable to take on this additional financial burden, they typically are priced out of higher-cost neighborhoods.

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APPENDIX B: EDUCATION 101

What is public education (pre-K–12th grade)?

Public education is education that is offered to children free of charge by the government and is considered compulsory across the United States. In 2016, 50.2 million students attended 98,158 public elementary and secondary schools across the United States.¹ Public education typically is offered to students in prekindergarten (pre-K) through 12th grade, although the ages and grades of compulsory attendance vary across localities.²

Typically, public education is first provided to young children in pre-K or kindergarten, but learning begins at home with parents and caregivers and continues with child care, nursery school or preschool. Although this 101 focuses primarily on public education from pre-K through 12th grade, it is important to note that the infrastructure for early childhood education is markedly different from the publicly funded school system. Early childhood education, sometimes referred to as early learning or early education, is widely and increasingly recognized as a critical developmental period for children. For an overview of research on the benefits of early childhood education, see this National Education Association reference: [Research on Early Childhood Education](#).

EARLY LEARNING

Early learning is a particularly important area of focus for supporting families with children living in low-income households, who may not be able to afford child care or have access to enrichment programs for young children during this important developmental stage. A variety of programs and supports are available to families with young children living in low-income households, supported by federal, state and local funding and provided through public entities and nonprofit organizations. Examples of programs and services are summarized on the following page.

- **Child care, nursery school and preschool:** It should come as no surprise that access to safe and affordable child care is a critical resource for any family and is particularly challenging for families with young children in low-income households. Child care can be provided by family, friends or neighbors or in more formal settings, such as registered or licensed child care homes, child care centers, nursery schools or preschools. These entities can be publicly or privately operated, and a variety of subsidies, scholarships, sliding-fee scales, tax credits and discounts may be available through federal, state or local programs to help support income-qualifying families.
- **Head Start:** A program of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Head Start is well known for offering free and comprehensive services to families with children under the age of 5 through Early Head Start (for children under the age of 3) or Head Start (for children ages 3–5).
- **Pre-K:** Although a preschool may focus more generally on developmental and social skills for young children, pre-K programs focus specifically on school readiness and preparation for kindergarten. Pre-K programs may be offered to income-qualifying households at public elementary schools, and may be funded by a combination of federal, state and local funding, with increasing support from state governments based on a growing recognition of the importance of early childhood education.

PUBLIC EDUCATION

Elementary schools (also known as primary schools) typically serve students in pre-K through eighth grade. Older elementary school students may be served at middle schools, typically ranging from sixth through ninth grade, depending on the school district. Secondary schools serve students in ninth through 12th grade. Several types of schools offer education to minors, as described in the following section on the most common types of schools and school systems. Although public education is free and compulsory for most minors, a quality education is not available to all students. Such factors as school funding, concentrated poverty, segregated neighborhoods, ineffective or inexperienced teachers, implicit bias and lower expectations for students of color, ineffective curricula, unequal access to mental health supports, and low-quality facilities could limit students' access to a quality education. In addition, students may experience problems associated with poverty — such as hunger, housing instability or homelessness, or trauma — that need to be addressed before they can focus on learning.

What are the most common types of schools and school systems?

A variety of schools offer education to minors across the United States. The following table provides a brief description of the schools providing public education across the country. These are described in greater detail in the following sections. Although this 101 focuses specifically on public education, a brief description of private schools, post-secondary programs and other educational services is provided at the end of this section on common types of schools and school systems.

TYPE OF PUBLIC EDUCATION	NUMBER OF SCHOOLS	NUMBER OF STUDENTS SERVED	BRIEF DESCRIPTION
Public	87,421 ³	44.5 million ⁴	Public schools are the most common type of school in the United States, offering free education to all children within their designated district or catchment area. Public schools are governed by a government entity and are paid for through a combination of federal, state and local funding.
Charter	7,011 ⁵	3 million ⁶	Charter schools are publicly funded but differ from traditional public or magnet schools in that they are governed by a private or nonprofit organization.
Magnet	3,164 ⁷	2.5 million ⁸	Magnet schools are publicly funded and governed by a government entity but have a special focus or curriculum designed to attract students from diverse racial and socioeconomic backgrounds.
Virtual	562 ⁹	212,311 ¹⁰	Virtual schools are publicly funded schools that do not require a physical facility. Instead, students and teachers are connected online.

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Public schools are the most common type of school in the United States, offering free education to all children within their designated district or catchment area. Public schools are governed by a government entity and are paid for through a combination of federal, state and local funding. The level and composition of funding for public schools varies by state.¹¹ Typically, states expect localities to raise revenues for public schools through property taxes or income taxes. This creates significant disparities in funding for public education for localities with limited tax bases.

CHARTER SCHOOLS

Charter schools are publicly funded but differ from traditional public or magnet schools in that they are governed by a private or nonprofit organization. State legislatures must pass a “charter” that allows the establishment of charter school.¹² Most but not all states have passed charter school legislation.¹³ Chartering authority varies by state, allowing districts, universities or nonprofits to authorize charter schools. Charter schools allow administrators more flexibility and autonomy than traditional public schools in nonacademic operations, such as hiring and in adherence to local- and state-mandated curricula. The number of charter schools across the country increased from 2,000 to 7,000 between 2000 and 2016.¹⁴

MAGNET SCHOOLS

Magnet schools are publicly funded and governed by a government entity but have a special focus or curriculum designed to attract students from diverse racial and socioeconomic backgrounds. Programming and admission may be based on special interests or abilities (e.g., art, music, math), grades or test scores. Magnet school programs can be embedded within traditional public schools or can stand alone. There were 3,164 magnet schools in the United States in 2016.¹⁵

VIRTUAL SCHOOLS

Virtual schools are publicly funded schools that do not require a physical facility. Instead, students and teachers are connected online. Teachers may conduct lessons through a livestream or record lessons for students to watch on their own schedule. Online, virtual or distance learning also may be offered by schools that have physical facilities. There were 562 virtual schools operating across the United States in 2016.¹⁶

ADDITIONAL SCHOOLS AND SERVICES

Private School and Home-school: Private schools, including religious schools, and home-schooling are education options outside of the public school system. In 2016, 5.8 million students attended 34,576 private elementary and secondary schools, while another 1.7 million students were home-schooled.¹⁷

Post-secondary Programs and Schools: After high school graduation or attainment of a high school equivalency, students often need additional training to prepare for a career. Post-secondary education and training may include programs at four-year colleges and universities, two-year colleges, and vocational and technical providers. Vocational and technical providers may include for-profit businesses, nonprofit organizations, workforce system organizations (such as American Job Centers) and employers. Post-secondary education and training programs could lead to an education certificate (which may take less than two years), a credential (which may or may not be recognized formally by industry), a college degree (a bachelor's or an associate's degree) or a graduate degree (a master's degree or doctorate). In addition, apprenticeship programs may allow people to train while working in a job. To learn more about the range of service providers in local workforce systems, visit the Urban Institute's online [Local Workforce System Guide](#). Additional research from the Urban Institute on post-secondary programs outside of four-year colleges can be found here: [Postsecondary Education and Training](#).

Other Educational Services: In addition to traditional primary and secondary school options, many other services are offered to promote educational attainment. Most public schools offer access to educational services for learning differences or English language development. Student learning may continue after the school day or during the summer through out-of-school-time programming. Many schools offer such activities as sports, art and community service clubs for students in middle and secondary grades. This programming may be designed to support academic achievement by offering mentoring, homework support, enrichment activities or college readiness courses. Programming may be offered by the school or by another agency or organization working in the school.

What types of organizations typically work in education at the local level?

Numerous organizations work in education at the local level, in such areas as providing or supervising education, advocating for teachers and students, or offering related services, such as workforce development. The table below presents a list of education organizations and a description of their roles.

EDUCATION ORGANIZATION	DESCRIPTION OF ROLE
School Districts	Also referred to as Local Education Agencies, school districts are local agencies responsible for providing public education, which may be independent or part of a city or county government. More than 98,000 schools are in nearly 13,600 school districts across the country. ¹⁸
School Boards	School boards are locally appointed or elected individuals who are responsible for hiring the superintendent and for providing oversight of policy implementation, school staffing and local funding to supplement state funding.
State Boards of Education	State Boards of Education are elected or appointed bodies that are responsible for setting priorities and conducting oversight of education in that state.
State Departments of Education	State Departments of Education implement state policy, distribute funding and conduct oversight of local school districts. State legislatures also are responsible for providing and appropriating state funds for primary and secondary education.
Head Start	Head Start is a federally funded preschool program designed to support the early learning needs of children in low-income households by supporting young children and their parents.
Teachers' Unions	Teachers' unions work to ensure that the interests of teachers are recognized by policymakers and administrators.
Local Business Owners	Local business owners can inform educational priorities by communicating their needs for specific skills and by providing opportunities for students to learn outside the classroom.
Universities and Colleges	Universities and colleges develop relationships with local schools and school districts to provide university students with opportunities to learn about school systems, teaching, student physical and mental health care, and other important issues.
StriveTogether Cradle to Career Network	StriveTogether Cradle to Career network members are backbone organizations working at the local or regional level to form community partnerships and bring about systems change to help every child succeed.
Other Service Providers	Other service providers work to provide educational support to children and families within a neighborhood, city or region. These service providers include out-of-school-time providers, child care and preschool providers, United Way, Boys and Girls Club, mentoring organizations, faith-based organizations, recreation centers, libraries, and school-based health clinics. Many regions also have advocacy groups, including child advocacy organizations.

How is education regulated?

Much of the regulation of schools is set at the state level, offering greater consistency in accountability standards within each state than are found in the housing sector. States set key policies and standards for what students should know, accountability frameworks, human capital policies and school choice policies. States also decide whether to set curricula, offer a list of options, or let districts decide which curricula to use.¹⁹ States also make decisions about sources and levels of funding for education.

According to the [2015 Every Student Succeeds Act \(ESSA\)](#), states are responsible for establishing teaching and learning standards in their ESSA plans, which their districts and schools must meet. Most of the standards are based on standardized test scores, but ESSA requires states to identify at least one nonacademic measure as well. Every three years, states use these standards to identify schools that need improvement and intervention by the state. School districts often use proficiency on standardized tests to measure school quality, but point-in-time test scores often reflect student disadvantage. As a result, schools that serve disadvantaged students often are characterized as low quality, even when teachers are teaching successfully and students are learning successfully. It also is important to consider academic progress, which is reflected in year-to-year gains in test scores for individual students.

The federal government is concerned with supplementing state and local efforts, particularly on behalf of vulnerable students. The U.S. Department of Education also monitors and addresses inequities for protected groups through its Office of Civil Rights and runs programs to protect and support economically disadvantaged students, students with disabilities, students in foster care and students experiencing homelessness. The federal government also works to increase innovation and access to information about evidence-based education policies and practices.

How do school zones or boundaries affect public education?

All school districts have policies to determine where students can enroll in school. Some enrollment policies are based entirely on place of residence. If a student's residence falls within a school's service area, catchment area or zone, that student is eligible to attend the school. However, charter and magnet schools generally do not have catchment areas. When demand for charter schools is greater than the supply, the schools may admit students by lottery. Magnet schools sometimes use other admission criteria, such as test scores.

Some school districts align with city or county boundaries, while others do not. School districts in the mid-Atlantic and New England states tend to align with county, township or city boundaries, whereas districts in the Midwest, Great Plains and Western states tend to be independent of municipal boundaries. District boundaries may not align with Census Tracts or Block Groups, which form the building blocks for Urban Areas, Metropolitan Areas, and ZIP Code Tabulation Areas. This spatial mismatch can make it more challenging to gather data about the neighborhood demographics and characteristics of the districts in which schools are located. Nonetheless, online tools are available to help link American Community Survey (ACS) data to school data, such as through the [National Center for Education Statistics](#).

"School choice" refers to an arrangement that allows parents to decide which of two or more publicly funded schools their child will attend.²⁰ Students may attend a traditional public school outside of their assigned school boundary, a magnet program, or a public charter school, or they may obtain a voucher or tax credit to offset the cost of private school tuition. Some school choice programs limit students to attending only schools within a school district ("intradistrict"), and others allow students to enroll in schools in a different district ("interdistrict").²¹

What is the impact of education on families?

The importance and benefits of a quality education are well documented. Getting a quality education increases what students know, whether they go on to or complete post-secondary education, and whether they will earn enough to sustain a family and maintain good health. Educational attainment is positively correlated with earnings and negatively correlated with unemployment.²² Without a quality education, students are less likely to be able to support themselves. In addition to having lower earnings and employment than high school graduates, individuals who drop out of high school have worse health and make up a larger proportion of the institutionalized population.²³

Education research has produced competing evidence about the aspects of education that are most important for achievement and attainment. Some studies explore the influence of teacher quality, teacher turnover, class size and curricula. Others explore the role of segregation in economic and racial achievement gaps. One recent study found that racial segregation leads to disparate outcomes because it concentrates children of color in high-poverty schools.²⁴ Another suggested that the achievement gaps created by racial segregation can be addressed through funding, finding that, “for low-income children, a 10 percent increase in per-pupil spending each year for all 12 years of public schooling was associated with 0.46 additional years of completed education, 9.6 percent higher earnings, and a reduction of 6.1 percentage points in the annual incidence of adult poverty.” The research hypothesized that school districts with greater funding can offer smaller class sizes, increased adult-to-student ratios in the school, increased instructional time for students and increased teacher compensation, resulting in improvements in student outcomes.²⁵

Funding for students depends on how the federal, state and local funding streams for schools interact with other policies and the demographics of the state and district.²⁶ As already discussed, states typically expect local jurisdictions to generate revenues for public schools through property or income taxes. With poor localities having limited tax bases to generate school revenue, this funding structure can create significant disparities in public education within and across regions.²⁷ Through court orders, some states compensate for regressive local spending, but other states do not compensate for this disparity in funding. As a result, the revenue for public education varies across and within states, leading to significant disparities in educational quality.

In addition to the importance of education funding generally, research shows positive outcomes from quality education, beginning with early childhood education through high school and post-secondary preparation. For younger learners, early childhood education is associated with kindergarten readiness and later school success.²⁸ For secondary students, those who complete high school are more likely to work full time, year-round and earn more than students who do not complete high school. Among workers age 25 and older, median weekly earnings in 2017 were \$515 for those without high school, \$718 for those with high school but no college, \$1,189 for those with a bachelor’s degree, and \$1,451 for those with an advanced degree.²⁹ Other examples of research on education outcomes are included in [Appendix D: Education Outcomes](#).

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APPENDIX C: HOUSING OUTCOMES

The following resource provides background on the housing outcomes presented in the toolkit. These outcomes reflect the focus of [Enterprise Community Partners](#) — a national nonprofit organization that improves communities and people’s lives by making well-designed homes affordable — and their work to measure impact in the housing sector. Housing indicators are included within each housing outcome. Each indicator includes a brief description, examples of interventions used to address that outcome, a discussion of the connection to education and sample metrics. It is important to note that the metrics are examples and are not exhaustive of all relevant metrics for each outcome. When measuring impact, it is critical to look at data disaggregated by race to help identify racial or other disparities whenever possible.

HOUSING OUTCOME: HOUSING STABILITY

Housing stability refers to the ability of residents to live in their home for as long as they choose, without being forced to move because of cost, eviction or other unwanted reason. Having a stable home eliminates material hardships and expenses related to moving and affects an individual's ability to obtain and maintain employment and remain productive at work and school. Related housing outcomes include reduction in homelessness, multiyear stability and reduction in evictions.

Housing Indicator: Reduction in Homelessness

Description: Homelessness refers to an individual's or household's ability to remain stably housed, with a "fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence."¹ The experience of homelessness is challenging to endure and can result in negative long-term outcomes, particularly for children and youth. Individuals experiencing homelessness are more likely to suffer from mental and physical health challenges, in addition to facing barriers to obtaining and maintaining employment.

Examples of Interventions: Access to affordable, subsidized housing is critical for preventing and alleviating homelessness. For more information on affordable housing, see the Housing 101 in [Appendix A](#). Homelessness rates increase when individuals and families are unable to access affordable housing. Some affordable housing, often referred to as Permanent Supportive Housing, is designated specifically for individuals and families coming out of homelessness and offers residents services and supports. Research has found that long-term rent subsidies for families exiting homelessness are associated with positive child outcomes, whereas short-term subsidies have no significant effect, signaling the importance of consistent and committed funding for affordable housing.²

Connection to Education: Children and youth experiencing homelessness face many obstacles to achieving positive academic outcomes.^{3,4} These obstacles may include an increased likelihood of cognitive and mental health challenges, asthma and other health conditions, physical assaults and accidental injuries.⁵ Children in households that are experiencing homelessness also have been found to have higher rates of school absenteeism, as well as lower reading and math scores. The challenges of homelessness for children often are cumulative and may prevent students from completing their secondary education. For example, a study in New York City revealed that fewer than 50 percent of homeless youth went on to earn a high school diploma or a GED certificate.⁶ In turn, students experiencing homelessness face lower job earnings later in life.⁷

EXAMPLE METRICS	RECOMMENDED DATA SOURCES
Number of people who are homeless on a single night within a particular geographic area	• U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Point-in-Time (PIT) counts
The number of people who seek/receive homeless services during the course of a month	• Local Continuum of Care (CoC) client-level data collected in its Homeless Management Information Systems (HMIS)
The number of students experiencing homelessness within a particular school or school district	• Local educational agency, school or district, local liaison overseeing the McKinney-Vento Act in district schools, or the National Center for Homeless Education

Housing Indicator: **Multiyear Stability**

Description: Multiyear stability refers to an individual’s or family’s ability to live in their home for as long as they choose, without being forced to move because of cost, eviction or other unwanted reason. Stability over time is important, particularly for children, because frequent moves can have a detrimental effect on health, education, employment and overall well-being, as noted above.

Examples of Interventions: The provision of stable, affordable housing is an important mechanism for preventing unwanted moves. This is true particularly for the preservation and production of affordable housing in locations that provide access to employment centers, quality schools, and other community resources and amenities. Eviction protection measures are another important policy and programmatic intervention to help prevent instability and are explored in greater detail in the next housing outcome, *Reduction in Evictions*.

Connection to Education: When children have a stable home and school, they experience a sense of belonging that has been shown to improve grades. This is true particularly for lower-income students of color.⁸ Research has demonstrated strong links between housing stability and children’s physical and mental health, as well as school attendance.⁹ Housing instability and frequent moves often are associated with changing schools, which has been found to have adverse effects on academic performance. For example, students who change schools frequently have been found to lag behind their peers by a year or more in reading and math.¹⁰ Additionally, when children in lower-income households experience frequent school moves, they tend to obtain jobs with lower wages as adults.¹¹

EXAMPLE METRICS	RECOMMENDED DATA SOURCES
Student turnover within a particular school or district	• Local educational agency, school or district
Change of address in student school records	• Local educational agency, school or district
Presence of rental/tenant rights policies	• Local laws and regulations
Rent control and stabilization policies	• Local policies

Housing Indicator: Reduction in Evictions

Description: An eviction is an involuntary move that is initiated when a landlord expels a renter or renters from a property. A primary cause of eviction is when renters cannot or do not pay their rent, although renters may be evicted for other reasons, including a landlord’s decision to terminate a lease or a renter’s violation of laws or rental agreements. In particular, families with low incomes and severe cost burden (paying more than 50 percent of their income toward housing) are vulnerable to eviction, which can come as a sudden disruption and traumatic experience for children and adults alike.

Examples of Interventions: As mentioned, eviction protection measures are an important policy and programmatic intervention to help prevent instability. These measures may include policies and laws that support tenants’ rights, legal services for families with low incomes, or programs that offer cash assistance to households that have experienced a sudden job loss or health care costs that threaten their ability to make housing payments. Eviction protection measures often focus on housing that is affordable but not subsidized and, therefore, is not under the regulation and compliance of a state, federal or local housing program. More broadly, the provision of subsidized, affordable housing is another important way to help stabilize households and end the cycle of eviction. This is explored in more depth in the previously described housing outcome, *Multiyear Stability*.

Connection to Education: Eviction leads to immediate housing instability and, in some cases, to homelessness. Heightening the trauma of a sudden move, eviction typically leads to further financial instability. Research has shown that workers who experience an eviction are 15 percent more likely to be laid off, and many evicted households lose their possessions in the process.¹² These circumstances create long-lasting negative outcomes for children and families, as housing instability often is tied to school changes, absenteeism, behavioral problems and an overall decline in academic performance.¹³

After experiencing housing instability, households often are forced to move into communities with fewer resources, including fewer employment opportunities, which can worsen economic hardship and instability.¹⁴ Such communities often have lower-performing schools with fewer resources than schools in affluent areas, primarily because of racial segregation and school funding mechanisms that rely on the local tax base to generate revenue for schools. With a smaller tax base, neighborhoods with fewer resources and the children who live in them are at a disadvantage, exacerbating disparities in academic performance for children experiencing housing instability and eviction.

EXAMPLE METRICS	RECOMMENDED DATA SOURCES
Eviction rates	• Eviction Lab
Change of address in student school records	• Local educational agency, school or district
Presence of rental/tenant rights policies	• Local laws and regulations
Rent control and stabilization policies	• Local policies

HOUSING OUTCOME: HOUSING QUALITY

Housing quality that protects and promotes health is free of major defects. Poor housing quality has been linked to worse health outcomes for children, which, in turn, affects their physical and mental development, academic performance, and long-term educational outcomes. Related housing outcomes include access to safe and healthy housing and reduced exposure to environmental toxins.

Housing Indicator: [Access to Safe and Healthy Housing](#)

Description: Safe and healthy housing is free of major defects, including unregulated temperatures and lack of insulation, water leaks, exposed wiring, mold or mildew, broken windows or doors, or missing safety features (e.g., fire extinguishers and carbon monoxide detectors). The presence of pests — such as mice, cockroaches and rats — also contributes to unhealthy living conditions. These conditions can have a significant negative effect on resident health and well-being. One study found that cost-burdened households paying more than 30 percent of their income toward housing are more likely to live in substandard, low-quality and overcrowded housing.¹⁵

Examples of Interventions: Affordable housing and other housing subsidies can create opportunities for low-income households to live in higher quality housing that meets building standards and promotes health. The [Enterprise Green Communities Criteria](#) is a nationally recognized standard for green building practices in affordable housing that promote resident health and well-being and environmental sustainability. The Criteria provide a range of strategies for maximizing positive health outcomes, such as choosing a well-located site, reducing environmental hazards or toxins, and optimizing ventilation.

Connection to Education: Research has shown that poor-quality housing leads to worse health outcomes for children, affecting a child’s physical and mental development, as well as their academic performance and long-term educational outcomes.¹⁶ One research study found that children who lived in low-quality housing had lower kindergarten readiness scores.¹⁷ In contrast, research has shown that healthy children have better school attendance rates, a key indicator of academic success, and improved attention in school compared to their less-healthy peers.¹⁸

EXAMPLE METRICS	RECOMMENDED DATA SOURCES
Number of housing code violations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Local government agencies
Number of families living in deeply distressed or substandard housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">American Housing Survey
Condition of affordable housing properties owned or subsidized by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), including public housing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Real Estate Assessment Center physical inspection scores

Housing Indicator: **Reduced Exposure to Environmental Toxins**

Description: Exposure to environmental toxins can come from a variety of sources, both inside the home and in the neighborhood. Environmental toxins include radon, lead and air pollution, among many others. Although the federal government banned consumer use of lead-based paint in 1978, the risk of exposure in older buildings still is present. Pests like mice, rats and cockroaches also contribute to unhealthy living conditions, as does housing with serious defects, such as exposed wiring, mold or mildew, and broken or nonfunctioning amenities. Racial segregation and the inequitable allocation of resources between neighborhoods often lead to greater exposure to environmental hazards for children living in areas with more residents of color, including proximity to waste facilities, industrial areas, or major highways or thoroughfares.¹⁹

Examples of Interventions: Many green building standards provide recommendations for reducing exposure to environmental toxins within the home, including the [Enterprise Green Communities Criteria](#) described in the previous outcome. The Criteria provide strategies for mitigating the risk of radon exposure, reducing lead hazards in buildings constructed before 1978, improving in-home ventilation, and other strategies to reduce exposure to environmental toxins. Broadly speaking, housing assistance also creates opportunities for individuals and families to live in housing that promotes health. In fact, children living in assisted housing have been shown to have lower blood lead levels than do children in eligible families who did not receive housing assistance.²⁰

Connection to Education: As noted, exposure to environmental toxins can have severe and long-lasting health impacts for children. Young children exposed to lead dust face significant risks to their IQ and challenges in learning, both of which affect education outcomes. Although most studies looking at the connection between poor housing quality and educational outcomes prove correlation as opposed to causation, research shows that living conditions are related to poor school performance.²¹ Substandard living conditions contribute to high rates of asthma, worse sleep quality, and an increased likelihood of heart and respiratory problems, as well as poor mental health.²² In turn, poor health is tied to higher rates of absenteeism and poor academic performance.²³ In fact, one study found that living in low-quality housing is tied to lower kindergarten readiness scores and a higher incidence of child abuse and neglect.²⁴

EXAMPLE METRICS	RECOMMENDED DATA SOURCES
Proximity to environmental hazards (e.g., Brownfield sites) in a neighborhood	• Environmental Health Hazard Index
Air quality	• Air Quality Index Publications
Social vulnerability to environmental hazards	• Enterprise OPPORTUNITY360 Community Dashboard

HOUSING OUTCOME: HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

Housing affordability is defined as paying no more than 30 percent of a household’s income toward housing costs each month. Families who pay more than 30 percent of their income toward housing are considered to be “housing cost burdened” and have been shown to spend less money on food and educational enrichment activities that support healthy child development. Related housing outcomes include a lack of housing cost burden and reduced crowding.

Housing Indicator: Lack of Cost Burden

Description: For households with low incomes, housing cost burden is particularly challenging. With few financial resources left after paying for housing, households that are cost burdened must make difficult trade-offs, such as sacrificing food, health care or other necessities. These trade-offs can affect health, educational attainment, professional advancement and overall economic well-being.²⁵ Housing cost-burdened households are more likely to experience other negative outcomes, as well, including making frequent moves, living in substandard housing and being confined to high-poverty neighborhoods. Each of these additional negative outcomes then deepens the health, economic and educational risks that result from housing cost burden.²⁶

Examples of Interventions: The provision of affordable housing is a primary strategy for addressing housing cost burden among low-income households. When housing costs are limited to 30 percent of household income, residents of affordable housing are better prepared to afford other important household needs. Studies have shown that long-term housing assistance lessens psychological and economic distress for parents while improving food security and educational outcomes for children.²⁷

Connection to Education: As is the case with housing instability and frequent moves, children living in cost-burdened households often struggle in school. Studies show that these children are more likely than their peers to be held back and to exhibit behavioral problems.²⁸ These challenges can extend beyond K–12 schooling, because living in a cost-burdened household has been shown to decrease the pursuit and completion of a post-secondary degree.²⁹ In contrast, long-term housing assistance correlates with fewer school moves and better long-term educational outcomes for children.³⁰ Studies confirm that growing up in subsidized housing, public housing and voucher-assisted housing is associated positively with increased annual adult earnings.³¹

EXAMPLE METRICS	RECOMMENDED DATA SOURCES
The number and percentage of families who spend more than 30% of their income on housing (total for a geographic area and disaggregated by race)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enterprise OPPORTUNITY360 Community Dashboard • American Community Survey
The number and percentage of families who spend more than 50% of their income on housing (total for a geographic area and disaggregated by race)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enterprise OPPORTUNITY360 Community Dashboard • American Community Survey
Cost of housing by census tract (average gross rent)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enterprise OPPORTUNITY360 Community Dashboard • American Community Survey
Percentage of renter households that receive housing choice vouchers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) 2018 Picture of Subsidized Households
Percentage of renter households that receive project-based housing assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HUD 2018 Picture of Subsidized Households
Percentage of all low-income households that are severely cost burdened	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS), 2012–2016
Percentage of renter households that receive housing assistance in a census tract	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enterprise OPPORTUNITY360 Community Dashboard

Housing Indicator: Reduced Crowding

Description: Although the definition of “crowding” may vary by culture and preference, crowding often is defined as more than 1.5 persons per room living in a housing unit.³² Residential crowding frequently is a response to housing cost burden, because families may need to choose between crowded living conditions and unaffordable housing costs, or they may be forced to move in with others following an unexpected move or eviction.³³ In some cases, crowding can be associated with multigenerational households and/or households in which large extended families live together in one home. Living in a crowded home with limited space and limited privacy can affect residents’ physical and mental health, as well as educational performance and long-term economic stability.

Examples of Interventions: Crowding frequently is a symptom of housing cost burden, because households who struggle to pay rent are more likely to share living space to save on housing costs. The provision of affordable housing alleviates this financial pressure and can help to reduce residential crowding. Affordable or public housing developments may offer larger unit sizes to accommodate larger or multigenerational families. Reducing crowding through affordable housing promotes stronger health and education outcomes for students and adults in a household.

Connection to Education: Living in a crowded home presents numerous challenges for children and families, and studies have shown a connection between crowded living conditions and poor academic performance. A crowded home can mean limited quiet space for students to do homework and the presence of noise or other disruptions that prevent students from getting appropriate sleep.³⁴ These conditions can translate into poor academic performance, the need to repeat grades in school, and behavioral or cognitive issues.³⁵ For elementary students, crowded living conditions have been associated with lower reading and math scores,³⁶ and high school students in crowded living conditions have been found to be less likely to graduate from high school on time and tend to have lower educational attainment at age 25.³⁷

EXAMPLE METRICS	RECOMMENDED DATA SOURCES
The number and percentage of families living in overcrowded units	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enterprise OPPORTUNITY360 Community Dashboard• American Community Survey
Average household size	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• American Community Survey
Percentage of occupied units that are crowded or overcrowded	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• American Community Survey
Percentage of households that include multiple families or unrelated individuals	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• American Community Survey

HOUSING OUTCOME: HOUSING AS A PLATFORM

Housing as a platform recognizes the unique impact of the quality, affordability and location of a person’s housing on their ability to access resources and opportunities. When quality and affordable housing is located in proximity to neighborhood amenities, this platform can provide access to quality schools, jobs and numerous other benefits. Related housing outcomes include access to neighborhood amenities and resources and neighborhood safety.

Housing Indicator: Access to Neighborhood Amenities and Resources

Description: The neighborhoods people live in heavily influence their access to education, healthy food options, libraries, transportation, job centers, health care services, green space and other important resources. Many high-poverty, racially segregated neighborhoods lack these amenities and resources, limiting access to opportunity and shaping long-term outcomes, particularly for children. As a result, families with low incomes and few housing options often are confined to underresourced neighborhoods. In contrast, families living in safe, well-resourced neighborhoods are better positioned for long-term success.

Examples of Interventions: Community development efforts, including the provision of affordable housing, bring needed investment to communities that lack access to opportunity. Investment in neighborhood resources and amenities — such as grocery stores, schools, parks and employment centers — is a valuable mechanism for connecting residents with important elements of opportunity. In addition to channeling resources to under-invested areas, another approach is to ensure that affordable housing is made available in well-resourced communities through new affordable housing investments or the provision of housing vouchers. When households are able to find housing options in higher opportunity neighborhoods, they may be better able to send their children to higher performing schools, have easier access to such amenities as green space or public transportation, and maintain stable employment.

Connection to Education: There is a strong link between the neighborhood in which a child grows up and the child’s long-term educational and economic outcomes.³⁸ Living in a neighborhood with fewer amenities and resources can stunt academic performance, limit post-secondary enrollment and degree completion, and ultimately diminish economic success for individuals and families with low incomes.^{39,40} Research shows that adults’ educational attainment and earnings correlate directly with conditions in the neighborhood in which they grew up.

EXAMPLE METRICS	RECOMMENDED DATA SOURCES
Neighborhood conditions across multiple data points using the OPPORTUNITY360 Community Dashboard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enterprise OPPORTUNITY360 Community Dashboard
Percentage of workers who commute using public transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enterprise OPPORTUNITY360 Community Dashboard
Percentage of households that have access to a vehicle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enterprise OPPORTUNITY360 Community Dashboard
Average travel time to work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enterprise OPPORTUNITY360 Community Dashboard
Percentage of workers who commute for more than one hour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enterprise OPPORTUNITY360 Community Dashboard
Access to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) retailers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SNAP Retail Locator
Neighborhood walkability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walk Score

Housing Indicator: Neighborhood Safety

Description: Safety is an important neighborhood characteristic that can have a strong influence on resident outcomes. Families who have low incomes and few housing options and are confined to neighborhoods with high rates of crime, violence or traffic fatalities can suffer negative mental and physical health outcomes, as well as negative educational outcomes. In contrast, families living in a safe and well-resourced neighborhood are better positioned for long-term success.

Examples of Interventions: Neighborhood safety, or the perception of safety, is closely tied to overall neighborhood conditions and visible community investments. Ongoing community development efforts and neighborhood safety initiatives that address community-identified needs can help improve neighborhood conditions and perceptions of safety. Programs might include violence-reduction campaigns; coaching and mentorship programs for youth; community policing initiatives; and infrastructure improvements, such as streetlights, or sidewalk and road upgrades.

Connection to Education: Exposure to neighborhood violence can disrupt academic progress and negatively impact school performance among students of all ages.⁴¹ For example, one study found that students who lived close to a recent homicide performed worse on cognitive testing shortly thereafter.⁴² The stress and negative impact of neighborhood violence also is associated with reduced high school graduation rates⁴³ and diminished pursuit and completion of a post-secondary education.⁴⁴

EXAMPLE METRICS	RECOMMENDED DATA SOURCES
Number of violent crime incidents within a half mile of a student's home	• Uniform Crime Reporting Statistics or locally available crime data, such as ShotSpotter
Housing vacancy rate	• Enterprise OPPORTUNITY360 Community Dashboard
Adverse childhood experiences	• ChildTrends summary of the 2016 National Survey of Children's Health (data not available at a neighborhood level)

HOUSING OUTCOME: HOUSING THAT BUILDS ASSETS AND WEALTH

Housing that builds assets and wealth contributes to household members’ ability to deploy resources to meet their needs and achieve their goals. With access to assets and wealth, households can manage both expected and unexpected repairs or pursue educational or entrepreneurial goals. Related housing outcomes include access to home equity and credit and asset building.

Housing Indicator: Access to Home Equity

Description: Access to equity through homeownership is an important housing outcome that can contribute to mobility from poverty and lifelong positive economic outcomes. The ability to access home equity enables families to remain stably housed and can contribute to long-term asset building that supports future generations in their pursuit of education and overall economic mobility.

Although homeownership offers many benefits, it is not a silver bullet, because a third of homeowners with low incomes report difficulty meeting their basic needs.⁴⁵ Additionally, federal housing policies and a legacy of structural racism have created historical barriers to homeownership for households of color that persist today. Disparities between Black and white homeownership can be seen both in the rate of homeownership and in average home value.⁴⁶ The devaluation of land in predominantly Black neighborhoods introduces an additional obstacle to wealth accumulation, which translates to fewer opportunities to build wealth, pass down financial resources or make investments in educational opportunities, such as college tuition.

Examples of Interventions: Access to home equity may be achieved through traditional homeownership or pursued through alternative financing and ownership models that promote housing and financial stability through access to equity. Community land trusts and co-ops are two alternative homeownership models that offer shared equity ownership opportunities to qualifying homebuyers. To keep the properties affordable, land or common areas may be held in common ownership, and resale prices may be restricted. Although these models have been adopted widely for their success in enabling affordable homeownership and neighborhood stability, the opportunity to build financial assets using these models may be more limited than through traditional homeownership.⁴⁷ For more information on support for homebuyers with low incomes and to learn more about shared equity models, see the Housing 101 in [Appendix A](#).

Connection to Education: As noted, access to equity through homeownership can have long-lasting positive outcomes on families, particularly children. Families who own their homes are more likely to live in quality housing that contributes to children’s overall health, well-being and success in school.⁴⁸ Ownership also correlates with increased housing stability and fewer school changes, making students less prone to absenteeism, behavioral problems and poor academic performance.⁴⁹ Although homeownership is connected to higher-than-average wealth, other programs that help families with low incomes build equity also have been shown to create positive financial outcomes for future generations. These are described in greater detail in the next outcome to be discussed, *Credit and Asset Building*.

EXAMPLE METRICS	RECOMMENDED DATA SOURCES
Homeownership rate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enterprise OPPORTUNITY360 Community Dashboard American Community Survey
Mortgage originations in a census tract	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enterprise OPPORTUNITY360 Community Dashboard
Homeownership by race/ethnicity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enterprise OPPORTUNITY360 Community Dashboard American Community Survey
Presence of a community land trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Land Trust Directory

Housing Indicator: Credit and Asset Building

Description: Building assets and improving credit fosters financial security and resiliency for families, positioning them to better manage expenses and make larger investments. The financial stability brought about through credit and asset building can enable families to put money toward educational and enrichment activities, improving long-term outcomes for children.

Examples of Interventions: Although homeownership is one of the most commonly known ways to build assets, other programs offer the opportunity for renters with low incomes to build credit and accumulate assets for long-term financial stability. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development offers asset-building programs for low-income renters through the Jobs Plus program and the Family Self-Sufficiency program. Both programs minimize or limit statutory rent increases as a household’s income increases, allowing families to save money while maintaining their subsidized housing, even as their income grows.⁵⁰ Both these programs have been proven to have a lasting impact on employment and earnings among participating households.⁵¹ Additionally, many programs and services, such as nonprofit financial or credit counseling, are designed to help households with low incomes build the credit necessary to reduce the cost of debt and take advantage of other financial opportunities.

Connection to Education: Like homeownership, credit and asset building programs can help stabilize a household’s finances, leading to positive economic and employment outcomes. Financial stability improves overall family stability, reduces the frequency of moves, and enables a household to secure higher-quality housing in neighborhoods with greater access to opportunity, which, in turn, significantly influences children’s academic performance and long-term employment and economic outcomes.

EXAMPLE METRICS	RECOMMENDED DATA SOURCES
Homeownership rate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enterprise OPPORTUNITY360 Community Dashboard • American Community Survey
Homeownership by race/ethnicity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enterprise OPPORTUNITY360 Community Dashboard • American Community Survey
Presence of a community land trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Land Trust Directory
Housing tenure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enterprise OPPORTUNITY360 Community Dashboard • American Community Survey
Housing tenure by race/ethnicity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enterprise OPPORTUNITY360 Community Dashboard • American Community Survey

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APPENDIX D: EDUCATION OUTCOMES

The following resource provides background on each of the education outcomes presented in the toolkit. These outcomes reflect the focus of [StriveTogether](#) — a national movement supporting a network of communities to improve local practices and outcomes for youth — and their work to measure impact in the education sector. Each outcome includes a brief description, examples of interventions used to contribute to that outcome, a discussion of the connection to housing and sample metrics. It is important to note that the metrics are examples and are not exhaustive of all relevant metrics for each outcome.

Both extensive research and data from the StriveTogether network reveal that students of color are affected disproportionately by existing systems and structures, which, in turn, negatively impacts their education outcomes along the cradle-to-career continuum. To ensure that the data are a true reflection of how the system supports outcomes for all students, it is critical to look at data disaggregated by race to identify racial or other disparities.

It also is important to note that, in addition to the education outcomes listed here, the StriveTogether Cradle to Career Network currently is developing a list of complementary systems indicators, to be released in early 2021. The systems indicators will serve to assess and track the progress of institutions and systems that impact young people's success from cradle to career.

Education Outcome: Kindergarten Readiness

Description: Kindergarten readiness affects future academic achievement and life success. Children develop fundamental skills and responses in early childhood that build a strong foundation for reading, arithmetic and social interactions. Studies show that as a child’s kindergarten readiness scores improve, third-grade reading and math scores rise accordingly.¹

Examples of Interventions: To promote early learning, many local programs, often publicly funded or run by nonprofits, offer home visiting programs, free or reduced cost enrollment in child care, or prekindergarten for families with low incomes. Programs like Head Start (described in greater detail in the Education 101 in [Appendix B](#)), ensure that children receive access to quality child care, enrichment activities and curricula that prepare them appropriately for kindergarten. The co-location of early learning centers, day care centers, or preschool classrooms in affordable housing or public housing developments is another way to ensure that affordable child care is available to families who otherwise would be unable to afford quality child care or would have difficulty commuting to day care centers in other neighborhoods.

Connection to Housing: The stability and quality of a child’s housing has been shown to have a direct influence on school preparedness, even before the child attends elementary school. Chronic instability early in a child’s life has a negative impact on vocabulary development among preschool children,² and low-quality housing has been tied to lower kindergarten readiness scores.³ Low-quality housing also has been tied to higher incidences of child abuse and neglect. When families with children have access to stable, quality housing, children are better able to develop the early learning skills and abilities that will prepare them well for kindergarten and beyond. This is true particularly when affordable or public housing also includes on-site child care or early learning programs, as described in the interventions above.

EXAMPLE METRICS	RECOMMENDED DATA SOURCES
Kindergarten readiness assessments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local educational agency, school or district Promise Neighborhoods’ Data Dashboard and Neighborhood Infographics
Uppercase letter recognition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student assessments, such as the Ages & Stages Questionnaires
Numeracy/early math	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student assessments, such as the Ages & Stages Questionnaires
Physical well-being and motor development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student assessments, such as the Ages & Stages Questionnaires
Social-emotional foundations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student assessments, such as the Ages & Stages Questionnaires
Prekindergarten enrollment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local educational agency, school or district Child Trends summary of enrollment (data not available at the local level)
Head Start enrollment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> U.S. Department of Health & Human Services (data available by state)

Education Outcome: Early Grade Reading

Description: Literacy, particularly early grade reading, is critical to a child’s academic success. Children in the early grades begin to transition from learning to read to reading to learn. Reading at grade level is one of the strongest predictors of later success in school, with data showing the link between disparities in literacy during the early grades and persistent achievement gaps.⁴

Examples of Interventions: As noted, literacy has long been recognized as a cornerstone of a child’s education. After-school and tutoring programs, family literacy campaigns, services at local libraries, and local book drives all are examples of organized efforts to broaden access to early literacy. At affordable or public housing developments, on-site programming and services for residents may include after-school or summer programming specifically tailored to provide academic support for younger children or family literacy campaigns that encourage parents and guardians to read with their children by offering monthly or periodic children’s book deliveries.

Connection to Housing: Numerous aspects of housing affect a child’s literacy and reading achievement. Studies have shown that children who experience frequent moves in the early elementary years have lower reading achievement in third grade, as well as cumulatively lower reading scores in later years.⁵ Among children living in overcrowded households, reading scores have been found to decline as the number of people per room increases.⁶ Housing and neighborhood quality also play a role, because students with higher levels of lead paint exposure may have lower reading test scores,⁷ and students who live in proximity to homicidal violence perform worse on reading assessments.⁸ Although varied, all these factors suggest that children who lack a stable, secure and affordable home face an uphill battle to gain the literacy skills needed to perform well in early grade reading.

EXAMPLE METRICS	RECOMMENDED DATA SOURCES
Third-grade reading state assessments	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Local educational agency, school or district• Promise Neighborhoods’ Data Dashboard and Neighborhood Infographics

Education Outcome: Middle Grade Math

Description: Middle grade math has become an important milestone for high school persistence, academic achievement, college attainment and readiness for the workforce. Research indicates that students who successfully complete middle grade math perform better in geometry, more advanced algebra, trigonometry and calculus. A child’s math curriculum also has a strong link to college enrollment.⁹

Examples of Interventions: Much like early grade reading, many youth programs focus specifically on middle grade math skills, whether through after-school programs, summer camps or other tutoring services. Case management for families who experience homelessness may track academic achievement for school-age children and seek opportunities for children to enroll in tutoring or enrichment programs to help keep students at grade level amid the disruption of frequent moves. Emerging partnerships between housing providers and schools or school districts are another way to ensure that quality academic supports are provided during out-of-school time to prepare children for middle grade math achievement, while also tracking academic progress and targeting further support to students and families as needed.

Connection to Housing: Homelessness, mobility and overcrowding all are elements of a child’s housing that impact their performance in middle grade math. Research demonstrates that students experiencing homelessness scored worse on math assessments than students who were eligible for free and reduced price lunches, and their progress in math was slower during their years without stable housing.¹⁰ Among children experiencing frequent moves from the third through eighth grades, math scores have been shown to be negatively affected during the time of the move.¹¹ Among children living in more crowded conditions, their math scores, as has been seen with reading scores, were found to decline.¹² As with other education outcomes, access to safe, affordable, stable housing can help alleviate many of these negative effects.

EXAMPLE METRICS	RECOMMENDED DATA SOURCES
Sixth-grade state assessments	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Local educational agency, school or districtPromise Neighborhoods’ Data Dashboard and Neighborhood Infographics
Eighth-grade state assessments	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Local educational agency, school or districtPromise Neighborhoods’ Data Dashboard and Neighborhood Infographics

Education Outcome: High School Graduation

Description: High school graduation is important for lifetime earnings, health and social outcomes. Students who graduate from high school have lower rates of unemployment, earn higher wages and have better results on other measures of personal and social welfare, such as health and relationships. Increasing the educational attainment of one generation improves the next generation’s academic and social outcomes.¹³

Examples of Interventions: With the growing recognition of the importance of a high school diploma for attaining employment and higher wages, many programs and services focus specifically on helping students and adults attain their diploma or equivalency degree. Some school systems offer accelerated high school programs to older secondary students who need more credits to graduate, while many nonprofit organizations offer tutoring and classes for youth and adults for the General Equivalency Diploma tests, or GED. Housing authorities and affordable housing developments also may work with nonprofits to offer GED classes at no cost to their residents.

Connection to Housing: A student’s housing throughout childhood has a profound influence on his or her ability to graduate from high school. Much like the negative impact seen on younger students’ educational performance, homelessness and frequent moves continue to affect older students, making a student more likely to drop out of high school.¹⁴ For example, a citywide study in New York City found that less than 50 percent of youth who experience homelessness during high school are able to go on to earn a diploma or GED certificate.¹⁵ For students who lived in a crowded household during their high school years, research suggests they are less likely to graduate from high school on time and tend to have lower educational attainment at age 25.¹⁶ When students do have access to stable housing and connections to needed services, they face less overall instability and are able to focus on their studies and stay on track to graduate.

EXAMPLE METRICS	RECOMMENDED DATA SOURCES
Four-year cohort graduation rate	• Local educational agency, school or district
Graduation rate	• Local educational agency, school or district • Promise Neighborhoods’ Data Dashboard and Neighborhood Infographics
College readiness	• Local educational agency, school or district • Promise Neighborhoods’ Data Dashboard and Neighborhood Infographics
Youth employment	• Competency-based assessments administered at the high school or by higher education institutions • Kids Count Data Center (available by congressional district, city, state or nation)

Education Outcome: Post-secondary Enrollment

Description: Post-secondary enrollment marks a critical transition in the cradle-to-career pipeline. Students of color and those in low-income households are less likely to pursue education beyond high school.¹⁷ As more careers require additional preparation, it is critical to ensure access to options and financial aid information for four-year degrees, two-year programs and technical certifications.

Examples of Interventions: Post-secondary enrollment represents an important first step after high school graduation toward earning a college degree or technical certification. To encourage enrollment in higher education, many programs focus on high school students or young adults who may be less likely to seek out opportunities because of their cost or lack of awareness and provide them with information and guidance on post-secondary opportunities and scholarships as early as their junior or senior year of high school. For youth exiting foster care or experiencing homelessness or housing instability, for example, community colleges and universities may offer special programs that include year-round housing, access to emergency funds, and tutoring and counseling services. In this case, housing may be provided by the college or university directly or in partnership with a local housing authority.

Connection to Housing: As previously stated, a student’s or young adult’s neighborhood has a particular impact on their ability to enroll in post-secondary education. When neighborhoods are isolated from social networks and institutions that facilitate school and work aspirations — such as high-performing schools or visible employment opportunities — youth may be less aware of post-secondary opportunities and, therefore, be less likely to enroll.¹⁸ Additionally, housing affordability remains a critical barrier to post-secondary enrollment, because students may be unable to afford the costs of housing and tuition while dedicating time to school in addition to or instead of full-time employment. Access to safe, affordable housing can provide the stability needed to encourage enrollment in post-secondary education.

EXAMPLE METRICS	RECOMMENDED DATA SOURCES
Enrollment in a two-year college within 16 months of graduation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local educational agency, school or district National Student Clearinghouse and other privately operated post-secondary tracking services
Enrollment in a four-year college or university within 16 months of graduation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local educational agency, school or district National Student Clearinghouse and other privately operated post-secondary tracking services
Career readiness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completion of industry-recognized certificates
Enrollment in trade or vocational programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completion of industry-recognized certificates National Student Clearinghouse and other privately operated post-secondary tracking services

Education Outcome: Post-secondary Degree Completion

Description: Post-secondary degree completion is more valuable than ever, because degrees and certifications open doors to meaningful jobs and stable futures. Workers with at least a bachelor’s degree can earn more than individuals who have only a high school diploma, and post-secondary attainment also leads to improved health and social outcomes.¹⁹ Societal benefits from a more educated population include lower crime rates and more community involvement.²⁰

Examples of Interventions: Much like the importance placed on high school graduation, post-secondary degree completion is increasingly recognized as an important milestone and an area that requires particular support and services for youth and adults with low incomes to narrow the achievement gap. Programs may offer tailored support and subsidies for students enrolled in colleges and universities or may provide preparation for or connections to apprenticeships, trade programs or other opportunities to earn training certificates. As described in the previous outcome of post-secondary degree enrollment, housing subsidies, scholarships and other educational supports also are critical to ensuring that students are able to afford the costs of attendance, remain stably housed, and access the academic support and time needed to focus on their studies so that they can graduate on time.

Connection to Housing: For students with lower incomes enrolled in higher education, housing cost burden often is a major barrier. Students who struggle with housing insecurity frequently are forced to enroll part time, live off campus and work while attending college, factors that may delay or complicate the path to graduation.²¹ One study showed that stably housed community college students maintained a higher GPA than those with unstable housing and were 40 percent more likely to stay on track to graduate.²² Neighborhood conditions also can impact an individual’s ability to progress through post-secondary training or education. A study conducted in Philadelphia found that, among individuals granted subsidized housing conditional on their enrollment in post-secondary education credits, subsidy recipients living in block groups with higher crime rates completed their credits at a slower rate, which suggests that the stress of living in an unsafe neighborhood may impede a student’s progress.²³

In contrast, when families are able to remain stably housed in safe neighborhoods, and are able to build wealth and assets through housing, typically through homeownership, they are able to invest money in education, including tuition and support for children enrolled in post-secondary schools.²⁴

EXAMPLE METRICS	RECOMMENDED DATA SOURCES
Three-year completion rate at two-year colleges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local educational agency, school or district National Student Clearinghouse and other privately operated post-secondary tracking services
Four-year completion rate at two-year colleges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local educational agency, school or district National Student Clearinghouse and other privately operated post-secondary tracking services
Four-year completion rate at four-year colleges and universities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local educational agency, school or district National Student Clearinghouse and other privately operated post-secondary tracking services
Six-year completion rate at four-year colleges and universities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local educational agency, school or district National Student Clearinghouse and other privately operated post-secondary tracking services

Education Outcome: **Employment**

Description: Connecting post-secondary graduates to good jobs is the ultimate goal of the cradle-to-career pipeline. Students who are employed within a year of graduation are on their way to achieving self-sufficiency. When a community’s workforce is fully engaged, the entire community is stronger.

Examples of Interventions: Programs and services geared toward workforce development — such as job training, support for job searches, apprenticeships and support for entrepreneurship — are examples of interventions that aim to connect adults with expanded employment or business opportunities. Organizations that work with children and youth also may employ a “two-generation” approach and work with parents and guardians to help them access stable or better-paying employment. The provision of stable, well-located housing is another intervention that can support employment outcomes, because a fixed address and reliable commute can help individuals secure and maintain work.

Connection to Housing: Overall, the cumulative effects of living in unaffordable and unstable housing in childhood make it much less likely that an individual will attain steady, well-paying employment as an adult. Research suggests that children in low-income households who switch schools frequently tend to obtain jobs with lower earning potential and fewer skill requirements as adults.²⁵ Additionally, when housing instability is experienced as an adult, financial instability often results. For example, one study showed that the likelihood of being laid off is 15 percent higher among workers who have experienced an eviction.²⁶

EXAMPLE METRICS	RECOMMENDED DATA SOURCES
Employment rate	• Enterprise OPPORTUNITY360 Community Dashboard
Unemployment rate	• Enterprise OPPORTUNITY360 Community Dashboard
Labor market engagement	• Enterprise OPPORTUNITY360 Community Dashboard
Youth employment	• Kids Count Data Center (data available by congressional district, city, state or nation)
New mothers by workforce status	• Enterprise OPPORTUNITY360 Community Dashboard

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APPENDIX E: RESOURCES FOR HOUSING AND EDUCATION PARTNERSHIPS

Comprehensive Resources for Cross-Sector Partnerships

A number of existing resources and toolkits offer valuable guidance on cross-sector partnerships with relevance to all five of the partnership stages.

- » [The Intersector Toolkit](#) | **The Intersector Project:** The Intersector Toolkit is a comprehensive and engaging resource that can help to “diagnose, design, implement, and assess successful cross-sector collaborations,” with content ranging from guiding questions and resources on engaging partners to telling the story of the shared work.
- » [The Value of Backbone Organizations in Collective Impact](#) | **The Greater Cincinnati Foundation and FSG, Collective Impact Forum:** In a series of articles on the Stanford Social Impact Review website, the Greater Cincinnati Foundation and the nonprofit consulting firm FSG highlight key practices of an effective backbone organization and links to other resources on getting started in collective impact work.
- » [Building Impact: A Closer Look at Local Cross-Sector Collaborations for Education](#) | **Teachers College, Columbia University:** In “Building Impact,” a research team from the Department of Education Policy and Social Analysis at Teachers College, Columbia University, compiles examples, guidance and findings from cross-sector education collaborations in eight cities across the country.
- » [Cross-Sector Partnership Guideline](#) | **Danish Red Cross and Deloitte:** The Cross-Sector Partnership Guideline, authored by Deloitte on behalf of the Danish Red Cross, offers a succinct set of summaries about a range of partnership elements, from scoping a project to evaluating the partnership.

Resources Organized by Housing and Education Partnership Stage

In addition to the resources and tools listed within the text, the following pages list additional sources of guidance relevant to each of the partnership stages.

STAGE 1: ASSESS EXISTING CONDITIONS

Resources for Assessing Existing Conditions

The following resources offer guidance on conducting an assessment of existing conditions.

- » [Conducting a Community Needs Assessment](#) | The Children’s Trust, National Neighborhood Indicators Partnership (NNIP)
- » [Comprehensive Community Needs Assessment Toolkit](#) | Maryland Community Action Partnership

National datasets on housing and education are widely available and often contain local or regional data in the form of online databases or downloadable reports. The following resources are national data sources that can be used to access local or regional data.

- » [American Community Survey \(ACS\)](#) | **United States Census Bureau:** Administered through the United States Census Bureau, ACS data come from an annually administered survey. Users can search easily based on geography and download relevant information tables.
- » [Child Opportunity Index](#) | **diversitydatakids.org:** The Child Opportunity Index displays information about opportunities and inequities for children in different metropolitan areas, allowing users to explore national datasets that are specific to youth in their area of focus.
- » [Child Trends DataBank](#) | **Child Trends:** The Child Trends DataBank is an online resource with a range of indicators and data summaries regarding the well-being of families and children in the United States. It includes a focus on educational attainment and disaggregation by race.
- » [County Health Rankings](#) | **Robert Wood Johnson Foundation:** The County Health Rankings offer a wealth of data, organized by state, county or ZIP code, regarding public health factors and outcomes in the United States.
- » [Digest of Education Statistics](#) | **National Center for Education Statistics:** The Digest of Education Statistics is a comprehensive report on education in the United States that is released annually by the National Center on Education Statistics. The data can be examined longitudinally, and many tables are organized by race and ethnicity.
- » [Education Data Explorer](#) | **Urban Institute:** The Urban Institute’s Education Data Explorer compiles school and school district data from publicly available sources and makes it available for users to access. Data include location and grade offerings, along with information about enrollment demographics, staffing levels, student discipline and more.
- » [Equity Profiles and Data Summaries](#) | **National Equity Atlas:** The National Equity Atlas features a range of data profiles and summaries on the nation’s 100 largest cities, 150 largest regions and all 50 states.
- » [Federal Data Summary School Years 2015–16 through 2017–18: Education for Homeless Children and Youth](#) | **National Center for Homeless Education, UNC Greensboro:** The National Center for Homeless Education provides an annual report based on data submitted by states regarding the demographics and academic performance of students experiencing homelessness.
- » [Kids Count](#) | **The Annie E. Casey Foundation:** Operated by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, Kids Count is an online resource that provides data sources on child well-being, including an index that compares performance on a set of 16 indicators (one of which is education) for states across time.

- » [Opportunity Atlas: Mapping the Childhood Roots of Social Mobility](#) | **Opportunity Insights:** Coordinated by a multidisciplinary team at Harvard University and led by Economics Professor Raj Chetty, The Opportunity Atlas includes publicly available data regarding the impact of neighborhood conditions on children’s outcomes in adulthood, organized by census tract.
- » [OPPORTUNITY360 Community Dashboard](#) | **Enterprise Community Partners:** Enterprise’s OPPORTUNITY360 Community Dashboard offers a wide range of data about the opportunity pathways and outcomes of a neighborhood, enabling users to quickly identify the neighborhood’s assets and challenges. Through an interactive online platform, users can explore neighborhood data for any census tract and compare it with other census tracts.
- » [Out of Reach](#) | **National Low Income Housing Coalition:** The National Low Income Housing Coalition produces an annual report called “Out of Reach” to document the gap between renters’ wages and the cost of rental housing in states across the United States. The data can be viewed by ZIP code or state, allowing comparison of such key factors as minimum wage and fair market rents.
- » [Public Housing Authority Picture of Subsidized Households](#) | **U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development:** HUD provides an online database of information regarding households living in public housing. Users can search the database for specific developments to learn more about the number of people served, units available, occupancy rates and resident income, along with other data points.

Example Assessments

The following reports are based on community assessments of existing conditions. Some assessments focus on a variety of topics and issues within a community, while others are focused on a particular topic.

- » [City of Tacoma: Community Needs Assessment](#) | City of Tacoma, Washington
- » [College and University Basic Needs Insecurity: A National #RealCollege Survey Report](#) | The Hope Center for College, Community, and Justice
- » [High School Persistence and Completion of Houston-Area Youth](#) | Texas Education Research Center (TERC), The University of Texas at Austin
- » [A Study of Financial Hardship](#) | United Way Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed (ALICE) Project
- » [To Live in the Community You Serve: School District Employee Housing in California](#) | Center for Cities + Schools, University of California, Berkeley
- » [Creating Pathways for Educational and Neighborhood Success: Hunters View HOPE SF Educational Strategy Plan](#) | Center for Cities + Schools, University of California, Berkeley
- » [Portraits of Change: Aligning School and Community Resources to Reduce Chronic Absence](#) | Communities In Schools

STAGE 2: IDENTIFY AND ENGAGE PARTNERS

Housing Partners

The following table offers an overview of the housing organizations that typically are active at the local level and that may be well positioned to serve as partners on cross-sector initiatives.

HOUSING ORGANIZATIONS	POTENTIAL PARTNERS	PARTNERSHIP CONSIDERATIONS
<p>Housing Agencies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public housing authorities (PHAs) 	<p>PHAs typically are the largest “landlord” in a given city or municipality, making them a fitting partner or stakeholder in efforts to better support low-income families. Governance structures of PHAs vary widely by state, with most PHAs led by an executive director and governing board, which typically includes a resident representative.</p> <p>For examples involving a housing authority, see the case studies in Stage 1 and Stage 2 in the Housing and Education Partnerships text.</p>
<p>City Departments and Offices</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offices of housing, planning, community development, etc. Finance agency or redevelopment authority Mayor’s office 	<p>Many cities and towns have offices dedicated specifically to housing or related municipal issues, such as housing finance and redevelopment, planning, and community or economic development. These offices are valuable sources of knowledge about ongoing housing efforts and programs, relevant neighborhood data, and municipal policies. City offices or agencies may be willing partners, because they often have dedicated resources and staff assigned to specific neighborhoods or geographic areas.</p> <p>Mayor’s offices also may have a particular focus on housing and interest in supporting the work of a partnership.</p> <p>For an example involving alignment with a Mayor’s office, see the case study in Stage 3 in the Housing and Education Partnerships text.</p>
<p>State Departments and Offices</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housing, planning or community development departments Housing finance agencies 	<p>Many states have departments dedicated to housing and housing finance and may be active locally in financing housing projects or in helping cities plan for additional housing. States also may have staff or resources that can support local efforts. Given their access to funding and regulatory powers, state-level departments also are well-equipped to incentivize cross-sector partnerships.</p> <p>For an example of state involvement in local partnerships, see the case study on the Homework Starts with Home initiative in Stage 5 in the Housing and Education Partnerships text.</p>

HOUSING ORGANIZATIONS	POTENTIAL PARTNERS	PARTNERSHIP CONSIDERATIONS
<p>Housing Developers, Owners and Operators</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community development corporations (CDCs), community housing development organizations (CHDOs) • For-profit and nonprofit affordable housing developers and lenders • Property managers • Private landlords 	<p>Numerous organizations of varying sizes are involved locally in developing, managing and advocating for affordable housing. Landlords, CDCs and CHDOs may focus their housing development and services in certain neighborhoods, making them excellent prospects for partnership within a target geography.</p> <p>Other affordable housing developers, property managers, private landlords or lenders may work nationally or across a city or region, offering an ability to scale programs across multiple properties or policy areas.</p> <p>For an example of a partnership involving private landlords, see the case study regarding the Star-C program in the Exploring Housing and Education Outcomes section in the Housing and Education Partnerships text.</p>
<p>Service providers (focused on resident services or case management) and advocacy organizations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuum of Care (CoC) participating organizations • Community action programs (CAPs) • Homeless shelters • Housing counseling organizations • Housing advocacy organizations, including tenant rights and legal services • United Way 	<p>A wide range of service providers work with households experiencing homelessness or housing instability, either directly through providing temporary housing for individuals experiencing homelessness, or indirectly through case management, rent subsidies, cash assistance, housing or legal counseling, and much more. These organizations offer a wealth of knowledge on vulnerable communities and often are willing partners to help extend the reach of their services.</p> <p>For an example involving service providers, see the case study on Project Hope in Stage 5 in the Housing and Education Partnerships text.</p>

Education Partners

The following table offers an overview of the education organizations that typically are active at the local level and that may be well positioned to serve as partners on cross-sector initiatives.

EDUCATION ORGANIZATIONS	POTENTIAL PARTNERS	PARTNERSHIP CONSIDERATIONS
<p>Schools and School Districts</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public, charter or magnet schools Colleges and universities Local education agencies Rural school districts Public school districts School boards 	<p>School or school district leaders — such as principals, deans, presidents or superintendents — often are key stakeholders when working in partnership, because their leadership or support can help guide collective efforts or designate staff time or resources. Schools and school districts also may have staff known as “community liaisons” or other community-facing staff or offices that are well prepared to work collaboratively across sectors to coordinate efforts and services.</p> <p>For an example involving a college or university, see the case study in Stage 2 in the Housing and Education Partnerships text.</p> <p>For an example involving a school district, see the case study on Project Hope in Stage 5 in the Housing and Education Partnerships text.</p>
<p>Backbone Organizations and Collective Impact Coalitions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> StriveTogether Cradle to Career Network member organizations Promise Neighborhoods 	<p>Organizations working within the StriveTogether network, and others focused on collective impact, focus on key education outcomes, with strong experience in sharing data and pursuing systems change. Already serving as a backbone organization within the educational sector in a particular city or region, these organizations have a wealth of experience and practice to offer cross-sector collaborations between housing and education.</p> <p>For an example involving a StriveTogether network member organization, see the case study on the Early Childhood Initiative in Stage 1 or the case study on the College Housing Assistance Program in Stage 2 in the Housing and Education Partnerships text.</p>
<p>State Departments and Agencies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State department of education State education agency 	<p>State agencies may be led by a superintendent, commissioner or secretary of education. Working with state departments and agencies offers the opportunity to affect change across a broader set of policies and geographies.</p> <p>For an example of state involvement in local partnerships, see the case study on the Homework Starts with Home initiative in Stage 5 in the Housing and Education Partnerships text.</p>

EDUCATION ORGANIZATIONS	POTENTIAL PARTNERS	PARTNERSHIP CONSIDERATIONS
<p>Service Providers (focused on programming and family supports)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boys and Girls Clubs • YMCAs and YWCAs 	<p>Many service providers operate within schools, while others offer out-of-school educational support. As a result, these service providers typically have a deep understanding of family needs, neighborhood and school context, as well as the impact of certain programming on family outcomes. As a result, these partners are important stakeholders to include in the design and implementation of cross-sector solutions.</p> <p>For an example involving service providers, see the case study on Project Hope in Stage 5 in the Housing and Education Partnerships text.</p>
<p>After-School, School Enrichment and Youth Programming Organizations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentoring and tutoring organizations • Arts, sports and environmental organizations • Recreation centers and libraries 	<p>Similar to other service providers, these organizations, focused on educational enrichment and youth programming, offer an understanding of community needs and may offer a different perspective than school-based stakeholders. These service providers are important partners to provide input into the design and implementation of cross-sector solutions.</p> <p>For an example involving a mentoring and tutoring organization, see the case study in Stage 4 in the Housing and Education Partnerships text.</p>

Resources for Partnership Development

The following resources offer background and guidance on key elements of partnership development, including strategies for community and stakeholder engagement.

GENERAL RESOURCES

- » [Partnerships: Frameworks for Working Together](#) | Strengthening Nonprofits: A Capacity Builder's Resource Library
- » [The Partnership Toolbox](#) | World Wildlife Fund (WWF)
- » [Making Meetings Work](#) | Collective Impact Forum
- » [12 Steps Towards Successful Cross-Sector Partnership](#) | The Partnering Initiative
- » [The Partnering Toolbox](#) | The Partnering Initiative

FOCUS GROUPS

- » [Conducting Focus Groups](#) | Community Tool Box, Center for Community Health and Development at the University of Kansas
- » [Public Participation Guide: Focus Groups](#) | U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

SURVEYS

- » [Conducting Needs Assessment Surveys](#) | Community Tool Box, Center for Community Health and Development at the University of Kansas
- » [Methods for Conducting an Educational Needs Assessment](#) | University of Idaho Extension | pages 8–12
- » [Measurement Tools](#) | Success Measures at NeighborWorks America

PARTICIPATORY ASSET MAPPING

- » [Participatory Asset Mapping: A Community Research Lab Toolkit](#) | The Advancement Project and Healthy City
- » [Unlocking Your Community's Hidden Strengths: A Guidebook to Community Asset-Mapping](#) | Southern Poverty Law Center
- » [Activating Asset Mapping](#) | AmeriCorps, VISTACampus

STAKEHOLDER, NETWORK AND SYSTEMS MAPPING

- » [Identifying and Analyzing Stakeholders and Their Interests](#) | Community Tool Box, Center for Community Health and Development at the University of Kansas
- » [Using a Stakeholder Analysis to Identify Key Local Actors](#) | Grassroots Collective
- » [Stakeholder Engagement: Tools for Action](#) | Home and Community-Based Services Clearinghouse
- » [Guide to Actor Mapping](#) | FSG
- » [Network Mapping Tool](#) | Advocacy & Communication Solutions
- » [Worksheet: Network Mapping for Crowdfunding Success](#) | GlobalGiving
- » [Systems Practice](#) | The Omidyar Group

HOSTING COMMUNITY EVENTS

- » [Public Participation Guide: Charrettes](#) | U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- » [Crafting Charrettes That Transform Communities](#) | American Planning Association
- » [Conducting Public Forums and Listening Sessions](#) | Community Tool Box, Center for Community Health and Development at the University of Kansas

STAGE 3: PRIORITIZE AND DEVELOP SHARED OUTCOMES

Resources for Identifying and Prioritizing Shared Outcomes

The following resources offer guidance within the three overall steps toward identifying and prioritizing shared outcomes: Consider shared outcomes, Engage stakeholders and Plan an approach.

CONSIDER SHARED OUTCOMES

- » Housing Outcomes ([Appendix C](#)) and Education Outcomes ([Appendix D](#))
- » [Housing as a Platform for Improving Child and Youth Education Outcomes](#) | Stewards for Affordable Housing for the Future and Urban Institute

ENGAGE STAKEHOLDERS

- » Shared Outcomes Discussion Guide ([Appendix F](#))

PLAN AN APPROACH

- » [Theory of Change: A Practical Tool for Action, Results and Learning](#) | Organizational Research Services, The Annie E. Casey Foundation
- » [Aim Statement](#) | Minnesota Department of Health
- » [Program Evaluation Framework Checklist: Describe the Program](#) | Program Performance and Evaluation Office, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- » [Logic Model Development Guide](#) | W.K. Kellogg Foundation
- » [Introduction to the Results Count™ Path to Equity: A Guide to the Accountability for Equitable Results Framework](#) | The Annie E. Casey Foundation

STAGE 4: PARTNER AND IMPLEMENT CROSS-SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS

Resources on Partnership Roles and Agreements

The following resources provide background on structuring partnerships, from creating a Memoranda of Understanding to assigning roles and shared responsibilities.

- » [Collaboration Toolkit: Creating an MOU](#) | Colorado Collaboration Award, Colorado Nonprofit Association
- » [Overview of roles and responsibilities, worksheet and guidance document, downloadable MOU template](#) | access²innovation

Resources for Outcome Measurement

The following resources outline the key elements and steps for outcome measurement, as articulated in Stage 4: Identify indicators, Create a data collection and measurement plan, Establish data-sharing agreements, and Adopt continuous and collaborative improvement models.

IDENTIFY INDICATORS

- » [Building Impact: A Closer Look at Local Cross-Sector Collaborations for Education](#) | Teacher's College, Columbia University | Chapter 12: Using Data, pages 74–81
- » [Addressing the Problem of Chronic Absenteeism: A Promising School-Community Partnership](#) | Communities In Schools
- » [Criteria and Benchmarks for Achieving the Goal of Ending Youth Homelessness](#) | U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness

CREATE A DATA COLLECTION AND MEASUREMENT PLAN

- » [Data Governance Tool Kit Guiding Framework](#) | The Annie E. Casey Foundation
- » [Data Governance for Two-Generation Programs](#) | The Annie E. Casey Foundation
- » [Data Collection Guide and Template](#) | Colorado Department of Education
- » [Create a Detailed Data Collection Plan](#) | The Institute for Educational Leadership — Coalition for Community Schools | pages 4–5

ESTABLISH DATA-SHARING AGREEMENTS

- » [Collection of Example Data-Sharing Agreements: Education](#) | National Neighborhood Indicators Partnership, Urban Institute
- » [Collection of Example Data-Sharing Agreements: Homelessness + Housing](#) | National Neighborhood Indicators Partnership, Urban Institute
- » [Believe to Become Master Data Sharing Agreement for Education Data](#) | National Neighborhood Indicators Partnership, Urban Institute
- » [Housing and Education Cross-Systems Collaboration: Examples](#) | HUD Exchange, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
- » [Measuring Performance: A Guidance Document for Promise Neighborhoods on Collecting Data and Reporting Results](#) | Urban Institute, U.S. Department of Education | pages 145–156

ADOPT CONTINUOUS AND COLLABORATIVE IMPROVEMENT MODELS

- » [Promise Partnership of Salt Lake City](#) | StriveTogether Network
- » [E3 Alliance](#) | StriveTogether Network
- » [Defining CQI \[Continuous Quality Improvement\] and Building a CQI Framework](#) | Child and Family Services Review Information Portal
- » [Quality Self-Assessment Tool for Expanded Learning Programs](#) | Partnership for Children & Youth
- » [PDSA: Plan-Do-Study-Act](#) | Minnesota Department of Health
- » [Tracking the Well-Being of San Antonio's Children and Families](#) | National Neighborhood Indicators Project, Urban Institute
- » [Building Impact: A Closer Look at Local Cross-Sector Collaborations for Education](#) | Teacher's College, Columbia University | page 100
- » [How to Integrate Continuous Learning into Collective Impact](#) | Collective Impact Forum
- » [Culture of Continuous Learning Project: Theory of Change](#) | Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
- » [Targeted and Universal Strategies Achieve Better and More Equitable Results](#) | The Annie E. Casey Foundation, Results Count™

STAGE 5: SUSTAIN PARTNERSHIPS FOR SYSTEMS CHANGE

Resources for Conducting Evaluations

In addition to the resources included in the toolkit section describing Stage 5 of partnership, the following resources offer guidance on how evaluation strategies and practices can help build evidence of a program's effectiveness or create momentum for systems change.

EVALUATION PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

- » [Evaluation Capacity Diagnostic Tool](#) | Informing Change
- » [Reflections on Applying Principles of Equitable Evaluation](#) | The WestEd Justice & Prevention Research Center, The Annie E. Casey Foundation
- » [Placing Equity Concerns at the Center of Knowledge Development](#) | Center for the Study of Social Policy
- » [Evaluating Comprehensive Community Initiatives](#) | Community Tool Box, Center for Community Health and Development at the University of Kansas
- » [Partnerships: Frameworks for Working Together](#) | Strengthening Nonprofits: A Capacity Builder's Resource Library | pages 26–28
- » [Guide to Evaluating Collective Impact](#) | Collective Impact Forum
- » [Strengthening Evaluation Literacy: Demystifying Participatory and Collaborative Approaches to Evaluation](#) | Tamarack Institute
- » [What Counts: Harnessing Data for America's Communities](#) | NeighborWorks America, Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco, Urban Institute

EXAMPLES OF EVALUATION PLANS

- » [CLN Kids Draft Evaluation Plan](#) | CLN Kids, Albuquerque, New Mexico
- » [Families, Education, Preschool, and Promise Levy: Implementation and Evaluation Plan](#) | Seattle Department of Education & Early Learning | pages 16–20

Using Evidence to Drive Systems Change

In addition to the examples included in Stage 5, the following resources offer examples of how evidence collected through formal evaluation or program implementation can be used to communicate about and advocate for policy and systems change.

EXAMPLES OF CROSS-SECTOR REPORTS AND BRIEFS

- » [Next Steps for the Seattle Housing Authority-Seattle Public Schools Partnership: Assessing Progress for a Strong and Innovative Partnership](#) | Urban Institute
- » [Education Data for Health Systems](#) | Healthy Schools Campaign
- » [How Housing Mobility Affects Education Outcomes for Low-Income Children](#) | Evidence Matters, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

EXAMPLES OF CROSS-SECTOR EVALUATION REPORTS

- » [MDRC Evaluation of Communities In Schools: Final Reports](#) | Communities In Schools
- » [Tacoma Housing Authority McCarver Special Housing Program 2015 Year Four Evaluation Report](#) | Tacoma Housing Authority, Tacoma, Washington
- » [Improving College Access and Success: Grand Rapids Challenge Scholars](#) | FSG
- » [Supporting Learning and Evaluation for Latino Student Success](#) | FSG
- » [An Evaluation of Family Economic Success—Early Childhood Education: Findings from a Two-Generation Approach](#) | James Bell Associates

EXAMPLES OF REPORTS OR BRIEFS THAT USE EVIDENCE TO DRIVE SYSTEMS CHANGE

- » [Impact KCK Toolkit: A Guide to Replication](#) | Avenue of Life, University of Missouri–Kansas City
- » [BEYOND THE FOOD PANTRY: Supporting Community College Students with Affordable Housing Vouchers: Lessons from the Field](#) | The Hope Center for College, Community, and Justice
- » [The Path to Partnership: Lessons Learned in the Pursuit of Joint Initiatives between Affordable Housing Providers and Medicaid Managed Care Programs](#) | Stewards of Affordable Housing for the Future



APPENDIX F: SHARED OUTCOMES DISCUSSION GUIDE

Discussing Shared Outcomes

The following discussion or workshop facilitation guide covers a sample agenda for a meeting of individuals and organizations — including housing, education and other civic leaders — coming together across sectors to address housing and education challenges. Objectives for a discussion using this guide can include the following:

- Understanding the housing and education landscapes in a given community or area of focus.
- Understanding attendees' perspectives on the community's priorities, gaps and opportunities.
- Informing ways to build stronger cross-sector relationships through shared outcomes.

It is important to tailor a discussion guide to your particular community and goals. Although this guide is intended for an approximately hour-long conversation with one or two stakeholders in an interview format, the guide can be shortened easily or adjusted based on the size of the group or the familiarity of participants with the discussion material.

Depending on the format of the discussion, a variety of roles can be needed to ensure a successful discussion, particularly when adapting these discussion questions to a workshop format. In an interview format, it is helpful to have one person serve as the note taker while another person serves as the discussion facilitator. The roles to consider for a workshop format include the following:

- **Presenter:** Introduces topics, provides an overview of materials
- **Facilitator:** Guides conversation and activities, makes suggestions or contributions when needed, engages participants
- **Note Taker:** Captures notes from discussions or activities for the purposes of later review
- **Recorder:** Writes notes from discussions or activities on poster paper, whiteboard or other readable format so that participants can see ideas in real time

Shared Outcomes Discussion Guide: Sample Interview Script and Guiding Questions

Introduction – 5 minutes

Sample Introduction Script: As you may know, our organization is focused on advancing economic mobility in our city, with a focus on bringing together partners across sectors to work collaboratively to achieve this goal. As part of this work, we are focusing on the alignment between housing and education. We know that housing and neighborhood conditions can have significant effects on children’s educational outcomes. Because communities can improve education outcomes through housing and neighborhood development policies and practices, we would like to ask you some questions related to building greater coordination between the housing and education sectors. This discussion will help us better understand how to achieve greater collaboration between the housing and education sectors, with the ultimate goal of expanding economic mobility for students and their families.

Information About Interviewee(s) or Workshop Participant(s) – 5 minutes

» **Solicit the following information from each respondent**

- o Name, title and organization/affiliation
- o Role at [organization name]
- o Length of involvement with the organization

Organization Overview and Vision – 10 minutes

» **Can you describe your organization’s overall mission (or mandate) and intended goals/outcomes?**

- o Who are the primary beneficiaries of the organization’s services? At what scale?

» **Does [organization name] focus on economic mobility/mobility from poverty? If so, how do you define that?**

- o What would your community look like if this vision was realized?
- o What would need to be different or change in your community to achieve this vision?
- o What current efforts in your community are helping make progress toward that vision?

- » **What are the primary ways that [organization name] works toward your mission?**
- » **What programs, services or initiatives are core to your work?**
 - o What are your organization's current priorities?
- » **How does [organization name] typically go about making decisions to create or modify programs/services?**
 - o Have any changes been made to your programs/services in the past two years? If yes, what were those changes, and why were they made?

Data Collection and Tracking Within the Organization – 15 minutes

- » **Does [organization name] have a way of measuring its success? If yes, how does it do so, and how does that vary across programs?**
 - o How were these measures of success developed/set (i.e., funder requirements, strategic planning process, alignment with regional/city initiatives, etc.)?
- » **Do you collect data to track and measure your success?**
 - o What methods or systems are used to collect data or measure success?

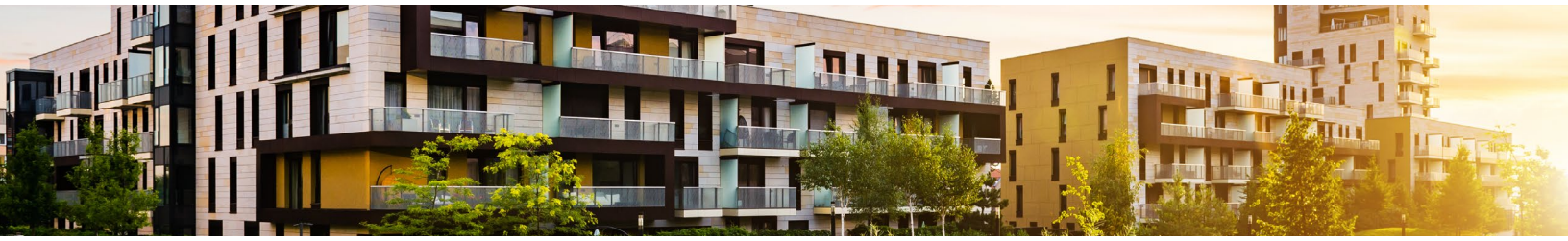
Partnerships – 30 minutes

- » **Who are your partners?**
- » **What challenges or community needs is your organization working to address that would benefit from greater alignment with the [housing/education] sector?**
- » **Has [organization name] ever partnered or worked with the [housing/education] sector on a program or initiative?**
 - o **If yes**, what was the nature of the partnership? What were you hoping to achieve? What was [organization name]'s role in the partnership? Describe the collaboration.
 - Were there key stakeholders who needed to buy into the new partnership? If so, who were they, and why was their buy-in important?
 - How did you obtain their buy-in?
 - How was the program/initiative funded?
 - Did the partnership involve shared fundraising?
 - Did the partnership include any target measures of success or shared data collection/measurement activities to assess performance?

- **To what extent did the project meet expectations?**
 - What worked well?
 - What were the main challenges? How were they addressed?
- **Can you share any documents that describe this partnership/program?**
 - Can you share some of the lessons learned or data collected along the way?

- o **If no**, is your organization interested in partnering with the [housing/education] sector on an initiative/project?
 - **If yes, what types of initiatives/projects would you want to collaborate around? Why?**
 - Who would need to be involved/brought in for this type of partnership?
 - **If no, why would you not be interested?**
 - What obstacles or challenges do you anticipate?

- » **Is there anything else you would like to share with us?**



APPENDIX G: NOTES

Project Background

During 2019 and 2020, Enterprise staff provided technical assistance to members of StriveTogether’s Cradle to Career Network and their partners in Dayton, Ohio; Memphis, Tennessee; and Racine, Wisconsin. The assistance included supporting local housing and education stakeholders as they worked to build stronger partnerships that address interrelated housing and education challenges. Through this work and other relevant technical assistance engagements, Enterprise developed and tested many of the elements featured in this toolkit, including the partnership stages framework and the Shared Outcomes Discussion guide included in Appendix F.

In support of this toolkit, the Urban Institute conducted case study research to identify housing and education collaborations that can offer lessons for similar efforts. The research involved document review and semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders from 10 collaborations. These organizations included housing providers, educators, collective impact backbone organizations, resource centers, technical assistance providers and a state agency. The focus of the data collection was on motivations for initiating partnerships, leadership structure, funding and sustainability, systems-level efforts, data use and outcomes tracking, and cycles of continuous improvement.

The collaborations included the following entities:

- » [Akron Metropolitan Housing Authority’s Early Childhood Initiative](#) in Summit County, Ohio
- » [Avenue of Life’s Impact KCK](#) in Wyandotte County, Kansas
- » [Boulder Housing Partners and the “I Have a Dream” Foundation’s Bringing School Home](#) in Boulder, Colorado
- » [The Field Center for Children’s Policy Practice & Research’s Foster Care to College](#) in Pennsylvania
- » Minnesota Interagency Council on Homelessness’s [Homework Starts with Home](#) program in Minnesota
- » [Partnership for Children & Youth’s Housing and Education \(HousED\)](#) initiative in California
- » [Project Hope](#) in Boston, Massachusetts
- » [Purpose Built Communities](#) in Atlanta, Georgia
- » [Star-C](#) in Atlanta, Georgia
- » [Tacoma Housing Authority’s College Housing Assistance Program](#) in Tacoma, Washington

The research team used the data from the interviews to inform this toolkit and a research brief: [Aligning Housing and Education: Evidence of Promising Practices and Structural Challenges](#), released July 2020.





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