



GUIDE | FOUNDATIONS FOR DEVELOPING A COMMON AGENDA

A commonly expressed challenge within the Cities Reducing Poverty learning community is how to get to a common agenda for collective impact. This guide was developed to support communities in understanding the process, milestones, and resources that can help lay foundations for developing a community-wide common agenda.

THIS GUIDE WILL HELP YOU TO:

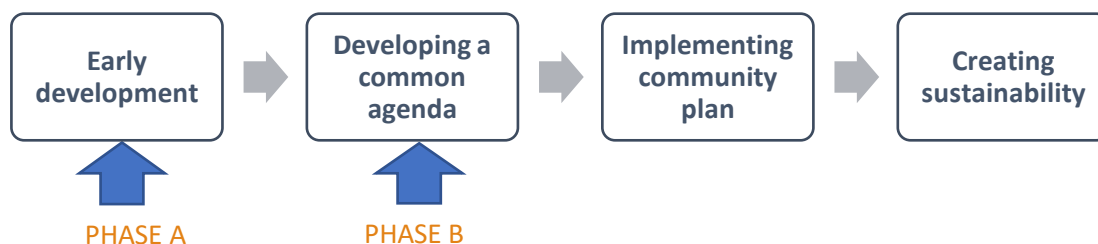
- Understand a proven engagement process that can help you develop an informed and sustainable community plan
- Identify milestones and actions to help you track your progress
- Access a compendium of resources that will guide you through the process of achieving key milestones

OVERVIEW

There are four phases involved in developing poverty reduction collaboratives:

- a. early development
- b. establishing a community-wide agenda
- c. implementing a community plan
- d. creating sustainability

This guide aims to support community organizers and collaboratives at the A or B phase to create a community plan by engaging the community in awareness-raising and building the will and commitment needed to carry out the plan. It offers key milestones and resources that enable you to navigate the [Collective Impact](#) process as you work towards achieving a common agenda.



A common agenda is a common understanding of the problem and a shared vision for change. It is a necessary component of collective impact and a process that leads to the development of a Poverty Reduction Strategy through a proven engagement process.

This guide draws on real-life experiences of Cities Reducing Poverty members who have progressed through these early development phases with success.

Common Agenda

A common understanding of the problem and a shared vision for change.

INTENDED USERS

Organizers should ideally be in a position to drive the work forward by having:

- a. a government mandate at the municipal or regional level;
- b. an organizational focus to address poverty; or
- c. a coalition of residents and non-profits committed to creating a more vibrant community.

THE PROCESS

First assess what phase your collaborative is in:

Phase A (early development) starts with a group of engaged individuals, who have not yet established a community plan, and perhaps have no specific vision or direction for how to move forward. Key to this phase is building the energy required to collectively organize around the issue at hand. This includes forming a leadership team that will work together to move the collective impact work forward. In this early phase, you will need to identify local champions or community influencers from diverse sectors and invite them to be involved in the community initiative.

Phase B (developing a community-wide agenda) requires a multi-sectoral leadership team to be committed to developing a common agenda. Key to this phase is exploration, including identifying and bringing together 100 caring people from four sectors (community or not-for-profit, business, government and people with lived/living experience), and continuing to build momentum around the issue in the community. This step is critical to the future success of your collective impact work.

SUMMARY OF MILESTONES

Phase A:
Early development

- Identify local champions/ influential people
- Convene a roundtable
- Conduct an environmental scan and make sense of local poverty data
- Understand community readiness for collective impact
- Multi-sector engagement

Phase B:
Develop a community-wide agenda

- Adopt collective impact - develop a community vision and principles
- Convene your top 100 (and other community consultations)
- Establish priorities and a Theory of Change
- Establish backbone structure and role, and leadership team
- Develop and launch your Poverty Reduction Strategy

RESOURCES TO SUPPORT ACTIONS AND MEET MILESTONES

PHASE	MILESTONES	RESOURCES
<p>A) Early Development – <i>Building the Energy</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identify local champions/influential people ▪ Convene a multi-sector roundtable ▪ Collect and make sense of local poverty data; do an environmental scan ▪ Understand your community’s readiness for collective impact and raise awareness ▪ Conduct multi-sector engagement 	<p>Overview of common agenda:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How to Develop a Common Agenda for Collective Impact ▪ Common Agenda Framework <p>Case study on the four phases of poverty reduction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Phases of Poverty Reduction in Saint John <p>How to identify key people for your initiative:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Top 100 Engagement ▪ Gives and Gets <p>Case study on convening a roundtable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Halton Poverty Roundtable <p>Case study on interpreting local data:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Central Iowa's Opportunity Plan Case Study <p>Understanding local poverty issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cause and Effect Exercise <p>Community readiness, multisector engagement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Convening a Comprehensive Multisector Effort to Reduce Poverty ▪ Collective Impact Self Assessment and Planning Tool
<p>B) Developing a community-wide agenda - <i>Exploration</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Adopt a collective impact methodology; develop a community vision and principles ▪ Engage the community; convene your Top 100 and hold other consultations ▪ Identify priorities and establish a Theory of Change ▪ Establish governance; backbone structure and role, and leadership team ▪ Develop and launch your poverty reduction strategy 	<p>Team motivation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Bringing the Heart into Collective Impact <p>Framework for poverty reduction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Winnipeg's Framework for Action <p>Identifying priorities and Theory of Change:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Theory of Change Example <p>Host a Top 100 Conference:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Top 100 Conference Outline ▪ Commitment Form example ▪ Top 100 Report - What we heard <p>Continue to engage the community:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Engagement Continuum ▪ Community Engagement Workbook ▪ Public Participation Spectrum <p>Governance structure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sample Governance Structure and Terms of Reference ▪ Personal Asset Inventory ▪ Backbone Starter Guide <p>Sample Poverty Reduction Strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Peel Region's Poverty Reduction Strategy ▪ Edmonton's Poverty Reduction Strategy ▪ Calgary's Poverty Reduction Strategy

PRINCIPLES FOR PHASE A & B

Tips that will lead you to success:

- **Remain flexible** – The milestones and steps involved in creating a common agenda may not always happen linearly. This guide is intended to aid your progression with resources that have been effective for other collaboratives in getting to a common agenda. Refer to the milestones, reflect on what you are doing well and what could use improvement, but ultimately do what makes the most sense for your community's local context.
- **Leverage your assets** – Get the right people on board early, engage with the community and different stakeholders, raise awareness of poverty locally, foster relationships, re-evaluate existing community assets, and build momentum and energy.
- **Invest the time** – Explore local issues and resources, try to get everyone on the same page, and keep them informed and engaged in each stage of the process. Remember that long before a strategy can be built and action can occur, you must build strong community engagement and will.
- **Keep going** – This guide will ideally get your collaborative to a point where you are ready to transition the momentum of developing a common agenda with the community towards drafting a community plan. Once you launch your plan, you will be ready to enter the implementation phase (Phase C).

Funded by the Government of Canada's Social Development Partnership Program.

Canada 

The opinions and interpretations in this publication are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of the Government of Canada.