

*A Tamarack Institute Webinar*

# Communities Building Youth Futures

Building Your Collective Impact Structure

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Tamarack Institute



## Thinking about the CBYF Structure

- There are two distinct structural elements to a Collective Impact approach
- The **CBYF Backbone** includes:
  - a 10 – 15 person CBYF Leadership Table which includes youth voice
  - A Charity which acts as the Convener/Fiscal Sponsor, holding the revenues for the collaborative work
  - a CBYF staff team of 2 to 3 individuals
- The **CBYF Eco-system** includes:
  - All of the components of the CBYF Backbone
  - Working Groups or Action Teams on specific topics or areas of focus
  - Other community organizations supporting youth including businesses employing youth, other non-profits, government services, etc



## CBYF – Collective Impact Structure – Key Roles

	<b>Primary Focus &amp; Contributions</b>	<b>Time Commitment</b>
<b>CBYF Convener/ Fiscal Sponsor</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local charitable organization that receives the funding from Tamarack to operate the CBYF project</li> <li>Is a member of an accountable to the CBYF Leadership Table</li> <li>May be the location for the CBYF staff team</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monthly, quarterly and annual progress reports</li> <li>Supervision of staff</li> <li>Involvement in the Leadership table</li> </ul>
<b>CBYF Leadership Table</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10 – 15 local leaders including youth leadership</li> <li>Shapes and leads the CI strategy overall</li> <li>Aligns work of various action teams</li> <li>Hold commitment to common agenda &amp; Theory of Change</li> <li>Engage other stakeholders</li> <li>Mobilize resources &amp; knowledge</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4-6 hours/month to participate meetings</li> <li>6-8 hours/month to undertake key actions</li> </ul>
<b>CBYF Staff Team</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Includes the SC &amp; core staff of the backbone infrastructure</li> <li>Support the work of the Steering Committee &amp; CI Initiative overall – includes SC Co-Chairs &amp; Key Staff of the Initiative</li> <li>Design &amp; facilitate engagement across the initiative and meetings of various groups</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 – 3 FTE Staff</li> <li>Communications (1-3 hrs/month)</li> <li>Learning &amp; Evaluation (1-3 hrs/month)</li> </ul>
<b>Working Groups or Action Teams</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scale-up on-the-ground solutions around key areas of focus/priorities</li> <li>Co-design &amp; refine solutions around key shifts/strategic priorities</li> <li>Number of size of work groups to be determined</li> <li>Each work group includes youth leadership</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4-6 groups of 10-15 members</li> <li>Average 3-5 hours/month in working sessions</li> </ul>
<b>CBYF Community Network</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides insights and ideas on key shifts &amp; ideas impacting youth</li> <li>Offers feedback on priorities to maximize impact of the initiative</li> <li>Contributes knowledge, resources &amp; connections</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attend 2-3, one-day stakeholder gatherings per year</li> </ul>



## CI Leadership Table – Member Characteristics

**The CBYF Leadership Table ideally should include high-leverage stakeholders who are well-positioned & can influence others in the system.**

Ideal Leadership Table member characteristics include:

- Highly regarded by their peers
- Highly knowledgeable in their subject area(s)
- Action-oriented thinkers
- Able to represent their organization's involvement
- Willing/eager to collaborate & innovate with a diversity of other perspectives
- The CBYF Leadership Table must include Youth leadership and voice



## CI Leadership Table – Member Gifts

Together, the members of the CI Leadership Table should include a mix of the following gifts & attributes:

- **Connector** – Someone who knows many people across the system
- **Attractor** – Someone whom others want to be in the room with
- **Visionary** – Someone who will push the Leadership Table and its network to move with speed & scale while staying focused on the common agenda
- **Subject-Matter and/or Context Expert** – Youth with expertise on a key aspect of the issue/opportunity being addressed
- **CBYF Staff** – The CBYF staff provide support to the Leadership Table as well as support the working groups.



## Collaborative Governance – Constellation Model



### Constellation Model of Governance

- Designed for collaborative efforts in using open source principles
- Emphasizes self-organization and concrete action within a network working on a common issue
- Supports action by multiple groups or sectors working toward a shared outcome.







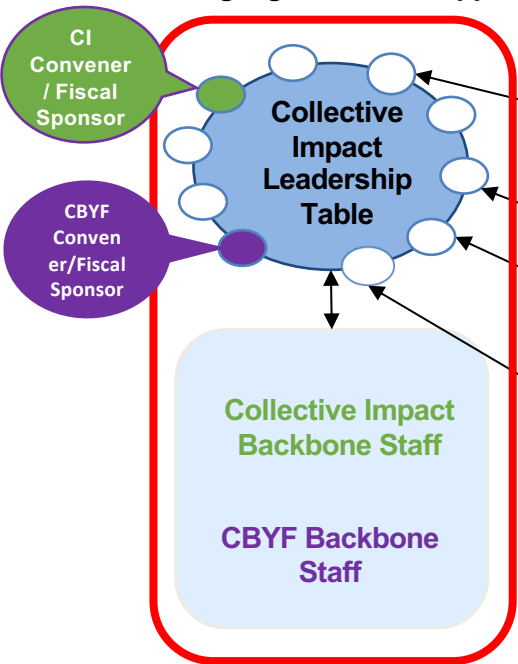




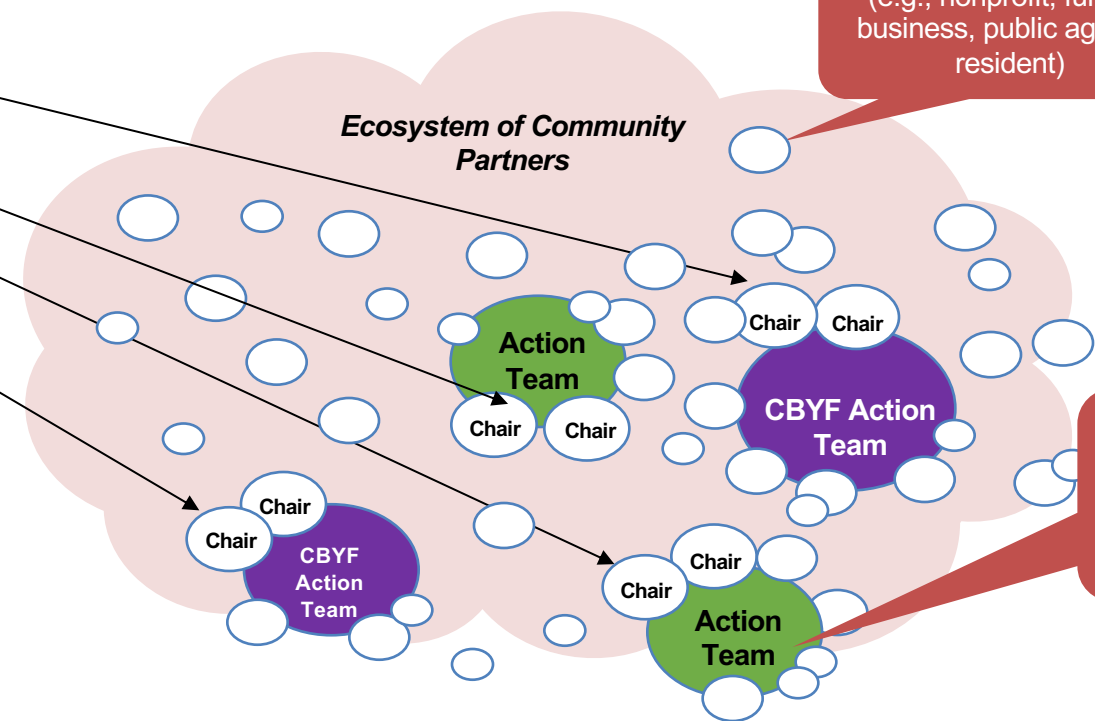
# Collaborative Governance – Constellation Model - Alternative B

## Common Agenda and Shared Metrics

### Backbone Infrastructure *strategic guidance & support*



○ = Community Partner  
(e.g., nonprofit, funder, business, public agency, resident)



Action Teams  
Work groups formed around ideas & opportunities NOT organizations

Adapted from [Listening to the Stars: The Constellation Model of Collaborative Social Change](#), by Tonya Surman and Mark Surman, 2008.



## Constellation Governance Model



### 3 Primary Elements

Stewardship Group = CBYF Leadership Table

Constellations = Working Groups or Action Teams

Third-Party Coordination = Fiscal Sponsor and CBYF staff

### 3 Core Governance Documents

Guiding Principles for working collectively

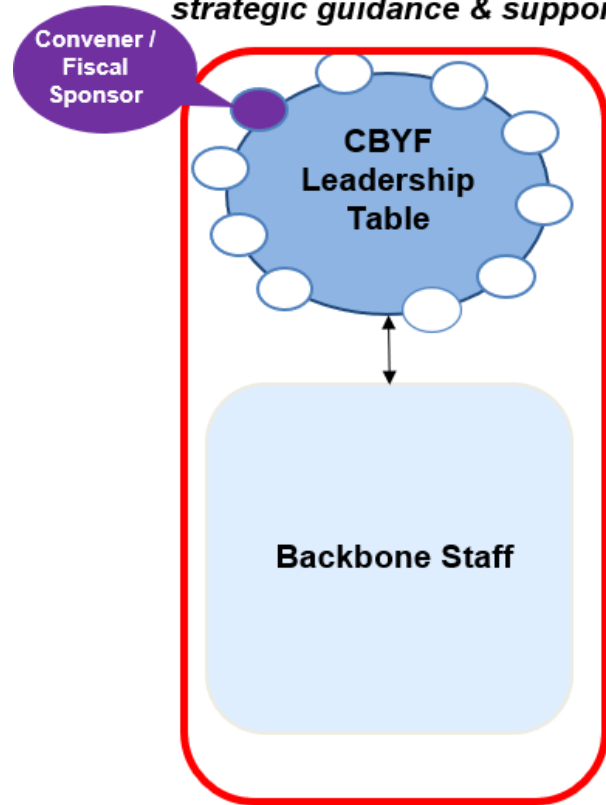
Governance terms of reference (Leadership Table and Working Groups)

Common Agenda and Strategies



## Constellation Governance Model

### Backbone Infrastructure *strategic guidance & support*



### CBYF Backbone Infrastructure

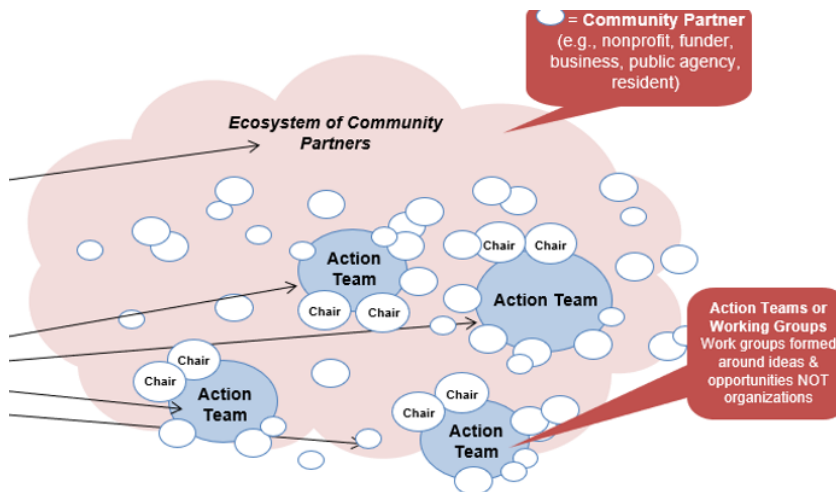
- Includes the Leadership Table, CBYF Convener/Fiscal Sponsor and Staff Team
- Serves the broader collective vision and strategic directions of the network
- Monitors overall partnership health
- Aligns constellations with partnership purpose
- Determines and provides support to constellations



# Constellation Governance Model

## CBYF Community Eco-System

- Includes working groups or actions teams and other organizations which are serving and supporting youth
- Working groups or action teams for specific activities
- Used for formal projects or opportunistic initiatives
- Must be consistent with partnerships vision
- Conditions for a constellation
  - Overall need or opportunity
  - Energetic leadership by one or more partner
  - Can phase out when energy no longer exists or issue is addressed





## Constellation Governance Model

### Elements of Success:

- Light-weight governance
- Action-focused teams
- Third-party coordination – Convener/Fiscal Spon

### Advantages

- The ability to respond quickly to emerging opportunities while still working on more protracted issues
- Preserving organizational autonomy within the collaborative
- Supports a flexible, adaptable partnership not a “heavy new umbrella NGO.”



## Constellation Governance Model

### Challenges

- Securing funds to pay the secretariat/backbone
- Building capacity of all partners to contribute in a meaningful way
- Ensuring partners had the ability to play as equals within the partnership
- Succession planning amongst leadership partners





# Linking the Backbone to Collaborative Governance

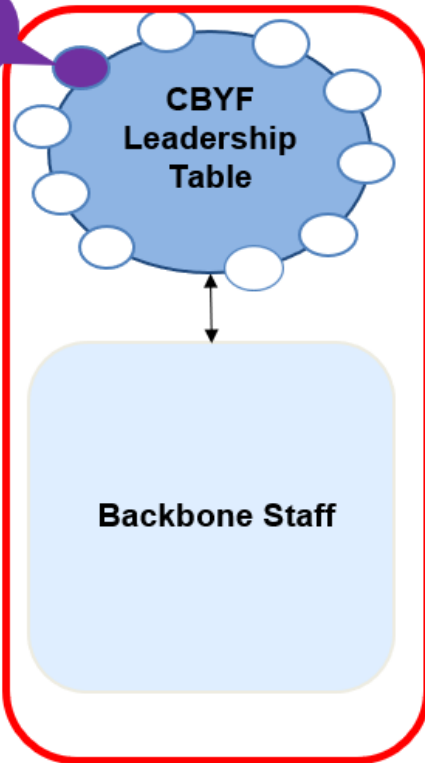
## The Key Elements



## Backbone Infrastructure

### Backbone Infrastructure *strategic guidance & support*

Convener /  
Fiscal  
Sponsor



*Like a manager at a construction site who attends to the whole building while carpenters, plumbers and electricians come and go, the support staff keep the collaborative process moving along, even as the participants may change.*

Jay Connor, 2004

*Community Visions, Community Solutions: Grantmaking for Comprehensive Impact*

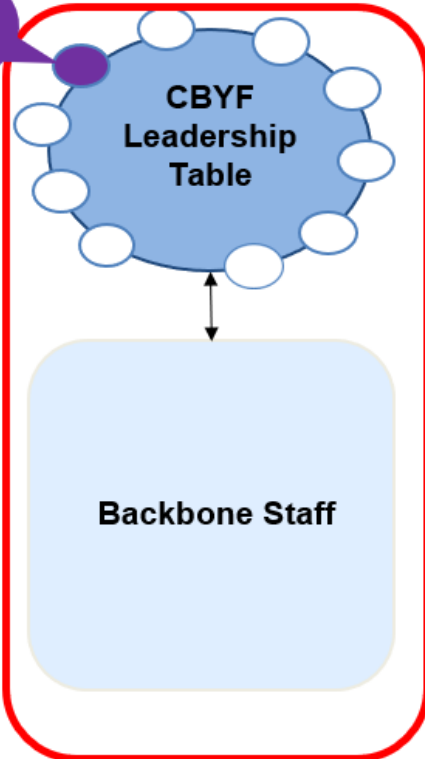




## Backbone Infrastructure – Core Functions

### Backbone Infrastructure *strategic guidance & support*

Convener /  
Fiscal  
Sponsor



Backbones must balance the tension between coordinating and maintaining accountability, while staying behind the scenes to establish collective ownership.

Guide Vision and Strategy

Shared Measurement

Established Measurement Practices

Continuous Communication

Advance Policy

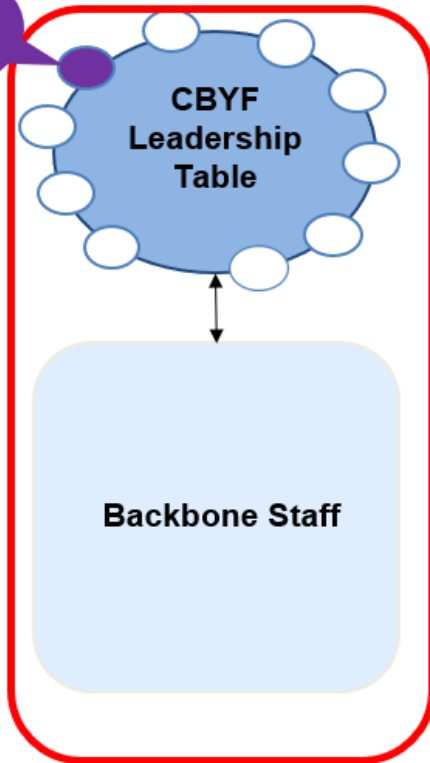
Mobilize Funding



# Backbone Infrastructure – Leadership Characteristics

## Backbone Infrastructure *strategic guidance & support*

Convener /  
Fiscal  
Sponsor



Stakeholders describe backbone leaders as:

***Visionary***

***Results-Oriented***

***Collaborative, Relationship Builder***

***Focused, but Adaptive***

***Charismatic and Influential Communicator***

***Politic***

***Humble***

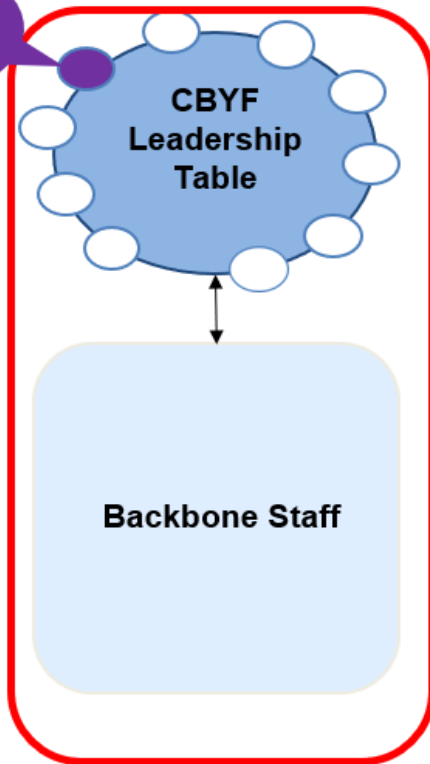
***“Someone who has a big picture perspective—[who] understands how the pieces fit together, is sensitive to the dynamics, and is energetic and passionate.”***



# Equity and Backbone Infrastructure

## Backbone Infrastructure *strategic guidance & support*

Convener /  
Fiscal  
Sponsor



- One of the backbone's critical roles is to reinforce the initiative's focus on equity and youth voice
- Backbone members should reflect the community's diversity and require the skills & resources to engage communities and share power with them
- Backbone members need to have credibility with the communities most affected by inequities;
- Backbone members must ensure the Leadership Table, Staff Team and others design strategies with a focus on the most vulnerable
- Key Questions for the Backbone Re: Equity:
  - How do we effectively integrate youth and community voice?
  - How do we authentically & meaningfully involve youth?
  - How do we engage all stakeholders in sensitive conversations about race, class and culture?

# Linking the Backbone to Collaborative Governance

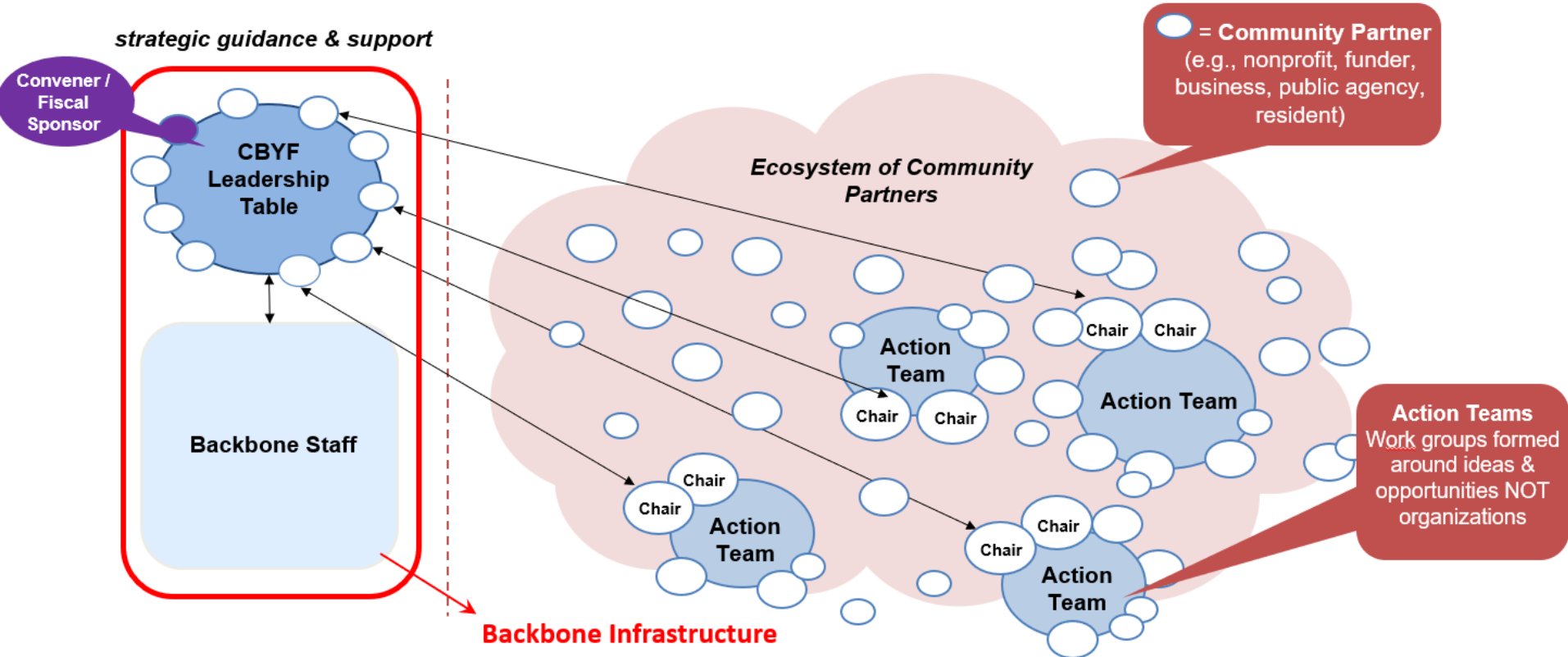
## The Key Players:

Leadership Table, Fiscal Sponsor/Convener and Staff Team  
And Community Partners



# Collaborative Governance – Constellation Model

## Common Agenda and Shared Metrics



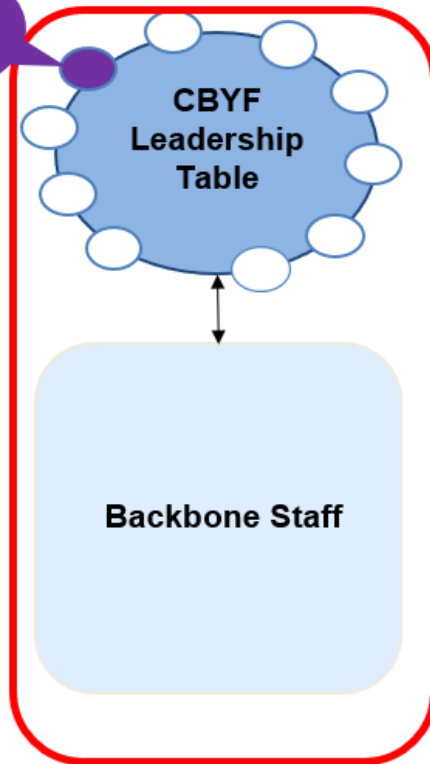
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# CBYF Convener/Fiscal Sponsor

## Backbone Infrastructure *strategic guidance & support*

Convener /  
Fiscal  
Sponsor



## Purpose

- Is a Canadian charity
- Mandate and mission are aligned with that of the collaborative
- Holds financial and HR legal accountabilities
- Provides admin services (in kind donation or for a fee)
- Typically, well-established, trusted & respected
- Usually includes legal sponsor and funders

## Composition

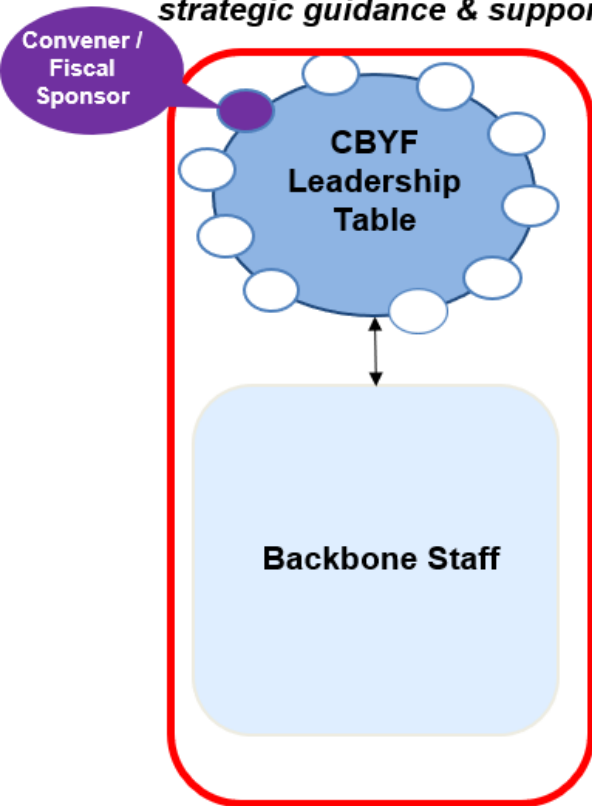
- Often includes staff on an active but ex-officio basis

*Note: power may reside here, to the detriment of the larger leadership table and community network*



# CBYF Leadership Table

## Backbone Infrastructure *strategic guidance & support*



## Purpose

- Champions and provides strategic direction for the initiative
- Establishes a common agenda for their Collective Impact Initiative
- Aligns and leverages mutually reinforcing activities
- Some Leadership Table members may serve on Working Groups/Action Teams
- Helps coordinate various elements of the structure across the initiative
- Provides guidance and support to CBYF staff

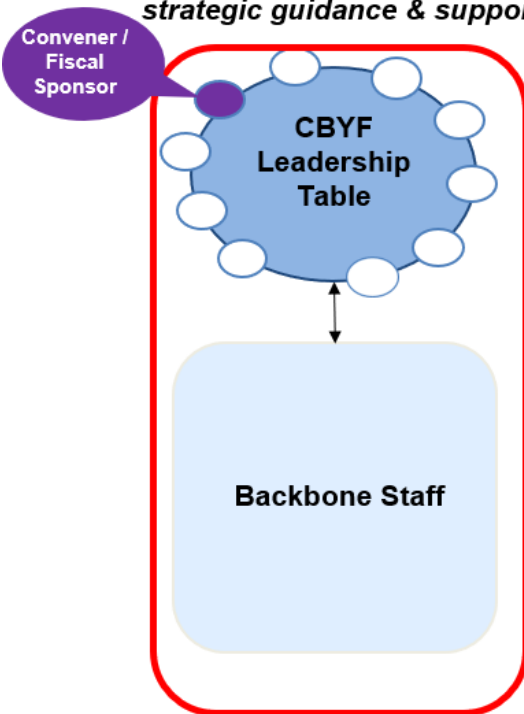
## Composition

- Reflects Multiple Sectors
  - Nonprofit Organizations
  - Business
  - Government
  - Youth Leadership
- Average Size – 10 – 15 members
- Can initially meet monthly but as collaboration matures, may meet quarterly
- Often includes backbone staff on an active but ex-officio basis
- Includes legal/fiscal sponsor and funders



# CBYF Project Manager (Lead Staff Person)

## Backbone Infrastructure *strategic guidance & support*



## Role

- CBYF staff are accountable to the entire Collaborative initiative via the Leadership Table
- Manage the overall initiative (staff, finances, reporting, coordination of governing bodies)
- Keep an eye on the big picture and help shape strategic direction
- Play a hands-on role engaging partners and facilitating their collaboration
- Ensure the initiative is effectively communicated about

## Description

Typically highly experienced people with:

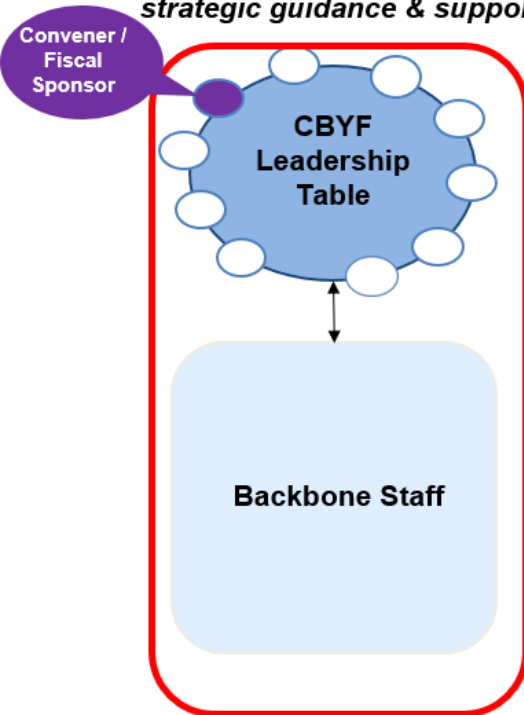
- Strong networks,
- A good understanding of the substantive issues
- An ability to work with a wide range of community partners
- Capacity to manage a complex change process.





# CBYF Staff Team

## Backbone Infrastructure *strategic guidance & support*



## Purpose

Hands-on support for the initiative on a day to day basis

- Planning & Facilitating
- Researching
- Organizing
- Communicating
- Coordinating
- Supporting data & shared measurement practices

## Accountability

- Accountable and provide support for the common agenda & implementation plan
- Accountable to the Leadership Table

## Composition

Fully operational initiatives usually have the equivalent of 2-3 full-time staff:

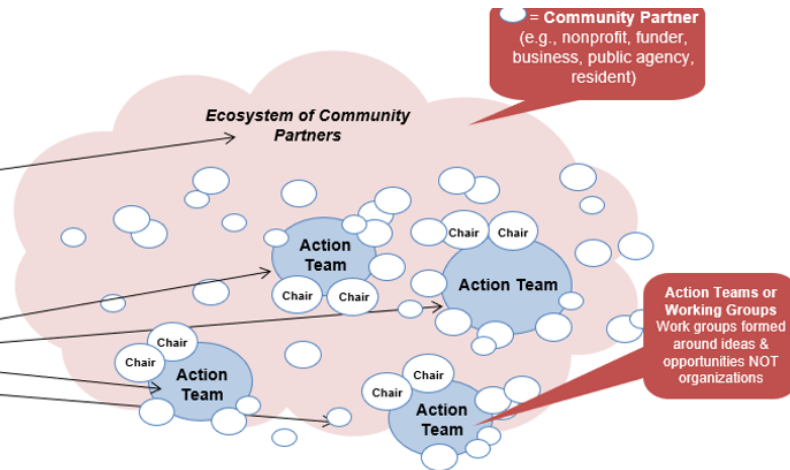
- Full-time lead staff person/coordinator
- 1 or 2 project organizers
- Some contractors (e.g., evaluation, communications)

Staffing arrangements vary:

- Some use decentralized staffing models (small core staff supplemented by staff from legal sponsor or partner organizations)



# CBYF Working Groups or Action Teams



## Purpose

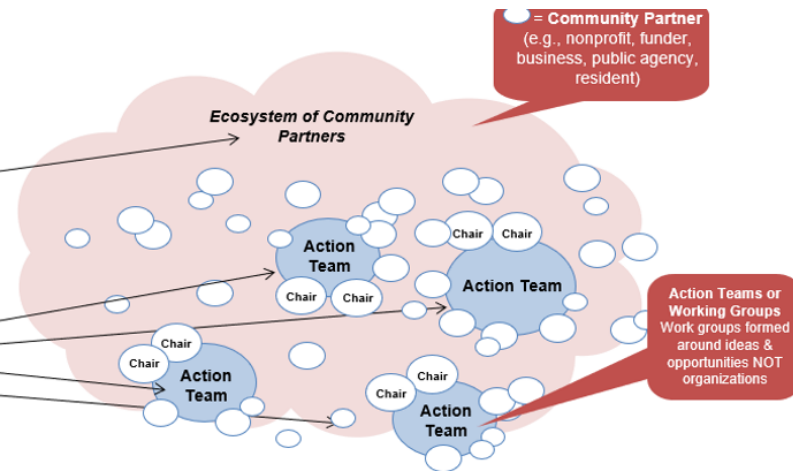
- Teams that form around ideas & opportunities NOT existing organizations
- Focused on addressing key priorities within the Collective Impact Initiative
- Are consistent with CI Initiative's Common Agenda, principles & values
- Coordination across teams
- Can be time-limited or ongoing in nature

## Composition

- Diverse membership of content experts, community organizations, business, government and community.
- Action Teams Chairs are also members of the Leadership Table to foster alignment & coordination across teams
- Action Teams all meet together at least once per year
- Access support from CBYF staff



# The Broader Community or Eco-System



## Role

- Sense of ownership of the initiative:
  - Input re: the vision & common agenda
  - Opportunities for engagement
  - Celebration & recognition
- Staying informed:
  - written reports
  - media
  - public gatherings
- Feedback:
  - Presentations
  - Public gatherings
  - Interactive social media

## Description

- May include geographic communities and communities of interest.
- May occur at multiple levels (e.g. neighbourhood, city-wide)
- May include 'direct' or representative involvement



## Considerations beyond Structure

- **Member Characteristics:** influence, commitment, diversity.
- **Decision-making:** majority, consensus, etc.
- **Authority:** Bottom-up, Top Down, In the Middle
- **Communication:** informal, formal.
- **Leadership Style:** charismatic, servant leadership, etc.
- **Group culture:** risk oriented, process light/heavy, etc.
- **Collaborative Arrangements:** number, roles, structure