
Process Evaluation Report

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Executive Summary

The vision for Thrive began in 2013, centered around the theory that in order to improve educational outcomes from cradle to career, cross sector partners need to be engaged and working together. The Mayor's Office convened an original core team of 30 leaders (the Leadership Council) to advise the initiative and build a collective impact framework. Participation has since expanded to include representatives from more than 150 organizations, including major city agencies, nonprofits, business, colleges and universities and philanthropy. Today, it is one of the largest collective impact initiatives in the country.

By collaborating, the goal is that service providers and communities work together more effectively and drive better outcomes. Thrive's initial primary goals were:

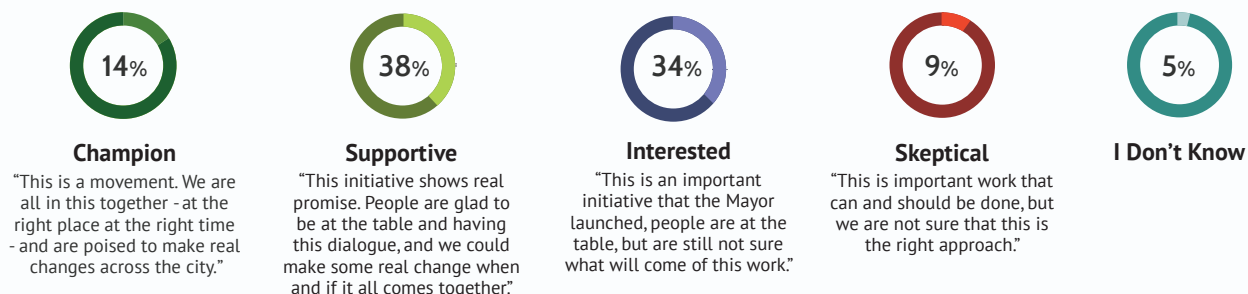
- Leaders across the city and youth-serving sectors come together to develop a common agenda for youth that includes tangible benchmarks of success from cradle to career.
- Leaders abandon individual agendas in favor of a collective approach to improve academic and life outcomes.
- Organizations across sectors focus on this single set of goals and use data to constantly improve their programs and practices and address gaps in services for different communities and age groups.

In the past two years, the initiative has built strong momentum and has achieved some considerable milestones, most notably its progress in organizing a diverse set of stakeholders to commit and work towards a common agenda. Additionally, Thrive has established itself as an independent organization, released an initial baseline report, launched a data pilot and established the Change Network structure to convene organizations, and plan and align actions of a broad group of stakeholders. All of these accomplishments have taken significant coordination and demonstrated incremental progress.

Now, Thrive is at a critical juncture. Internally, new staff members have been added to the team and there is now more bandwidth to support the work of the Change Networks. Externally, 85% of stakeholders remain committed to the work, but noted some pressing challenges that need be addressed in order to for Thrive to reach its full potential.

FSG, a leading expert on collective impact, recently stated that the success of such an initiative depends on the relationships and trust among the people and organizations participating.

Which term and associated statement best describes your overall feeling about Thrive?



Source: Thrive Process Evaluation Participant Survey, 85 respondents

"It is ultimately about enabling adaptive, collective problem-solving," wrote FSG Managing Director Fay Hanleybrown and Director Jennifer Splansky Juster in a recent blog. "As the saying goes, 'Progress moves at the speed of trust.' Oversimplifying what collective impact is can lead to the assumption that it is easy to implement and will lead to quickly seen results. It can sometimes take years, or decades, to achieve the large scale change that collective impact efforts seek."¹

As you'll see in the pages that follow, those words hold true in both describing and advising the path of Thrive.

KEY FINDINGS

In order to identify areas of strength and best practices while also identifying some of the challenges and opportunities for improvement, Thrive engaged an evaluation team to design and conduct a process evaluation. The evaluation was focused specifically around a core set of research questions that were organized into two main categories: convening partners and aligning actions. The key findings focused on the following areas:

Vision

Nearly all stakeholders felt comfortable articulating the over-arching mission for Thrive. There was also general sense of clarity around Thrive's purpose and big goals, as a collective impact initiative, supporting positive cradle to career outcomes for youth in the city.

However, many participants need additional support and guidance from Thrive to understand how all the components fit together and position Thrive to achieve the overall outcomes the initiative. Many reported that they generally know that is happening in each of the Change Networks, but fewer stakeholders had a clear command of the specific initiatives that each Change Network was planning or implementing.

1. "Three Misconceptions around Collective Impact", FSG blog, <http://www.fsg.org/blog/three-misconceptions-around-collective-impact>

Stakeholders noted that it would be helpful to have more information about how the work of the Change Networks is aligned with and is designed to advance priority outcomes of the overall initiative. Stakeholders noted that greater clarity about this connection will help advance the work.

Expectations

Most stakeholders came to the table with an interest in working more closely with other organizations to advance key outcomes. To date, stakeholders have valued the platform that Thrive provides, especially the relationships and networking. Respondents noted that some of their initial expectations have yet to be met, including access to data and access to new resources and funding. In many cases, stakeholders acknowledged that the work to build infrastructure and process takes time and “so the benefits take a while to be realized.” Some Thrive participants noted that Thrive “has moved more slowly than most partners expected” but provided an important caveat: “however, I also think that means that we are building a strong foundation for a set of strategies that will have lasting impact.” Many participants remain optimistic, but note that there is some fatigue among participants expecting to see more rapid progress. Going forward, it will be important to provide clear communication about the progress and accomplishments of the Change Networks and especially progress and opportunities related to funding and data.

Structure & Process

Considering the size and complexity of Thrive, there have been many significant infrastructure accomplishments that are now in place to support the initiative. Stakeholders noted the following most frequently: moving out of the Mayor’s office, establishing an independent organization and hiring staff to facilitate the process and support the work of the Change Networks. These advances have positioned Thrive to move forward faster and create cohesion. Stakeholders requested clarity related to the role of the Leadership Council, the relationship between the Leadership Council and Change Networks and the roles of key actors in the Change Networks.

Across every aspect of Thrive, respondents stated that communication needs to be strengthened and improved. Specifically, communication channels between the Leadership Council and the Change Networks and across Change Networks need to be formalized and expanded. In addition, there is an opportunity to continue to define and formalize the criteria that the Change Networks use to determine the activities and initiatives that they will pursue and a clear process and roles for the Change Networks and Leadership Council in reviewing, affirming and advancing the work of the Change Networks.

Engagement

Across the Initiative there is high level of commitment and a true dedication to this work. In addition, stakeholders noted that participation in the Change Networks largely includes the right organizations. Engagement at the Leadership Council level is varied, but many provided concrete recommendations to increase involvement, such as a stronger connection between the collective vision and Change Networks, more defined structure for participation and continuous communication.

There has been high engagement across most of the Change Networks and nearly every participant is committed to the vision of Thrive. Several participants cited the need for more consistent attendance from Change Network members as an opportunity for improvement. Given the critical timing for the initiative, Thrive needs to focus on strengthening the level of engagement (e.g. attendance, participation) across stakeholders. Because involvement and ownership are closely tied with the other key elements, such as communication, role clarity and resources, it is likely that when these areas are strengthened, engagement will also increase.

Resources

Funding remains an important topic for Thrive to address and to design clear communications and parameters around funding opportunities. Stakeholders continue to invest significant time to advance the work of this Initiative. However, this is above and beyond their full time job. Given the cross section of stakeholders involved, including funders and influential policy leaders, many hope that Thrive can be a conduit to additional funding to support and expand this work.

As you'll see in the report below, a number of themes come up time and again, including communication, requests for clarity, time constraints and funding. At the same time, respondents all acknowledged, with notable optimism, that Thrive is very young, and, as a large organization, will take time to develop.

While these points may initially come across as a critique, the evaluators' intent is not to criticize. Rather, it's to act as an unbiased party in gathering information and then share advice on how to initiate small course corrections and continue the valuable work that Thrive has already begun.

EVALUATION PROCESS

The goal of this evaluation process is to address a set of research questions about the structure and process of the initiative, searching for early hallmarks of success. It is based on insights from Thrive stakeholders.

Convening Partners	Aligning Actions of Individual Organizations
<i>Areas of Inquiry</i>	<i>Areas of Inquiry</i>
Leadership Council structure, process and engagement	Clarity of roles and responsibilities of conveners, leaders, staff and other actors
Change Network structure, process, level of ownership and defined goals	Degree to which actors are working together toward common goals
Participant engagement, effectiveness, ownership and level of clarity and consistency in describing what Thrive does and aims to achieve	Degree to which strategies are promoting understanding and increasing commitment of all actors to improve education outcomes

This evaluation did not assess the youth outcomes achieved to date via Thrive, but provided a reflection on progress in building the collaborative infrastructure, while also seeking insights for the initiative moving forward.

The evaluation process included a review of Thrive documents, followed by: interviews with three members of Thrive staff and in-depth interviews with nine Leadership Council and Change Network stakeholders. The evaluation team reviewed findings from these initial interviews and designed an interview guide, conducting an additional 34 interviews with Thrive stakeholders, including representation from the Leadership Council and Change Network. In order to reach a broad set of Thrive stakeholders and be as inclusive as possible, the evaluation team also designed an online survey, which was sent to more than 300 participants. 85 individuals completed the survey, for a 28% response rate. The Thrive stakeholders engaged in the process included members of the Leadership Council, leadership and participants in the Change Networks as well as representatives from the data pilot.

LIMITATIONS OF THIS EVALUATION

This evaluation included perspective from more than 125 Thrive participants, but may not have included the perspectives of participants that are no longer active in Thrive. As part of the planning, the evaluation team worked closely with the Thrive team to identify stakeholder champions as well as skeptics, seeking a balance of opinions and perspectives. The evaluation team invited participants to be candid, in an effort to capture clear, accurate and honest feedback.

Introduction

Thrive Chicago has made significant progress over the last year and a half, creating the infrastructure necessary to convene partners and align actions toward improved outcomes for youth in Chicago from cradle to career.

Initially, the initiative gained credibility and visibility as an initiative of the Mayor's office. It gained stature, stability and stakeholder buy-in and engagement as it transitioned into an independent organization. Along the way, it developed a more formalized structure, including a board and staff, and began working with more than 150 organizations – an undertaking in magnitude unlike other collective impact initiatives in the United States.

Throughout its development, Thrive has benefited from tremendous interest and participation from key leaders and stakeholders, including Board Members, city agencies, Chicago Public Schools, community-based organizations, large social service organizations, funders and corporations. Together, executives and leading organizations focused on youth in Chicago set out to agree upon the most pressing issues facing our city. Their shared goal:

Position Chicago to create transformative and system level change by moving money, people, policies and processes.

In addition, Thrive designed and implemented a formal mechanism for engaging key participants and stakeholders, enabling partners who would otherwise be disconnected to convene and plan together. This infrastructure includes the Leadership Council and Change Networks, as well as putting in place the staff to manage the process and administer the work flow. The infrastructure provides the platform for idea generation, networking, relationship building and most importantly, building trust among participants.

The process and infrastructure were further enhanced with the addition and support of professional staff, including the Thrive director and two Change Network facilitators. This team keeps the work of the Leadership Council and Change Networks moving forward through additional structure, planning and project management. In addition, the leaders of Thrive developed a set of short-term working committees (Continuous Improvement, Evidence Based Decision Making, Investment and Sustainability, Effective and Representative Leadership) to refine the work of the organization and address key needs and questions as they arose. This work was largely focused around making improvements and designing additional structure to support the role of the Leadership Council, funding and sustainability, as well as increasing cohesion and defining roles and operating procedures across the initiative.

Addressing these key areas will position Thrive to deepen engagement and ownership among participants, which will in turn support the initiative in designing and planning promising, scalable initiatives that leverage the expertise of partners and move the needle on the issues that are most critical to success.

Evaluation Findings

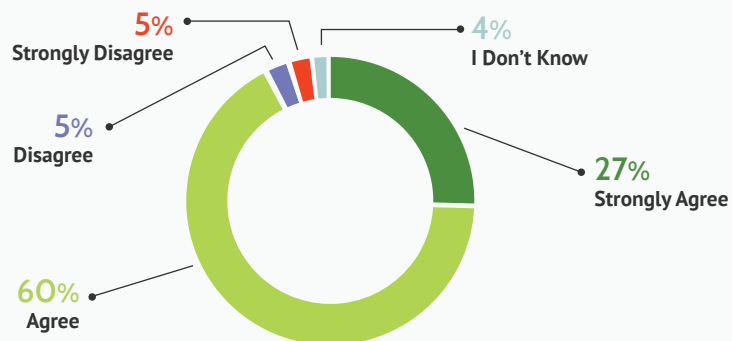
VISION

At the heart of every collective impact initiative is a vision—a North Star—that guides the participants. Considering the wide variety of stakeholders in Thrive, this shared vision is particularly important to bring cohesion and collaboration in supporting a goal that is bigger than the sum of all of the participating organizations. Central to this process evaluation, it was critical to assess the degree to which participants at every level had a common understanding of the vision and purpose of Thrive. For this project, “Vision” is defined as:

- Ensuring that there is an agreed upon and common overarching goal
- Participants in the work can clearly articulate the common vision
- Ensuring that all of the work of the Leadership Council and the Change Networks builds collectively and helps to advance the larger stated goals

The vast majority (more than 87%) of survey respondents knows or has access to information about Thrive’s goals.

I know or have access to information that provides a clear statement of Thrive’s goals



Source: Thrive Process Evaluation Participant Survey, 85 respondents

Not surprisingly, those closest to the work were able to clearly articulate the overarching themes and goals. Common key words and phrases expressed most frequently included:

- Bringing together disparate stakeholders dedicated to youth success
- Serving youth from cradle to career
- Building collective community capacity to yield higher outcomes
- Common set of success indicators
- Integrating data and continuous learning into program models

While shared vision is important, the evaluation team also found through its interviews that Thrive stakeholders would benefit from aligned expectations—namely, more fundamental education around collective impact. It will be important to continue to outline for participants how the initiatives organized and implemented by Thrive represent the unique ability of a collective impact initiative to advance a particular outcome in a way that individual organizations are not positioned to solve on their own

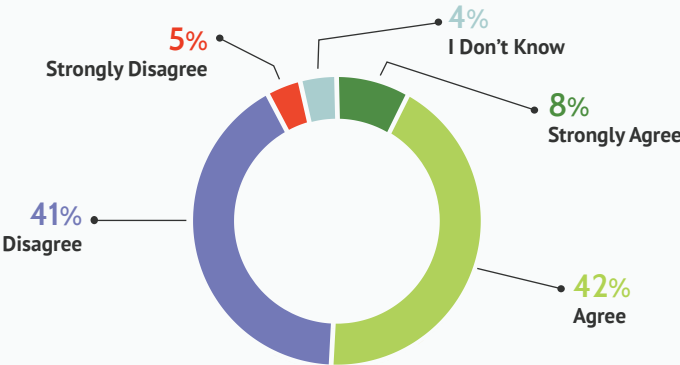
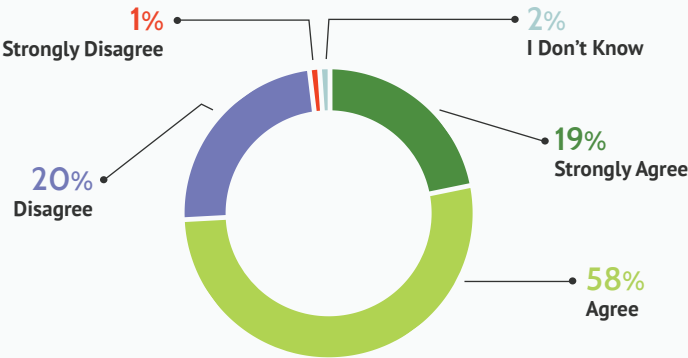
“ There is not a real clear understanding of what collective impact actually is. We need to tell participants that if it weren’t for Thrive, this wouldn’t be moving forward.

On its website, Thrive articulates those as follows:

Mission. “To prepare Chicago’s youth for a vibrant future by aligning efforts and outcomes from cradle to career.” Vision. “Chicago is a city where all succeed in education, career and life.” Respondents reported feeling unclear about how the work of the Leadership Council and Change Networks are helping to achieve this mission and vision.

The graphics below demonstrate that participants have a good sense of the big picture, but less clarity on the moving parts of the initiative.

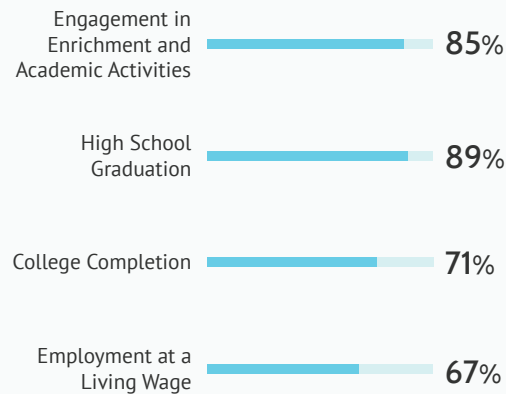
I know or have access to information that describes what is generally happening in each Change Network



I know or have access to information about the activities that are being implemented by each Change Network

Source: Thrive Process Evaluation Participant Survey, 85 respondents

The Change Network has clear goals and objectives



*It should be noted to only one participant from the "Enter Kindergarten Ready" Change Network completed the survey.

Source: Thrive Process Evaluation Participant Survey, Change Network participants responding for their identified Change Network only. This is not a reflection on all participants' perspective on each Change Network.

“The work of my Change Network is strong but it feels disconnected from the work other groups are doing.

“I think the goal may not be in sync with the need.

“There needs to be a tighter link between the proposed activities to ensure that they will affect the outcomes that we as a city all agreed to.

Stakeholders, while agreeing the initiative's goals are clear, raised a number of questions about those goals, including:

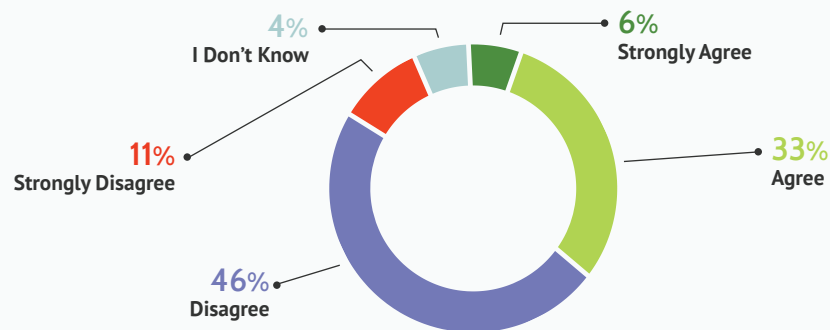
- Are those goals the right ones to pursue?
- Could the process for setting goals be more inclusive?
- Are the projects that Change Networks undertake always the best fit?

The responses indicate that in the future it would be helpful for Change Network participants to see how their projects and goals sync together and to outline a set of guidelines and parameters for the initiatives and activities that are the best fit for Thrive. That definition would need to be developed. Some areas to consider include: positioning to address a key outcome, aligning with the metrics/indicators that are considered most important, leveraging the collective/could not be done by a single organization, having an evidence base or connection to best practice, and offering the potential to secure funding.

Further, stakeholders are uncertain about what's in store for Thrive. When asked if stakeholders have information about the future direction of the initiative, more than half (57% of survey respondents) disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement "I know or have access to information about the future direction of Thrive." Because of that, participants report that the murky sense of "what's next?" along with the lack of information about the core work and activities of Thrive, is sowing disengagement and skepticism, and therefore diminishing the value of participation.

One of the initial research questions outlined by Thrive was, "Has your involvement in Thrive improved your understanding of how to systematically improve education outcomes for Chicago's children?" 59% of survey respondents reported positively that Thrive has helped advance their overall knowledge. Many also provided

I know or have access to information about the future direction of Thrive



Source: Thrive Process Evaluation Participant Survey, 85 respondents

recommendations on how to expedite the process, including using data to inform the work of the Change Networks, sharing success stories, inviting broader community participation and ensuring common goals are communicated at every level.

Recommendations

- The communication from Thrive leadership should continually reinforce the mission and vision of Thrive. In addition to sharing the overarching goals at the beginning of each meeting and in written and electronic messages, it is critical to share across the entire Thrive initiative how the work at the Change Network levels cascade and support this vision.
- Building on the work of the Continuous Improvement Committee, there needs to be stronger interaction between the Leadership Council and the Change Networks. The members of the Leadership Council are in influential positions across the sector. By spreading awareness and support at the ground level, they can engage their networks and resources in advancing Thrive's work.
- Revisit the logic models for each Change Network and Work Group to ensure that they flow together and work to support key milestones within the cradle to career trajectory. Continually iterate and revise as necessary to ensure the work of the Change Networks supports the overarching goals.
- Empower the Leadership Council to provide validation and parameters for the work of the Change Networks and conveners. In doing so, leaders will ensure that the Change Networks are focused on activities and projects that support the larger overarching goals and vision.

EXPECTATIONS

This process also invited participants to provide a description of the expectations for their involvement and to reflect on whether those expectations had been met.

Thrive participants cited a variety of reasons for participation, and stated most frequently: “work more closely with others to advance key outcomes” and “build new relationships and partnerships.” In addition, participants noted, “There was a real draw to having a peer network to share ideas for youth development,” and that there was a very genuine interest in being “part of something bigger than our own organization.”

In the interviews, the vast majority of participants said the reason for their initial participation was because Thrive was a Mayor-led initiative and they were invited to participate. Thrive participants also said an alluring part of this work was the promise of collective impact initiatives to make systemic change. Many observed the success of such initiatives in other cities and stated that being a part of one of the largest collective impact endeavors ever initiated was an exciting proposition.

What did you expect involvement in Thrive would mean for your organization?



Source: Thrive Process Evaluation Participant Survey, 85 respondents. Respondents could select more than one response.

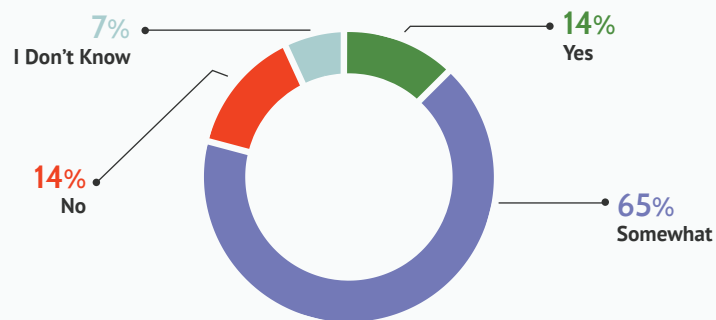
“People came to the table initially because they were asked and it was the table to be at,” said one participant. Others noted that they were “not sure that there is another forum where all of these people are coming together in one place.” One of the more consistent responses that arose: there was a hope or expectation that funding would become available to support the work of Thrive and benefit the participant’s own organization.

The participant interviews and survey also invited respondents to reflect on the degree to which their expectations had been met through Thrive. The majority of survey participants indicated that their expectations have been “somewhat” met. Those that indicated “yes” and those that responded “no” were about equal.

Many participants noted that Thrive had met their networking expectations, connecting them with other peers and practitioners. They noted that Thrive is a viable platform for critical system change conversations.

Most of the participants indicating that their expectations had been “somewhat” met added an addendum: “not yet would be a more accurate answer.” They acknowledged the complexity of the work and expressed optimism that for the future.

Has your participation in Thrive met these expectations?



Source: Thrive Process Evaluation Participant Survey, 85 respondents

Other participants who stated “somewhat” added that “there is much work to be done, but we are moving in the right direction,” while some allowed that “it takes a while to get a structure in place and initiatives launched so the benefits take a while to be realized.” Thrive participants also observed that launching Thrive “has moved more slowly than most partners expected,” but provided the important caveat: “however, I also think that means that we are building a strong foundation for a set of strategies that will have lasting impact.” Many participants remain optimistic, but note that there is also some fatigue among participants expecting to see more rapid progress.

Participants who noted that their expectations were not met, shared the following reasons: because engagement by other organizations was inconsistent; some participating organizations offered ideas but were less engaged in designing and planning the collective action and initiatives of the Change Network; a lack of clarity around how decisions were made at the Change Network; and unclear paths of funding. One respondent observed, “It seems like decisions are made outside of meetings and by a select few organizations.” Several stakeholders anticipated that they would have access to data more readily or be in a position to benchmark with peers. At the same time, they recognized, again, that the initiative is a huge undertaking that demands time, and noted that the eventual result will benefit their organization and others.

One additional concern expressed by stakeholders related to the perception of Thrive. Some respondents indicated that there is a perception that Thrive is a “top-down” “downtown” initiative. In truth, the initiative is much broader, and that those false impressions may be something to address, before it impacts Thrive’s appeal to participants in the future.

Now is the time for Thrive to reach out to stakeholders and help realize some of these expectations.

Recommendations

- It is important for the Thrive team and leadership to keep participant expectations in mind as they develop communication strategies.
- Design and activate a communication strategy that includes updates on the successes and accomplishments of Thrive overall, as well as key milestones and accomplishments for each of the Change Networks, in order to communicate openness and generate buy-in. The absence of clear information about progress can influence and even stall momentum and engagement.
- Thrive should also be very clear about the progress and opportunities of funding and data, which are two areas that are very tangible for stakeholders.

“ I think this is primarily a matter of traveling further down the road that it is on. This all is an extremely ambitious undertaking, and the fact that it takes time should not be lost on anyone.

STRUCTURE & PROCESS

At the core of this evaluation process were questions about the structure and process that Thrive has employed. The key research questions that this section will address are the following: How has the Leadership Council structure and processes affected progress? And how has the Change Network structure and process affected progress?

First, participants noted that moving Thrive out of the Mayor's Office was extremely helpful, as it positioned Thrive to act independently and to operate with increased transparency and accountability. In addition, Thrive participants praised the communications plan that was separate from the Mayor's agenda. Some stakeholders noted that engagement with Thrive participants improved significantly when Thrive became its own entity. At the same time, several stakeholders noted that increasing the Mayor's visibility and support for the project will be key in helping to sustain and/or accelerate engagement.

LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

The evaluation process surveyed aspects of the Leadership Council that have worked well and also noted opportunities for improvement.

Stakeholders familiar with the membership of the Leadership Council lauded it for including the member organizations that would be the most critical for launching and sustaining a collective impact initiative of this size and complexity. At the same time, respondents observed that the participants in Leadership Council meetings did not always include the executive level staff from organizations. Stakeholders expressed concern that by not emphasizing the presence of true leaders in the council, its role could be limited as the strategic champion of Thrive.

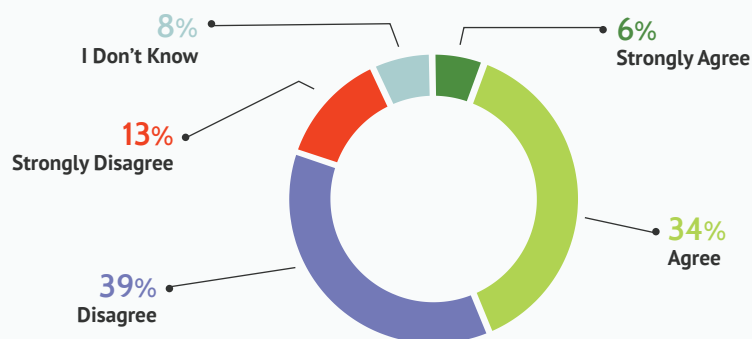
“ I think progress will happen more quickly as times goes on and more folks are clear on the goal and initiatives. I think we are moving in the right direction for that. One suggestion would be do to even more work in committees so that the Leadership Council stays at the strategic and governance levels.

Participants noted that the Leadership Council committees that were designed and implemented over the last six months were a positive step for the initiative. These committees have:

- Positioned the Leadership Council to be more connected to the work of the Change Networks
- Created more of a vehicle for Leadership Council and Change Networks to interact
- Provided clarity around goals and roles for Leadership Council,
- Defined plans for future Leadership Council members.

Some stakeholders offered suggestions for strengthening the Leadership Council, including continuing to clarify the role, membership and activities. This clarification will help all Thrive participants (both at the Leadership Council and at the Change Networks) to ensure a clear understanding of how all the components of Thrive work together.

I know or have access to information about the work of the Leadership Council



Source: Thrive Process Evaluation Participant Survey, 85 respondents

There is also an opportunity for the Leadership Council to grow in its role to become the “driving force” behind Thrive. While the latter role is currently held by a small number of Leadership Council members, the initiative would benefit significantly from stewardship of the full Leadership Council members to more fully actualize this role.

The evaluators invited participants to reflect on and rank the most important roles that Leadership Council members can play in Thrive. The following list provides a summary of the areas that Thrive participants view as most important for the Leadership Council to play:

- Attend Leadership Council meetings and actively participate in the strategic direction of the initiative
- Open doors to decision makers or key influencers in order to further the work of the Change Networks
- Bring resources (human, dollars or other) to the work of Thrive

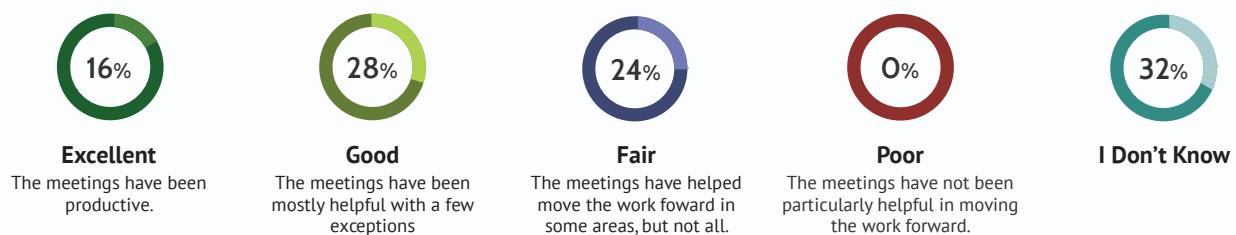
Other roles also noted as important were the following: advance policy change, lend credibility to the work through participation, attend change network meetings and engage other members of their organization in the Change Networks.

Given these expectations for the Leadership Council, it will continue to be valuable and important for the community of Thrive to see clear examples of how the Leadership Council is, in fact, leading. That will only reaffirm the role of the council as the champions of Thrive.

Stakeholders had numerous suggestions for ways in which the Leadership Council might help support the work of Thrive, which include the following: provide members of the Leadership Council with timely updates from the Change Networks, which would better position the leadership to “exert positive and meaningful pressure on the policy leaders to produce results;” increase clear communication to/from the Leadership Council noting challenges and specific requests to assist with overcoming obstacles; provide clarity around roles and responsibilities for the Leadership Council.

Of those stakeholders who participated in at least one Leadership Council meeting, 44% indicated that Leadership Council meetings were overall helpful and productive in moving the work forward. This speaks to the strengths of Thrive leadership and their ability to organize and manage such a massive and complicated project.

How would you describe the productivity of the Leadership Council meetings?



Source: Thrive Process Evaluation Participant Survey, 25 respondents, who were members of the Leadership Council and/or had attended at least one Leadership Council meeting

Stakeholders also provided insights to improve the productivity of the Leadership Council. These suggestions include ensuring that the Change Networks have the support that they need to move initiatives forward; hosting meetings outside of work hours to ensure more consistent participation; and sending documents ahead to the Leadership Council so that there is ample time for review.

Some stakeholders, who reported more in-depth experience with Leadership Council, commented that they'd prefer to see more leadership and guidance from the council. "Their role should be more than providing oversight, they need to lead," said one participant.

“ I am just not clear about who is in the Leadership Council and what they do.

Communication was a recurring theme from respondents when asked about the Leadership Council. Several stakeholders noted that the information exchange between the Leadership Council and Change Networks would benefit from information flowing both directions (e.g. Leadership Council to Change Networks and Change Networks to Leadership Council) with additional focus and frequency. In addition, only about 40% of survey respondents indicated that they were aware of or had information about the Leadership Council. There is an opportunity to document and inform the full “community” of Thrive about the work of this critical group. Improvements in communication would position Thrive to be more cohesive and would position the initiative to celebrate accomplishments and increase visibility, awareness and understanding across the network.

Recommendations

- Provide clarity around the role of the Leadership Council and the Board Members.
- Create more intentional, cohesive communication structure between the Leadership Council and Change Networks around the work (e.g. what is each group planning and why), accomplishments (e.g. key milestones and accomplishments) and how the work advances the larger outcomes that Thrive aims to achieve (e.g. clear statements about the role that each initiative can play to advance the work of Thrive and how this work would only be possible leveraging a collective impact approach).
- Leverage existing Thrive communication channels, while also exploring and developing new channels and content. This will provide a window into the work and also help those new to Thrive understand how all of the pieces are working together.

CHANGE NETWORKS

The evaluation process provided Thrive participants an opportunity to review the Change Network structure and processes used to date. Overall, stakeholders observed several strengths and benefits to the way that the Change Networks have operated thus far.

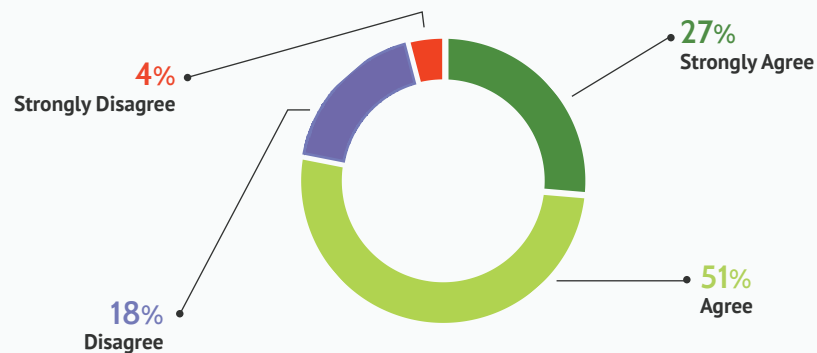
First and foremost, participants noted that the Change Networks provided an important convening opportunity and platform for networking and building relationships with peers and other practitioners in the field. Many participants agreed that this has been a very positive part of their participation in Thrive. Convening with others, they said, emphasizes the importance of aligning actions in order to accomplish more than what a single organization could accomplish.

As noted earlier in this report, Thrive participants sought to engage with other organizations to advance key outcomes. The Change Networks are the place where this can be realized. At the outset of this work, the goal-setting process was one of the first activities undertaken by each Change Network. This was the initial step in setting up the structure and process for each group.

Overall, participants noted that the Change Networks seem to be operating with clear goals and objectives. Nearly 80% of Thrive participants stated that this was clearly in place for the Change Networks.

“ It was great networking across geographies, agencies and disciplines. It allowed us to work on something that none of us could actually accomplish on our own.

The Change Network has clear goals and objectives.

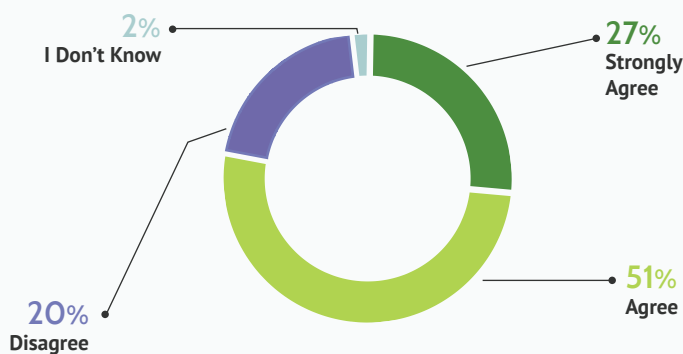
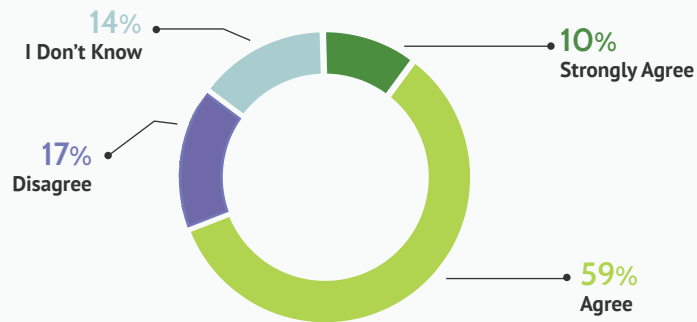


Source: Thrive Process Evaluation Participant Survey, Change Network Participants, 68 respondents

In addition, the majority of survey respondents (69%) said that their organization had a voice in setting the priorities for the Change Network and nearly 80% indicated that their organization had some involvement in the design or implementation of initiatives of their Change Network.

Goal setting is an area where structure and processes mesh with engagement. As the goals are revisited and refined, having inclusive and strong processes will have a direct influence on engagement and participation. As participants feel that they had a voice in the process and that the goals are relevant to their own work, ownership may increase.

My organization (me or my colleagues) had a voice in setting the priorities of the Change Network.

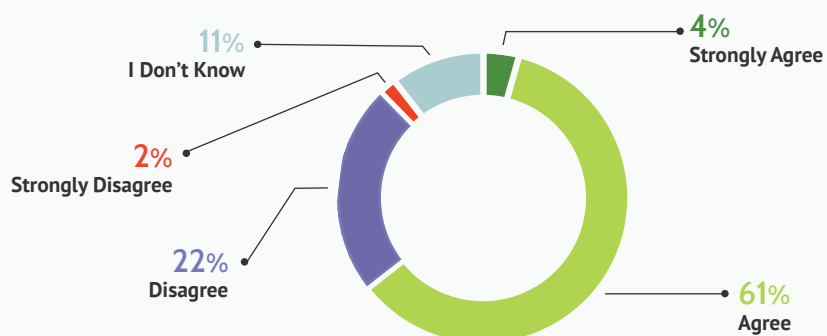


My organization has participated or been involved with at least one of the initiatives designed or developed by the Change Network.

Source: Thrive Process Evaluation Participant Survey, Change Network Participants, 68 respondents

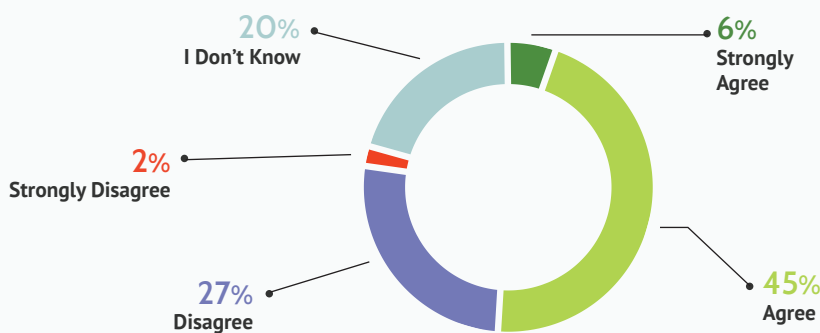
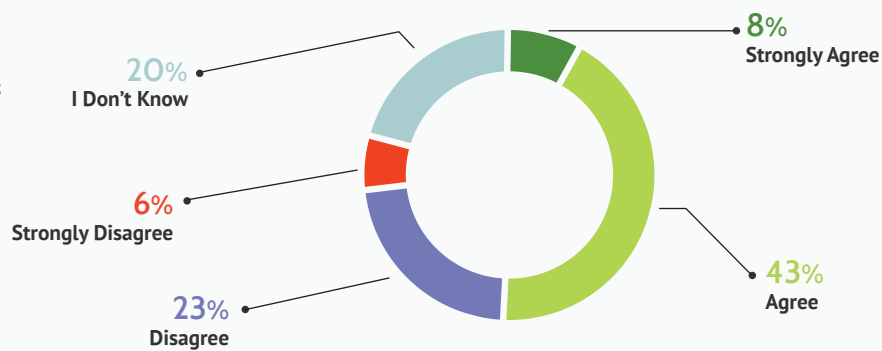
A large portion (65%) of participants also indicated that the Change Networks had identified initiatives in which many participants could participate.

The Change Network has designed initiatives that many organizations can participate in and/or align with.



Source: Thrive Process Evaluation Participant Survey, Change Network Participants, 68 respondents

The process used to determine the priorities (e.g. goals) of the Change Network was effective.



The process used to determine the priorities (e.g. goals) of the Change Network was inclusive.

Source: Thrive Process Evaluation Participant Survey, Change Network Participants, 68 respondents

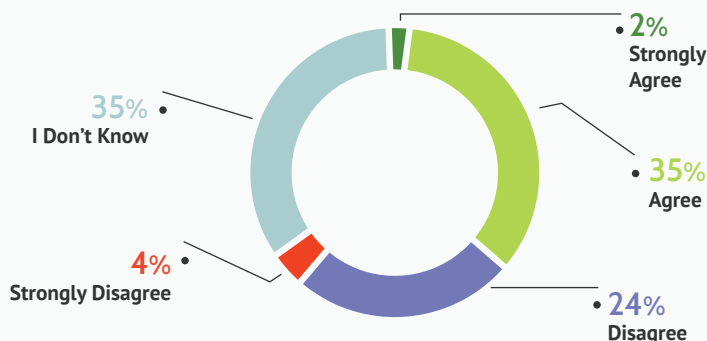
The areas of the Change Network goal and priority setting process and structure that yielded more mixed results from stakeholders included the process that was used to determine priorities which was only noted as “effective” and “inclusive” by about 50% of respondents.

Stakeholders observed that there is an opportunity (as noted earlier in this report) to have the proposed activities of the Change Networks connect with the outcomes and key metrics that were agreed to at the top level of Thrive. One way to carry this out is to devise a set of criteria to guide the development of activities and initiatives of Change Networks. Those criteria would help reinforce the vision and purpose of Thrive inside of each Change Network and working group. This criteria could include some of the following:

- Strong alignment with goals/outcomes/metrics
- Research base to support the approach
- Scalability
- Funding options or pathways
- Relevance to many organizations for activation or participation;

Outside of the goal-setting process, respondents were also invited to observe the extent to which participants were making changes to align their work with the initiatives of Thrive. The responses revealed mixed results: less than 40% of survey respondents noted that organizations had made changes to align their efforts with the initiatives of the Change Network. (Given that many of the initiatives are still in the planning and design stages, this low number comes as no surprise.) And more than a third answered, “I don’t know.” In order to continue to encourage participation and alignment of actions, it is imperative that Thrive provides guidance on how the Change Networks can support members to align actions.

Organizations in the Change Network have made changes to their practices, programs and/or initiatives to better coordinate with and align their efforts with the work of Change Network.



Source: Thrive Process Evaluation Participant Survey, Change Network Participants, 68 respondents

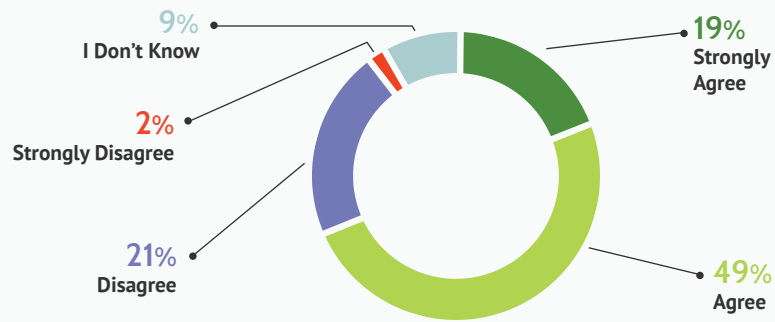
The Change Networks have been structured to include a number of positions, including a Change Network Convener, Work Group Leaders and work group participants. Networks are supported by Change Network Facilitators (Thrive staff). The evaluation process delved into the role of each.

CHANGE NETWORK FACILITATORS

The Change Network Facilitators have been invaluable in providing a single and consistent point of entry and contact for the groups. In the interviews and the survey, Thrive participants consistently noted that this is a massive undertaking and that volunteer efforts from Thrive participants would be not be sufficient to support the initiatives of Thrive. The Facilitators act as project managers and provide the structure for the work, including an agenda, discussion items, action items and a cohesive summary of next steps to advance the work.

“ The structure of Thrive has improved over time as more staff has been added on Thrive’s side. I think that Thrive is heading in the right direction in this area. This allows organizations to participate more since they are no longer tasked with large leadership roles.

The role and responsibilities of the Change Network Facilitator (Thrive Staff) are clear.



Source: Thrive Process Evaluation Participant Survey, Change Network Participants, 68 respondents

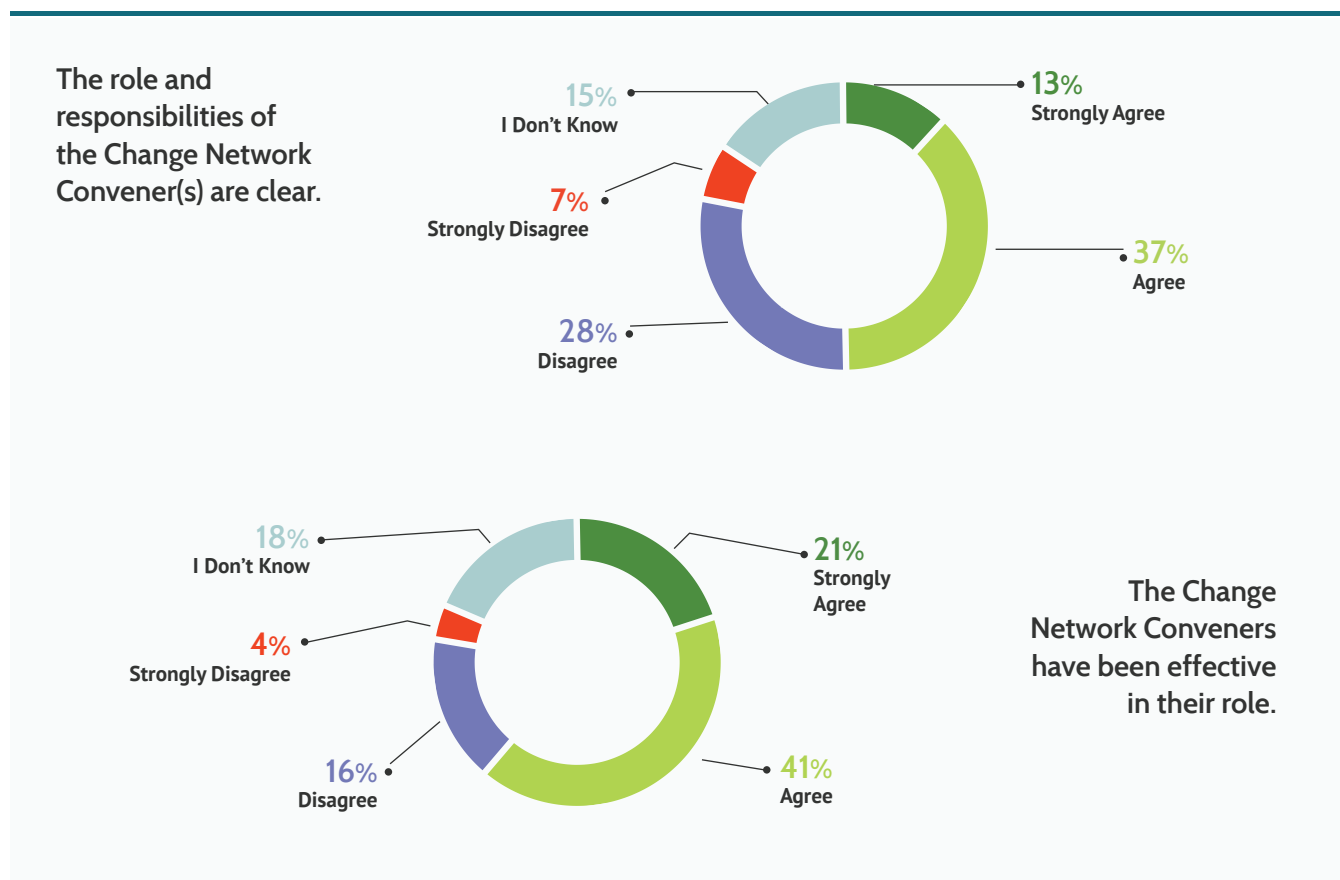
Despite an abundance of praise for the Facilitators, some stakeholders raised the following questions:

- Can the Thrive staff conduct research to support projects and initiatives?
- Should the Thrive staff be subject matter experts in the areas in which they are working?
- Can the Thrive staff carry forward action items for the working groups?

To address these questions, it will be important to clarify the scope of the Facilitators. This clarification will manage expectations on all sides and continue to support the roles in the Change Network to work together.

CHANGE NETWORK COVENERS

As a group, Change Network Conveners were viewed as passionate about the issues. Respondents said Conveners are positioned to provide good ideas and generate good momentum for the group. Across the Change Networks, the individuals in these roles are largely viewed as effective. Still, clarity is needed on the roles and responsibilities of the Convener (see chart below).



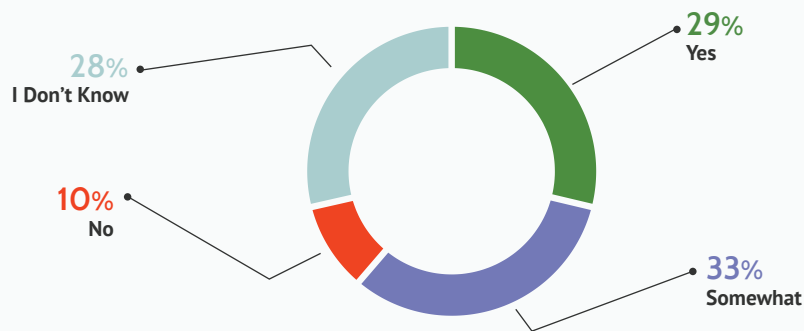
Source: Thrive Process Evaluation Participant Survey, Change Network Participants, 68 respondents

WORKING TOGETHER

About two-thirds of Change Network participants noted that roles are working together or “somewhat” working together to advance the goals of the Change Network. 29% of respondents indicated that they did not know if the roles were working together. This figure could demonstrate that many were unclear on the terminology and the responsibilities of the roles themselves. As stated in previous parts of this report, improved communication and clarity on roles and responsibilities will allow for improved understanding surrounding the initiative.

Also, it should be noted that this data point may be skewed, as levels of activity differ in those surveyed. Those who are less active may be less informed about roles and responsibilities.

Are the roles in the Change Network working together?



Source: Thrive Process Evaluation Participant Survey, Change Network Participants, 68 respondents

A CLOSER LOOK: CHANGE NETWORKS IN ACTION

There were a variety of tactics used by the Change Networks to organize their efforts to activate the design and planning work. While the Change Networks have similar components, their methods of operating varied depending on the conveners and initiatives, with little or no consistency. For example, different Change Networks took the following approaches:

- Engaged key decision makers early on in the process, which enabled them to move the work and achieve some early wins.
- Hired a consultant to lead the work, which yielded accelerated progress on particular projects and initiatives.
- Identified one or two key participants to drive the work.

One example is the College Completion Change Network, which was described as moving “discrete and meaningful” work forward. This network hired a consultant for the College Advising Credential Work Group, who provided subject matter expertise and had strong ties at Chicago Public Schools (CPS). Given her dedicated support and the commitment of the conveners (one of which was CPS), this Change Network, achieved some early milestones and was able to pilot a few of their projects, including College Advising Credential. In this case, the structure was flexible enough to allow for external support and had the buy-in of key decision makers at CPS to implement the project.

The response is encouraging: 71% of College Completion Change Network participants reported positively that the goals and initiatives are aligned with their organization and 83% of respondents reported participating in one more of the initiatives designed by the Change Networks.

To date, the group has designed the senior seminar, piloted the college advising curriculum and activated the network of groups that are doing transition coaching.

Key components of their success includes:

- Leveraged a consultant for a specific Work Group, with CPS experience and strong program design and projects management skills to outline, design and facilitate a portion the work.
- Engaged CPS with a network of partners and took an idea for a product/program and “made it better”
- Clearly defined goals that were articulated and shared across the Change Network. Adding to these goals were three Working Groups that aligned their projects to the Change Network’s logic model.
- Investment and support of CPS. This high level involvement has helped advance policies and change practices at the District level, such as launching a new required advisory credential pilot.

Other stakeholders observed that the Engaged in Academic and Enrichment Activities Change Network “spent more time planning and thinking about the work” that they would undertake than designing plans for action. The group “went in one direction and then decided to go another direction,” which meant a loss of momentum and a decline in participation.

To avoid such instances in the future, stakeholders made the observation that there are opportunities to clarify the role and expectations for the leadership of the group, and that having a stable Thrive staff presence has improved the dynamic of this group and positioned the discussions to advance.

In addition, only 54% of survey respondents (who were participants in this Change Network) noted that the goals of this Change Network were clear and also aligned or mostly aligned with the goals of Thrive, which was the lowest level of agreement across the Change Networks. (Note: This question invited respondents to reflect on a set of statements that best described their perspective on the clarity of the Change Network’s goal and the degree to which the goals were aligned with the overall goals of Thrive).

For the Kindergarten Readiness Change Network, the roles of Network convener, work group leader and Change Network facilitator are all played by one person, and therefore the questions about the ways in which these roles are operating together were not relevant. Many stakeholders felt that this group is operating completely separate from Thrive. This Change Network had the smallest participation in the evaluation process, including one person interviewed and one survey completed.

Across the Change Networks, some participants observed that when staff or organizations were not in a position of authority to make a change (e.g. adopt/implement a practice or policy) that it was a barrier for the work moving forward. Group members needed to return back to their respective organizations and get buy in. This delay often stalled progress. In the future, Thrive staff should help equip and support participants to engage leadership of their organizations in order to advance the work.

Thrive meetings were generally observed to be well organized (e.g. always have an agenda, move discussion to action points, clear follow-up and summary processes in place) and the meeting frequency has been helpful building momentum and holding Change Network members accountable for moving action items forward. Over the past 18 months the Thrive staff have implemented a variety of tools that have helped to provide clear and helpful ways to structure the meetings. Some would like to see even more Thrive staff involvement to supplement their own volunteer hours. In many cases, building momentum and regular meetings are at odds with fatigue. Stakeholders commented that the time and resources required to participate have been a constraint.

Participants also said the new process for on-boarding new participants to the work of the Change Network was efficient and helpful. It was noted that this was work that the Thrive team had developed recently with new members and that it had been very valuable. Going forward it will be helpful to leverage one-on-one meetings with new members to provide them with insight into how they can participate, what their participation will mean and how they can expect to benefit.

As stated earlier, Change Network participants emphasized, time and again, that it is critical to anchor their work to the big goals and develop a clear understanding of how their work is moving the needle (e.g. what are the short-term outcomes that they are influencing and how does their work contribute to the long-term goals of Thrive.) Continually, reiterating this information with the Change Networks and Leadership Council will continue to be important. Participants noted that this would ensure greater cohesion across the work.

“ Nice to have non-Thrive staff involved but need more Thrive staff involved in the background.

“ I feel that it is very important that each Change Network is rooted in understanding how their work is moving the needle at the high level.

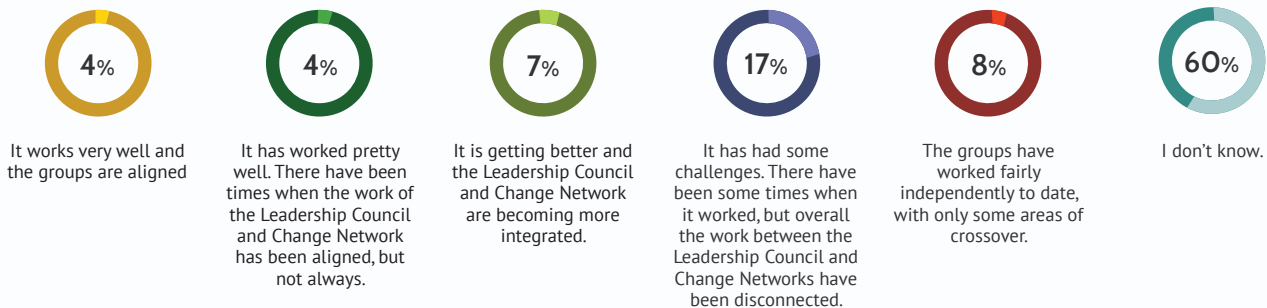
Recommendations

- Expand staff involvement and capacity to help advance the work. That will alleviate the burden that many volunteers—who also have full-time jobs—feel.
- Outline a clear set of criteria for pursuing projects at the Change Network level and processes that the Change Network can follow to propose the new work streams.
- Identify specific processes and opportunities for the Change Networks to gain input and support from the Leadership Council. This activation could include policy change, an influence strategy and/or funding to support the work of the Change Network.

LINKAGE BETWEEN LEADERSHIP COUNCIL AND CHANGE NETWORKS

The link between the Leadership Council and the Change Network could be a powerful and beneficial relationship. Some participants noted that currently the two groups are “somewhat disconnected.” This is a similar finding to that of the Continuous Improvement Committee of the Leadership Council, which is actively working to create cohesion. As previously noted, the work of these recent committees has provided significant value and clarity for Thrive and the initiative will benefit from full implementation of the recommendations.

From your perspective, has the structure of the Leadership Council and its work with the Change Networks worked well to date?



Source: Thrive Process Evaluation Participant Survey, 85 respondents

One key element of the relationship between the Leadership Council and the Change Networks that was a consistent theme for participants was decision making, including authority and the processes for both the Leadership Council and Change Networks. Stakeholders noted that greater access to and direction from the Leadership Council could position the work of the Change Networks to move forward faster. Participants observed that this disconnect and lack of clarity around roles in reviewing, approving, affirming or advancing the work has been a source of confusion and tension as it has not been clear who has the authority to make decisions about the direction of the work. Some key questions have surfaced:

- Are the Change Networks autonomous in their pursuits?
- Does the Leadership Council need to approve the work?
- Do Thrive staff determine what is a fit for Thrive or not a fit for Thrive?

Other participants noted that they are not clear on the process for proposing, reviewing, refining, approving or supporting initiatives at the Leadership Council level. For example, the Employment at a Living Wage Change Network selected record expungement for individuals with a criminal history in order to remove a barrier to employment. Several stakeholders stated that this was prioritized based on the participants who were in the room at the meeting. It was unclear to other members of the Change Network if the Leadership Council viewed this as a key priority, and how specifically to connect this work to the large groups articulated by Thrive.

Stakeholders also raised questions about the role that the Leadership Council could play in holding the Change Networks accountable for their charge and charter. Stakeholders wondered if the Leadership Council is “satisfied with all that is happening in each Change Network.” For example, stakeholders wondered if the development of a toolkit in the Engaged in Enrichment Activities Change Networks was the best type of project to pursue and if the Leadership Council viewed it as a viable and impactful initiative to undertake. There was a sense of uncertainty around what the Leadership Council knows about and wants from the Change Networks and the criteria that both groups see as critical for undertaking a particular activity or initiative. Still other stakeholders wondered: “Are they completely satisfied that all is going as well as it could in each group?”

Generating buy-in between the Leadership Council and the Change Networks has been and will continue to be important – so that the Change Networks are getting the affirmation, approval and support that they need and the Leadership Council can continue to champion the work.

Recommendations

- Devise more structured engagement, information exchange and ownership between Change Networks and Leadership Council. Do that by having brief reports from the Change Networks at the Leadership Council Meetings and encouraging Leadership Council organizations to dedicate staff to participate in the Change Networks.
- Develop an internal communications strategy that allows for information to flow both directions between the Leadership Council and the Change Networks. This should include regular reports to all Thrive participants about the activities of the Leadership Council, Change Networks and board.
- Develop an organization chart including names and contact information for people participating in the planning. This would also include roles and responsibilities so that it is clear who owns what elements of the work.
- Leverage the Change Network conveners as the conduit between the Change Networks. For example hold two summits a year in which the leadership of all the Change Networks come together, share information and explore collaboration and intersection points.
- Develop criteria for initiatives or work streams to ensure that conveners and Change Network participants understand the parameters for Thrive work streams.
- Create a clear description of decision-making. How do Change Networks connect with the Leadership Council, invite feedback, affirmation and advice and secure resources to support the work?

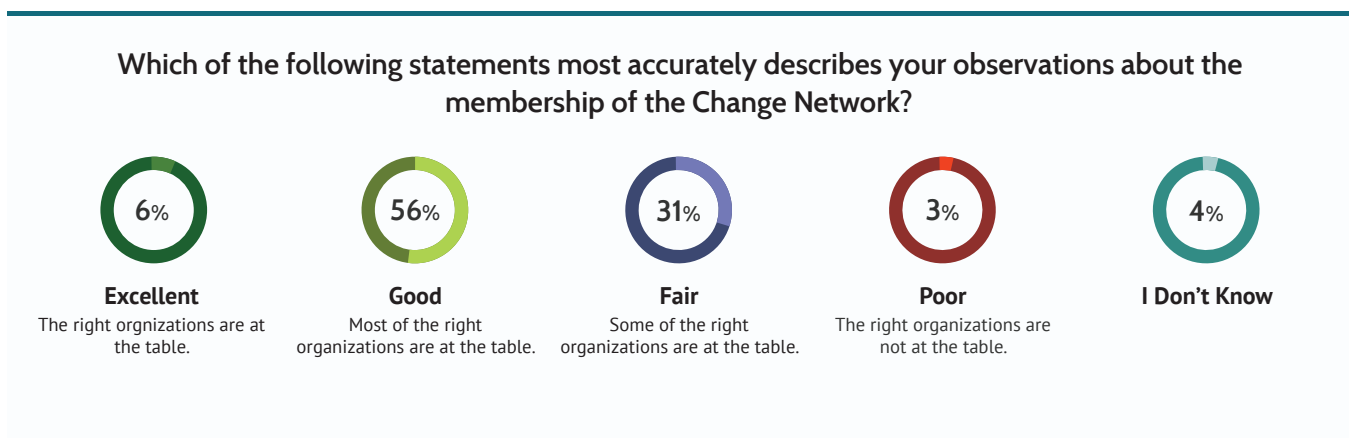
ENGAGEMENT

Collective impact is a sustained effort that requires deep participation by a wide group of stakeholders over a long period of time. This is also aligned with how Thrive Leadership defines Engagement.

In this process evaluation, engagement was assessed by answering the following questions:

- Are the right stakeholders involved?
- Are the stakeholders participating and to what degree?
- What influences engagement and ownership?

Since its inception in the Mayor's Office, Thrive has tried to be inclusive and representative of the spectrum of organizations working across the city on issues related to youth from cradle to career.



Source: Thrive Process Evaluation, Participant Survey, Change Network Participants, 68 responses

62% of survey respondents responded favorably that the right organizations are represented in the Change Networks.

At the Leadership Council level, stakeholders have reported that Thrive has tried to be comprehensive. Recommendations were made to expand the Leadership Council participants to include

- A wider representation of higher education institutions
- Leadership from faith-based institutions
- Greater involvement from the Department of Family and Support Services at the City of Chicago, given they are a common funder among nearly every community based organization.

Racial and ethnic diversity was a central theme, as many recognized that the Leadership Council could expand the number of people of color among its members.

Both at the Leadership Council level and in the Change Networks stakeholders raised up the natural tensions of including smaller, grassroots, community-based organizations in the work. On one hand, their “on the ground” knowledge and perspective is needed and critical to serving the city’s diverse and vulnerable population. However, there was a deep recognition that being involved in Thrive requires time and staff to attend meetings, both of which smaller organizations have little to no margin to spare.

With the Leadership Council there have been varied levels of engagement from the members.

**From your perspective, how many of the Leadership Council Members are highly engaged?
(Leadership Council Meeting Participant Perspective)**



Source: Thrive Process Evaluation Participant Survey. 25 respondents that indicated that they had attended at least one Leadership Council meeting.

When asked broadly among the Change Network stakeholders, “What is your view of the engagement level of the Leadership Council members?” 75% reported, “I don’t know.” This speaks to the need to increase communication across the entire Thrive and city landscape.

**From your perspective, how many of the Leadership Council Members are highly engaged?
(Change Network Participant Perspective)**



Source: Thrive Process Evaluation Participant Survey, 82 respondents including those who had not attended at least one Leadership Council meeting as well as those that had attended at least one Leadership Council meeting.

Increasing engagement at the leadership level, could come from a variety of different strategies, which include:

- Reinforcing the over-arching vision and purpose of Thrive. Being explicit in how the work of the Leadership Council can profoundly effect the work of the Change Networks and how these two groups work in tandem to advance the mission.
- Clearly defining roles and responsibilities for the Leadership Council. As previously mentioned, having specific expectations and pathways to execute on those expectations will help increase participation and buy-in among the Leadership Council.
- Continued communication and connection with the working groups will support engagement. Building on the work of the Continuous Improvement Committee, Thrive leadership and staff can continue to facilitate interaction between these groups. The more the Leadership Council knows about the work, the more members may imagine pathways for them to engage and get involved in a deeper way.

Each Change Network has been organized slightly differently, based on the conveners' and the working groups' activities. However, a common theme across nearly all the Change Networks has been the lack of consistent participation. Given that this is a volunteer commitment, and to date, resources have not been available to support the work of all of the Change Networks, participation has been transient, with different staff showing up to different meetings. Efforts to be inclusive coupled with inconsistency have created some level of inefficiency. For example, participants noted that at the beginning of meetings, conveners and work group leaders often spend time bringing participants "up to speed." For those attending on a regular basis, this has created redundancy and frustration.

To date, engagement in Thrive has meant participating in meetings, reading/sending emails and completing work on the action plans. 75% of those who responded to the survey spent on average less than 2 hours a week on Thrive activities. In order to advance the work more quickly, additional Thrive staff may be needed.

As with most large collective impact initiatives, engagement and participation are so closely interwoven with other elements. Based on the survey and interview responses, if Thrive participants felt that they had a clear understanding of the vision and how their work contributed towards achieving that vision, they may increase their participation.

“ There is an opportunity for Thrive staff to help get the work done. It is volunteer work on top of everyone's job and feels like a big lift.

“ Funders who can underwrite these initiatives have not activated these resources. We need the funders to step up and support the work of the Change Networks.

Additionally, financial resources remain at the center of much of this discussion. This work is difficult and requires extra hours outside their current full-time positions in order to engage. Without resources to support these efforts, many feel that it will be difficult to sustain the momentum and level of time and resources required to do the work.

The addition of the Change Network facilitators has played a massive role in advancing the work at the Change Network levels. Their project management skills and support have built momentum and allowed for more productive meetings. This energy and efficiency has increased engagement. Many stakeholders commented that, “Additional staff support from Thrive would be so helpful. We have full-time jobs, so it is difficult to fit this in.” As additional positions are added, many feel confident that this will increase participation even further.

Recommendations

- Review the diversity of Leadership Council participants to ensure representation and voices from academia, faith-based organizations and government are more fully represented.
- Ensure Thrive is actively recruiting people of color to the Initiative at all levels to be fully representative of Chicago’s population.
- Determine a communication strategy to engage smaller community based organizations and providers.
- Consider hosting meetings outside the Loop in different communities. This may increase diversity and encourage engagement.
- Create opportunities to highlight success stories and acknowledge participation. Many organizations and stakeholders have contributed countless hours and resources to help Thrive to date. In order to pay tribute and help ensure future commitment, it would be important for Thrive leadership to recognize their efforts and accomplishments.

RESOURCES

Although not explicitly asked in either the survey or the interviews, financial resources, data and human capital were often mentioned, either as a way to enhance or increase engagement, and/or to advance the work at a faster pace.

Many recognize that Thrive is a huge undertaking, one that is ambitious and powerful. This acknowledgement has often been coupled with the observation that Thrive staff are stretched thin and could benefit from additional capacity, perhaps even one Thrive staff per Change Network. There was positive reinforcement from Working Group participants that Thrive staff has helped in significant ways, both advancing the work, keeping the group on task and assisting with project management responsibilities that often “slip through the cracks.” However, prior to adding staff, as previously noted, a more clear understanding of roles and responsibilities is needed to be as effective as possible.

At the leadership level, respondents noted that the director was instrumental in moving the organization from the Mayor’s Office to become a standalone organization, which is now co-located at the McCormick Foundation. This role has been helpful at managing a large Leadership Council with different interests and viewpoints. As referenced previously, stitching together the vision and the work of the Change Networks will be essential for the new President & Chief Impact Officer.

Financial resources are central to helping advance the work of Thrive in several ways:

- Greater funding will provide sustained and expanded staff efforts that can help manage the work and allow for additional subject matter expertise.
- Providing incentives and funding to key organizations will support the work of Change Networks. By convening community based organizations and funders at the same table, Thrive has demonstrated its value. This role can be further enhanced by facilitating funding to align and support the work of the Change Networks.

28% of survey respondents originally participated in Thrive expecting to “gain access to new resources.” This expectation has grown as stakeholders have been participating for the past 18 months, essentially donating time, staff resources and tools.

“ No one has had dedicated resources to work on this outside of the planning meetings.

“ Funders who could underwrite the actions, have not started funding. Change Networks are spinning their wheels and getting feedback and supposed to fundraise for these initiatives, which is a bit unfair. The funders agreed to fund these and need to step up.

“ At the end of the day we need money to do this work. All the funding costs focused on funding Thrive infrastructure.

While many recognized that one of the priorities for funding needs to be the infrastructure of Thrive, they were concerned that without resources trickling down, engagement would eventually wane and actual progress would be difficult.

Consultants and subject matter experts could be invaluable in helping to advance this type of work. Since Change Network participant time is volunteer and often limited and Thrive staff play more of a project management role, there is often a need for a consultant who has specific expertise in a key area. For example, on the data pilot side, Kelly Sparks was engaged, given her knowledge of the issues and educational landscape. Her ability to focus solely on this project helped advance the work in a substantive way. This type of support may be a helpful resource to the Change Networks as they face challenges with execution.

In addition to funding and staff support, many stakeholders are new to collective impact and to participating in a collaboration of this size. It would be helpful to provide professional development and training to those involved on the skills necessary for success. By utilizing resources such as Strive Together, Thrive could highlight best practices and further develop participant understanding of collective impact.

Recommendations

- Work with the Board and Leadership Council to establish clear parameters around funding opportunities. Determine policies that support both Thrive and the Change Networks to receive resources.
- Highlight success stories from the Change Networks. Ensure that funders and key City leadership, including the Mayor, are aware of the positive change that is happening.
- Create opportunities for organizations to connect and inform funders and policy makers on the issues and obstacles to this work.
- Review the concept of a funding mechanism that would have specific criteria for distribution that aligns with the advancement of the vision and outcome metrics.
- Retain subject matter experts to support the work of the Change Networks and provide guidance on specific projects on an as needed basis.
- Provide professional development opportunities to train Thrive participants on collective impact and other relevant topics.

Conclusion

As Paul Schmitz, former CEO of Public Allies and Senior Advisor, Collective Impact Forum, recently observed, the field of collective impact is relatively new and changing rapidly. According to early research, collective impact has emphasized the “structural, strategic and measureable” aspects of the work, but emerging commentary and literature are pointing to the critical role that culture play in this work.² Culture, as they describe it, is created through a shared sense of purpose and values, expectations and goals.

Over the last 18 months, Thrive has impressed its stakeholders with its goals, networking capabilities and development of infrastructure. Now, stakeholders are ready for action. They're ready for communication. They're looking for clarity on funding, leadership and the future of the initiative.

In order to advance the mission even further, Thrive should pursue the following action steps:

- Develop a strategic communications plan that provides participants in Thrive (internal audiences) and external audiences with clarity on the critical topics noted in this report, including but not limited to vision, intended outcomes, initiatives, roles of key actors and accomplishments to date and how all of the work of Thrive fits together.
- Clarify the role and purpose as well as the relationship between the key Thrive structures, including the Leadership Council, the Board of Directors and the Change Networks.
- Outline the short-term and longer-term key action steps, including identifying and securing resources to advance the work of Thrive.

Thrive is at a pivotal moment. It has a solid foundation from which to build and now is the time to move forward with the work of aligning actions and convening partners. More than 150 organizations are poised and ready for Thrive to impact the city and beyond.

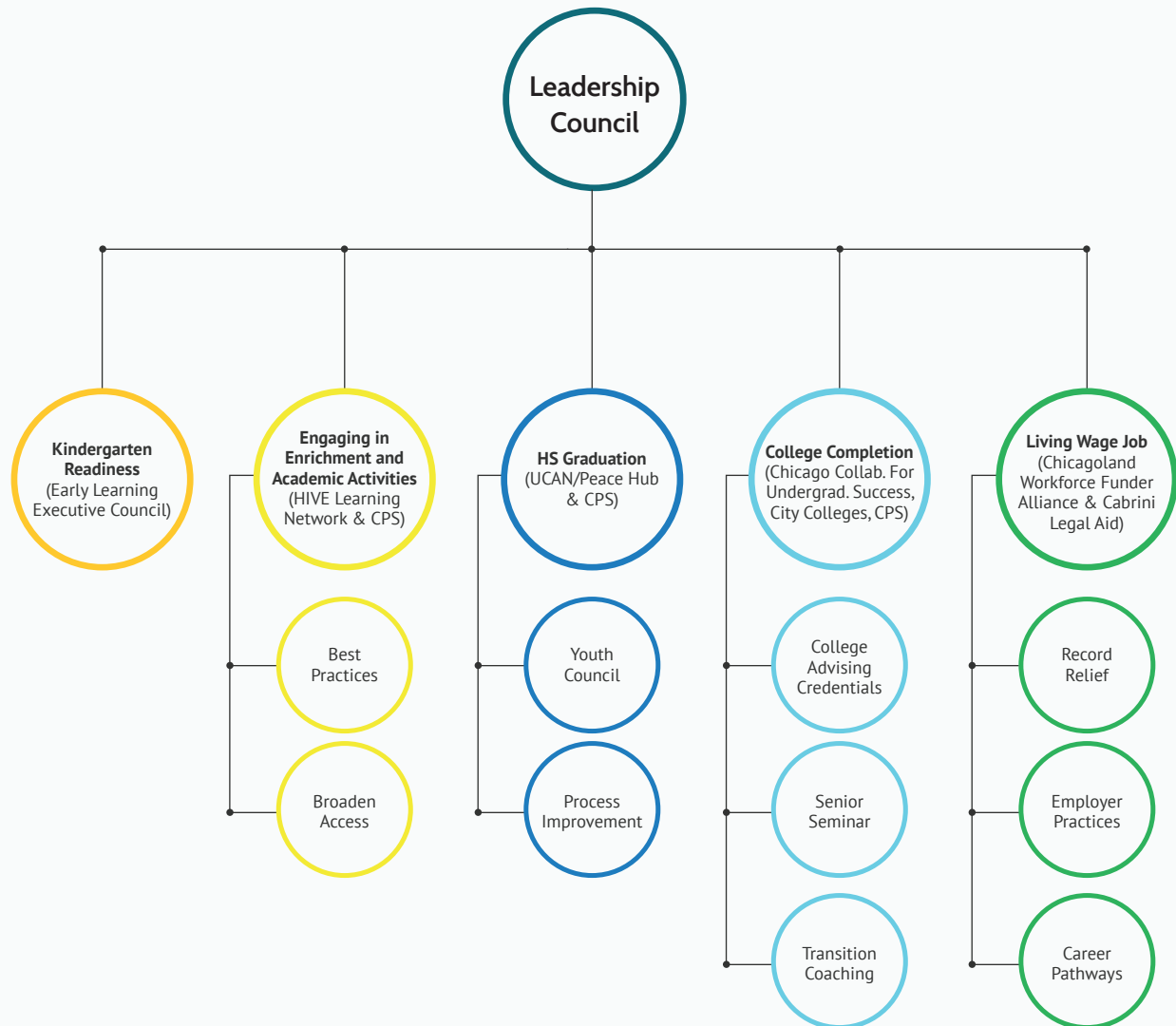
2. Collective Impact Forum http://www.huffingtonpost.com/paul-schmitz/the-culture-of-collective_b_6025536.html

Appendix

- Thrive Structure
- List of Organizations that participated in the Evaluation (via interview or survey)
- Interview Guide

THRIVE STRUCTURE

THRIVE CHICAGO, APRIL 2015



ORGANIZATIONS THAT PARTICIPATED IN THE EVALUATION

A Better Chicago	Heartland Alliance
AARP Foundation Experience Corps	ILJP
After School Matters	Illinois Department of Children and Family Services
Alternative Schools Network	IPSSJ
America Works of Illinois, Inc.	Joyce Foundation
Archdiocese of Chicago, Office of Catholic Schools	Jumpstart
AVID Center	Legal Assistance Foundation
Bottom Line	MacArthur Foundation
Boys and Girls Clubs of Chicago	Manpower
BUILD	Maple Grove Objective
Cabrini Green Legal Aid	Mayer & Morris Kaplan Family Foundation
CCT - Chicagoland Workforce Funders Alliance	Metropolitan Family Services
Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership	Microsoft
Center for College Access & Success/NEIU	Noble Network of Charter Schools
Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago	Northern Illinois University
Chicago Citywide Literacy Coalition	Office of Mayor Rahm Emmanuel
Chicago Communities in Schools	One Million Degrees
Chicago Community Trust	OneGoal
Chicago Department of Family and Support Services	Polk Brothers Foundation
Chicago Jobs Council	Project Exploration
Chicago Lights	Robert R. McCormick Foundation
Chicago Literacy Alliance	SGA, Youth and Family Service
Chicago Literacy Coalition	Shambhala Chicago
Chicago Public Schools	Skills for Chicagoland's Future
Chicago Scholars	Small Business Majority
Chicago Tribune Community Giving	StriveTogether
Chicago Youth Centers	TEC Services Consulting
Children's Home + Aid	The Brinson Foundation
Circle of Service Foundation	The College Board
City of Chicago	The Fund
City Year Chicago	Thrive Chicago
Civic Consulting Alliance	UCAN
College Advising Corps- Chicago	United Way of Metropolitan Chicago
CollegeScoop.com	University of Illinois (system)
Columbia College Chicago	University of Illinois at Chicago
Donors Forum	Upworld Inc.
East Village Youth Program	Urban Education Initiative and Urban Labs
Excel Academy Englewood	Working in the Schools-WITS
Gary Comer Youth Center	Year Up
Generation All	YMCA of Metropolitan Chicago
Genesys Works Chicago	Youth Job Center
Get IN Chicago	

THRIVE CHICAGO

PROCESS EVALUATION: INITIAL INTERVIEW GUIDE

Round 2

May 2015

Introduction

Thrive Chicago is undertaking an evaluation process to consider the way in which the work has been organized to date. This is a process evaluation, so it is intended to look the structures and processes that have been used to convene partners and align actions of participants.

This process will invite perspective from leadership and participants in the Thrive process to date and we have designed a set of questions that will invite your perspective about what's worked well, areas for improvement or additional support and other observations that you have about how process of implementing the initiative. The goal of this work is to inform the future planning and direction of Thrive Chicago.

This conversation is confidential, so, please feel free to be candid. Nothing that you mention in this conversation will be shared with a reference to you. As part of the evaluation process, our team will aggregate all findings stakeholder interviews. Findings will be shared in aggregate and comments and quotes will be shared without noting their source (e.g. without attribution).

1. Can you please describe your **role and involvement** to date? How closely have you been involved with the Change Networks?
2. In your own words, how do you describe **role and purpose** of Thrive Chicago?
3. Why do you think that organizations have “**come to the table**”? What **expectations** did they have?
4. Do you think that Thrive Chicago has the **right combination of representation** from across the city? Is there anyone or any organization that you would add?
5. From your perspective, what would you say has **worked really well** about the way that the Thrive Chicago Leadership Council has **organized its work and process to date**? (e.g. “process or structure” we mean communications, priority and goal setting, member engagement, planning process, work group structure and management, etc.)
 - a. Probe, how do you know it is working well? What are the signs?
6. Are there any **opportunities to improve** the way that the Leadership Council has operated to date?

7. From your perspective, what would you say has **worked really well** about the way that the Change Networks have organized their work and process to date?
 - a. Probe, how do you know it is working well? What are the signs?
8. Are there any **opportunities to improve the way that the Change Networks** have or are operating?
 - a. Probe, Are there any changes that you'd suggest? What do you hope will change as a result of these improvements?
9. Where are you seeing the **deepest level of engagement** by Thrive participants? (e.g. Change Networks, Leadership Council, Work Groups, other) How do you know?
10. What are some **specific changes** that you think would improve Change Network participant effectiveness and ownership?
11. Are the **roles of the Change Network Conveners, Work Group Leaders and Thrive staff** (Change Networks Facilitators and Director) **clear**?
12. Are these **roles working together** to move the work of the Change Network forward (e.g. working to plan, working to implement and conveners are leading the work)? If so, what are some examples of how this has worked well?
13. What **role has the Thrive Chicago staff**, including Network Facilitators and Director, played to date? What has worked well in terms of supporting the work? What are some opportunities for improvement?
14. Is there anything else that you'd like to share at this time?