

## Achieving Youth Results as Related to Collective Impact and My Brother's Keeper

*"Success at the population level depends on partnerships... It is unfair to hold any single agency responsible for a community condition" – Mark Friedman, Trying Hard is Not Good Enough*

### Achieving Youth Results: An Overview

The work and impact of agencies, schools, and organizations across Tompkins County provides a complex web of support for youth throughout our community. To continue to improve upon current practices and learn of areas of weakness, the Tompkins County Youth Services Department launched Achieving Youth Results (AYR) in the spring of 2015 with the backing of the Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) Bureau of Youth Development and the Results Leadership Group. AYR utilizes the Results Based Accountability (RBA) Framework to measure the communal success of agencies, schools, organizations, and our community at a population level.

Achieving Youth Results enables our community (Tompkins County) to define results statements that concisely express the desired conditions of well-being or in our case six *Community Goals*. The Community Goals are:

1. **Community**– Tompkins County will provide children, youth and families with healthy, safe, and thriving environments
2. **Economic Security**– Children and youth will live in an economically secure community
3. **Education**– Youth will leave school prepared to live, learn and work in their community
4. **Engagement**– Children and youth will demonstrate commitment to their community as contributing members of their families, schools and neighborhood
5. **Family**– Children will grow up within safe environments
6. **Physical and Emotional Health**– Children and youth will have optimal physical and emotional health

As a measurement of the communal success and improvement, AYR establishes at least two *Community Indicators* per goal area. Community Indicators are data statements that provide shared measurements that correlate with the goal. Indicators vary and were selected by a panel of local leaders based on availability of data, quality of data, ability to clearly communicate the information, and measurement of data.

Utilizing the six goals and twelve community indicators, AYR brings various stakeholders together in the *Community Convening Meetings*. These AYR Community Convening Meetings give the stakeholder the opportunity to converse and brainstorm using a shared language. Community Convening Meetings are held with youth, key decision makers, program staff, business owners, schools, agency staff, parents, concerned citizens, and others.

During Community Convening Meetings participants focus on the *Seven Population Accountability Questions* of Results Based Accountability, found below.

- 1) What are the quality of life conditions that we want for children, adults and families in our community?
- 2) What would these conditions look like if we could see them?
- 3) How can we improve the measurement of these conditions?
- 4) How are we doing on our selected indicators?
- 5) Who are the partners that have a role to play in doing better?
- 6) What works to do better? Including no-cost and low-cost ideas?
- 7) What do we propose to do?

The information gathered at Community Convening Meetings shape a *Community Wide Call to Action* written by the community for the community. This Call to Action serves as the foundation for furthering the success and improving the current conditions for youth with in the community.

Currently there are a variety of initiatives, programs, organizations, and services which support positive youth development. Utilizing the framework of Results Based Accountability under Achieving Youth Results the work can move forward as no one agency, organization, person or system can achieve the results on their own.

It is important to note that the Results Based Accountability Framework goes beyond the work of Achieving Youth Results and serves as a measurement to assess performance at a program specific level through performance measures. All funded agencies of the Tompkins County Youth Services Department have developed program performance measures and have been collecting program performance data since October of 2014. Performance measures under Results Based Accountability answer the three questions of: how much or many, how well, and is any one better off. Tools such as the Youth Program Quality Assessment, serve as a measurement for program level performance.



## Collective Impact Cradle to Career: An Overview

*“No single organization has the ability to solve any major social problem at scale by itself. Collective impact is a powerful new approach to cross-sector collaboration that is achieving measurable effects on major social issues.” – Mark Kramer and John Kania, Collective Impact*

Recognized by the White House Council for Community Solutions as an important framework for progress on social issues, Collective Impact is a commitment of many individuals and organizations to set a common agenda to solve a social problem through structured collaboration.

The article *Collective Impact* written by John Kania and Mark Karmer first appeared in the Stanford Social Innovation Review in 2011. The framework of Collective Impact focuses on five conditions for solving a complex social problem:

- 1) A common agenda
- 2) A shared measurement system
- 3) Mutually reinforcing activities
- 4) Continuous communication
- 5) A backbone support organization

In May 2014, Building Bridges brought Collective Impact to the broader community in their “Creating a Just and Healthy Community Now and For the Future” Forum. Utilizing the Collective Impact framework, working groups were launched in Tompkins County. Two groups were developed to support youth – school readiness and career readiness. Both groups met with key leaders, community members, parents, and youth to better understand the community needs around these initiatives. As the two groups continued to explore their goals and purpose, it became clear that the two should merge together. In the fall of 2015, the Cradle to Career Working Group was formed. The goal of this group is to support youth ages 0-24 in achieving college or career readiness. Currently, the Cradle to Career working group is defining their shared vision, identifying additional stakeholders, and working on creating support for this goal.

## **My Brother's Keeper: An Overview**

*"That's what 'My Brother's Keeper' is all about. Helping more of our young people stay on track. Providing the support they need to think more broadly about their future. Building on what works – when it works, in those critical life-changing moments." - President Barack Obama, February 27, 2014*

In September 2014, President Barack Obama released a challenge for towns, cities, counties and tribal nations across the country to become My Brother's Keeper (MBK) Communities. The challenge serves as a call to action for the communities to enact sustainable change through policy, programming, and partnerships.

Under the MBK Challenge each community accepts to work on six goals to:

1. Ensure all children enter school cognitively, physically, socially and emotionally ready
2. Ensure all children read at grade level by 3rd grade
3. Ensure all youth graduate from high school
4. Ensure all youth complete post-secondary education or training
5. Ensure all youth out of school are employed
6. Ensure all youth remain safe from violent crime

The MBK Challenge is rooted in the reality that the disparities between children from poor families and those from non-poor families are significant and pervasive, especially among those families of color. However, through targeted, continuous intervention at multiple life stages there is the potential to eliminate these disparities across the cradle-to-career continuum as seen in the work of the Strive Partnership.

In order to become successful, the Challenge has provided nine elements of success needed to drive the strategic work of MBK:

1. Clear Goals
2. Emphasis on Place
3. Authentic Youth and Community Engagement
4. Committed Leadership
5. Support from Elected Leaders
6. Engaging Local Organizations
7. Leveraging Expertise of Organizations and Networks
8. Policy and Systems Reform
9. Strategic Use of Data

As adopters of the MBK Challenge the City of Ithaca has agreed to:

1. Notify the White House of the intention to build and execute a plan to accomplish the goals of My Brother's Keeper.
2. Convene a local action summit to help build a coalition of partners to move the strategy forward.
3. Conduct a policy review and develop recommendations for action which includes data tracking mechanisms.
4. Launch a plan of action and a timetable to review the plan.

Currently the City of Ithaca is assessing the scope of this work and how they will implement this initiative at our local level.



## How does Achieving Youth Results Relate to Collective Impact?

Under Collective Impact, the first strategy is setting a **Common Agenda** for change including a shared understanding of the problem and a joint approach to solving it through agreed upon actions. Achieving Youth Results defines the problem and utilizes the goal statements to clearly define the desired condition of well-being. Through involving a wide-variety of community members during Community Convening Meetings, the creation of the Community Wide Call to Action lays a common plan for action.

Using the Community Indicators of Achieving Youth Results a **Shared Measurement** is established. The Community Indicators will be collected on a consistent basis at a population level, thus ensuring a shared measurement for alignment and accountability among various agencies, organizations, and the community at large.

The Community Wide Action Plan of Achieving Youth Results provides an outline which will allow various partners to coordinate **Mutually Reinforcing Activities**.

**Open and continuous communication** is needed across the many players to build trust, assure mutual objectives, and create common motivation. At the foundation of Achieving Youth Results is the development of a shared language.

**A backbone organization(s)** with staff and a specific set of skills to serve the entire initiative and coordinate participating organizations and agencies is the final condition of Collective Impact. While the Tompkins County Youth Services Department will serve as the backbone organization for Achieving Youth Results (collecting data, updating partners, overseeing funded program performance, releasing and updating Community etc.) this does not necessarily mean that we will serve as the overall backbone organization of Collective Impact.

## How does Achieving Youth Results Relate to My Brother's Keeper?

In February 2014, President Obama launched the My Brother's Keeper (MBK) initiative to address persistent opportunity gaps faced by boys and young men of color and ensure that all young people can reach their full potential. The initiative seeks to organize and capitalize on the commitment of community leaders in order to reach that goal. The City of Ithaca has accepted the challenge to become a My Brother's Keeper community.

Like Achieving Youth Results, My Brother's Keeper focuses on six community goals:

- 1) Ensure all children enter school cognitively, physically, socially and emotionally ready
- 2) Ensure all children read at grade level by 3rd grade
- 3) Ensure all youth graduate from high school
- 4) Ensure all youth complete post-secondary education or training
- 5) Ensure all youth out of school are employed
- 6) Ensure all youth remain safe from violent crime

While the goals are not identical they do align with Achieving Youth Results goals and/or community indicators:

My Brother's Keeper Goals	Achieving Youth Results Goals
Ensure all children enter school cognitively, physically, socially and emotionally ready	Physical and Emotional Health Family Education
Ensure all children read at grade level by 3rd grade	Education
Ensure all youth graduate from high school	Education
Ensure all youth complete post-secondary education or training	Economic Security
Ensure all youth out of school are employed	Economic Security Engagement
Ensure all youth remain safe from violent crime	Community Engagement

The second step of My Brother's Keeper is to establish a coalition of partners with an ownership stake in the strategy and a sense of empowerment to help lead the effort. As part of the MBK challenge a Local Action Summit with key stakeholders to assess needs and assets, determine priorities, and set concrete goals must be held. This Action Summit is similar to and in some cases can be an Achieving Youth Results Community Convening meeting.

Following the Local Action Summit, a working group stakeholder is convened to review existing local policies, programs, and practices in search of ways to introduce or expand on existing efforts to better serve the needs of the community's youth. The working group should assess the impact of both existing



and proposed programs/strategies. This body is charged with should producing a report with recommendations for action on each goal area, standards for tracking and sharing data across public agencies and community partners, and structural recommendations for institutionalizing the effort until goals are reached. Achieving Youth Results lends a shared measurement through the Community Indicators. The body that is working to develop the Community Wide Call to Action also can help to support the efforts of MBK as they develop their strategies and action steps.

The final step of the My Brother's Keeper Challenge is to convene key partners to launch a plan of action for accomplishing goals based off the results of the action planning meetings. This blueprint for strategies must include protocols for tracking data, benchmarks and timelines for review the community progress towards goals, and the examination and changing of ineffective strategies. Achieving Youth Results will also launch the Community-Wide Action Plan and Results Scorecard measurements publically after review from key stakeholders. This Action Plan and Community Indicators will be revised and updated based on impact as outlined in a defined timeline.



**Side by Side Comparison of Achieving Youth Results, Collective Impact, and My Brother’s Keeper**

<b>Results Based Accountability</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Achieving Youth Results</li> <li>• Countywide</li> </ul>	<b>Collective Impact</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cradle to Career</li> <li>• Countywide</li> </ul>	<b>My Brother’s Keeper</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supporting young people in poverty and/or young people of color</li> <li>• ICSD Specific</li> </ul>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Shared Language</li> <li>2. Community focused action plan</li> </ol>	<p>Common Agenda</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Six goals related to the challenge</li> <li>2. Plan of action and timetable due by 180 days of accepting the challenge</li> </ol>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Population accountability               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 6 Goals</li> <li>- 12 Community Indicators</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. Performance accountability               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Performance measures defined by programs</li> </ul> </li> </ol>	<p>Shared Measurement System</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. National Indicators (aka National Data fields for community tracking)</li> </ol>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Community Convening Meetings lead to shared Community Wide Call to Action</li> </ol>	<p>Mutually Reinforcing Activities</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Cross cutting recommendations from MBK</li> <li>2. Support of local efforts to improve indicators – cradle to career</li> </ol>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Results Scorecard measures population and program success to be shared</li> <li>2. Community Convening Meetings</li> </ol>	<p>Continuous Communication</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Local Action Summit and creation of MBK Community</li> <li>2. Policy review and create recommendations for action</li> </ol>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Organizational support from one entity to enter and maintain data</li> <li>2. Shared leadership team to move Community Wide Call to Action</li> </ol>	<p>Backbone Support Organization</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Working group of pertinent government stakeholders</li> </ol>



## References

Acemoglu, Daron and David Autor. "Skills, Tasks and Technologies: Implications for Employment and Earnings." NBER Working Paper No. 16082. <http://www.nber.org/papers/w16082>.

*Achieving School Readiness: A 5 Year Action Agenda*, Annie E. Casey Foundation, Leadership in Action Program, 2002

*Economic Costs of Youth Disadvantage and High-Return Opportunities for Change*, Executive Office of the President of the United States, July 2015

Epps, Deitre. *Achieving "Collective Impact" with Results Based Accountability*, Results Leadership Group, 2011

Friedman, Mark. *Trying Hard is Not Good Enough*. Trafford Publishing, 2005

Kania, John, and Mark Kramer. Collective Impact. *Stanford Social Innovation Review*. Winter 2011

*One-Year Progress Report to the President*, My Brother's Keeper Task Force. February 2015  
<http://www.mbkchallenge.org/pdf/mbk-task-force-one-year-progress-report-to-the-president.pdf>

2010 Striving Together Report Card. Strive Cincinnati-Northern Kentucky, 2011  
<http://www.strivetogetehr.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/2010StriveReportCard.pdf>

"The Real Challenge for Collective Impact." Huffingtonpost.com. 2012-09-27.