





Local Education Attainment Collaborative Interim Report



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Executive Summary

MyFutureNC and ncIMPACT formed a partnership in 2021 to address educational challenges across North Carolina by providing capacity-building support to 15 Local Educational Attainment Collaboratives (LEACs) whose remit is to increase local postsecondary degrees, credentials, and certifications among 2 million residents by 2030. This report examines the LEACs' intended impact areas, teaming infrastructures, productivity, and community reach as of July 2022, leading up to their launch in December 2022 to independently achieve their goals.

The most popular focus areas of collaboration across the LEACs address FAFSA completion rates and the successful transition of graduating students to postsecondary settings. Although teams began meeting in July 2021, it wasn't until the summer of 2022 that most teams established a 3-tiered infrastructure of communication feedback loops between their leadership, working groups, and community members. Team composition includes representation from 8 groups on average from education, workforce boards, employers, government agencies, community and faith-based organizations, policy makers, foundations, and students/families. Over the past year and months, LEACs have produced media campaigns, postsecondary guidance materials, community events, and internships to raise awareness of the Initiative and to improve local educational attainment. In this work, teams have been intentional to target populations that have been historically marginalized from educational opportunities based on race/ethnicity, native origin, family or community socioeconomics, non-traditional student status, or school disconnectedness.

To assist LEACs in their collaborative efforts, teams have been trained in Strategic Doing and Collective Impact. As their expectations have shifted to address systems transformation- as opposed to quick wins, there have been observable gains over time in Collective Impact knowledge based on post-Forum feedback. These skills coupled with action-planning, networking of networks, increasing team diversity, tracking progress, and establishing sustainability will be instrumental to ensure successful launch in the months ahead.

By The Numbers

100%

of NC educational pipeline stages from Pre-Kindergarten to 4-year college degrees are targeted for transformative **IMPACTS** by 2030. 552

stakeholders statewide are working collaboratively on local **TEAMS**.

50

LEAC **PRODUCTS** will have been shared with local communities as events or media by December 2022.

4,075

students, parents, educators, and stakeholders have been **REACHED** by LEACs to-date since July 2021.

Figure 1: Accomplished Impacts, Teams, Products, and Reach

IMPACT

NC EDUCATIONAL PIPELINE

All 15 LEACs are focused on having a targeted impact to address issues related to postsecondary certification or education, with more than a quarter of LEACs poised to address the entire educational pipeline from preschool to college.

LEACs include Central Carolina Connections (CCC), Surry-Yadkin Impact (SYI), Guildford Jobs 2030 (GJ), Our Future in UNiSON (OFiU), McDowell Pipeline (MP), Durham's Opportunity Collaborative (DOC), Work in Burke (WiB), Land of Sky (LoS), Our Future Cape Fear (OFCF), AchieveHIGHTS (AH), Sampson Connect (SC), Empower NENC (ENENC), STEP #workHERE (SWH), Queen City Collaborative (QCC), and Our Future ENC (ENC).

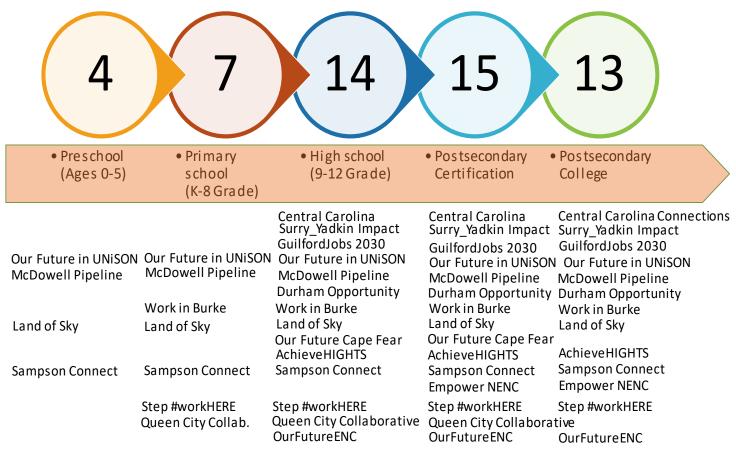


Figure 3: LEACs Targeted Pipeline Impact

KEY FOCUS AREA COLLABORATIONS

LEACs have worked with local stakeholders to identify, initiate, progress, or complete collaborations across 15 key focus areas for improving educational attainment. These collaborative efforts help to address issues with pre-Kindergarten Child Care and Development, Low Performing Schools, FAFSA Completion, College and Career Readiness in Reading, College and Career Readiness in Math, College and Career Promise Programs, Advanced Placement Participation, School Counselors, Opportunity Youth, Chronic Absenteeism, High School Graduation, Transition to Postsecondary Settings, Postsecondary First-Year Persistence, Postsecondary Completion, and Adult Learners.

All teams progressed collaborations on FAFSA Completion and Transition to Postsecondary Settings. Six LEACs had active collaborations on 14-15 of the key focus areas while seven teams addressed 10-12 efforts. The remaining two LEACs had collaborations on 4 key focus areas.

COLLABORATIVE CONNECTIONS NONE IDENTIFIED INITIATED (As of July 2022):							PROGRESSING COMPLETED								
	Pre-K	Low Performing School	FAFSA Completion	College & Career Reading	College & Career Math	College & Career Promise	AP Participate	School Counselors	Opportune Youth	Chronic Absentee	High School Graduation	Transition Post Secondary	First Year Persistence	Post- Secondary Completion	Adult Leamers
ENC															
QCC															
SWH															
ENENC															
SC															
АН															
OFCF															
LoS															
WiB															
DOC															
MP															
OFiU															
GJ															
SYI															
CCC															

Figure 4: Focus Area Collaborations

TEAMING STRUCTURE

TEAM MEETINGS

Since the LEAC initiative began in July 2021, all teams have had recurring meetings for either their leadership, working groups, or community members. In 2022, there was a concerted effort for LEACs to begin engaging all three tiers of their infrastructure with continuous communication feedback loops. As a result, meetings across the LEACs increased dramatically in 2022 from the first to the second quarter along with the scheduling of future meetings in the third quarter happening at least 2-3 months ahead of the meeting dates. LEACs were meeting as frequently with their leadership as with their working groups for strategy planning and tactical execution, respectively, while also reporting out to community members.

LEACs 2022 Meeting Audience and Cadence

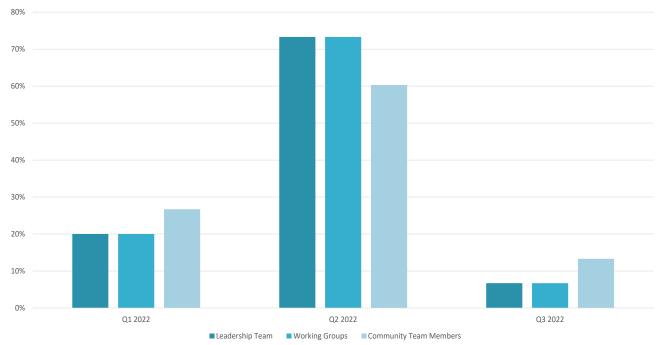


Figure 5: LEACs 2022 Team Meetings

TEAM SIZES

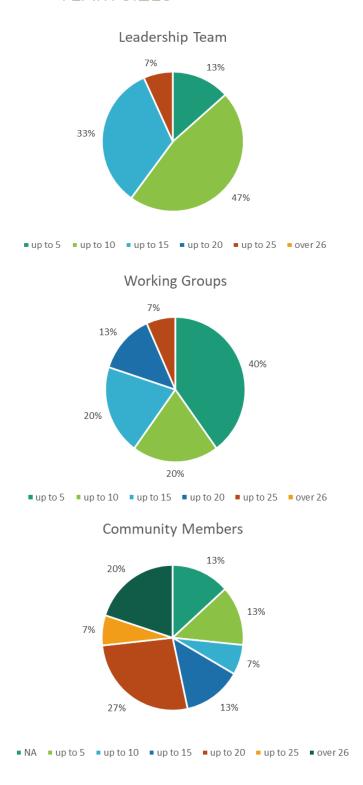


Figure 6: LEACs 3-Tiered Teaming Sizes

Membership sizes vary for the 3-tiered LEAC teams. Leadership groups are typically under 25 members; the majority (60%) of which are under 10 members. Durham's Opportunity Collaborative and McDowell Pipeline have the fewest people on their leadership team with 1-5 reported members.

Eighty percent of the **LEACs' working groups have 15 or less members**. Here again, McDowell Pipeline has a small team with 1-5 reported members along with Our Future ENC, Sampson Connect, AchieveHIGHTS, Work in Burke, and Our Future in

UNISON.

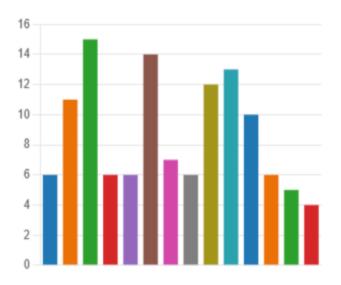
Slightly more than half of the LEACs' community teams have 16 or more members. Among these, Our Future Cape Fear, Our Future in UNiSON, and Guilford Jobs 2030 reported that they have more than 26 members. On the opposite end of the spectrum, Our Future ENC and Queen City Collaborative had yet to formally establish community teams although Our Future ENC had hosted a business roundtable and a community organization engagement event in the second quarter of 2002 to share updates with the broader local community.

TEAM COMPOSITION

There are **121 groups represented** on the 15 LEACs. A third of the LEACs (McDowell Pipeline, Empower NENC, Our Future Cape Fear, Our Future in UNiSON, and Surry-Yadkin) had a very diverse composition with 10-12 groups. The other 10 LEACs had participation from 5-8 groups on Our Future ENC, Queen City Collaborative, STEP #workHERE, Sampson Connect, AchieveHIGHTS, Land of Sky, Work in Burke, Durham's Opportunity Collaborative, Guildford Jobs 2030, and Central Carolina Connections. Only five teams had team representation from students (Empower NENC, Our Future Cape Fear), parents (Sampson Connect), or both (AchieveHIGHTS, McDowell Pipeline).



Figure 7: Team Composition



PRODUCTIVITY

COMPLETED PRODUCTS (MEDIA, EVENTS, AND PROGRAMS)

Since July 2021, LEACs have produced numerous products and programs for their local communities to raise awareness of the Initiative and to increase postsecondary certifications and degrees. These efforts include, but are not limited to:

- LEAC Websites County Chamber of Commerce Presentations
- County Board of Education Presentations
- Influencer Videos
- TikTok Challenges
- Community Education Fairs
- Student Navigation Toolkits
- Career Exploration and Observations

- Schoolwide Assemblies with Employers
- School Field Trips (High School) to industry sites
- County-wide Career & Technical Education Nights
- Faith-based Dual Enrollment Promotion
- Connection to Workforce Internships
- Credentialing Pathways Maps (with courses and certifications listed from middle school, high school, community college, and 4-yr college that align with industry-specific jobs
- Coordinated Community FAFSA series with Community Based Organizations

ADDITIONAL PRODUCTS PLANNED BY END OF 2022

3 OR LESS PRODUCTS

McDowell Pipeline
GuilfordJobs 2030
Surry-Yadkin Impact
OurFutureENC
Empower NENC
AchieveHIGHTS
Durham's Opportunity

Figure 8: 2022 Planned LEAC Products

4 OR MORE PRODUCTS

Queen City Collaborative					
Sampson Connect					
Our Future Cape Fear					
Land of Sky					
Our Future in UNiSON					
Central Carolina Connect					
STEP #workHERE					
Work in Burke					

SUCCESS STORIES

MORE VOICES AT THE TABLE



"One steering committee member from all nine counties is in our collaborative and they participate at the Forums and in Steering committee meetings."

COLLABORATIVE GRANT WRITING



"The Workforce Development Board Director has shown support and has applied for the Opportunity Youth Grant to enhance the [LEAC] efforts."

EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT



"Through collaboration with both county school systems, business/industry partners (local employers) and our community colleges, we had great success with our "Employer in the Foyer" event held at all public high schools."

ACTION PLAN DEVELOPMENT



Career Fair Success Movement from 'NO plan' to 'CLEAR plan' for postsecondary plan.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION



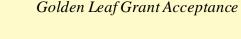
Reported increase of black student population in CCP from 177 in Fall 2021 to 259 Fall 2022

EXPANDED AUDIENCE REACH



"The Raising a Reader Literacy Play event ... [that] was designed for just children under the age of five and their families reached elementary school, high school, and college students. Anson County Schools administrators and teachers, Anson County Partnership for Children staff, Wingate University, and South Piedmont Community College, and non-profit organizations worked together to expand the impact of the original event."

NEW FUNDING



SCHOOL & CAREER TRAINING



"Our paid internship in a local business allows students to gain valuable real-world experience, earn high school credit, earn college credit, earn industry-recognized credentials, and earn a financial stipend for travel!"

REACH

AUDIENCE REACH (As of July 2022)

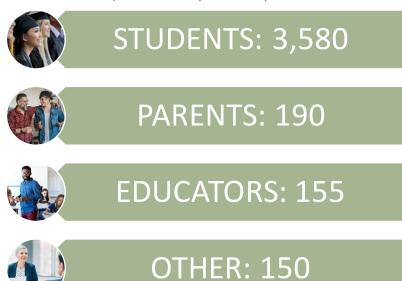


Figure 9: LEACs Audience Reach

EQUITABLE REACH APPROACHES

LEACs have employed two distinct strategies to ensure equitable reach for their programming and products. More than half of the teams are taking an **individual-level** approach by targeting populations with specific cultural heritages of Black, Hispanic, and/or Native American. Central Carolina Connections, Surry-Yadkin Impact, Our Future in UNiSON, Work in Burke, Land of Sky, AchieveHIGHTS, McDowell Pipeline, and Durham's Opportunity Collaborative are being intentional in their efforts to serve these historically marginalized populations.

The other 7 LEACs are taking a **community-level** approach by targeting disadvantaged zip codes, low-performing or Title 1 schools, or minority-serving community-based organizations. These LEACs include Our FutureENC, Queen City Collaborative, Step #workHERE, Empower NENC, Sampson Connect, Our Future Cape Fear, and Guilford Jobs 2030.

FORUM 4 FEEDBACK

KNOWLEDGETRANSFER

The response rate for Forum 4 survey was 77% with a high satisfaction score of 97% for the overall experience. Although there were continued gains by the end of Forum 4 among LEACs in learning and practicing Collective Impact (CI), the combined score for perceived SD practice competencies and application of Strategic Doing (SD) waned. A potential explanation is that LEACs began to shift to shift their attention away from SD iterative quick wins to CI's longer-term goals requiring more intensive action-planning and infrastructure building. This rationale is supported by the fact that most of Forum 4 sessions were devoted to CI topics with two sessions on action planning, one session on futurist thinking, a session on shared measures, and a session on sustainability. Forum participants continue to perceive that their CI knowledge and practice competencies are growing, as measured by trends across Forums. The knowledge gains coincide with the developmental growth of the teams as LEACS transition from short-term "forming" and action planning to longer-term considerations of impactful and transformative programming/initiatives that require CI structured framework and backbone supports. See Appendix for Post-Forum 4 Feedback Report.

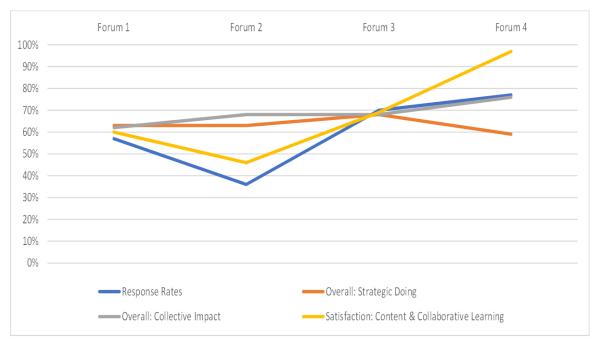


Figure 10: Forum 4 Knowledge Gain and Satisfaction

LESSONS LEARNED

ACTION PLANNING

After a review of the teams' action plans in April, the LEAC Steering Committee realized that there was a knowledge-gap in how to document, utilize, and communicate local progress. In response, the adult learning content and presentations for Forum 4 were designed to increase LEACs' skills related to action planning. In addition, Regional Impact Managers (RIMs) and Evaluation-Implementation Science (EIS) coaches provided LEACs with direct technical assistance in one-to-one meetings and group calls.

- 1. **Forum 4 activities on action planning**: Exemplar action plan provided to LEACs; Project Managers meeting scheduled to work on action plans; Peer session provided for paired review and feedback of plans
- 2. **Post-Forum action planning activities**: Revised action plans to be submitted in Fall 2022 for Steering Committee Feedback

I FVFRAGING LOCAL INTEGRATION

Networking of Networks

Networking can be more important than team size. McDowell Pipeline is a small team but highly productive because of their fully-aligned Career and Technical Education (CTE) system and Workforce Development Board. AchieveHIGHTS is also small, however, access to integrated data systems allows the team to effectively develop targeted programming on the student/family level. Likewise, Our Future in UNiSON is a small team, but they have benefited greatly from identifying a few key stakeholders across the two counties who are influential decision-makers in moving large-scale coordinated efforts forward. Finally, STEP #workHERE is a mid-size team with an oversized impact by leveraging relationships between education and workforce team members to design various school events that can reach hundreds of students at a time, totaling over 2,500 students to-date across the two counties.

On the other hand, larger teams such as Queen City Collaborative, Durham's Opportunity Collaborative, and Guilford Jobs 2030, which are situated in resource-rich environments that are accustomed to large collaborative initiatives, may experience challenges in productivity because of the over-saturation of competing efforts in the area. Moreover, despite these teams having high data awareness of the local educational needs, cross-data sharing may be limited due to local politics that delineate insiders (old establishment) and outsiders (newcomers). These tensions have the potential to undermine LEACs' intentional strategies to ensure equity in programming reach.

Representativeness of 'Voice' on LEACs

Few teams have strategies in place to ensure the recruitment, participation, and established sense of belonging for representatives from the teams' targeted (equity) populations. Target populations include students, parents, opportunity youth, CTE participants, non-working adults in transition, and disconnected learners and/or others that may lack access to social determinants and supports associated with educational or postsecondary credentialing systems. Teams should consider inclusive strategies such as paid attendance, accommodating meeting schedules, dual-language or translation services, cultivating inviting meeting cultures, and finding resources for supplemental supports such as child care, meals during meetings, and transportation to and from meetings and planned events.

Codependence, Interdependence, and Independence for Sustainability

As teams develop sustainability plans beyond the current funding cycle, many have begun cultivating relationships with other local organizations with varying levels of codependence, interdependence, and independence. Codependence is a good option for teams that are well-established or are already integrated into the local education or workforce development systems. Interdependence is an attractive option for teams that are looking to merge or to be acquisitioned in the near term. Independence is a viable option, and starting point, for all teams with an understanding that a clear plan for local systems integration is needed for longer term success. See the table below for candidate LEACs, strengths, and cautions aligned to each of the sustainability options.

	PROS	CONS
CODEPENDENCE	Backbone support and	LEAC's work and branding
CANDIDATES:	broader community buy-	could become
McDowell Pipeline, Work in	in exists.	indistinctive from the
Burke, Land of Sky, Empower		aims of the broader
NENC, Central Carolina		organization.
Connections, Our Future		
ENC, AchieveHIGHTS, Surry-		
Yadkin Impact*		
*Revisit placement once interim		
Project Manager is fully oriented INTERDEPENDENCE	Leveraging the high	For multi-county or
CANDIDATES:	profile, state-level	distinctively different
Queen City Collaborative,	visibility of the LEAC	communities, equity in
Guildford Jobs 2030	initiative could be	regional identity could be
Gunarora 3003 2030	attractive to local	lost.
	organization to elevate	1031.
	their own brand's value	
	while allowing LEAC work	
	and team to remain	
	intact.	
INDEPENDENCE	Team has complete	There is limited upfront
CANDIDATES : Our Future	autonomy to seek	funding for team staffing
Cape Fear, Durham's	independent grant	and an urgent need to
Opportunity Collaborative,	funding with a clarity of	quickly build competency
STEP #workHERE, Sampson	mission specific to LEAC	in systems transformation
Connect, Our Future in	goals with their existing	and systems integration.
UNISON	thought-leaders and	
	working groups.	

Table 1: Sustainability Options and Candidates

APPENDIX

A. POST-FORUM 4 FEEDBACK REPORT

APPENDIX A: POST-FORUM 4 FEEDBACK REPORT

Post-Forum 4 Reporting

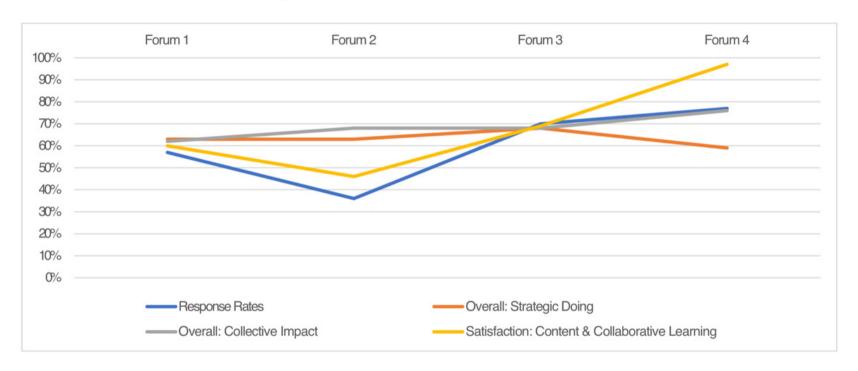
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myFUTURE**NC**





Snapshot: Forum 1 - 4



Overall Strategic Doing and Overall Collective Impact represents percent of participants who perceive SD & CI to be useful in their collaboratives' work.

Satisfaction represents average scores of satisfaction with 1) content, 2) guest speakers, 3) organization, and 4) inperson/virtual experience.

Participation & Post-Forum Survey Participation

67
Attendees

38

Avg. Respondent Attendees per Session

Day 1: 73% of respondents Day 2: 74% of respondents

77%

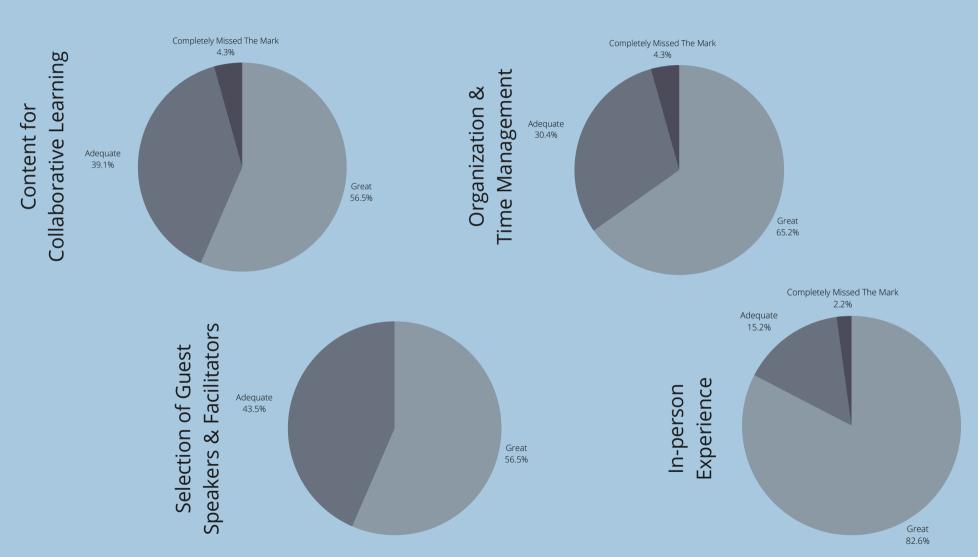
Survey Response Rate

39 avg. responses per Q

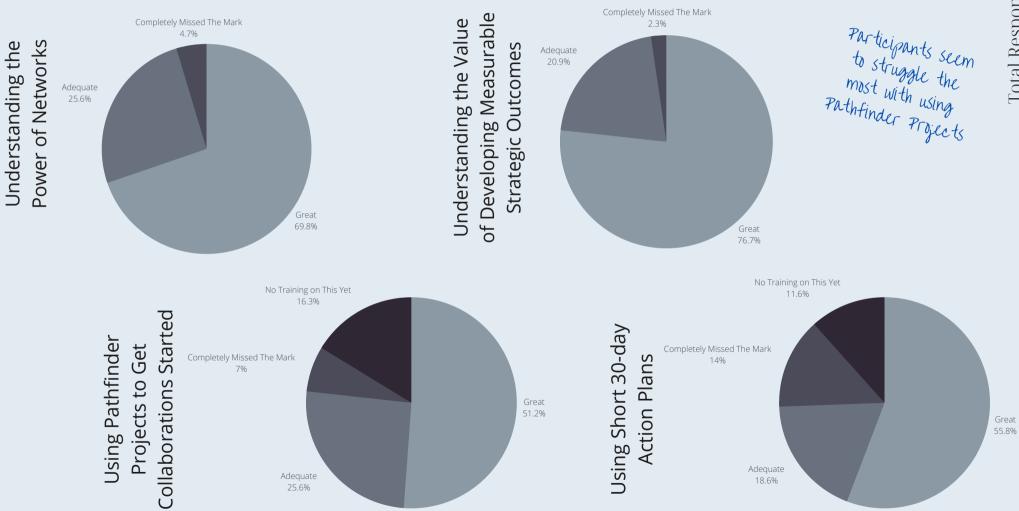
Participant Information



Overall Forum Satisfaction

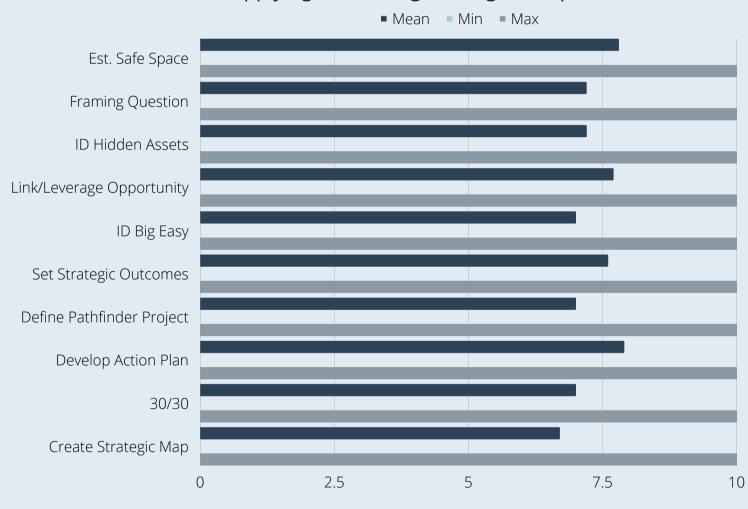


Strategic Doing Learning Objectives



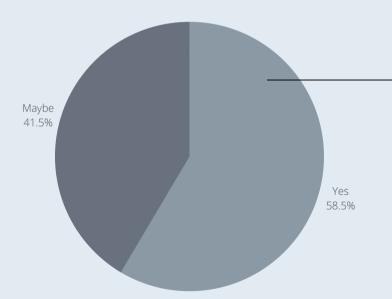
Strategic Doing | Application

Confidence in Applying the Strategic Doing 10-step Guide

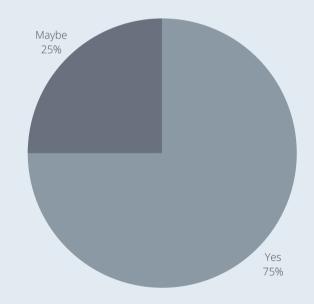


Strategic Doing | Application

Has your team applied Strategic Doing in their work?

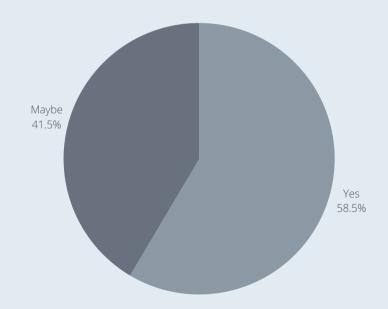


Has your team's application of Strategic Doing been successful?



Strategic Doing | Application

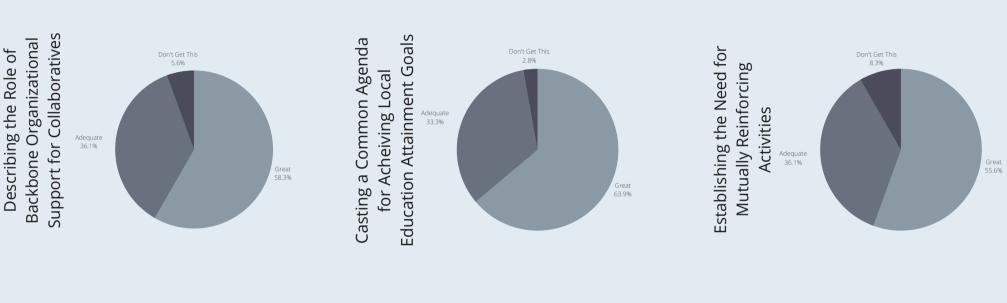
Do you think the Strategic Doing information and tools will have an impact on achieving your team's overall goals?

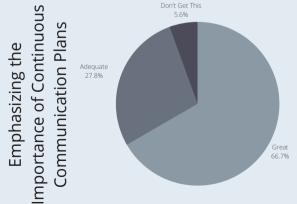


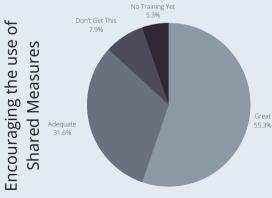
Please explain.

- Unsure how effective our little groups will be at addressing such
- Some of this doesn't seem relevant now
- All of the terms are too jargon-laden to provide any practical value
- Now clear how the foundational work was beneficial
- Feels like we are headed towards measurable outcomes

At this point in the project (including additional learning gained by attending the Forum), how well do you understand the components of the Collective Impact Model?

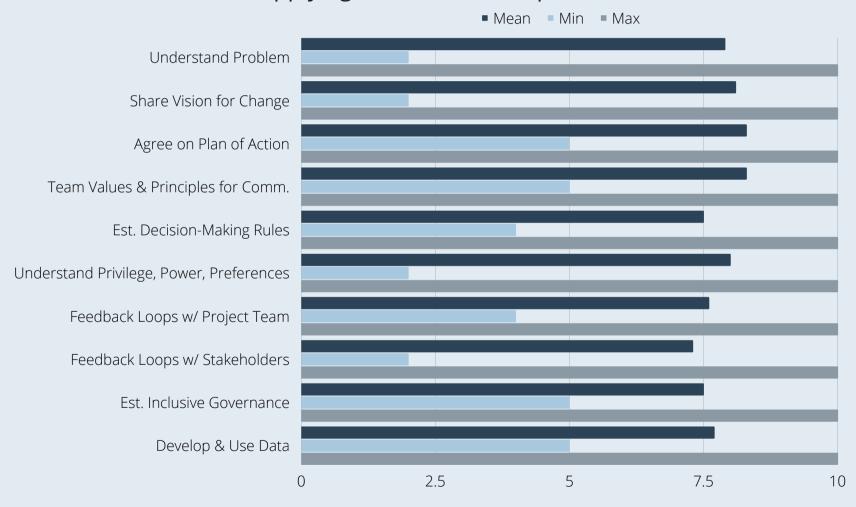




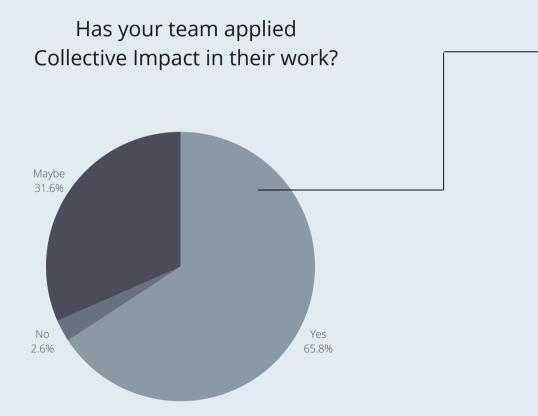


Collective Impact | Application

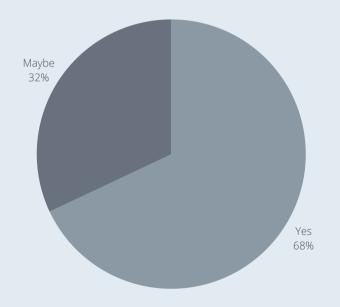
Confidence in Applying the Collective Impact Model



Collective Impact | Application

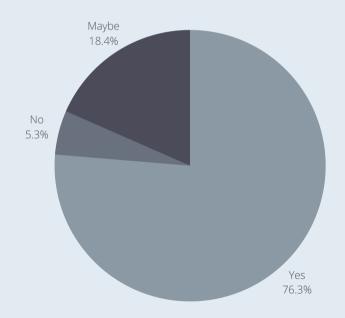


Has your team's application of Collective Impact been successful?



Collective Impact | Application

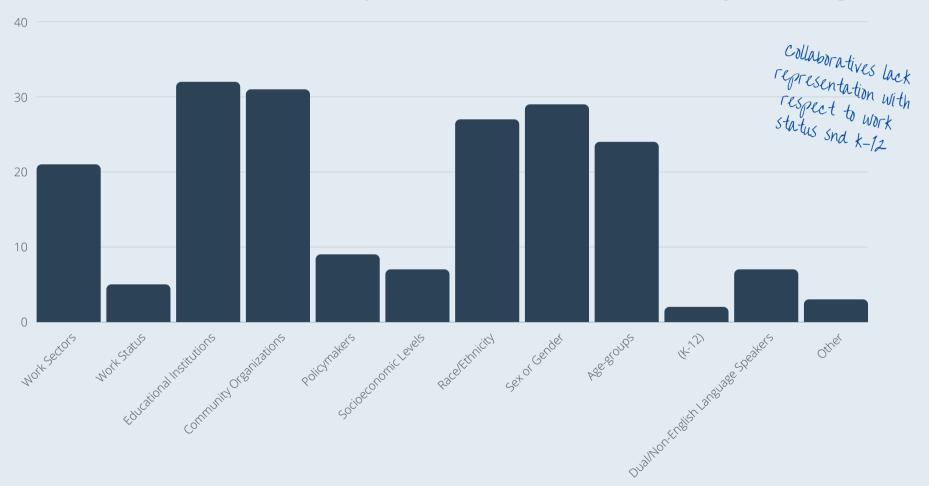
Do you think the Collective Impact information and tools will have an impact on achieving your team's overall goals?



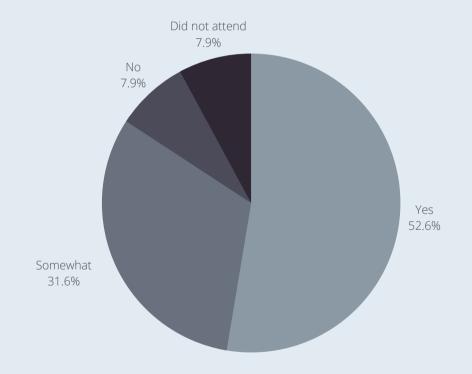
Please explain.

- This training is too much, too late.
 We have been focusing on these problems for decades and these forums give us hopeless concepts.
- We discussed Collective Impact differently in training than in this Forum.
- Necessary for sustainability
- Understandings the mechanisms of how this work becomes far-reaching is eye-opening
- Helps keep us focused on reasonable goals and expectations

Our collaborative has a diverse representation from our community according to:



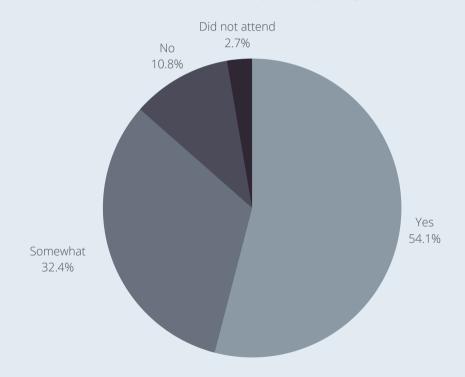
Did the session "Refining Action Plans with Peer Collaboration" help you to refine your Action Plan?



Please explain.

- Could have dedicated more time to this event
- Helpful and illuminating to share insights

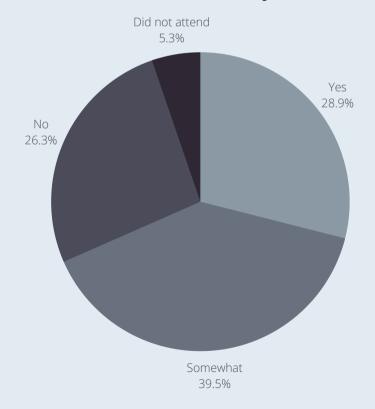
Did the session "Using Your Progress Tracker to Capture Shared Measures" help you understand how to measure your progress?



Please explain.

- Struggled to relate what speaker was discussing to our collaborative's work; a hands-on approach would have been more impactful
- Hard to digest data talk first thing in the morning

Did the session "Ensuring the Sustainability of Your Collaborative for Success" help you better understand how to ensure both short and longterm sustainability?

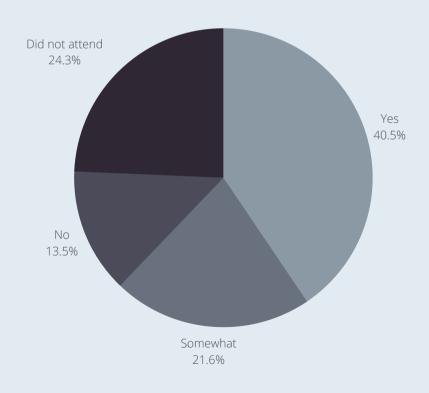


Please explain.

- Speaker was not every engaging
- Seemed to focus more on how to get where we already are than on sustainability

Participants found this session to be the least helpful

Did the session "How Can You Attract Place-Based Funders to Invest in Your Collaborative's Work?" help you consider how to secure additional funding sources?



Please explain.

- We were hoping to dig deeper
- Did not have representation from a funder who would serve my area/population
- Great range of information

How helpful did you find the sessions?

(1 = Completely unhelpful, 5 = Very helpful)



Please explain if you did NOT find one of the above sections mostly/very helpful.

- The session on sustainability would have been more useful 6-8 months ago & the speaker was not engaging
- Unsure how to apply this information to motivate those with short-term needs
- The ending felt rushed
- Would have been more helpful for each team to present best practices
- Unsure how to relate this to our collaborative's work

Meeting Format

(1 = Not at all helpful, 10 = Extremely helpful)

Overall, how helpful was it to meet in person?

8.7

Overall, how helpful was it to engage with other collaboratives?



Is there anything you would like to share about Forum 4 or about your collaborative work to date?

What People Liked:

- Reception was amazing
- Most sessions were engaging and informational
- Well-organized
- Great to be surrounded by people doing the same kind of work

The inclusion of a the most positive

What People Didn't Like:

- The presenter on Collective Impact was unhelpful, dismissive, and offensive
- Not enough small group time

Suggestions:

- We should be able to register for either or both days instead of simply for the entire event
- More time with work on our plans with feedback/assistance would have been useful
- Would be helpful to hear from state leaders on their vision/hope for MFNC's work