What is collective impact?
We’re using the term “collective impact” to describe organizations working together to make changes in our community. What’s new about this approach is when organizations — nonprofits, agencies, foundations — share goals and measures of success for a specific community challenge, the pace of change is accelerated.

Why do we need collective impact?
No single program, organization or institution acting in isolation can bring about large-scale social change on its own. For change to occur there needs to be a concerted effort of the many different players around a common agenda.

How is GCF making collective impact work?
We have made a multiyear investment in seven “backbone” organizations that will serve as leaders to nonprofits in our community as they work on specific issues and systems. The backbones will help nonprofits report and measure progress, connect partners and collect data.

Our partnership with these seven organizations will help everyone work together across sectors, address resource gaps and fuel the implementation of proven strategies to make our community better.

Who are the organizations?
Agenda 360, Green Umbrella, LISC Greater Cincinnati & Northern Kentucky, Partners for a Competitive Workforce, Strive Partnership, Success By Six®, Skyward.

What is it?
Partners for a Competitive Workforce (PCW) is a partnership in the Tristate region focused on meeting employer demand by growing the skills of our current and future workforce. Its partners include more than 150 businesses, workforce investment boards, chambers of commerce, secondary and post-secondary educational institutions, service providers and philanthropic funders. The partnership, started by GCF, is now managed by United Way, with major support provided by the National Fund for Workforce Solutions and local funders. By joining efforts, it aims to accelerate the pace of collaboration to reach the United Way’s Bold Goal of 90 percent of our labor force gainfully employed by 2020.

What is the problem? We are facing a growing skills gap.
• The Cincinnati region’s long-term economic success depends on our ability to develop and supply a qualified workforce. By 2020, nine out of ten of all well-paying jobs in our region will require some post-secondary education or training. Yet, nearly half of our current workforce lacks any education beyond high school, and far too many workers lack basic employability skills necessary to succeed in the workplace.

• This growing skills gap threatens our economic competitiveness. Half of all local businesses expect to struggle to find qualified workers for in-demand jobs in the next few years, even amidst high unemployment. Nationwide, at least 3 million jobs are going unfilled due to the skills gap, a figure expected to reach 7 million by 2018. Economists estimate our unemployment rate would be two to three percentage points lower if we had qualified workers to match current job openings.

• Bottom line — our businesses cannot compete if they cannot find qualified workers, and our residents cannot get family-sustaining jobs unless they further develop their skills.
PCW’s solution

Connect Businesses to Qualified Workers
Employers First is a regional partnership of four workforce investment boards that joined forces to coordinate and streamline access to services to help employers meet their workforce needs without having to navigate the bureaucracies of dozens of programs.

Align Education with Industry Needs
Industry-driven partnerships among employers, schools, colleges, and community organizations are working to close skill gaps in key industries, including healthcare, advanced manufacturing, and construction, with information technology and financial services in development. These partnerships work closely with employers to identify the skill needs of the industry, build career pathways to prepare the workforce for in-demand careers and provide employers with qualified workers.

Improve Work Readiness
The Work Readiness Collaborative is a partnership of service providers focused on building the foundational work readiness skills of our workforce through continuous quality improvement in service delivery and use of evidence-based practices.

Starting Over
LaGracia Guice Williams was 52 years old when she lost her job. A widow with a mortgage and two teenagers approaching college, she was scared. Thanks to training at Great Oaks Career Campus supported by PCW, LaGracia reinvented herself. She is now a health unit coordinator at Children’s Hospital Medical Center and is considering getting a master’s degree.

Read more about collective impact on our website www.gcfdn.org/collectiveimpact

Our results
9,100+ individuals trained by four career pathway initiatives since 2008, with 88% completing training and earning 9,200+ postsecondary credentials and 80% obtaining employment with 69% retaining employment for at least 12 months.

750+ employers served; more than 50 employers are actively engaged as partners in four career pathway initiatives; demonstrating positive ROI for employers through reduced turnover and recruitment costs.

$46M+ in public and private funds leveraged from local, state, and national sources since 2008.

9 out of 10 well-paying jobs REQUIRE SOME EDUCATION OR TRAINING BEYOND HIGH SCHOOL.

50% of local EMPLOYERS are having trouble filling jobs.

170,000 NEW SKILLED WORKERS needed in our region by 2020.