**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.

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**What is it?**
Determined to improve academic success in the Greater Cincinnati region’s urban core, a group of leaders from various sectors, including early childhood educators, school district superintendents, college and university presidents, business and non-profit leaders, and community and corporate funders, came together in 2006 to form The Strive Partnership.

These leaders had no intention of launching a new program, but rather a collective effort to transform the larger system of education and learning by aligning their work and investments to a common vision, a set of shared outcomes, and a belief that we can achieve greater impact – together.

The partnership’s work spans the cradle to career continuum, and is focused on achieving “collective impact” through:

- Collaborative action around shared priorities and outcomes.
- Building a culture of continuous improvement by using data effectively to drive improved results for children and students, and
- Aligning our community’s leadership capacity and funding to what works for children and students.
Academic Improvement

One of the foundations of the partnership’s work is to build the capacity to make data-driven decisions. To this end, Strive is helping lead the Learning Partner Dashboard (LPD) web application to serve as a local comprehensive birth through college data system. Many participating schools are now using data from the LPD to inform their work and better meet the needs of our students. For example, Pleasant Ridge Montessori carefully examined data to ensure that targeted students were benefiting from volunteer tutoring. By doing so, the school was able to identify ways to improve the tutoring program and saw significant academic improvements for the students involved. Students who were in the daytime volunteer tutoring program in 2011-12 improved 204 points on their state exams on average, compared to 70-75 points school-wide. The school also jumped two state rating categories – from Academic Emergency to Continuous Improvement.

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

Strive’s Solution

The partnership is driven by five shared goals: that every child:

1) Is prepared for school
2) Is supported inside and outside of school
3) Succeeds academically
4) Enrolls in some form of post secondary education, and
5) Graduates and enters a meaningful career

To measure its progress, the partnership has eight shared outcomes for student success, which are tracked and reported on annually:

1) Kindergarten readiness rates
2) 4th grade reading proficiency
3) 8th grade math proficiency
4) High school graduation rates
5) ACT scores
6) Postsecondary enrollment rates
7) Postsecondary retention rates
8) Postsecondary completion rates

Recognizing that “gainful employment” is a very important outcome, the partnership is working with Partners for a Competitive Workforce and the Community Research Collaborative to identify and begin reporting a ninth outcome indicator to measure the successful transition to a meaningful career.

The Partnership’s Results

- Fourth grade reading achievement is trending up at CPS with an increase of 16 percentage points since the baseline year in 2004-05.
- Kindergarten readiness in Cincinnati is at 55 percent for the 2012-13 school year and has increased 11 percentage points since the baseline year (2005-06).
- First to second year college retention for local students has remained relative steady since the baseline year at the 2 year institutions, and increased at the 4 year institutions. Cincinnati State and Gateway are at 56% and 67%, respectively; and NKU and UC are at 65% and 86%, respectively.

What is the problem?

Education is perhaps the most important engine of economic growth and individual success. There is little doubt that growing a stronger economy and lifting incomes will depend on getting better results in education, cradle to career. While we have a long way to go, 85 percent of the partnership’s measures are trending in the right direction. That’s up from 81 percent last year, and 68 percent three years ago.