

StriveTogether Impact & Improvement Networks

Result

Impact and Improvement Networks were created to accelerate the progress of Cradle to Career Network members across the StriveTogether Theory of Action¹ to achieve Systems Change in their communities, and ultimately Proof Point.² Impact and Improvement Networks accelerate progress towards Proof Point by building the capability of local leaders and practitioners to use data improve measurable outcomes at scale.

Impact and Improvement Network Structure

Based on the Institute for Healthcare Improvement’s Breakthrough Series Model³ and built on the principles of the Annie E. Casey Foundation’s results-based leadership,⁴ StriveTogether’s Impact and Improvement Networks are short-term (typically 8 – 12 months) and consist of the following key components:

Results Focused

Impact and Improvement Networks are focused and accountable for making measurable improvements in a specific outcome. This could mean having multiple teams working on different interventions related to a common outcome. Or this could mean having multiple teams focused on improving different outcomes.

Engaged Partners

Impact and Improvement Networks consist of a total of up to 20 people. Within this group, small teams of four to five people are composed to work together to implement a specific intervention against a given outcome. Each team should ideally consist of one staff member who is going to help facilitate the work and three partners who are able to a) get the outcome and programmatic data they need in order to b) improve the specific interventions they are implementing to make progress on a specific outcome.

Learning and Action

Impact and Improvement Networks include monthly learning sessions to provide teams with the knowledge, tools, and resources necessary to enact change. Between learning sessions, teams act – they plan, test, and measure change. At subsequent learning sessions, teams reflect on the action and refine their interventions.

Learning and Action – Operationalized

Impact and Improvement Network teams attend monthly learning sessions (in-person or virtual) focused on content knowledge related to the Network’s outcome and tools that enable leaders to drive improvements and change (e.g., rapid cycle continuous improvement, results-based leadership, design thinking.) Subject matter experts and coaches provide formal training, and the Impact and Improvement Network also facilitates peer-to-peer sharing of best practices and collaborative problem solving.

Between learning sessions, Impact and Improvement Network teams develop and implement interventions related to the outcome area using rapid cycle continuous improvement strategies. Teams conduct multiple Plan, Do, Study, Act (PDSA) cycles and measure improvements during and after each PDSA test. Impact and Improvement Network teams receive individualized coaching calls during the “action” periods between learning sessions to provide needed support and resources.

¹ The [StriveTogether Theory of Action](#) outlines a rigorous approach to collective impact. It includes four principles to build effective community partnerships and impact cradle to career outcomes: 1) a shared community vision, 2) evidence-based decision making, 3) collaborative action, and 4) investment and sustainability.

² Partnerships reach Proof Point when they are maintaining or improving at least 60 percent of indicators across six community level outcomes - kindergarten readiness, early grade level reading, middle grade math, high school graduation, post-secondary enrollment, and post-secondary completion.

³ Read more about the Collaborative Model for Achieving Breakthrough Improvement at [IHI.org](#) (see White Papers).

⁴ Results-based leadership is The Annie E. Casey Foundation’s approach to leadership development which includes core competencies, foundational frameworks, and foundational skills. Learn more at [aacf.org](#) (see Our Work, Talent).

Place-Based Impact & Improvement Network

About Place-Based Impact and Improvement Networks

Place-Based Impact and Improvement Networks are more intensive opportunities for local partners to a) learn competencies and skills and b) improve a specific outcome within a 12-month timeframe. Partners meet regularly throughout the year to receive the training they need and then directly apply what they have learned to increase the likelihood they can contextualize and sustain the knowledge and practice. Each of the small teams of four that engage in the work must have a specific and measurable outcome they can collect at least every other week, as well as the ability to improve implementation of interventions based on what they are learning.

Place-Based Impact and Improvement Network Sample Timeline

Place-Based Impact and Improvement Network teams will convene regularly over a 12-month period. The sample timeline below for a Network includes both in-person learning sessions (designated in turquoise) and virtual learning sessions (designated in orange) with periods of scheduled and on-call coaching in between (designated in grey).



The specific deliverables will be detailed run-charts of the progress made by each team from month-to-month on their specific outcome and intervention as well as a report on key lessons both about the process and their practices.

Place-Based Impact and Improvement Network Stages

Timeframe	Stage	Focus
May 2016 to Aug. 2016	Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to continuous improvement and design thinking, particularly understanding baseline data and conducting root cause analyses • Introduction to national research on attendance/chronic absenteeism
Sept. 2016 to April 2017	Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued continuous improvement training, particularly implementing interventions, running micro Plan, Do, Study, Act test cycles (PDSAs), and tracking data • Exposure to best practices and case studies from across the U.S. • Peer-to-peer sharing, coaching, and troubleshooting
May 2017 to Sept. 2017	Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflection on the impact the teams' efforts had on attendance and the K-12 outcome in their communities • Documentation of what worked and what didn't • Planning for the ongoing improvement work and capability building locally