

## **Collective Impact: Homelessness and Unemployment in Coatesville**

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**Keywords:** Collective Impact, Equity, Homelessness, Unemployment, Government

### **Abstract**

The Alliance for Health Equity began a three-phase process to implement a Collective Impact model for the *Homelessness and Unemployment in Coatesville Collective (Coatesville Collective)*. This was after the successful completion of phase one and two, a six-month training and nine-month planning processes on the adoption of the model respectively. This was done to address community-identified local complex problems. Building upon phases one and two of Collective Impact Multi-Sector Community Engagement Process, the Coatesville Collective then used the model for phase three: implementation. Implementation focused on building capacity and setting strategic direction for Coatesville’s Collective with the intent to streamline, integrate, and reduce redundancy among service providers by addressing inequities within homelessness, unemployment, and case management services. Three primary goals were established to guide the work of the Coatesville Collective by using an evidenced-based model and tools. This article outlines processes, strategies, adjustments, and the evolution of the Homelessness and Unemployment in Coatesville Collective. It summarizes how the process intentionally addressed inequities. Further, it elaborates on the Collective’s movement beyond the creation of societal impact through the utilization of data to drive collective discussions and influence on service models, systems, policies, and anticipated funding allocations.

### **Introduction**

The Alliance for Health Equity began the process to implement a Collective Impact model for the *Homelessness and Unemployment in Coatesville Collective (Coatesville Collective)* after the successful completion of phase one and two; a six-month training and a nine-month planning processes on the adoption of the Collective Impact model to address local community-identified problems. Collective Impact is “a disciplined, cross-sector approach to solving complex social and environmental issues on a large scale”. Collective Impact (CI) includes five conditions and three pre-conditions which, when applied in a comprehensive way, have demonstrated remarkable effectiveness in addressing a broad range of issues. Collective Impact is also very much an evolving body whose effectiveness is being accelerated as the growing number of practitioners share their insights and experiences.

Building upon phases one and two, the Coatesville Collective used the model for phase three, implementation. Implementation focused on building capacity and setting strategic direction for Coatesville’s Collective with the intend to streamline, integrate, and reduce redundancy among service providers by addressing the inequities within homelessness, unemployment, and case

management services. Three primary goals were established to guide the work of the Coatesville Collective’s use of an evidenced-based model and tools. The three primary goals are:

1. Build community capacity to address homelessness and unemployment complexities among men of color aged between 18-24;
2. Create iterative processes and feedback loops that facilitate integration and coordination of transparent cross-sector partnerships to leverage expertise, program and service delivery, and resources;
3. Develop a project management process and structure that supports efficient use of time and accountability among the collective group.

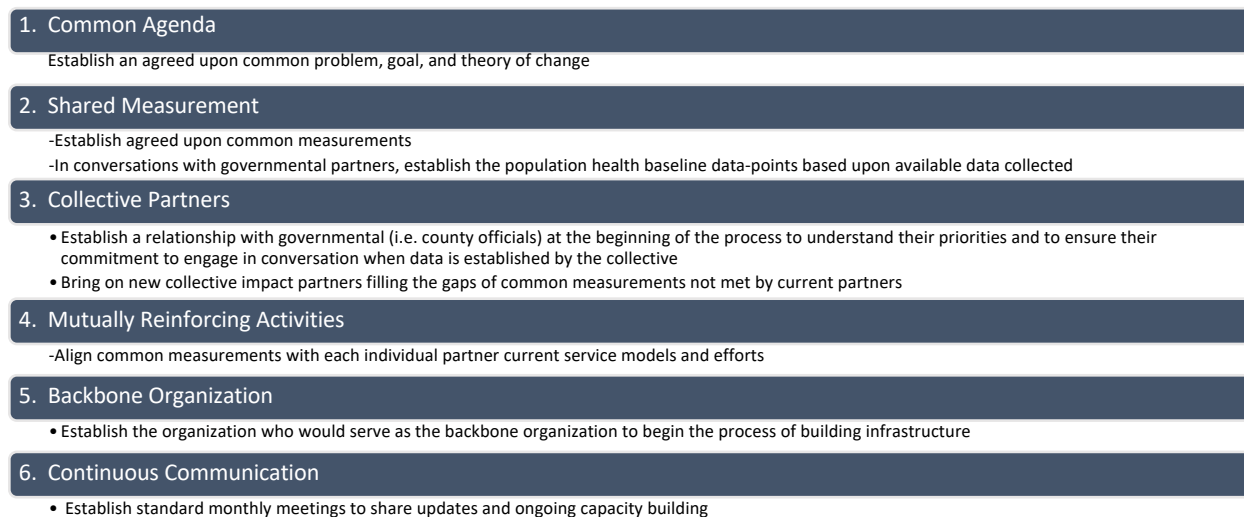
### Strategy and Outcomes

The Alliance for Health Equity’s implementation phase consisted of establishing a timeline and four strategies for the Homelessness and Unemployment in Coatesville Collective to put into practice the Collective Impact Model’s six stages:

1. Common Agenda;
2. Shared Measurement;
3. Collective Partners;
4. Mutually Reinforcing Activities;
5. Backbone Organization;
6. Continuous Communication.

The relational aspect between the Collective Impact Model’s six stages and the Coatesville Collective’s strategies can be found in Figure 1.

**Figure 1: Collective Impact Model’s Six Stages and Coatesville Collective’s Strategies**



STRATEGY 1: Agreeing upon a Common Problem and Target Population, a Common Goal, and a Theory of Change.

The Coatesville Collective established:

**Theory of Change:** Coatesville's Collective Impact Initiative will design a coordinated system that connects current training, education, and intensive case management services with employment opportunities. By doing this, 18-24 years old males and females of color Coatesville residents will obtain living wage employment leading to housing stability.

**Common Problem and Target:** In Coatesville there is high unemployment or underemployment rates for adults 18-24 years old males and females of color leading to and/or related to homelessness.

**Common Goal:** Coatesville's Collective Impact Initiative will help people live healthy and well by increasing employment and living wage employment in Coatesville for adults 18-24 years old males and females of color by 25% increase leading to a 20% increase in housing stability (rentals and/or home ownership) by 2026.

STRATEGY 2: Agreeing upon Common Measurements.

The Coatesville Collective outlined four primary categories and indicators grounded in equity that addresses education, employment, housing stability, and behavioral needs that encompass its shared common measures. Below highlights each category and sample indicators:

**Category A.** Building skills for competencies for independent dignity living

- of individuals who obtained an industry-recognized training certificate;
- of individuals who obtained a High School Diploma or GED;
- of individuals who obtain a Post-Secondary Degree;
- of individuals placed in a job;
- of individuals retained 3 months, 6, 12, 18 months;
- of individuals earning a livable wage defined by Coatesville Standard of Living.

**Category B.** Ensuring financial stability toward achieving housing stability

- of 18-24 years old females of color that have retained reliable childcare services;
- of individuals who attained subsidized housing;
- of individuals retained in rental housing for 6, 12, 12+ months;
- of individuals who demonstrate basic Financial Management Knowledge.

**Category C.** Meeting basic needs toward achieving independent housing stability

- of individuals of color between the ages of 18-24 registered for Driver Education Training and Testing;
- of Fathers in Education Program;
- of 18-24 years old females of color that use Family Planning Services;
- of households receiving public benefits (housing assistance, Earned Income Tax Credit, Medicaid, SNAP, TANF, WIC, SSDI, etc.).

**Category D.** Meeting behavioral needs towards achieving independent living and housing stability

- case managers/case management services provided to individuals of color between the ages of 18-24 years old;
- drug and alcohol services provided to individuals of color between the ages of 18-24 years old;
- individuals of color between the ages of 18-24 years serviced by in-person out-patient case management.

**STRATEGY 3:** Agreeing upon collective impact partners.

The Coatesville Collective supported the founding partners in the design and building stage and ensured there was support from local and regional government. Once the design was completed the Coatesville Collective invited additional partners who were able to directly contribute to achieving the collective common goals and indicators.

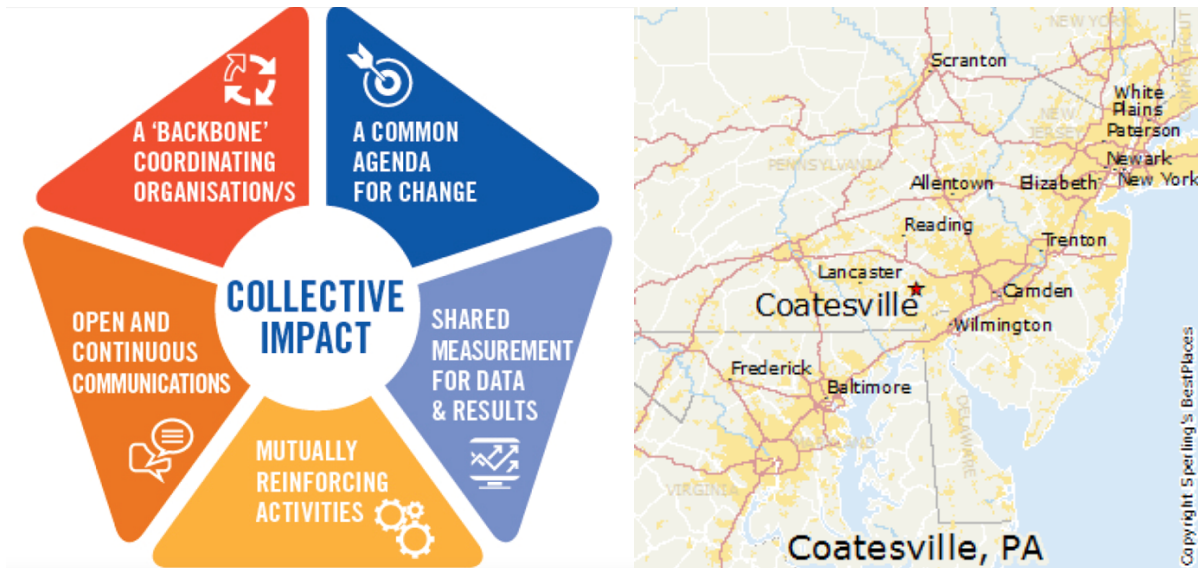
**Founding Partners** participated in Coatesville Collective since inception, including step one training, step two planning and instrumental in launching, and step three; the implementation phase. The eight founding partners represented various sectors including philanthropy, employment, behavioral health, social service, local for-profit business, law enforcement, and community residents.

**Government Partners** including local, City of Coatesville, and three county government agencies such as Community Economic Development, Human Services, and Health Department. These government partners were approached early in the collective impact process with the intention of being part of the design and building process. The Coatesville Area School district joined the Collective in its implementation phase. The primary role of the governmental partners was both to establish population health baseline data and to help focus the collective on priority target population(s) from homelessness and employment.

**Stage 1 Partners** were identified by the founding partners based upon the criteria:

1. What organizations were able to contribute to achieving the common measurements and indicators; and
2. What organizations met a gap in services to achieve agreed upon common measurements and indicators.

**Stage 2 Partners** will be identified to scale the ecosystem services to achieve the agreed upon common measurements and indicators.



STRATEGY 4: Establishing population health data points and baselines.

The Coatesville Collective worked with governmental partners to determine what data was gathered and for what timeframe to establish the population level baseline data. Table 1 outlines preliminary population level data points.

<b>Coatesville Collective Impact: Population Level Baseline Data</b>
<b>DATA SETS: 2018, 2010, 2020 (July 1 - June 30)</b>
<b>GEOGRAPHIC AREA: Zipcode: 19320 and/or City Coatesville</b>
<b>WORKFORCE/EMPLOYMENT: SOURCE School District and County</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Percentage/Number of men of color (18-24) who have a high school diploma or obtained their GED. SOURCE: School District and County</li> <li>• Percentage/Number of women of color (18-24) who have a high school diploma or obtained their GED. SOURCE: School District and County</li> <li>• Percentage/Number of men of color (18-24) who are employed and/or pursuing a higher education degree or vocational certificate. SOURCE: County</li> <li>• Percentage/Number of women of color (18-24) who are employed and/or pursuing a higher education degree or vocational certificate. SOURCE: County</li> <li>• Percentage/Number of men of color (18-24) who are earning above poverty wages (single adult at or above \$13.39 and adult of two children at or above \$29.08...). SOURCE: County</li> <li>• Percentage/Number of women of color (18-24) who are earning above poverty wages (single adult at or above \$13.39 and adult of two children at or above \$29.08...). SOURCE: County</li> </ul>
<b>HOUSING: SOURCE: County</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Percentage/Number of men of color (18-24) who have stable/permanent housing (owned by client with or without subsidy, rental by client with or without subsidy, living with friends or family with a permanent tenure).</li> <li>• Percentage/Number verified homeless (on the street, living in car/tent...) 18-24 year old men of color who have secured permanent housing (owned by client with or without subsidy, rental by client with or without subsidy, living with friends or family with a permanent tenure).</li> <li>• Percentage/Number of men of color (18-24) retained in housing (not re-entering back into the system for homeless services/coordinated entry system) for 6 months, 12 months, 24 months)</li> <li>• Percentage/Number of men of color (18-24) who own a home.</li> <li>• Percentage/Number of men of color (18-24) who reach out for homeless services.</li> <li>• Percentage/Number of Housing Choice Vouchers distributed to men of color (18-24) in the City of Coatesville</li> <li>• Percentage/Number of women of color (18-24) who have stable/permanent housing (owned by client with or without subsidy, rental by client with or without subsidy, living with friends or family with a permanent tenure).</li> <li>• Percentage/Number verified homeless (on the street, living in car/tent...) 18-24 year old women of color who have secured permanent housing (owned by client with or without subsidy, rental by client with or without subsidy, living with friends or family with a permanent tenure).</li> <li>• Percentage/Number of women of color (18-24) retained in housing (not re-entering back into the system for homeless services/coordinated entry system) for 6 months, 12 months, 24 months)</li> <li>• Percentage/Number of women of color (18-24) who own a home.</li> <li>• Percentage/Number of women of color (18-24) who reach out for homeless services.</li> <li>• Percentage/Number of Housing Choice Vouchers distributed to women of color (18-24) in the City of Coatesville</li> </ul>
<b>HEALTH</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Percentage/Number of men of color (18-24) who have public (private if data available) health insurance? SOURCE: County via Department of Human Services</li> <li>• Percentage/Number of women of color (18-24) who have public (private if data available) health insurance? SOURCE: County via Department of Human Services</li> <li>• Percentage of men of color (18-24) with chronic disease that is being successfully managed. SOURCE: Health Department</li> <li>• Percentage of women of color (18-24) with chronic disease that is being successfully managed. SOURCE: Health Department</li> </ul>

Table 1: Preliminary population level data points.

### **Discussion: Evolution of Collective Impact Process**

**Equity:** Through this process, the Coatesville Collective concluded that there needs to intentionality to continual integrate equity principles into the design as the Collective Impact Model lacks an equity framework. The Collective also realized that community voice needs to be built into the design of the process. As a result, the Collective has built community voice into the identification of the problem and data analysis process. Every quarter when the data is collected by the partners and co-related with the population health data provided by the governmental

partners the community voice will be included in the interpretation of the data leading to new or adaptive service models from partners and/or policy and funding by governmental partners.

**Philanthropy:** The collective realized the importance of philanthropy to serve in a catalytic role to initiate a collective. Philanthropy can play a critical role in expanding its grant-making beyond service provision by funding collaborative processes with the goal of shifting current funding or establishing new funding as a sustainability strategy that is aligned with achieving the collective goals.

**Communication:** The collective needs to shift their efforts toward larger questions of do current service models achieve the collective goal and do current policy and funding models support achieving the collective goal. Through continuous communication driven by collective data, the collective can begin the process of answering the root questions regarding homelessness and unemployment for people of color between the ages of 18–24 years old in Coatesville. The outcome of these questions and discussions will result in a shift in homelessness and workforce service models and shift in systems, policy, and funding allocation by governmental partners.

## **Conclusion**

Collective Impact is “a disciplined cross-sector approach to solving complex social and environmental issues on a large scale”. Collective Impact (CI) includes five conditions and three pre-conditions which, when applied in a comprehensive way, have demonstrated remarkable effectiveness in addressing a broad range of issues. Collective Impact is an evolving body of practice whose effectiveness is being accelerated. Moreover, it is a model of practice that easily allows for adaptation to use an equity framework within its six stages:

1. Common Agenda;
2. Shared Measurement;
3. Collective Partners;
4. Mutually Reinforcing Activities;
5. Backbone Organization;
6. Continuous Communication to ensure community voices are in the process and institutional systems and practices can be dismantle that perpetuate unintentional harm, discrimination and inequities among marginalized groups.

The Alliance for Health Equity began implementing a Collective Impact model for the Homelessness and Unemployment in Coatesville Collective and quickly realized the product is the process of engagement and bringing multiple partners together to collectively tackle the community issues. Homelessness and Unemployment in Coatesville Collective is not expecting to have an immediate impact on the Homelessness and Unemployment in Coatesville for 18–24 years old people of color. Rather, they intend to align their collective efforts with the health data provided by governmental officials. Upon success, the partners will be able to continue tackling other community ecosystem issues as the infrastructure and partnerships will already be in place to unite efforts for a common agenda.