

Collective Impact Fellowship:

An innovative grant making and service delivery mechanism developed by The Rider-Pool Foundation

The unprecedented economic boom in center city Allentown, catalyzed by the creation of a Neighborhood Improvement Zone (NIZ), and solidified by the relocation of several leading Lehigh Valley companies, is positioning downtown as a major business and entertainment “hub” for the region.

Ensuring long-term success and community-wide benefits of this transformation will largely depend upon significant improvements to quality of life – including housing, health, education, public safety and jobs – in the neighborhoods surrounding the NIZ. Historically, the Lehigh Valley has taken an “isolated impact” approach (i.e. addressing education without including other influencing factors) to issues that are complex and inter-related.

Research and best practice tell us that addressing these complex challenges requires a new approach and style of leadership. Organizations need more exposure to strategies that create win-win solutions and collaboration across sectors and silos. One approach that is gaining increased attention in communities across the country is called “Collective Impact”. Collective Impact can be a helpful frame for structuring collaboration that increases efficiency of resources, amplifies impact and drives alignment across community systems. Collective Impact, as well as other forms of structured collaboration, requires a deeper understanding and application of systemic leadership.

Local funders have identified Collective Impact as a required approach to address deep-rooted challenges within downtown Allentown. Non-profit leaders have embraced this approach, but also have identified the need for training and leadership development to effectively apply this strategy.

The Rider-Pool Foundation has adopted a proactive approach in meeting these needs through the development of a Collective Impact Fellowship. Now in its third year, a group of not-for-profit leaders representing multiple community systems is selected annually to be trained by national experts in systemic leadership, Collective Impact strategies, community engagement and program design and evaluation. At the conclusion of this program, Fellows will be invited to work as a team to develop and implement strategies that directly apply this training to improving the quality of life in the neighborhoods surrounding downtown Allentown.

COLLECTIVE IMPACT FELLOWSHIP

SYLLABUS OVERVIEW

September- Orientation

Learning Objectives:

1. Fellows will have a thorough understanding of activities and expectations of the Collective Impact Fellowship
2. Fellows will learn how to access and use the Fellowship Wikispace

October- Principles and Application of Collective Impact/Systems Mapping

Overview:

Using the Collective Impact model and framework, Fellows will spend three days gathering a deeper understanding of the principles and application of strong cross-sector partnerships as a way to address complex social issues that impact multiple systems.

Learning Objectives:

At the end of the session, Fellows should understand:

1. The basics of complexity and how it relates to collective impact
2. The five key conditions of collective impact
3. The basics of how to structure a Common Agenda
4. Why structure and process are so important in collective impact
5. How systems strategies differ from program strategies
6. How to measure and communicate progress in collective impact

November- Foundations for Achievement

Overview:

This three day work session starts with a simple definition of leadership as the skillful use of influence to create a climate in which people can do their best work towards the goals of the organization or collective. This session is based upon a deeply researched model called Foundation for Achievement that focuses on three key components of leadership—understanding the motives that drive behavior, strengthening organizational climate and imbedding a discipline of effective goal setting and achievement. The Fellows will explore each of these components in depth during this interactive work session and will identify specific ways to use these elements to advance both the work of the Fellowship as well as that of their own organizations.

In advance of the work session, Fellows will complete two individual assessments providing feedback on individual motives and leadership styles. The program includes individual coaching to allow the Fellows to apply the principles of leadership to specific initiatives.

Learning Objectives:

1. Understand individual motives, their impact leadership behaviors and organizational climate and performance, and how to align them with specific projects and goals to improve engagement and execution
2. Learn how to quickly impact work group effectiveness and develop a shared vocabulary to drive clarity, alignment and responsibility within the group
3. Adopt best practices on goal-setting, execution and integration of learning and experience to improve performance on an ongoing basis

December- Collective Impact Program Design and Evaluation

Overview:

In these sessions, we will focus on types of evaluation and begin to develop a logic model based on the individual Action Learning Project. Fellows will think through and develop the strategies, outputs, outcomes and impact for their individual ALP. Fellows will complete the logic model and discuss the indicators that will be used to identify success.

Learning Objectives:

1. Fellows will share and review the indicators and/or metrics used by each organization
2. Explore various methods and strategies to evaluate Collective Impact at each stage; emphasis will be placed on the early stages of Collective Impact that are more relevant to this group
3. Use draft project rubric to guide a discussion around the continuation of work post-fellowship using cross-sector partnerships to address complex social issues

January- Community Engagement: Community Based Participatory Approach (CBPA): Tools and Strategies for Community Leadership and Transformation

Overview:

Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR), as defined by the Kellogg Foundation's Community Health Scholars Program, is a "collaborative approach to research that equitably involves all partners in the research process and recognizes the unique strengths that each brings. CBPR begins with a research topic of importance to the community with the aim of combining knowledge and action for social change to improve community health and eliminate health disparities." National organizations, funding agencies, researchers and communities are increasingly calling for collaborative models that involve intended beneficiaries in planning, organizing, bringing about, and sustaining community transformation. CBPR is an approach to inquiry (CBPA) that centers on community strengths as well as issues and provides people in communities with the means to conduct systematic investigation for the purposes of building awareness and taking action to resolve specific problems. Collaborative approaches can be challenging, however, given the different cultures, structures, priorities, leadership, policies and practices of community and organizational stakeholders. What is distinctive about CBPA is a set of principles to help guide the openness, ensure the fluidity, and navigate the unpredictability of a collaborative approach to research, evaluation, program strengthening, and community

transformation.

This module will introduce Collective Impact Fellows to CBPR principles and the approach as an effective tool for building stakeholder partnerships to engage and address complex, multi-layered community issues. We will use a blend of brief presentations, group discussions, and interactive exercises to stimulate the Collective Impact Fellows to think creatively about how to apply the approach, tools and strategies to their work in Allentown.

Learning Objectives:

1. Describe the community-based participatory research approach (CBPA)
2. Provide examples of ways in which communities have been engaged in CBPA
3. Engage Collective Impact Fellows in an interactive CBPA exercise
4. Discuss implications for Fellows' work in Allentown

February- Effective Communication and Messaging

Overview:

Communication is the leadership bridge between people, organizations and various interests. Leadership effectiveness is, in large part, impacted by the strength and breadth of a leader's communication skills. In the press of day-to-day business, leaders often focus on information dissemination rather than communication. Effective leaders think beyond the specific information to be shared and focus broadly on communication as a vehicle for influence.

In this work session, we will focus on how to leverage communication as a means of influencing others. The Fellows will gain familiarity with tools that will help them to understand their audiences and the goals of different types of communication, assess delivery methods, and craft messages that resonate and move people to act.

The Fellows will complete a communications assessment in advance of the work session that identifies communication preferences and strengths. The program will include individual coaching to allow the Fellows to apply the communication tools to specific activities.

Learning Objectives:

1. Understand different communications preferences, perceptions and related personality types
2. Use practical tools to improve one-on-one and one-to-many communication through language preferences, channels and recognition
3. Learn to recognize miscommunication in real time, diagnose the cause and intervene to prevent the unproductive behaviors that often follow

March- Community Engagement: Digital Storytelling

Overview:

This workshop is designed to introduce fellows to the principles and practices of digital storytelling—storytelling that leverages word, image, and sound to share powerful first-person narratives about individuals, organizations, and communities. Participation in this workshop will support the individual and collective goals of the fellows through: 1. Developing familiarity with the basic tenets, practices, and possibilities of digital storytelling in non-profit organizations 2. Establishing a shared understanding of the storytelling goals for this program and lay a foundation for your own personal narratives 3. Engaging in hands-on experience with digital storytelling tools 4. Receiving recommendations for next steps in developing a storytelling strategy for fellows, including tools, content, and further learning. In advance of the workshop, fellows will ideally prepare in the following ways:

Learning Objectives:

1. Develop familiarity with the basic tenets, practices, and possibilities of digital storytelling in non-profit organizations
2. Establish a shared understanding of the storytelling goals for this program and lay a foundation for your own personal narratives
3. Engage in hands-on experience with digital storytelling tools
4. Receive recommendations for next steps in developing a storytelling strategy for fellows, including tools, content, and further learning.

April- Results Based Leadership

Overview: Under development

Learning Objectives: Under development

May- Community Engagement: Appreciative Inquiry

Overview:

Appreciative inquiry is a search for knowledge built on theory that seeks intentional collective action from, in this case, society as a whole (Cooperrider and Srivastava, 1987). It is grounded in a series of core principles developed by David Cooperrider and his colleagues that make it ideal for garnering data sets targeting a group of people's ideals. The first, that reality is built through conversations and social interactions, requires face-to-face communication and dialogue between members of a community. The second, that change comes from asking questions, implies that simply by asking questions we have already put the process of change in motion. The notion that we choose what we study and the lens through which we study it, which is the third principle, suggests that it is our choice in how we approach whatever lay before us. In Ai we choose to

focus on positive possibilities (Whitney, Cooperrider, Trosten-Bloom, & Kaplin, 2002). This leads into the fourth principle. Our words matter, and focusing on strengths leads to positive, collective energy that promotes collaboration. In Ai this manifests through redefining problems as solutions. The fifth principle – envisioning the ideal future acts as a guide towards positive change – assumes that defining our dreams can help us identify the positive changes that are needed to get there (Cooperrider and Srivastava, 1987).

Session Goal: To provide a general understanding of the Ai model and how it can be a useful tool in community revitalization

Learning Objectives:

1. Understanding the 8 Principles of Ai theory
2. Identifying the 4 Ds of Ai Cycle
3. Simulating the Ai process

June-Collective Impact and Funder Partnerships

Overview: As this nine-month journey draws to an end, the group will implement a plan to:

- Contribute to the capacity building for collective impact and other cross-sector partnerships
- Create the environment and culture to do this work in partnership with funders
- Continue to learn and hone their skills
- Connect with the Fellows from earlier classes

Learning Objectives

1. Fellows develop skills to engage funders in more meaningful partnerships by sharing and discussing post-fellowship plans with Rider-Pool Foundation staff
2. Fellows develop meaningful ongoing connections with other CI Fellows through Community of Practice

For more details on the Collective Impact Fellowship, contact The Rider-Pool Foundation's Ron Dendas at ronald.dendas@pooltrust.org.