

# Equity: The Soul of Collective Impact

Michael McAfee, Angela Glover Blackwell, and Judith Bell



PolicyLink is a national research and action institute advancing economic and social equity by **Lifting Up What Works**®.

The long, rich history of community-building work in low-income communities and communities of color provides a foundation of theory and practice on which today's collective impact framework<sup>1</sup> must build to achieve results commensurate with society's biggest challenges. That foundation is equity—just and fair inclusion into a society in which all can participate, prosper, and reach their full potential. Equity, both racial and economic, must be infused through all aspects of collective impact processes,<sup>2</sup> from the deep engagement of communities to the collection and analysis of data; the design and scale of solutions; and the capacities, point of view, and roles of backbone organizations.

## The Lessons of Equity-Focused Community Action

In the 1980s, infants in Oakland, California were dying at one of the highest rates in the nation, with 18 deaths per 1,000 live births. Black babies had by far the highest risk.<sup>3</sup> The crisis, and the readiness of the community to address it, earned the city a demonstration grant in the early federal Healthy Start program. Within five years of implementation, Oakland became the first city in the nation to reduce Black infant mortality by 50 percent. Today, Oakland and surrounding Alameda County have one of the lowest Black infant mortality rates in California<sup>4</sup> and the United States.<sup>5</sup>

How this improvement happened is a case study in collective impact, though it predates the term by decades. The effort began with data. In the late 1980s, Oakland-based Urban Strategies Council published indicators of resident health and well-being, including infant mortality, disaggregated by race and neighborhood. Splitting data this way was unheard-of back then, and that leading-edge approach illuminated two crucial facts that citywide and countywide metrics obscured: African American babies had the highest risk of death, and the worst rates were in poor, disinvested neighborhoods of color. Diverse constituencies and organizations from across the city coalesced to address the problem by concentrating resources and interventions where they were needed most.

The Healthy Start grant awarded a few years later mandated community engagement, but Oakland's engagement process already went well beyond the requirements. The initiative put the community at the center of planning and implementation, building relationships based on trust and respect. It hired a well-respected African American leader of a community health clinic to head the effort, leveraging her deep experience and immense integrity in the neighborhood. The Oakland Healthy Start consortium included churches, schools, grassroots advocates, parent groups, and community-based organizations—in short, it included everybody touched by infant mortality and, more broadly, by disparities in family health and community well-being. Along with local evaluators, Urban Strategies Council, a respected community intermediary, continued to monitor and disaggregate data, engage communities, and advocate for systems and policy change to address the needs of the most vulnerable people and places.

There was broad consensus that Black infant mortality was not an isolated health-care problem but the result of systemic barriers rooted in structural racism<sup>6</sup> and community divestment. There also was consensus that these fundamental issues had to be addressed to improve the survival of infants and the health of families. The consortium developed a multilayered approach focused on supporting and empowering Black families, strengthening supports and expanding opportunities in their communities, and fixing the splintered, often dysfunctional, public health system on which the lives of low-income people depend.

Oakland Healthy Start established community-run family life resource centers in the three highest-risk neighborhoods, offering one-stop shopping for “everything a family needs.”<sup>7</sup> The centers hired staff from their communities and drew on the programming and expertise of community-based organizations to provide comprehensive, coordinated supports, including health education for teens, classes in prenatal nutrition and parenting, GED preparation, housing services, tenant associations, neighborhood revitalization, and community economic development. Healthy Start expanded and improved medical care services, not by creating a new bureaucracy but by strengthening and aligning the existing health-care system to work well for the people it was supposed to serve. The initiative did this in large part by pulling the system out of the pen-and-paper age and bringing in computers and information management software, long before such things were commonplace, so data could be shared and families followed systemwide.

The initiative's rapid success and the advocacy of Urban Strategies Council spurred county officials to apply Healthy Start principles—community engagement, aligned and accountable service delivery, and the use of data to track results—to the health-care and foster-care systems countywide. Oakland's success and advocacy also helped to win federal authorization to scale Healthy Start from a handful of pilot programs to a nationwide initiative. To this day, Healthy Start provides vital support to low-income communities and communities of color focused on reducing infant mortality around the country.

Today's collective impact framework stands on the shoulders of countless initiatives like Oakland's, efforts driven by and for communities to take on the biggest work anyone can tackle—saving dying babies, launching all children and their families on a pathway to success and supporting them at every step, and creating healthy communities of opportunity for all. These initiatives share critical characteristics that must be integrated, intentionally and explicitly, into collective impact theory and practice, including the following.

- Analysis of the racial barriers that limit opportunity and undermine health, and a commitment to address and remove those barriers.
- Respect for and integration of the wisdom, voice, experience, and leadership of community residents.
- Use of disaggregated data to identify and target resources for the people and places in greatest need, to maximize impact.
- A mix of families, community residents, and leaders owning contributions to the programmatic, systemic, and policy solutions needed to address complex problems at their roots.
- Ambition and commitment to achieve impact at a scale commensurate with the problem.
- Willingness to be accountable to the people whose lives are directly impacted by the interventions, practices, programs, and policies developed.

This paper expands the collective impact model by infusing it with equity, an explicit focus on race, and a place-based approach to achieving large-scale change through systems and policy reforms. Two of the examples cited here—the Oakland Healthy Start consortium and the Promise Neighborhoods Institute at PolicyLink—demonstrate the powerful results that are achieved when equity and race are integrated into a collective impact model. Two other examples, the Healthy Food Financing Initiative and the Alliance for Boys and Men of Color, address these issues in a different way. The focus on equity, race, and place-based strategies are all at play in an environment that is not a pure collective impact model. As leaders doing this work, we may not always start at the perfect place. But clarity about the goals, the systems and policy change desired, and the populations we intend to reach can help us to achieve impact at a scale commensurate with society's greatest challenges.

## The Equity Imperative and the Changing Face of America

A need to focus explicitly on race to achieve equity is not a relic of a more bigoted, less enlightened age. Race remains the fundamental fissure in America; it compounds and perpetuates disadvantage across neighborhoods and generations. Full-time workers of color earn 23 percent less than their White counterparts, and the gap is growing instead of shrinking.<sup>8</sup> The number of people living in high-poverty neighborhoods, where 40 percent or more of residents live below the poverty line, has nearly doubled since 2000. More than one in four of the Black poor and one in six of the Latino poor live in neighborhoods of extreme poverty, without decent housing, schools, or jobs, compared with one in 13 of the White poor.<sup>9</sup> “To make matters worse, poor children are more likely to reside in high-poverty neighborhoods than poor adults,” writes Paul A. Jargowsky, professor of public policy at Rutgers University-Camden.<sup>10</sup>

Living in a neighborhood of concentrated poverty has an enormous impact on opportunity, wealth, income, health, and even lifespan. For example, in the Baltimore neighborhoods of Upton and Druid Heights, where median income is well below the poverty line at \$13,388, the average life expectancy is 63 years—20 years lower than in Roland Park, less than five miles away, where the median income is \$90,492.<sup>11</sup>

Racial inequities persist in all sorts of policies and practices, implicitly and explicitly. For example, Black children nationwide are suspended and expelled from school at three times the rate of White children, beginning in preschool.<sup>12</sup> Until recently, California schools suspended 400,000 students annually, often for minor infractions—nearly one in five African American students, one in nine American Indian students, and one in 13 Latino students, compared to one in 17 White students.<sup>13</sup> Racial inequities are evident in the mass incarceration of Blacks and Latinos, who represent nearly 60 percent of the more than two million people behind bars in this country.<sup>14</sup> And racial inequities are evident in “the subtle impulse to call Johnny back for a job interview, but not Jamal,”<sup>15</sup> as President Obama pointedly stated in his eulogy for the South Carolina state senator, Reverend Clement Pinckney, who was murdered in June 2015 along with eight parishioners at the historic Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston. In fact, racial disparities exist on every measure of individual and community well-being.<sup>16</sup>

## Driving Sustainable Solutions through Community Engagement and Ownership

Authentic community engagement must be embedded as an essential element of the collective impact framework. This means making sure that low-income communities and communities of color are included as equal partners in planning, implementing, and governing initiatives. As Healthy Start recognized decades ago, community matters. Ownership of solutions matters. Listening to, integrating, and acting upon the voice, wisdom, and experience of community members are not optional. This is where collective impact finds its soul.

Residents, youth, small-business owners, clergy, grassroots advocates, and other neighborhood stakeholders have lived the pain of disinvestment, and they have the insights, credibility, and relationships that are essential to turning things around. They must be involved fully at every step, at every level of power and authority, and in every important decision, from setting the agenda to developing strategy to determining who does the work in the community and how it will be implemented. Along with everyone else at the collective impact table, the community must hold itself accountable for results.

The Northside Achievement Zone (NAZ) in Minneapolis illustrates the powerful results that can be achieved when families are driving accountability and owning and contributing to solutions for their children. NAZ, a grantee of the federal Promise Neighborhoods initiative, is turning the social service model on its head. Families are shifting from being perennial recipients of services to leaders of a culture change toward a college-going community. NAZ leaders believe a culture of achievement can be built only from within the community—one family at a time. Parents partner with NAZ at every step on their child's path to college:

- Parents sign a “College Bound Commitment” pledging to make college a top family priority.
- They partner one-on-one with a NAZ Connector “family coach” to set and reach goals that support college readiness.
- Specialized support is provided by NAZ Navigators and partner organizations to stabilize households through housing services, career and finance training, and behavioral health counseling.
- Parents take NAZ Family Academy empowerment and education classes.
- A team of parent leaders are selected to serve on the NAZ Parent Advisory Board.

This did not happen by accident. The structure of our society was erected on a foundation of bigotry and racial discrimination; in fact, racism was institutionalized into society before the founding of the nation. Laws intended to dismantle legal discrimination have had to fight against custom, culture, practice, and intentional counter-efforts that were well funded and aggressively implemented. Take as examples the redlining of Black neighborhoods to avoid housing integration; the mass busing of millions of White children to suburban schools to avoid school integration; and the exclusion of farm workers and domestic workers from Social Security, occupations held in large numbers by workers of color. The work of overcoming this history, dismantling barriers to opportunity, and advancing racial equity is hard, ongoing, and essential for America to live up to its claims of being a nation that offers broad opportunity.

The nation's demographic shift has made achieving racial equity an economic imperative as well. By mid-century, the majority of the population will be people of color, and the shift already has occurred in some states and cities. Nearly every corner of the country will grow more diverse over the next 15 years, from rural communities in Nevada, Wisconsin, and Wyoming, where small populations of color could double in size, to Houston, which is projected to add one million Latino residents by 2030.<sup>17</sup> Inclusion will be the challenge everywhere. A focus on equity must drive collective impact, in cities, aging suburbs, and rural communities alike. It is the only way the field can move solutions that reflect the scale of the nation's challenges.

In a powerful critique of collective impact, Junious Williams and Sara Marxer of Urban Strategies Council urge partnerships to account for community voice, the distribution of power, and racial equity in determining the outcomes of change strategies and the fate of communities. “Without rigorous attention to persistent inequities, our initiatives risk ineffectiveness, irrelevance, and improvements that cannot be sustained,” they write.<sup>18</sup>

Equity is realized through the results we set for collective impact and through all aspects of the process. It requires the front-and-center engagement of communities as equal partners, leaders, and owners of the work. It requires a commitment to the long, complex task of systems and policy change. And it requires the leadership and capacity of backbone organizations driven by a vision of equity and skilled in bringing solutions to scale.<sup>19</sup>

NAZ families have experienced multigenerational poverty and an egregious achievement gap. Through NAZ, parents are beginning to believe their children are worthy of a college education, and they are partnering with their NAZ connector to take actions that put their entire family on a trajectory toward success. NAZ targets—and partners with—the hardest-to-reach parents who have not traditionally been involved with promoting academic success. As NAZ scales up to enroll nearly half of the families within the zone, the success of individual families becomes the culture of the community. As a result of the NAZ approach, three-quarters of parents in NAZ parenting classes were proficient in skills and knowledge that support child development, compared to less than one-quarter in a control group.<sup>20</sup>

The collective impact framework, of course, recognizes that transformative work in communities requires the participation and alignment of many people, organizations, and sectors—the very name of the framework gives primacy to collective action. But unless rich, sustained community engagement is an expressed priority, it does not happen. In an interview on the Living Cities blog, R. T. Rybak, former mayor of Minneapolis, described the dynamic in a collective impact process in his city:

“Often we would find ourselves in meetings with the top people from our philanthropic institutions and social service agencies, which was a good thing, but the racial make-up of that meeting was often all White or predominately White people trying to solve the problems of communities of color. We had to racially and ethnically expand the table so we could have an authentic conversation about who we are ultimately trying to help, understand the differences and similarities in experiences of an African American youth living on one side of town versus a Somali immigrant youth living on the other side of town, and make collective decisions based on that knowledge.”<sup>21</sup>

He went on to explain how the voices, pain, and aspirations of youth led to stronger, smarter, more sustainable solutions. “The ability to have those conversations drive policy change was one of the major benefits of working in this new way.”<sup>22</sup>

Budgeting for such engagement is critical. Community organizations and residents cannot be expected to function as true partners—and they will not be viewed that way—if they have to volunteer their time and resources while others are compensated and supported to participate and contribute.

This is one of the crucial lessons learned through the Sustainable Communities Initiative (SCI), the Obama Administration’s effort to catalyze game-changing investments and opportunities in 143 communities and regions that are collectively home to 119 million people. The administration made robust community engagement a pillar of SCI, in the belief that a shared vision for an equitable, prosperous future will materialize only if traditionally marginalized people see themselves as and are valued as full partners. Just as Oakland did with Healthy Start, many communities went beyond the federal community engagement requirements. Minneapolis-St. Paul backed its commitment with money, investing nearly \$1 million in community outreach and capacity building. Greater Kansas City supported peer exchange and the development of a regional equity network, one of many unprecedented opportunities for local groups in SCI communities to work on a larger scale and in broader, more powerful partnerships to shape policy.<sup>23</sup>

Community involvement in SCI assessments, planning, and decision making has yielded results. New transportation, housing, grocery stores, green infrastructure, and other essential resources for economic resilience are being developed in disinvested neighborhoods. A much broader set of stakeholders is focused on charting an inclusive, equitable economic future, using the power of cross-agency and cross-sector collaboration to improve outcomes for low-income communities and communities of color across diverse neighborhoods, cities, and regions. Spurred by data from SCI assessments, which documented the persistence and pernicious effects of housing discrimination, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development recently released groundbreaking rules<sup>24</sup> to strengthen the way housing segregation and inequities in neighborhood investments are addressed.

## Policy Advocacy and the Politics of Moving Solutions to Scale

With 45 million people living in poverty in the United States (more than one-third of them children), it is not enough to move the needle for a few hundred—or even a few thousand—families or a scattering of neighborhoods. While successful programs shed light on the prospects and strategies for change, equity challenges collective impact partnerships to develop capacity to make the systems and policy changes and subsequent investments needed to improve lives and opportunities for entire populations. The rich history and practice of change initiatives in low-income communities and communities of color point the way forward.

Systems and policy change are integral to advancing racial equity. Without changing policies and systems, transformation at scale cannot be achieved. Policy offers the most direct route to measurable progress. But all too often collective impact practice stops at the programmatic level.

While programs are critical for developing the right mix of solutions, they must become more than isolated islands of excellence. Collective impact partnerships should plan to amplify the possibilities inherent in local successes and translate the lessons and insights into the systems and policy change needed to have big, lasting impact for whole populations.

The federal Promise Neighborhoods initiative builds upon a local success—in this case, the Harlem Children’s Zone (HCZ), which concentrates on 100 blocks in northern Manhattan. HCZ wraps children in the zone in high-quality, coordinated health, social, community, and education supports from “cradle to career” to improve education outcomes and reverse the cycle of generational poverty. The federal initiative translates the model into investments in communities across the country, not by imposing the HCZ approach or any other paradigm but rather by amplifying and accelerating local efforts to align people, organizations, and programs across sectors in a focused, results-driven initiative<sup>25</sup> to make sure all children succeed. More than 60 communities—many, though not all of them federal Promise Neighborhoods grantees—have brought together nonprofit agencies, schools, government, business, families, students, and other partners to create aligned supports from cradle to career to help all young people succeed. Already these efforts serve 300,000 children in urban, suburban, and rural communities.

The collective impact framework has helped local leaders who are implementing a Promise Neighborhoods strategy develop the cross-sector collaborations needed to secure resources, access to power, broad buy-in, and a shared commitment by all stakeholders to work in concert to achieve results. For example, leaders of the Indianola, Mississippi, Promise Community have used collective impact to inspire and organize the community to make measurable progress on the 10 results and 15 indicators associated with the federal initiative. Indianola leaders used Results-Based Accountability<sup>26</sup> to bring a disciplined approach to their collective impact process, and they focused explicitly on eliminating barriers for vulnerable populations, with the goal of improving the chances of success for everyone. That combination—the collective impact framework, the use of Results-Based Accountability to implement it, and the focus on vulnerable populations while holding the intention of creating opportunity-rich communities for all—led Indianola leaders to advance an equity agenda that evolved from impacting a few hundred children to impacting all 3,200 children in the city, from birth to age 18. In just three years, the Indianola Promise Community enrolled 79 percent of school-age children in the area. From 2013 to 2014, the initiative documented a relative 76 percent improvement in the percentage of kindergartners arriving at school grade-ready. The city’s third graders, who used to lag behind students statewide in math proficiency, have closed the gap and in some instances have moved ahead.

Although Promise Neighborhoods is largely programmatic, it has the potential to greatly extend the reach and impact of best practices, to unearth the need for systems and policy changes that will pave the way for greater scale and more comprehensive impacts, and to fight for those changes. Promise Neighborhoods are recognizing the power of uniting practitioners, parents, neighborhood leaders, and advocates across the country in raising their voices, using their data, and telling their stories to secure policies, funding, and political and public support for scaling and sustaining cradle-to-career strategies. Collective impact provides the framework for organizing Promise Neighborhoods across the country into a potent network to jointly advocate for investments and policies to benefit even more children and communities.

The Alliance for Boys and Men of Color in California, staffed by PolicyLink, is an example of how population-level impact is being achieved through policy that addresses the state's appalling racial disparities in school suspensions and expulsions. Parents, youth, and organizers around the state had fought for years to reverse the growing use of harsh discipline and zero-tolerance policies and to dismantle the school-to-prison pipeline, which has had disastrous consequences in communities of color across the country. In the Oakland and Los Angeles school districts, advocates achieved important policy wins. But progress was local and the discipline issue remained largely invisible to state policymakers. That began to change in 2011, when disparate local efforts coalesced into a broad-based statewide movement, with support from the Alliance. A determined coalition of more than 200 youth leaders, community leaders, public interest lawyers, and statewide advocacy organizations put school discipline reform on California's legislative agenda.<sup>27</sup> Youth lobbied legislators and testified at hearings with eloquence and passion that moved some lawmakers to tears. Data on suspensions in nearly 500 districts, broken down by race, highlighted the disproportionate impacts on youth of color, their families, and their communities. Ten discipline reform bills were introduced, seven passed, and five were signed into law in 2012. Since then, the Alliance has won more legislative and administrative victories, not only in school discipline but also in more equitable school financing, workforce training, criminal sentencing practices, and other areas that affect the lives and prospects of millions of Californians, especially the poor and people of color.

The federal Healthy Food Financing Initiative (HFFI) is another example of how the impact of local wisdom and innovations can be expanded through systems and policy change to remove barriers for large numbers of low-income communities and communities of color. The story begins in Philadelphia in 2001. Responding to the long-standing frustration in low-income Black communities of trying to have access to fresh fruits, vegetables, and other essentials when there were no grocery stores in or near their neighborhoods, The Food Trust and The Reinvestment Fund (TRF) joined with other community leaders and elected officials to understand the problem. The group identified financing as the biggest obstacle to developing healthy food retailing in underserved communities and recommended the creation of a state fund to support grocery store development.

A \$30 million state fund was leveraged to attract more than \$190 million in private investment. Loans and grants led to the development of more than 88 stores and other retail outlets, 5,000 jobs, and more than one million square feet of retail space. In addition to improving access to healthy food and creating jobs, these stores spurred broader community economic development and increased property values in some neighborhoods.

Pennsylvania's success sparked the interest of leaders in low-income communities and communities of color who had long advocated for access to healthy food in their neighborhoods. With community support, the results spurred replication efforts in Illinois, New York State, New Orleans, and elsewhere. They also fueled a national advocacy campaign for a comprehensive federal initiative to ensure that residents of all states and communities, not just those with the capacity and will to address this urgent issue, have access to fresh, healthy food. The campaign—led by The Food Trust, TRF, and PolicyLink—resulted in the authorization of HFFI. Since 2011, it has awarded over \$150 million in federal grants and leveraged more than \$1 billion through public-private partnerships, financing more than 200 stores, farmers' markets, co-ops, and other projects in 30 states.<sup>28</sup> A recent analysis by TRF found that while 16 million people have gained access to healthy food, there are still 20 million people without it.<sup>29</sup> This underscores both the impact of local, state, and federal policy changes and the need for continued action and advocacy, even in the face of victory.

## **Roles and Perspectives of Backbone Organizations**

The Sustainable Communities Initiative, Promise Neighborhoods, the Alliance for Boys and Men of Color, and the Healthy Food Financing Initiative all illustrate what it takes to achieve large-scale change. We must focus on race, engage communities, and take on the challenge of changing systems and policy. This is the only way to dismantle barriers to opportunity, scale best practices and local models of success, and achieve the broad, deep changes needed to create communities of opportunity for all. For Promise Neighborhoods, this vision and work are guided by the backbone organization, the Promise Neighborhoods Institute at PolicyLink. This raises the question: What are the proper roles and perspectives of collective impact backbones?

Collective impact theory rightly recognizes that a backbone organization is essential for shepherding a collaborative initiative. We believe it takes a certain kind of organization to support collective impact partnerships to address structural racism, engage communities, and advocate for systems and policy change to achieve significant results for low-income communities and communities of color. Five elements are essential to the success of backbone organizations and by extension, the collective impact endeavor.

First, backbone organizations must embody a leadership voice and pattern of behaviors that live and breathe equity. Although the collective impact framework calls for the backbone to serve as a neutral facilitator, we believe that backbone organizations must bring a point of view, infusing collective impact partnerships with a focus on fairness and inclusion and a commitment to create the change that will ensure everyone has access to the opportunities and resources it takes to succeed. Backbone organizations need to have expertise and experience in advancing equity and in bringing the needed technical, process, and political skills to collective impact efforts.

Second, backbone organizations must have the courage, capacity, and credibility to take on the biggest problems in our nation, starting with structural racism. Diversity is critical in the leadership of the organization, both executives and board members, and throughout the staff. Leaders and staff must be comfortable talking about issues of race, equity, and inclusion. The organization must bring deep community ties, credibility across constituencies, and strong connections with the full range of stakeholders.

Third, backbone organizations must be adept at using a disciplined approach such as Results Based Accountability, for moving from talk to action and creating the right container that enables leaders to align the contributions of diverse partners in a way that makes long-term, transformative work happen. This also requires a strong shared culture of accountability for improving results for entire populations and for ensuring that the community is fully integrated into the collective impact process and partnerships. Without such accountability, the effort is structured in a severely flawed manner. Backbone organizations should use data for learning, continuous improvement, and shared accountability, and the data must be used by all partners, not simply data managers.

Fourth, backbone organizations must be flexible. They need to know how to manage the culture of shared accountability while simultaneously coaching from the sidelines to support and amplify the efforts of local leaders. They need to be prepared to provide resources—people, research, and strategy guidance—to advance a policy agenda. They must also be willing to step out front and lead when necessary, especially to keep equity as the driving force of the initiative.

Fifth, backbone organizations must hold themselves and the collective impact partnerships they shepherd accountable for achieving results for thousands, hundreds of thousands, even millions of people. This requires the skill, capacity, and commitment to educate, organize, and advocate for systems and policy change. And it requires staying power for the long journey to achieve transformative results.

## **Delivering the Results that Communities Demand**

Collective impact has focused wide attention on the broad, deep, sustained collaborations required to make change happen. However, it would be a mistake to embrace the frame and congratulate ourselves for it before we make sure it includes all the critical components. Only by including all of the components discussed here can we achieve the big results that are embodied in the framework, that long-term systemic issues of racial and economic exclusion require, and that low-income communities and communities of color demand. Let us use the lessons learned from community change efforts that have been driven by a commitment to equity to take on the toughest challenges. Let us be guided by their discipline, sophistication, ambition, and soul. Their successes and challenges should inspire us to elevate collective impact practice, engage communities as partners and owners, and join together in building a society that works for all.



## Notes

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- 17 Emily Badger. "4 Maps that Show How Demographic Change Will Touch Every Corner of the Country." *The Washington Post Wonkblog*, January 20, 2015. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonkblog/wp/2015/01/20/4-maps-that-show-how-demographic-change-will-touch-every-corner-of-the-country/>.
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- 19 Scale is considered to be the tipping point at which an initiative reaches enough people in need that community conditions shift and set the stage for changes that benefit the whole population. The Promise Neighborhoods Institute at PolicyLink defines scale as reaching at least 65 percent of people who need support. See [http://apps1.seiservices.com/pn/2015pd/Materials%5CPNI\\_Developmental\\_Pathway\\_Final.pdf](http://apps1.seiservices.com/pn/2015pd/Materials%5CPNI_Developmental_Pathway_Final.pdf).
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## Author Biographies

**Michael McAfee** is vice president for programs at PolicyLink and co-director of the Promise Neighborhoods Institute at PolicyLink. He guides the organization's work on collective impact.

**Angela Glover Blackwell** is president and CEO of PolicyLink. Since founding the organization in 1999, she has continued to drive its mission of advancing economic and social equity by bringing the wisdom, voice, and experience of low-income people and people of color into the policymaking process, improving access and opportunity for all.

**Judith Bell** is vice president of programs at The San Francisco Foundation. Until recently she was an executive staff member at PolicyLink with particular expertise in policy development and campaign strategy at the local, state, and national levels.



Lifting Up What Works®

**Headquarters**

1438 Webster Street  
Suite 303  
Oakland, CA 94612  
t 510 663-2333  
f 510 663-9684

**Communications**

55 West 39th Street  
11th Floor  
New York, NY 10018  
t 212 629-9570

**Washington, DC Office**

1200 18th Street, NW  
Suite 200  
Washington, DC 20036

**Los Angeles Office**

1000 North Alameda Street  
2nd Floor  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

<http://www.policylink.org>

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