IMPACT:

Qualitative Evaluation of the Intentionally Measuring Performance to Achieve Core Targets (IMPACT) Initiative

In Partnership With

STATE STREET.

BIGPICTURE APPROACH CONSULTING

the forum FOR YOUTH INVESTMENT

United Way

United Way of Massachusetts Bay and Merrimack Valley

Priscilla M. D. Little, Big Picture Approach Consultant
Laura Jahromi, Big Picture Approach Senior Program Associate

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Qualitative Evaluation of the IMPACT Initiative

Introduction

Performance measurement systems provide non-profits with the infrastructure necessary to systematically collect and analyze data for continuous program improvement and accountability. However, as The Bridgespan Group noted in a 2012 publication entitled *Building Capacity to Measure and Manage Performance*[1], "*nonprofits appear to be woefully under-investing in measurement, particularly in their own internal capacity.*" It goes on to report survey data from The Innovation Network indicating that of the non-profits they surveyed, only 13% had a full-time measurement position. Further, twice as many non-profits named their funders and board, rather than their internal leadership teams and staff, as the primary audience for their measurement work, signaling a lack of capacity for internal performance management.

Recognizing the need for better performance measurement practices and systems among their own grantees, State Street Foundation (SSF) teamed up with The United Way of Massachusetts Bay & Merrimack Valley (United Way) in 2014 to launch a two-year capacity building effort called *Intentionally Measuring Performance to Achieve Core Targets* (IMPACT). At its core, IMPACT was designed to provide 16 Boston area youth- and adult-serving Workforce Development/Education agencies technical assistance to enhance their ability to measure program outcomes, track operating metrics, and use data to inform programming and organizational decisions. The key inputs of IMPACT were: a needs assessment to better understand agencies' needs and challenges related to performance measurement; access to one-on-one consultancies to focus on specific needs identified; and, participation in convenings to foster peer learning and provide more in-depth information on specific issues of relevance to the agencies.

Committed to learning from the outset, SSF and United Way included an evaluation in the initiative design that would help them understand the benefits and challenges associated with participation in the capacity building initiative, as well as point to possible future directions for "IMPACT 2.0." United Way commissioned the Forum for Youth Investment to conduct a qualitative evaluation of the IMPACT Initiative, document its results, and make recommendations on how it could be replicated by other corporate and private foundations. Specifically, through document review and interviews, the evaluation addressed the following four evaluation questions:

1. What was the IMPACT initiative?
2. How did the agencies benefit?
3. How did SSF and United Way benefit?
4. What is IMPACT 2.0?

Evaluation results confirm that building capacity for performance measurement was, indeed, a critical need for the set of agencies who participated in IMPACT. To a person, interviewees reported benefits of participation in IMPACT and saw value in the dual approach of individual consultancy and peer learning. But, in the spirit of continuous improvement, interviewees made observations and recommendations of how to strengthen and improve the initiative in its next iteration. Chief among those recommendations was to create better alignment between the one-on-one consulting services and agency convenings.

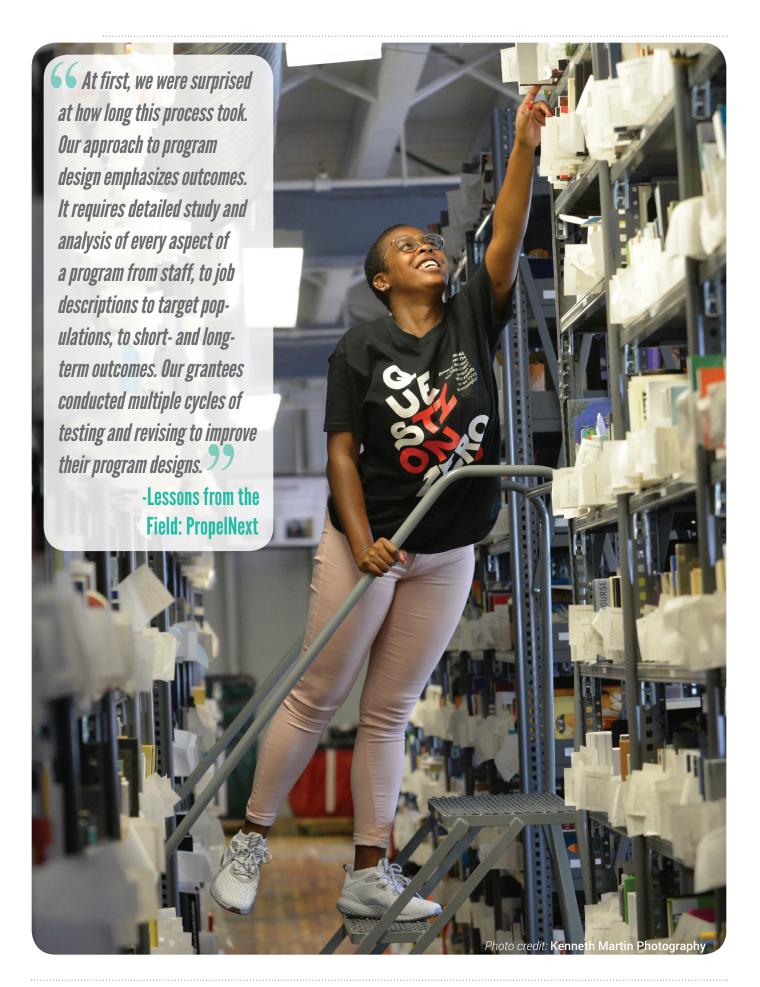> *" non-profits appear to be woefully underinvesting in measurement, particularly in their own internal capacity. "*
> **Forti and Yazbak, 2012.**

Roadmap to the Report

The report opens with a brief review of the evaluation process and approach. It then proceeds to address the evaluation questions, combining agency, client and funder benefits into one section.

> " At first, we were surprised at how long this process took. Our approach to program design emphasizes outcomes. It requires detailed study and analysis of every aspect of a program from staff, to job descriptions to target pop-ulations, to short- and long-term outcomes. Our grantees conducted multiple cycles of testing and revising to improve their program designs. "
>
> **-Lessons from the Field: PropelNext**

Section 1: Methodology

As requested by United Way, the Forum used a qualitative approach consisting of document review and interviews to gathering data to inform the four evaluation questions. The primary data source was interviews: over the course of two months (March and April 2017) interviews were conducted with 14 of the 16 agencies[2], five consultants,[3] and SSF and United Way staff. Appendix A lists the interviewees who participated in the evaluation.

Interviews were conducted using a semi-structured interview protocol organized by the four evaluation questions and sub-questions identified by United Way, specifically:

1. What was the IMPACT initiative?
   • What were the intended benefits: for the agencies, SSF and United Way?
   • How were the 16 agencies selected to participate?
   • Which agencies participated?
   • What supports and services were provided to the agencies?

2. How did the agencies benefit?
   • What were the agencies' perceptions of the initiative? What was of most value? What was less valuable?
   • What data collection/performance management capacities did the agencies develop?
   • Did the agencies sustain knowledge gains after the initial funding/supports ended? Are there any improvements in operations and practice? How have clients benefitted?

3. How did SSF and United Way benefit?
   • What were the perceptions of the initiative? What was of most value? What was less valuable?

4. What is IMPACT 2.0?
   • What changes should be made to the model if it were to be replicated?
   • What aspects should remain unchanged?
   • What is the necessary core infrastructure necessary for replication?

In addition to interviews and document review, additional data sources included a meeting with SSF and United Way in April 2017 to preview the findings and discuss the recommendations that conclude this report and "*Putting Measurement to Work*" *Convenings: Lessons Learned*, a report compiled by the convening consultant offering her reflections on IMPACT convenings.

Section 2: Overview of the IMPACT Initiative

Rationale for IMPACT

State Street Foundation (SSF) and United Way of Massachusetts Bay & Merrimack Valley are committed to helping youth and adults obtain the skills, credentials and knowledge they need to acquire and retain good jobs. Ultimately, these jobs enable youth and adults to be financially independent, support their families, and contribute to the economy.

To position youth and adults to achieve these outcomes, SSF and United Way fund education and workforce development agencies to provide training and education that convey an array of relevant skills and knowledge. SSF and United Way-funded agencies serve diverse populations and provide a range of essential supports, including placement in employment. The services that agencies offer both incorporate established best practices and reflect targeted clients' particular strengths and needs.

At the outset of IMPACT, although the two funders were proud of their grantees' accomplishments, they wanted to help them become more effective. They recognized that workforce development and education service providers needed accurate and comprehensive data on the services they provide, including participation rates and how effective the

services are in helping clients to obtain, retain, and advance in good jobs and/or to acquire workplace credentials. Unfortunately, it can be difficult and costly to collect these data and even agencies that have viable data-collection systems may not be collecting key information systematically or have the capacity to use those data to assess programming.

Accordingly, the two funders issued the IMPACT request for proposals (RFP) to help address some of these challenges. Through IMPACT, SSF and UMWBMV aimed to enhance agencies' ability to track and use data, including measuring the outputs, outcomes and other metrics that funders require their grantees to collect. The working hypothesis of IMPACT was that, armed with performance measurement capacity, agencies would become better able to assess the efficacy of the services they provide and to make strategic programming corrections when necessary. It was also posited that this capacity would enable agencies to broadcast their accomplishments to an array of public and private funders and ideally, to secure and sustain resources for effective programming and scaling of operations. As one of the funders noted, "*We ask them to report on metrics all the time and I felt responsible for building their capacity to improve data collection and use.*"

IMPACT was designed as a two-year, $622,000 initiative with a kick-off meeting in October 2014 and final consultancies wrapping up in Winter

> **The Challenge: Workforce development and education service providers need accurate and comprehensive data on the services they provide but lack performance measurement capacity.**
> **The Solution: IMPACT provided customized TA to enhance agency ability to collect and use data, building on current capacities to address each agency's unique needs.**

of 2016. Details about the initiative design are described below.

Agency Selection Process

Based on an analysis of their portfolios, SSF and United Way identified a cohort of agencies that one or both funders was already working with and that they believed would benefit from targeted capacity building for performance measurement. They invited 25 agencies to respond to a competitive Request for Proposal in Spring 2014. The RFP asked applicants to respond to questions about their agency, its services and target population, and its current performance measurement efforts and challenges. In Summer 2014, 16 agencies were selected to participate in IMPACT.[4] These will be described in more detail below.

The agencies were intentionally selected to represent different levels of experience with and expertise in performance measurement. Some agencies had comparatively more intensive needs for performance management support, while others were experienced agencies that would need less intensive support but would benefit from focused learnings on data measurement and could serve as performance management "peer experts." As the initiative unfolded, this decision to launch a blended portfolio of agencies "seasoned" in performance measurement with "newcomers" to the topic posed challenges to creating a cohesive learning cohort. This is an area to address in IMPACT 2.0.

In addition to selecting agencies with different levels of experience with performance measurement, other criteria used to assess agency "fit" with the initiative were:
- Demonstrated enthusiasm for and commitment to performance measurement,
- Agreement to participate in a learning cohort and attend convenings,
- Agency leadership agreement to engage in performance measurement.

The next section of the report describes the agencies selected in more detail.

Overview of Agencies Selected

Agencies selected to participate in IMPACT had some commonalities: all were funded by either SSF and/or United Way; all were focused on workforce development or education (or both); and all were located in the Metropolitan Boston area. However, as Appendix B shows, the services provided and the target populations varied widely across the agencies. Based on data gathered through needs assessment site visits completed by United Way staff by Fall 2015 the profile of the cohort was as follows:

- Agencies had been in operation anywhere from under five years to over 25 years; 42% had been in operation five to nine years; another 43% had been in operation at least 10 years. So, even the more mature agencies sought support for performance measurement.
- For their focused work with IMPACT, almost two-thirds (61%) of the agencies targeted their work on youth workforce and education programming, another 31% targeted adult workforce programming and 8% of the agencies targeted both.
- The most reported desired post-program success was job placement, followed by academic success, and then job or educational skills.

Programming ranged from positive youth development, to family assistance, to system-involved youth, to opportunities in the culinary field. Two agencies illustrate the range of programming in the cohort:

- *Boston Scholar Athletes* supports academic achievement through athletics. It strives to enhance the scholar-athlete experience, provide regular instruction to the coaching staff, and improve academic performance and personal growth.
- In contrast, the mission of the *Urban League of Eastern Massachusetts* is to be a champion of civil rights dedicated to helping people improve their lives and build stronger communities by providing local residents with education, job training, and placement at no cost.

Despite their differences, the agencies shared common performance measurement goals for the IMPACT initiative, as identified through the United Way needs assessment:

- 93% wanted a better sense of which data are important to assess to improve programming.
- 93% wanted a better ability to measure participant outcomes.
- 71% of agencies wanted better ability to collect data.

Agencies also reported wanting clearer and more viable measures of client outcomes related to long-term success in school and/or work. They referenced wanting help measuring life skills, employability and social-emotional skills such as perseverance, grit and mindset. They also reported wanting targeted learning opportunities on topics related to performance measurement.

In sum, the diverse set of agencies selected for participation in IMPACT shared a common goal of building capacity for performance measurement. How IMPACT tried to build that capacity is addressed in the next section.

Key Inputs of IMPACT

The IMPACT Initiative had three main inputs:

1. Needs assessment to determine high-priority performance measurement needs,
2. Targeted technical assistance to build capacity in the area identified through the needs assessment,
3. Convenings to promote peer learning and networking and deepen understanding on key aspects of performance measurement.

Each of these inputs is described in detail below.

- Needs assessment
  In order to customize technical assistance and resources, United Way conducted needs assessments of all the agencies selected for participation from November 2015 through January 2015. In the spring, the assessments were vetted with each agency and results were used to build on agencies' current capacities and to address their unique needs. Eventually,

> **Learning would have been amplified with more similarities across agencies.**
>
> **-Funder**

Photo credit: **Matt Tueten**

a TA plan was co-created with the agency and United Way that resulted in the next phase of IMPACT, engagement with technical assistance consultants. While not articulated as an input of IMPACT at the outset of the initiative, United Way and SSF staff uniformly agreed that conducting the needs assessment was a critical input in helping to shape the initiative.

- Technical assistance
  IMPACT was designed with two primary technical assistance needs related to performance measurement:

  - Improved capacity to collect, store, use and/or analyze data (IT) to more effectively run programs, serve clients and attract funders, including purchasing the necessary software and/or hardware so that they could collect, store and use key information.

  - Development of a sound theory of change (ToC) to guide program implementation and performance measurement.

Through the needs assessment process, it was determined which type of individual consulting each agency needed. A total of 13 agencies received support for IT and a total of nine agencies received support for ToC, with six of these agencies receiving both types of technical assistance and one agency receiving IT support and "other" specific support from Strategy Matters (See Appendix B for a chart of which agencies received what kinds of support). Of those who received IT support, this came in the form of purchasing new software, streamlining existing reporting functionalities and improved measurement capacity. For example, a consultant worked to develop an agency's database reporting environment to utilize all of the district's student data, not just what the agency was collecting. The purpose of this database enhancement was to help the agency target recruitment and simplify reporting requirements.

The sites that engaged in a ToC process worked with consultants to review/refine their mission

statements, define their target populations, articulate their program strategies and determine short, medium and long term outcomes. For example, one ToC consultant worked with agency staff in the refinement, implementation and utilization of key performance measurement systems to increase understanding of program outcomes. The purpose was to be able to use this information to improve communication and outreach to key constituencies.

During the course of the initiative, over 16 consultants were engaged in working with one or more agencies (See Appendix B for a chart of which consultants worked with each agency).

Consultants were paired with agencies for different reasons. In some cases, the agency had a pre-existing relationship with the consultant, while in other cases, United Way recommended the partnership based on their knowledge of the agency and the consultant. Consulting engagements varied in length and intensity. Engagements began in Fall 2015 and continued through December 2016. Perceived benefits and challenges associated with the TA work will be discussed in Sections 3 and 4.

> " Before, there was a discrepancy between how we talked about the program and what we were able to show that we were doing. "
> -Youth Workforce Development Agency

- Agency convenings
  Both SSF and United Way were committed to peer learning, so from the outset, they built several agency convenings into the initiative. After the kick-off meeting in Fall 2014, there was an all-agency meeting in Fall 2015. At that point, Child Trends[5] was hired to manage the five remaining convenings, which took place approximately every two months between February and December 2016. Entitled *Putting Measurement to Work*," the series of convenings facilitated by Child Trends

was designed to equip agencies to develop their performance measures and put them into practice. The series focused on supporting agencies in the collection of social and emotional (SEL) outcomes that they were working to foster in their participants. According to the Child Trends Lessons Learned document,[6] the intended benefits were four-fold:

Photo credit: **Kenneth Martin Photography**

- To deepen understanding for practical performance measurement in the participating agencies; To promote awareness of existing outcomes measures and help agencies adapt and implement those measures at their agencies;
- To help participants make tangible progress toward better indicators, measures and reports;
- To create a clear vision for how data can be used to produce better outcomes for program participants.

The focus on SEL emerged organically through the United Way needs assessment where assessors encountered a "bewildering array of outcome metrics and confusing terminology around SEL, soft skills, 21st Century skills, and workforce readiness."[7] The convenings were an attempt to help agencies clarify what SEL outcomes and measures were most relevant to their participants and then support agencies in their capacity to collect and use SEL outcomes data. In total, ten of the agencies explicitly named SEL as an area of focus for their IMPACT work.

The agency participants who attended the convenings were those leading the IMPACT work, namely the executive director/chief executive officer, the program director and the evaluation/performance measurement lead, or some combination of the three. Additionally, SSF and United Way staff attended all the convenings and some consultants attended some of the convenings. Convening topics were collaboratively planned with input from the funders, the agencies and the consultants that attended the convenings. Topics centered on various aspects of SEL measurement: defining SEL; identifying, developing, and refining SEL measures; and using data for improvement and sustainability.

As noted below, the convenings, as implemented, were viewed with mixed reactions among the agencies, consultants and funders, and this is an area for redesign in IMPACT 2.0.

Over the course of the initiative investment in technical assistance was approximately four times that of investment in peer learning.

Summary of Section 2

IMPACT aimed to improve the performance measurement capacity of 16 agencies selected through a competitive RFP process. Over the course of two years, agencies underwent a diagnostic needs assessment, engaged in technical assistance on IT, ToC or both, and participated in seven all-agency convenings. The next section of this report presents the findings regarding the perceived benefits of participation among key stakeholder groups.

Section 3: IMPACT Benefits for Key Stakeholders

Based on interviews with the three key stakeholder groups, this section of the report presents findings on:
- Agency benefits
- Client benefits
- Funder benefits

In some instances, consultants and agencies had different perceptions of the value of various components of the work. An explanation for this may be that given the under-funded nature of non-profit capacity building for performance measurement, non-profits are hungry for any support they can get and therefore report value in the effort, while seasoned consultants take a more critical view of progress made. The two perspectives help to balance the report and, as the recommendations reveal, converge on suggestions of how to improve IMPACT 2.0.

Agency Benefits: Overall, a Positive Experience

Overall, agencies reported a positive experience with the IMPACT initiative. All stated that they were glad they participated and would make the same decision to participate again. All stated that they would participate in IMPACT 2.0 if given the opportunity.

Many interviewees shared that involvement in the work required more time and a bigger commitment than they anticipated, but that the work was well worth the effort. In general, agencies reported thinking about new concepts, learning new tools/resources and expanding their networks.

A common theme was that this capacity building work for them as an organization is much bigger than just participation in the IMPACT initiative. The 14 out of 16 agencies that participated in the evaluation reported that their agency leadership was primed to participate in this initiative given their ongoing or new conversations about organizational capacity needs. Many agencies reported beginning the work on ToC or database improvement far in advance of their involvement with IMPACT – some even had previous relationships with their consultants. All 14 agencies that participated in the evaluation reported that improvement work is continuing after the funding has ended.

Four agencies reported feeling that the funded work with their consultants ran out before their recommendations could be fully implemented. While they were all grateful for the design and roadmap creation the consultants had done (both with ToC and data collection system), they were experiencing challenges now with implementation and wished they could afford continued access to the consultants' expertise. Indeed, some agencies continued to find support for consultants after IMPACT ended.

Five agencies commented on their gratitude for the funding to work with the consultants through this initiative, as this type of funding is not commonly available to them.

Agency Benefits: Technical Assistance – IT

Of the 14 agencies participating in interviews, four received solely IT technical assistance, six received both IT and ToC technical assistance and one received IT and other technical assistance. Among the 11 agencies who received IT technical assistance, the following themes emerged:

> **"With our new system, we now collect data at the right points in the progression as students work through our program and we think about all movement as a streamlined process."**
>
> **-Adult Workforce Development Agency**

- New or improved database

  All 11 agencies reported improvements to their data management systems. Four of these agencies had no pre-existing database for client or program data, though one used Salesforce for fund development tracking and one used Excel. Two agencies completely sunsetted their previous databases and worked with the consultants to build new systems. The remaining five agencies reported optimized systems; one agency modified their data collection based on the ToC work, one designed a new platform to measure SEL outcomes, one expanded their database to measure outcomes more longitudinally and one integrated in new data on the broader population from which they draw clients.

> **When asked about the value of the convenings to their work, agency staff and consultants all noted that peer learning could have been amplified if agencies had been group into smaller sets of similar agencies at the convenings.**

- **Able to get new and/or better data reports**
Eight agencies reported a new or improved ability to run reports from their improved data collection systems; four of whom did not have this capacity before participation, two streamlined their reporting and two added on the capacity to generate new reports with new data that was previously not collected.

Examples of reports include: key performance indicator reports, visual reports for school partners around student progress, client progress reports, etc.

- **Able to measure new progress indicators**
Six agencies reported that they have a new ability to measure progress indicators on their clients, i.e. client growth on hard or social-emotional skills throughout the course of programming as opposed to only at the end of the program. These agencies reported that this new ability allows staff to have more accurate and current knowledge about their clients so that they can make real-time corrections and provide needed interventions to improve client outcomes.

- **Better efficiency, consistency and communication amongst staff using new technology**
Three agencies remarked that this work allowed them the opportunity to train program staff on data collection and outcomes measurement, which has provided staff with a new skill set.

Five agencies remarked that their staff are more efficient and productive as a result of technological improvements, either around data entry and/or data analysis. Three agencies reported benefits related to improved consistency of client evaluation because of the use of new, standardized data collection instruments. One agency reported that database improvements helped to break down siloes across departments.

Agency Benefits:
Technical Assistance - Theory of Change

Of the 14 agencies participating in interviews, four received solely ToC technical assistance and five received both ToC and IT technical assistance. Amongst the nine agencies who received ToC technical assistance, the following themes emerged:

- **Greater consistency of service delivery**
All nine agencies reported benefits related to improved "road maps" or logic models for service delivery. This focus on ToC allowed the agencies to make more strategic decisions, to have stronger fidelity to their model through program expansion and to codify elements that had been introduced in previous years.

- **Increased ability to communicate and demonstrate value of services**
All nine agencies reported being able to use their improved ToC and outcome clarity with funders other than the United Way and State Street Foundation. Three agencies specifically reported that their staff is better able to describe their programming model and talk about their work with others outside of their agency.

> **This work built the confidence of our front-line staff, now they can be smart as a practitioner and as an analyst.**
>
> **-Youth Workforce Development Agency**

- **Improved quality of service delivery**
In the above discussion regarding benefits from IT technical assistance, all six agencies who have a new ability to measure progress indicators were agencies that also received ToC or other technical assistance. Four agencies reported that they had made significant changes to their service delivery model based on ToC work, such as adding a fourth tier of programming, integrating explicit SEL interventions and other

revisions to their curriculum. One of these agencies reported receiving more positive feedback on partner satisfaction surveys in their pilot sites as compared to sites not yet implementing program changes.

Institutionalization of Performance Measurement Capacity

Agencies and consultants had different viewpoints in response to questions around whether agencies have institutionalized the work conducted during the IMPACT initiative.

Consultants felt that the short time-frame of the initiative did not enable the agencies to "practice" new practices.

> **" Everyone at our agency can now equally define what we do and what our goals are. This is our biggest success. "**
>
> **-Youth Workforce Development Agency**

Agencies, however, noted improvements in their "data culture" overall that they believe will have a lasting impact on agency functioning. Six agencies also reported creating new policies around implementing new specific protocols and practices (e.g., supervisory practices, new meetings).

Client Benefits

Many agencies reported that it was too soon to tell if their clients had improved outcomes as a result of their work. However, all interviewees conveyed optimism that they were headed in the right direction and that they would be seeing stronger outcomes in due time.

- **Increased programmatic funding**
  Three agencies specifically reported that they have already received new funding to support their expanded or improved programming, which has allowed them to serve more clients and/or provide expanded services to clients.

- **Improved service delivery as a result of more informed staff interactions with clients**
  Five agencies reported that staff are more informed as a result of the IT or ToC work and are thus able to make more strategic decisions and/or have more informed interactions with clients. Three of these agencies reported that staff are more effective in providing feedback to their clients on a regular basis because of new progress indicators or new data reporting capacity. One of these agencies reported staff now are aware of the full array of services that clients are receiving and can make more informed service plans. The final agency reported that clients had a more accurate history of their accomplishments across time spent in programming, which, among other benefits, has improved services through staff transitions.

- **Improved client retention and outcomes as a result of program modifications**
  Four agencies reported that they were already able to see improved client outcomes because of their ToC and IT work (all four received both types of technical assistance). Two of these agencies reported stronger client retention and thus completion numbers, because of new services related to addressing social-emotional needs. One of these agencies reported clients are having improved outcomes as a result of receiving more services for longer, because of an additional tier of programming added on to their model.

Funder Benefits

Both SSF and United Way engaged in IMPACT as a way to support their grantees while also testing out some approaches to building capacity for performance measurement. They had a long-standing relationship and viewed IMPACT as a way to work together on improving a critical gap in non-profit capacity. United Way was interested in using its collaboration with SSF as an "experiment" to test out how it could work with other corporate funders. As data-driven funders, they wanted to help their grantees do a better job of getting and using data for program improvement and accountability.

Both SSF and United Way staff reported that the collaboration was a success along a number of dimensions. The two funders had an open working relationship, attended all the convenings United Way staff conducted visits to the agencies.

SSF had hoped to learn more about their own measurement framework, promoting the utilization of standard language and definitions for key workforce and education metrics across its grantees. However, the focus of IMPACT evolved into improving the understanding of performance measurement and building a data culture, not on developing common measures across grantees and funders.

United Way viewed IMPACT as a learning lab to improve their own grantmaking and they have already used the information they learned through IMPACT to inform new grantmaking approaches. First, through the needs assessment, they learned about the importance of SEL skills as well as the lack of capacity among agencies to support them. This helped them shape future grantmaking to be more focused and explicit about the need for out-of-school time and other youth development agencies to target SEL skills. And related to this, it helped them work with workforce development agencies not just on workforce skills, but on the critical SEL skills that enable young people to be effective in the workplace.

The focus on learning communities was new for United Way and through observing the convenings they saw both the value of peer learning, as well as what works and what does not work when convening grantees. Their insights are included in the Recommendations section of this report. Overall, both SSF and United Way felt that they benefited from participation in the convenings, as participation built relationships with agency staff and gave the funders greater insights into agency challenges related to data collection, promoting SEL and building a culture for performance management.

Section 4: Perceived Value of the Technical Assistance and the Convenings

A mix of individual technical assistance (TA) and group sessions was core to the design and potential success of the IMPACT Initiative. However, perceptions of which aspects of the TA and convenings were most valuable contained much variance, both within the agency sample as well as between the agencies, consultants and funders.

Photo credit: **Joel Haskell**

Technical Assistance was the Most Valuable Aspect of IMPACT

When specifically asked, "What was the most valuable part of the overall initiative?" 13 agencies responded that the services provided by their consultants were the most valuable aspect (the remaining agency thought the convenings were the most valuable). In general, these agencies found the TA to be the most directly aligned with meeting their specific needs and furthering their organizational goals. The one agency that had the most negative feedback to share reported disappointment with the services provided by their consultant; the interviewees from this agency felt rushed into selecting a consultant and ultimately felt the services provided did not address their needs. Overall, agencies reported that the work was hard and time consuming and the consultants kept them accountable to making successful progress. Some interviewees reported difficulty in finding the right consultant, with a few "false starts" to consulting engagements.

> *If people want performance management to drive improvement, then the initiative needs a longer tail.*
> **-Consultant**

Consultants concurred that the individualized TA services were the most impactful service for the agencies, but, as noted above, felt the individual engagements, at least for the ToC work, were not long enough to complete a full cycle of inquiry. While this was mostly stated in relation to the ToC engagements, putting IT improvements in place and then using the new systems to support program improvement also takes time and warrants its own cycle of inquiry: from establishing the database, to collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data, to using data to inform program modifications and, finally, conducing another data cycles to see if modifications led to improved agency services.

Convenings Received Mixed Reviews

Related to the convenings, 11 agencies responded that they found value in the peer learning opportunity. These interviewees reported benefits from meeting new agencies that were providing similar services as their own and the cohort environment allowed them to build relationships.

- Value of peer learning
  The majority of organizations felt the most valuable aspect of peer learning was the opportunity to hear from other agencies about their experiences, including the challenges they were facing and best practices they were implementing to reach success. Interviewees felt that the time in convenings where agencies could "workshop" with each other around the tools and issues provided a space where they could think through how to apply the new concepts back in their agencies.

  However, almost every interviewee at some point reported that peer learning could have been amplified if they had been grouped into smaller sets of similar agencies. Consultants agreed that the diversity of the agencies caused challenges to fostering peer learning. Some interviewees reported that they liked the diversity and that they benefitted from learning from agencies that were different than their own agency. One interviewee liked hearing from smaller agencies that she felt could be more innovative than her own agency. Another enjoyed working with

newer agencies and benefitted from preparing his materials to share with them.

- Changes in attitudes and mindsets
  In general, interviewees reported that the benefits they gleaned from attending the convenings were related to their own attitudes and mindsets as professionals within their agencies and about having a space to think about new concepts. One interviewee reported gaining the insight that his agency was operating in siloes and began to think through ways to build more bridges. Another agency reported learning the most from thinking about how to promote a shared data culture and hearing strategies to get staff on board with the data collection. Otherwise, few agencies reported learning any tangible tools or practices that they later applied in their agency.

> 66 *This SEL work gives new language for staff to use with the young people to make them more self-aware around SEL goals. New types of questions that staff are asking of young people are more comprehensive than just the academics and is beneficial to the students.* 99
> **-Youth Education Agency**

- Relevance of convenings to agency work
  There was mixed feedback about whether the time spent in the convenings was applicable and/or well connected to the work they were doing internally with their consultants. Consultants also felt a disconnect between their individual engagements and the convenings.

  The agencies that appreciated the focus on SEL reported receiving more insight, learning, and tangible takeaways than those that were not focusing on SEL with their consultants. The convening consultant observed that the focus on SEL at the convenings helped agencies in a

number of ways: clarity about the important role of SEL outcomes on desired agency outcomes, recognition of the need to tailor SEL outcomes so that their measurement can guide daily practice and refinement of program models to better support SEL outcomes.[8]

Six interviewees reported that some to most of the content of the convenings was not relevant to their work agencies' work. A common reason for these statements included the feeling that too much time spent on group work or hearing where others were in their own process when the interviewee's agency was in a very different place. Three interviewees whom were executives in their agencies felt that attending the convenings was not the right use of their time; one suggested a separate convening only for executives would have been welcome.

> **Agencies were working on very different things as there was no common IMPACT program or shared goals or milestones...agencies faced very different challenges and different needs that could not be always be met in a group setting.**
>
> **Consultant**

- Content of the convenings
Half of the agencies interviewed mentioned that there was a change in the focus and goal of the IMPACT initiative after participation had begun. Six agencies were originally drawn to the initial goal of engaging the funding community in refining or streamlining the metrics of educational and/or workforce development programs and reported feeling disappointed that this goal was not realized. Three agencies were further disappointed that the IMPACT initiative did not help them access additional funders who were likely to fund their programming and/or continued capacity building work, as they believed this was a commitment made to them by initiative leaders during the course of programming.

There was a mixed reaction to the focus on social emotional learning (SEL). Seven agencies reported that Child Trends shared valuable SEL resources that helped them understand the competencies that help young adults succeed in the workforce. Three reported receiving no benefits from such an intense deep dive on SEL outcomes; one interviewee even shared that he stopped attending the convenings specifically because SEL was not relevant to his agency's work at that time. One agency reported benefitting greatly from the SEL tools and concepts, but expressed that they wished they had known earlier it would be the focus, as they had to back track on their internal TOC and data collection system work that they had begun in advance of the convenings.

Needs Assessments Were a Valuable Tool

The above section of the report focused on two of the three IMPACT inputs. Only one agency mentioned the needs assessment as being useful to them. However, as noted above, SSF and United Way found them invaluable in shaping the technical assistance support that each agency received. Indeed, the quote on this page from an evaluation of a similar capacity building effort, Working on Workforce (WOW), conducted by the James Irvine Foundation underscores the value of needs assessments as part of building capacity for performance measurement.[9] The next section of the report will discuss ways the needs assessment might be an even more valuable part of IMPACT 2.0.

Summary of Section 4

Overall, agencies reported more benefit from the targeted technical assistance than from the convenings. Specific capacities built included improved data capacities and more focused program models. However, while agencies found the technical assistance helpful, the ToC consultants indicated that the initiative was not long enough to see meaningful improvements in performance measurement capacities. Related to the convenings, most agencies found them somewhat valuable, but there was a feeling among agencies, consultants and funders alike that there could have been greater alignment between the

TA engagements and the convenings. The next and final section of this report draws on evaluation findings to offer a set of recommendations for IMPACT 2.0.

Section 5: Recommendations for IMPACT 2.0

The main goals of the evaluation were to assess whether or not IMPACT made a difference in performance measurement capacity for the 16 agencies which participated, and if IMPACT achieved its intended outcomes. Secondarily, the evaluation sought to harvest lessons from IMPACT to feed into the design of IMPACT 2.0. To a person, all IMPACT stakeholders felt that the approach to building capacity for performance measurement that IMPACT took was helpful, but they had suggestions on how it could be modified for even greater agency engagement and impact. This final section of the report concludes with a set of recommendations for IMPACT 2.0:

- Agency selection should be informed by an intentional cohort design
- Timing and implementation of the needs assessment should be clearly communicated and happen early
- Timeframe for engagement with consultants needs to be at least two full years
- Selection and deployment of the consultants should be aimed at ensuring consistency and alignment
- Convenings should be designed to be integrated into agency work

Each of these recommendations and implications for IMPACT 2.0 are discussed below.

1. Agency Selection Should be Informed by an Intentional Cohort Design

The range in "readiness" of agencies to take on the task of building performance measurement capacity posed challenges to the design of a learning cohort. Consultants and funders agreed that working with agencies who were all in the same stage of their performance measurement work would have created more commonalities for learning across the cohort.

As one consultant noted: "*some agencies were 'less ready' than others to engage in the far-reaching work of implementing a performance management system.*" It was suggested that the RFP could be reworked to be more specific about what capacities the agencies already have in place and then select from the applicant pool a set that are in similar stages of the work. Alternatively, the selection could entail an intentional choice to have two "mini-cohorts" within the larger pool: one beginner, and one advanced. Regardless of the approach, there was consensus that agency selection should be made with an eye toward cohort design.

There was mixed opinion among funders and consultants regarding whether or not the agencies should also have more commonalities in terms of their focus, geography and clients served. So, in addition to selecting agencies in the same stage of "readiness," there might also be considerations about criteria including selecting agencies that are working with the same age group or the same issue area. IMPACT was designed to support workforce and education agencies, but the approach could be applied to other non-profit sectors.

> *The assessment visits, which were planned to gauge how well the agencies were prepared for the project turned out to be time well spent for other reasons. They gave an opportunity to establish a rapport with the agencies, build relationships and establish a baseline against which to measure progress.*
>
> **-Creating a Culture of Inquiry**

Finally, an additional criterion to consider, based on the evaluation of a capacity building effort led by the James Irvine Foundation in California, is to include motivation as a key determinant in agency selection and to start with organizations who are sufficiently motivated to commit the time and resources.[10] Further, Bridgespan's decade of work helping non-profits improve their performance

> *We had never done work around SEL before, though we had talked about wanting to start. This forced us to set aside time to develop an approach that we've now implemented. It was a very tangible step forward for us.*
>
> **-Adult Workforce Development Agency**

measurement has led them to caution, "*It takes leadership commitment, more than cash, to get started... Without a leader who commits to measurement as a top priority, articulates how it will improve agency impact, and identifies a staff person to lead the charge, organizations will not overcome the natural reluctance among their staff to embrace a daunting task such as performance measurement.*"[11] Indeed, the IMPACT RFP clearly set expectations that senior agency staff would attend convenings, collaborate with United Way on workplans, and consult with TA consultants. However, beyond the initial commitment, some interviewees felt that leadership commitment waned over the course of the initiative, signaling a need for ongoing cultivation of senior agency staff engagement.

2. Timing and Implementation of Needs Assessment Should be Clearly Communicated and Happen Early

United Way and SSF viewed the needs assessments as a valuable part of shaping the engagements with the individual consultants. However, in some cases there was a significant delay between when agencies were selected to participate in IMPACT and when they received a needs assessment. Absent the needs assessment, they couldn't really get going on their work with the consultants. But, as one interviewee said, "*We didn't know what the organizations knew and we had to find out before we could pair them with the right consultant.*" Upon reflection, United Way and SSF agreed that the needs assessment process slowed them down and thus had a few suggestions for how to keep the momentum going. First, signal in the RFP that there will be a needs assessment and communicate a timeline for when it will occur (ideally within the first two months of receiving the award). And secondly, rather than relying on a staff member to conduct the needs assessments, consider outsourcing them to a third party who can stay focused and on track. The additional value-add of an outside party doing the assessment is that it isn't a funder coming in and assessing the agency but rather a neutral third party.

3. Timeframe for Engagement with Consultants on Performance Management Should be at Least Two Years

While the timing of the needs assessment was a challenge, the overall timeframe of the initiative was also problematic in order to see real changes in performance management. As noted above, consultants observed that there was not enough time in the initiative to implement a full cycle of learning. Indeed, in "*Creating a Culture of Inquiry,*"[12] a report on a two-year performance measurement capacity building effort funded by The James Irvine Foundation, the evaluators found that after two years of engagement with consultants, agencies reported improved capacities on discreet aspects of performance measurement, much like the findings describe above. However, only one of the six agencies in the Irvine initiative was actually at the point of using information gleaned from its performance measurement to improve programming after two full years. By the time the IMPACT initiative was up and running, agencies had at most a year of targeted technical assistance — not enough time to effect deep performance measurement changes and see a full cycle of inquiry, for either their data work or their ToC work.

While on a much smaller scale, IMPACT greatly resembles a large performance measurement initiative, Propel*Next*, sponsored by The Edna McConnell Clark Foundation. Like IMPACT, it

> " *IMPACT 2.0 could try to leverage work that is happening in a single geographic area around aligned goals but is essentially parallel play. Agencies might all be working to support family stability and children's health/well-being but they don't share the same theory of change or action. So why not bring them together to figure that out?* "
>
> **-Consultant**

provides grantees access to expert coaching, group learning sessions and a peer learning community aimed toward enhancing and sharpening agency program models, implementing robust performance management systems and developing organizational cultures that facilitate and practice ongoing learning and assessment. However, unlike IMPACT, it is a three-year effort, and even then, its evaluators concluded that high-quality program design requires time and patience.[13]

4. Selection and Deployment of Consultants Should be Aimed at Ensuring Consistency and Alignment with Technical Assistance

Interviewees felt that the selection and deployment of consultants could be improved in

Photo credit: **Matt Tueten**

IMPACT 2.0. One area of possible improvement is in the number of consultants deployed to work with agencies. There are trade-offs between engaging with a large consulting pool so that no one consultant is stretched too thin, versus engaging a smaller group of consultants who have similar approaches to the work. In the IMPACT initiative, at least 16 consultants worked to support ToC and IT in the 16 agencies; some agencies worked with more than one consultant. Even though United Way provided the ToC consultants with a template, their engagement with and work product from, the agencies varied widely. IMPACT 2.0 could work with a smaller consultant pool, with each consultant working

with multiple agencies. This would provide greater consistency in the TA and provide opportunities for smaller cohort learning — consultants could help connect the agencies with whom they worked to share experiences and challenges to their performance measurement work.

On a related note, while some consultants were assigned to agencies based on prior partnerships together, others entered new relationships and, in some instances, agencies did not think it was a good match. Having more agency input in the consultant choice may help strengthen the work.

A second area for improvement was the variability in consultant participation at the convenings. Some consultants attended most convenings, others hardly at all. As will be discussed in the next section, consultant participation at the convenings could help better integrate the individual technical assistance supports with the peer learning opportunities.

A third area for improvement relates to the fact that most of the consultants said they would have liked to have opportunities to connect as a consultant team. Like many multi-site technical assistance efforts, TA can be siloed unless there is an intentional effort on the part of the funders to create a "learning community" for the consultants as well.

Finally, in IMPACT 2.0 United Way could consider outsourcing consultant management to ensure that it was someone's "day job" to promote consistency and learning among the consultants. This could be the same person/agency tasked with the needs assessment, as recommended above.

5. Convenings Should be Designed to be Integrated into Agency Work

Like the PropelNext initiative referenced above, IMPACT supported targeted technical assistance and fostered a learning community. As reported, agencies perceived the biggest benefit of IMPACT to come from the TA, but many also noted benefits from participation in the convenings. As the quote

to the right suggests, effective performance measurement initiatives likely need both.

Several recommendations were made regarding how to maximize the value of the convenings to agencies' work:

- Set the learning agenda from the outset so that agencies are clear about the purpose of the convenings;
- Greater cohesiveness among the agency cohort could help promote more "common ground" when agencies got together;
- Absent a cohort with completely similar characteristics, consider role-alike groups within the convenings so that agencies facing similar challenges can work with each other, exploring common tools, measures and practices;
- Be clear about who should attend and why and consider tailoring agency staff participation to convening topics;
- Better integrate the agencies' work with individual consultants into the convening agendas and require consultants to attend the convenings;
- Consider fewer convenings but require participation of the key IMPACT leads at each agency.

Funders also discussed weighing the balance of investing in individual supports versus group learning. While they did not land on the "right" proportion of investment, they, and the consultants, felt that individual technical assistance support should be larger than support for the convenings.

Final Summary

Results of this evaluation point to the critical need for non-profit capacity building efforts focused on performance measurement. Agencies, expert consultants and funders alike viewed IMPACT as a valuable endeavor that bears repeating and they had several recommendations for how to strengthen IMPACT 2.0. Chief among them are: be more intentional about the cohort selected to participate; give agencies enough time to practice a full cycle of inquiry; and use the agency convenings as a vehicle for complementing and strengthening the agencies' work with consultants. Indeed, these recommendations echo the results of other non-profit performance measurement capacity building efforts such as those of Edna McConnell Clark and The James Irvine Foundations. But the three core inputs of IMPACT — needs assessment, individual technical assistance, and peer learning — should remain central to any redesign for IMPACT 2.0.

Footnotes

1. Forti, M. and Yazbak, K. (2012). Building capacity to measure and manage performance. Boston, MA: The Bridgespan Group
2. ABCD and Bird Street did not participate in the evaluation.
3. At the suggestion of UNITED WAY the IT consultants were not interviewed for this evaluation, nor was the firm of Root Cause. This decision was made to streamline the data collection to focus on the consultants with the richest experiences with the agencies.
4. Of the 25 agencies invited to apply, seven chose not to apply and two did not meet the requirements of the RFP.
5. Child Trends is a Washington, D.C.-based non-profit research organization that focuses on improving the lives and prospects of children and their families.
6. Wagner, N. (2017). "Putting measurement to work" convenings: Lessons learned. Washington, DC: Child Trends.
7. Wagner, 2017.
8. Wagner, 2017.
9. Hernandez, G. and Visher, M. (2001). Creating a culture of inquiry: Changing methods and minds on the use of evaluation in nonprofit organizations. San Francisco, CA: The James Irvine Foundation.
10. Ibid.
11. Ford & Yazbak, 2012.
12. Hernandez & Visher, 2001.
13. Edna McConnell Clark Foundation. (2015). *Lessons from the field: PropelNext Initiative.* http://www.propelnext.org/what-were-learning/propelnext-lessons-from-the-field/

Appendix A

List of Interviewees for Evaluation

- **Agency informants**
  Kimberly Bartlett-Ra, Boston Debate League
  Vanessa Calderon-Rosado, Inquilinos Boricuas en Acción
  Josephine Cuzzi, New England Center for Arts and Technology
  Mark DaCruz, West End House
  Kory Eng, Quincy Community Action Programs, Inc
  Lisa Fortenberry, Boston Scholar Athletes
  Andrea Howard, West End House
  Daphne Griffin, Boston Scholar Athletes
  Carolyn Grimes, Future Chefs
  Mallory Jones, Friends of Youth Opportunity
  Spencer Klein, Asian American Civic Association
  Rafael Madina, Inquilinos Boricuas en Acción
  Matthew McCall, More than Words
  Joe McLaughlin, Boston Private Industry Council
  Anne Meyerson, YMCA Education and Training
  Joel Ramos, Inquilinos Boricuas en Acción
  Kristin Rhuda, West End House
  Ryan Rucker, BUILD Greater Boston

  Jorge Santana, BUILD Greater Boston
  Noah Schectman, More than Words
  Ayele Shakur, BUILD Greater Boston
  Neil Sullivan, Boston Private Industry Council
  William Watkins, Urban League of Eastern Massachusetts
  Freddie Velez, Friends of Youth Opportunity

- **Consultants**
  Ellen Bass, Black Ministerial Alliance of Greater Boston
  Julia Gittleman, Mendelsohn, Gittleman & Associates, LLC
  Liz O'Connor, Strategy Matters
  Carl Sussman, Sussman Associates, LLC
  Nicola Wagner-Rundell, Child Trends

- **State Street Foundation**
  Amanda Northrop

  Wayne Young

- **United Way Mass Bay/Merrimack Valley**
  Christine Araujo
  Karley Ausiello
  Ellen Dickenson

List of Agencies and Services

Agency	Focus for Individualized IMPACT Supports: Theory of Change, IT, Other	Consultant(s) Providing Individualized Support, Type, # hours	Primary focus of programming	Agency Mission and Area Targeted for IMPACT
Action for Boston Community Development (ABCD)	IT (Client Track)	Fulcimus (70)	Youth Workforce Development	ABCD's mission is to empower disadvantaged people by providing them with the tools to overcome poverty, live with dignity, and achieve their full potential. To fulfill this mission, ABCD uses a comprehensive approach that systematically addresses the range of barriers faced by households in poverty – from day-to-day crises to long-term needs for jobs and education. For the IMPACT Initiative, ABCD addressed challenges and identified issues related to data collection and outcome measurement at the Youth Services/Workforce Department level, rather than focusing in on one particular program.
Asian American Civic Association (AACA)	IT (ETO)	Sidekick Solutions (44)	Adult Workforce Development	The Asian American Civic Association provides limited English speaking and economically disadvantaged people with education, occupational training and social services enabling them to realize lasting economic self-sufficiency. AACA has served and advocated for the needs of immigrants and other economically disadvantaged people since 1967. Today AACA serves clients from over 80 countries. Focused on economic self-sufficiency and participation in American society, AACA provides a range of services, including English classes, social services, job training, college preparation and a post-graduate retention program.

Bird Street Community Center	IT (Orchard)	Cloud Construct (102)	Youth Education	The mission of Bird Street is to instill in our youth and young adults the intellectual, social, and leadership competencies to deal effectively with daily challenges, strive for academic success, and pursue employment opportunities.
				Bird Street Community Center meets the day-to-day needs for building strong minds, healthy bodies and outlets for creative expression and social interaction for families and children. Bird Street enables individuals across generations to engage in educational activities and life-long learning. Bird Street is a "second home" for our members, providing space for local events, community gatherings, and celebrations. Bird Street remains vibrant, flexible, and responsive to the changing needs of the children and families of the North Dorchester / Roxbury neighborhoods.
				For the IMPACT Initiative, BSCC focused on academic programming in their Homework Room, a quiet place or youth to complete their homework, receive help or tutoring, or conduct a job search.
Boston Debate League (BDL)	ToC IT	Julia Gittleman (25) Data Collaborative (85) 501 Partners (10) Chris Palmer	Youth Education	To integrate argumentation and competitive debate into Boston Public Schools to develop critical thinkers ready for college, career, and engagement with the world around them.
				The Boston Debate League's programming is unique among the city's after-school and other youth development programs in that it targets middle and high school students and blends competition and fun with rigorous academic work. While many programs aim only to keep teens safe and occupied in the afternoon, debate provides an engaging, educational opportunity that actively cultivates social and academic skills. The BDL presents debate in a variety of ways so as to reach a broad spectrum of students, from those already highly achieving to those who are off-track academically and at risk of dropping out.

Boston Private Industry Council (PIC)	IT (Custom)	Cityspan (30)	Youth Workforce Development	The Boston Private Industry Council (PIC) is a nonprofit organization that strengthens Boston's communities and its workforce by connecting youth and adults with education and employment opportunities that align with the needs of area employers. Our work is grounded in the belief that meaningful employment changes lives, lifts people out of poverty, and strengthens the local economy. The Boston Private Industry Council is both the city's Workforce Development Board and its school-to-career intermediary organization. The PIC brings together employers, educators, and workforce organizations, often by industry sector, to help guide the agenda for education and workforce preparation. For the IMPACT Initiative, PIC focused on their School to Career and Post-Secondary Success initiatives.
BUILD Greater Boston	ToC	Ellen Bass (104)	Youth Workforce Development	BUILD's mission is to use entrepreneurship to ignite the potential of youth from under-resourced communities and propel them to high school, college & career success. The BUILD Program is not vocational education. Rather, it's an in-school elective in 9th through 12th grade, taught by BUILD mentors and on-site teachers at partner public high schools. The program works like this: • Students learn the basics of entrepreneurship while improving academic skills • Students develop a business plan • Students secure seed capital through a pitch to a Venture Capitalist • Students run their own businesses • Students concentrate on going to college
Friends of Youth Opportunity (YOU)	ToC IT (ETO)	Root Cause (88) Treadwell (76)	Youth Workforce Development	The mission of YOU Boston is to empower and motivate young people to gain the educational, employment, and career advancement necessary to be successful in the workforce, in the community, and in their lives. YOU Boston provides a unique combination of intensive case management and career development services through their continuum. We leverage Boston's top resources to best serve the needs of each young person. YOU works with Boston's youth and young adults ages 14 to 24, specializing in serving young people from neighborhoods with the highest level of poverty and violence, and those reentering the community from incarceration. The majority are gang-involved with safety issues or have court involvement history.

Future Chefs (FC)	ToC IT (Salesforce)	Carl Sussman (104) 501 Partners (53)	Youth Workforce Development	FUTURE CHEFS prepares youth for quality early employment and post-secondary opportunities in the culinary field and supports them in developing a broad base of transferable skills as they transition into the working world.
				The three-phase school-to-career engagement relies on a systemic collaboration with food service employers, social service agencies, and educators to provide standards- based education, preparatory and work-based experiences, youth development, leadership opportunities and referral services. Our consistent, long-term program uniquely prepares and coaches urban teens to meet the demands and expectations of adult employment in any field.
				For the IMPACT Initiative, Future Chefs focused on their high school programming.
Inquilinos Boricuas en Acción (IBA)	IT (Salesforce)	501 Partners (80)	Youth Education	IBA – Inquilinos Boricuas en Acción empowers and engages individuals and families to improve their lives through high-quality affordable housing, education, and arts programs.
				For the IMPACT initiative, IBA targeted their college readiness and workforce development programs. This includes Basic High School Equivalency, ESL/BESL and Post Secondary Credentials.
More Than Words (MTW)	IT (ETO) ToC	? JFCS (11)	Youth Workforce Development	More Than Words empowers youth who are in foster care, court-involved, homeless or out of school to take charge of their lives by taking charge of a business.
				MTW believes that when system-involved youth are challenged with authentic and increasing responsibilities in a business setting, and are given high expectations and a culture of support, they can and will address personal barriers to success, create concrete action plans for their lives, and become contributing members of society.
New England Center for Arts & Technology (NE-CAT)	ToC IT (Salesforce)	Root Cause (88) 501 Partners (80)	Adult Workforce Development	NECAT is a career-directed educational non-profit serving resource-limited, chronically unemployed and under-employed adults and at-risk young adults in Boston. We offer targeted job training, support and employment services to prepare our students to secure and retain career-ladder jobs in the growing food services industry.
				Through inspirational and experiential learning environments, NECAT provides high-quality and industry-relevant job skills training for adults. NECAT guides students through a transformational process to UNLOCK their potential, SHAPE lives and IMPACT communities.
				For the IMPACT Initiative, NECAT focused on their culinary arts job training program.

Quincy Community Action Program (QCAP)	Other IT (Client Track)	Strategy Matters (88) Fulcimus (80)	Adult Workforce Development	The mission of QCAP is: Through public and private partnerships we endeavor to assist families and individuals in our communities to improve the quality of their lives by minimizing the effects of poverty, promoting self-sufficiency and advocating for social change. QCAP delivers multiple services that are designed to support people in crisis, as well as provide low-income households with a path for reaching economic self-sufficiency. For the IMPACT Initiative, QCAP focused on their Adult Basic Education and Financial Stability Center services.
Boston Scholar Athletes (SA)	ToC	Julia Gittleman (88)	Youth Education	The mission of Scholar Athletes is to support academic achievement through athletics. SA strives to enhance the scholar-athlete experience, provide regular instruction to the coaching staff, and improve academic performance and personal growth. These collaborative efforts build skills, confidence, shape character, and enhance opportunities for success. Programs include: Academic Coaching & Counseling, College Readiness, High School Intramural Sports, Academic & Athletic Recognition, and Athletics Capacity Building.
Urban League of Eastern Massachusetts (ULEM)	ToC IT (Apricot)	Ellen Bass (104) 501 Partners (40)	Adult Workforce Development	The mission of the Urban League of Eastern Massachusetts is to be a champion of civil rights dedicated to helping people improve their lives and to build stronger communities by providing local residents with education, job training, and placement at no cost. For nearly 100 years, ULEM's programs and services have given hope to program participants and made a lasting, positive impact in the community. Focusing on this overarching goal leads us to provide opportunities for every person that walks through our door to realize economic empowerment through basic- and mid-level skills trainings, certifications, internships, and job placements.

West End House Boys & Girls Club (WEH)	ToC	Julia Gittleman (88)	Youth Workforce Development	West End House is the largest youth development agency in the Allston-Brighton community providing high-impact programs that ensure that our young people are succeeding academically, exploring and mastering the arts, developing career readiness skills and adopting healthy lifestyles.
				Our innovative and responsive programming annually serves over 1,500 youth between the age of 7 and 20, with more than half of membership comprised of youth ages 13 and older. Youth come from nearly every Boston neighborhood – approximately 60% of youth reside in Allston-Brighton, and 40% live in other Boston neighborhoods, including Dorchester, Roxbury, and Mattapan.
				Their mission is to inspire and enable youth from all backgrounds to realize their full potential as productive, responsible and caring citizens.
				Programs focus on Academic & College Success, Fitness & Nutrition, Leadership & Life Skills, and Visual & Performing Arts.
Training Inc., YMCA Education & Training	IT (Apricot)	Sidekick Solutions (80)	Adult Workforce Development	Training Inc., a program of the YMCA of Boston, is an intensive 20-week, full-time (600 hours) computerized office skills training and employment program. Designed to replicate the expectations of a professional office environment, the training prepares participants with both the technical and job readiness skills to succeed.
				We provide intensive, hands-on, innovative technical training in a simulated business environment and engage lasting, deep commitment of major employers in Greater Boston. Our program is constantly reviewed and informed by industry partners, ensuring that participants are receiving the most relevant, hands-on training to gain career-building employment in the Greater Boston area.

United Way of Massachusetts Bay and Merrimack Valley harnesses the power of communities working together - individuals, businesses, nonprofits and government agencies - to create positive, lasting change for people in need. We focus on improving two foundations of better lives: Financial Opportunity and Educational Success. Our Financial Opportunity goals include ensuring that individuals and families have safe housing, healthy food, quality child care, a job that allows them to support themselves and their family, and access to financial tools and coaching to help them build a better future. Our Educational Success goals include ensuring children enter school ready to learn, develop critical social and academic skills and get the support they need to stay in school and graduate. United Way identifies the most pressing issues and targets resources to the areas of greatest need. By funding the most effective nonprofits and programs, measuring their progress and mobilizing volunteers, we ensure our donations deliver the greatest impact and real results in the community.

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