

# Communities Learning in Partnership Planning Phase Evaluation Report: Critical Lessons Learned and Catalyzing Factors for Success

Prepared for  
The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

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## Communities Learning in Partnership Introduction

*The overall goal of CLIP is to learn how community stakeholders working in a coordinated fashion can increase postsecondary completion rates more successfully than colleges, school districts, community leaders, employers, and other stakeholders implementing promising practices in isolation.*

### *Gates Postsecondary Success Strategy overview*

The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (Foundation) has set an ambitious goal for its Postsecondary Success (PS) Strategy – to double the numbers of low-income young adults who by age 26 earn a postsecondary credential with labor market value in the marketplace by 2025. To drive efforts toward this goal, the Foundation has organized its PS strategy into three grantmaking initiatives: Improve Postsecondary Performance, Empower Student Success, and Build Commitment.

The Foundation has made four key choices about where to focus its PS grantmaking initiatives, emphasizing: (1) a focus on community colleges, (2) efforts that push greater awareness of postsecondary completion rates and challenges, (3) increased investments in technology, and (4) the development of a new loss/momentum framework. This framework targets developing interventions at “loss points,” where students are most likely to drop off the postsecondary continuum, and improving “momentum” strategies that have the potential to strengthen and/or accelerate student progress.

### *CLIP investment strategy overview*

Communities Learning in Partnership (CLIP) is part of the Building Commitment portfolio and supports the Foundation’s overarching goal to effect broad-based change in students’ postsecondary success. Underpinning CLIP is the belief that impact requires more than investment in individual programs and student supports. Catalyzing large-scale shifts in the postsecondary outcomes of low-income young adults requires innovative, systemic approaches at the community level that address the need for critical policy and practice changes.

Through CLIP, in September 2009 seven communities received \$250,000, nine-month planning grants to develop a three-year implementation plan and foster a community-wide focus on postsecondary success, specifically among community colleges, K-12 school districts, and municipal leaders. In each community, core partners identified a specific agency to serve as the lead. The seven CLIP communities and lead agencies are listed below. Four of

#### **The Foundation’s Three PS Initiatives**

##### ***Improve Postsecondary Performance:***

- Accelerate large-scale, multiple-campus innovation and rigorous research
- Promote breakthrough technology-driven innovation
- Build new delivery models

##### ***Empower Student Success:***

- Influence student behavior
- Redesign aid programs

##### ***Build Commitment:***

- Increase awareness
- Advocate for a policy agenda
- Encourage the implementation of state and federal data systems
- Build state and community partnerships

#### **CLIP Investment Strategy in Brief**

**Total Investment:** \$17 million

**Planning Phase:** November 2009-July 2010

**Number of Planning Sites:** Seven

**Implementation Phase:** August 2010-July 2013

**Number of Implementation Sites:** Four

##### **Key Selection Criteria:**

- Capacity to succeed
- Commitment to shared learning
- Capacity for impact over time

**Intermediary/Technical Assistance Partner:**  
National League of Cities’ Institute for Youth, Education, and Families (NLCI)

**Evaluation Partner:** OMG Center for Collaborative Learning

these sites will receive implementation grants moving forward, although in some cases the lead agency may shift. The implementation grants will be awarded in September 2010 for a three-year term.

<i>City</i>	<i>Grantee</i>
Dayton, OH	Sinclair Community College
Jacksonville, FL	Florida State College at Jacksonville
Mesa, AZ	Mesa Community College
New York, NY	City University of New York (CUNY)
Phoenix, AZ	City of Phoenix
Riverside, CA	Riverside Community College District
San Francisco, CA	San Francisco Mayor's Interagency Council on Youth

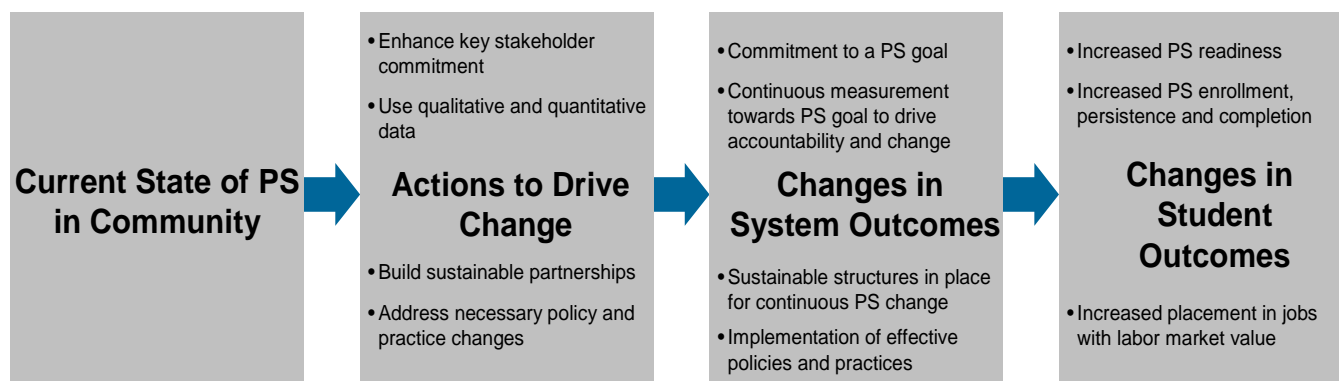
In addition to providing site-specific grants, the CLIP investment strategy includes technical assistance and learning support. The National League of Cities' Institute for Youth, Education, and Families (NLCI) is the intermediary and technical assistance partner and the OMG Center for Collaborative Learning (OMG) is the evaluation partner. The Foundation, NLCI, and OMG serve as the national CLIP leadership team.

### *The CLIP theory of change*

To guide sites in planning and implementation, the CLIP national partner team developed an initiative-level theory of change. The theory of change presents a roadmap for the duration of the initiative and beyond, and rests on the assumption that critical changes at the system level lead to changes in student outcomes, many of which may not manifest until after the conclusion of the grant period. See Figure 1:

*Multi-stakeholder CLIP partnerships will use data and leverage key stakeholder commitment to shift policies and practices that currently impede student postsecondary success. Effectively changing systemic barriers to postsecondary success will have more profound effects on student success than if any one institution or organization tried to move the completion needle on its own. Central to this change strategy is the development of a common postsecondary success goal that can help drive accountability, as well as focus policy and practice changes community-wide.*

**Figure 1: CLIP Theory of Change**



This report is organized around the CLIP system outcomes shown in the third box in Figure 1. The following table illustrates what these system outcomes might look like in practice; the types of activities sites might take on, the types of people they might engage, and the early results they might expect to see. The full CLIP theory of change is included in Appendix C.

<b>System outcome</b>	<b>Examples of activities sites might take on to work towards that system outcome</b>	<b>Examples of evidence we might see that would demonstrate progress toward the outcome</b>
Commitment to a PS goal  Abbreviated in this report as “Enhancing commitment”	-Working in partnership, set a community postsecondary completion goal that partners are willing to support and report on -Identify individuals in the community who can speak on behalf of CLIP and direct the attention of other community members towards the postsecondary completion goal	-Local higher education leaders, K-12 leaders, and municipal government leaders regularly speak about and prioritize postsecondary completion as a critical community issue -CLIP partners, including higher education institutions, municipal government, and school districts support CLIP through financial or in-kind resource contributions
Continuous measurement towards postsecondary goal to drive accountability and change  Abbreviated in this report as “Using data”	-Develop data sharing procedures among key partners such as higher education and K-12 representatives that enable the partnership to set a realistic and measurable completion goal -Identify an individual or group of individuals within the partnership to lead the data analysis work and share findings with the broader partnership	-CLIP partners can articulate the postsecondary completion goal they are working towards and can use data to explain why they selected that particular goal
Sustainable structures in place for continuous postsecondary change  Abbreviated in this report as “Building partnership”	-Identify, recruit, and engage appropriate partners for CLIP, such as non-profit leaders, community college presidents, mayors, superintendents, etc. who can provide leadership for CLIP -Jointly develop structures, protocols, and processes to guide partnership activities so that the partnership has a clear strategy for making decisions and measuring its progress	-The CLIP partnership includes representatives from a wide range of local institutions that touch the postsecondary pipeline; these partners can explain their roles and responsibilities within the partnership
Implementation of effective policies and practices  Abbreviated in this report as “Addressing policy and practice”	-Use data to identify gaps in local programs and support structures as well as opportunities to align existing programs and supports -Jointly identify critical policies (such as college enrollment priority systems) that could be changed or modified to support postsecondary completion; develop strategies to change these policies	-Policy, education, workforce, and youth development organizations coordinate support services and align resources -CLIP partners can identify examples of policy changes that they are attempting to address, and can explain how and why they are targeted that policy

### *Planning phase expectations*

The theory of change on the previous page describes changes expected over the course of the initiative. The CLIP national partners also developed a set of shared outcomes and indicators to define success for the 9-month planning period. Expected planning phase outcomes are listed below, followed by examples of indicators we would expect see (see Appendix B for more details on indicators).

#### *Enhancing commitment*

- Increased stakeholder awareness and ability to frame CLIP and its systems change and postsecondary success goals.
- Increased stakeholder buy-in for the CLIP work and verbal commitment of resources to the work.
- Increased partner and stakeholder knowledge of local and national postsecondary trends and ability to articulate how these impact their CLIP efforts.

#### *Using data*

- Increased partner use of data to inform decision making, the CLIP implementation plan, and future work.
- Increased partner ability to identify specific policies and practices that contribute to key trends in student data that the partnership is looking to address.

#### *Building partnership*

- Increased partnership capacity to take on CLIP planning and implementation.
- Increased partner willingness and capacity to embed CLIP-related activities within their organizational function.

#### *Addressing policy and practice*

- Increased partner knowledge about local: students' college-going and completion rates, existing supports across the pipeline, and policy-level barriers and opportunities.
- Increased use of local and national research to inform CLIP strategy development.
- Increased partner ability to articulate the community strategy to improve alignment and quality of PS policies and practices.

Anecdotally, we know that the seven planning sites entered this initiative with different capacities related to the CLIP theory of change. For example, one site might have started with a significant amount of existing data capacity, but with very little existing partnership infrastructure. Regardless of the starting point, for the purposes of this evaluation report, site success is defined by the extent to which individual sites made progress towards the CLIP planning phase outcomes and demonstrated evidence of associated indicators. In the absence of a baseline measure for individual sites (the evaluation team interfaced with the sites once the planning work was already underway), the analysis is based on stakeholders' reflections of progress made vis-à-vis the CLIP planning phase outcomes and indicators.

### *The evaluation approach in brief*

OMG used the initiative-level theory of change to frame the planning phase evaluation. Several overarching evaluation questions and the previously listed outcomes and indicators informed the data collection methodology:

- What contextual factors help to facilitate or impede the CLIP planning work? What contextual factors emerge as necessary for successful planning?
- How are unique opportunities leveraged in each of the CLIP communities, e.g., public leadership, political capital, educational and nonprofit programming, private sector leadership, and workforce needs?
- What kind of infrastructure and capacities do sites have, or do sites leverage, to take on the planning work?

OMG's evaluation was primarily qualitative and formative in nature. OMG staff participated in various cross-site CLIP activities and conducted site visits in each CLIP community after the planning phase ended. In addition, we conducted formal interviews and had regular conversations with Foundation and NLCI staff. A summary of our evaluation methodology is presented in Appendix A.

### *The CLIP planning phase in practice*

CLIP sites varied in how they took on postsecondary system change, focusing on different areas of the theory of change first, depending on their pre-existing capacity or comfort level with, for example, data collection or partnership development. There were, however, some common activities that all sites engaged in during the planning phase. During early planning, all sites identified and engaged those that they considered to be the “right” partners for the work. Early partnership meetings focused on trust building, and clarifying and understanding the CLIP agenda. In most cases, the development of the local theory of change was the first partnership-level activity. Most sites also developed protocols to guide their partnership work, setting ground rules for meetings and developing protocols for decision making. Sites also engaged in data work, including identifying existing data sources, developing data sharing agreements across partners, merging and analyzing data, and discussing data findings and their implications for CLIP work and goals. Some sites also began to think about how to engage the broader community in advancing the CLIP agenda.

NLCI served as both the CLIP intermediary and the technical assistance provider. In its role as intermediary, NLCI managed the day-to-day operations of the grants, served as the point of contact for sites' questions related to CLIP, and provided continuous feedback to the Gates CLIP program officer about the progress of the grant. As technical assistance providers, the NLCI team provided one-on-one support to each of the sites during site visits and regularly scheduled monthly calls coaching partners through the planning process, reviewing and providing feedback on grant deliverables, and identifying site-specific needs and directing additional resources (including consultants and research) on an as-needed basis. NLCI also promoted cross-site learning through two cross-site meetings, an online learning community, and multiple cross-site conference calls.

As the evaluation partner, OMG developed a planning phase evaluation plan that was shared both with national partners and with CLIP sites. OMG also played an active role in developing tools used throughout the planning phase (for example, the initiative-wide theory of change and the planning phase outcomes and indicators). We participated in and provided assistance to sites as needed during the site theory of change process. Finally, OMG conducted numerous evaluation activities, including site visits, telephone interviews, and meeting observations, and provided feedback to partners and sites through a series of memos, site snapshots, and this final report. A full description of our methodology is included in Appendix A.

### *Summary progress during the planning phase and opportunities for additional focus*

During the nine-month planning phase, the seven CLIP sites demonstrated substantive progress across the four areas identified in the theory of change. In addition, OMG's evaluation identified key areas for additional focus as CLIP moves into the implementation phase. These key areas of progress and opportunities for additional focus are detailed below and are organized by four major system outcomes.

#### *Enhancing commitment*

- The planning process spurred and/or pushed forward the development of a common, localized postsecondary success vision in CLIP communities. CLIP partners developed and articulated not only a vision for CLIP, but also how this vision fit with local community priorities and their own organizational goals, such as economic development or social justice.
- While key partner representatives were at the table during the planning phase, commitment to this effort needs to extend much deeper into partner institutions and communities. With a few noted exceptions, those professionals who have the most influence over how policy and practice changes are taken up (e.g., principals, teachers, counselors, community college faculty, and nonprofit providers) had relatively little involvement in the CLIP planning phase.

#### *Using data*

- The early data emphasis of CLIP was clear and provided sites with the push needed to move data relationships to the next level. Although different sites started in different places in terms of pre-existing data-sharing activities, all made progress over the nine-month period in building data capacity and using data to explore new questions. At the end of the planning phase, all seven sites were able to develop a local postsecondary completion goal with some level of supporting data.
- Sites struggled to use qualitative data effectively during the planning process. Although some sites attempted to develop and integrate qualitative data collection efforts, only one site was able to develop a process that effectively informed the planning process and also succeeded in providing meaningful engagement of a broad range of stakeholders, including students.

#### *Building partnerships*

- CLIP helped provide the credibility to bring a diverse set of players to the table and the specific resources to support the development of new or existing postsecondary success partnerships. CLIP helped to secure the support and involvement of respected community leaders early on, which in many cases was a crucial first step for demonstrating the seriousness of the effort. Furthermore, partners had the resources to include partnership managers, data analysts, neutral facilitators, and community experts, among others. These factors were critical in developing strong partnership processes and structures, and beginning to remove silos from postsecondary success efforts.
- While partners had a strong sense of the overall CLIP vision and the planning process, they had a much more difficult time identifying specific roles and responsibilities moving forward into implementation efforts. At this stage, sites placed little emphasis on how efforts would transition from the planning phase into implementation. The intensity of the planning phase and the natural pause in the work while waiting for grant decisions may have played a role in this.



### *Addressing policy and practice changes*

- The planning phase provided the foundation for future policy and practice change by supporting more robust data sharing and partnership development, and by increasing knowledge of postsecondary success as a community issue. The development of partner buy-in and the use of data were important in laying the groundwork for rigorous and comprehensive decision making about policies and practices moving forward.
- While some sites began to identify specific policies and practices to shift moving forward, most sites used the planning phase to gain a deeper understanding of the postsecondary policy and practice landscape *prior* to being able to identify shared policy and practice change plans. To some extent, the theory of change may have pushed some sites into identifying specific policies and practices before they were ready to do so. In other cases, sites recognized that, except for a few policies or practices that may have risen to the top, the implementation period would provide the space and time needed to identify and take on specific changes.

### *Audience and intent for this report*

This report is presented to the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, but the Foundation and OMG hope that the lessons and information herein will inform the work of many communities who are working to support post-secondary success. The report should provide readers a sense of the work that happened during the planning phase, the lessons that can be drawn from that work and applied to other communities, and an overview of the factors that were particularly key in galvanizing progress. This report is the first in a series of products that OMG will develop as part of the 4 year evaluation of the Gates community partnership portfolio.

## Critical Lessons Learned from the CLIP Planning Phase

Overview: This report summarizes the most critical lessons that stakeholders involved in the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation's Communities Learning in Partnership (CLIP) initiative learned during the planning phase. The lessons are organized according to the CLIP theory of change action areas, beginning with some reflection on the planning process. As much as possible, we have included practical tools, resources, and tactics that helped sites move the work forward. Based on the lessons learned, the section culminates with a table of ten factors that helped catalyze sites' progress during the planning phase.

Although the lessons learned correspond with the areas of the theory of change, there are certain lessons that may be more critical or relevant to the field in OMG's assessment. These lessons include:

- *Partnership development, data collection and analysis, and commitment building are all precursors to changing policy and practice.*
- *The process of collecting, analyzing, and presenting data (in addition to the data itself) is an effective commitment-building strategy.*
- *Positioning partnerships to use data is not as difficult as one might expect; the process is onerous but the results are tangible.*

### Lessons learned about the planning process

*Create and nurture a sense of objectivity to engage partners and increase the transparency of the process.*

- ➔ House the work at an organization that has the potential to be perceived as a neutral leader.
- ➔ Create structures that support and reinforce objectivity and transparency.
- ➔ Clearly communicate to all stakeholders the steps you are taking to ensure objectivity and transparency.

In theory, partnership-driven change efforts should engage partners equally, with shared responsibilities and decision-making power. In reality, one or more partners usually have more influence over the process than others. Four CLIP communities were able to successfully mitigate this imbalance during the planning phase by selecting lead agencies that were non-threatening to other stakeholders. For example, in one site interviewees stated that the community college could function as a neutral leader because it was perceived as a valuable community resource that did not compete with other local higher education institutions for students. In another site, interviewees indicated that the lead agency, the mayor's office, was removed from the historical jockeying between the higher education and K-12 partners. Three communities successfully created structures that increased the objectivity and transparency of the partnership by appointing co-facilitators from different organizations (i.e., a community college and school district leader) to lead committee work, or by identifying a cross-sector core team that included municipal, community college, district, and nonprofit leaders to vet partner questions and concerns.

*By customizing your approach to a common framework, you are more likely to stay on track and build local buy-in.*

- ➔ Develop a shared systems-change framework to serve as a road map and create a common language for your work.

- ➔ Customize your framework to reflect planning strategies and structures that fit your local context.
- ➔ Recognize the areas where your community has existing assets or infrastructure, and modify your approach to build on these assets rather than “re-create the wheel.”

Although the theory of change was new to many CLIP communities, and despite their initial struggle to understand it, sites benefited from the structure that the theory of change framework provided (particularly the four system outcomes). Some sites were more predisposed to the rather abstract work of creating a theory of change, while others were more challenged to make the process accessible and applicable to their work. Ultimately, each of the sites became “fluent” in the major elements of their theory of change; one site made the document more user-friendly by hiring an artist to create an artistic rendering of its own local theory of change.

The initiative-wide theory of change framework ensured that each element of the change strategy was addressed in some way, and it provided a natural break down for committee work in three sites. However, the communities’ ability to customize their approach to fit the local context and to build on existing work was critical during the planning process. Some examples of customization include:

- Shifting the CLIP planning process from a city to a county scope; and
- Narrowing the target population to a specific subset of the Foundation-defined target population in response to a community need identified through data; for example, one community used data to determine that their college enrollment numbers were quite strong, so focusing their CLIP work on low-income students in either end of that pipeline (students in 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade and students who are already attending college) made more sense.

*Create a clear distinction between planning and implementation, and articulate how you will transition from one phase to another.*

- ➔ Impose a deadline when the partnership will stop planning and start doing
- ➔ Consider what partnership structures and processes make sense for planning and how they might evolve during implementation

Evidence suggests that the deadlines imposed by the CLIP planning phase created incentive for sites to move the work forward at a rapid pace. Partners were aware that they would need to complete an implementation plan by June 2010 and begin implementing their plan in August. This timeline successfully galvanized the work and allowed a natural break between the two phases of the work. However, very few of the CLIP sites considered how their partnership structures, processes, and decision-making channels would change from planning to implementation. We cannot yet report on the extent to which this impacted their ability to implement their plans in a timely way; however, evidence suggests that clarifying how structures and processes will change during implementation gives stakeholders a clear sense of the next steps for the work and how they will contribute.

## Lessons learned about enhancing commitment

*Securing executive-level commitment for a hot topic like postsecondary success is relatively easy; identifying ways to deepen and extend that commitment is more difficult.*

- ➔ Use the presence of a well-known funder and intermediary as a carrot to bring leaders to the table and to keep CLIP on leaders’ priority lists.

- ➔ Use targeted messaging to engage high-level leadership as vested partners (mayors, college chancellors, and superintendents)
- ➔ Develop strategies that will help leaders build commitment and implement change in their own institutions.
- ➔ Create structures, MOUs, or staffing arrangements that ensure continued commitment from executive-level leaders in the long term.

The well-known names of the Gates Foundation and the National League of Cities, along with the national attention on postsecondary issues, made CLIP an “easy sell” to high-level leaders in all seven communities. Beyond dollars, CLIP also provided communities with a timeline and an accountability structure to move beyond verbal buy-in to action. Several sites were particularly successful in moving the work by helping leaders understand how CLIP aligned with their own institutional priorities. For example, one community had recently completed a municipal strategic plan that included education and workforce elements. By aligning the messaging and language of CLIP with the strategic plan, the mayor’s existing commitment immediately multiplied. CLIP communities used or intend to use a variety of tools to build and sustain stakeholder commitment, including:

- Adding postsecondary success metrics to institutional scorecards;
- Using postsecondary success metrics to stage a public call to action;
- Embedding the postsecondary effort within existing institutional and city-level initiatives;
- Using qualitative data to “tell the stories” of the low-income young adults and those working to support their postsecondary success; and
- Developing a CLIP brand.

*The process of collecting, analyzing, and presenting data (in addition to the data itself) is an effective commitment-building strategy.*

- ➔ Use data to highlight a problem, identify a goal, or articulate a strategy.
- ➔ Localize your problem, goal, and/or strategy so that it resonates with stakeholders.
- ➔ Allocate a significant amount of time for problem/goal/strategy definition and engage all partners in the process.

Communities used the process of collecting and using data to build commitment for CLIP. Five communities created pipeline graphics to elevate a problem by depicting the loss points of low-income students in their communities. In all five communities, the process and challenges associated with collecting the pipeline data – in addition to the graphic itself – reinforced stakeholder commitment to improve and understand postsecondary outcomes. Localizing the Foundation goal of “doubling the numbers” required many hours of targeted data analyses, consensus building, and internal advocacy within institutions. As a result, each CLIP site has a local postsecondary success goal that can be used to galvanize community support *and* the process of engaging partners in creating the goal has deepened their commitment.

## Lessons learned about using data

*Positioning partnerships to use data is not as difficult as one might expect; the process is onerous but the results are tangible.*

- ➔ Empower researchers to ask and answer hard questions.
- ➔ Develop common definitions and metrics so partners have a shared vocabulary.

- ➔ Consider developing a common data reporting framework that can be used publicly to provide evidence of your success.
- ➔ Put parameters on your data collection and analysis by articulating your key research questions.

All CLIP sites identified data as a key catalyzing factor during the planning phase. While all sites spent significant time on data-related activities to inform the planning phase, across the board there was a sense of great accomplishment once data findings were shareable. The stages of the CLIP data collection and analysis process are presented in table 1 below:

**Table 1: CLIP Data Steps**

<b>Development of Data Processes</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Development of data-sharing agreements</li> <li>▪ Development of data warehouses, or joint data systems, for cross-institutional data collection</li> <li>▪ Development of data roles and responsibilities</li> </ul>
<b>Exploration of Data: Collection and Analysis of Data</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Joint discussions about common definitions of quantitative data variables</li> <li>▪ Development of qualitative data collection strategies (e.g. identifying purpose of data collection, methods, and participants)</li> <li>▪ Joint selection and negotiation of metrics</li> <li>▪ Data analysis</li> </ul>
<b>Exploration of Data: Sharing and Collective Decision-Making</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Presentations by data analyzers</li> <li>▪ Facilitated discussions about data results</li> <li>▪ Sharing of data findings internally among partner organizations</li> </ul>

Sites took different approaches to each of these stages of data collection and analysis. Three sites invested a significant portion of the planning period to build a set of common metrics and definitions to report their progress during implementation. Another site developed common terms to describe students' curriculum rigor: pre-core, core, and core-plus, and used these curricular levels to conduct more detailed data analysis. While these definitional efforts seemed taxing to partners, the results provided a strong foundation for further analysis. In several cases, CLIP was embedded into a broader preexisting research agenda, allowing more time to be spent on discussions and data sharing.

Sites also focused on different sources of data, which varied depending on the sources available in each state or locality, and on the site's area of focus. Some examples of the types of data sources that CLIP sites relied on include local school district graduation data, local community college enrollment and completion data, American Community Survey educational attainment data, and National Student Clearinghouse data. While sites did not all present or use data from these various sources during the planning phase, most clarified what role each of the relevant data sources would play moving into implementation.

*Trust is vital for partners to successfully share and use data. Create structures to support and reinforce this trust.*

- ➔ Define data-sharing ground rules that support transparency.
- ➔ Identify and engage trusted researchers to help set your research agenda, collect data, and conduct analysis.

- ➔ Navigate sensitivity about data by giving special consideration to who presents the data and how they do it.

Given the sensitive nature of student outcome data, the level of trust among partners was a direct influence on the progress sites made in using data. To build trust, some sites created ground rules for data sharing. For example, in one site, if a partner was unable to share specific data, they had to explain why the information was not shareable. Another site, which did not create ground rules partly because partners felt that they already knew one another, later regretted this omission as issues of trust slowed their data processes. Yet another site developed a data-sharing process that allowed each institution to review, vet, and approve the presented data prior to cross-institutional rollout. Sites took particular care in selecting researchers to conduct the data analysis and presentation, taking into consideration both researchers' capacity and ability to remain neutral in the analysis. Individuals performing the data analysis and presentation came from a variety of institutions, including:

- Workforce;
- Community college;
- State university;
- Research consortium;
- University research center;
- Mayor's office; and
- Cross-sector team.

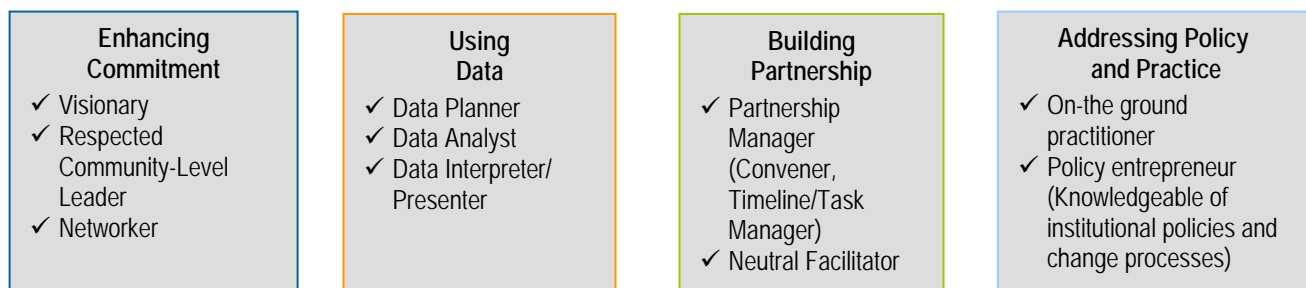
## Lessons learned about building partnership

*Partnership building requires a wide range of skills and functions; identify which partners are most equipped to take charge of which functions.*

- ➔ Clearly articulate individual partner roles in the partnership-building process.
- ➔ Engage both “visionaries” and “doers” in the process in appropriate ways.
- ➔ Identify capacity gaps and fill these with consultants as appropriate; make sure the consultant's role is well defined.

CLIP is predicated on the assumption that partnerships are effective vehicles to drive change. Each of the communities took a slightly different approach to partnership building. However, a handful of roles – whether fulfilled by one individual or a set of individuals – proved critical to the early planning work:

**Figure 1: Critical CLIP Roles**



The enhancing commitment and building partnership roles are particularly nuanced. Both roles are critical, yet evidence suggests that if the roles are not appropriately assigned, the partnership suffers.

For example, in one community a particularly visionary leader was tasked with convening partners, managing partnership operations, etc. As a result, partnership operations were not as effective as they might have been otherwise. Conversely, in another community a strong team of managers lacked the direction that a visionary leader might have provided and the partnership struggled to find cohesion.

In addition, core partners played different roles across the seven sites. Table 2 below provides an overview of the roles of various partners during the CLIP planning process:

Site	Mayor's Office	Community College	School District	Business Leaders	Work-force	Other Colleges	Local Philanthropy	CBOs
1	L	⊙	⊙		✓	✓	✓	▶
2	⊙	L	⊙	▶	▶	✓		✓
3	L	⊙	⊙		▶	▶	✓	
4	⊙	L	▶		✓		✓	✓
5	⊙	L	▶	✓	▶	✓	✓	
6	⊙	L	⊙		✓	✓		✓
7	⊙	L	⊙					▶

#### Key Player Roles:

- L** Lead agency: the planning phase was housed at this organization
- ⊙ Core partner: representatives from this organization made the work happen
- ▶ Advisory partner: leaders from this organization participated in decision-making processes
- ✓ Contributing organization: representatives from this organization attended meetings

Six of the seven CLIP sites hired a CLIP consultant or staff person. These individuals functioned very differently across the sites, but in all cases they were critical to advancing the planning work and meeting the tight grant timeline. For example, in two sites they fulfilled strictly administrative functions, providing facilitation support, synthesizing meeting minutes, and scheduling partner meetings. In four sites they provided deeper support, conducting data analysis, helping to set research agendas, conducting needs assessments, etc. In the remaining site, a team of consultants was hired, and the two lead consultants acted as primary facilitators and operations managers while the others performed background research and other tasks to support the two leads.

Emerging evidence suggests that consultants are best positioned to advance the work when they have pre-existing knowledge, connections, and history in the community. Individuals who previously held leadership positions within local education organizations or other civic institutions tend to possess an understanding of past reform efforts and community assets and challenges that enables them to facilitate difficult conversations effectively and translate across stakeholder groups.

*Before jumping into the task at hand, significant partnership-building groundwork must be done.*

- ➔ Agree on partnership norms, communication channels, and other operational details, perhaps most importantly how decisions will be made.
- ➔ Build a common threshold of understanding about the core sectors in the partnership.



- ➔ Develop a shared perspective and awareness of past work that has been done in the community in support of college access and success or workforce development.

When undertaking deep partnership activities like those required in CLIP, steps need to be taken at the onset to ensure that a stable foundation exists. Key stakeholders should:

- Understand the institutional contexts and value systems within which each operates;
- Ensure trust between partners even when there are preexisting relationships;
- Get clear about the goals and parameters of the work ahead; and
- Set and agree to ground rules (who will set agendas and how, how will differences of opinion be addressed, and how can partners introduce new topics).

In one site in particular, planning phase progress was primarily attributed to the partnership management structure and ground rules. Well-attended, standing meetings every other week helped build deep understanding and commitment among partners. While many of the partners have known one another for many years, some were relative newcomers. Regardless, the same rules applied: processes and decisions were transparent, professional egos and institutional agendas were checked at the door, and partners had opportunities to make substantive contributions to

meetings and plans. As a result, partners felt that their time commitment to this work was both valued and valuable. In another site, which did *not* establish partnership management structures processes up front, partners dealt with trust issues and a lack of shared understanding about one another's institutions throughout the planning phase, essentially learning this lesson backward.

***Partnership to-do list before work begins***

- Set and vet ground rules
- Conduct trust-building conversations
- Develop a shared understanding of community history in PS
- Share information about your institutional policies and practices
- Learn about other partners' institutional policies and practices

In particular, sites should develop clear parameters about how and by whom decisions are made. Given the somewhat emergent nature of many of the CLIP partnerships, some of the more peripheral partners and other stakeholders were not privy to decision making and were unclear on how it happened. This resulted in confusion about what decisions had actually been made, and in many cases tempered support for these decisions.

Time spent developing an understanding across institutions of how and why they each operate the way they do was invaluable to the partnership. For example, not everyone is familiar with the nuances of developmental education, financial aid, or testing requirements at the K-12 level. Upon reflection three of the seven sites noted that they would have benefited from more discussion about the programs and policies that currently exist at partner institutions.

***A successful partnership structure should have shared accountability and diverse partners without being unwieldy.***

- ➔ Create multi-layered leadership with multiple institutions at each level, particularly the core partners (community college, municipal government, and K-12).
- ➔ Be cautious and strategic about how and when you engage the broader community.



Partnership development is a bit of a balancing act; the partnership must be nimble yet authoritative; inclusive but effective. By designing the partnership structure with a shared leadership model, early evidence suggests that shared responsibility will result. For example, in one site committee co-chairs from two different institutions had a shared understanding of planning phase expectations and were able to hold each other accountable.

The core partnership also needs to consider how and when to engage additional stakeholders to achieve this balancing act. While most sites recognized the importance of engaging a broader range of community members, they were unsure how and when to do it. One site made the decision early on to engage a wide variety of partners and stakeholders, and soon realized that their broad engagement strategy slowed the pace of progress. Similarly, another site reported that the broad engagement strategy it used early on might have limited its ability to go deep among the core partners. A smaller group of stakeholders in the beginning (from the three core partners and a few other key community groups) may have helped to focus the work while still leaving open the opportunity for expanding the partnership when ready.

## Lessons learned about addressing policy and practice change

*Partnership development, data collection and analysis, and commitment building are all precursors to changing policy and practice.*

- ➔ Set realistic expectations and timelines; systems-change initiatives require significant investments of time and resources on the front end.
- ➔ Create a workplan from the beginning that accounts for this initial “start-up” work and seamlessly shifts from start-up to decision-making and priority-setting.

The CLIP planning phase timeline was short resulting in both benefits and drawbacks: it incentivized partners to get to work right away, but it also limited deep conversations. Two sites provided examples of institutional policies they had changed during the nine-month planning phase, and one site was able to identify specific policies to address moving forward. The lesson here is that the start-up of an initiative like CLIP requires significant time and effort in building the partnership, commitment, and data systems needed to advance the work. The planning phase is also a good time to conduct a thorough postsecondary policy and practice audit as a precursor to having partners identify concrete policies and practices that need to shift.

*Past efforts to build programs or implement policies in parallel fields (such as college access or high school dropout prevention) can serve as a guiding light or a cautionary tale about how to best influence policies and practices related to postsecondary success.*

- ➔ Conduct a scan of your community to identify recent policy and practice efforts that touch postsecondary success.
- ➔ As a partnership, reflect on how these efforts can inform the CLIP approach to policy and practice change.

As previously noted, many of these communities had postsecondary initiatives already underway, and all of them had some existing college access and success infrastructure. Two sites in particular were strategic in leveraging and learning from past investments. In one community, the CLIP partnership decided to expand a college access program that had high participation and had generated cross-sector

conversations about college access in the community. Previously, the program focus was primarily on increasing college knowledge among students and families, so the partnership repositioned the program to take on a more systemic perspective. In another community, the CLIP partnership used data from a past intervention – which had an impact but was not successfully sustained – to determine what additional supports would be necessary to make CLIP sustainable.

## Factors Catalyzing the CLIP Planning Phase

Over the course of the planning phase, certain factors began to emerge that helped catalyze sites' progress. The table below describes ten catalytic factors, with examples to illustrate how the factors took shape across sites. Since these factors facilitated the CLIP planning work at select sites, it is our assessment that these may be useful to communities that are considering taking on partnership-driven postsecondary systems-change efforts similar to CLIP. Building from the experiences of the CLIP sites, the *Considerations for adaptation* column presents brief checklists of actions that communities ought to consider prior to taking on this kind of work. The final column, *Associated planning phase outcomes*, identifies the expected outcomes that each factor helped catalyze.

Factor	Description	Example	Considerations for adaptation	Associated planning phase outcomes
Embedding CLIP within existing systemic efforts	The launch of CLIP coincides with an unprecedented national focus on postsecondary completion and workforce development issues, resulting in many local CLIP-related efforts already underway. Sites that quickly capitalized on the supportive environment and began to embed the planning work into preexisting related initiatives moved the work forward most aggressively during the planning phase. In some cases, CLIP provided an umbrella under which existing, duplicative efforts could be streamlined. In other instances, CLIP helped broaden existing efforts by introducing new partners or agenda items.	In one of the CLIP communities, there was a well-established partnership between the community college system and school district, and CLIP was used to sharpen and accelerate the existing work. It also broadened the agenda by engaging community-based organizations and other city agencies. In another site, CLIP was embedded within the city's economic development strategic plan; in effect <i>becoming</i> the implementation strategy for two of the city's economic development goals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take stock of existing initiatives and efforts (at the city and institutional levels)</li> <li>• Identify which existing efforts support your postsecondary policy and practice change agenda</li> <li>• Embed your work within existing efforts, or use it to coordinate disjointed initiatives</li> </ul>	<p><b><i>Planning</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased partner ability to identify and leverage CLIP-related opportunities in its community.</li> </ul> <p><b><i>Building partnership</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased partner capacity to take on the planning work and implement the proposed plan.</li> <li>• Increased partner willingness and capacity to embed CLIP-related activities within its organizational function.</li> </ul> <p><b><i>Enhancing commitment</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased stakeholder buy-in for the CLIP work and verbal commitment of resources to support the work.</li> </ul>

Factor	Description	Example	Considerations for adaptation	Associated planning phase outcomes
Engaged local drivers of change across the system	Different locales have different individuals that can help drive a change agenda. While CLIP positions the change strategy within the mayor's office and/or community college president's office and evidence to date suggests that this is a promising strategy, sites used their local knowledge to identify <i>additional</i> trusted champions with a history of civic leadership to support the CLIP agenda. Diversifying the pool of local change leaders increased the credibility and urgency of the CLIP work. It also allowed CLIP partners to tap into very diverse, and in some cases atypical (meaning non-educational), networks of community members that, hopefully in the future, can be mobilized to support implementation. As many individuals involved in this work noted, implementing a PS agenda requires moving the conversations beyond the educational community.	In addition to strong mayoral leadership in one CLIP site, the Chamber of Commerce President and a local businessperson and State Workforce Investment Board member are championing the CLIP agenda. Both see CLIP as a regional competitiveness strategy. Another community engaged the director of community partnerships from a local four-year institution because of his civic leadership and deep educational experience. Yet another community has developed a connection with an educational advocacy organization, which had a historically adversarial relationship with city and school district leadership, recognizing the critical public will-building role that this organization played in past reform efforts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In addition to mayors and educational leaders, identify the <i>unusual</i> suspects – civic leaders, activists, workforce leaders, community organizers – with a history of involvement in community change efforts</li> <li>• Engage these leaders as spokespersons or committee leaders early on to build community buy-in and credibility</li> </ul>	<p><b>Planning</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased partner ability to identify and leverage CLIP-related opportunities in its community.</li> </ul> <p><b>Enhancing commitment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased stakeholder buy-in for the CLIP work and verbal commitment of resources to support the work.</li> <li>• Increased stakeholder awareness and ability to frame the CLIP initiative and its systems change and postsecondary success goals.</li> </ul>

Factor	Description	Example	Considerations for adaptation	Associated planning phase outcomes
Customized and localized messaging	Messaging and public will-building is a critical element of the CLIP initiative. While the theory of change provided some common messaging points across sites, a handful of sites customized how they talked about the CLIP initiative to fit their communities and ensure that the work resonated with local needs and engaged partners more rapidly.	Two communities with a history of social justice movements, for example, described the CLIP effort as a moral and social justice imperative to strengthen opportunities for low-income young adults. Three other communities have framed CLIP not as an educational agenda but as an economic competitiveness imperative, in one instance using per capita income levels to support the argument.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify your target audiences (general public, civic leaders, business, etc.)</li> <li>Know what issues are most important (and to whom) in your community</li> <li>Consider aligning your messaging with the most salient public policy issues in your community</li> </ul>	<p><b>Planning</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased partner ability to identify and leverage CLIP-related opportunities in its community.</li> </ul> <p><b>Enhancing commitment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased stakeholder awareness and ability to frame the CLIP initiative and its systems change and postsecondary success goals.</li> </ul>
“Doers” and “visionaries” in multi-layered partnerships	While the CLIP partnership models vary in size and structure across the seven sites, the sites that had the most success in moving the partnership work forward organized multi-level partnerships, with two types of people represented at each level: (1) those who had the capacity to <i>do</i> the work, and (2) those who could advance the long-term systems-change <i>vision</i> and its linkages to city-level or institutional goals. In some cases these were the same individuals, but more frequently sites engaged	One of the CLIP sites developed a very complex partnership structure that regularly engaged over 50 people in the planning process. Such a large group could easily lose sight of the big picture, <i>or</i> talk theory with little practice and follow-through. A co-leadership structure (one community college and one school district representative) with clear reporting lines across committees and direct links to decision-makers helped avoid these potential partnership pitfalls. The carefully selected	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Once key partners have been identified, define very specific roles and responsibilities</li> <li>Weigh partner capacity (time, decision-making authority, influence) in matching partner roles</li> <li>Know who your “doers” and “visionaries” are, engage them equally, and don’t confuse their roles</li> </ul>	<p><b>Building partnership</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased partnership capacity to take on CLIP planning and implementation.</li> </ul>

Factor	Description	Example	Considerations for adaptation	Associated planning phase outcomes
	different partners to play the role of “doers” and “visionaries.” The more successful sites were clear internally about who played which role within the partnership, and ensured that both “doers” and “visionaries” had the appropriate levels of decision-making authority within the partnership <i>and</i> their respective organizations.	co-leadership structure ensured that committees benefited from both “doer” and “visionary” leadership. In this case, there was also a team of four (mayor’s office, community college, school district, and a community-based organization) that served as “air traffic controllers” to make sure that at all times decisions and discussions were coordinated, productive, and results-oriented.		
Structured data processes	Across all seven sites the process of compiling, analyzing, and sharing postsecondary success data was cited as a critical catalyzing factor during the planning phase. Even in cases where sites had difficulty accessing data, or arrived at their analysis late during the planning phase, the <i>process</i> of arranging data sharing, ironing out definitional and confidentiality issues, and structuring the analysis of the data allowed partners to “cut their partnership-building teeth” on a very concrete	Depending on the size of the city, familiarity among partners, levels of risk-taking, trust, and many other contextual factors, data sharing happened very differently across sites. Some sites used third-party, neutral researchers to conduct the analysis and present the data, others shared the responsibility among the community college and school district systems. In one site, the school district and the community college system ran the same analysis separately and then compared their	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take stock of existing data collection and sharing efforts and consider how to leverage existing systems</li> <li>• Create data management, analysis, and sharing protocols in advance of the work; vet these with all partners</li> <li>• Address definitional issues; use these conversations as a precursor to more</li> </ul>	<p><b><i>Changing policy and practice</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased partner and stakeholder knowledge of local and national postsecondary trends and ability to articulate how these impact their CLIP efforts.</li> <li>• Increased partner knowledge about local: (1) students’ college-going and completion rates, (2) existing supports across the pipeline, and (3) policy-level barriers and opportunities.</li> </ul>

Factor	Description	Example	Considerations for adaptation	Associated planning phase outcomes
	aspect of the work.	findings, using the differences in their findings to frame ongoing conversations. Regardless of the actual strategy, several critical elements were common across the more successful sites: unflappable commitment to confidentiality; sensitivity to sharing of findings and their implications for partners; structured and agreed upon sharing, analysis, and dissemination processes; and opportunity for iterative discussions about the findings.	<p>complex conversations about data findings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow time to digest and discuss data findings; use protocols and previously agreed upon procedures to mitigate the “blame game” and questioning of findings</li> </ul>	<p><b>Using data</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased partner use of data to inform decision-making, the CLIP implementation plan and future work.</li> </ul>
Data centered public call to action	Even though none of the sites publicly released data during the planning phase, for several sites the <i>intention</i> of using the postsecondary success data to frame a public call to action, or public score card, was a major driver throughout the planning process. The commitment to publicly releasing data simultaneously required partners to identify what changes they would publicly commit to, and provided a structure for public accountability.	While most of the sites stated that they intend to use their postsecondary data findings as a community rallying call, for one site in particular the pending public data release (set for early fall 2010) created a sense of urgency. The public event is the culmination of two-plus years of careful data analysis, framing, and internal vetting that preceded and included CLIP. Recognizing the potential scrutiny and backlash against the presented data, all three key partners (the mayor’s office, school district,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gain agreement among partners about how the data will be used</li> <li>• Set a public release timeframe</li> <li>• Co-develop a partnership-level communications strategy <i>in addition to</i> individual communications plans from each partner organization</li> </ul>	<p><b>Using data</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased partner ability to identify specific policies and practices that contribute to key trends in student data that the partnership is looking to address.</li> <li>• Increased partner use of data to inform decision making, the CLIP implementation plan, and future work.</li> </ul> <p><b>Changing policy and practice</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased partner ability to articulate the</li> </ul>



Factor	Description	Example	Considerations for adaptation	Associated planning phase outcomes
		and community college president's office) are preparing coordinated communications strategies to respond to public and media requests.		community strategy to improve alignment and quality of PS policies and practices.
Objective and transparent processes and facilitators	As a systems-change effort, CLIP is by definition a politicized initiative with the potential for institutional positioning and jockeying. Site lead organizations that applied their knowledge of community power dynamics to develop partnership structures and processes to mitigate these dynamics – or at least make them discussable – were able to move more rapidly from partnership management to tackling substantive issues. While the formality of partnership structures varied from site to site, most sites recognized the need for a neutral, objective facilitator. For the sites that made the most progress during the planning phase, the facilitator was also a critical partner	Some examples of processes and procedures that contributed to objectivity and transparency included partnership operating rules, providing opportunities to get to know partners and their organizations, shared facilitation and decision-making opportunities, outlets for partners to voice concerns anonymously, and access to trusted partners that could bring issues forward for partnership-level discussion. Sites took various approaches to increasing the objectivity of the facilitator. In one site, the community college was the facilitator of the CLIP work, but the staff position was <i>not</i> located in the chancellor's office. This created a sense of independence from the institution's agenda.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Once critical partners have been identified, dedicate some time to defining power dynamics among partners</li> <li>• Develop partnership management and facilitation structures that help mitigate preexisting power dynamics</li> <li>• Consider co-facilitation models, common operating protocols, and communication channels <i>prior</i> to engaging in the partnership-building work</li> <li>• Vet these structures with partners to create buy-in</li> <li>• Remain flexible as</li> </ul>	<p><b><i>Building partnership</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased partnership capacity to take on CLIP planning and implementation.</li> </ul> <p><b><i>Enhancing commitment</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased stakeholder buy-in for the CLIP work and verbal commitment of resources to the work.</li> </ul> <p><b><i>Using data</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased partner use of data to inform decision making, the CLIP implementation plan, and future work.</li> </ul>



Factor	Description	Example	Considerations for adaptation	Associated planning phase outcomes
	within the CLIP work, rather than just a process consultant. As such, the “neutral” facilitator was not <i>actually</i> neutral. But by establishing concrete and transparent partnership management systems, some facilitators successfully created a sense of objectivity.	Anecdotal evidence suggests that sites that placed the facilitation role within the mayor’s office were more likely to be viewed as neutral, since they were not <i>perceived</i> by partners as having an institutional change agenda.	the work unfolds to revisit the partnership structure and partner roles	
Clear prioritization processes	Since most of the CLIP sites engaged <i>lots</i> of partners with <i>lots</i> of ideas during the planning phase, toward the end of the phase some prioritization was necessary to put together an action plan for implementation. A transparent prioritization process that was clear to all partners involved (and one that partners had an opportunity to weigh-in on) helped catalyze some of the sites’ work.	Priorities were set very differently across sites. In one site, each subcommittee had to nominate three priority areas for the work. The full partnership discussed these and came to consensus during a day-long retreat. Another site gathered feedback from partners during a series of community conversations and then a small group of critical partners established priorities, sharing them back with the community once decisions were final. While these two examples of priority setting are very different (one seeming more “ground-up” and one more “top-down”), they both worked in their respective communities because <i>in advance</i> of the	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determine a prioritization process early on during the planning phase</li> <li>• Vet the process with key partners, or co-develop the process with partners prior to engaging in substantive discussions</li> <li>• Make the prioritization process clear to other stakeholders</li> <li>• Create outlets or opportunities to share the ongoing results of the process with interested stakeholders</li> </ul>	<p><b>Using data</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased partner ability to identify specific policies and practices that contribute to key trends in student data that the partnership is looking to address.</li> </ul> <p><b>Planning</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased partner ability to identify and leverage CLIP-related opportunities in its community.</li> </ul>

Factor	Description	Example	Considerations for adaptation	Associated planning phase outcomes
		process partners discussed <i>and agreed</i> (rather than just being told) how implementation priorities would be set.		
Sustainability plans	Sites that engaged in contingency planning (i.e., those that developed a Plan B in case they were not selected for implementation) were better able to engage partners from the beginning. Contingency planning helped partners see that there was a commitment to implementing the resulting plan – with Gates Foundation money or without. Additionally, sites that framed the planning phase more broadly (not as a grant application process, but rather as an opportunity for action) were more effective in engaging and retaining critical partners throughout the planning phase.	One community framed the process as the development of a “solid systems-change implementation plan” that if unfunded by Gates could be “shopped” to area funders. Another community plans to use the CLIP implementation plan to operationalize part of the city’s economic development strategy. Yet another site used the planning process to streamline and focus existing efforts – therefore strengthening the conviction that the planning process was beneficial – even if funding did not follow.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recognize and articulate the value-added of a planning process</li> <li>Articulate this value-added to partners, shifting the focus <i>away</i> from the grant application process to how the planning process benefits the community overall</li> </ul>	<b><i>Enhancing commitment</i></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased stakeholder awareness and ability to frame the CLIP initiative and its systems change and postsecondary success goals.</li> <li>Increased stakeholder buy-in for the CLIP work and verbal commitment of resources to support the work.</li> </ul>

## Appendix A: Evaluation Methodology

OMG's evaluation was designed around the critical evaluation question: **What lessons have we learned from the CLIP planning phase that may benefit other communities across the country that are seeking to take on similar postsecondary systems-change efforts?** Methods were developed to collect data pertaining to each of the outcome areas specified in the CLIP initiative-wide theory of change. In addition, OMG included methods to address two additional areas of inquiry specified in the Gates Foundation RFP: What are sites' approaches to planning? And, what is the role of technical assistance support in CLIP? The methods used during the planning phase were qualitative in nature.

While the emphasis of the evaluation was site-level data collection, the Gates Foundation was interested in a developmental evaluation that would provide real-time feedback about issues and emerging lessons from the initiative. As a result, in addition to site-level methods, OMG developed a set of activities to ensure ongoing communication with CLIP partners and to document initiative planning and theory.

Below, we describe each area of inquiry and the methodologies used to explore it. Then, we describe activities to facilitate partner communication, including deliverables produced during the evaluation.





### 1. Site-Level Data Collection

#### *A. Sites' approaches to planning*

Planning for a systemic-change effort such as CLIP requires deep knowledge of the community, high levels of authority, and the ability to identify and leverage opportunities to take on community- and institution-level change. It also requires management, coordination, and reputable leadership that can hold stakeholders accountable for their role in the development of the plan. To evaluate sites' approaches to planning, OMG looked for increases in partners' ability to identify and leverage CLIP-related opportunities in their communities. We also looked for increased partner capacity to take on the planning work and implement the proposed implementation plan, and use of feedback to shape the planning and implementation process. Examples of key evaluation questions for this area of inquiry included:

- What contextual factors help to facilitate or impede CLIP planning work?
- How are unique opportunities leveraged in each of the CLIP communities?
- What kind of infrastructure and capacities do sites have or are able to leverage to take on CLIP work?

OMG utilized the methods listed below to assess sites' approaches to planning.



<b>Methods: Approaches to Planning</b>	
	Phone interviews with site leads and 2 – 3 partners per site, including questions concerning the planning process to date
	Site visits (2-day, 2-person visits) to each site, including interviews focusing on contextual factors, opportunities, infrastructure, and capacity of the local community
	Interviews with key Gates Foundation and NLCI management team members concerning expectations for the planning phase, the evaluation, and technical assistance
	Site document reviews (background documents, theories of change, action plans, etc.)

## **2. Community commitment to achieving PS goals**

Shifting the postsecondary system to support young adult success through completion of a postsecondary degree or certificate requires the commitment and more critically the action of key, diverse stakeholders, including municipal and institutional leaders, the business community, policy-makers, youth, parents, and community members. Awareness building about the CLIP initiative and the importance of postsecondary success is an important aspect of getting stakeholder buy-in and ultimate commitment to action. Key outcomes that OMG looked for in this area included increases in: stakeholder awareness and ability to frame CLIP and its systems-change and postsecondary success goals; stakeholder buy-in for the work and verbal commitment of resources; and partner and stakeholder knowledge of local and national postsecondary trends and ability to articulate how these impact CLIP. Examples of key evaluation questions for this area of inquiry included:

- How do CLIP communities frame and build consensus for a shared agenda across different interests, power structures, and critical stakeholders?
- How do key community stakeholders frame the CLIP and PS vision and what resources do they provide to support the achievement of this vision?

OMG utilized the methods listed below to assess community commitment to achieving PS goals.

<b>Methods: Community Commitment</b>	
	Site visits (2-day, 2-person visits) to each site, including questions about how CLIP is being framed by stakeholders and partners, and how partners are working to align the PS vision for the community
	Site document reviews




## **3. Data to drive decision-making**

Data is critical to help identify the opportunities and barriers to PS in each community and to inform and assess the work of the partnership. By publicly establishing and tracking progress toward a common postsecondary completion goal, CLIP communities will be able to use data to further catalyze change. OMG looked for increased partner use of data to inform decision-making, the CLIP

implementation plan, and future work. We also considered partners' ability to identify specific policies and practices that contribute to key trends in student data that the partnership is looking to address. Examples of key evaluation questions for this area of inquiry included:

- How are sites using data to inform the development of their implementation plans?
- What role does data play in selecting targeted policies and PS supports in each community?

OMG utilized the methods listed below to assess the use of data for decision-making.




<b>Methods: Data Use</b>	
	Phone interviews with site leads and 2 – 3 partners per site, including questions about sites' data collection systems, opportunities, and challenges
	Site visits (2-day, 2-person visits) to each site, including collection of data samples, reports, or other data collection-related materials
	Site document reviews

#### **4. Sustainable structures are in place for planning, coordination, and execution of strategies**

Organizations and individuals working to address PS issues must better coordinate their work to address the multiple obstacles to college completion facing underserved students. The goal of increasing postsecondary success for low-income young people is an important issue that can motivate these key players to change practices and form partnerships to align services and change systems. Key outcomes that OMG looked for in this area included increased partner capacity to take on CLIP planning and implementation, and partner willingness and capacity to embed CLIP-related activities within their organizational function. Examples of key evaluation questions for this area of inquiry included:

- Who are the key partners and what roles and responsibilities do they take on during the planning phase to begin coordinating systems and shifting key policies and practices?
- How are existing partnerships leveraged and how do they transition to take on the CLIP agenda?

OMG utilized the methods listed below to assess partnerships.




<b>Methods: Partnerships</b>	
	Phone interviews with site leads and 2 – 3 partners per site, including questions about who the partners are, their roles, and the emerging partnership structure
	Site visits (2-day, 2-person visits) to each site, including interviews concerning partnership purpose, member characteristics, process and structure, communication, and staffing and resources
	Site document reviews

## 5. Stakeholders adopt and implement supportive and effective PS policies and practices

CLIP is not about creating new programs but improving coordination of what already exists, removing ineffective programs, and targeting specific policies that impede postsecondary success. Improved alignment will increase demand for postsecondary supports that will in turn lead to increased enrollment, persistence, and completion. To examine the barriers to postsecondary completion that partners identify as the focus of their CLIP work, OMG looked for increased knowledge about local college-going and completion rates, existing supports, and policy-level barriers and opportunities. We also considered sites' use of local and national research to inform CLIP strategy development. Finally, partners' ability to articulate the community strategy to improve alignment and quality of PS policies and practices was explored. Examples of key evaluation questions for this area of inquiry included:

- What barriers to postsecondary completion do partners identify as the focus of their CLIP work? What role does data play in the identification of these areas?
- What strategies do partners propose to begin addressing policy and practice barriers and how will these strategies translate into on-the-ground changes?

OMG utilized the methods listed below to assess sites' work around PS policies and practices.







<b>Methods: Policy and Practice</b>	
	Phone interviews with site leads and 2 – 3 partners per site, including questions about emerging policy and practice areas
	Site visits (2-day, 2-person visits) to each site, including interviews about emerging policy and practice areas and how these areas were identified
	Site document reviews

## 6. Technical assistance

In order for CLIP to be successful, information and lessons learned need to be shared across sites. The supports provided to sites by NLCI, the project coordinator and technical assistance provider, are critical for sites' planning to be effective and constructive, and for the work to continue after the Gates Foundation funding ends. To assess technical assistance, OMG examined the leadership, flexibility, and responsiveness of technical assistance supports to meet the diverse needs of sites. We also looked for increased site use of technical assistance and evaluation feedback to shape their CLIP strategy. Finally, we looked for increased understanding on the part of the Gates Foundation of work happening on the ground. Examples of key evaluation questions for this area of inquiry included:

- How have sites used the feedback from NLCI and leveraged TA, both in terms of implementation planning and grant compliance/management? How does the NLCI team provide leadership while responding in a constructive way to meet site needs?
- To what extent has the TA and project management role played by NLCI helped the sites in planning, building local partnerships, and developing necessary capacities to support CLIP?
- What is the value added of NLCI as a national intermediary and TA provider across the diverse sites? Does the fact that there is no direct financial relationship between NLCI and the sites affect the effectiveness/value-added of NLCI's support?

OMG utilized the methods listed below to assess sites' work around technical assistance.

<i><b>Methods: Technical Assistance</b></i>	
	Phone interviews with site leads and 2 – 3 partners per site, including questions about the role and value of technical assistance
	Site visits (2-day, 2-person visits) to each site
	Observation of the CLIP kick-off meeting
	Observation of the March cross-site meeting
	Observation of all-CLIP calls
	Satisfaction surveys regarding select technical assistance activities

## 2. Partner Communication Activities

Due to the evaluation's developmental nature, it was critical for OMG to play an active role in the initiative's planning and to establish regular opportunities to provide feedback, raise issues, and share emerging lessons with partners. OMG accomplished this through a combination of ongoing conference calls and a series of deliverables. In particular, we participated in monthly CLIP management calls to ensure coordination across the national partners. We also held regular biweekly calls with Gates Foundation evaluation program officers to provide regular feedback and solicit input from the Foundation on evaluation activities and products.

The shaded box to the right lists deliverables produced by OMG, including a series of feedback memos circulated at key points during the planning process; a set of site snapshots (one for each site) summarizing the results of OMG's site visits; the final report; and several tools used for planning and communicating about CLIP's theory and expectations.

### ***Evaluation Deliverables***

1. Feedback memos
  - A. Early observations and issues for consideration for CLIP (December 2009)
  - B. Key themes from CLIP stakeholder interviews (February 2010)
  - C. Findings from CLIP site interviews and observations from March cross-site meeting (April 2010)
2. Site snapshots – summaries of evaluation site visits, shared with sites two weeks after the visit
3. Final report
4. Planning tools
  - A. Evaluation plan
  - B. Site-level assessment rubric
  - C. Initiative-level TOC
  - D. CLIP outcomes and indicators table
  - E. Materials for site-level TOC sessions

In addition, OMG (in coordination with NLCI) provided additional technical assistance to sites during the site-level TOC process. In particular, we developed materials and co-facilitated site-specific webinars focused on the TOC. We also participated in follow-up calls and provision of feedback to sites, as needed.



## Appendix B: Evaluation Outcomes and Indicators

Action Area	Planning Phase Outcomes	Planning Phase Indicators
Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased partner ability to identify and leverage CLIP-related opportunities in their community.</li> <li>Increased partner capacity to take on the planning work and to implement the proposed plan.</li> <li>Increased use of feedback to shape the planning and implementation process.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partners identify existing community efforts that complement the CLIP work and know how these efforts will be leveraged during the implementation phase. A clear action plan is emerging.</li> <li>The implementation plan that develops out of the planning phase is feasible (in terms of timing, resource allocation, staffing capacity, etc.) and appropriate given the local context that partners are working within.</li> <li>Across partners, descriptions of the planning process and leadership in developing the plan are consistent and positive.</li> <li>Partners exhibit and articulate personal engagement and investment in the plan.</li> <li>Partners articulate concrete supports that they are willing to provide for implementation, including funding, staffing, in-kind supports, etc.</li> <li>CLIP partners articulate concrete examples of technical assistance and evaluation feedback that have helped to shape their process and the resulting implementation plans.</li> </ul>
Commitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased stakeholder* awareness and ability to frame the CLIP initiative and its systems-change and postsecondary success goals.</li> <li>Increased stakeholder buy-in for the CLIP work and verbal commitment of resources to support the work.</li> <li>Increased partner and stakeholder knowledge of local and national and postsecondary trends and ability to articulate how these impact their CLIP efforts.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partners identify similar stakeholders that are being targeted to be public champions for CLIP.</li> <li>Partners use common message points for discussing CLIP with stakeholders.</li> <li>Stakeholders are beginning to use some of the common messaging points to articulate the CLIP vision and the postsecondary goals.</li> <li>Partners can provide specific examples when CLIP stakeholders publicly acknowledged the initiative and whether they verbally committed to supporting the work through funds, human resources, and in-kind supports.</li> <li>CLIP partners use personal and professional networks to recruit stakeholders.</li> <li>Data and research about college access and success are disseminated among partners and stakeholders, discussed together, and applied to the local context.</li> <li>Partners and stakeholders can provide concrete examples for how the CLIP work has shifted their understanding of postsecondary success in their community.</li> </ul>

\* Stakeholders include policymakers, neighborhood leaders, municipal leaders, community representatives, etc., who have an interest in improving the PS system and increasing student postsecondary completion rates. These stakeholders are *not* necessarily formal members of the CLIP partnership. Partners are formally engaged and have specific roles and responsibilities to advance the CLIP work in their communities.



Action Area	Planning Phase Outcomes	Planning Phase Indicators
Data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased partner use of data to inform decision-making, the CLIP implementation plan, and future work.</li> <li>Increased partner ability to identify specific policies and practices that contribute to key trends in student data that the partnership is looking to address.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partners identify existing data collection efforts and develop their own data systems utilizing preexisting data.</li> <li>Partners engage in activities to systematically collect, link, and analyze data about (1) local LIYA college needs and barriers, and (2) existing college access and success resources.</li> <li>Partners identify long-term measurable CLIP goals.</li> <li>Individual organizations share analyses of “proprietary” data with other partners.</li> <li>Partners identify key obstacles to data sharing and are beginning to develop agreements and processes to overcome these.</li> <li>Partners examine data together in partnership meetings or other forums.</li> <li>Partners articulate specific processes and structures for how they plan to use data to inform decision-making during implementation.</li> <li>Partners identify key data findings (facts) that have focused their CLIP work and corresponding policies or practices that they are beginning to examine.</li> </ul>
Partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased partnership capacity to take on CLIP planning and implementation.</li> <li>Increased partner willingness and capacity to embed CLIP-related activities within their organizational function.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Across partners, the descriptions of the CLIP vision and goals are specific and consistent.</li> <li>Across partners, the descriptions of leadership and supporting roles and responsibilities of various players are specific and consistent.</li> <li>Specific partners take responsibility for organizing and securing facilitation for regular partnership meetings.</li> <li>Specific partners take responsibility for analyzing and using meeting data and feedback to develop proposal documents.</li> <li>Diverse community stakeholders – including those with institutional and community knowledge and authority – are engaged in the planning process.</li> <li>A core group of partners contributes to the implementation plan and can clearly articulate what will be expected of them during implementation.</li> <li>Partners are willing to reflect on partnership challenges and potential areas of improvement with one another, and the TA and/or evaluation staff.</li> <li>Partners see the value of being involved in CLIP and clearly articulate how it aligns with their organizational mission and/or goals.</li> <li>Partners articulate the capacities that will be necessary for implementation and have a sense of how they contribute to these capacities.</li> </ul>

Action Area	Outcomes	Indicators
Policy and Practice Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased partner knowledge about local (1) students' college-going and completion rates, (2) existing supports across the pipeline, and (3) policy-level barriers and opportunities.</li> <li>Increased used of local and national research to inform CLIP strategy development.</li> <li>Increased partner ability to articulate the community strategy to improve alignment and quality of PS policies and practices.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is evidence in meetings and partnership communications that partners have engaged in an iterative process for developing strategies – exploring data and community information before identifying strategies.</li> <li>Policy advocates and experts have been part of the process for identifying policy obstacles, opportunities, and strategies.</li> <li>Program providers – postsecondary advisors, the school district and nonprofit providers – have been part of the process for identifying program obstacles, opportunities, and strategies.</li> <li>Proposed CLIP strategies support change across the segments (K-12, postsecondary, workforce) of the college access and success pipeline.</li> <li>Proposed CLIP strategies build on and leverage existing community resources.</li> <li>Proposed CLIP strategies are appropriate based on the current college access and success landscape in the community.</li> <li>Partners highlight processes and structures for ongoing evaluation and refinement of strategies.</li> </ul>
Technical Assistance and Intermediary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased leadership, flexibility, and responsiveness of technical assistance supports to meet the diverse needs of the sites.</li> <li>Increased site use of technical assistance and evaluation feedback to shape their CLIP strategy.</li> <li>Increased understanding on the part of Gates Foundation of work happening on the ground, via NLCI communication and feedback.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TA providers disseminate (1) generalized tools, (2) targeted site tools, and (3) relevant research to sites.</li> <li>TA providers refer to these tools and research in follow-up conversations.</li> <li>TA conversations include information about other sites.</li> <li>TA conversations/convenings are developmental and build off of one another.</li> <li>Phone visits or on-site visits result in a set of site and TA actions.</li> <li>Sites can articulate the purpose and value of receiving TA.</li> <li>Sites can identify specific team members providing TA to them.</li> <li>Sites can articulate a series of supports provided to them through TA and how these shifted their thinking about the CLIP work.</li> <li>Sites can identify a clear timeline for preparing and submitting their proposal.</li> <li>Foundation program officers have the familiarity and knowledge they need of CLIP planning sites to make an informed selection decision.</li> </ul>

## Appendix C: CLIP Theory of Change

# **The Communities Learning in Partnership Theory of Change**

**And how it links to the Gates Foundation's  
Postsecondary Success Strategy**

# Gates Postsecondary Success Strategy: 3 Initiatives to Increase Completion

## Improve Postsecondary Institution Performance

- Support innovative practices, programs, and educational delivery mechanisms – inside and outside public postsecondary system
- Strengthen community college capacity for reform
- Increase external incentives and pressure to improve completion rates

## Support Young Adult Success

- Re-structure financial aid to incentivize completion
- Increase awareness of existing, and create new, sources of financial aid
- Scale alternative pathways to college for young adults who are already in the workforce

## Build National, State, & Local Commitment

- Increase awareness levels among key stakeholders
- Create a completion-focused policy and advocacy community
- Synthesize and disseminate evidence on effective policies, models and practices
- Build state and community partnerships

**Gates Strategy  
Goal:**  
*By 2025 Double  
the percentage  
of low-income  
young adults  
who earn a  
postsecondary  
credential with  
labor market  
value by age 26*

**Communities Learning in Partnership (CLIP)**

# CLIP Theory of Change Introduction



## A few words about the CLIP Theory of Change

- The CLIP Theory of Change (TOC) is a tool and process to build consensus among partners about the main “buckets” of work that needs to be done in order to achieve local outcomes that are consistent with the overall goals of the Gates Foundation’s Postsecondary Success Strategy and with the specific goals of the Building Commitment strand of that overall strategy.
- While the TOC looks linear the work is very iterative – shifts in the current state may impact actions. As the work unfolds actions may lead to shifts in expected outcomes.
- The TOC is not a stagnant document. It should be revisited periodically to make sure it still makes sense as the work unfolds.
- The site-specific TOC should have characteristics of a carefully constructed logical argument in order to ensure a high likelihood of achieving the expected outcomes. The local TOC should be grounded in as much qualitative and quantitative information as possible to promote the selection of appropriate actions.
- The local workplan should closely align with the city’s TOC.

# CLIP Theory of Change in Brief

Current State	Actions to Drive Change	System Outcomes	Student Outcomes
<p>Limited awareness of/concern about low completion rates</p> <p>Limited knowledge of potential solutions to low postsecondary success (PS) rates</p> <p>Lack of knowledge about college-going among students and parents/guardians</p> <p>Limited alignment among K-12, PSE, youth development, and workforce systems, especially around standards/curriculum</p> <p>Limited relationships among key stakeholders to drive to a common goal</p> <p>Institutional policies &amp; practices create obstacles to student success</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. <b>Enhance key PS stakeholders' commitment</b> and action to drive PS change</li><li>2. Develop infrastructure and mechanisms to <b>use qualitative and quantitative data</b> to drive PS decision-making on an ongoing basis</li><li>3. <b>Build sustainable partnerships</b> with clear leadership and appropriate roles and responsibilities to drive the change agenda</li><li>4. Identify and <b>address necessary policy and practice changes</b> to align, coordinate and scale up postsecondary success pathways and supports</li></ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. <b>Community commitment to achieving PS goals, especially among key leaders and institutions</b></li><li>2. <b>Community continuously measures progress towards a set PS goal, uses this information to drive change and publicly reports progress.</b></li><li>3. <b>Sustainable structures are in place for community to plan, coordinate and execute strategies that increase PS</b></li><li>4. <b>Relevant stakeholders adopt and implement supportive and effective PS policies and practices</b></li></ol>	<p>Increased Academic Readiness for College work</p> <p>Increased College Knowledge</p> <p>Increased Enrollment Intensity</p> <p>Increased Persistence</p> <p>Increased Completion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•% of students completing credential</li><li>•% of CC transfer students completing 4-yr degrees</li></ul> <p>Increased placement in jobs with labor market value</p>

**How can we use the Theory of Change  
to think about an implementation plan?**

**Possible actions and indicators for CLIP communities**



# Action 1: Shift Stakeholder Commitment and Action

Examples of Actions to Drive Change	Potential Indicators of Change	System Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Identify which stakeholders' commitment is most important in the local community to facilitate system-level changes in time, for example:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Municipal leaders</li><li>•Institutional leaders (K-12, postsecondary)</li><li>•Low-income students and families</li><li>•The broader community</li></ul></li><li>• Develop strategies that appropriately build and leverage the commitment of identified stakeholders</li><li>• Engage different “community” stakeholders and leverage their commitment to promote CLIP related strategies</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Community leaders and key stakeholders prioritize college completion as the standard for educational attainment for young adults</li><li>• Municipal leaders publically support and advocate for community-wide completion goals</li><li>• Public identification of CLIP leaders and partners</li><li>• Public awareness of community's college-going and completion record</li><li>• Public investment in improving PS outcomes</li></ul>	<p><b>Community commitment to achieving PS goals, especially among key leaders and institutions</b></p>

## Action 2: Use Data to Drive Strategy

Examples of Actions to Drive Change	Potential Indicators of Change	System Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Develop data sharing procedures and mechanisms among partner organizations</li><li>• Identify and designate data analysis responsibilities and public reporting format</li><li>• Systematically collect and share information about institutional and organizational policies and practices</li><li>• Aggregate and/or link school district, nonprofit, postsecondary, and city data sources that provide information about student experiences, progress, and outcomes</li><li>• Develop systems for updating and reviewing updated information on an ongoing basis</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Development and dissemination of measurable PS goals and timeline</li><li>• Key stakeholders and municipal leaders agree to PS goals and timeline</li><li>• Stakeholder action to improve college completion driven by <i>local</i> data analysis and a deep understanding of <i>local</i> low-income student needs and barriers.</li><li>• Deepened and common understanding across CLIP partners of local college-going and completion rates, existing supports, and student needs and barriers to success.</li><li>• Data used in decision-making about CLIP activities</li><li>• Formal mechanisms for data sharing and use established, including ways to measure progress towards PS goals</li><li>• Public reports on progress toward measurable PS goals available regularly</li></ul>	<p>Community continuously measures progress towards a set PS goal, uses this information to drive change and publicly reports progress</p>

# Action 3: Build Sustainable Partnerships

Examples of Actions to Drive Change	Potential Indicators of Change	System Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Identify, recruit, and engage all appropriate partners and partnership organizations for CLIP</li><li>• Jointly develop structures, protocols, and processes to organize partnership activities:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Operating procedures</li><li>•Individual roles and responsibilities – particularly convening, facilitation, and data responsibilities</li><li>•Communications pathways</li><li>•Accountability mechanisms</li></ul></li><li>• Set and refine a workplan with a concrete timeline and partner responsibilities that identifies policies and programs/supports that the partnership will address</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Formation of leadership/steering group</li><li>• Convening of regular partnership meetings</li><li>• Shared understanding of the individual roles and responsibilities of partners</li><li>• Active engagement of a variety of partners during meetings</li><li>• Communication among partners specific to CLIP between physical meetings</li><li>• Addition of new partnership members over time</li><li>• Evidence of PS in mission and work of various individual partners</li><li>• Processes for consensus building, decision-making, and coordinated action are institutionalized</li></ul>	<p>Sustainable structures are in place for community to plan, coordinate and execute strategies that increase PS</p>

# Action 4: Address Policy and Practice Change

Examples of Actions to Drive Change	Potential Indicators of Change	System Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Conduct gap analysis of existing services and supports</li><li>• Use data to diagnose opportunities and challenges in strengthening local policies and programs</li><li>• Jointly develop policy change strategies that address challenges within the broader environment (not addressable at program level and/or better addressed at policy level)</li><li>• Jointly develop community-level strategies that maximize and leverage existing program activities across partners</li><li>• Implement policy and practice changes that have system-level impacts</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• High school education, postsecondary education and workforce training providers intentionally align programs and practices to support students' academic momentum and program completion (e.g., standards, assessments, curricula, dual enrollment, data sharing, and career pathways).</li><li>• More referrals and programmatic connections across partners</li><li>• Policy, education, workforce and youth development organizations coordinate support services and align human and financial resources to achieve community-wide college completion goals.</li><li>• Policymakers, with support from community stakeholder organizations, identify, adopt and implement policy changes to coordinate and streamline public funding to achieve community-wide college completion goals.</li></ul>	<p>Relevant stakeholders adopt and implement supportive and effective PS policies and practices</p>