



# HPRI YEAR 2 REFLECTION:

## *Collective Impact as a Framework for Collaborative Homelessness Research*

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Homelessness Policy Research Institute (HPRI) is a collaboration between over 40 researchers and policymakers working to accelerate equitable and culturally informed solutions to homelessness in Los Angeles County by advancing knowledge and fostering transformational partnerships between research, policy and practice. HPRI utilizes the collective impact framework to reimagine how researchers can collaborate and start a new dialogue between policymakers, researchers, service providers and people with lived expertise. Collective impact is a new variation of collaborative governance, explicitly intended to address difficult to solve social problems through a structured and resourced cross-sectoral collaboration framework (Kania and Kramer, 2011). The framework prescribes elements such as a “common agenda”, “continuous communication”, and a “shared measurement system” to ensure coordinated and meaningful collaboration across organizations and individuals.

#### Key accomplishments of HPRI have included:

1. Recruiting over 40 research committee members from fields that have historically been extremely siloed and competitive, to meet monthly, share ideas, and engage in cross-institution collaborative research projects;
2. Making space for the voices of researchers within the Home For Good collective impact model and advocating for the inclusion of evaluation frameworks as new policies and practices are rolled out; and
3. Increasing the visibility of research and the amount of available funding for all researchers working to end homelessness, and more specifically, co-developing and securing funding for more than 10 research projects.



This report will discuss the ways in which HPRI aligns with and operates under the collective impact framework to guide its novel effort. We conclude that collective impact is a useful framework through which to organize a research collaborative. We also disseminate key lessons learned from the past two years of operating the Institute and recommend best practices for establishing a collaborative dedicated to building research-practice partnerships for solving intractable social problems.



## THE HOMELESSNESS POLICY RESEARCH INSTITUTE

Established in 2017 with a leadership gift from the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation and support from the United Way of Greater Los Angeles' Home For Good Funders Collaborative, HPRI is a county-wide effort that comprises over 40 scholars and policymakers. Given the scale and urgency of the homelessness crisis in Los Angeles, HPRI established a unique organizational framework within the research community. Whereas traditional research settings often rely on competition to produce rigorous research, HPRI sought to reframe the landscape to promote more collaboration and knowledge creation. By structuring the collaborative through a collective impact framework, HPRI has convened the larger research community with policymakers and practitioners around a shared purpose to accelerate equitable and culturally informed solutions to end homelessness in Los Angeles County by advancing knowledge and fostering transformational partnerships between research, policy and practice.

HPRI's three primary objectives are to:

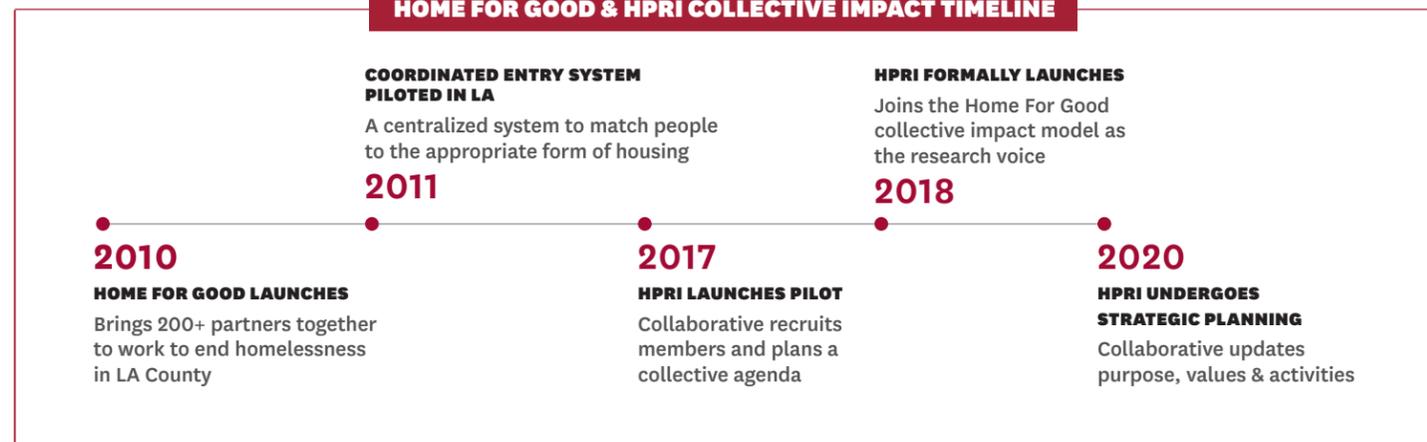
1. **Conduct & Facilitate High Impact Research** to inform timely and relevant policymaking to address homelessness in Los Angeles County;
2. **Gather & Translate Research** on evidence-based approaches and how they've been transformed into practice, supporting providers and policymakers; and
3. **Convene & Engage** policymakers, researchers, people with lived expertise and culturally specific organizations to support research.

The wide range of partners that make up HPRI's research committee are indicative of the collaborative approach that guides the Institute's work. The research committee includes highly regarded researchers and

policymakers from public and private institutions such as USC, UCLA, Corporation for Supportive Housing, RAND Corporation, the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA), Abt Associates, Economic Roundtable, and others. While the collaborative has an explicit focus on Los Angeles, it also draws on expertise from national partners whose work has relevance to the Los Angeles area.

HPRI is situated within Home For Good's collective impact framework and acts as the research partner of the initiative. Launched in 2010 by the United Way of Greater Los Angeles and the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce, Home For Good is a collective impact initiative comprising over 200 partners across sectors who have the common agenda of ending homelessness in Los Angeles County. In 2011, the initiative piloted a shared, centralized system called the Coordinated Entry System (CES), which matches people experiencing homelessness with appropriate housing based on their unique needs and circumstances and has since been adopted countywide. Home For Good's mutually reinforcing activities include the formation of the Home For Good Funder's Collaborative, which aligns and coordinates over 70 funding sources from public and private partners across the county (Home For Good, 2017). Since its inception, Home For Good's organizational structure and activities have met the criteria for a collective impact initiative. However, even though its numerous partner organizations span the private and public sectors, the initiative initially lacked a sustained, collective research voice, which prevented it from maximizing its impact. In 2017, Home For Good helped launch HPRI as the much needed research voice for its work to end homelessness in Los Angeles County. A timeline of key moments in the Home For Good and HPRI collective impact initiatives is shown on the following page.

### HOME FOR GOOD & HPRI COLLECTIVE IMPACT TIMELINE



## THE COLLECTIVE IMPACT FRAMEWORK AND GUIDING LITERATURE

As defined by Kania & Kramer (2011) in their paper in the *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, collective impact refers to “the commitment of a group of important actors from different sectors to a common agenda for solving a specific social problem.” Collective impact models are used to address complex social problems, like homelessness, where a single organization or sector cannot create any meaningful change on its own. This cross-sectoral commitment is distinct from simple collaboration or partnerships and involves five specific key components:

1. A common agenda or shared vision
2. A shared measurement system
3. Mutually reinforcing activities
4. Continuous communication
5. A backbone support organization.

Since 2011, the collective impact framework has been used widely by practitioners and philanthropic funders. In 2018, 46 of the 100 largest foundations in the United States referenced collective impact on

their websites, financial statements, or annual reports. Boyce (2013) contends that funders are particularly drawn to collective impact approaches because “large grant-making entities and corporate foundations alike share a growing interest in achieving the most progress possible for their dollars” (p. 496). This rapid shift is a testament to the pervasiveness of the collective impact framework and the strong influence of Kania & Kramer's research.

In addition to the collective impact components identified by Kania & Kramer (2011), other scholars have identified additional characteristics of the collective impact framework. Beyond Kania and Kramer's (2011) initial five pillars, Weaver (2016) and leaders from the Strive initiative (Edmondson & Hecht, 2014) further identify additional characteristics and recommendations necessary for effective collective impact. These include:

- Practicing systems leadership
- Embracing a framework and leveraging existing resources
- Assessing community readiness and engaging local expertise



- Focusing on data and measurement
- Addressing disparities across groups
- Continuous learning and improvement

Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, the collective impact framework is rooted in a commitment to prioritize and amplify the voices of individuals with lived expertise relevant to the social problem at hand. It is critical that community voices help define the scope of the problem, co-design potential solutions, and ultimately have the authority to implement the solutions that they desire for their community. Without these voices, researchers are developing solutions in a vacuum that are unlikely to be implemented in practice. In response, Hanleybrown, Kania, and Kramer (2013) describe a three-phased approach to community involvement where the collective impact efforts (1) facilitate community outreach, (2) engage the community and build public will, and (3) continue engagement and conduct advocacy.

HPRI has organized the objectives and activities of the collaborative to meet the various components of the collective impact framework. How the organization operates within these five components, as well as the challenges encountered and best practices to overcome those challenges, is discussed in the sections below.

### HPRI AND THE COLLECTIVE IMPACT FRAMEWORK

While HPRI is part of Home For Good’s collective impact model, the Institute is also internally guided by the collective impact framework. The following section details the ways in which HPRI’s work, activities, and organizational structure align with the collective impact framework. Based on the evidence described below, we believe that collective impact offers a valuable framework around which to structure collaborative research organizations such as HPRI.

### Common agenda

*Participants in a collective impact initiative must have a common vision for change, a mutual understanding of the problem at hand, and an agreed upon set of actions that they will take to jointly solve the problem (Kania & Kramer, 2011).*

A key strength of HPRI is the diversity of the organizational types that its partners represent. While major Los Angeles area research institutions such as USC and UCLA are heavily represented, the collaborative also has members from public and private universities from all over the country including University of Pennsylvania, Rutgers University and The University of Texas. HPRI members from think-tanks and consulting firms such as RAND Corporation, Economic Roundtable, and Abt Associates provide a different set of strengths and perspectives than traditional academic research. Representatives from the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) and the Los Angeles County Homeless Initiative are able to speak to pressing policy priorities and administrative data access. Additionally, service providers, such as the Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH) and St. Joseph’s Center, who work more directly with people experiencing homelessness, provide on-the-ground expertise and advocacy.

Given this diversity of partners, HPRI’s research committee spent the first several months of its pilot year developing a common agenda through a shared vision, values, and goals document. This document defined the committee’s agenda during its first several years and established agreed upon activities, namely producing timely, actionable research for the homelessness policy community. A clear and unified set of goals is necessary for effective mutually reinforcing activities. If partners are not in agreement about the goals, priorities, and the overall mission of an initiative, the work of individual partners will be uncoordinated and unaligned instead of reinforcing

and complementary. A shared understanding of goals and priorities is not easy to achieve—it requires ongoing, consistent meetings with representatives from all partner organizations present.

During its first year, HPRI leadership worked to understand the role of research in collaborating with policymakers and funders within the larger collective impact framework. Research and evaluation quickly became an increasing priority for the homeless services system, as HFG established research investments and several large-scale, multiyear research projects were commissioned to address anti-Black racism in homeless services. Given this large influx of funds and project opportunities, HPRI members expressed a desire to revisit and specify the collaborative’s purpose, values and activities at the end of its first year.

Given the unique application of the collective impact framework to the research community, in its second year, HPRI decided to strategically revisit its purpose and activities to ensure that the collaborative continued to evolve. With the help of Social Venture Partners LA (SVPLA), a consulting firm, HPRI was able to inform its strategic planning through a series of individual interviews with a sample of HPRI members and systems leaders as well as several facilitated group sessions. During this process, HPRI restructured its monthly meeting format and created shared agreements for conducting meetings, developed a process for distributing research funding and opportunities through RFPs, and created a more specific set of values, objectives and activities that reflected the rapid growth that the collaborative experienced in its first year. A high level of participation from HPRI members allowed for a successful process and a clear path forward for the collaborative.

### Shared measurement system

*Uniform access to data and consistent measurement strategies across participants in a collective impact initiative ensures the alignment of efforts and allows participants to hold each other accountable and learn from each other’s successes and failures (Kania & Kramer, 2011).*

The Homelessness Management Information System (HMIS) is an administrative dataset that documents the use of various homeless service programs and is a key data source for research on ending homelessness. However, members of the research community face several important challenges with accessing and using HMIS data for research purposes. First, each research organization must individually contract with the local homeless service authority to obtain and use HMIS data for research, a process that can often take a number of months to complete. Additionally, HMIS data is an administrative dataset whose primary purpose is for public administration rather than research. As a result, once each researcher obtains HMIS data, he or she must individually clean and restructure the complex administrative dataset for research use, which adds additional time to a research project and can easily lead to error if done incorrectly.

To address these data use issues and solidify itself as a sustainable long-term resource for the policy community, HPRI identified the need for a “research accelerator” that houses a secure, pre-cleaned, regularly-updated copy of HMIS data for researcher use on approved projects, along with a full-time staff to answer questions and reduce error in complex data analyses. The accelerator will give researchers a common starting point across projects and will promote knowledge sharing on the use of HMIS data in a secure environment. Additionally, shared access to the HMIS will help the research community identify data points that may be highly relevant



to tracking systems change but are unavailable or have a high frequency of missing values due to entry error. With this information, researchers can work with policymakers and service providers to ensure that frontline staff are consistently documenting the highest priority data points given the strain that data entry puts on staff working directly to house people experiencing homelessness.

With support from philanthropic organizations such as the United Way and the Hilton Foundation, the California Policy Lab (CPL) at UCLA has spearheaded the development of the research accelerator, including building out a secure environment to host the data, hiring a staff member to document data cleaning processes and codebooks, and working with attorneys to set up various data use agreements. Although CPL is an HPRI partner with extensive experience with administrative datasets, the innovative structure of collaborative data sharing has presented challenges and caused delays in getting the research accelerator off the ground. Setting up data sharing agreements with the local homeless service authority has been a particular challenge; however, all parties involved are hopeful that the legal framework is close to completion.

**Mutually reinforcing activities**

*Collective impact initiatives entail collaboration between diverse groups of partners and encourage each participant to engage in the activities that it does best in a manner that supports and complements the efforts of the other participants (Kania & Kramer, 2011).*

By design, HPRI excels at producing, translating, and sharing research in several forms, including quarterly research symposia, an online research catalog, and literature reviews and policy briefs. These activities produce ideas and strategies that are actionable and policy-relevant, which reinforces the work of the

funder and policymaker arms of the Home For Good collective impact network.

HPRI hosts quarterly research symposia attended by key policymakers and practitioners, offering a forum for a more extensive discussion on active research projects and/or timely policy topics. Past discussions have included topics on trauma informed care, accelerating permanent supportive housing, and predictive models to prevent homelessness. The quarterly symposia provide the research, service, and policy communities with a comprehensive understanding of the current landscape regarding homelessness research in the greater Los Angeles region, as well as a chance to convene and network around shared interests and potential research collaborations.

HPRI also curates and hosts an extensive research catalog on its website that includes the latest research products from HPRI partners and other researchers around the country, in addition to policy briefs and literature reviews produced by HPRI staff. This catalog serves as a centralized resource for policymakers, service providers, and other interested stakeholders to access relevant research and information related to homelessness in Los Angeles County.

Additionally, HPRI responds to specific requests from funders, service providers, and policymakers for “rapid response” data analysis and literature reviews. In the early stages of HPRI’s existence, there was no clear line of communication about current policy goals and rapid response research needs between researchers and policymakers. Home For Good and HPRI addressed this challenge by ensuring that HPRI sends a representative to monthly Home for Good Policy Table meetings. Topics identified and discussed in the Policy Table meetings frequently result in HPRI developing rapid-response data analyses, literature reviews, and research briefs. Accordingly, these meetings

provide a critical line of communication between policymakers and researchers, in which policymakers identify research needed to support policy and homeless services, and researchers can then provide policymakers with rapid response research based upon their requests.

While HPRI has effectively cultivated a line of communication for policymakers to share current policy topics that need rapid research support, HPRI members have expressed that a similar line of communication needs to be built for larger and longer term research topics identified by the research community. Through its work with SVPLA, HPRI identified that a research agenda created by researchers with input from providers and people with lived expertise will be an important mechanism to share the research community’s priorities with policymakers and funders. HPRI will develop a research agenda in its upcoming third year.

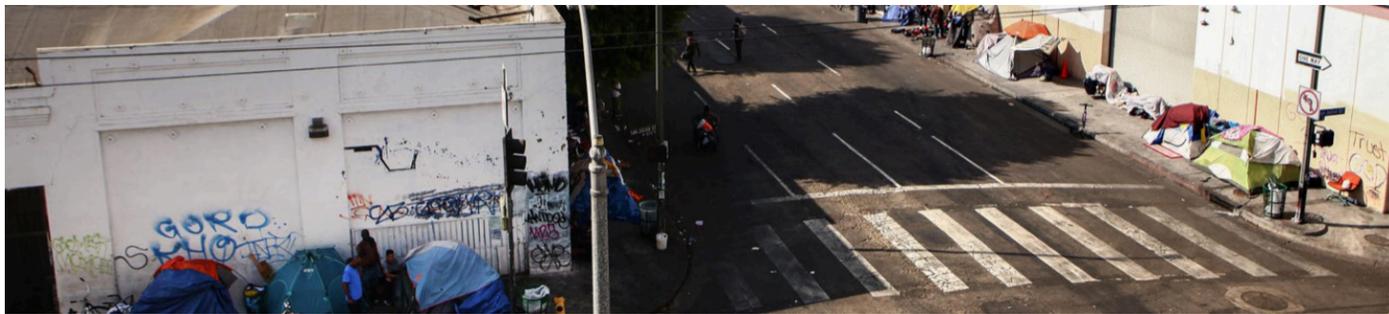
Within its internal collective impact framework, HPRI has established working groups to focus more intensively on specific issues like racial equity or gaps in administrative data. Breaking down collaborative tasks and responsibilities into working groups and committees helps to design specialized processes and allows partners to take ownership of specific issues. This practice embodies the mutually reinforcing activities component of the collective impact framework and also allows for improved coordination. In its first year, HPRI established a steering committee that included six members of the research committee and a Home For Good staff member to guide the overall direction of the Institute. The collaborative and various members also established several other working groups on internal processes and research topics including: the research accelerator, RFP development, gaps in administrative data, research translation and communications, older adults, and race equity.

Due to the overrepresentation of Black people in the population experiencing homelessness and the historic lack of diversity in the research community, the race equity working group has played a particularly crucial role within HPRI to promote a race equity lens in homelessness research and to elevate the voices of researchers of color, service providers and people with lived expertise as critical leaders in ending racial inequities in homelessness. This working group directly supported the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority’s Ad Hoc Committee on Black People Experiencing Homelessness, which informed the publication of their groundbreaking report in 2018. Since then, the working group has adopted an advisory role to support the research community with integrating an equity framework on current and prospective homelessness research.

**Continuous communication**

*In order to develop trust, effective coordination, and a sense of common motivation among participating organizations, agencies, and corporations, collective impact initiatives must hold consistent, structured, in-person meetings over a protracted period (Kania & Kramer, 2011).*

In line with this component of the collective impact framework, HPRI holds monthly research committee meetings where committee members become familiar with each other’s work and learn about new opportunities for collaborative research. With the help of SVPLA, HPRI identified that in its first year, too much time was being spent on administrative and project updates during monthly meetings. This reduced opportunities for researchers to learn from and collaborate with one another at monthly meetings and caused gaps in knowledge about current projects and future funding opportunities for partners who miss a meeting. To correct course, HPRI staff began sending written memos prior to monthly meetings that include updates on relevant projects, progress



on potential funding for research, as well as internal and external RFP opportunities. This written monthly communication frees up time during in-person meetings and ensures that all HPRI members receive important updates about current projects and funding opportunities, regardless of their ability to attend a meeting on any given month.

Fewer administrative updates during meetings has allowed for more time for members to present on and lead a discussion around their current research projects. This provides a crucial space for researchers to get feedback from peers on their own work and learn about other projects currently happening in their field. HPRI also invites outside stakeholders to speak at monthly meetings and share updates from the field. In the upcoming year, HPRI would like to expand on the types of stakeholders invited to include more service providers and culturally specific organizations.

This continuous communication works to prevent tension that may arise amongst members who must balance their commitment to collective impact, while also satisfying the needs of their own work. While HPRI has increased the level of funding for homelessness research in Los Angeles County, it will require more time and collaboration building for members to find this balance.

Continuous communication does not come without its challenges however; in some cases, urgent matters or projects need to be discussed between monthly meetings, and because membership is voluntary and unpaid, it is often difficult to connect with people who are occupied with other work. Digital interactions between leadership and committee members are crucial to help bridge the gap in communication between monthly meetings. The ability to be adaptive and amenable to course corrections is a critical quality for creating the foundations of any organization, but it is particularly important in the development of a

collective impact model. Listening to and acting on feedback from policymakers, funders, and research committee members ensures long term sustainability of relationships vital to success.

**Backbone support organization**  
*Effective collective impact initiatives must establish a backbone support organization made up of dedicated administrative staff who can provide technical and logistical support and manage the efforts of the collaborating partners (Kania & Kramer, 2011).*

The USC Price Center for Social Innovation serves as HPRI's backbone support organization. The Center has several staff members who are funded to provide administrative support to HPRI research and activities. The Director of External Relations manages research translation, communication, and resource allocation. A Project Manager coordinates monthly meetings and oversees rapid response research and collaborative research, and a project specialist assists in administering internal RFPs, budgets, and contracts. Further, HPRI's Director and Associate Director act as liaisons between the research community and policymakers and funders on a regular basis. HPRI staff also frequently interact with the backbone support staff of the larger Home For Good collective impact initiative through monthly meetings to discuss fundraising and high-level research and strategy items.

Following the lead of Home For Good's Funders Collaborative, which between 2012 and 2016 aligned over \$1 billion in public and private philanthropic resources toward permanent solutions to homelessness (Home For Good, 2017), HPRI has facilitated collaborative funding opportunities for its researcher members. For example, HPRI members recently submitted two different collaborative proposals to help evaluate and upgrade the Coordinated Entry System Triage Tool. Collaboration

across institutions and disciplines among researchers has become more common due to the network HPRI has established.

In addition to leadership provided through the backbone organization, Weaver (2016) discusses the importance of "system leadership" as an important aspect of the collective impact framework. System leadership cannot rely on one heroic individual to guide the process of systems change. Instead, system leadership relies upon multiple leaders who can look at problems both from a micro level and a macro level and work together to create consensus and methodical changes. HPRI is able to fit within systems leadership by working alongside roundtables and committees organized by Home for Good and the Los Angeles Homelessness Services Authority (LAHSA). Within a system leadership framework, change is a slower process, but may produce better long-term outcomes through a consensus-based decision making process. Using a systems leadership framework to convene around a common agenda of ending homelessness in Los Angeles is ongoing and will likely continue to shift with the nature of the issue.

## CHALLENGES AND BEST PRACTICES

While the literature on Collective Impact is recent, and the evidence around its effectiveness is still forthcoming, the practices embedded in the framework are not new. Weaver (2016) asserts that organizations asking themselves questions like "What measures will show that we are making progress?" or "How can we improve communications across partners?" are practices that will only improve the work of any organization striving for systemic change. Weaver cites multiple examples of organizations having success using the Collective Impact Framework, from organizations working to end poverty like Vibrant Communities Canada, to organizations

focusing on educational equity such as the Strive Partnership and the Seattle Roadmap Project. Despite limited causal evidence on the effectiveness of the collective impact framework, the framework does provide a structure that organizations can use to ensure collaboration and communication with the community that the organization is trying to positively impact.

HPRI has had great success in its first three years utilizing the Collective Impact Framework to build a community of researchers and policymakers working to tackle the vast and complex issue of homelessness in Los Angeles, engaging in work that no one else in the region is doing. Using the Collective Impact framework as a guidepost, HPRI has developed strong relationships with United Way as a key organization. The framework also guided HPRI to be very intentional when establishing a common agenda, creating working groups to more deeply explore critical issues, and ensuring that the voices of stakeholders were incorporated in the work of the organization.

In addition to following Kania and Kramer's Collective Impact Framework, HPRI has prioritized the following best practices in the face of common challenges that helped them to establish a strong foundation in their first three years as an organization:

### **Challenge: Rapid Growth**

Immediately upon launching HPRI, the need for a collective research voice in the work to end homelessness in Los Angeles became apparent. Policymakers and funders had an extensive list of "rapid response" research questions to be answered. The number of organizations joining the research collaborative grew steadily over the first two years. Towards the end of its first year, HPRI received substantial funding to redistribute a large investment into research purposes for a relatively new collaborative.



This raised questions from members about the purpose of the collaborative as a convening body or one that conducts large scale research projects.

**Solution: Prioritize Authentic Collaboration & Remain Adaptable**

Authentic collaboration is the result of transparency, good communication, and lasting intentional relationships, not of a one-time upfront investment in an initiative. The ability to be adaptive and amenable to course corrections is a critical quality for creating the foundations of any organization, but it is particularly important when operating within a collective impact framework. Although an unplanned step, after the collaborative grew rapidly during its first year, HPRI leadership worked with a consulting firm to understand the tensions and successes of the first year and to plan the upcoming years according to the vision of its members, allowing space for its purpose and activities to continue to evolve.

**Challenge: Resource Competition**

Another challenge with such a large and diverse collective of researchers and organizations is a potential competition for funding resources, such as competitive grant opportunities. Since members of HPRI come from several different organizations, with various levels of funding tensions can arise when seeking grant research funding. Past questions have included: what does it mean to get HPRI funding, what obligations does the researcher have if they receive funding from HPRI; and if multiple researchers apply together for the same project, who gets to be the principal investigator on the project? These tensions largely arose at the end of the first year of the collaborative, when the HPRI brand began gaining traction among policymakers and funders.

**Solution: Transparency & Collective Review Processes**

Although the USC Price Center for Social Innovation is the administrative lead for HPRI, it does not seek to be the primary recipient of funding for the collaborative. To address the challenges related to funding, HPRI staff created a framework to guide decision making around fundraising for the collaborative, including who leads the solicitation process, when the Price Center serves as a facilitator versus the lead applicant, and who serves as the principal investigator. This framework was presented to the HPRI research committee, who collectively reviewed, provided feedback, and agreed upon the framework. Similarly, when HPRI solicits RFPs, the director and staff serve strictly as administrators and rely on a review committee to inform the funding decision based on a rubric that is included in the original request for proposals. Every applicant for an RFP also receives comments from the reviewers to promote transparency and provide feedback to strengthen an applicant's future proposals.

**Challenge: Power & Equity**

Collective impact has faced widespread critiques from academics and practitioners for not addressing community inclusion, equity, power and race in a meaningful way, which is necessary to tackle the underlying drivers of persistent social problems (Wolff et al., 2016; Christens & Inzeo, 2015). The model offers limited guidance for engaged affected residents, to build community influence throughout the collective impact process (Wolff, 2016; Barnes et al., 2014). Furthermore, the model offers little guidance for implementation and for advancing policy change, which are necessary in order to undermine the structural inequalities that many collective impact initiatives aspire to dismantle (Hoey et al., 2017; Wolff, 2016). Research in particular has been a historically

White male profession with a reputation of extracting from the communities that it studies and excluding community members from decision making positions.

**Solution: Actively & Continuously Strive for Equity, Uplift Historically Excluded Voices**

As a collaborative of researchers, HPRI must actively and continuously work to make sure issues of power and equity are addressed. In working with SVPLA in the strategic planning process during its second year, HPRI members ensured that equity and cultural humility were explicitly laid out in the updated purpose statement, values and activities. The collaborative committed to engaging culturally specific organizations in its convenings and research and recruiting new members from a diversity of organizations and racial and ethnic backgrounds. Further, members committed to finding a defined role for people with lived expertise of homelessness to participate in conversations and convenings and advise HPRI on research agendas and projects.

HPRI's race equity working group underwent a similar purpose and activity defining process, and agreed to function primarily as a consulting body to ensure that all HPRI convenings and research are addressing disparities in inclusion, equity, power and race. Advising activities of the working group include reviewing HPRI RFPs and proposals for research, ensuring that affected communities are engaged during research dissemination, providing proactive suggestions for designs/measures in research projects, and ensuring that HPRI is engaging with other tables focused on racial equity, including the Ad Hoc Committee on Black People Experiencing Homelessness. Additionally, at least two places on the HPRI Steering Committee are reserved for members of the race equity working group.

**CONCLUSION**

Since HPRI first launched as a pilot project in 2017, the Institute has used Kania and Kramer's collective impact framework as an essential guidepost for navigating the complexities of bringing together over 40 researchers, policymakers, and service providers around a shared agenda. HPRI strongly aligns with Kania and Kramer's framework, uniting this diverse group to synergize the relationship between policy, practice and research. With support from a strong backbone organization, HPRI has been able to adopt and refine a shared agenda, establish continuous communication, create mutually reinforcing activities with other sectors in the homelessness ecosystem, and facilitate the infrastructure for a shared measurement system. Across institutions, HPRI members are united behind the mission of accelerating equitable and culturally informed solutions to homelessness by advancing knowledge and fostering transformational partnerships.

Given the emerging state of the literature around best practices, HPRI is a strong example of an organization utilizing the framework in a new context. However, like many other collective impact organizations, challenges for the collaborative have emerged. Although a shared infrastructure for HMIS data will one day be a powerful tool for homelessness researchers, getting the infrastructure up and running will require larger cultural shifts around data sharing at public institutions. HPRI must also continue to consciously grapple with power imbalances and inequities that the collective impact framework alone may not address (Christens & Inzeo, 2015). While a dedicated working group is a good starting place to address racial inequities in homelessness and research, in upcoming years, the collaborative will continue to build on that work by developing and implementing a strategy for engaging people with lived expertise to ensure that research is better informed by these voices.



The intractable nature of the homelessness crisis in Los Angeles warrants a new approach to partnerships between research, policy and practice. The Collective Impact Framework is a multi-faceted model that matches the complexity and urgency of the issue. While the principles of the Collective Impact Framework are not groundbreaking in themselves,

the power of the framework is in combining these practices intentionally to create new pathways for social impact. The successes of HPRI's first three years within the collective impact framework suggest that researchers working on complex, intersectional problems such as homelessness could benefit from adopting a similar approach.

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