

Norwalk ACTS MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT

The **mission** of Norwalk ACTS is to enrich and improve the lives and futures of all of Norwalk's children and youth, from cradle to career. In doing so, it is our **vision** that Norwalk will be the healthiest city in America for a child to grow up in - academically, socially/emotionally, and physically. Social justice and racial equity are core values of Norwalk ACTS. We are committed to continuing to disaggregate data to report on racial and economic disparities so that together we can deploy tools and resources to support adoption of equitable practices. This includes evaluating our internal operations and systems and building our own capacity to make measurable progress towards being a truly diverse, equitable, and inclusive organization. The Norwalk ACTS Membership, having adopted the principles of **Collective Impact** and the **StriveTogether Theory of Action** for building cradle to career civic infrastructure, is helping our community build an integrated system to address the academic, social emotional, and health/wellness needs of Norwalk's children.

Principles of Collective Impact

- Common Agenda
- Shared Measurement
- Mutually Reinforcing Activities
- Continuous Communication
- Backbone Support

StriveTogether Pillars

- Shared Community Vision
- Evidence Based Decision Making
- Collaborative Action
- Investment and Sustainability

Additionally, we incorporate these additional **eight practices** of Collective Impact:

1. Design and implement Initiatives with a priority placed on equity
2. Include community members in the collaborative
3. Recruit and co-create with cross-sector partners
4. Use data to continuously learn, adapt, and improve
5. Cultivate leaders with unique system leadership skills
6. Focus on program and system strategies
7. Build a culture that fosters relationships, trust, and respect across participants
8. Customize for local context

Our Collective Impact process, strategies, and Initiatives are aimed at the achievement or increase in the %s of the following community level outcomes:

- Norwalk children enter kindergarten ready to learn.
- Norwalk students meet the goal level in 3rd grade reading.
- Norwalk students have the necessary skills to successfully transition from 5th to 6th grade.
- Norwalk students have the necessary skills to successfully transition from 8th to 9th grade.
- Norwalk students graduate from high school in 4 years ready for college, post-secondary training, or full-time employment.
- Norwalk graduates are career-ready with a college degree or professional certificate.

Purpose

This Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) is intended to serve as an articulation of the shared intention of the Norwalk ACTS Membership to implement the mission. It outlines the roles and responsibilities of Members and those of the Backbone Staff, in support of our collective efforts at better outcomes for all of Norwalk's children and youth.

The Members of Norwalk ACTS are entering into an MOA agreement with the organization and with one another, to ensure a foundation built on shared accountability, continuous improvement, solidarity, inclusion and respect.

To ensure better outcomes for children, we aim to foster the following:

- True system building
- Leadership and innovation
- Shared commitment to the methodology of Collective Impact
- Aligned productivity
- Cost effective practice
- Leveraged learning

Pledge

As a Member of Norwalk ACTS, I and/or my organization commits to building trust amongst Members and throughout the community by operating with honesty and transparency, valuing and actively promoting equity and unity, and by modeling a commitment to our work by ensuring:

- The principles of Collective Impact and the methodology of *StriveTogether* guide our work
- Data is used as information and evidence to support fact-based decision-making
- All sectors of the community are intentionally engaged in the work with regards to race, gender, age, income, geography, role, etc.
- Open and candid communication, transparency, an ongoing spirit of innovation, optimism, and positive thinking
- Persistent commitment to sustainable, long term, systems change, and continuous improvement

Benefits of Membership

As a Member of Norwalk ACTS, I/my organization can expect to receive the following:

- Development of robust working relationships among diverse community members and leaders across multiple sectors
- Participation in the co-development of strategies and action plans to move the needle on community level outcomes
- Access to local programmatic data and other evidence-based data to support informed decision-making and action plan development and implementation
- Opportunities to build a sense of collective identity and to learn about the work of many Norwalk community based organizations
- A unified advocacy position and greater community impact through the collaboration and alignment of best cross-sector practices, resources and services that will further inform member and community work
- Access to networking and meaningful professional development opportunities
- Assistance with the identification, alignment, and leveraging of short and long term investments
- Regular communication about the work of the partnership and individual members to amplify best practices
- The opportunity to vote annually on a slate of members to serve as Norwalk ACTS' Board of Directors
- The opportunity to be featured as a member on our website and annual community impact report

Responsibilities of Members

As a Member of Norwalk ACTS, I and/or my organization commit(s) to:

- Working within the established principles of Collective Impact and the StriveTogether framework
- Ensuring that Norwalk ACTS is a community of learning by participating in outreach activities, attending Norwalk ACTS General Membership meetings and participating in Initiatives and/or Workgroup/Task forces.
- Ensuring that there is no action without data. Within FERPA and HIPAA guidelines, I/we will:
 - Commit to data-informed decision-making and measurable impact
 - Prioritize and rely on quantitative and qualitative data to identify trends, define problems, test strategies, analyze results, and align activities and resources
 - Identify ways to amplify what is working locally and within other evidence-based practices
- Persistently reminding ourselves that behind every data point is a child. By taking a holistic approach to achieving our vision, I/we commit to making decisions that are focused solely on better outcomes for children and youth
- Publicly advocating for the mission of Norwalk ACTS and my role as a Member
- Aligning organizational and programmatic interests with other Members wherever and whenever possible

Responsibilities of Backbone Staff

Norwalk ACTS, both in terms of how the Backbone supports the Membership and in terms of how the Membership supports the Community, is a **Convener, a Conduit and a Catalyst for Change**.

As a Convener, the Backbone Staff commits to:

- Convening Leaders/Members around data-identified need, prioritized Initiatives or cohorts of children
- Providing staff and consultant facilitation to develop and implement Action Plans and outline the strategic direction of Norwalk ACTS' Initiatives
- Establishing a central location for notes, documents, and other relevant information that is easily accessible to Members
- Assisting Member organizations with their alignment with Norwalk ACTS' mission and outcomes

As a Conduit, the Backbone Staff commits to:

- Providing Members with information, resources, and data in order to facilitate decision-making
- Actively collecting and analyzing data
- Facilitating the prioritization of data and providing Members with data as requested
- Working with members to establish/align a better system of data collection
- Providing data infrastructure/capacity, storage and communication

As a Catalyst for Change, the Backbone Staff commits to:

- Actively honoring Norwalk ACTS' membership in the *StriveTogether* Network and our "Commitment to Quality" by:
 - Using the *StriveTogether* Theory of Action as a guide for our work
 - Continuing to build and sustain a cradle to career civic infrastructure and to achieve improved outcomes for Norwalk's children
 - Actively participating in a community of learning and practice, exchanging knowledge and expertise with peer cradle-to-career partnerships
- Identifying and leveraging investment opportunities around infrastructure, specific bodies of work and/or cohorts of children in order to sustain the organization and the work of our Members
- Fostering the development of emerging leaders
- Establishing partnerships to create opportunities for shared resources, leveraged investment and communities of learning
- Executing a comprehensive internal and external Communications plan in order to highlight the work of our Members and increase visibility and familiarity within the greater community
- Working with the Membership to develop an Advocacy Plan for greater community impact