

Building civic infrastructure in smaller cities: lessons from the Boston Fed's Working Cities Challenge on paving the way for economic opportunity

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A graduation rate that rose from 52 to 72 percent in six years. A 10.5 percent increase in the labor force participation rate. Population growth of 10.1 percent.¹ Lawrence has too often served as the ‘poster city’ for decline in Massachusetts’ smaller industrial cities, but its story is much more complex—and as these statistics demonstrate, hopeful—than headlines suggest. And while the ‘hopeless smaller city’ narrative still persists in the media, it is increasingly clear that there is much these communities can do to rewrite their stories. These places will never be insulated from the kinds of economic shocks that decimated manufacturing industries and populations in turn, but local leaders and their institutions can make a real difference for their cities and residents through their approaches to economic development, human capital development, and quality of life.

The playbook on effective strategies in these domains is growing ever thicker: reinvesting in historic downtowns, focusing on business retention as well as recruitment, leveraging historic and cultural assets, building the capacity of small businesses, strengthening neighborhoods, and developing regional approaches to economic development are among the pathways smaller cities are encouraged to pursue.² But as the Boston Fed’s research on revitalizing smaller industrial cities illustrates, it’s not only what you do, it’s how you do it. Implementing technical solutions like these requires both capacity and infrastructure: capacity to implement effectively and adaptively, and the infrastructure where this capacity is housed, resourced, and sustained.

Indeed, the key factor identified by Boston Fed researchers in a study of what it takes for smaller industrial cities to achieve resurgence was effectively a strong civic infrastructure—high-capacity leaders, organizations, and networks that mobilized residents and resources—that allowed the community to pursue a shared vision and implement technical strategies to achieve it.³

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This finding was an important one for the Boston Fed, where our community development efforts seek to advance economic opportunity in smaller industrial cities across New England. This inspired a question: what would it take for the Boston Fed to support smaller industrial cities in strengthening their civic infrastructures in order to advance economic opportunity for low-income residents? Our hypothesis was that that if we provided financial and technical support to cross-sector teams pursuing a shared result that benefits their low-income residents, then those teams would build capacity and make lasting improvements to their cities' civic infrastructures.

This hypothesis was named the Working Cities Challenge, and five years after its 2013 launch in Massachusetts, *we now have early but promising evidence that this hypothesis was correct*. The four cities that won the initial round of the competition showed meaningful gains in capacity over the course of the three-year competition. These teams have deployed systems-level strategies that will sustain change beyond the grant period. They have empowered new voices through resident engagement and improved their practices as a result of introducing new perspectives to their leadership tables. Learning has been prioritized, and data is increasingly used to shape, improve, and adapt approaches in ways that weren't happening before. And most importantly, the capacity to lead collaboratively, across sectors and silos, has fundamentally changed the way business is done in these places, resulting in a stronger civic infrastructure that will enhance these cities' responses to new challenges or opportunities far beyond the life of their Working Cities Challenge grants.

These places have already begun to leverage their more powerful civic infrastructures to achieve better results for their low-income residents. The Lawrence Working Families Initiative has connected over 200 parents to new or better jobs, resulting in an average wage increase of 25 percent. Holyoke's SPARK initiative has generated 33 new businesses that employ 82 people. Large parcels of vacant real estate in downtown Fitchburg are being developed to reenergize the

neighborhood. Chelsea Thrives is gaining traction in reducing its crime rate by fundamentally shifting the way the city identifies and supports high-risk people and families.

These three-year-old efforts will still take years to bear the kind of fruit that will sustain lasting, population-level change. But the work of these teams provides important lessons not only for their Working Cities Challenge peers in subsequent rounds in Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut, but also for smaller industrial cities throughout New England and beyond that are seeking lessons for how to make and sustain change in complex, under-resourced environments. Those lessons include:

1. **Collaboration** must be more than prioritized; to do this effectively and leverage collaboration for results, teams benefited from structured incentives, flexible funding, and focused capacity-building to support working in new and different ways.
2. The WCC emphasizes and practices an ethos of **learning and adaptation**, which gives teams the flexibility to reassess and shift in ways that unlock important progress.
3. The role of **dedicated leadership** in the form of Initiative Directors has been invaluable to keeping the collaboration moving forward. It also pushes leaders and organizations to think more intentionally about leadership development: in addition to how the work will be sustained, who will be poised to lead it?
4. The pursuit of **systems change** requires teams to informally assess and influence each dimension of civic infrastructure. At the same time, a city's civic infrastructure itself—the way resources are allocated, or the process of engaging residents in decision-making—can be an important target for systems change.
5. The branding of this initiative and **the spotlight it shines on oft-neglected smaller industrial cities** has paid off tremendously for winning teams, both through their ability to leverage their initial awards, but also through their ability to collectively attract investments

from national philanthropy that recognizes the promise of investing in smaller—and often more nimble—systems and cities.

In an effort to model the learning orientation we ask our teams to demonstrate, the Boston Fed readily acknowledges that we have much more to learn when it comes to strengthening civic infrastructure in smaller cities. Since we last reflected on lessons and adaptations, there's a new and growing set of learning questions we are pursuing in order to understand and respond to: the level of readiness cities need to have in order to compete in the WCC; the influence of city size on a team's ability to succeed in the WCC; the degree to which progress on a shared result is linked to progress strengthening civic infrastructure; the influence a sharper focus racial equity will have on teams' initiatives; the role leadership development can play in bolstering and sustaining civic infrastructure gains; and what it takes to sustain these initiatives beyond the three-year grant period.

In addition to key lessons and examples emerging from the Working Cities Challenge on what it takes—and what it looks like—to strengthen civic infrastructure, this paper will also share some tools the Boston Fed has prototyped to help cities better understand, talk about, and improve their civic infrastructures in order to enhance their long-term prospects for resurgence.

1. WCC background

History. The Boston Fed's Regional and Community Outreach division is concerned with advancing economic opportunity for New England's low- and moderate-income communities, and the majority of those communities are smaller cities that reached peak population and productivity through manufacturing. Springfield, Massachusetts, is one of our biggest, and its barriers to revitalization—steep declines in population, manufacturing, and workforce participation coupled with insufficient growth in educational attainment—became the focus of our research and outreach staff from 2008-2010. In the process of looking at specific issues like low labor force participation,

and small business development, a broader question was also pursued: can cities that have lost as much ground as Springfield achieve economic resurgence, and if so, what does it take?

This question was answered through an investigation into the trajectories of 25 of Springfield's peer cities across the country, ten of which⁴ recorded substantial gains for their residents. While strategies varied, the importance of a strong civic infrastructure remained constant: sustained collaboration across individuals, institutions, and sectors underpinned each community's turnaround narrative.⁵ This unexpected finding led the Boston Fed to another question. If a strong civic infrastructure is what it will take for Springfield and other struggling, smaller cities in New England to achieve better outcomes for their residents, then what does it take to strengthen civic infrastructure?

Our pursuit of that question led us to an exploration of models that advance cross-sector collaboration and systems change, including those that pursue "collective impact." It also introduced us to the idea of a competition and the benefits such an approach could have on building the capacity of communities seeking resources in new and different ways. And as we looked at approaches for building civic infrastructure, we also realized the importance of building a cross-sector, collaborative infrastructure of our own. This became our Steering Committee, populated by public, private, nonprofit, and philanthropic leaders from Massachusetts, where we decided a pilot would be most feasible given an established, state-level commitment to supporting the places branded as "Gateway Cities."⁶

With the support of our Steering Committee, the Working Cities Challenge was piloted with a competitive grant opportunity made available to 20 Massachusetts cities with high poverty, low educational attainment, and between 35,000 and 250,000 residents. Four cities—Chelsea, Fitchburg, Holyoke, and Lawrence—were awarded three-year grants by an independent, cross-sector jury in Round 1. Thanks to the early success of that round, a second Massachusetts round was introduced

for non-winning cities in 2015, and the WCC has since introduced the model to Rhode Island and Connecticut as well. (See section 2 for more on the winning teams across the three participating states.)

Model. While the model has evolved considerably based on lessons from the pilot round of the WCC,⁷ the overarching theory of change of the Working Cities Challenge is that teams will translate their short-term efforts to build capacity and pursue a shared result into a stronger civic infrastructure. This stronger civic infrastructure, in turn, will be leveraged to improve economic and quality of life outcomes for their cities' residents, much like the "resurgent cities" cited in the Boston Fed's research have done.

This theory is put into practice through the key features that comprise our model:

- A state-level **Steering Committee** that informs the development and implementation of the competition to ensure that the WCC is adapted for the context of each state and their cities.
- **Funding** provided by state government, the private sector, and philanthropy (local and national); no funding is provided by the Boston Fed.⁸
- **Staffing** by the Boston Fed to manage the competition and support the winning teams during implementation.
- A set of **core elements** that guide how teams approach their work to ensure that teams make progress toward their shared result while strengthening civic infrastructure:
 - *Collaborative leadership*: the ability to work together across the nonprofit, private, and public sectors to achieve a shared, long-term vision
 - *Community engagement*: authentic involvement of residents that empowers them to participate in the development and implementation of your initiative, with an intentionality around race, equity, and inclusion

- *Learning orientation:* The willingness to tackle hard questions, use evidence to inform your decisions about strategies and priorities, and change course when needed
 - *Systems change:* altering activities, priorities, resources, capital flows, and/or decision making structures within a larger system in order to better solve a problem or deliver services
- **Design grants** of \$15,000 awarded by an independent jury to a large subset of eligible teams (10 each in CT and MA, 7 in RI) that demonstrate readiness. Grants support six months of planning, during which time the Boston Fed convenes teams capacity-building workshops.
 - **Implementation grants** of \$400-475,000 awarded by an independent jury to teams that made progress in the design phase and developed compelling initiatives to achieve an ambitious, 10-year shared result. Grants are for three years and are matched locally to ensure that teams have sufficient resources to hire Initiative Directors and implement strategies.
 - **Coaching and technical assistance** provided by the Boston Fed staff and external consultants over the course of implementation.
 - A **learning community** that brings teams together several times a year to build collective capacity and exchange ideas.
 - **Independent evaluations** of each round to advance the Boston Fed's understanding of how to support teams in the short-term and how to improve our model across rounds.

WCC implementation, illustrated. What does this model look like in practice? In Connecticut, our most recent round that reflects our best learning from previous rounds, it began with an effort secure commitments from state-level, cross-sector stakeholders to fund and champion a round of the competition. Many of those funding partners joined the Steering Committee to help the Boston Fed shape the competition process, which kicked off with an announcement in October 2016 that

sixteen cities would be eligible to compete for \$15,000, six-month design grants. All sixteen applied, and ten were selected by a jury comprised of Steering Committee members who scored applications and conducted interviews to assess which teams were design-ready.

Those ten teams embarked on a six-month process of growing and building relationships within their teams, engaging residents, learning more about the challenges they intended to address, and building capacity in the core elements through four, day-long sessions facilitated by the Boston Fed. Those sessions featured practitioners sharing lessons from their own cross-sector, collaborative work, including Initiative Directors from Round 2 teams from Massachusetts. They concluded with homework assignments that helped the Boston Fed gauge progress and ensure the design phase was on track to produce competitive, implementation-ready applications.

Nine teams emerged from the design phase with applications for \$450,000 implementation grants (one team decided not to proceed). The Steering Committee again served as the jury, reviewing teams' submissions and conducting interviews to assess teams across a set of criteria that assessed progress during the design phase, capacity and alignment across the core elements, and the strength of teams' approach to understanding and pursuing a feasible pathway to their shared result. Five teams prevailed in that process, yielding the cohort of WCC winners in Connecticut who will receive not just three years of implementation funding, but also coaching and technical assistance from the Boston Fed, opportunities to work together across cities to advance learning, support and advisement from the Steering Committee, and independent feedback on their progress through the evaluation.

While the competition processes across rounds have yielded important lessons for our model, it's the work of the winning teams themselves that has contributed most significantly to our understanding of what it takes to support cities as they undertake the complex work demanded of them by the WCC. As of February 2018, we now have sixteen unique cities, teams, and initiatives to

draw lessons from, and because each round is at a different stage of the work, they all stand to both inform and benefit from adaptations along the way (Appendix A features details on winning cities and their initiatives).

Working Cities Challenge winners

MA – Round 1	MA – Round 2	Rhode Island	Connecticut
Chelsea	Haverhill	Cranston	Danbury
Fitchburg	Lowell	Newport	East Hartford
Holyoke	Pittsfield	Providence	Hartford
Lawrence	Springfield		Middletown
			Waterbury

2. Measuring civic infrastructure

Before shifting to sharing evidence that—and reasons why—the WCC is positively impacting civic infrastructure, it’s important to address how we’re gathering that evidence in the first place. Moreover, some of our emerging lessons about impacting civic infrastructure relate to measuring it. As the saying goes, “What gets measured gets done.” So what impact might it have on teams and cities if there is a more intentional focus on addressing and tracking progress on civic infrastructure during the WCC, rather than assessing it at the end of the grant period?

Current approach to measuring civic infrastructure. A key feature of our model is an independent evaluation that is assessing the impact of the WCC for each round at key intervals: the end of the design phase, the start of implementation, the midpoint of the grant period, and at the conclusion of year three. These assessments offer key insights on how teams are progressing, the degree to which that progress reflects or demands more or different from our model, and whether that progress is putting teams on a path toward lasting civic infrastructure gains.

Our most recent insights on the WCC’s impact come from the final evaluation of Round 1, which concluded in September 2017. Unlike the midpoint evaluation for this round,⁹ which assessed teams’ progress implementing their strategies and integrating the core elements, this looked at how teams translated those things into broader civic infrastructure gains. Through surveying and

interviewing key stakeholders in each city, observing the teams at work, and reviewing teams' grant reports and other documentation of their work, the final evaluation assessed civic infrastructure using the following outcomes that reflect the WCC theory of change: 1) expanded and sustained collaborative leadership; 2) value of core elements in advancing shared result, and diffusion of core elements within partner organizations; 3) resident engagement; and 4) external recognition and resources. See Appendix B for the detailed rubric Mt. Auburn Associates used to inform their assessment of teams' progress toward the WCC's overarching civic infrastructure goals.

Exploring additional tools. While the analysis conducted at the close of Round 1 offers important insights the WCC and civic infrastructure, it also leaves us with some important questions around cities' baseline levels of civic infrastructure. To what extent does a team's starting point affect or reflect their ability to make progress? And because "what gets measured gets done," we'd like to know if measuring this at the city level—even absent a resource-intensive intervention like the WCC—could help cities target scarce resources toward areas in which progress will make the most difference. While there are some secondary measures that appear to reflect on some key dimensions of civic infrastructure, including nonprofit density, voter turnout, resource attraction, and individual philanthropy, factors like leadership and collaboration prove much harder to gauge.¹⁰

In partnership with the Lawrence Partnership, a cross-sector group of leaders in that city advancing inclusive economic development, we piloted a survey of nearly 100 city leaders to assess their perceptions of civic infrastructure across its dimensions with questions like, "To what extent do citizens, government, private companies, and nonprofits work together to solve community problems?" (Examples of survey questions included in Appendix C). And in partnership with graduate students from Northeastern University, we used similar questions to measure civic infrastructure through the perceptions of leaders with a statewide perspective (working in state or federal government as well as philanthropy) to determine whether this target group could provide

insights across multiple cities. (See Appendix D for sample questions.) Both of these tools show promise, and we hope to test them on a larger scale and across more cities and states to find ways to simplify the methodology or even identify proxy indicators that can be measured through secondary data alone.

3. How is the WCC impacting civic infrastructure?

The independent evaluation of Round 1, completed in early 2018, objectively validated the story our winning teams were telling us: that their capacity has grown significantly as a result of the WCC, and that this has translated into strengthened civic infrastructures. Mt. Auburn Associates found, “substantial evidence that the WCC teams have generated outcomes for their respective communities that extend well beyond progress toward their shared result, but ultimately affect the communities’ capacity to tackle any challenges in the future, regardless of the specific goal.”¹¹ What does that substantial evidence include? The Round 1 evaluation points to:

Impact on leaders. Foundational to the progress made by teams was the degree to which participating leaders strengthened their connections and collaborative capacity. In a survey of WCC team members across the four cities, 92 percent agreed that their WCC initiatives yielded new or deeper relationships and/or catalyzed changes in perspectives among local leaders. Team members expect this will have a lasting influence on how their cities approach challenges or opportunities. One participant shared, “The relationships that have been formed are not going to go away. When there’s a new grant, everyone’s already thinking about how we can collaborate.”¹²

Winning teams from future rounds have observed how even the six-month design phase meaningfully changed leaders’ connections with each other. In a survey of design phase participants, one respondent noted, “The design phase brought greater visibility to stakeholders that are less well known than the major institutional players. We were able to recognize the value those stakeholders brought to the process and will bring to the initiative.”

In some cases, teams are already moving beyond strengthening leadership capacity among the team and toward putting systems in place to sustain a strong—and more diverse—bench of leaders. This has included identifying and adding members to their teams, but it is also extending to influence civic life. Chelsea’s Board Leadership Boot Camp has prepared over 50 residents for positions on municipal boards and commissions, and a majority of participants now serve their communities in this capacity. The Round 2 teams of Pittsfield and Lowell are also pursuing inclusive leadership development strategies aimed at diversifying the voices of appointed and elected leaders through candidate nights and efforts to make their City Council meetings more accessible.

Impact on organizations. Each team experienced leadership turnover in the course of the WCC, and that fact of life makes it particularly important that the capacity changes at the individual leadership level spill over to affect those leaders’ organizations, too. The evaluation found strong progress in the area of collaboration—a majority of organizations reported an increased level of engagement within and across sectors, with 75 percent reporting increased engagement with nonprofits and businesses since the WCC began.

Public sector turnover presented a significant threat to both the Fitchburg and Chelsea teams, whose mayor and city manager respectively played important roles in winning the WCC. These initiatives proved resilient in part because teams took quick action to engage those leaders’ successors. But the teams had also developed other relationships in city government to deepen public sector engagement before those transitions happened, and that engagement would have proven difficult to undo.

Almost every team includes a higher education partner, and in the case of Fitchburg State University (FSU), the WCC significantly enhanced the way that anchor institution contributes to the city’s civic infrastructure. Beyond making investments in the team’s target neighborhood, FSU just recently took over the backbone role of the initiative, leveraging its institutional capacity to ensure

that the initiative is housed and staffed beyond the WCC grant period—a significant investment that will be critical for the sustainability of this work.

In addition to new and deeper collaboration among organizations, the WCC catalyzed shifts in policies and practices in ways that enhanced organizational efficacy as well as the impact of cities' initiatives. Organizations are embedding the core elements in their practices to become more learning- and systems-oriented and improve the ways they engage residents. For example, Lawrence CommunityWorks, that city initiative's backbone agency, was disinclined to use and analyze data at the start of the WCC. When surveyed at the end of the initiative, staffers reported an increased value and use of data within the organization—a lasting change that will likely enhance the organization's efficacy beyond the WCC.

The increased level of organizational collaboration is also likely to spread and sustain beyond the WCC: 83 percent of participants now see an increased importance in sharing decision-making and responsibility across organizations. Perhaps most importantly, 69 percent of Round 1 team members report that their organizations have changed policies, practices, and/or resource allocations to facilitate stronger collaborations with other entities in their cities.

Impact on networks. The WCC itself catalyzed a new network in each city by asking each team to develop a formal, cross-sector table to guide the initiative. Because teams have committed to pursuing their result for a full ten years, these new networks themselves represent critical elements of cities' current and future civic infrastructures. But the impact of the WCC on catalyzing and strengthening networks goes beyond the initiative level. The Round 1 evaluation found new collaborative networks emerging from the WCC, along with new efforts to align existing networks in service of a broader vision for improvement in these cities. The Fitchburg team has aligned with the nascent Fitchburg Plan, which resembles the Lawrence Partnership. The business leaders driving this new entity have begun engaging with the WCC team on capital investment opportunities

downtown, and they are also exploring ways to collaborate more deeply on developing a pathway for sustaining the WCC initiative's work beyond the grant period.

Another way WCC teams are influencing networks reflects the nature of these places and the degree to which they are more tightly-knit than their large-city counterparts. Smaller-city leaders often wear multiple hats in their communities which allow teams to link to more networks and influence more systems. In Lowell, one team member represents a nonprofit and serves on the School Committee, providing bridging two sectors and issue areas at once. The Waterbury team has two members that represent organizations but also sit on their city's Board of Alderman. These overlapping networks reflect and enhance teams' power to influence local systems in service of their shared result, and they also reinforce the value of formal and informal networks in helping cities operate more effectively.

Impact on resident engagement. The influence of the WCC on resident engagement has bolstered leaders' and organizations' value of and practice with this dimension of civic infrastructure: 72 percent of survey respondents expressed that they now place more importance on seeking out diverse resident perspectives to inform their work as a result of the WCC, and 83 percent reported an increase in how they value resident empowerment and leadership.

At the same time, it's difficult to determine how much teams' progress in this area reflects their starting place. The backbone agencies for the Chelsea and Lawrence teams began the WCC with strong practices in place to ensure that resident voices informed and contributed to their work, and this capacity helped ensure not only that their initiatives embedded engagement, but also that organizational partners—including the community college in Lawrence and the City of Chelsea—began changing practices to enhance their own work.

The Boston Fed adapted our model for subsequent rounds to provide more targeted technical support in this area when we learned how Round 1 teams' gains in this area were largely reflective of

their baseline capacity. We thus expect—and have already seen evidence among Round 2 teams—that this dimension of civic infrastructure will produce stronger gains going forward. In Lowell, where elected officials do not reflect the city’s racial and ethnic diversity,¹³ the WCC team introduced a new model for resident engagement that promotes inclusivity and accessibility. Groups in the city, including the municipality, have begun using the “Working Cities model” to design public processes that yield a deeper and more representative level of engagement.

Impact on resources. The easiest influence to measure when it comes to enhanced civic infrastructure is a city’s ability to align and generate new resources. To date, the Round 1 teams have used the WCC’s investment of \$1.8 million to attract \$8.4 million new dollars to support their collective work. Importantly, all of these investments—from regional and state-level foundations, state and federal grants, and national philanthropy—represented new funding these cities would have been unlikely to attract without using a cross-sector, collaborative initiative as the hook.

Beyond leveraging the innovative nature of their work, these teams have also made the most of their relationship with the Boston Fed and its funding partners to heighten the profile of their cities. For example, the Fitchburg team secured an opportunity to bring a team of leaders to an out-of-state workshop hosted by The Kresge Foundation on laying the groundwork for capital investments. Not only did this new resource bolster capacity and connections to outside resources, but it also bolstered relationships among key leaders through the amount of time they spent together on the trip. Meanwhile, both Chelsea and Lawrence were recognized by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation’s Culture of Health Prize, in part thanks to their collaborative work undertaken through the WCC.

Of significant importance is the shift in perceptions among Massachusetts leaders interviewed for the Round 1 evaluation, who expressed that the WCC cities emerged from the grant period with stronger prospects for future funding. Indeed, the state’s Urban Agenda grant program, explicitly

modeled after the WCC, has awarded over one-third of its most recent competitive dollars to cities from Rounds 1 and 2 in support of projects that align with WCC initiatives.

Leveraging civic infrastructure for better results. As some of the aforementioned examples demonstrate, teams have already used their strengthened capacities and infrastructures to pursue new and promising strategies around economic opportunity and quality of life. In a sense, they are applying the *adaptive* skills developed through the WCC to *technical* challenges and opportunities—many of which are straight out of the ‘smaller and/or post-industrial city revitalization’ playbook. It is encouraging to see the critical link between civic infrastructure and population-level change resulting in outcomes for low-income residents at this early stage, though we expect that measurable impacts will take several more years to reach scale.

The Fitchburg team is taking two interconnected strategies out of that playbook to mobilize two key assets: its walkable, historic downtown and its public university. Through their engagement with the WCC, FSU has made downtown redevelopment its own strategic priority and followed through with investments in real estate. These investments make revitalization efforts much more likely to succeed, and they may not have happened without the strong relationships that were built through FSU’s deep and sustained engagement with a network committed to improving this neighborhood.

Inclusive economic growth is another solution cities are encouraged to strive for, but pathways for doing so, particularly in places with limited growth, are less clear. Nevertheless, WCC teams are making real headway in ensuring that those most disconnected from their cities’ economies are not only targeted beneficiaries; teams are also providing them with seats at the decision-making table so that local leaders can better understand what it takes to be inclusive in both process and outcomes. The Lawrence Working Families Initiative is on the leading edge of this work. In alignment with the Lawrence Partnership, the team is bridging the language and cultural gaps between parents needing work and employers needing workers. Through strategies like mock interviews, employer

engagement and resident engagement have begun to intersect, and learning is two-way: prospective workers gain a better sense of what it will take to get hired, while employers learn about the needs and assets of entire sections of the community that they may not have historically engaged.

A third area representing significant potential for growth is in these cities' approaches to workforce development. While best practices in this area abound, the Springfield team can attest that the changes that need to be made in the area of data sharing and tracking alone depend on a foundation of trust. After trusting relationships are built, partners still need to agree on how to use data for learning and not for judgement—or worse, for resource reallocation. Though they are still honing their data strategy, the early progress the Springfield team has made in developing one signaled that they were ripe for more investment. This signal yielded \$75,000 from the state's Urban Agenda program that will help the team augment its impact on low-income residents this year.

5. What aspects of WCC make a difference for civic infrastructure?

It was necessary to verify that the WCC is a model that can demonstrate meaningful gains in civic infrastructure, but for most audiences—leaders in smaller cities in particular—the key question concerns the application of these findings. What interventions seem to have the most influence on strengthening the capacity of leaders, organizations, and networks and mobilizing human and financial capital?

1. The sharp focus on collaboration. As the evaluation shows, the WCC had the strongest impact on collaboration among leaders and organizations. This was no mistake: teams had to demonstrate a commitment to collaboration in their applications and jury interviews, write about progress in this area for grant reports, and be subject to an external evaluation on it at the beginning, middle, and end of the grant period. But collaboration was more than a refrain sung at key intervals across three years; most importantly, it was tied directly to resources.

Simply completing the WCC application provided Round 1 teams and their competitors with their first *incentive to collaborate*. Though eligible cities had many ideas that might fit the parameters of the WCC, each city was allowed to submit just one application, forcing some early and hard conversations about how local leaders would work together to put forth a single proposal that represented their best opportunity. This requirement has continued across each subsequent round due to the impact it had in challenging, and ultimately strengthening, teams.

The structure of the competition not only incentivized collaboration with dollars, but through the incorporation of the design phase it also created a defined space and structure within which a collection of organizations could become a team. Across the evaluations of each design phase, teams reference the design sessions and the Boston Fed as forcing agents that required them to tackle the hard questions and conversations that broke new ground for relationship-building. One Massachusetts design phase participant called this structure, “a sturdy enough container to ‘hold’ some rather uncomfortable conversations.” Two years after the planning period, Round 2 teams still reflect on how they informally tackled thorny issues like competition, power, and race during long car rides they shared to attend these sessions. They also talk about how those opportunities helped them know each other as people, not just professionals, which built a foundation of trust upon which this work necessarily depends.

The WCC also represents an *intentional investment in collaboration*. Working in this way often represents a new way of doing business in smaller cities, and that requires sufficient flexible dollars to make it possible. Even the highest-functioning collaboratives need to be staffed, so the WCC directs dollars to the cost of initiative directors who work full-time in service of their teams’ work. Backbone agencies need funding to cover the cost of initiative director support and supervision, space, and fiscal oversight—more complex than a typical grant, since teams often distribute dollars across multiple partners.

In addition to the competition structure and resourcing, collaboration was bolstered through coaching and technical support. Perhaps the most meaningful intervention on this level has been *training on adaptive leadership*. This framework and the supporting tools to which teams have been introduced has helped them make important progress on the complex, human-centered challenges of their work.

2. An emphasis on learning and adaptation. Providing training on adaptive leadership was just one way the WCC encouraged teams to embrace the iterative nature of this work. We have also revised our core elements to move away from a sharp focus on data and toward a broader emphasis on learning orientation, which includes but is not limited to technical capacity to measure progress.

This shift was prompted by a few factors. First, teams were struggling to clear what they perceived to be a too-high bar when it came to the ability to gather, track, and respond to data that reflected their outcomes. What the Boston Fed wanted was not data for data's sake; instead, *we wanted teams to adopt an ethos* that ensured their strategies evolved in response to and generating the kind of information needed to decide what to shift, scale, or even stop in order to achieve their shared result. This shift was felt by participants in the Round 2 design phase, one of whom appreciated, "The use of data as a navigational tool, not a club."

The second thing that pushed us toward learning orientation was that Round 1 *teams were making the biggest leaps after they significantly reassessed and adapted* their work. In Chelsea, that looked like changing the 10-year shared result upon which their initiative was founded. In Fitchburg, the team narrowed their focus areas from six to three, which made the work feel more feasible to a thinly stretched team. Instead of waiting for teams to ask permission to dramatically alter the course of their work like a traditional grant-maker, we decided to encourage and celebrate this kind of adaptation more explicitly in our model.

The final factor that elevated the concept of learning orientation is the observation from our inaugural design phase that *learning oriented teams made the most progress* in this six-month span. Teams in Round 2 and Rhode Island that participated actively and thoughtfully, spoke openly about their challenges, sought data from new and different sources to better understand their challenges, and emerged with new insights about their teams and communities have not only made strong progress during the design phase, but they also appear to be best poised to put their plans into action at the start of implementation. As a result of this finding in particular, learning orientation was not only cemented as a core element; it also became the leading criterion for selecting implementation grantees in Connecticut.

3. The value of Initiative Directors in this complex, adaptive work cannot be understated, nor can the importance of finding—and supporting and retaining—the right person for this position. Initiative Directors hold a challenging role: in many cases, they are the only individuals whose sole responsibility is to move their initiatives forward, so a major responsibility is to ensure that the high-level leaders who comprise their teams remain engaged and accountable despite the many demands on their time. In addition to the challenges that come with leading the leaders, which draws heavily on the adaptive skills needed to build trust, communicate effectively, and anticipate (and manage) conflict, Initiative Directors must also develop and draw upon technical capacities in order to support the team’s efforts to use data, engage residents, communicate to stakeholders, and manage resources (including the WCC grant itself).

An important finding from the Round 1 evaluation was that developing the leadership of Initiative Directors represented a major step toward strengthening this dimension of civic infrastructure. Two Round 1 Initiative Directors have translated their success into new public sector leadership roles in their respective cities, which extends the reach of their WCC work into new spheres while making room for two new leaders to build their skills in this role. We look forward to

watching how the career paths of the WCC Initiative Directors spread and sustain the influence of this model in their cities and beyond.

4. Teams' pursuit of changes to systems through the WCC has strongly influenced the degree to which their work has left a mark on their cities' civic infrastructures, because changes to systems require understanding and influencing multiple dimensions of civic infrastructure itself. For any systems change a team is targeting, they must ask: which leaders need to be engaged and influenced? Which organizations affect the system now, and how might their internal policies and practices need to align with this effort? To what extent can networks be mobilized as contributors or advocates? How do resource flows obstruct or facilitate the changes needed to advance a team's shared result? And how can strengthening resident engagement bolster a systems change effort, or even represent a systemic change by itself?

Some systems changes target civic infrastructure directly. In cities like Pittsfield, several WCC initiatives are changing the way residents are engaged in planning, decision-making, and leadership. One change this team is making across the city is ensuring that residents are compensated for their time, since they are often asked to volunteer their time while working alongside paid professionals in planning and decision-making processes. This required first demonstrating the value of this new way of operating to leaders within the WCC network. Once bought in, those leaders have adapted their own organizational practices to ensure that residents are compensated for participation in efforts beyond the WCC. This systems change has even affected resource flows: a large grant recently awarded to support engagement in the region's cultural sector intentionally allocates resources for stipends to pay residents for their time.

In this case and in the experience of many other teams, systems changes that can be seen and felt at the policy, practice, and resource level often start with a significant amount of unseen work to influence the perceptions and beliefs of systems leaders themselves. Demonstrating the

value of paying residents for their time, for example, necessitates understanding how leaders currently value the time of residents. Do they recognize the opportunity cost incurred to attend a public meeting? Have they ever experienced the barriers many residents, especially those living in poverty, must overcome in order to simply attend, including transportation, child care, language? The Pittsfield team invested a significant amount of time talking about mental models that leaders might hold about low-income residents and how learning about the lived experience of these residents can shift those narratives—a necessary precursor to shifting the policies and practices that make engagement more engaging.

If WCC teams were working in a strictly programmatic space, they may have achieved measurable results sooner by deploying dollars exclusively to scale up existing interventions or fill voids that served low-income residents directly. But the push to change systems has led to teams outside of their boundaries and comfort zones. And while changing systems is slower and messier, this is the work that not only makes a lasting difference for community members; it also directly pushes a city's civic infrastructure to work differently and better on behalf of their low-income populations.

5. The WCC has elevated the profile of smaller cities among key investors and partners. An early adopter of the excitement for the potential of smaller cities was Living Cities, whose Integration Initiative informed the early design of the WCC. Our partnership provided a valuable comparison between opportunities and possibilities in smaller cities—where the close connections among high-level leaders help them assemble quickly in response to a challenge or opportunity—and larger cities where relationship-building can take much longer (starting with getting everyone in the same room). This comparison helped Living Cities and other national funders like The Kresge Foundation and Doris Duke Charitable Trust recognize the value of investing in and learning from more nimble and tightly-woven places that have historically struggled to attract their dollars.

Smaller cities are now seen in a different light more locally, too. The Massachusetts Competitive Partnership, which comprises the state's largest employers, invested heavily in both of this state's rounds because they valued the way civic infrastructure improves the business climate in these places. In Connecticut, a tremendous number of private sector partners, such as Stanley Black & Decker and Travelers Insurance, have not only invested in smaller cities by contributing to the funding pool; they have also been highly involved in shaping the competition through participation on the steering and advisory committees. Their level of financial and even personal investment represents a significant shift for Connecticut's smaller cities.

State government has also strengthened its support for smaller cities in each participating state. Governors committed significant new dollars to facilitate each state's participation in the WCC, despite challenging budgetary environments. Key state officials hold seats on each state's Steering Committee, and their offices have taken steps to align their economic development approaches with the WCC. In Massachusetts, the Office of Housing and Economic Development created the "Urban Agenda" grant program that explicitly references the WCC in its call for proposals and has borrowed elements of the WCC application review process to guide their own.¹⁴ In Connecticut, the Department of Economic and Community Development is integrating the WCC in its 'Opportunity Zones' application process, a promising step to ensure that smaller cities attain a greater level of recognition in that state.

6. What's next for the WCC: emerging lessons and adaptations

Thanks to the learning orientation of our winning cities, the Boston Fed is gaining new—and sometimes unexpected—insights about what it will take to better support current and future teams on their paths to achieving results and strengthening civic infrastructure. As we better understand and interpret the questions the teams and evaluators have helped us raise, we expect to continue

shifting or augmenting our model as needed to accelerate progress. Some of the questions on our current learning agenda include:

What does it take to be ready to engage in collaborative, systems-changing work? The WCC is designed to reward sufficiently ready places that have capacity, momentum, and a foundation of civic infrastructure to build on. The design phase represented a significant adaptation that bolstered capacity for implementation grantees and non-winning teams alike. And while the sustained progress of non-winning cities concerns us, so too do the fortunes of cities that lacked the capacity and readiness to even participate in the design phase. What does it take, then, to prepare lower-capacity, less-ready cities to engage in something like the WCC? Learning more about this question will help us understand the key levers of civic infrastructure-building and assess how our model might need to adapt to support even smaller cities in northern New England where we hope to expand.

How does city size affect—or reflect—a WCC team’s ability to have an impact on their shared result and on civic infrastructure more broadly? The WCC’s definition of “smaller” is rather broad. While the population size is capped to disqualify only one New England city (Boston), winning cities are as small as Newport (pop. 24,570) and as large as Providence (pop. 178,851). The core group of leaders on any WCC teams typically—and for governance purposes, almost necessarily—hovers around 12-15. So depending on city size, this group may overlap significantly or minimally with the leaders, institutions, and networks that comprise a city’s civic infrastructure, affecting the degree to which a WCC initiative achieves meaningful spillover impacts. The Springfield (pop. 153,991) team is showing signs of promise when it comes to influence beyond their team, but we’ll be interested to learn whether city size requires teams to work harder and/or more intentionally to ensure that their initiatives make a lasting impression.

How much progress do teams need to make on their shared result in order to achieve civic infrastructure gains? The WCC model hypothesizes that if teams pursue a shared result in a way that integrates the core

elements, then they will make lasting improvements to their cities' civic infrastructures. Our Round 1 evaluation found this hypothesis to be correct, stating, "...improvements to civic infrastructure can be produced as a spillover, a positive externality of the work toward the team's shared result."¹⁵ But how much progress is enough for that to occur?

A threshold level of progress is likely necessary to ensure that team members value the hard work of collaboration. We hope to learn more about what this threshold looks like, and whether it takes the form of better outcomes for low-income residents, the implementation of meaningful systems changes that will logically translate to better long-term outcomes, or something else entirely. While this question is almost impossible to measure among four Round 1 cities, we should be able to better understand the relationship between the shared result and civic infrastructure across sixteen teams in three states.

How will a sharper focus on racial equity influence the work and impact of the teams? Like the collective impact field, the WCC model has shifted to become increasingly explicit about how considerations of racial equity should be reflected in teams' leadership teams, strategies, and approaches to community engagement, among other aspects of their initiatives. This reflects not only teams' lessons about how racial and ethnic divides in their cities affect the problems they're trying to solve, but also the support WCC teams have asked for as they have proactively sought to make progress in this area. Responding to teams' needs and ambitions has started with updating the language in our model, but it also requires working with teams to understand the level of progress cities hope to make on this front and the support they need to achieve it. Depending on how our intervention changes, it will also be important to work with our evaluator to learn about whether and how addressing racial equity has a spillover effect on the dimensions of civic infrastructure.

How do we help teams build and sustain the leadership capacity to advance their initiatives and strengthen civic infrastructure over the long-term? Though the emphasis of the WCC is on collaborative leadership, doing

this well requires strong individual leadership at multiple levels. Capable, collaborative, and adaptive leadership is required of Initiative Directors and of team members themselves. But if these initiatives are to sustain, a pipeline of leaders must be developed to ensure that turnover does not hinder progress and to keep the lessons and values of the WCC alive beyond the grant period. These pipelines must be inclusive across age, race, ethnicity, and gender, particularly in the many smaller cities where leaders do not reflect the growing diversity in their populations. Smaller places where the leadership bench is shallow to begin with can ill afford to ignore the talent that has historically gone untapped if they are to achieve resurgence that is felt by the whole community.

So what will it take to help cities ensure that they are developing a representative, high-quality pool of leaders who can sustain the capacity built through initiatives like the WCC and the pursuit of better outcomes for low-income residents? The Boston Fed is tackling this question as we consider how to sustain our support of New England's smaller cities beyond the WCC. We expect this exploration will build on promising practices demonstrated by our teams, including efforts to elevate residents to leadership positions and the professional development gains made by Initiative Directors themselves.

What will it take for teams to sustain their efforts beyond year 3? The WCC represents a three-year catalytic investment intended to accelerate teams on a pathway toward a 10-year result. And though we now know more about the ability of the WCC to have a catalyzing effect, we don't yet know what it will take for teams to persist. Will the team stay together? Will they continue to focus on the same shared result? Will they be able to sustain the work at its current level?

In preparation for the end of Round 1, our team conducted a literature review to better understand what sustainability has looked like for similar investments and initiatives. We found an empirical link between long-term sustainability and the following factors:

- Flexible funding for operations and capacity-building. In many cases, these funds came from multiple sectors, including team member organizations themselves.
- A formal plan for sustaining the initiative that goes beyond funding to address governance structures and functions as well as how to respond to emerging needs or challenges. Like any plan, success depended upon teams' ability to carry them out.
- Depth of leadership experience, particularly in the areas of collaborative management and living and working in the community, influenced sustainability regardless of funding level or collaboration structure.
- Distributed leadership among partners, which is essential to keeping staff and organizations motivated during times of struggle or turnover.
- Buy-in among community members who can advocate for continued investment, particularly when initiatives are threatened by community shocks or leadership turnover.

The Boston Fed and our Round 1 teams are putting these lessons into practice through a one-year sustainability planning phase that provides teams with the resources and technical support needed to develop sustainability plans and transition toward new sources of support. This, too, will be independently evaluated; we expect those findings, due in the fall of 2018, to inform how we approach sustainability with teams in subsequent rounds.

7. Takeaways for smaller city leaders and advocates

More learning questions and responsive adaptations will necessarily emerge as the Boston Fed and the winning teams progress through each round of the WCC. While we expect to have some fascinating insights on what it takes to build civic infrastructure across sixteen smaller industrial cities when the Connecticut round wraps in 2021, leaders in these places cannot afford to wait for a third-party evaluation to guide the way. So what are some key steps leaders can take now

to strengthen their cities' civic infrastructures in ways that allow them to more effectively pursue the strategies that promise progress?

Assess your civic infrastructure. What needs shoring up, and where does your city have strengths it can leverage? The Lawrence Partnership is taking this step to understand not just where progress is needed; these leaders also recognize that naming civic infrastructure as priority and having regular conversations about it is essential to strengthening and leveraging this critical asset.

Invest in people, not just projects and programs. Developing the capacity of leaders to implement technical strategies effectively will ensure that scarce resources yield the greatest benefits. And unlike specific interventions, capacity has staying power. In cities where leaders tend to play multiple roles at once, these abilities will make a difference across multiple domains of civic life.

Leverage the power of small to change systems. Smaller cities have smaller systems, meaning you can often fit key system leaders in a single room—and they likely already know each other. Changing relationships, policies, and practices is invariably challenging, but when leaders in smaller cities are committed to this, change can be put into motion more quickly.

Build coalitions for shared learning and advocacy. WCC teams come together formally and informally throughout the competition, and the ability to exchange lessons, ideas, and challenges has been invaluable for growth and persistence through the shared struggle. Increasingly, those relationships are also turning into coalitions of communities with shared interests in state-level policy. Given their collective legislative influence, there is significant power in working across smaller cities to advance a common agenda, particularly when this leverages the capacity strengthened through the WCC.

Smaller cities benefit from assets and opportunities that larger cities struggle to muster. By building capacity and leveraging their civic infrastructures, these places have a real opportunity to

rewrite their stories—and more importantly, change the stories of the low-income families who have shared the long struggle to get ahead.

Endnotes.

¹ From 2000-16, via the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago's Peer City Identification Tool (<https://www.chicagofed.org/region/community-development/data/pcit>)

² Sources include:

- Hollingsworth, Torey and Alison Goebel (2017). "Revitalizing America's Smaller Legacy Cities." Cambridge, MA: Lincoln Institute of Land Policy.
- Lambe, Will, Longworth, Susan, and Stauber, Karl (Eds.). (2017). "Looking for Progress in America's Smaller Legacy Cities: A Report for Place-Based Funders." A joint publication of The Funders' Network for Smart Growth and Livable Communities, its members, and the Federal Reserve Banks of Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, and New York.
- The Kresge Foundation, Initiative for Responsible Investment, and the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston (2016). "Capital & Collaboration: an in-depth look at the community investment system in Massachusetts Working Cities." Available at: <https://www.bostonfed.org/publications/one-time-pubs/capital-and-collaboration.aspx>

³ Kodrzycki, Yolanda K. and Ana Patricia Munoz with Lynn Browne, DeAnna Green, Marques Benton, Prabal Chakrabarti, David Plasse, Richard Walker, and Bo Zhao (2009). "Reinvigorating Springfield's Economy: Lessons for Resurgent Cities." Community Affairs Discussion Paper 2009-03. Boston, MA: Federal Reserve Bank of Boston.

⁴ Evansville (IN), Fort Wayne (IN), Grand Rapids (MI), Greensboro (NC), Jersey City (NJ), New Haven (CT), Peoria (IL), Providence (RI), Winston-Salem (NC), and Worcester (MA)

⁵ Kodrzycki & Munoz 2009.

⁶ Learn more about at <https://massinc.org/our-work/policy-center/gateway-cities/about-the-gateway-cities/>

⁷ Benderskaya, Kseniya and Dawicki, Colleen (2017). "Sparking change in New England's Lessons from Early Rounds of the Working Cities Challenge." *Communities & Banking*, (Spring 2017). Available at: <https://www.bostonfed.org/publications/communities-and-banking/2017/spring/sparking-change-new-englands-smaller-cities-lessons-from-early-rounds-of-working-cities-challenge.aspx>.

⁸ Cross-round funders supporting the WCC in MA, RI, and CT include: Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, The Kresge Foundation, Living Cities, and NeighborWorks of America

⁹ Available at: <https://www.bostonfed.org/workingcities/massachusetts/round1/process/evaluation.htm>

¹⁰ Dawicki, Colleen (2013). "Civic infrastructure in Gateway Cities." *MassBenchmarks*, 15 (1). Available at: <http://www.massbenchmarks.org/publications/issues/vol15i1/5.pdf>

¹¹ Mt. Auburn Associates (2018). "Working Cities Challenge: Final assessment of Round 1 progress." Forthcoming at: <https://www.bostonfed.org/workingcities>.

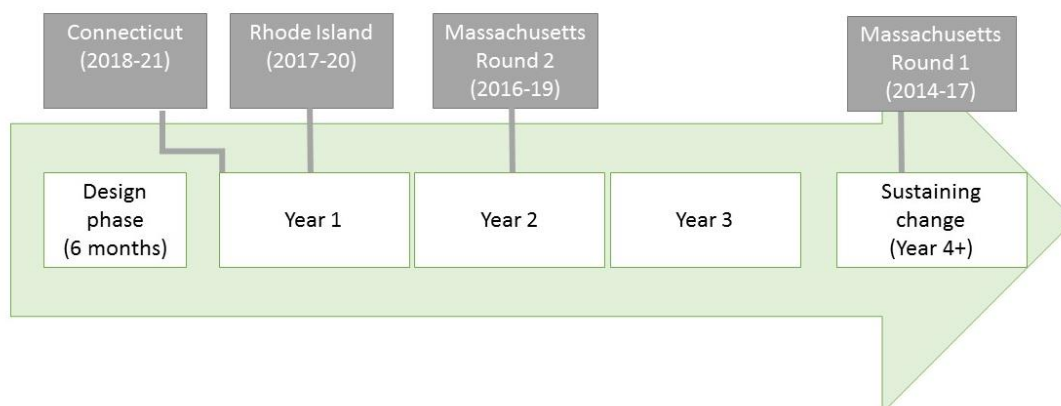
¹² Mt. Auburn Associates (2018).

¹³ Learn more at: <https://commonwealthmagazine.org/politics/why-whites-control-lowell-city-government/>

¹⁴ Details available at: <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/urban-agenda-grant-program>

¹⁵ Mt. Auburn Associates (2018).

Appendix A: Overview of winning cities/teams



Massachusetts – Round 1 (2014-2017)

City/Initiative	Demographics (2016)	Collaborators include:	10-year shared result
Chelsea / Chelsea Thrives	Population: 38,244 Median family income: \$53,219 Poverty rate: 16.9%	The Neighborhood Developers (lead), Police Department, City of Chelsea, Roca, Chelsea Public Schools, Chelsea Collaborative, residents	Improve safety perception by 30% in poorest neighborhood, reduce crime rate by 30%
Fitchburg / Reimagine North of Main	Population: 40,441 Median family income: \$59,307 Poverty rate: 15.1%	Montachusett Opportunity Council (lead), City of Fitchburg, Fitchburg State University, NewVue Communities, Health Foundation of Central MA, Fitchburg Art Museum, residents	Transform the North of Main into a neighborhood of choice , where people want to live, work, play, and invest
Holyoke / SPARK	Population: 40,280 Median family income: \$45,598 Poverty rate: 25.2%	Greater Holyoke Chamber of Commerce (lead), Holyoke Community College, City of Holyoke, Bank RSB, Holyoke Creative Arts Center, One Holyoke CDC, Career Point, SCORE, and small business owners and residents	Create 300 new businesses, with 20% Latino-owned
Lawrence / Lawrence Working Families Initiative	Population: 79,337 Median family income: \$38,681 Poverty rate: 24.2%	Lawrence CommunityWorks (lead), Lawrence Partnership, City of Lawrence, career center, Northern Essex Community College, school district, The Community Group, residents	Increase parent income by 15% and dramatically increase parent engagement in the public schools

Demographics for MA – Median family income: \$90,180, Poverty rate: 11.4%

Massachusetts – Round 2 (2016-2019)

City/Initiative	Demographics (2016)	Collaborators include:	10-year shared result
Haverhill / Mt. Washington Alliance	Population: 62,340 Median family income: \$75,240 Poverty rate: 10.1%	Community Action, Inc. (lead), City of Haverhill, school district, neighborhood businesses, Chamber of Commerce, Northern Essex Community College, faith community, resident groups	Mt. Washington neighborhood matches city median on: employment, income, school quality, voting, code reporting
Lowell / Working Cities Lowell	Population: 109,871 Median family income: \$55,999 Poverty rate: 17.2%	Coalition for a Better Acre (lead), City of Lowell, UMass Lowell, Cambodian Mutual Assistance Assoc., Middlesex Community College, health and career centers, housing authority, residents	Increase by 10%: income, employment, school readiness, and inclusion in the Acre neighborhood
Pittsfield / Working Cities Pittsfield	Population: 43,632 Median family income: \$60,378 Poverty rate: 14.2%	Central Berkshire Habitat for Humanity (lead), City of Pittsfield, Berkshire United Way, Berkshire Health System, Berkshire Community College, career center, faith community, residents	Increase full-time workforce from 42 to 45% and # of individuals living above 200% FPL by 1,300, ensure Pittsfield is inclusive community
Springfield / Springfield WORKS	Population: 153,991 Median family income: \$39,836 Poverty rate: 26%	Economic Development Council of Western MA (lead), Regional Employment Board of Hampden County, MGM, United Personnel, City of Springfield, Springfield Technical Community College, school district	Increase proportion of residents who are currently employed from 58 to 75 out of 100 and improve job retention and wage growth

Demographics for MA – Median family income: \$90,180, Poverty rate: 11.4%

Rhode Island – Round 3 (2017-2020)

City	Demographics (2016)	Collaborators include:	10-year shared result
Cranston / OneCranston	Population: 80,882 Median family income: \$79,214 Poverty rate: 6.9%	Comprehensive Community Action Program (lead), Center for Southeast Asians, City of Cranston, library, Police Department, school district, Roger Williams University, Texas Roadhouse, YMCA, residents	Increase social cohesion by 30 percent; decrease economic and educational disparities among minority and low-income residents
Newport	Population: 24,570 Median family income: \$81,806 Poverty rate: 9.7%	Boys & Girls Club of Newport County (lead), school district, Community College of RI, City of Newport, Housing Authority, East Bay Community Action Program, Newport Health Equity Zone, Chamber of Commerce, residents	Decrease the poverty rate in Newport by 20 percent
Providence	Population: 178,851 Median family income: \$43,585 Poverty rate: 23.7%	City of Providence (lead), Genesis Center, Dorcas International, Providence Housing Authority, The WorkPlace, Providence Career & Technical Academy, Apprenticeship RI, RI Hospitality Assoc., RI Dept. of Education, We Make RI	Number of unemployed Providence residents served by the workforce system will mirror the characteristics of unemployed Providence residents

Demographics for RI – Median family income: \$75,655, Poverty rate: 13.8%

Connecticut – Round 4 (2018-2021)

City	Demographics (2016)	Collaborators include:	10-year shared result
Danbury	Population: 83,890 Median family income: \$77,188 Poverty rate: 9%	United Way of Western CT (lead), Community Action Agency of Western CT, City of Danbury, school district, Western CT State University, Naugatuck Valley Community College, residents, businesses	Reduce by 30% (1,009 lives) the number of immigrant or people of color households living below the poverty level
East Hartford	Population: 50,834 Median family income: \$61,359 Poverty rate: 14.3%	East Hartford Public Schools (lead), Town of East Hartford, United Way of Central and Northeastern CT, the CT Center for Advanced Technology, HallKeen Management, residents	Increase 10% of household incomes in the Silver Lane neighborhood to be comparable to the town-wide median of \$48,369
Hartford	Population: 124,320 Median family income: \$36,156 Poverty rate: 29%	United Way of Central & Northeastern CT (lead), Southside Institutions Neighborhood Alliance, CT Children's Medical Center, Capital Community College, City of Hartford, Our Piece of the Pie, Capital Workforce Partners	Reduce unemployment among 16-29 year-olds in three contiguous Hartford neighborhoods from 23% to 10%
Middletown	Population: 46,933 Median family income: \$84,941 Poverty rate: 9.2%	Middlesex United Way (lead), The Connection, City of Middletown, Shiloh Christian Church, Middlesex Community College, Wesleyan University, CT Dept. of Children and Families, Chamber of Commerce	Reduce by more than 40% the numbers of single parent families living at or below poverty (from 35% to 20%)
Waterbury	Population: 109,211 Median family income: \$48,822 Poverty rate: 21.3%	Hispanic Coalition of Greater Waterbury (lead), Neighborhood Housing Services, Boards of Aldermen and Education, United Way of Greater Waterbury, CT Community Foundation, Workforce Investment Board, residents	Reduce the unemployment rate of the RIBA neighborhood from the current 23% to 12%

Demographics for CT – Median family income: \$91,274, Poverty rate: 10.4%

Appendix B – Mt. Auburn Associates Round 1 final evaluation rubric

Outcome Areas	Indicators	Sub-Indicators
Expanded and sustained collaborative leadership	WCC team organizations demonstrate distributed leadership, sharing responsibility for achieving the shared result.	
	WCC teams demonstrate preparation for sustaining collaborative, system-oriented work in service of shared result.	
	Existing leadership connections strengthened and new leaders are identified and engaged.	Initiative resulted in new or deeper relationships among organizations and/or catalyzed changed perspectives among leaders.
		New partners have been welcomed into the leadership of the initiatives.
		Partners place increased priority on working with leaders who represent the racial and ethnic diversity of their cities.
		Stakeholders cite rising, new, talented civic leaders who reflect the diversity of their communities.
	Teams have ongoing collaboration with other networks, collaboratives, or other key organizations active in related systems in the city formally or informally on issues that extend beyond the specific WCC result.	
Value and diffusion of core elements	WCC teams see substantial contribution of core elements in progress toward shared result.	Stakeholders note collaborative leadership made a substantial impact on the outcomes achieved.
		Stakeholders note community engagement made a substantial impact on the outcomes achieved.
		Stakeholders note use of data made a substantial impact on the outcomes achieved.
		Stakeholders note system change made a substantial impact on the outcomes achieved.
	Organizational leaders bring core elements back to home organizations, diffuse into practices & policies.	Partner organizations have changed systems to support stronger collaborations with other leaders or leading organizations in the cities.
		Partner organizations have changed systems to better engage residents.
		Partner organizations have changed systems to better use data.
Engaged residents	WCC partners regularly sought out resident voices and insights when developing strategies	
	WCC teams' strategies directly respond to resident insights.	
	WCC teams demonstrate accountability to residents by directly communicating progress toward shared result.	
External recognition	WCC leaders develop or improve relationships with entities outside the cities, including attracting new outside resources aligned with shared result.	

Appendix C: Sample questions, Lawrence Partnership survey

On a scale of 1-10 (with 1 being very weak and 10 being very strong) how strong is Lawrence's civic infrastructure, which is defined by the Boston Fed as "the network of organizations, resources, leaders, and residents that can be mobilized to solve a complex problem or pursue a new opportunity."

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: If Lawrence faced an unexpected economic, physical, or social shock (e.g., loss of major employer, sudden rise in high school dropout rates, etc.), I have a high level of confidence in the civic leadership of Lawrence to respond quickly and capably to the challenge.

How would you describe the ability of leaders in Lawrence to resolve conflict so that they are able to work together toward long-term community improvement?

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: The leaders in Lawrence reflect the diversity of city residents.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: Community leaders effectively raise local awareness and build political will in support of efforts to improve conditions in Lawrence.

To what extent are leaders within the following sectors protective of their own resources and knowledge? (Options: public, private, nonprofit, anchor institutions)

How often is the following statement true: Lawrence's government works with nonprofits and the private sector to address challenges in Lawrence.

How often is the following statement true: When a new opportunity is presented, leaders and institutions come together to determine how best to pursue it.

How actively do the following sectors work to create opportunities to improve quality of life for low-income residents?

How often is the following statement true: Businesses in Lawrence participate in efforts to improve the community.

How often is the following statement true: Lawrence's government is responsible and accountable to its citizens.

How effective are leaders in Lawrence when it comes to securing and leveraging available resources and assets? This includes governmental and foundation grants, subsidies, tax credits, and even non-financial assets like real estate, time, and expertise.

How much influence do groups that represent low-income or other marginalized residents have in the planning and decision-making processes?

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: People from all neighborhoods, ethnicities, and income levels have equal opportunities to participate in Lawrence's decision-making process.

Note: Questions derived from multiple existing sources, including the ACEs and Resilience Collective Community Capacity (ARC3) survey developed by Community Science (<http://www.appi-wa.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/APPI-White-Paper.pdf>) and the Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory (<https://www.wilder.org/Wilder-Research/Research-Services/Pages/Wilder-Collaboration-Factors-Inventory.aspx>)

Appendix D: Sample questions, survey of state leaders' perceptions of civic infrastructure

How accountable do you find leaders from the following sectors? (Options: public, private, nonprofit, anchor institutions)

How actively do leaders from the following sectors appear to convene all segments and communities in <city>?

How has turnover in leadership impacted your own work? (Options include: Turnover has not stifled any opportunity or progress; Leadership has fluctuated to the extent where it is difficult to work with this sector; Lack of turnover has been a barrier)

Within each of the following sectors, are there leaders you would consider visionary, that challenge existing assumptions and think innovatively about their community?

In the time that you've worked with partners in this city, how often have leaders from multiple sectors (public, private and non-profit) work together on project?

For each of the following sectors, is conflict more or less what you would expect? (Options: There is less conflict than I would expect; The amount of conflict is natural, and about what I would expect; There is more conflict than I would expect; There is far too much conflict; I don't know)

How challenging is it for you and your partners to work in the existing political environment?

To what extent do you feel that residents are authentically involved in local planning initiatives?

Which of the following best characterizes the level of cohesion between different neighborhoods and/or groups (ethnic, socioeconomic, religious, etc.) in the City?