



NATION
SWELL

Collective action

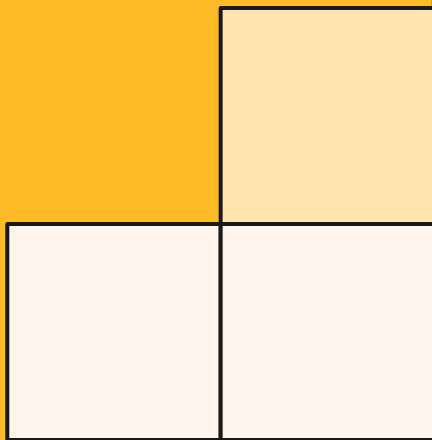
models and approaches

October 2025

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About this resource



What is this resource? _____

This resource is a practical guide for impact leaders to quickly understand the most prevalent and effective models of collective action. It distills each model into clear purposes, strengths, risks, and use cases—providing actionable insight into when and how to leverage these structures to advance your goals. The aim is to save leaders time, sharpen decision-making, and help you align the right model with the challenge or opportunity in front of you.

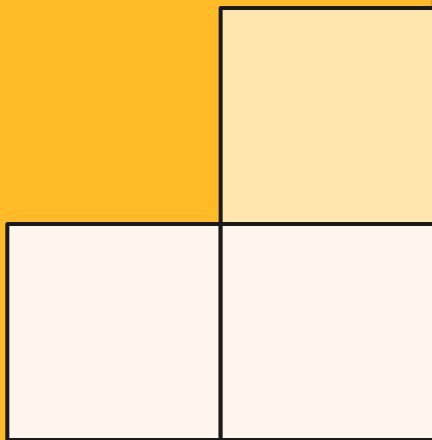
What is it not? _____

This is not a comprehensive review of all the academic literature or every variation of collaboration in the social impact ecosystem. Collective action takes many forms, and real-world practice often blurs lines between models. Instead, this resource is intentionally high-level and pragmatic, focusing on the frameworks most relevant and replicable for leaders today.

Feedback or suggestions? Email us at insights@nationswell.com

Key principles of collective action

No one knows everything, but together we know a lot



Shared purpose: Clear alignment on a problem or opportunity that no actor can solve alone

Diverse participation: Engaging multiple sectors and combining unique perspectives; bringing people to the table who have historically been less represented

Defined structure: Clear mechanisms for collaboration, governance, or shared services

Mutual value: Participants each gain efficacy, efficiency, influence, or capacity

Trust and legitimacy: Sustained by transparency, power-sharing, and demonstrated results

Balance of flexibility + accountability: Enough structure to stay aligned while maintaining willingness to adapt

System-level ambition: Aimed at shifting narratives, structures, behaviors, or resource flows

Models-in-brief

Model	Core purpose	Strengths	Risks	Best when...	Time parameters
Public-Private Partnerships	Mobilize public + private resources for infrastructure or community outcomes	Scale, legitimacy, formal agreements	Political shifts, misaligned incentives	Government approval/scale is essential	Typically long-term (multi-year to decades); requires sustained political and institutional commitment
Co-investment + Pooled Funding	Aggregate capital for bigger, coordinated impact	Scale, efficiency, shared risk	Slow decisions, funder misalignment	Goal requires large unified investment	Medium to long-term; funds can be pooled quickly, but impact often requires sustained capital flow
Learning, Advocacy, & Action Networks	Build alignment, narratives, and peer learning	Shared visibility, low cost, flexible	Diffuse impact, low accountability	Goal is advocacy, narrative change, or field cohesion	Often short to medium-term; can mobilize quickly for campaigns, but stronger networks build over years
Place-Based Initiatives	Address interconnected issues in a geography	Deep, visible local outcomes	Requires patience, and willingness to adapt to local needs	Challenges are interlinked within one place	Ideally long-term, or planning for handover for continuity. Requires deep relationship and trust-building to achieve lasting impact
Shared Capacity & Services Platforms	Provide centralized infrastructure/tools for partners	Efficiency, quality, access for smaller players	Costly, dependency risk, rigidity	Partners share common operational needs	Medium to long-term; requires ongoing operation and maintenance, though some benefits can appear quickly



Five collective action models

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Public Private Partnerships (PPPs)

Public Private Partnerships Overview

PURPOSE

To deliver public infrastructure, services, or community outcomes by combining public oversight with private-sector resources and innovation. Community-Centered PPPs (CP3s) expand the purpose beyond infrastructure to include inclusive economic development, community resilience, and social equity.

STRUCTURE

Formal agreements such as contracts, MOUs, or concession arrangements. Traditional PPPs use co-investment from government and private sectors. CP3s add more flexible partnerships with NGOs, universities, and CBOs, often funded through blended capital, in-kind support, or grants.

PARTICIPATION

Traditional PPPs are primarily led by institutional actors (governments and corporations). CP3s expand participation to include local residents, community organizations, and academic partners – emphasizing shared ownership, participatory governance, and trust-building.

IMPACT

Measured through performance metrics such as delivery timelines, cost efficiency, and service outcomes. CP3s also evaluate broader impacts like job creation, community inclusion, innovation, and lived experience, often using third-party evaluations and community feedback.

Adoption Considerations

ADVANTAGES

- Combines public authority with private innovation and capital
- Enables large-scale implementation and legitimacy
- Formal agreements provide clarity on roles and risk-sharing

RISKS

- Vulnerable to political shifts and leadership turnover
- Incentive misalignment between public interest and corporate ROI
- Bureaucratic delays can stall implementation

WHEN TO CONSIDER THIS MODEL

- Best when government approval or scale is essential
- Works if goals are clearly aligned and codified in agreements

TIME PARAMETERS

- Typically long-term (multi-year to decades); requires sustained political and institutional commitment



Public Private Partnerships

GAVI, THE VACCINE ALLIANCE

NationSwell community involvement:
Gates Foundation // Founding partner

Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance helps vaccinate more than half the world's children against deadly and debilitating infectious diseases, giving it tremendous power to negotiate vaccines at prices that are affordable for the poorest countries and to remove the commercial risks that previously kept manufacturers from serving them. As part of its mission to save lives and protect people's health by increasing equitable and sustainable use of vaccines, Gavi has helped vaccinate more than 1.1 billion children in 78 lower-income countries, preventing more than 18.8 million future deaths.

Gavi's impact draws on the strengths of its core partners, the World Health Organization, UNICEF, the World Bank and the Gates Foundation. Gavi also works with donors, including sovereign governments, private sector foundations and corporate partners; NGOs, advocacy groups, professional and community associations, faith-based organisations and academia; vaccine manufacturers, including those in emerging markets; research and technical health institutes; and implementing country governments.



Learn more and get involved:

Learn more about Gavi and partnership opportunities at www.gavi.org.



Public Private Partnerships

MASTERCARD FOR GOVERNMENT

NationSwell community involvement:

Mastercard // Private sector lead

Governments are focused on building more resilient and sustainable economies. They are doing this in part by embracing digital technologies and leveraging strong public-private partnerships. Mastercard helps to build highly collaborative and productive partnerships across private and public sectors — focused on jointly solving important government challenges, with the highest security standards, to ensure citizen trust and confidence.

At the heart of every thriving, inclusive economy are interactions between its people, government and businesses based on trusted identities, obligations and rights to use and receive services. Mastercard has built a globally trusted network that facilitates these exchanges swiftly, securely and transparently via:

Inclusion: Enabling small businesses and citizens to participate in economic activities that incorporate identity, payment, payroll, savings and access to credit.

Trust: Delivering services, payments and other public entitlements with global security standards and identity services to increase citizen trust and prevent fraud.

Efficiency: Digitizing vital services and operational processes to better serve communities and realize operational efficiencies.

Economic development: Strengthening policymaking by grounding decisions in aggregated and anonymized data to understand economic and social impact.



Learn more and get involved:

To learn more about partnership with Mastercard for Government, reach out at www.mastercard.com/global/en/business/governments/mastercard-for-government/contact-us.html.



Public Private Partnerships

MECTIZAN® DONATION PROGRAM

NationSwell community involvement:
Merck & Co., Inc. // Founder and primary funder

Launched in 1987, Merck & Co., Inc.'s* Mectizan Donation Program® (MDP) pioneered a public-private partnership model by combining Merck's long-term drug donation with coordination by the Task Force for Global Health, WHO, ministries of health, NGOs, and local communities. This collaboration ensures effective distribution, oversight, and technical guidance.

Mectizan works to treat river blindness (onchocerciasis) and lymphatic filariasis (also known as LF, elephantiasis, and "bigfoot disease") – both debilitating parasitic diseases that cause pain, suffering, and stigmatization. With sustained, annual treatment over time, transmission of both diseases can be eliminated. The result of the public-private partnership has been billions of treatments delivered and measurable progress toward eliminating neglected tropical diseases.

**Merck & Co., Inc. is known as MSD outside the US and Canada*



Learn more and get involved:

Learn more about the program at www.mectizan.org.

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White	Light Yellow	Dark Yellow	Dark Yellow	Dark Yellow	Dark Yellow	Dark Yellow	Dark Yellow	Dark Yellow
Dark Yellow	White	White	White	White	White	White	White	White
Light Yellow	White	Light Yellow	White	White	White	Light Yellow	Light Yellow	Dark Yellow

Co-investment + pooled funding structures

Co-investment + pooled funding structures

Overview

PURPOSE

To combine financial resources from multiple funders to tackle larger social challenges together and increase impact efficiency.

STRUCTURE

Donors pool capital into a shared fund (e.g. a collaborative) or co-granting model; governance rules coordinate pooled decision-making.

PARTICIPATION

Participating organizations/investors are actively involved in joint decision-making, underwriting grants, and learning together; smaller participants may join consultatively.

IMPACT

Outcomes are typically assessed using collaborative evaluation – often shared learning processes, aligned metrics, peer accountability; impact is tied to fund disbursement and shared impact metrics.

Adoption Considerations

ADVANTAGES

- Aggregates resources for scale and efficiency
- Reduces duplication across funders
- Shares risk and learning among contributors

RISKS

- Decision-making can be slow and political
- Funders may exit if priorities shift
- Requires high levels of trust and alignment

WHEN TO CONSIDER THIS MODEL

- Best when the goal requires scale and unified investment
- Works when funders are aligned and willing to cede some autonomy

TIME PARAMETERS

- Medium to long-term; funds can be pooled quickly, but impact often requires sustained capital flow



Co-investment + pooled funding structures

BLUE MERIDIAN PARTNERS

NationSwell community involvement:

Gates Foundation // Impact Partner
Pivotal Ventures // General Partner
George Kaiser Family Foundation //
General Partner

Blue Meridian Partners is a pioneering philanthropic model for finding and funding scalable solutions to the problems that limit economic and social mobility for America's young people and families in poverty. While solutions exist, the most promising strategies cannot reach far enough, fast enough without significant resources. Hence, Blue Meridian Partners bring philanthropists together to pool capital and scale solutions that target drivers of poverty from cradle to career.

Although operating with an investor mindset, Blue Meridian measures success in terms of social impact. Grants are viewed as “investments,” providing the flexible, transformative capital that visionary social sector leaders need to dream bigger and pursue long-term change. Beyond dollars, Blue Meridian provides critical capacity and evidence-building support as well as strategic advice. Ultimately, Blue Meridian wants to transform the philanthropic marketplace and improve the life trajectories of millions of young people and families across America.



Learn more and get involved:

Blue Meridian has raised over \$4 billion to date, and welcomes new partners seeking to invest significant capital. Engage further at www.blumeridian.org/engage-with-us.



Co-investment + pooled funding structures

CO-IMPACT

NationSwell community involvement:

Gates Foundation // Core Partner

Co-Impact is a global philanthropic collaborative focused on improving the lives of millions of people through justice and inclusive systems change. They do this by supporting locally-rooted coalitions working to achieve impact at scale in Africa, Asia, and Latin America across the sectors of education, health, and economic opportunity.

The model is designed to support powerful systems change, at scale, that lasts over time. Co-Impact focuses on improving underlying government and market systems, and places particular emphasis on gender equality and inclusion across all aspects of their work. Because Co-Impact knows that deep change cannot happen without the meaningful inclusion of women and girls, gender equality and inclusive development are animating principles across how they work, listen, and learn – including how they engage and work with partners.



Learn more and get involved:

To speak with a member of the Philanthropic Collaboration team about joining Co-Impact, or to make a one-time or recurring charitable contribution, reach out at www.co-impact.org/contact-us/.



Co-investment + pooled funding structures

NEW PLURALISTS

NationSwell community involvement:

Einhorn Collaborative // Funding partner,
Co-founder

Workday Foundation // Funding partner

New Pluralists is a funder collaborative investing together in a culture of respect and belonging for all. Its vision is a country where people treat each other with curiosity and care across our differences, solve problems productively, and stand up for each other's dignity and well-being. New Pluralists' ideologically diverse community of donors pool resources to nurture and accelerate pluralism practices, and demonstrate what works to strengthen belonging, social trust, and cooperation as measurable outcomes that are essential to a healthy, vibrant and cohesive society in the U.S.

New Pluralists is advancing its goals by:

- **Investing resources:** In the first four years, New Pluralists invested \$33M+ to strengthen the ecosystem and catalyze community-driven pluralism.
- **Connecting people and ideas:** New Pluralists builds trust and belonging among partners, creating opportunities for leaders to elevate their work, work together on collective challenges, and share insights.
- **Strengthening how we understand and express pluralism:** New Pluralists supports research and practice collaborations and knowledge networks, so we can all better understand what works, in what contexts, and why, to advance pluralism effectively.
- **Inspiring many types of communities, people, institutions, and leaders to join:** New Pluralists uses its platform and leverages its resources to champion pluralism within philanthropy.

Learn more and get involved:

New Pluralists is expanding its roster of funding partners to meet the surge of interest in pluralism currently happening within philanthropy.

The 2026 Breakthrough Fund is designed to be accessible and streamlined, allowing funders to more quickly make a difference in local communities across the country. Funders can contribute to this strategic pool and learn alongside peers without the more intensive engagement that often comes with joining a funder collaborative. It is a high-leverage opportunity, especially for funders who are newer to pluralism work. To learn more, contact Liz Vogel, Co-Executive Director, at liz@newpluralists.org.



Co-investment + pooled funding structures

TIPPING POINT FUND FOR IMPACT INVESTING

NationSwell community involvement:

- Ford Foundation** // Funder
- Omidyar Network** // Funder
- Visa Foundation** // Funder

The Tipping Point Fund on Impact Investing (“TPF”) is a donor collaborative with a mission of creating and supporting public goods that are critical to the continued growth and fidelity of the impact investing market. The TPF is designed to build on existing field building efforts and specifically prioritizes the areas that are chronically under-funded, are best suited for collective action, and require additional support beyond individual grantmaking.

The TPF focuses on two key grantmaking areas: Public Policy (e.g., policy development, advocacy, and implementation); and Data, Metrics, and Measurement (e.g., impact measurement and management standardization, data interoperability).



Learn more and get involved:

The TPF is open to additional funders who wish to contribute to the critical work of building the impact investing field. To inquire about how your organization can support the TPF, get in touch at

www.tpfii.org/contact.

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Learning, advocacy, and action networks

Learning, advocacy, and action networks

Overview

PURPOSE

Align organizations or individuals around a shared cause or domain to exchange knowledge, shape narratives, and coordinate advocacy or action.

STRUCTURE

A flexible network often convened by a central host or backbone that provides forums, communications, and field-building resources.

PARTICIPATION

Members contribute expertise, learning, and commitment to joint messaging or initiatives while maintaining autonomy in their own operations.

IMPACT

Builds collective visibility, influence, and field capacity by amplifying voice and aligning members' actions toward systemic change. Members may commit to shared goals, though reporting and measurement is often left to individual entities.

Adoption Considerations

ADVANTAGES

- Builds shared narratives and field-wide alignment
- Facilitates rapid knowledge sharing and peer learning
- Amplifies collective influence at low cost

RISKS

- Risk of “all talk, no action”
- Diffuse impact that’s hard to measure
- Limited accountability for members

WHEN TO CONSIDER THIS MODEL

- Best when the need is alignment, advocacy, or narrative change
- Works when members are motivated by shared identity or reputational benefits

TIME PARAMETERS

- Often short to medium-term; can mobilize quickly for campaigns, but stronger networks build over years



Learning, advocacy, and action networks

AI WORKFORCE ALLIANCE

NationSwell community involvement:
Cadence Giving Foundation // Founder

In 2023, the Cadence Giving Foundation launched an AI Workforce Alliance to catalyze the industry to invest in nonprofits and university students and programs, drive product innovation, and leverage industry influence to support people pursuing or in tech careers, with a focus on AI. This initiative advances workforce development through education, supporting employment opportunities for all, leadership, and innovation to ensure that people are prepared to excel in tech and AI roles.

The Cadence Giving Foundation also formed the Alliance to rally companies and institutions to drive change toward a more representative tech and AI workforce. Industry leaders have joined forces with Cadence to champion the advancement of innovation in AI technology.

Their vision and unwavering commitment to our mission are pivotal in driving innovation in the tech industry.



Learn more and get involved:

Visit the initiative's [webpage](#) and select "Join the Alliance" to contact the Cadence Giving Foundation team.



Learning, advocacy, and action networks

CENTRE FOR EXPONENTIAL CHANGE

NationSwell community involvement:

New Profit // Co-founder

The Centre for Exponential Change (C4EC) is a global action network established as a collaborative platform for “system orchestrators” — the innovators who weave together ecosystems across civil society, government, and markets to drive deeply transformative, scalable social impact. C4EC is grounded in the belief that today’s complex social challenges demand more than incremental solutions—they call for exponential change, where one shift triggers cascading, rapid transformations.

To support system orchestrators, C4EC fosters a vibrant, enabling environment—what they describe as “co-traveling” with these leaders. The network offers several key resources: exchange of open, practical knowledge; strategic advisory for designing and prototyping new approaches; “paradigm grants” to spark bold ideas; experienced mentorship; and communities to bolster orchestrators’ confidence and resilience.



Learn more and get involved:

To become an active member of the emerging C4EC Global Network, extend your financial support or expertise with system orchestrators, share your journey and insights, or collaborate on existing or new exponential change journeys, visit www.centreforexponentialchange.org



Learning, advocacy, and action networks

CRADLE TO CAREER NETWORK

NationSwell community involvement:
StriveTogether // National backbone

StriveTogether is a national movement uniting communities, schools, families, nonprofits, businesses, and more into the Cradle to Career Network, focused on ensuring every child has access to opportunity and success from early childhood through career. Membership in this network empowers communities with access to over 70 peer locations for shared learning, expert partnerships, and tailored support — alongside recognition for credibility, impact, and shared accountability.

At the heart of StriveTogether’s work lies the Theory of Action — a community-driven framework that guides civic infrastructure development through milestone-based progress toward better outcomes. The organization plays three core roles for its members:

Connect: Facilitating knowledge exchange and access to experiential learning across communities;

Support: Providing resources and guidance to help communities advance along the Theory of Action as they work toward economic mobility for youth;

Champion: Elevating member communities in the broader ecosystem—bolstering reputation and enabling engagement with funders and policymakers.



Learn more and get involved:

Learn more about the Cradle to Career Network at www.StriveTogether.org.



Learning, advocacy, and action networks

FOUNDATION S, THE SANOFI COLLECTIVE

NationSwell community involvement:
Sanofi // Anchor funder and lead partner

To achieve Sanofi’s mission of improving the health of communities around the world, Foundation S operates as a “Think & Do Tank.” By working with global thought-leaders and experts, Foundation S creates a collaborative platform that aims to identify cutting-edge ideas and solutions to address some of the greatest challenges in global health. As a “Do Tank,” Foundation S works with partners from around the world to translate ideas and solutions into action through funding, advocacy, impact initiatives, and volunteering.

Foundation S’ collective approach is implemented through initiatives like:

- The Collective MindS Climate x Health Council
- Childhood Cancer Expert Committee
- Emergency Support and Medicine Donations
- Foundation S and Drugs for Neglected Diseases Initiative (DNDi)



Learn more and get involved:

Learn more about Foundation S at www.foundations.sanofi.com.



Learning, advocacy, and action networks

NATIONSWELL COLLABORATIVES

NationSwell community involvement:

NationSwell // Founder

NationSwell Collaboratives bring together cross-sector change makers to align on bold ideas, unlock collective insights, and take coordinated action on the most urgent challenges of our time. From research and strategy to storytelling and amplification, NationSwell provides the infrastructure that helps partners move from siloed effort to shared progress on one social or environmental issue. Our award-winning model is designed for:

Design + direction: Custom research, workshops, and learning journeys aligned to collective goals

Actionable collaboration: Intimate, high-trust spaces to connect, test ideas, and co-develop solutions

Visibility + influence: Platforms and moments that spotlight individual and collective work and catalyze the field

Insights + storytelling: Award-winning editorial, tools, campaigns and joint action workstreams that drive collective impact

NationSwell Collaboratives are award-winning initiatives, recognized by Fast Company, W3, Anthem, and D&AD for their excellence in storytelling, design, and collaboration.

Currently, NationSwell is in full swing with five Collaboratives on the following topics: **Place-Based Impact**; **The Case for Childcare**; **Workforce Innovation**; **Health in Action**; and **Collective Wealth**. We invite you to reach out if you are interested in any of these impact areas.



Learn more and get involved:

Learn more about NationSwell Collaboratives here:

www.nationswell.com/nationswell-collaboratives/



Learning, advocacy, and action networks

PLEDGE 1%

NationSwell community involvement:

Salesforce // Co-founder

Atlassian // Co-founder

Pledge 1% is leading a global movement to embed social impact into the DNA of all businesses. It provides a simple, flexible framework for setting aside a percentage of staff time, product, profit, and/or equity for social impact that allows companies of all sizes and stages to have impact.

With 19,000+ members spanning 130 countries, Pledge 1% has sparked US\$3 billion in equity commitments alone. The movement envisions a future with a new blueprint for business success, one in which profit is intertwined with purpose and social impact is a business norm.



Learn more and get involved:

Whether you're a company executive, social impact leader, investor, or other business stakeholder, you can get involved in the movement to transform business for good. Learn more at

www.pledge1percent.org/get-involved/.



Learning, advocacy, and action networks

WHITE OAK COLLABORATIVE

NationSwell community involvement:

Blue Star Families // Convening authority
and secretariat

With over 40,000 entities supporting military and Veteran families, our field is plagued by uncoordinated, duplicated, and irrelevant programs. The White Oak Collaborative (WOC) directly addresses this national challenge. Since 2010, Blue Star Families has convened the White Oak network, evolving from a small retreat into a powerful, non-partisan collaborative of over 150 diverse organizations, uniting military/veteran support groups, private philanthropy, and government.

This coalition champions data-driven, evidence-based, whole-of-family approaches, leading to nationally-recognized efforts like Joining Forces, MIC3, and the COVID-19 Military Support Initiative. More importantly, White Oak-seeded ideas have driven profound social impact: reduced Veteran homelessness and unemployment, improved military student transitions across all 50 states, and nearly all federal agencies now consider unique military family needs in program implementation.



Learn more and get involved:

Participation is by nomination and invitation. For more information, please contact whiteoakpartners@bluestarfam.org.



Place-based initiatives

Place-based initiatives Overview

PURPOSE

To tackle interconnected social challenges (e.g. education, health, equity) within a specific geography using a coordinated, cross-sector approach.

STRUCTURE

Multi-sector partners align around a common agenda at the neighborhood/city/region level; may be supported by backbone organizations funded via grants or pooled support.

PARTICIPATION

High involvement of local organizations, service providers, government, residents. Participation is often restructured around a local backbone organization (often via steering committees or backbone support).

IMPACT

Shared measurement systems established across partners; common indicators tracked for continual learning and adaptation; third-party or backbone-led evaluation.

Adoption Considerations

ADVANTAGES

- Holistic approach to interconnected local challenges
- Deeply rooted in community context and leadership
- Potential for visible, durable local outcomes

RISKS

- Collaboration across the community requires patience
- Must be willing to listen, adapt to local needs and honor their feedback on what works
- Not a one size fits all to replicate elsewhere

WHEN TO CONSIDER THIS MODEL

- When you are committed to a specific geography as an organization
- Best when you can identify a strong, trusted local organization to act as your backbone to progress

TIME PARAMETERS

- Requires patience, and willingness to adapt to local needs



Place-based initiatives

CIVIC COMMONS

NationSwell community involvement:
Seattle Foundation // Fiscal sponsor

Civic Commons aims to reimagine civic engagement in the region by elevating community voices, fostering belonging and creating new models of cross-sector collaboration to achieve shared goals. Civic Commons provides the tools, information, and connections to empower communities to achieve equitable outcomes and tackle complex issues.

Civic Commons' work is an evolution of Seattle Foundation's strategy to move beyond just a grantmaker to being more of a cross-sector community weaver.

Civic Commons includes several programs:

- The Network Weaving program builds connections between existing regional leadership networks to develop and execute cross-sector approaches to equity. Black Home Initiative (BHI) is one such effort to address these systemic injustices. BHI is a network of community groups, nonprofits, private companies and government agencies working to generate 1,500 new Black homeowners by 2028
- The Scorecard for Shared Prosperity defines and tracks objective metrics of well-being of Puget Sound's shared prosperity to allow existing and new efforts to align toward a shared vision and equitable future.
- We Belong Here builds people-to-people relationships across sectors and communities to expand our region's sense of belonging and ability to address challenges. It includes Communities of Belonging – a framework that helps communities, ranging from small campuses to counties, to discover the factors that encourage or inhibit belonging.



Learn more and get involved:

To make a donation or learn more about the work Civic Commons engages in, contact Seattle Foundation's Philanthropic Services team at ps@seattlefoundation.org.



Place-based initiatives

CRADLE TO CAREER: UNION COUNTY, SC

NationSwell community involvement:
BlackRock Foundation // Lead funder

When the BlackRock Foundation saw an opportunity to use philanthropy to help bridge the skills gap and support the infrastructure needed to build a talent pipeline and create socioeconomic change in Union County, South Carolina, they turned to neighboring Spartanburg for inspiration via Spartanburg Academic Movement's (SAM) model of collective action. The BlackRock Foundation explored how they could foster a cradle-to-career approach in Union County, recognizing that workforce development extends beyond job training to include social determinants, like housing and healthcare. They identified key stakeholders to facilitate a grant, and convened local organizations to develop a long-term plan for the community. These efforts and flexible grants would support building the infrastructure and capacity for the community to identify their funding needs.

Today, with the help of organizations, including SAM, Spartanburg County Foundation (SCF), and the United Way of Piedmont, and with funding from the BlackRock Foundation, Union County is able to take on more philanthropic funding, exchange learning among leaders, and give residents the opportunity to plan its future.



Learn more and get involved:

Reach out to the NationSwell Studio to learn more about how we can support your place-based impact at www.nationswell.com/collaboratives-inquiry/.



Place-based initiatives

GROUND BREAK COALITION

NationSwell community involvement:
McKnight Foundation // Co-founder and
coordinator

GroundBreak Coalition is a multi-sector collaborative committed to closing racial wealth gaps and unlocking capital for equitable economic development that benefits everyone in the Minneapolis-St. Paul region. With an initial focus on building Black wealth, GroundBreak mobilizes, aggregates, and deploys financial resources through guarantees, low-cost loans, and grants to support transformative financial systems change.

Launched in 2022, GroundBreak brings together over 40 corporate, civic, and philanthropic partners to reimagine how capital flows to historically excluded communities. Its mission is to build a racially equitable, inclusive, and climate-resilient economy by:

- Mobilizing \$5.4 billion over 10 years through flexible capital strategies
- Unlocking private-market investment at a 3:1 leverage ratio
- Partnering with nonprofits, CDFIs, and financial institutions to deploy resources
- Centering community voices in design and implementation

The GroundBreak model is designed to realize the aspirations of all low-wealth people, starting with Black households, specifically to:

- Create 11,000 new homeowners
- Launch 5,000+ new entrepreneurs creating 8,000 jobs
- Complete 60 new neighborhood commercial developments

As of September 2025, GroundBreak has secured \$959.34 million in capital commitments from 22 early investors.



Learn more and get involved:

GroundBreak is securing capital commitments for grants, loans, loan guarantees, and private-market lending from financial, corporate, philanthropic, and public partners, as well as individual investors. More at

www.groundbreakcoalition.org
and
info@groundbreakcoalition.org

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Shared capacity and services platforms

Shared capacity and services platforms

Overview

PURPOSE

Provide centralized infrastructure, tools, or content that enable partner organizations to deliver more effective and efficient programs.

STRUCTURE

Often a hub-and-spoke model where a central organization or platform manages shared resources used by multiple independent actors.

PARTICIPATION

Partners access and adapt common assets—such as logistics, data systems, or digital content—while tailoring implementation locally.

IMPACT

Expands reach, quality, and efficiency by lowering duplication and ensuring consistent standards across a distributed network.

Adoption Considerations

ADVANTAGES

- Reduces duplication and increases efficiency
- Raises quality and consistency across partners
- Helps smaller actors access infrastructure they couldn't build alone

RISKS

- High costs and complexity to maintain
- Risk of partner dependency on the hub
- Innovation can stagnate if services get rigid

WHEN TO CONSIDER THIS MODEL

- Best when partners have common operational needs
- Works when members are willing to adopt shared standards and systems

TIME PARAMETERS

- Medium to long-term; requires ongoing operation and maintenance, though some benefits can appear quickly



Shared capacity and services platforms

CISCO NETWORKING ACADEMY

NationSwell community involvement:

Cisco // Founder and lead partner

Backed by Cisco expertise and an unmatched ecosystem of partners, Cisco Networking Academy has been transforming lives through the power of education since 1997. Guided by Cisco's purpose to power an inclusive future for all, the Networking Academy brings this vision to life by preparing learners with real-world skills and helping them discover opportunities to apply those skills through a progressive education technology platform, leading-edge curriculum, superior learning experiences, and an unparalleled partner ecosystem.

Today, in addition to the millions of learners who take their self-paced courses, 31,300 instructors deliver curriculum across 12,200 academies. 97% of learners who complete courses find employment or access new educational opportunities. Cisco Networking Academy's ever-expanding ecosystem of partners ranges from the White House and the United Nations to many of the nonprofits you know and love.



Learn more and get involved:

Cisco Networking Academy partners include: libraries, chambers of commerce, workforce development organizations, state and local governments, colleges and universities, and NGOs of all types. Learn more about partnership types and opportunities at www.netacad.com/partners.



Shared capacity and services platforms

GLOBAL FOODBANKING NETWORK

NationSwell community involvement:

Starbucks // Partner

The Global FoodBanking Network (GFN) is a not-for-profit organization committed to alleviating hunger by advancing and uniting food banks around the world. Initially launched in 2006 with roots in several North American and Latin American food bank networks, GFN has since grown into a global network spanning more than 50 countries across six continents. In 2023, its member food banks provided food to over 40 million people.

GFN supports community-led solutions by offering resources tailored to help local food banks operate effectively, expand responsibly, and weather crises. Its multifaceted approach includes mobilizing food systems change through research, policy advocacy, expert convening, strategic partnerships, and a range of training and knowledge-sharing initiatives.



Learn more and get involved:

GFN encourages leaders and organizations to get involved through strategic partnerships, employee-driven campaigns, volunteer programming, and awareness events — visit www.foodbanking.org/ways-to-partner/ to learn more.



Shared capacity and services platforms

INSTITUTE FOR YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH

NationSwell community involvement:

America's Promise Alliance // Founding partner

The Jed Foundation // Founding partner

The Institute for Youth Mental Health, a collaboration between The Jed Foundation (JED) and America's Promise Alliance (APA), is designed for APA member organizations looking to strengthen their mental health strategies and help prevent suicide among the youth they serve. Grounded in **JED's Comprehensive Approach to Mental Health Promotion and Suicide Prevention for Community-Based Organizations**, the Institute will provide content knowledge, expert training, technical assistance, assessment tools, and strategic planning support to ensure mental health and suicide prevention is integrated into their day-to-day programming.



Learn more and get involved:

The Jed Foundation (JED) is a nonprofit that protects emotional health and prevents suicide for our nation's teens and young adults.

America's Promise Alliance is a "by us, for us" practitioners' community for the CEOs and executive teams of the nation's leading youth-supporting nonprofits. To apply for membership, visit www.americaspromise.org/become-a-member/.



Shared capacity and services platforms

LABXCHANGE

NationSwell community involvement:

Amgen Foundation // Sponsor

LabXchange is a global science classroom open to every curious mind. Created at Harvard University with support from the Amgen Foundation, this powerful digital tool makes high-quality science education accessible and gives learners and educators, everywhere, the courage to chart a meaningful path in science—for free. Through a flexible approach to content, learners and educators can engage with individual content types—including videos, assessments and simulations—and build them into customized learning journeys aligned to specific goals. By joining forces with the world’s top educational content creators, LabXchange harnesses the power of collaboration to build a growing digital library of high-quality science content.

LabXchange collaborates with more than 200 partners who contribute content hosted directly on the platform, alongside strategic allies such as the UNESCO Global Education Coalition and the STEMM Opportunity Alliance of AAAS, who help extend its reach and broaden access to this free learning resource. This unique model creates a win-win-win:

- **For LabXchange** - now home to over 30,000 assets and continually expanding.
- **For content collaborators** - who connect with new audiences through the platform, which has already welcomed more than 63 million visitors.
- **For educators and learners worldwide** - who gain access to a growing library of resources they can personalize, remix, and even author themselves, while also managing classes and teaching more effectively.



Learn more and get involved:

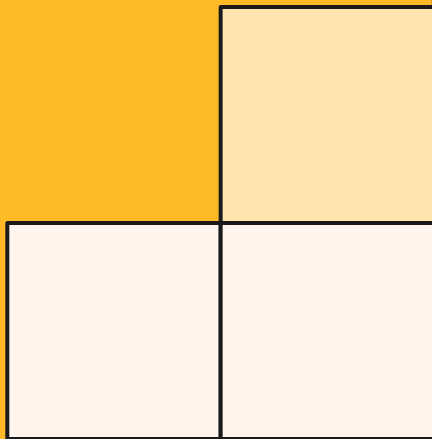
LabXchange is welcoming additional funders to sustain the program. Contact the LabXchange team at collaborate@labxchange.org for inquiries.

Let's hear from you.

Do you have feedback or suggested additions to this resource?

Do you want to connect to discuss how NationSwell can support your collective action journey?

Drop us an email at insights@nationswell.com or reach out to your NationSwell membership team.



The logo consists of the words "NATION" and "SWELL" stacked vertically in a white, uppercase, sans-serif font. The text is centered within a dark grey rectangular box, which is itself centered within a larger yellow rectangular area.

NATION
SWELL

Thank you

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