

What does it mean to receive the Systems Change designation along the StriveTogether Theory of Action™?

Systems Change happens when communities are scaling the relationships, structures and practices — or civic infrastructure — that make it possible to work together across sectors and improve outcomes for every child. This progress is the result of deep collaboration, consistent use of data and a shared commitment to opportunity, especially for youth and families most impacted by systemic barriers.

Communities designated within the Systems Change Gateway are:

- Aligning efforts across sectors to tackle root causes, not just symptoms.
- Using data to guide action, uncover disparities and track progress.
- Centering community members, including youth and families, in decision-making.
- Institutionalizing collaboration so that improved outcomes can be scaled and sustained.

These communities are changing the way systems operate by improving how resources are used, how policies are implemented and how decisions are made. This allows the conditions in communities to shift, leading to measurable improvements in education, employment and opportunity.

By focusing on alignment and sustainability, place-based partnerships are laying the foundation for future generations to thrive. Systems change happens when:

- Cross-sector partners move from cooperation to shared accountability.
- Data becomes a tool for continuous improvement.
- Community members have the ability to name priorities and design and implement strategies.

Communities changing systems change see real, measurable results, like increased kindergarten readiness, higher high school graduation rates and more young people completing postsecondary education and entering the workforce.

More importantly, these results are sustained. The work is not only reaching more young people — it's closing gaps and creating lasting opportunity for every child.

About the StriveTogether Theory of Action™

Continually evolving with lessons from network members, the StriveTogether Theory of Action™ supports communities building the civic infrastructure necessary to transform the systems that shape opportunity.

Our theory of action provides progressive milestones rather than a prescription for change, which allows local context to guide the framework. The milestones inform necessary collaboration of cross-sector leaders from systems like education, housing, health care and more to get better results for youth and families.

About StriveTogether

StriveTogether is a national network of community partnerships that bring together neighbors, including youth and families, nonprofits, businesses, schools and more, to work toward a future where youth can thrive in their communities.

Cradle to Career Network members change the way their communities work together by building connections, sharing resources and using data to put more young people on a path to economic mobility.

Our work helps young people meet seven key life milestones so that they have the opportunities they need to reach their goals, and, ultimately, thrive.