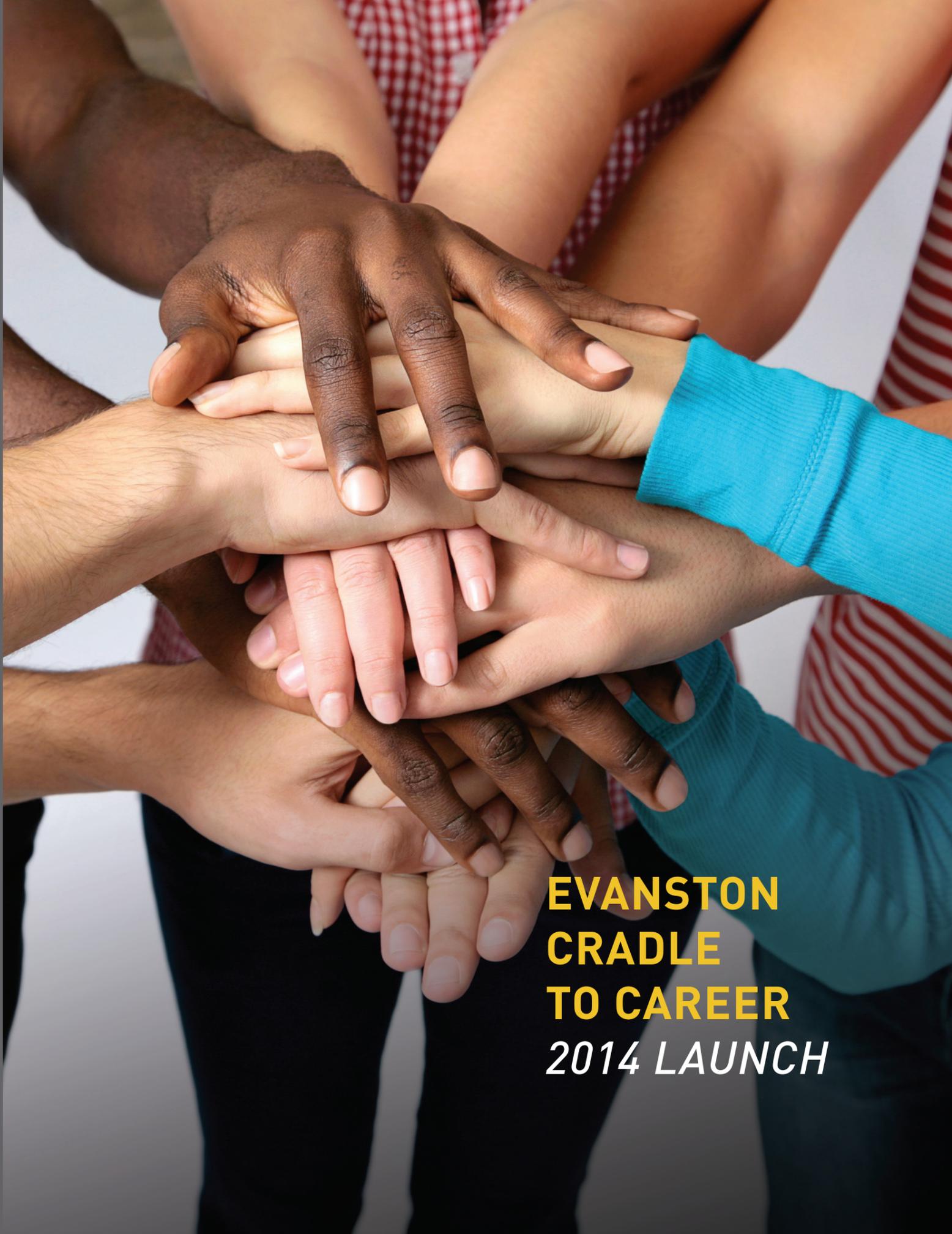


**By the age of 23**, all Evanston young adults will be leading productive lives, building on the resources, education, and support that they and their families have had to help them grow into resilient, educated, healthy, self-sufficient, and socially responsible adults.



**EVANSTON  
CRADLE  
TO CAREER  
2014 LAUNCH**

# Executive Summary

The Evanston Cradle to Career initiative is an effort to mobilize our community assets to make a lasting difference in the lives of our community's children and youth.

Our vision is that by the age of 23, all Evanston young adults will be leading productive lives, building on the resources, education, and support that they and their families have had to help them grow into resilient, educated, healthy, self-sufficient, and socially responsible adults.

Our work on Evanston Cradle to Career began in October 2012 when the leaders of many community-based organizations discovered that their goals were closely aligned with those of other groups. The organizations also realized that, when strung together, their work covered birth to the post-secondary years and spanned a wide variety of issues that impact outcomes. They invited still more community organizations to join them in what became a series of conversations with Professor Michele Shumate of Northwestern University to learn more about "collective impact" as a means of working together to accomplish these related goals.

Following those meetings, a smaller group of nominated and encouraged leaders emerged. They agreed to take the broad definitions created within the large group and develop from them a definition of the community's vision and a system of shared accountability for moving forward together to achieve it. For six months, the group met every other week to outline a shared vision, set of working principles, measures for data-driven decision-making, and organizational structures. The result is Evanston Cradle to Career. This framework for community-wide engagement has grown over the past 18 months, through the dedication of community leaders, school leaders, Northwestern University and Oakton Community College, and City of Evanston representatives.

## What is collective impact?

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Collective impact is an effort to move the needle on a specific but complex community problem. Collective impact initiatives are "long-term commitments by a group of important actors from different sectors to a common agenda for solving a specific social problem whose actions are supported by a shared measurement system, mutually reinforcing activities, ongoing communication, and are staffed by an independent backbone organization."

### Key collective impact points found in Evanston Cradle to Career model:

- Shared common vision of change and problem
- Shared measurement system of outcomes not outputs
- Mutually reinforced coordination, not necessarily collaboration
- Continuous high-level communication by top leaders in organizations
- Backbone support organization including, at minimum, a full-time coordinator and a data-analyst
- Realignment of funding to long-term commitment to shared goals and measurable outcomes

# Guiding Principles

**Equity:** We recognize issues of racism and disparity in our community and will work collectively to establish an inclusive community based upon equitable access and opportunity for all children, youth, and young adults in Evanston.

**Shared Responsibility:** We acknowledge that we are all responsible for the success of our young people and are committed to maximizing the potential of each child, youth, and young adult from early childhood to age 23.

**Collective Impact:** We commit to work in an intentionally coordinated manner, guided by a mutually agreed-upon shared performance measurement system, to achieve our shared vision for all Evanston youth.

**Community Engagement and Development:** We commit to partner with the people most affected by this community initiative, as equal stakeholders, to help lead the development and implementation of these joint efforts.

**Positive Support Structures:** We commit to ensure that Evanston children, youth, and young adults, as well as their families, have the positive support structures they need to be successful. These supports include, but are not limited to, social services, emergency assistance, housing assistance, workforce development, mentoring, and financial literacy.

**Resources:** We commit to leverage and direct our collective existing and future resources toward the accomplishment of the Evanston Cradle to Career vision.

**Holistic Learning & Growth:** We recognize that learning and education occur in various settings throughout the community and we will be intentional in fostering an atmosphere that encourages and provides life-long learning/ educational opportunities to all.



# Are We Making a Difference?

## Measurement Matters

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We are developing a mutually agreed upon shared performance measurement system to ensure that the hard work we are doing together is making a difference in the lives of our children and youth.

By advancing these metrics, we are committing to supporting data collection and to making this information transparent both among the Evanston Cradle to Career network and to the entire community.

Most importantly, we are committed to making decisions guided by whether efforts are making a difference. We need to be able to answer, accurately and honestly, “All of our community’s children are doing well.” If all our children are not doing well, then we need to intensify our attention, resources and work to help them grow into resilient, educated, healthy, self-sufficient, and socially responsible adults.

Rather than look one time at a snapshot of Evanston as it is today, we commit to looking at a sequence of such snapshots over time. Experiences in other communities and academic research show that there is a broad array of “social indicators,” or circumstances, that bear on a child’s likelihood of progressing in a healthy and productive way through life. Using a series of snapshots, we will be looking at education, health, community, and career and employability to identify and address barriers and obstacles to our children’s success. This ongoing scrutiny of how well our community is succeeding with all our children is made possible by a data-driven collective impact approach. All of these indicators will be disaggregated by socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity and gender wherever possible.

Our community groups, both school districts, post-secondary educational institutions, the business community, and City of Evanston will work together to develop the metrics to track our progress. We will begin, in phase one, with currently collected data that measure how children and young people are doing-- how the community is doing. Then, as we move forward, we will determine if there are other questions we need to address but do not have the information to answer. By advancing these metrics, we are committed to making decisions guided by whether efforts are moving the needle. Knowing the numbers is important to our accountability to all stakeholders, especially to the families who reach out to the community of organizations for support and guidance, and also to the donors who support the work of our organizations.

# How it Will Work

## Operational Structure

The Evanston Cradle to Career initiative is organized into a strategic framework consisting of a steering committee, solution design teams, and community coalitions focused on a common vision.

### Steering Committee

The complex nature of large-scale social impact requires a long-term commitment and a multi-level operational structure to coordinate the participation across the community at large. The work of the teams and coalitions and of the initiative as a whole is guided by a steering committee which includes representatives from key organizations as well as individuals touched by the issues. The steering committee must ensure a centralized infrastructure, a dedicated staff, and a structured process to maintain and advance a common agenda, shared measurement, continuous communication, and mutually reinforcing activities among all participants.

### Solution Design Teams

Solution design teams are intended to cross traditional boundaries, mixing participants from across the community. These teams will include both organizational representatives and community members focused on key areas of the Evanston Cradle to Career vision. Each solution design team will develop a theory of action, making visible the chain of events that is necessary to “move the needle” on shared measures. This includes harnessing existing strategies as well as developing new evidence-based practices to address needs that are discovered through examining the data collected and disaggregated across organizations.

The solution design teams will meet regularly to share results, learn from each other, and refine their collective work based on their learning. Each solution design team is responsible for communicating its activities more broadly with other organizations so that the circle of alignment can grow within the community.

The solution design teams will focus on:

- Literacy
- Community stability including housing and poverty
- Mental and physical health and safety
- Career and postsecondary readiness
- Parent engagement

### Community Coalitions

The community coalitions are based on populations or issues specific to a population. These community coalitions will review the data related to the topic areas that they represent. They will review strategies and provide feedback to the solution design teams. They will encourage best practice dissemination and will coordinate services across agencies that are pertinent to their topic area. The community coalitions will meet at least four times annually.

Examples of existing coalitions are:

- Early Childhood Education: Childcare Network of Evanston networks, Evanston Community Foundation *Every Child* Network
- LAN: Youth serving and education network
- WorkNet partners
- Health: Pioneering Healthy Communities

## How it Will Work (Cont.)

A steering committee is responsible for hiring all personnel, providing oversight for their work, determining management structure including development of backbone infrastructure, fund development for the initiative, and all program related decisions.

The steering committee will be composed of representatives of the solution design teams and representatives of key institutions and organizations committed to Evanston Cradle to Career. The steering committee is charged with guiding the way that the solution design teams and community coalitions set goals and create initiatives, supervising the overall data analysis and collection, and providing guidance, training and development needs (i.e. listening with deep empathy, community organizing). Further, the steering committee is charged with identifying and building systems that will encourage coordination among partner agencies.

Implementation of this initiative requires staffing dedicated to the project. An executive director will be hired to manage and direct the Evanston Cradle to Career effort. A data analyst will be employed to provide oversight in data collection and to lead the statistical analysis of the metrics that we will be tracking.

Fiscal sponsorship is to be provided by the Evanston Community Foundation, acting as the fiscal sponsor for this initiative. A qualified 501(c)3 ensures that gifts and grants are treated as tax deductible contributions, maintains records, reports to the steering committee, and pays the bills.

## Initial Evanston Cradle to Career Start-up Structure

### Steering Committee

- Focus on community involvement, leadership and mentorship
- Supervise executive staff and overall data analysis and collection
- Ensure racial and cultural competence
- Coordinate system



### Community Coalitions

*Include and build on existing coalitions*

*Meet a minimum of four times annually*

- Early childhood education:  
Evanston Community Foundation *Every Child* Network, Childcare Network of Evanston networks
- LAN: youth serving and education network
- WorkNet partners
- Health: Pioneering Healthy Communities

### Solution Design Teams

*Twice monthly meetings*

- Literacy
- Community Stability and Safety (including violence, housing, poverty)
- Health and Well-being
- Career and Post-Secondary Readiness
- Parent Connections

## How it Will Work (Cont.)

Funding a successful Evanston Cradle to Career effort is based on a collective financial commitment to its vision and principles. In keeping with those principles, the majority of the funding for Evanston Cradle to Career will come from local partners, and every participating organization will contribute something. This plan both underlines the commitment of individual organizations to the collective goals and avoids competition with individual organizations' fundraising. Evanston Cradle to Career is woven into the budgets and the work of each organization. As the initiative becomes established and new opportunities are identified, additional funds will primarily be solicited via foundation grants. The initial Evanston Cradle to Career budget is estimated to be \$250,000 and will include staffing and benefits, data management resources, meeting and administrative costs, and fiscal sponsorship fees.

### Year One Contributions by Organizational Budget

ORGANIZATIONAL BUDGET	PARTNER CONTRIBUTION
Largest organizations	\$50,000
\$10 million +	\$10,000
\$5 - \$10 million	\$7,500
\$2 - \$5 million	\$5,000
\$1 - \$2 million	\$3,500
\$750,000 - \$1 million	\$2,500
\$500,000 - \$750,000	\$1,500
\$500,000 - \$250,000	\$750
<\$250,000	\$500

## Timeline for Implementation

March 28, 2014	Community-wide meeting
April - June	Presentations at organizations - continue to seek Participation Agreements - target for initial Agreements is June 30, 2014  Working group continues to refine and expand concepts, materials, plans - develops budget - continues discussions of initial and near-term organizational structures / backbone concept - outlines initial framework for steering committee selection process
June 30, 2014	Target date for initial Participation Agreements secured
Early July	Meeting of organizations who have signed Participation Agreements to affirm / revise steering committee selection process - select steering committee
Late July	Initial steering committee meeting - meets twice monthly through 2014 - hold initial planning meeting - job descriptions finalized - search process established
August	Steering committee meets twice - continues work projects (above) - develops a draft timeline through December 2015 - maintains an 18-month rolling timeline (updated every six months at which time six additional months are added)  Posting of positions (Evanston Cradle to Career Executive Director and Data Analyst)
September	Steering committee meetings  Interviews / selection for positions with representatives from the steering committee
October	Steering committee meetings  Executive Director and Data Analyst begin employment  Large group meeting - development of Solution Design Teams (meet twice monthly) and Community Coalitions (meet quarterly)

## How it Will Work (Cont.)

### Timeline for Implementation (Cont.)

November, 2014	Launch baseline data analysis Steering committee and ED develop marketing and communication plan – initiate research and planning for sustainability funding from United Way and others Initial meetings of Solution Design Teams – meet monthly
December, 2014	Steering committee updates 18-month rolling plan Initial Community Coalition meetings – meet quarterly Report to participating organizations and the community
Winter 2014-15	Large group meeting Meetings of Community Coalitions
Spring 2015	Large group meeting Meetings of Community Coalitions Steering Committee updates 18-month rolling plan
Summer 2015	Large group meeting Meetings of Community Coalitions
Fall 2015	Large group meeting Meetings of Community Coalitions
Winter 2015-16	Large group meeting Meetings of Community Coalitions Steering Committee updates 18-month rolling plan

## What Can You Do?

### Learn More

Evanston Cradle to Career members are eager to present to your organization or group about who we are, what we hope to do, and how important it is that you join in the Evanston Cradle to Career effort.

### Join Us!

We need your participation to make Evanston Cradle to Career succeed.

Join Evanston Cradle to Career by:

- Scheduling a board presentation
- Passing your board resolution
- Reviewing and signing participation contract and board resolution
- Securing fiscal resources (signing a check)
- And making a commitment to help Evanston Cradle to Career flourish