



# *Charting the Course: Implementing Local College Access Networks*

*High Impact Practices: Retention Conference  
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# Michigan College Access Network

## Mission & Goal

To *increase college readiness, participation and completion* rates in Michigan, particularly among low-income students, first-generation college going students, and students of color.

Increase the percentage of Michigan residents with high-quality degrees and postsecondary credentials to 60% by 2025.



# Michigan College Access Network

## Vision & Values

- **College is *Postsecondary Education*:** MCAN uses the term “college” to refer to the attainment of valuable postsecondary credentials beyond high school, including professional/technical certificates and academic degrees.
- **College is a *Necessity*:** Postsecondary education is a prerequisite to success in a knowledge-based economy. Everyone must pursue and complete a postsecondary credential or degree beyond high school.
- **College is for *Everyone*:** The postsecondary education attainment rates among low-income students and students of color are significantly lower than those of other students. MCAN is committed to closing these gaps.
- **College is a *Public Good*:** Postsecondary educational opportunity and attainment are critical to a just and equitable society, strong economy, and healthy communities.

# Michigan College Access Network

## Primary Strategy

**Local College Access Network Development:** Support the creation, expansion, and sustainability of high-quality community-based college access strategic alliances. MCAN provides technical assistance and grant opportunities.

## Secondary Strategies

**Implement Statewide Initiatives:** Support and maintain key statewide initiatives in order to increase college access, particularly within Local College Access Networks. Includes ItsMILife, KnowHow2GO, MichiganCAP, and Michigan College Access Week.

**Professional Development:** Train college access professionals, such as high school counselors and other community- and campus-based professionals, to be highly qualified and effective college advisers.

**Leadership and Advocacy:** Serve as Michigan's authority on college access and success issues through leadership. Advocate for policy reforms that expand postsecondary opportunities for low-income students, first-generation college going students, and students of color.

**Coordination and Partnerships:** Coordinate Michigan college access resources, programs, and services. Strengthen existing like-minded and mission-aligned college access and success initiatives.

# Local College Access Networks

## The Basics

- An alliance of cross-sector CEO-level leaders representing K-12, higher ed, nonprofit sector, government, business, and philanthropy
- Community-based strategic network committed to increasing college readiness, enrollment, and completion.
- Highly structured collaborative effort, as opposed to isolated efforts of individual organizations.



# Local College Access Networks

## The Functions

- Agree on a vision
- Establish clear college readiness/access/success goals – and track progress transparently
- Align/coordinate existing organizations to shared goals to fill differentiated roles
- Implement collaborative action plan based on data-driven community priorities
- Hold partners accountable for results



# Local College Access Networks

## Networks versus Programs

It is important to note a Local College Access Network is not a new program of the community or of one particular organization within the network. LCANs primarily coordinate and mobilize college access efforts rather than provide direct services to students and families.

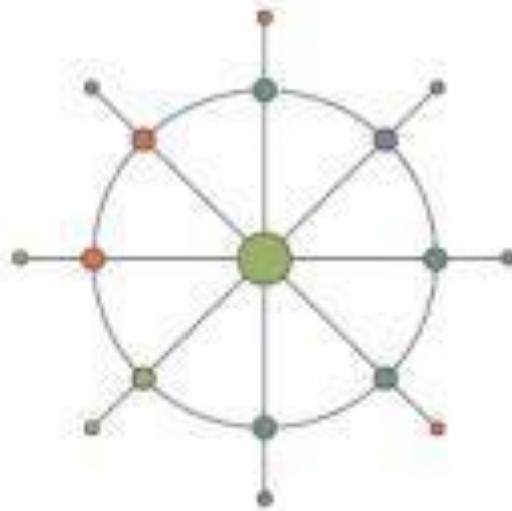
- *An LCAN is*
  - A formalized partnership, coalition, or alliance that rallies around moving the needle on key system-wide metrics
  - A highly structured process that embraces collaborative action, data-driven decision-making, and continuous improvement
  - A framework that enables a community to make gradual but consistent improvements in educational attainment
- *An LCAN is NOT*
  - A new program or project that layers on top of existing efforts

# Local College Access Networks

## ***Collective Impact***

*“Large-scale social change requires broad cross-sector coordination, yet the social sector remains focused on the isolated intervention of individual organizations. Substantially greater progress could be made in alleviating many of our most serious and complex social problems if nonprofits, governments, businesses, and the public were brought together around a common agenda to create collective impact.”*

Kania and Kramer  
Stanford Social Innovation Review, Winter 2011



# CHARTING THE COURSE

A COMMUNITY'S GUIDE FOR INCREASING EDUCATIONAL  
ATTAINMENT THROUGH THE LENS OF COLLECTIVE IMPACT

# Charting the Course: Part I

## PART I: ESSENTIAL LCAN ELEMENTS

Part I of this guidebook addresses the larger framework for using the five conditions of collective impact. This section will explain what the collective impact conditions are and what it means to embed the collective impact framework as it applies to college access and a local college access network (LCAN). The five conditions of collective impact are:



### COMMON AGENDA

Look for this color throughout for concepts highlighting common agenda.



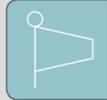
### SHARED MEASUREMENT SYSTEMS

Look for this color throughout for concepts highlighting shared measurement systems.



### MUTUALLY REINFORCING ACTIVITIES

Look for this color throughout for concepts highlighting mutually reinforcing activities.



### CONTINUOUS COMMUNICATION

Look for this color throughout for concepts highlighting continuous communication.



### BACKBONE SUPPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

Look for this color throughout for concepts highlighting backbone support infrastructure.

# Collective Impact

## Common Agenda

- All participants have a shared vision for change

## Shared Measurement

- Collect data and measure results consistently across all participants

## Mutually Reinforcing Activities

- Participant activities are differentiated but coordinated

## Continuous Communication

- Consistent and open communication across the many players

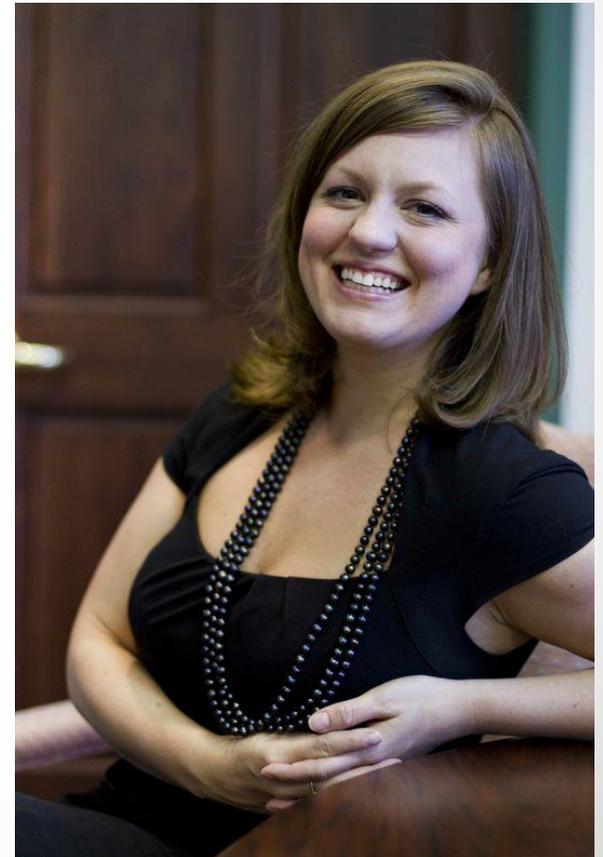
## Backbone Organizations

- Separate organization with staff and skills to coordinate participating organizations

## Essentials

- Cross-sector CEO-level leadership team adopt shared goals
- AKA roadmap, blueprint, master plan
- Purpose is to align multiple organizations and hold them accountable for improving student outcomes
- Focus leaders on clearly defined measurable goals and commit them to a coordinated and collaborative approach to reaching these goals over the long haul
- Includes shared vision for change, boundaries, goals and metrics, and commitments

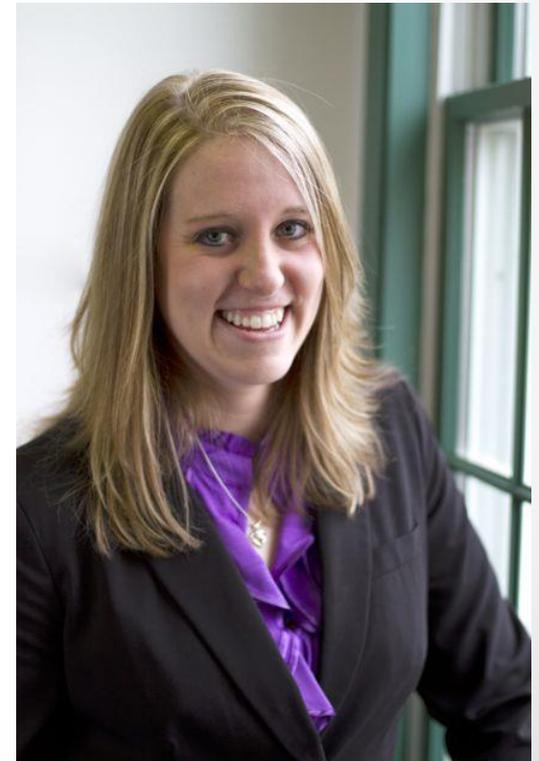
**Common Agenda:  
All participants have  
a shared vision for  
change**



## Essentials

- Short-list of common community-level indicators that match goals in common agenda
- Drive the selection of priority areas and direction of action teams
- Define a baseline, set measurable goals to move the needle, track progress on shared goals consistently over time, use data to continuously improve
- Help individual organizations align their goals to common goals
- Don't let flawed data halt all momentum
- Use data to “improve (not prove) practices (not programs)”
- Develop a consistent timeline and process for collecting, analyzing, and reporting data (dashboard)

Shared Measurement Systems: Collect data and measure results consistently across all participants



# LCANs: The Metrics

## College Readiness

- College-Going Culture (public opinion)
- College Aspirations (8<sup>th</sup> Graders)
- ACT College Ready Benchmarks (11<sup>th</sup> Graders)
- Need for Remedial Coursework

## College Access

- College Enrollment
- FAFSA Completion

## College Success

- College Retention/Persistence
- College Completion

## College Attainment = **Goal 2025**

- Community Postsecondary Educational Attainment (25-64)
- Community Postsecondary Educational Attainment (25-34)

## Essentials

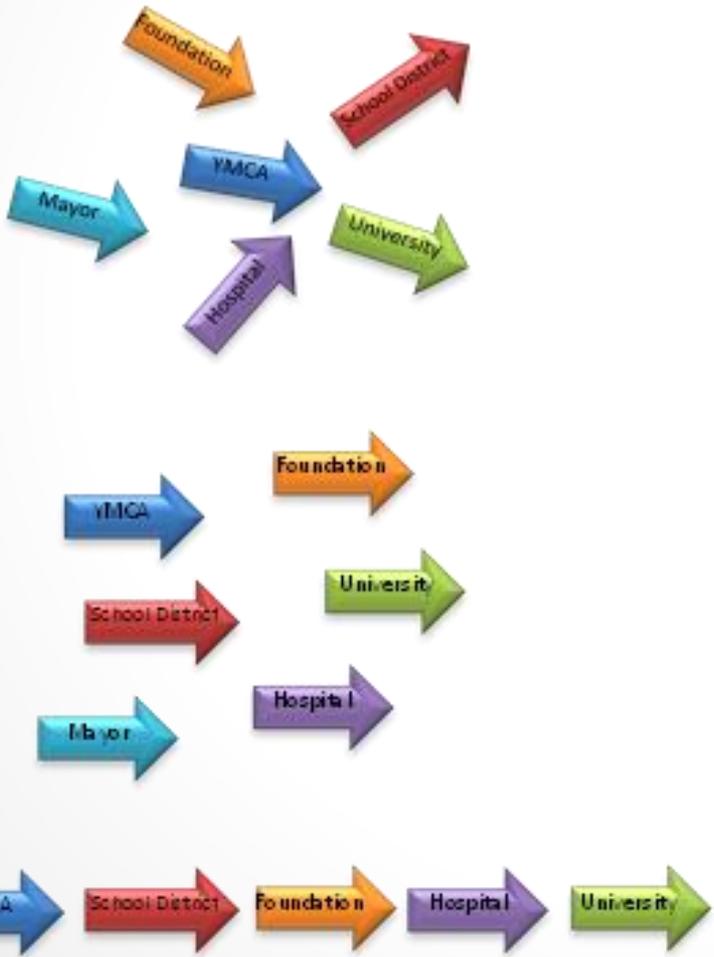
- “The power of collective action comes not from the sheer number of participants or the uniformity of their efforts, but from the coordination of their differentiated activities through a mutually reinforcing plan of action”
- Two Techniques:
  - First, work with existing organizations to align their current practices to the common agenda and to “pick a lane” that is clearly defined and not duplicative.
  - Second, the LCAN should unite service providers around action plans that tackle high-priority areas and address gaps in the community. These action teams will work together to analyze a problem using data and then design an intervention that will be implemented by the team itself.

Mutually Reinforcing  
Activities: Participant  
activities are  
differentiated and  
coordinated



# Mutually Reinforcing Activities

## Organizational Alignment



## Collaborative Action



## Essentials

- Communication builds understanding – between participants and to the public
  - Builds trust
  - Assures mutual objectives
  - Appreciate common motivation
- Common Agenda and Data Dashboard are two initial steps to develop trust

**Continuous  
Communication:  
Consistent and open  
communication across  
the many players**



## Essentials

- Collaboration takes time and resources
- The backbone is comprised of three distinct parts:
  - An active and engaged cross-sector leadership team
  - Core staffing with a specific set of skills
  - A neutral anchor entity or fiscal agent
- Leadership Team: Committed and diverse array of high-level, influential, and dynamic leaders from multiple sectors. Should provide vision and strategic direction, build public will, and mobilize resources.
- Staffing: LCANs require a dedicated staff person with coordination, facilitation, data management/analysis, and communication skills.
- Anchor: Fiscal agent and backend support. Keeps the network grounded. Must be neutral, responsible, and credible.

**Backbone Support  
Organization: Separate  
infrastructure with staff  
and skills to coordinate  
participating  
organizations**



# Charting the Course: Part II

## Building a Collective Impact Network



- 1 • Make the Case with Influential Champions
- 2 • Conduct a Landscape Scan and Asset Map
- 3 • Gather Baseline Data
- 4 • Establish an Initial Accountability Structure
- 5 • Establish LCAN Common Agenda and Dashboard
- 6 • Formalize Backbone Support Infrastructure
- 7 • Align Existing Organizations to Shared Goals and Measures
- 8 • Analyze Data to Select Priority Areas
- 9 • Develop a Coordinated Strategic Action Plan
- 10 • Establish a Process to Continuously Improve

# LCAN Process Step-by-Step

## The Pre-LCAN Work

- Convene a taskforce of community leaders to explore the possibility of establishing an LCAN
- Invite neutral champion to facilitate the first meeting (state network staff?)
- Start a dialogue:
  - Can community leaders articulate a basic urgency for change?
  - Is there a group of leaders who will serve as influential champions?
  - Are there organizations who would be willing to commit financial resources?



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## Common Agenda Metric/Goal

- Percentage of 12<sup>th</sup> grade students submitting a completed Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)

Analyze  
Data

## Priority Area Selection

- FAFSA Completion

Convene  
Representatives

## Action Team

- High School Counselors
- Financial Aid Advisers
- VITA Tax Preparation Volunteers
- College Advisers

Analyze  
Data

## Action Plan

- Financial Aid related strategies and projects

# Continuous Improvement



# Charting the Course: Part III

## PART III: CASE STUDIES AND TEMPLATES

In Part III we provide isolated examples of success from LCANs that have received dedicated assistance from MCAN to embed the collective impact framework. In addition to the LCAN examples, this section will also include templates referenced in Part I and Part II.



# Charting the Course

- Charting the Course is available FREE for download.

[www.micollegeaccess.org/our-network/lcan-guidebook](http://www.micollegeaccess.org/our-network/lcan-guidebook)

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