

Minnesota Learning Collaborative

Operational Guidelines



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Overview

People of color in Minnesota, specifically African-American and American Indian households, experience homelessness and housing instability at rates that are 7-8 times higher than their representation within the general population in Minnesota. In addition, Minnesota’s homeless response system historically and currently produces disproportionately poorer “homeless to housed” and “housing stability” outcomes for African-American and American Indian populations than for White or other populations.

Racial disparities in the homeless response system are caused by systems and structures that are designed to create such disparities. Failure to address these systemic and structural barriers inhibits our collective goal of ending homelessness. Specific attention, resource, and energy must be dedicated towards proactively reimagining policies, practices, attitudes and actions to pursue equitable power, access, opportunity, treatment, impacts, and outcomes for all.

Building upon the success of the Supportive Partnerships for Anti-Racist Communities (SPARC) Initiative, C4 Innovations recently developed the SPARC Learning Collaborative model specifically for Minnesota. The Minnesota (MN) Learning Collaborative will provide an intensive year of training, coaching, and support for four regions across the state. The model will utilize and build upon local leadership and expertise by providing strategic guidance with the collection, analyzation, and use of data; community engagement strategies; and the development and implementation of structural change objectives.

The goals of the MN Learning Collaborative are to:

- Increase the capacity of communities to understand and respond to racial inequities in homelessness,
- Assist communities in developing structural change objectives; and,
- Implement effective strategies to reduce the number of people of color experiencing homelessness.

Timeframe and Process

The Learning Collaborative will occur over 12 months and will combine three in-person Learning Sessions and virtual coaching through specific, time-limited action periods. During the Collaborative, teams of 7-10 people representing the HUD Continuum of Care, housing and homeless service providers, funders, people with lived experience of homelessness and other key stakeholders from each local community will focus on five stages of work:

1. Community Engagement
2. Data Analysis
3. Action Planning



4. Implementation and Evaluation
5. Sustainability

Learning Session 1 will be two days long and will include a one-day training on the intersection of racism and homelessness, strategies for community engagement, and guidance on data collection and analysis. Following Learning Session 1, Action Period 1 (months 2 – 4) will focus on convening community stakeholders, conducting data collection and analysis, and compiling the information into a concise presentation for Learning Session 2 and for use in the wider community. During this period, each team will participate in monthly virtual coaching sessions on webcam via Adobe Connect in which the coaches will provide guidance for how to move through the process and to troubleshoot barriers and challenges. Each team’s coach will be available as needed by email and telephone between coaching sessions.

Learning Session 2 will be one day long and will occur at month five. Teams will share local data in a storyboard session, identify commonalities across communities and share lessons learned during the first Action Period. Each SPARC coach will work with their team to begin translating their findings into strategic action planning including identifying Structural Change Objectives. During Action Period 2 (months 5 – 11), the regional teams will identify 2-4 structural change objectives and create an implementation plan that includes concrete steps to sustain the effort. During the monthly virtual coaching calls, the coaches will share Change Metrics, tools and lessons learned from other SPARC communities.

Learning Session 3, at the end of the 12 months, will be a one-day meeting and include a storyboard session in which teams present their structural change objectives and implementation plan. Teams will share their successes and challenges and plans for sustaining positive change.

Learning Collaborative Structure

The Minnesota Engagement on Shelter and Housing (MESH) is the lead entity for the MN Learning Collaborative and they identified four regions to participate in the yearlong Collaborative. MESH contracted with C4 Innovations to provide overall direction and together, they have identified the MN Learning Collaborative Partners, Faculty and Coaches (see Attachment A: MN Learning Collaborative Structure). The roles and responsibilities of all the partners and participants in the MN Learning Collaborative is described below.

Minnesota Engagement on Shelter and Housing (MESH): Fiscal authority who identifies funding and facilitates partnerships and regional participation.

- a) Role/Responsibilities:
 - i) Identifies and facilitates linkages to national and local partnerships for the MN Learning Collaborative Partners
 - ii) Receives all project funding and contributions and maintains timely and accurate financial record
 - iii) Monitor performance and progress towards deliverables identified with all partners and participants of the MN Learning Collaboratives
 - iv) Provide logistical support (as needed) to regional teams
 - v) Participates in the Learning Sessions



- vi) Reports and summarizes the MN Learning Collaboratives activities and accomplishments to the Heading Home Together Leadership Circle, funders, and other vital partners (including a final report at the end of the project year)

C4 Innovations: In consultation with MESH, facilitates the creation of a shared vision for the MN SPARC Learning Collaborative and provides overall project direction, subject matter expertise and administrative support.

a) Role/Responsibilities:

- i) Regina Cannon, C4's Chief Equity and Impact Officer, will lead the project including coordination among the partners, faculty, coaches and regional teams to implement the 12 month Learning Collaborative
- ii) Leads the creation of the Learning Sessions' agendas and content
- iii) Provides coaches with subject matter expertise in homelessness and racial equity to work directly with regional teams
- iv) Provides guidance on data collection and analysis
- v) Provides tools, guidelines and other products for regional teams
- vi) Provides project management support including setting up monthly coaching calls and other meetings among partners and participants

MN Learning Collaborative Partners: National and state-based organizations with expertise in racial equity, homelessness and special populations that provide content expertise and support for the MN Learning Collaborative

b) Role/Responsibilities:

- i) Identifies specific goals and outcome measures for the Learning Collaborative
- ii) Provides input on special populations and regional context
- iii) Provides tools, guidelines and other products
- iv) Assists with the identification of faculty for the Learning Sessions and monthly coaching calls

MN Learning Collaborative Faculty: Provide subject matter expertise on racial equity, homelessness and special populations.

c) Role/Responsibilities:

- i) Provide intellectual leadership in the content areas of racial equity, homelessness and special populations for the regional teams.
- ii) Participate in planning calls with C4/SPARC coaches
- iii) Support regional teams on monthly coaching calls as needed
- iv) Teach and facilitate breakouts at the Learning Sessions

MN SPARC Coaches: Provide ongoing coaching to a specific regional team(s) to support their work in meeting the overall MN Learning Collaborative goals.

d) Role/Responsibilities:

- i) Provide subject matter expertise in the content areas of racial equity and homelessness
- ii) Provide one-on-one support to a regional team(s) through monthly coaching calls, emails, and phone consultations
- iii) Participate in planning calls with faculty members
- iv) Teach and facilitate breakouts at the Learning Sessions



Regional Teams: Leadership team of 7 to 10 community partners that includes a representative from the region's HUD Continuum of Care (CoC) and the lead organization for the Homelessness Management Information System (HMIS). Other team members may include service organizations providing housing, shelter, social services and/or healthcare for people experiencing homelessness; persons of color with lived experience of homelessness; representatives from the criminal justice and child welfare systems; local churches and other key leaders in the community. All team members are expected to sign a letter of commitment to participate for one year (See Attachment B: Commitment to Participate).

- a) Role/Responsibilities:
 - i) Identify one person as the team leader who will ensure the team meets regularly to work on MN Learning Collaborative goals and objectives.
 - ii) Identify a champion who has influence in the community, believes in what the team is trying to accomplish, and will advocate on behalf of the team to achieve the stated goals
 - iii) Attend and actively participate in all three Learning Sessions (4 days) and in the one-hour virtual monthly coaching calls
 - iv) Complete assignments identified in monthly coaching calls
 - v) Create and gain input from other community members on Structural Change Objectives and local implementation plan
 - vi) Share monthly progress reports with the CoC, local planning committees and with MESH
 - vii) Assign one team member to serve on the Heading Home Together Leadership Circle Equity Team for up to two-hour monthly meetings with remote access
 - viii) Pursue funding (where possible) to support overall SPARC budget
 - ix) Identify resources needed to support local SPARC planning and participation which may include:
 - o Meeting space for Leadership Team meetings and activities
 - o Meeting refreshments for Leadership Team meetings and activities
 - o Stipends to encourage participation of individuals with lived experience
 - o Travel/lodging costs for in-person Learning Sessions (optional)

Regional Team Leader: The regional team leader will coordinate the work of the regional team and be the point of contact between MESH, C4 Innovations, the coach assigned to the team and the team members.

- b) Role/Responsibilities in addition to the Regional Team responsibilities above:
 - i) Attend and actively participate in pre-planning and orientation calls with MESH and C4 Innovations
 - ii) Identify appropriate team members and secure their commitment to participate for one year in the Learning Collaborative
 - iii) Provide C4 Innovations with contact information for all team members and update the information as needed throughout the year
 - iv) Convene the team at least once a month to work on action plan and goals
 - v) Coordinate with the assigned coach as needed to ensure the monthly coaching calls are helpful to the team and move their action plan forward



- vi) Provide evaluative input to the coach and C4 Innovations to increase quality and impact of monthly coaching calls and Learning Sessions

