Introduction

The eleventh Nelson Chair Roundtable on Networking Community-Based Programs was held April 5th and 6th, 2018 at Boston College. The sessions were moderated by Dr. Anderson J. Franklin, Director of the Roundtable and Honorable David S. Nelson Professor of Psychology & Education in the Lynch School of Education at Boston College and by Keri-Nicole Dillman, an external Evaluation and Learning Consultant. Presenters included Christine Dixon, Executive
Director of Project Hope, and representatives from the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative (DSNI), including Interim Executive Director Kalila Barnett and Katrina Brink, School and Community Partnership Specialist.

As a continuation of the Nelson Chair’s partnership with DSNI and Project Hope, the 2018 Roundtable featured the work of the No Child Goes Homeless Initiative (NCGH), which is a collaboration to support students and their families experiencing housing insecurity or homelessness in the Dudley Neighborhood of Roxbury and North Dorchester, Massachusetts, where both programs are also based.

**Roundtable history and mission**

The Nelson Chair Roundtable, first held in 2008, began as a “think tank” meeting designed to bring community-based programs together for networking ideas, resources, and shared concerns. The vision was to develop a supportive network that fosters program-to-program mentoring and to strengthen ties between community-based programs in a coalition that enhances their capacity to effectively address the multitude of challenges facing the populations in their neighborhoods. Therefore, the goal of each Roundtable meeting is to promote community partnership discussions in order to:

1. Reduce organizations working in isolation
2. Revisit missions to align with coalition building
3. Increase capacity for evaluation and monitoring impact
4. Build upon organizational strengths
5. Promote strategies for sustainability

**Boston Promise Initiative and Nelson Chair Roundtable Partnership**

The Nelson Chair partnership with DSNI began in 2015 with the first Roundtable for Boston Promise Initiative (BPI) and representatives from 37 partner organizations. DSNI acts as the lead agency for BPI – one of 68 federally-funded Promise Neighborhood grantees – and has
existed for over 30 years as a resident-led, non-profit community based organization. The two-day Roundtable event in 2015, which featured a special Cradle to Career Colloquium and presenters from PolicyLink’s Promise Neighborhoods Institute and the U.S. Department of Education, provided a forum for BPI’s coalition of partners to gain a deeper understanding of the Promise Neighborhood mission and to learn how BPI initiatives in which they participate contribute to a greater collective impact strategy.

The 2016 Roundtable with BPI, which included nearly 100 representatives from 48 partner organizations, featured the theme, “Demonstrating Collective Impact,” and focused on the five key elements of collective impact: 1) common agenda, 2) shared measurement systems, 3) mutually reinforcing activities, 4) continuous communication, and 5) support from a backbone organization. Four BPI partner programs, including Project Hope, presented their work and showcased the ability to demonstrate impact in the Dudley community.

In 2017 the Roundtable theme, “Shared Leadership, Shared Outcomes”, emphasized the importance of shared leadership responsibilities between BPI partners in order to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes with the common end goal of supporting children and families in the community. The mission was to assemble the nearly 70 representatives from 40 BPI partner organizations working on three separate community initiatives to discuss successes, challenges, and strategies related to the shared leadership approach. Attendees were grouped into three “Mini-Roundtables” composed of community and youth stakeholders from the Dudley Village Campus (DVC – areas surrounding The Dudley Triangle in Roxbury and North Dorchester neighborhoods of Boston), representatives from Boston Public Schools, and others.

The Mini-Roundtables were organized around three community initiatives:

- **Principals as School and Community Leaders**: Focusing on potential within principals’ dual roles as school administrators and community leaders with the intent of connecting schools to community organizations to increase local resources.

- **Mutual Data Sharing Agreements**: Exploring how school district and community-based organizations can partner to utilize school and agency data to determine collective impact.

- **Building Pathways for Young People**: Integrating youth voice and participation to define effective and meaningful strategies to support youth development beyond primary school years.
members of the Boston College Roundtable network. Additionally, two plenary sessions presented concrete strategies, models and tools for: networking and leveraging partnerships; and using data to inform policy development and sustainability, featuring Project Hope’s work with eviction data from Boston’s Housing Court.

With federal funding over a five-year period that completed in 2017, BPI served approximately 10,500 children and their families from birth to ages 18-24 years; all who live and attend programs and/or schools in the targeted DVC neighborhood. BPI worked through a network of 48 partner organizations, including Boston Public Schools, and 13 sub-grantee programs. These partnerships and the work of BPI are continued today under DSNI leadership.

**No Child Goes Homeless Initiative**

The 2018 Roundtable focused on the work of the No Child Goes Homeless Initiative (NCGH) in order to help sustain the partnership between DSNI and Project Hope, one of BPI’s sub-grantees. NCGH is a 6-year collaborative effort between DSNI, Project Hope, and three Boston Public Schools: Orchard Gardens K-8 Pilot School, the Dearborn STEM Academy, and the Dudley Street Neighborhood Charter School. The program works by partnering with Dudley Neighborhood schools to identify students and families in need of housing support. Project Hope provides families with flexible and responsive case management services to assess needs, work collaboratively to create an individualized service plan, connect families with housing resources, and achieve a stable housing situation. Since September 2012, 190 families have been referred to the NCGH initiative. Two-thirds of those referred have engaged with the Project Hope staff and received case management and housing search assistance. Of those, over seventy-five percent have obtained stable housing. In comparing attendance for students before and after their families became stably housed, Project Hope has found that over forty percent of the students engaged by their intervention are showing improved attendance.
2018 Roundtable Goals

Following NCGH’s 6 years of demonstrated success, the goal for this year’s 2018 Nelson Chair Roundtable was to provide a space for core team members to revisit the vision and mission of the initiative, and ultimately, to establish a blueprint for NCGH’s future work that could be shared with other organizations.

The first day of the Roundtable consisted of an internal staff planning meeting for NCGH to flesh out primary objectives, operational components, and targeted outcomes. The goal for the second day was to engage critical partners and stakeholders to: 1) share the newly articulated presentation of NCGH’s vision, partnerships, and operations; and 2) hear from external stakeholders about needed resources and partnership possibilities for NCGH’s continued growth and success.

Attendees included 38 representatives from 15 partner organizations including Boston Public Schools, Boston City Council, Boston Housing Authority, the City of Boston Mayor’s Office and Office of Housing Stability, United Way of Massachusetts, and programs such as New Lease for Homeless Families, Rosie’s Place, Homes for Families, and Boston’s Higher Ground. As always, the Roundtable provided a unique opportunity for partners who work together in varying capacities to identify shared challenges and collaborate on potential strategies, which we strive to share constructively through this report. For example, one approach utilized by NCGH core leadership staff to guide their deliberations was the adoption of the “logic model” in strategic planning.

Program Theory and Logic Models

A logic model provides an outline of how a program works, laying out the theory – or logic – of why a program does what it does and how those activities affect important outcomes. Logic models use “if, then” logic, which articulates “If we engage in activity X, then we should accomplish outcome Y.” Logic models are often visual representations of a program’s work and include resources or inputs, activities, outputs, short term and long term outcomes, and impacts. As
argued in the [Kellogg Foundation’s Logic Model Development Guide](#), a logic model contributes value to an organization in three primary ways:

1. By providing an inventory of the resources a program currently has and needs to carry out its activities;
2. By establishing a case for how a program’s activities will lead to intended outcomes;
3. By creating a guide for managing and assessing a program’s work. Within an organization, a logic model can provide a critical roadmap for designing, planning, implementing, and evaluating programs.

Creating and using a logic model can also be valuable for collaborating with outside organizations. A logic model can help a program to map its inter-organizational partnerships, clarifying both how these partnerships function and how they drive [collective impact](#). It can also facilitate communication with external stakeholders, establishing clear assumptions and expectations. Finally, it can help a program to strategically report results to funders and other stakeholders.

![Diagram of logic model](#)

Source: [Kellogg Foundation’s Logic Model Development Guide](#)
It is critical to note that a logic model is a living document to be revisited frequently and collaboratively within an organization. Logic models can help keep a program’s activities on track, as they strive towards desired outcomes, while also maintaining the flexibility to adapt to changing resources and circumstances. Ultimately, logic models are dynamic tools; As a program grows, so does its logic model.

**Mapping Program Work - Why is it so important?**

In the following sections, we will explore in more detail the importance of program mapping and developing logic models, using the No Child Goes Homeless (NCGH) initiative as a case study. NCGH’s strategic planning process involved a pre-planning process, where the logic model was developed, the first day of the Roundtable discussion, where members of NCGH’s discussed and further enriched the logic model, and the second day of the Roundtable discussion, where partner organizations were invited to see and critique NCGH’s logic model and to discuss how they could contribute to NCGH’s vision. This strategic planning process was uniquely valuable for the NCGH initiative in three primary ways:

1. By bringing in an experienced, external facilitator, NCGH was able to benefit from an important outside perspective in their strategic planning process and conversations.

2. The two-day Roundtable event gave NCGH members the opportunity to step back from their daily work to think about the big picture in a way that they rarely can afford to do.

3. Inviting external partners to both give input on the logic model and discuss how they contribute to NCGH’s work allowed NCGH to communicate their vision to partners, strengthen key relationships, and ask for further support and collaboration.

Over the two-day Roundtable discussion, NCGH mapped out a logic model and used that model to discuss the core components of their work as well as current and future activities with key stakeholders. In particular, we will analyze how NCGH used program mapping (a) to ensure alignment between short term and long term goals and the program mission; (b) to identify steps taken to achieve and implement target outcomes; (c) to understand what they do now and identify
what is needed for the future; (d) to identify current resources and additional resource that may be necessary to achieve future goals; (e) to focus on the importance of attending to planning and administration; and (f) to identify ways to leverage and maximize partnerships.

**Ensure alignment between short term and long term goals and program mission**

For any program engaged in strategic planning and program mapping, it is essential to step back from the detailed attention of day-to-day programming to ensure that the current goals that motivate programmatic activities truly align with the program’s mission and stated purpose. This alignment is critical because the most thoroughly planned and implemented strategies and the most diligently accomplished goals are only valuable if they ultimately advance the overarching mission of an organization.

The NCGH initiative has a needs-driven mission, focused on addressing tangible and actionable needs in the Dudley Square neighborhood, so one of the first activities of the Nelson Chair Roundtable discussion was to articulate and discuss a needs statement that motivates all of NCGH’s work. The identified needs statement asserted that:

1. Housing instability challenges Dudley families and is worsening;
2. Housing instability harms the well-being of Dudley families and children and the fabric of the neighborhood; and
3. The tension of high housing costs and limited incomes is at the heart of Dudley’s family housing instability problem.

In a group discussion, NCGH members built upon this needs statement, adding, for instance, that these needs are particularly salient for communities that do not speak English as their primary language. The importance of focusing on children in the needs statement was also identified, for instance measuring children’s well-being by school performance and future life outcomes.
Following the discussion of NCGH’s needs statement, the Roundtable transitioned to a conversation of the program’s current goal statement, namely that families in Dudley neighborhood schools that are homeless or housing-insecure achieve (within 18 months of engagement) and sustain (over at least 3 years) housing stability. NCGH also named the secondary goal of mitigating the risks of housing instability for Dudley students by connecting them to student-focused supports and services outside of NCGH. Therefore, school-aged children of Dudley families who are housing insecure would have reduced rates of chronic absenteeism within 18 months. In a discussion of this articulated goal statement, Roundtable participants added the aspiration to keep families in the community that they want to be in, whenever possible, promoting both housing and community stability. It was noted that family housing stability leads to community stability that leads to school stability, which increases school and student performance.

**Identify necessary activities to achieve and implement target outcomes**

Once a program has identified its core mission and goals, the next step is to identify a set of concrete outcomes, through which progress toward program goals can be measured. Not only is it critical that these outcomes reflect the program’s goals, but they must also be actionable outcomes that program activities can address. Once specific outcomes have been defined, a program can delineate a set of activities that, according to the program’s logic model, should lead to the desired outcomes.

Having discussed the community needs that motivated the work of the NCGH initiative and aligned these needs to a set of goals, the Roundtable discussion group moved on to a discussion of outcomes and program activities. Target outcomes included housing and family well-being-related aims at 18 months and three years (see table). In group discussion, members of the Roundtable agreed that it was not realistic to hold themselves directly accountable for students’ educational outcomes given their primary mission, and highlighted the need for clear communication with
funders about which outcomes their program directly targets, as opposed to indirect outcomes that research suggests may be affected.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target Outcomes in 18 months</th>
<th>Target Outcomes in 3 years</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Housing</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Residential stability ↑</td>
<td>Residential stability ↑</td>
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<tr>
<td>Affordability ↑</td>
<td>Affordability ↑</td>
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<tr>
<td>Residential satisfaction ↑</td>
<td>Residential satisfaction ↑</td>
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<td>Homelessness ↓</td>
<td>Homelessness ↓</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Family Well-being</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Physical &amp; mental health;</td>
<td>Good physical &amp; mental</td>
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<td>stress, substance use</td>
<td>health; minimal stress</td>
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<tr>
<td>Milestones achieved on</td>
<td>and substance use</td>
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<tr>
<td>individualized service plan</td>
<td>Employment status</td>
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<td>(e.g. education &amp; training)</td>
<td>(e.g. employed, job</td>
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<td>Employment status (e.g.</td>
<td>quality, hours, wages)</td>
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<td>employed, job quality, hours,</td>
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<td>wages)</td>
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<td>move towards financial</td>
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<td>basic needs (e.g. food</td>
<td>stability</td>
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<td>security)</td>
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Following their discussion of target outcomes, the NCGH Roundtable group moved on to identify their program’s current activities that, according to their logic model, should lead to target outcomes. The group identified five current activity areas: (1) marketing, training, and outreach, (2) intake and engagement, (3) housing crisis resolution and stabilization, (4) case management, and (5) planning and administration. Current marketing, training, and outreach activities identified by the group included meeting with other shelters and housing providers, fostering word-of-mouth referrals between families, and maintaining an active presence in schools, for instance by training school staff and distributing flyers to families at schools. Current intake and engagement activities involve school staff referring families to NCGH, either at monthly meetings or in between meetings as cases emerge. Initial intake and assessment meetings are family-centered – minimizing power dynamics, meeting people where they are, and engaging entire families. Intakes may span multiple meetings and forms of communication. They also involve a standardized assessment which is repeated every three months. Housing crisis resolution and stabilization activities identified by the group included guiding families through
the housing search process, negotiating with landlords and brokers, and providing critical funding, such as eviction prevention funding and assistance with moving costs. NCGH also identified current *case management* activities such as developing relational, holistic partnerships with families, developing individualized family goals and service plans, providing ongoing, collaborative case monitoring, including monthly meetings with school staff, and referring families to other supportive services, such as job training and adult education. Case management activities also included regularly recording and monitoring case notes and analyzing student attendance data. NCGH Roundtable participants agreed that the program’s fifth area of activity, *planning and administration*, was critical to program success but required further, thoughtful delineation outside of the Roundtable setting, so a small group agreed to meet again soon to flesh out a clearer understanding of these program activities.

*Understand what they do now and identify what is needed for the future*

With a clearer understanding of their current activity streams and how these activities align with program outcomes, goals, and missions, an organization can begin to strategize about the future, carefully distinguishing between current practices and aspirational ones and identifying opportunities for future growth and improvement. At the NCGH Roundtable, discussion participants identified five key opportunities for future development: (1) identifying families “earlier”, (2) preserving existing affordable housing in Dudley, (3) expanding subsidized housing waitlist priority status for families that are doubled-up, (4) providing the most comprehensive and appropriate suite of supports to families and children, and (5) institutionalizing resident family role in NCGH planning and administration. The group expanded upon and discussed the first four of these opportunities.

For the first recognized opportunity, the group agreed that identifying vulnerable families further “upstream” from homelessness could prevent trauma for families and reduce program costs associated with stabilizing housing and family well-being. In order to take advantage of this opportunity, the group discussed a need for both more and effective outreach, developing
previously untapped community partnerships e.g. with church communities, and leveraging existing partnerships with schools. The group identified value in both tailored marketing outreach, specific to NCGH, and also broader marketing outreach for Project Hope and DSNI in general, which would ultimately lead to more referrals for NCGH.

The second future opportunity involved preserving existing affordable housing in Dudley (as compared to citywide) and creating more housing that is affordable to families with low incomes in the neighborhood, with the objective of ensuring neighborhood and school stability for vulnerable families in Dudley. Current affordable housing cut-offs, which exclude many families, are a challenge to increasing the affordable housing in Dudley, and the citywide affordable housing lottery which does not give preference to families already living in the community is a further challenge to neighborhood stability. Roundtable participants agreed that progress toward this potential future opportunity would require building more organizing power and a larger base to lobby for policy changes. The related third opportunity identified by Roundtable participants was to expand subsidized housing waitlist priority status for families that are doubled-up (in addition to families in shelter), which could enhance NCGH’s ability to serve this particularly vulnerable subset of housing insecure families in Dudley.

The group identified a fourth opportunity for future growth and development – providing the most comprehensive suite of supports to families and children, which would enable NCGH to achieve student and family outcomes. Specific required supports and resources included more and accessible English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes for parents, greater access to tutoring support and transportation for students, and more mental health resources, particularly in languages other than English. The group identified a need for a flexible budget for families’ miscellaneous expenses, such as utilities and school supplies. They also identified a need to continue building relationships with other community organizations providing complementary services.
Identify current resources and additional resources necessary to achieve future goals

As a program establishes future goals and opportunities for growth, it is valuable to assess what resources are currently available and what resources are lacking. Missing resources may be targets for future activities or they may be challenges that programs have to creatively navigate around. The NCGH Roundtable identified multiple resources that were needed to achieve future goals. Many of these needed resources developed directly out of the group discussion about future opportunities. They included tutoring and transportation support from schools, more mental health resources, particularly in non-English languages, and budgets for school supplies, utilities, and other miscellaneous costs. A need was also identified for more quality, affordable housing units, eviction process trainings in languages other than English, and a larger, more powerful base to lobby for policy changes.

Focus on the importance of attending to planning and administration

To successfully implement activities to accomplish target outcomes and to take advantages of future opportunities, programs must attend carefully to their planning and administration practices. Effective planning and administration leads to efficient program operations and can be essential for measuring and evaluating program success as well as demonstrating impact to funders and other external stakeholders. Attaining funding is necessary for program sustainability, and NCGH Roundtable participants discussed the importance of clarifying the extent of their activities to funders. For instance, the group agreed that the words “case management” did not fully capture how much work goes into case management relationships and that the complexity of this work must be communicated. The Roundtable participants decided to have a follow-up meeting to focus specifically on identifying NCGH’s current planning and administration activities and how they align with program outcomes and goals.

Identify ways to leverage and maximize partnerships

As part of the process of creating a program theory, it is valuable for an organization to identify current partnerships and determine how these partnerships can be developed or strategically used to accomplish target outcomes and access needed resources. As preparation for the second day of the Nelson Chair Roundtable, where external stakeholders from partner organizations would join the discussion, the NCGH Roundtable participants devised a series of
“partner asks”. The first of these “asks” was simply to gain a better understanding how much collaboration and support they could reasonably ask and expect from their school partnerships. Another “ask” referred to management companies, questioning how to deal with housing broker issues and fees. Participants were interested in whether they could tap into an existing network of management companies and how they could incentivize landlords to rent out units below market rate and work directly with NCGH instead of going through a broker. The group was also interested in whether there was anything they could learn from external partners about how to control affordable housing stock at the community level, rather than the city level. Another partner “ask” focused on finding creative ways to leverage partnerships to address tutoring, transportation, language barriers, mental health, and other student and family needs.

No Child Goes Homeless - Today

Goal: Families in Dudley neighborhood schools that are homeless or housing-insecure achieve (within 18 months of engagement) and sustain (over at least 3 years) housing stability in the neighborhood.

In achieving this goal, the NCGH partnership aims to mitigate the risks of housing instability for Dudley students by providing a solid ‘foundation’ for student-focused supports and services provided beyond NCGH.
Accessing and Cultivating Stakeholder Input

At the 2nd Day of the Nelson Chair Roundtable, NCGH had a unique opportunity to bring external stakeholders to the table for a full, daylong discussion. This provided them with a rare occasion to strengthen partner relationships, renew existing commitments, learn about new resources, and generate momentum for future collaboration. For a portion of the day, the Roundtable split into three breakout groups, organized around issues related to housing, families, and students. Each group represented a segment of NCGH’s partners and brought together programs with aligned or overlapping missions and goals.

2018 Roundtable Breakout Groups

**Housing breakout group**

As rents continue to rise rapidly in Boston, it is becoming increasingly difficult to find affordable housing options in the Dudley neighborhood. The housing crisis is a complex issue that requires support from the City of Boston and collaborative advocacy for policy change.

The housing breakout group represented an important piece of NCGH’s program theory because keeping someone stabilized in current housing is cost effective and avoids many problems for families and communities. However, keeping families housed requires engagement and resources. From the policy level down to the family level, there is a need for system players to collaborate to expand services and make them more cost effective.

**Families breakout group**

NCGH strives to improve the long term well-being of families and to provide opportunities for input and leadership from an array of sources. Working with and supporting families is a crucial aspect of advertising NCGH intake and assessment, and case management services.

The families breakout group addressed important components of NCGH’s program theory related to supportive resources and services that help families stay housed and help students stay focused in schools. The current system can force families to lose all of their resources and informal support networks by relocating them far from their communities and then make them apply to qualify for these same resources, but collaboration among system players could fill in some of these gaps.

**Students breakout group**

DSNI and Project Hope rely on teachers and staff at Dudley Neighborhood schools to help identify and refer students and families who are experiencing housing instability. As such, the relationship with school staff is critical given that schools are the lead on academic supports for students, and that improving student performance is an aspiration tied to the primary goals of NCGH.

The students breakout group focused on the components of NCGH’s program theory that look at students’ academic success and stability in schools. Coordinated support between schools and community partners can provide valuable wrap-around services for students in unstably housed families.
**Housing breakout group**

Each of the breakout groups discussed relevant future opportunities for NCGH. The housing group discussed the opportunities of identifying vulnerable families upstream, preserving existing affordable housing in Dudley, and expanding subsidized housing waitlist priority status for families that are doubled-up. In their discussion about identifying vulnerable families earlier, the breakout group agreed that the sooner a vulnerable family was identified, the more cost effective it was to leverage supportive resources. They discussed that homelessness does not occur overnight, but rather there are usually multiple destabilizing events that occur over time and could be targets for intervention. The group also identified a need for strong partnerships and working across silos to identify and support unstable families upstream. The need for strong school partnerships was emphasized, as was the opportunity to build new connections with churches, community health centers, and other organizations where families are already going. These spaces should strive to be as safe and welcoming as possible because families are more likely to share that they are struggling in environments that treat them with dignity and respect. In particular, group members noted that healthcare providers were not at the table as collaborators and expressed a strong interested in bringing them into the conversation. The group also talked about opportunities to develop more sophisticated systems of early identification, for instance partnering with schools and hospitals in ways that are collaborative rather than intrusive to families.

In the housing breakout group’s discussion about preserving existing affordable housing, participants noted that preserving communities as they currently are will require a broad range of affordable housing and creative financing. The group raised questions about how to scale housing subsidies and rents to match the community level Area Median Income (AMI) rather than the regional AMI and how to align
resources, zoning rules, and density rules to get more affordable units. They acknowledged that, to house more people, Boston may need to increase its housing density, which many city residents and stakeholders are biased against. They also cited a need for stronger zoning laws because the city's high land value is due, in part, to zoning restrictions.

Finally, the housing breakout group discussed the opportunity to improve housing waitlist priority for families that were doubled-up. It was acknowledged that doubled-up families are often only temporarily in these circumstances and may end up homeless, so moving them up the priority list would be a valuable, earlier intervention. Group participants also discussed frustration about the lack of consensus across system players about how to define homelessness. Because doubled-up families are frequently not counted as homeless, the extent of the homelessness problem may appear smaller than it truly is. A point was also raised about the need to make compromises and recognize that, if doubled-up families move up the housing priority list, some other group must necessarily be moved down. Because of this, priorities should be considered in terms of an ecological framework and evidence-based connections.

**Families breakout group**

The families breakout group discussed the opportunities of identifying vulnerable families further upstream, providing the most comprehensive and appropriate services for families and children, and institutionalizing resident family roles in NCGH's planning and administration. In their discussion about identifying vulnerable families upstream, the group talked about ways that schools could be involved, including providing services for whole families and finding opportunities to establish more parent-to-parent supports. They also noted that organizations should work from the assumption that any family could be housing unstable, thereby destigmatizing housing instability and providing resources earlier.
In terms of providing comprehensive services, the group discussed a need for creating safe spaces both at NCGH and in schools by establishing family advisory boards and ensuring racial and linguistic diversity of staff. Needs were identified for culturally competent and language diverse mental health providers, childcare, and ESOL classes, as well as resources for LGBTQ students, domestic violence, and suicide prevention. Proposed strategies for approaching these resource needs included broadening the scope of grant proposals and developing more creative approaches to access unrestricted funds, for instance from individual donors.

In their discussion of institutionalizing resident family roles in NCGH, the families breakout group suggested establishing a parent advisory board and hiring family members as staff to lead engagement efforts with other families in the community. They also saw a potential role for family members to work as liaisons with school partners. The group noted that the institutionalization of family roles on staff would require NCGH to incorporate family leadership into their funding.

Students breakout group

The students breakout group discussed the opportunities of identifying vulnerable families further upstream, providing the most comprehensive and appropriate services for families and children, and institutionalizing resident family roles in NCGH’s planning and administration. In their discussion of identifying vulnerable families upstream, the group agreed that schools need more student support staff, such as guidance counselors and case managers, as well as increased training and capacity for teachers and schools to identify warning signs of housing instability in students. They also discussed that the Boston Public Schools’ new data sharing system, ASPEN, was not being used to its full potential.

Regarding providing comprehensive services to families and students, the group reiterated that both stigma and cultural differences are barriers to families seeking and receiving the supports they need. To mitigate these challenges, they suggested bringing families to the table,
involving them in trainings, recognizing their expertise, and establishing spaces for them to share their stories. The group also identified that schools could provide spaces for parents to connect and learn and could support student leadership by organizing trainings. Finally, the group discussed a need for more legal services, both for immigration issues and issues with the Department of Children & Families (DCF).

**Outcomes and Action Agenda**

The process of building group consensus about a program logic model and engaging key external stakeholders at the Nelson Chair Roundtable provided NCGH a roadmap for strategic planning, developing programs to align with future goals, and maximizing collective impact. Establishing a logic model gave Roundtable participants the opportunity to step back from their day-to-day to work to align with one another on what their program currently does and why, as well as where they plan to go in the future and how to get there. The logic model itself will serve as a flexible, dynamic roadmap for future activities as well as a valuable tool for communicating with community partners and funders.

NCGH walked away from the Roundtable not only with an internal strategy but also with commitments from external stakeholders. For instance, a representative from Rosie's Place committed to providing advocacy services for mothers in schools, and the Boston Housing Authority (BHA) committed to doubling down on eviction prevention efforts. A Boston city councilor in attendance recognized that decision makers are often disconnected from the people affected by polices and committed to remaining connected to community organizations to design better policies. A school-based clinician affirmed that schools needed to work on creating spaces for families to come together and talk with peers in safe spaces, without school staff, and a Boston Public Schools (BPS) guidance counselor established that the need for a higher ratio of guidance counselors to students should be reflected in the next BPS budget. A representative from the United Way committed to providing unrestricted support and flexible funding for organizations as well as partnering to bring in volunteers. DSNI and Project hope committed to working with landlords to get better rates for families, to collaborating to receive larger and more flexible grants, to building family leadership into their fundraising, to increasing their community organizing efforts to build family agency and power, and to continue meeting to carry forward
momentum from the Roundtable. Rahn Dorsey, Chief of Education for the City of Boston, spoke to the challenges of addressing multisystem issues without multisystem partnerships, processes, and investments. He emphasized the need for more of the kinds of tough conversations and relationship-building across systems that the Roundtable encouraged.

At the end of the Nelson Chair Roundtable, NCGH and community partners acknowledged ongoing challenges and unmet needs, including lack of legal and mental health services, need for transportation and academic support for students, and housing challenges related to zoning laws and relationships with landlords. However, through the process of creating a program logic model and engaging stakeholders at the Roundtable, NCGH developed a clear picture of the major challenges and opportunities ahead, where to focus their attention and resources, and how to draw upon community collaborations in order to accomplish their programmatic goals. The Nelson Chair Roundtable laid a solid foundation for the future of NCGH’s strategic planning, program activities, and engagement with community partners.
Resources

Program Theory

Purposeful Program Theory: Effective Use of Theories of Change and Logic Models

Logic Model Development

Kellogg Foundation Logic Model Development Guide
Cremonini Consulting presentation for Proteus Fund: Building Logic Models

Collective Impact


Policy Change Advocacy

Advocating for Equitable Development: A PolicyLink Manual

Participating Programs

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www.prohope.org

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BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS, DEPARTMENT OF OPPORTUNITY YOUTH
www.bostonpublicschools.org/domain/2342

BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS, SCHOOL-COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS
https://www.bostonpublicschools.org/domain/2093

BOSTON’S HIGHER GROUND
www.higherground-boston.org

CITY OF BOSTON, CITY COUNCIL
www.boston.gov/departments/city-council
CITY OF BOSTON, MAYOR’S OFFICE  
www.boston.gov/departments/mayors-office

DUDLEY STREET NEIGHBORHOOD CHARTER SCHOOL  
www.dudleystreetschool.org

NEW LEASE FOR HOMELESS FAMILIES  
www.newleasehousing.org

ORCHARD GARDENS K-8  
www.orchardgardensk-8.org

ROSIE’S PLACE  
www.rosiesplace.org

UNITED WAY OF MASSACHUSETTS BAY  
www.nsuw.org

YOUTH HARBORS  
www.jri.org/services/health-and-housing/housing/youth-harbors

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