

NEEDLE-MOVING COLLABORATIVES THREE-YEAR FOLLOW-UP

Nashville, TN

Focus areas: School success and children’s health; tracked metrics have included high school graduation rate.

Founding date: 2004

Leadership (backbone): Alignment Nashville

Results at time of 2012 study: Between 2002 to 2011, high school graduation rates increased by 20 percent.

Most recent results: From 2011 to 2013 the high school graduation rate increased by 2 percent, from 76.2 percent in 2011 to 78.7 percent in 2014 (however, calculation method changed in 2011, making before-and-after comparisons difficult).

Nashville’s experience over the last three years: Over the years, Alignment Nashville has developed a highly structured operating process. It has an operating board that weighs in on key issues, a governing board that approves all major decisions, several issue-focused steering committees, and an Invitation to Participate (ITP) process to solicit community participation in initiatives that surface from steering committees. For some stakeholders, these highly developed structures and processes have turned into a barrier. Anderson Williams, one of the founders of the Tennessee College Access and Success Network, echoed the views of several stakeholders: “There is certainly a need for coordination and facilitation to support and track the concept of collective impact. But we don’t need unnecessary bureaucracy.” On the other hand, Alignment Nashville has already received 84 responses to its ITP in the 2014-15 school year, and in 2013-14 it received 217 responses, covering a broad range of program areas and suggesting that there are plenty of organizations eager to be a part of Alignment’s efforts.

“Some organizations have heard about Alignment through national organizations like United Way. What they’re looking for is a model—how to do it. They get everybody in the room together, they get their structure built, and then they say, now what?”

SYDNEY ROGERS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
ALIGNMENT USA

Alignment Nashville’s attention to process and clearly defined ways of working have also helped it become a model for other community’s collaborative efforts.

Six communities in six states have adopted the Alignment model, receiving technical assistance from the Nashville team and sharing best practices across communities.

BOSTON

2 Copley Place, 7th Floor
Suite 3700B
Boston, MA 02116
Tel: 617 572-2833

NEW YORK

112 West 34th St., Ste. 1510
New York, NY 10120
Tel: 646 562-8900

SAN FRANCISCO

465 California St., 11th Fl.
San Francisco, CA 94104
Tel: 415 627-1100

