



THE WOMEN'S FUND  
*of* GREATER BIRMINGHAM

# Building Collaborative Models

**Melanie R. Bridgeforth, MSW**

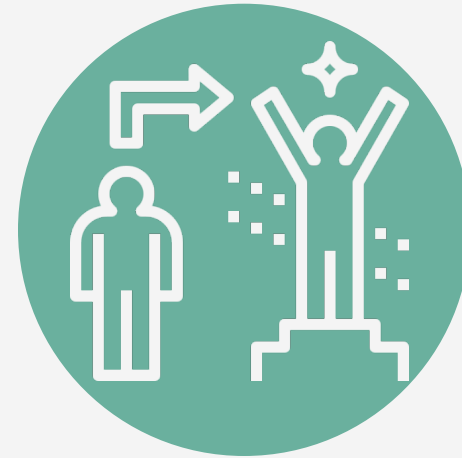
President & CEO

The Women's Fund of Greater Birmingham



# Why Collaborate?

**What's in it for you and  
the people you serve**



Go from good to great



Systems change



Better outcomes





**By the numbers**

# 18%

OF ALABAMIANS EXPERIENCE  
POVERTY

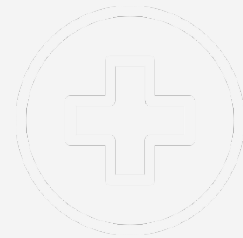
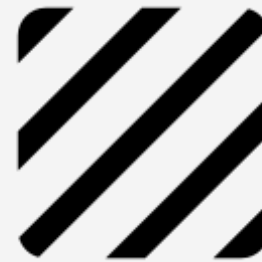


# By the numbers



**19.2%**

Alabamians experiencing  
food insecurity



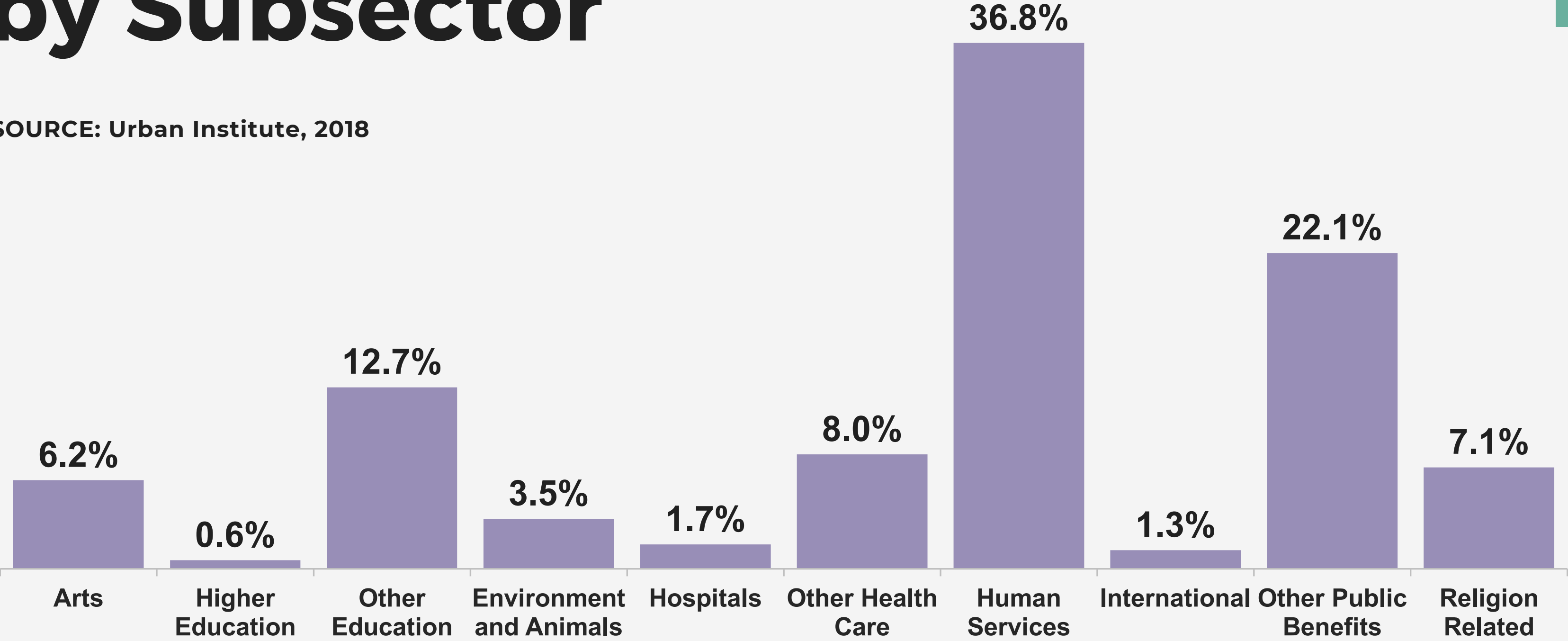
**290,000**

Renters paying over half  
their income for housing



# Alabama Nonprofits, by Subsector

SOURCE: Urban Institute, 2018





## Mission

The Women's Fund of Greater Birmingham accelerates economic opportunity for women and their families through philanthropy, research, and advocacy.

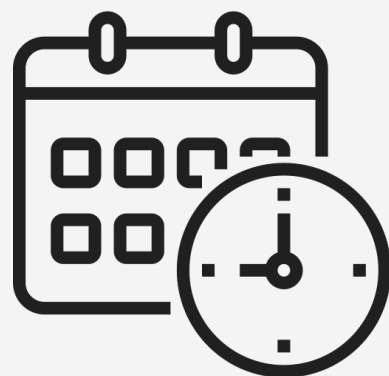
## Vision

We envision a society where power and possibility are not limited by gender.





# Our Collaborative History



**6 Year**

BODY OF WORK



**\$1.1 Million +**  
INVESTED





THE WOMEN'S FUND  
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IN ACTION:

# CASE STUDY ON COLLABORATION INSTITUTE 3.0 (CI3)

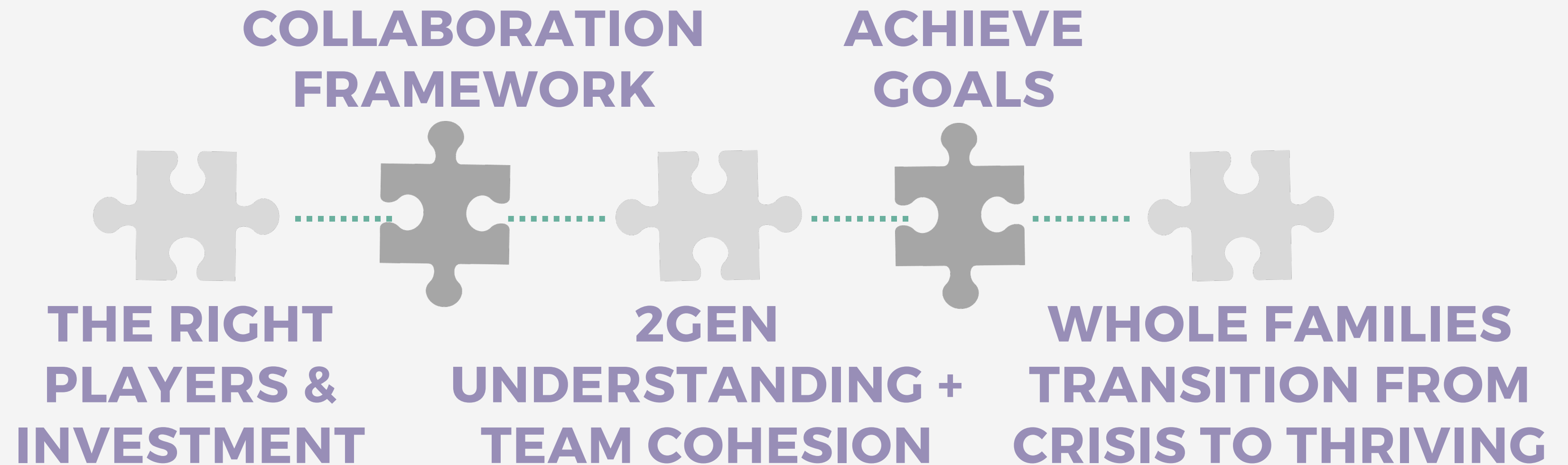


Evaluation conducted by:

**KORWIN CONSULTING**

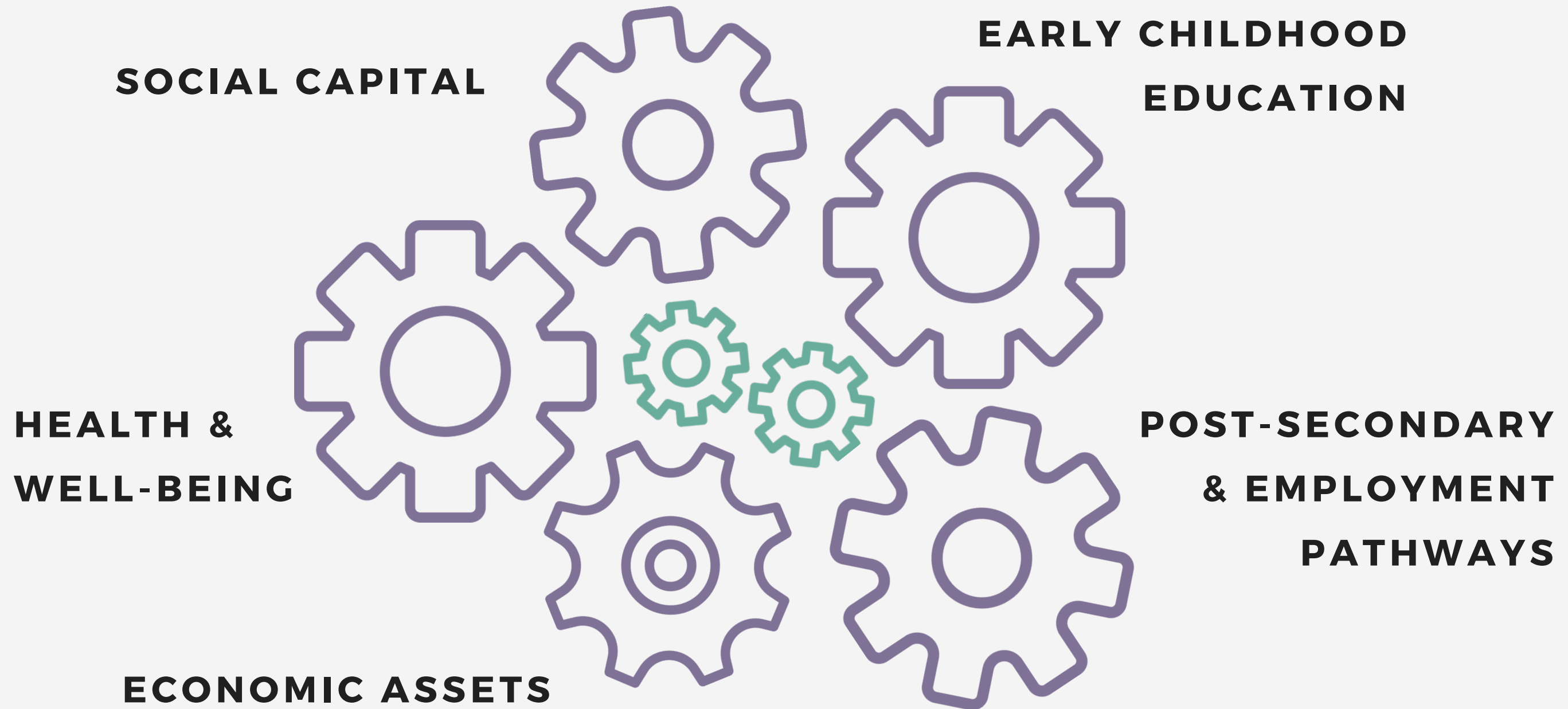
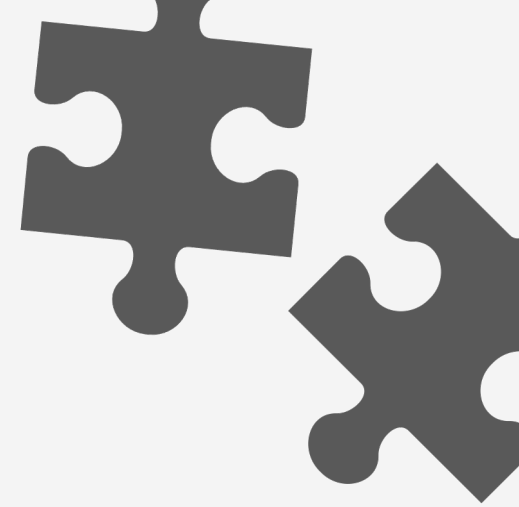
*Advancing Social Justice Solutions*

# Putting the Pieces Together





# Collaboration Institute: 2Gen Framework



Courtesy of the Aspen Institute

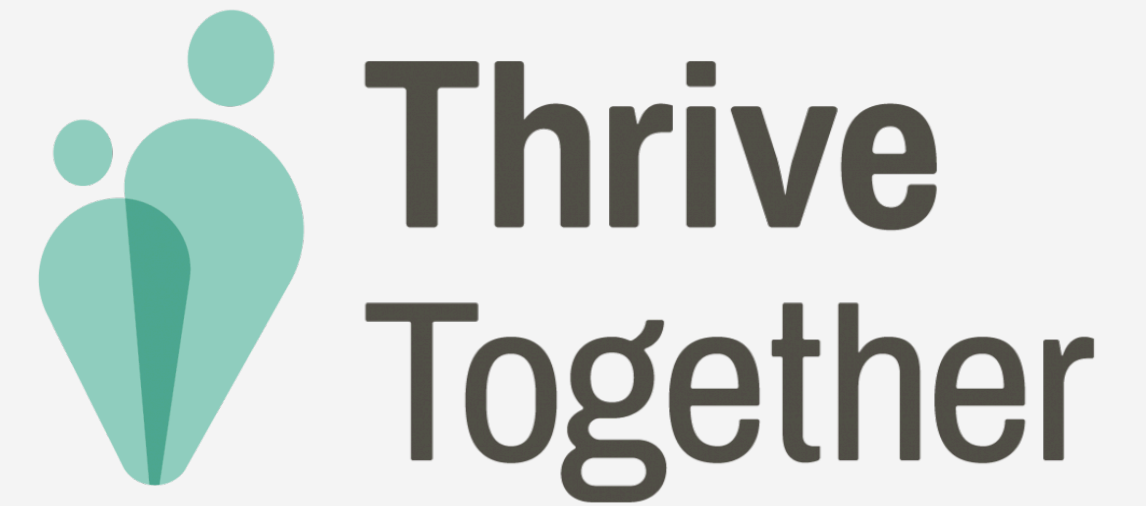


# Goals of Collaboration Institute

- Systems cohesion
- Family opportunity pathways
- Thriving children
- Family and workforce security



# Meet the Hubs



## THRIVE TOGETHER BIRMINGHAM (JEFFERSON COUNTY)

### Hub Members

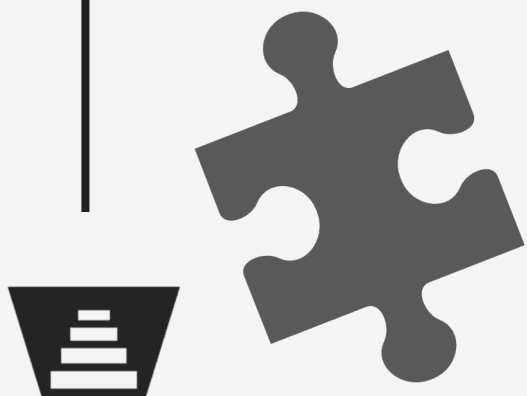
- Hope Inspired Ministries
- East Lake Initiative
- Serving You Ministries

### Unique Characteristics

- Small, faith-based non-profits
- Co-location

### Year 1 Goals

- Serve 30 families
- Prioritize families receiving Hope Inspired Ministries' job training, East Lake Initiative's housing support, or Serving You Ministries emergency services



# Meet the Hubs



# Thrive Together

## THRIVE TOGETHER SHELBY COUNTY

### Hub Members

- City of Montevallo
- City of Vincent
- Shelby County Community Services
- Jefferson State College
- University of Montevallo

### Unique Characteristics

- Collaboration between public sector and academic institutions
- No direct service providers

### Year 1 Goals

- Serve 20-30 families
- Prioritize families utilizing Shelby Emergency Assistance and children enrolled in Montevallo Boys and Girls Club or Headstart



# Meet the Hubs



**Thrive  
Together**

## **THRIVE TOGETHER WALKER COUNTY**

### **Hub Members**

- Walker County Board of Education
- University of Montevallo
- Bevill State Community College
- Jasper Area Family Services Center

### **Unique Characteristics**

- Participated in Collaboration Institute 2.0
- Partners from academic institutions, public sector, and family resource center

### **Year 1 Goals**

- Serve 35 families
- Prioritize single mothers or grandmothers and their children living at 200% poverty line or below



# Supports Provided



Peer-learning  
workshops



Family-centric  
approaches



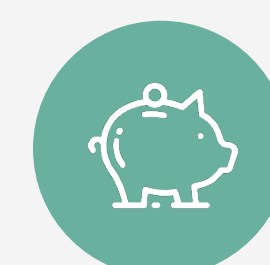
Local coach and  
national expertise



Database software



Site visits to  
successful models



Start-up investment



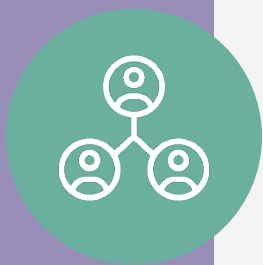
Technical assistance  
and capacity building



Connections to  
community leaders &  
funders



**Capacity-building  
investments from  
The Women's Fund**



# Peer-Learning Workshops

- 3 multi-day, convening led by Aspen Institute's Community Strategies Group (CSG)
- Dedicated time and space
- Team-building and cross-team learning
- Homework assignments between workshops

“ They had a really good structure to each day, where there was a lot of learning and then a lot of times we would just roll up our sleeves and get to work... it was important to have it overnight, because then we had that connectivity.”

– Shelby County Hub team member





# Local Coach and National Expertise



- Expert facilitation of 2Gen framework
- Individual coaches with place-based knowledge and specific expertise
- Connection to national movement

**“** Having folks who have done this research and work for decades is essential.”  
*– TWF Staff Member*







# Site Visits to Successful Models

- Two site visits:
  - Garrett County Community Action in Maryland
  - Brighten Center in Newport, Kentucky
- Deepened understanding of 2Gen in practice
- Validating and inspiring

**“ We realized this isn’t just theory. This is possible and practical, and this is why it is important.”**

**– Birmingham Hub**







# Technical Assistance and Capacity Building

- Ongoing technical assistance throughout each stage
- Check-ins with Aspen CSG
- Responsive capacity building



**“The interviews with Aspen Institute helped us break down what we needed to put into place and hone our strategy with each iteration.”**

**– Walker County Hub**





# Family-Centric Approaches

- Family pathways and outcomes model
- Shift from case-management towards family-centered coaching
- Guidance from Family Expertise Council

**“ One of the most pivotal parts was having the Family Expertise Council engaged... especially when they did a panel presentation and talked about their challenges... [Their stories] collectively made a real big impact on our Hub.”**

*– Shelby County Hub*





# Database Software

- EmpowOR software to collect and analyze data
- Saw in action in Garrett County
- Reliable metrics to measure progress



“ It is really helpful that the data are right at your finger tips instead of digging through files or going to each other’s offices. We already have a lot of funders asking about data. They want to see improvement with data.

*–Birmingham Hub team member*





# Start-up Investment

- \$5,000 stipend for each agency
- \$100,000 per team to implement their Hubs
- \$10,000 in technical assistance and capacity building

“ Often in the nonprofit sector, we’re expected to do miraculous things like solve all the social ills of the world. Rarely does anybody invest in our development... We as a funder believe that’s important.”

– TWF Staff Member





# Connections to Community Leaders & Funders

- Advisory committee of local funders, private sector employers, social service leaders
- Additional partners outside of core team



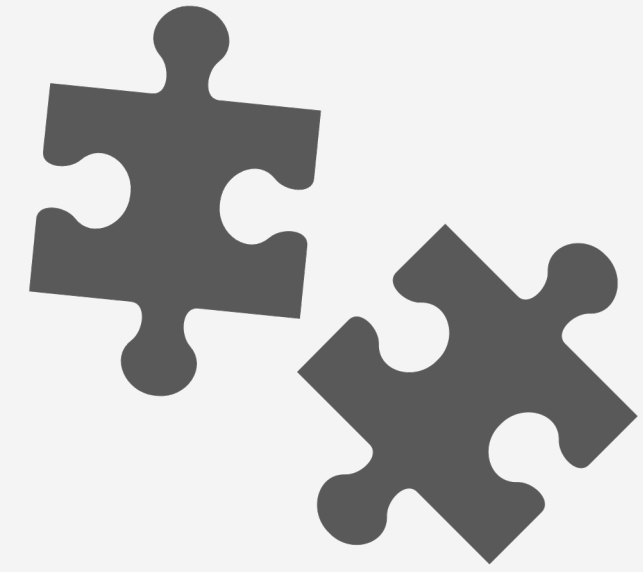
**“ We know the needs are great in this community and there is no way we can meet all the needs, so we have always wanted to collaborate with other organizations. When we saw the opportunity for a formalized collaboration, we wanted to jump on that.”**

***– Birmingham Hub team member***





# In Practice



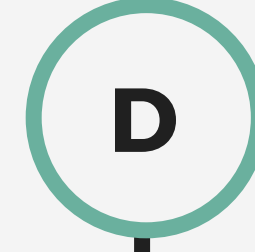
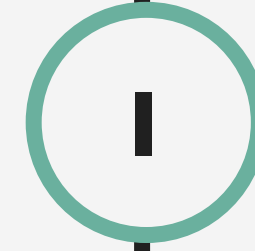
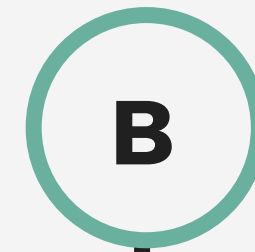
- Pros and cons of fundraising as a Hub and individual organizations
- Consensus, commitment, champions are needed for sustainability
- Sharing is ‘caring’ (and productive)





# Lessons Learned: BUILDiNg Collaborations

Five key steps for success



BREAK THE ROUTINE



# Break the Routine

Collaboration...

- Requires a culture change
- Is both an art and a science
- Requires a backbone organization

“ You can't just say, ‘Hey this is a good idea! Let's all get together and do it. You need some guidance.’  
– *Shelby County Hub team member* ”

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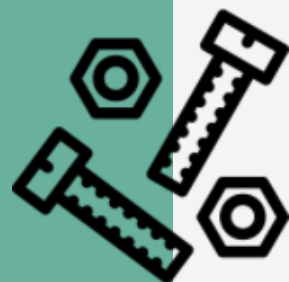






# How to BUILD Collaborations

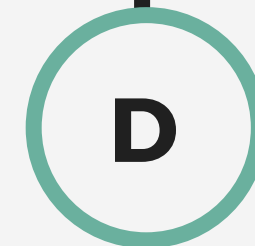
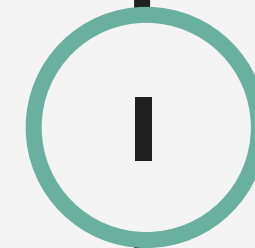
Five key steps for success



BREAK THE ROUTINE



UNDERSTAND THE LANDSCAPE



# Understand the Landscape

- Existing evidence
- Need to understand context
- Utilize expertise
- Voices of impacted populations

“ There was a debate among members about how to map access to services, and a Family Expertise Council member ended up drawing the best path. I strongly felt at that second convening that the family perspective was starting to gel.”

–TWF staff

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# Voices of Impacted Populations

- Formalize your process
- Value voices
- Requires changing how you do business
- Pay for their expertise

“One of the most pivotal parts was having the Family Expertise Council engaged... especially when they did a panel presentation and talked about their challenges... [Their stories] collectively made a real big impact on our Hub.”  
– Shelby County Hub team member

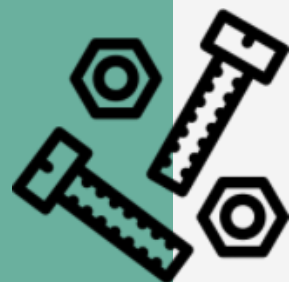
Helpful  
Tool 





# How to BUILD Collaborations

Five key steps for success



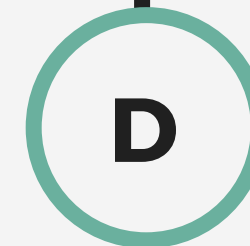
BREAK THE ROUTINE



UNDERSTAND THE LANDSCAPE



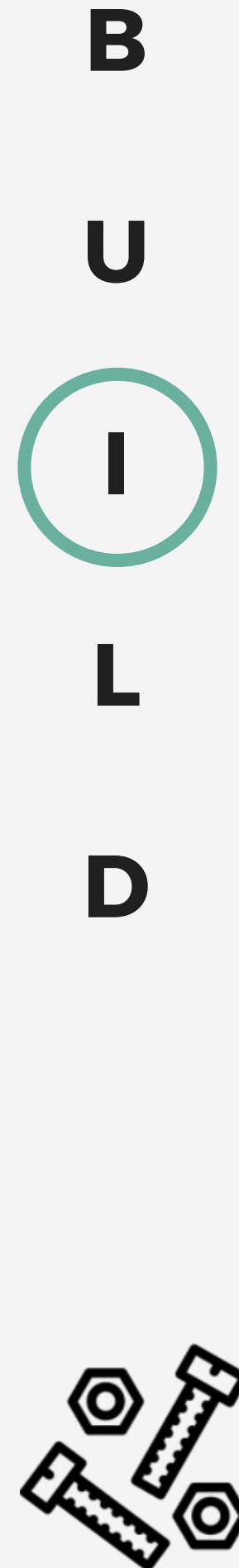
INVITE THE RIGHT PARTNERS



# Invite the Right Partners

- Want to collaborate
- Committed to capacity building
- Share values
- May not work – that's OK

“ When all of us came to the table, we realized we were providing these services individually to similar families, but not in collaboration. And we thought, ‘Wow! Look how much more of an impact we can have just bringing all of us to the table.’”  
– Walker County Hub team member





# Memorandum of Understanding

- Purpose
- Roles and responsibilities
- Term
- Self-interests
- Sharing data
- Conflict resolution

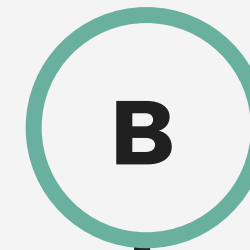
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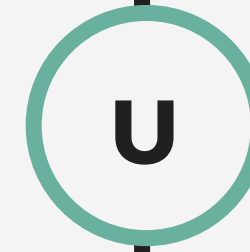


# How to BUILD Collaborations

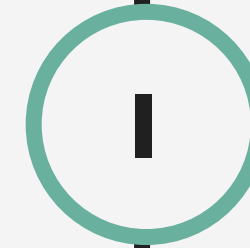
Five key steps for success



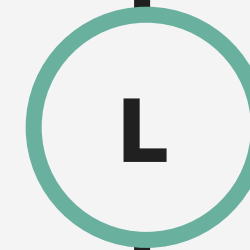
BREAK THE ROUTINE



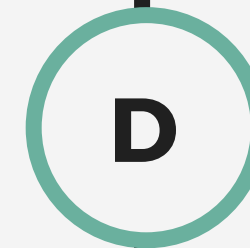
UNDERSTAND THE LANDSCAPE



INVITE THE RIGHT PARTNERS



LOG THE HOURS



# Log the Hours

- Dedicated time and space to meet
- Outside facilitation
- Opportunities to bond
- Action planning

“ We really had to take it a day at a time. Sometimes it meant evening homework or after hours or weekends. It was not easy. Somedays we didn't think we could do it. We don't know if we would've signed up for it if we knew what was required up front. However, now, I can honestly say we are all happy of where we ended up.

– *Birmingham Hub team member*

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# Action Planning

- What does success look like?
- What challenges might we encounter?
- Get specific about action steps
  - Who's responsible?
  - When will it be completed?
  - What resources are needed?
- Follow-up!

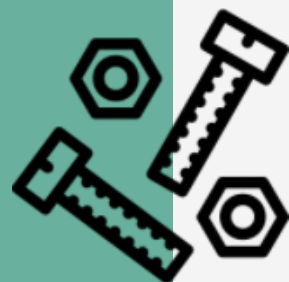
**Helpful  
Tool** 





# How to BUILD Collaborations

Five key steps for success



BREAK THE ROUTINE



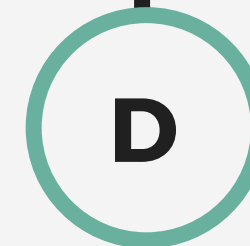
UNDERSTAND THE LANDSCAPE



INVITE THE RIGHT PARTNERS



LOG THE HOURS



DEEPEN RELATIONSHIPS



# Deepen Relationships

- Site visits
- Across collaborations
- Peer advice

“ We were able to feed off of each other. We might have an idea they like, or they have an idea we like, and we all worked together. Getting to know the other Hub teams was very beneficial.”

– Walker County Hub team member

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# Peer Advice

- Present the question
  - Context
  - Urgency
  - What do you have going for you?
  - What are the challenges?
- Answer questions
- Get feedback
- Take turns and start over

**Helpful  
Tool** 







# Challenges



TIME COMMITMENT



LEARNING CURVE



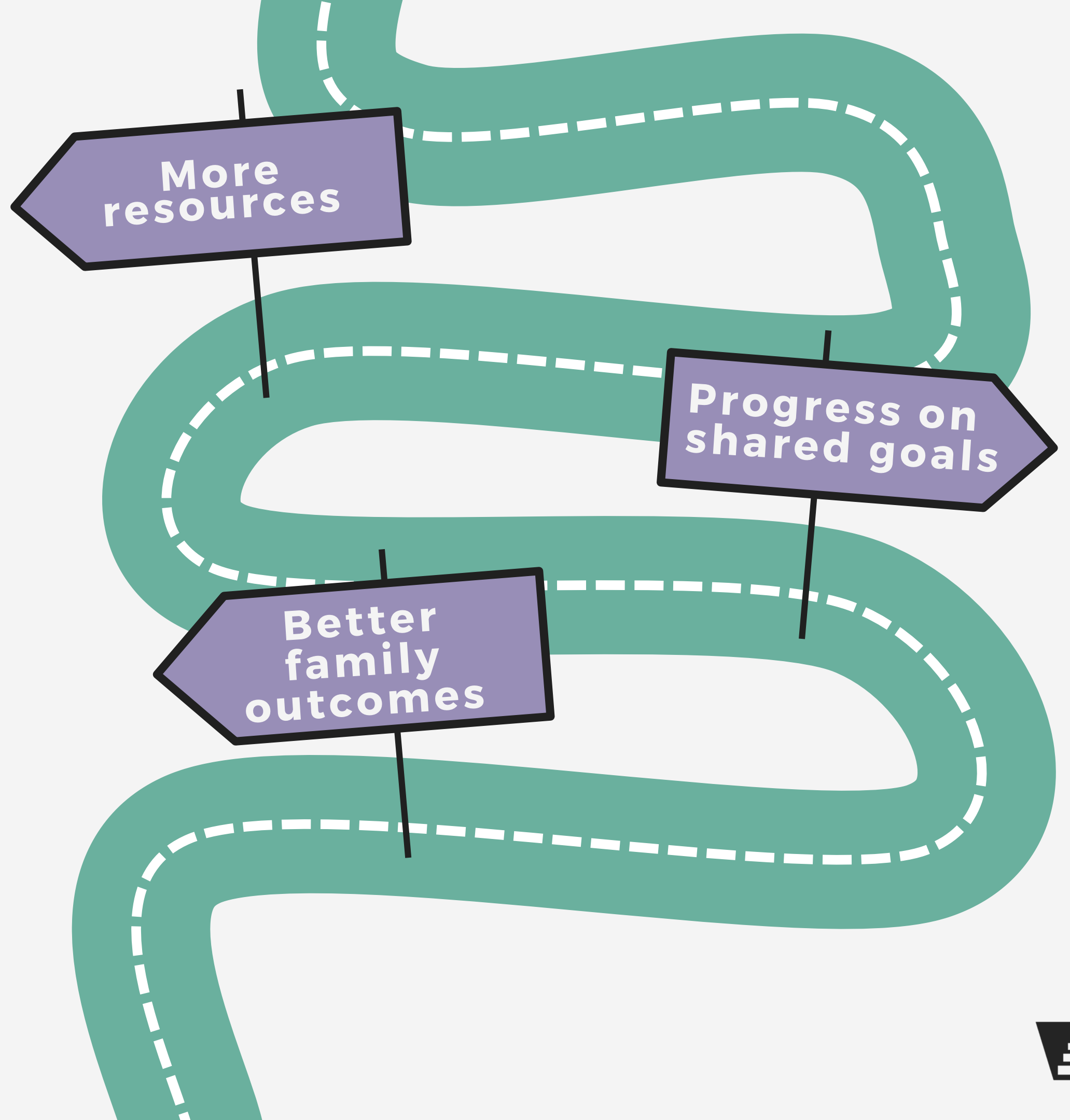
SUSTAINABILITY





# What Success Looks Like

Formal collaborations,  
when done well, yield...



# Questions & Dialogue



## Contact Us

**Jacob L. Smith, MPA**

[jsmith@womensfundbirmingham.org](mailto:jsmith@womensfundbirmingham.org)

205-326-4454

[www.womensfundbirmingham.org](http://www.womensfundbirmingham.org)

**Pam Bates**

[pam@eastlakeinitiative.com](mailto:pam@eastlakeinitiative.com)

205-202-2359

[www.eastlakeinitiative.com](http://www.eastlakeinitiative.com)



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