



# DANBURY COLLECTIVE - OVERVIEW

January 2024

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# COLLECTIVE IMPACT

Concept

National & State Landscape

StriveTogether

# The Collective Concept

- *Collective Impact* brings people together in a structured way to achieve social change. Collective Impact is a network of community members, organizations, and institutions who advance equity by learning together, aligning, and integrating their actions to achieve population and systems level change.
- Collective Impact is a movement of a group of people impacted by and impacting a challenge who share power, trust, resources, and effort to achieve a common purpose.
- Collective work contributes to building and sustaining the **civic infrastructure** necessary to improve outcomes and close gaps for children from cradle to career (“C2C”).

# CT & National Collective Impact Landscape

- Four Connecticut cities have an active “Collective,” including:
  - Bridgeport Prospers
  - Norwalk ACTS
  - Stamford Cradle to Career
  - Waterbury Bridge to Success
- All CT organizations are members of the StriveTogether network and Danbury Collective is engaged in the membership process.

# StriveTogether

- A national, nonprofit network of nearly 60+ communities working to improve outcomes for kids, cradle to career.
- **Benefits of being a StriveTogether partner:**
  - Provides a methodology to follow that is tested, yet always evolving, and centered on equity
  - Technical assistance
  - Funding opportunities

# Pillars of Building Civic Infrastructure

*From StriveTogether Theory of Action (TOA)*

## ➤ Shared Community Vision

- Policies, practices, resources, and power structures produce equitable cradle-to-career outcomes (**OUTCOME**)

## ➤ Evidence-Based Decision Making

- Data (i.e. both outcomes and systems data), including youth and family perspectives and narratives, to make shifts...**OUTCOME**

## ➤ Collaborative Action

- The necessary knowledge and skills to make powerful contributions that shift...**OUTCOME**

## ➤ Investment & Sustainability

- Collaboration necessary for producing and maintaining shifts...**OUTCOME**



# **DANBURY COLLECTIVE CATALYST & PILLARS**



# Catalyst & Pillars

## Catalyst

The [Nellie Mae Education Foundation](#) (NMEF) granted a coalition of Danbury organizations with a \$250,000 grant to support the development of a Collective Impact organization & Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion capacity building work.

**Building the Pillars – November 2022 to date...**

# Pillars Progress – Civic Infrastructure

## ➤ Shared Community Vision

- Hosted a series of eight Community Meetings (Dec '22 – Nov '23) leading to:
  - A shared understanding of Collective Impact work
  - Establishing or strengthening relationships among attendees
  - Baseline dialogue around the vision of equitable C2C outcomes
  - Co-construction of the organizational mission and vision
  - Creation and signing of [Membership Agreement](#)

## ➤ Evidence-Based Decision Making

- Community Asset and Data source mapping completed in March '23
- Youth and family perspectives represented by a subset of Danbury community members that have attended Community Meetings
- Assessment of CT Collectives' practices including coalition building and shared practice

# Pillars Progress – Civic Infrastructure

## ➤ Collaborative Action

- Equity as Collective Action in practice has been integral throughout community meetings with a capacity building session in Winter '23 meeting
  - Collective now beginning a journey to develop a formal equity statement/commitment/philosophy
- Initiative Areas identified: Chronic Absenteeism & Learner Engagement, Early Childhood Education, and Youth Mental Health
  - Mutually reinforcing activities concept introduced with leaders identifying “fast first moves” to leverage the Collective
  - *Working Groups* formed around each initiative area and meeting regularly as of December '23, led by Co-Chairs

## ➤ Investment & Sustainability

- Critical Social Sector leaders/organizations committed to work including the “signers” on NMEF grant, with critical support from Danbury Public Schools and the City of Danbury
- United Way of Coastal and Western Connecticut (UWCWC) established as Backbone
- Development of organizational structure
- Hiring of inaugural Executive Director as of Nov '23



# **ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OVERVIEW**



# Danbury Collective Staff

**Purpose:** Drive and support the Working Groups and oversee the day-to-day operational functions of Danbury Collective to ensure that the Mission, Vision, and core values of Danbury Collective are continually put into practice.

**Roles:** Danbury Collective key staff including Founding ED and future staff.

**Reports to:** Advisory Council; UWCWC CEO (technical supervisor)

**Role:**

1. Drive the work of Danbury Collective and entities on the ground by coordinating and supporting the Working Groups, including enabling access, analysis and utilization of data.
2. Provide feedback, guidance, and make recommendations for strategy and action plans to the Advisory Council regarding how best to improve Danbury Collective community level outcomes as efficiently and effectively as possible.
3. Ensure sound governance, fiscal oversight, and sustainability.
4. Actively advocate at the local, state, and national level to improve outcomes and eliminate barriers to success.
5. Communicate key messages and findings internally and to the broader community.

**Backbone Organization - United Way of Coastal and Western Connecticut (UWCWC):** Act as fiduciary of the initiative, sustain employee value proposition for Staff, leverage backbone role with other CT Collectives to leverage efficiencies and maximize impact.



# Danbury Collective Advisory Council (AC)

**Purpose:** Provide targeted governance and strategic guidance to the Collective. Act as public advocate in support of Danbury Collective model generally and in support of Working Group strategies and outcomes.

**Process of Engagement:** Recruitment by the executive committee of the AC. Nomination by AC and voted on by Collective Members in good standing.

**Membership:** A diverse group of cross-sector leaders from education, non-profit, philanthropy, business, civic, faith-based, community organizations, and individual community leaders. The Advisory Council is led by an executive committee of two Co-Chairs, a Vice Chair, and DC Executive Director.

**Commitment:** Monthly or as needed Advisory Council meetings, attendance at DC Convenings, and deep working knowledge of at least one Working Group.

**Role:** Bring leadership and influence to the Collective Impact process to improve DC community level outcomes by:

1. **Outreach & Advocacy** to further the Danbury Collective's mission, policies, strategies, and needs
2. **Resource Development** to identify, leverage, and align connections and resources to achieve the mission
3. **Backbone Staff Support**
4. **Organizational Oversight**

# Advisory Council Slate

## Advisory Council Leadership

**Co-Chairs: Katie Curran & Kara Prunty**

**Vice Chair: Grace Molina**

## Advisory Council (AC) Slate

**Danbury Parent Representatives (3x), Danbury Community**

**Chairs (2-4 seats), Working Groups, Danbury Collective**

**Superintendent, Danbury Public Schools**

**Board of Education Chair or Proxy, Danbury Public Schools/City of Danbury**

**Mayor or Proxy, City of Danbury**

**President & CEO, United Way of Coastal and Western CT (Backbone)**

**President & CEO, CT Institute for Communities**

**Executive Director, Community Action Agency of Western CT**

**Outreach Director, Danbury Public Library**

**Director of Health & Human Services, Danbury Dept. of Public Health**

**Director Family, School & Community Partnerships, Danbury Public Schools**

**Educator (up to 3 seats), Current Teacher and Building Leader, Danbury Public Schools**

**Executive Director, Danbury Collective**

To see who is on our Advisory Council  
and who are our current members, visit  
our website:

<https://www.unitedwaycwc.org/danburycollective>



# Danbury Collective Working Groups (WG)

**Context:** Selected priority areas linked directly and indirectly to the seven cradle-to-career outcomes as identified by *StriveTogether* Theory of Action, including: Kindergarten readiness / Early Grade Reading / Middle grade Math / High School Graduation / Postsecondary Enrollment / Postsecondary Completion / Employment

**Purpose:** Identify successful strategies and integrate data-driven improvements into action plans and programs in support of these three initial areas of focus:

1. Chronic Absenteeism and Learner Engagement
2. Youth Mental Health
3. Early Childhood Education

**Process of Engagement:** Recruitment by existing Advisory Council, WG, Collective Members, or DC Staff.

**Membership:** Cross-sector organizations & individuals who align around community level outcomes. Each Working Group will be led by a Chair (or Co-Chairs) who will also hold a seat on DC Advisory Council.

**Commitment:** Monthly meetings

**Is supported by and reports to:** DC Advisory Council and DC Staff

**Role:** Working Groups are charged with furthering or implementing a proven strategy focused on a specific target or outcome/s. WG will be comprised of empowered representatives from organizations that are participating in the effort to move the identified outcome/s forward.



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# Danbury Collective Collective Membership

**Purpose:** Contribute feedback on the progress and direction of Danbury Collective. Develop community awareness and alignment in support of Strategy and Action Plans created and put forth by Working Groups and the Advisory Council/DC Staff.

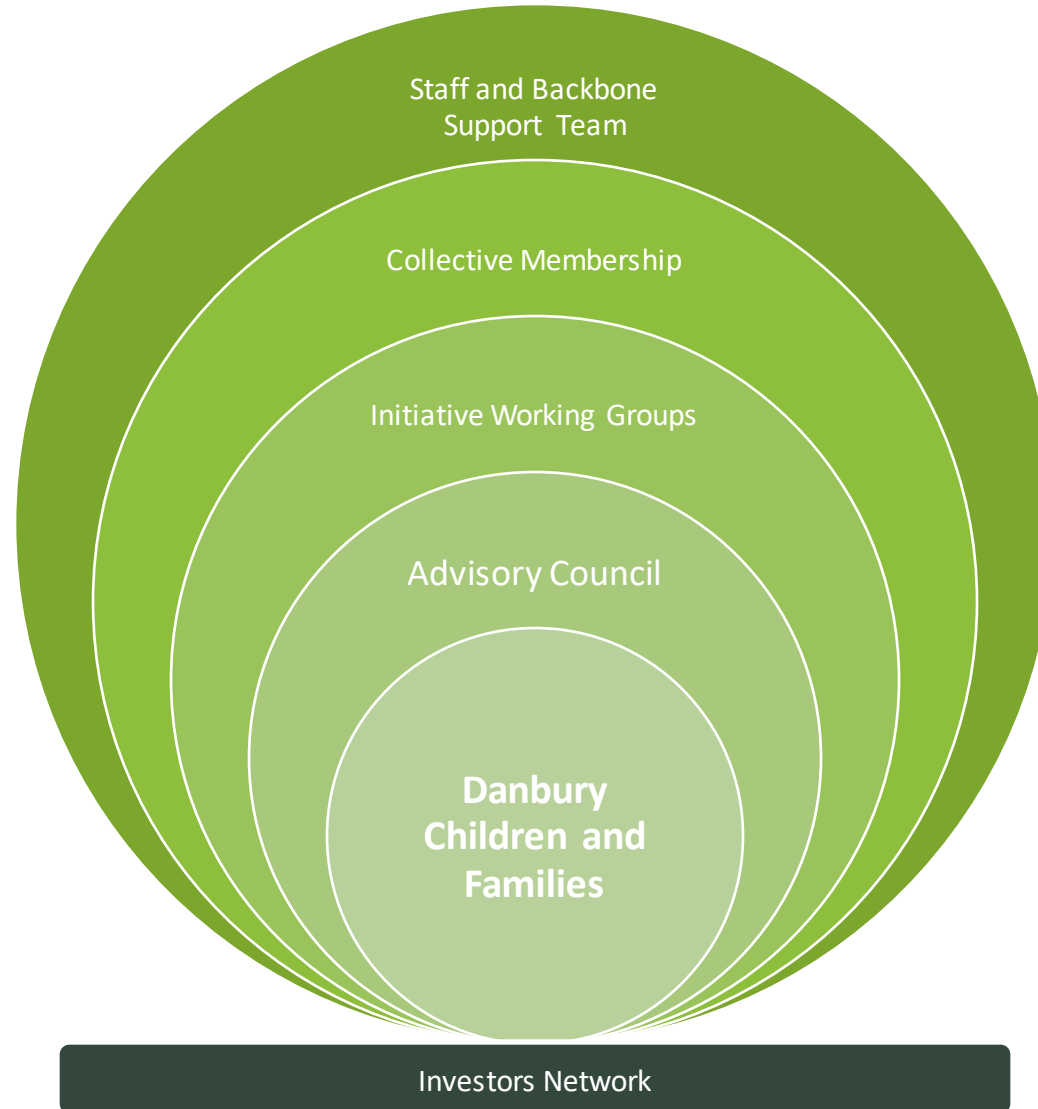
**Process of Engagement:** Ongoing external communication and recruitment by the active Collective members, DC Staff, and other community stakeholders.

**Membership:** Cross-sector community stakeholders with an interest in improving children and youth outcomes.

**Commitment:** Attendance at Danbury Collective Convenings (one every few months) and signing of Membership Agreement.

**Role:** Active participation and advocacy to positively advance the Mission and community level outcomes of Danbury Collective .


# Danbury Collective Accountability Structure





# Membership Agreement

To express commitment to the Danbury Collective, you may view and sign our Membership Agreement [here!](#)



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# CONTACT INFORMATION

For more information, reach out to Melissa Hannequin, Executive Director at [melissa.hannequin@unitedwaycwc.org](mailto:melissa.hannequin@unitedwaycwc.org).

