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Introduction

Community residents, nonprofit and for-profit organizations, and government and philanthropic entities often form and support coalitions as a way to address complex challenges that require collaboration within and across sectors, organizations, and demographic and geographic boundaries. National, regional, and community foundations have invested in coalitions for their potential to create long-term social change, build legitimacy and political clout for local and state policy change, elevate the community voice, and pool and maximize community assets and external resources (Community Catalyst, 2003; KU Work Group for Community Health and Development, 2017). Coalitions require systems thinking beyond a single organization, collaboration among partners representing different interests, and trust that enables communities to develop and sustain capacity to address complex, multisector issues (Senge, Hamilton, & Kania, 2015).

Local community leadership associations across the country operate programs to develop informed citizen leaders who can collaborate with other individuals and organizations and to help link participants to networks of like-minded individuals (Bono, Shen, & Snyder, 2010). Their emphasis has been on individual and organizational leadership. Organizations tend to be hierarchical and have defined lines of authority and established processes for achieving change (Thompson, Scheffler, & Shankman, 2015). Coalitions, on the other hand, rely on group process to bring together individuals with varying

Key Points

- Effective coalitions need leaders who are able to reach beyond individual, group, and sectoral boundaries to advance a shared vision for healthy and thriving communities. The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation partnered with the Center for Creative Leadership to create a one-year pilot, the Community Coalition Leadership Program, to test a new approach to providing training in collaborative leadership.

- This article discusses the program, whether and how it improved participants' individual and coalition leadership skills, and the implications for foundations and other entities seeking to increase interdependent leadership capacity within community coalitions. This article does not, however, intend to describe progress toward coalition goals or changes in community outcomes, given the short time frame of the evaluation.

- A post-program survey found that most coalitions improved on some measures along four dimensions: membership, structure, functioning, and collaboration. Even coalitions that struggled showed improvement along some dimensions, which suggests that the program was a valuable part of a longer-range strategy to build leadership capacity in under-resourced communities.

levels of influence within their organizations and represent organizations across systems, each with its own processes, language, and power structure within a community. Coalitions with

effective leadership are likely to have solid bonds among members and to encourage collaborative behavior within the coalition (Alexander, Christianson, Hearld, Hurley, & Scanlon, 2010; Gadja, 2004).

Collaborative leadership — also referred to as collective, shared, distributed, relational, integrative, systems, or interdependent leadership (Denis, Langley, & Sergi, 2012) — is "leadership that fosters collective action by multiple stakeholders from various sectors of society who work together for the common good" (Bono et al., 2010, p. 325). In particular, coalitions for social change require leadership across organizations and systems, described by Denis et al. (2012) as distributed leadership enabling complex cross-boundary change, which we propose is a different set of skills and tools from that of organizational leadership and has a different emphasis from shared leadership within a single organization or system. For example, a critical task of many coalition leaders is identifying and building consensus for a shared vision. Although this type of task is not exclusive to coalitions, managing the priorities and trade-offs between inclusiveness and efficiency among multiple organizations from different sectors within a coalition becomes increasingly complex. Many coalition members have little training in collective leadership across systems (Thompson et al., 2015), and more research is needed to determine what works, when, and why (Denis et al., 2012).
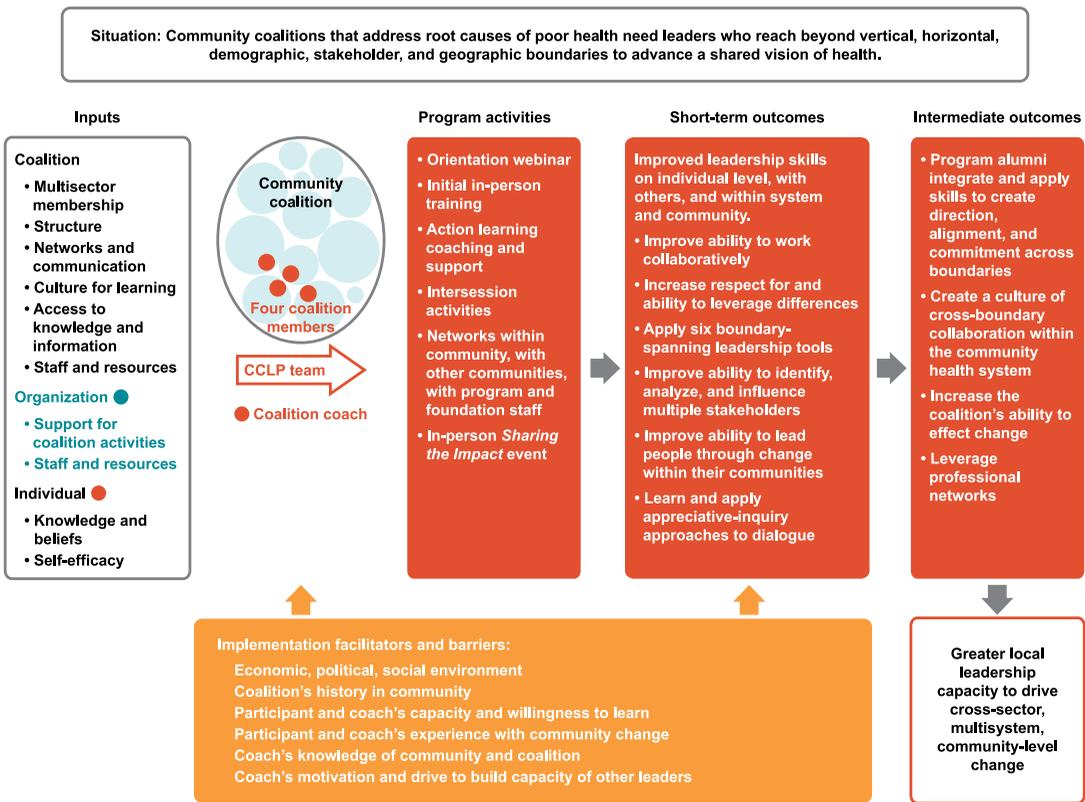
Recent studies of collective leadership recognize the heterogeneity of expertise and skill among potential team members, the importance of effective information exchange, and co-existence of collective leadership with formal or vertical leadership (Friedrich et al., 2011). To date, studies of collective leadership showing improved team performance are limited to teams with fairly defined responsibilities (for example, manufacturing, road maintenance, or research and development) or top management teams within a single organization or system (Friedrich et al., 2011; Hauschildt & Kirchmann, 2001; Hiller, Day, & Vance, 2006; Howell & Boies, 2004). A recent meta-analysis of shared leadership and team effectiveness (Wang, Waldman, & Zhang, 2014)

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found that the relationship between shared leadership and team effectiveness varies across different types of effectiveness criteria, and that the complexity of the work performed by teams was a moderator of the relationship between shared leadership and outcomes, suggesting shared leadership might be most beneficial when the work is knowledge-based and interdependent.

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation partnered with the Center for Creative Leadership to create the Community Coalition Leadership Program (CCLP) to improve the interdependent leadership capabilities within community coalitions. The program hypothesizes that developing the leadership capacity of a team of coalition members representing different organizations and sectors of the community — through intensive in-person training on boundary-spanning leadership and its related tools, team coaching through a coalition coach, and support through a professional mentor coach and monthly webinars — can improve coalition direction, alignment, and commitment; a culture of collaboration; and the ability to effect community change. Boundary-spanning leadership involves six practices: (1) buffering to create safety among members, (2) reflecting to foster intergroup respect, (3) connecting to build

FIGURE 1 CCLP Logic Model

Situation: Community coalitions that address root causes of poor health need leaders who reach beyond vertical, horizontal, demographic, stakeholder, and geographic boundaries to advance a shared vision of health.

Inputs

Coalition
• Multisector membership
• Structure
• Networks and communication
• Culture for learning
• Access to knowledge and information
• Staff and resources

Organization ●
• Support for coalition activities
• Staff and resources

Individual ●
• Knowledge and beliefs
• Self-efficacy

Community coalition
Four coalition members
CCLP team
● Coalition coach

Program activities
• Orientation webinar
• Initial in-person training
• Action learning coaching and support
• Intersession activities
• Networks within community, with other communities, with program and foundation staff
• In-person *Sharing the Impact* event

Short-term outcomes
Improved leadership skills on individual level, with others, and within system and community.
• Improve ability to work collaboratively
• Increase respect for and ability to leverage differences
• Apply six boundary-spanning leadership tools
• Improve ability to identify, analyze, and influence multiple stakeholders
• Improve ability to lead people through change within their communities
• Learn and apply appreciative-inquiry approaches to dialogue

Intermediate outcomes
• Program alumni integrate and apply skills to create direction, alignment, and commitment across boundaries
• Create a culture of cross-boundary collaboration within the community health system
• Increase the coalition's ability to effect change
• Leverage professional networks

Implementation facilitators and barriers:
Economic, political, social environment
Coalition's history in community
Participant and coach's capacity and willingness to learn
Participant and coach's experience with community change
Coach's knowledge of community and coalition
Coach's motivation and drive to build capacity of other leaders

Greater local leadership capacity to drive cross-sector, multisystem, community-level change

SOURCE: Center for Creative Leadership and Mathematica Policy Research

trust, (4) mobilizing to create shared identity, (5) weaving to advance intergroup interdependence, and (6) transforming to enable intergroup reinvention (Ernst & Chrobot-Mason, 2011).

This article contributes to the literature by describing the CCLP, a pilot program focused on developing collaborative leadership across systems; the evaluation, which aimed to understand whether and how the CCLP improved participants' individual and coalition leadership skills; and the implications for foundations and other entities seeking to increase interdependent leadership capacity within community coalitions. Given the short time frame of the evaluation, however, this article does not intend to describe progress toward coalition goals or changes in community outcomes.

The Community Coalition Leadership Program

The CCLP aimed to develop the collaborative leadership capacity of multiorganization coalitions and help coalition leaders engage in, develop, and transfer boundary-spanning leadership skills — defined as "the ability to create direction, alignment, and commitment across group boundaries in service of a higher vision or goal" (Ernst & Chrobot-Mason, 2011, p. 2). (See Figure 1.)

The CCLP was a one-year pilot initiative building on Ladder to Leadership, a program created by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the Center for Creative Leadership to prepare emerging nonprofit community health leaders for senior leadership roles in their organizations.

Ladder to Leadership equipped participants with boundary-spanning leadership practices to collaborate with other leaders from diverse sectors to address shared community challenges. To accomplish this, Ladder to Leadership required participants to form project teams that worked for 18 months to effect change in their community on an area of shared interest (e.g., reducing childhood obesity, improving behavioral health services). A team coach from the Center for Creative Leadership supported the project teams in applying program concepts and tools to improve team dynamics, and a community sponsor helped the team navigate potential obstacles in the community. The foundation was investing in many coalition-based efforts across the country that could also benefit from boundary-spanning leadership practices.

Program Components
There were three primary components to the CCLP's team-based leadership development model: the coalition coach, in-person training, and intersession support.

Ladder to Leadership participants suggested that the teams might have been even more effective if the team coach and the community sponsor had been the same person. Given that feedback, the foundation and the Center for Creative Leadership piloted that idea with the CCLP by designing the coalition coach role to be filled by a community leader with some experience with team facilitation or coaching, rather than a professional coach from the center. The CCLP curriculum specified three functions of the coalition coach: facilitator, coach, and subject-matter expert. Coalition coaches received training in team coaching skills and worked alongside their coalition team leaders to learn and apply the boundary-spanning leadership practices.

The CCLP kicked off with an orientation webinar and then intensive in-person training at a Center for Creative Leadership campus. Coalition coaches began training on a Monday, and the full team — the coalition coach and four coalition members — started their four-day team training the next day. The curriculum included a combination of didactic sessions, experiential exercises, and modeling of the six boundary-spanning leadership principles and tools. Specifically, the goals of the training were to help participants develop self-awareness in order to collaborate more effectively with others; awareness and appreciation for different perspectives and leadership styles of their teammates; and skills to better identify, analyze, and influence multiple stakeholders. A year later, the program concluded with Sharing the Impact, a two-day event for teams to share coalition experiences and leadership lessons and that served as a training refresher.

Over the course of the year, center staff mentored the coalition coaches and supported the leadership teams through monthly webinars and an online toolkit. The center knew that one day of coach training, followed by four days of training with their leadership teams, would not be enough for the coaches to completely master the new skills. For that reason, the center designed the intersession support, with emphasis on access to a mentor coach, to support coalition coaches with problem solving and on-site observations. After the initial training, each coalition coach could use 16 hours of mentor coaching, with flexibility to use those hours in any way — by telephone, email, or in person (within a travel budget).

Pilot Cohorts in the Evaluation
In 2013-2014, teams of four leaders and a coach from 14 coalitions participated in the pilot program that Mathematica evaluated. Approximately 100 coalitions were invited to apply to the CCLP, and applicants were encouraged to reflect diversity across multiple dimensions, including race, ethnicity, gender, age, and socioeconomic status. Of those, 17 coalitions submitted applications. Although all of the coalitions that applied might not have reflected all of the desired qualities (e.g., having an already-formed multisector coalition or network committed to collaborating on a shared health-related community issue), the foundation and the center had interest in learning from as many coalitions as they had capacity to include; thus, they selected 14 coalitions to participate and assigned coalitions to cohort 2 or 3 based on their availability to attend the initial training. (The first cohort

began October 2012 and served as an early pilot.) (See Table 1.)

Both cohorts reflected a wide range of characteristics:

- Membership size: The majority of coalitions had 20 to 40 members (range: 4 to 120).

- Tenure of the coalition: Most coalitions formed within five years of starting the CCLP, with three forming the same year. One coalition existed more than five years — and two coalitions more than 10 years — before the CCLP.

- Location: One partnership was on the West Coast, five were in the Midwest, three were in the Northeast, and five were in the South.

The Evaluation

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation commissioned Mathematica in spring 2013 to evaluate the CCLP to help the foundation and the center learn whether and how it improved participants' individual and coalition leadership skills. We sought to answer three research questions:

1. What leadership practices did CCLP participants use to foster cross-sector collaboration within their coalitions?

2. Did the CCLP achieve its short-term goal of improving participants' skills in leading at three levels: individual, with others, and within the system and community?

3. What factors of the CCLP and its implementation can help inform the foundation's leadership development strategy?

To address these questions, we assessed changes in coalition membership, structure, functioning, and collaboration as measures of leadership development by conducting three types of activities:

- Document review: We reviewed the coalitions' CCLP applications, the 2013 request for proposals, and the Center for Creative Leadership's digital toolkit, received by participants.

- Structured interviews: We gathered qualitative information through two rounds of telephone interviews. At the start of the evaluation, we interviewed all 14 coalition lead contacts briefly to obtain information on coalitions' background and organization, membership, and selection of CCLP participants. We also interviewed the coalition lead contacts, participants, and coaches after the initial training, and again two to three months after the CCLP ended, about their coalitions, cross-sector partners, coalition goals and activities, and CCLP experiences and expectations. Finally, we interviewed staff from various foundations and organizations that were either involved directly in the CCLP or oversaw grantees that were participating in the program, to learn about their experiences and perceived benefits and challenges for participants. At baseline, we interviewed 67 of the 72 coalition lead contacts, participants, and coaches; at follow-up, we interviewed 65 of the 70 participants and coaches (achieving a 93 percent response rate in each round). In analyzing the data, we identified key themes within each interview and across interviews. We used a combination of an inductive approach to identify preliminary themes and a deductive approach to categorize and organize the themes within the framework of the evaluation questions.

- Coalition survey: We conducted baseline and follow-up surveys of coalition members from 13 coalitions in cohorts 2 and 3 and analyzed results for 12 coalitions. We did not administer the survey to one coalition, which was still forming and had only four members at baseline. We did not analyze results from one coalition, which had a low response rate (20 percent at baseline and 31 percent at follow-up) and high member turnover during the year (only three members completed both surveys).

TABLE 1 Overview of CCLP Cohort 2 and 3 Coalitions

Coalition	Mission / Key Coalition Characteristics	Year Coalition Began	Number of Members[a]
Cohort 2			
A	Improve financial security and health of state residents through passage of a statewide earned income tax credit. / Work team is part of a larger advocacy coalition.	2010	**12** 21
B	Improve health outcomes across the county. / Formed in response to the 2010 County Health Rankings.	2010	**24** 22
C	Increase access to health care for residents. / Work groups target childhood obesity and perinatal substance abuse.	1996	**90** 55
D	Improve healthy food policies. / Team is a subgroup of a large county initiative.	2013	**12** 16
E	Improve academic achievement of children in the public school system. / Organization-based membership.[b]	2009	**38** 43
F	Improve community health via cross-sector planning among the public health department, hospitals, and health plans. / Loosely based on a former collaborative.	2012	**41** 46
G	Prevent heart disease. / One of seven community coalitions addressing health issues.	2011	90 42
Cohort 3			
H	Guide a collective impact approach to improve physical activity and healthy eating, women's preconception health, children's health and early development, and access to care. / Integrated within the county's department of health and human services.	2013	**20** 22
I	Improve access to healthy foods and physical activity opportunities. / Formed by the county health department as part of a state grant.	2000	**28** 22
J	Give residents a tool to regain control over their community and public spaces to eliminate existing drug activity and persuade young offenders to make different life choices. / Community-driven coalition emerged from previous project.	2012	**22** 19
K	Increase the financial stability of the county's low-income families.	2011	**30** 31
L	Improve financial stability of low-income individuals and families.	2007	**21** 17
M	Improve access to, coordination of, and collaboration with educational, social, physical, and behavioral health services, from cradle to career. / Convened by a former mayor	2010	**120** 205
N	Reduce obesity and improve access to healthy foods.	2013	**4** 8

SOURCE: Coalition CCLP applications, rosters, and baseline interviews.

[a] Top number (in boldface) represents the number of members on the roster of active coalition members we received at baseline; bottom number represents the number at follow-up.

[b] Membership is based on organizations, such that three individuals represent each organizational member.

We administered the baseline survey after each initial CCLP training session (June 2013 for cohort 2 and July 2013 for cohort 3) and the follow-up survey directly after each cohort's Sharing the Impact event (June 2014 for cohort 2 and July 2014 for cohort 3). Before each survey administration, we asked the lead contact of the coalition to provide us with a roster of all active members. We drew our sample from a frame of all active members. Members received an email with a unique link to the survey to complete online; they had the option to receive an electronic version, which they could return by email or fax.

The 15-minute survey consisted of 40 questions across four components:

1. Respondent organization information: We asked each respondent about his or her involvement in the coalition and other collaborative groups and about characteristics of the organization he or she represented.[1]

2. Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory: We included 22 items from the 40-item Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory, which measures dimensions of coalition functioning, relevant for the CCLP evaluation (Mattessich, Murray-Close, & Monsey, 2001).

3. Coalition leadership characteristic measures: We adopted measures from the Center for Creative Leadership's evaluation of the first cohort to learn how coalition members viewed seven leadership characteristics that the CCLP sought to improve, such as recognizing the strength of partners and leveraging opportunities, and being able to move to solutions and take action.

4. Collaboration: We included one social network question — frequency of collaboration — to identify the level of collaboration among the organizations within each coalition. We used this information to identify,

for each organization, the proportion of other organizations that cited it for frequent collaboration, and we averaged those scores for all organizations to create an overall level of collaboration within the coalition.

Across 12 coalitions, the median coalition response rate was 71 percent at baseline (range: 33 percent to 85 percent) and 70 percent at follow-up (range: 40 percent to 88 percent). Coalitions with a larger number of members — those reporting 90 or more — tended to have lower response rates than those with fewer members. To assess coalition changes over time and differences across coalitions, we used a descriptive analytical approach, such as comparing counts, frequencies, and means of the responses for each coalition and survey. (See Appendix.)

The evaluation offered rich, multifaceted insights about the participants and their coalitions during the program year, but also had limitations. First, the program included a small number of coalitions with baseline differences for which our analysis could not control, and we did not observe the degree to which each team implemented the CCLP model and tools. As a result, we had limited ability to know what drove change — CCLP participation, the dosage of training and uptake, other before-and-after factors, or a combination. Second, the observation period of 12 to 15 months was too short to observe change in coalition effectiveness, and we do not know if the observed changes persisted after the program ended. In addition, many coalitions aimed to make changes to improve social and economic determinants of health, which involve multiple systems across numerous years. The time frame for the evaluation was too short to assess coalitions' progress toward their community improvement goals. Future research on collective leadership training initiatives should assess coalition collaboration and progress toward coalition goals and intermediate milestones. Finally, the evaluation did not consider

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[1] The survey assessed coalition-level issues, and it was presented to respondents as a survey about the coalition and the respondents' involvement with their organization and the coalition. We therefore did not ask respondents about any personal characteristics, such as age, sex, or race/ethnicity. We acknowledge that these characteristics could play a role in the collaborative group involvement and perceptions, and that the decision not to collect this information presents a potential limitation of the evaluation's results.

individual participant characteristics, such as race, ethnicity, age, gender, and past leadership experience, which could have influenced CCLP participant involvement as well as overall perceptions and relationships within each coalition. We note that there are numerous factors within a complex and dynamic system of interactions that are at play, which points to the challenge that it is "nearly impossible to isolate a causal link between leader traits and behaviors and outcomes" (Friedrich et al., 2011, p. 5).

Results

Participants across the 14 leadership teams reported that the CCLP was a major influence on both their individual- and coalition-level leadership development. Next, we highlight results related to individual-level leadership changes (addressing research question 2), coalition-level changes (addressing research question 2), implementation of the CCLP skills (addressing research question 1), and participant feedback on the CCLP (addressing research question 3).

Individual-Level Changes

Participants said that the CCLP's standardized tools and process for self-reflection helped them function more effectively as individual leaders. The CCLP sought to increase participants' self-awareness to improve their ability to work collaboratively with others and to increase their respect for and ability to leverage interpersonal differences. Participants and coaches — those new to leadership and professional coaches alike — all reported that the CCLP provided skills, knowledge, and tools to help them grow as individuals and lead more effectively and, for some, more confidently. One participant commented, "Personally, I think it's made me more comfortable in front of groups because it's a standardized set of facilitation tools. I'm not a natural facilitator. It's a learned skill for me."

Participants reported that the CCLP helped them identify and leverage their leadership styles and provided a set of standardized facilitation and planning tools that helped them engage and lead groups. Coalition coaches were able to layer the CCLP tools on top of their existing and often

[T]he evaluation did not consider individual participant characteristics, such as race, ethnicity, age, gender, and past leadership experience, which could have influenced CCLP participant involvement as well as overall perceptions and relationships within each coalition. We note that there are numerous factors within a complex and dynamic system of interactions that are at play, which points to the challenge that it is "nearly impossible to isolate a causal link between leader traits and behaviors and outcomes."

extensive community leadership experience. They were more likely than other participants to facilitate group processes as part of their regular responsibilities and thus were more likely to report that they use the CCLP skills and principles very frequently or on a daily basis.

Coalition-Level Changes

This section describes coalition-level changes along the dimensions of membership (such as number of members and sector representation), leadership team and committee structure, coalition functioning (such as participation, goals, and purpose), and collaboration. Among the 12 coalitions with survey results, most coalitions improved in some measures. On the whole, however, four coalitions improved on most coalition

functioning and collaboration measures; two maintained high scores in membership, functioning, and collaboration. Three experienced challenges that were difficult to resolve during the program year and had lower follow-up scores than at baseline; three others worked to identify a shared vision and had no substantial change in scores over the year.

In the tables that follow, we categorize results for two groups of coalitions: those that completed the CCLP program with higher scores and those that completed the program with lower scores. The section concludes with a summary for each coalition by these different categorizations.

Coalitions used CCLP tools to assess their membership and leverage existing relationships to reach unrepresented sectors. The CCLP encouraged participants to use a systematic approach to identify and address gaps in key partners, which could have resulted in coalitions expanding their membership, depending on coalition goals and existing organizational involvement. After identifying membership needs through this process, five of the 12 surveyed coalitions increased their membership; four of these were coalitions with lower scores. (See Table 2.) The need to increase membership could signal that a coalition had not assessed its membership before (or recently), potentially because it had recently formed or its members were not accustomed to working together toward common goals.

Most coalitions had broad sector representation in their membership at baseline and increased sector diversity during the program year. (See Table 2.) The CCLP was predicated on the idea that coalitions addressing complex community issues should involve many sectors, including business, community development, education, government, health care, philanthropy, and public health. The appropriateness of such expansion or inclusion, however, depends on each coalition's goals and the local environment. Survey respondents within each of nine coalitions represented at least eight sectors as of the initial survey, and sector representation increased for most coalitions during the program year.

Despite this breadth, most coalitions wanted still greater sector diversity. Survey respondents indicated at both time points that their coalitions needed representation from other sectors, but typically did not agree on which sectors they needed. As sector diversity increased, sector dominance decreased during the program. At baseline, one sector dominated eight coalitions' membership; that is, half or more of respondents represented a single sector. Sector dominance decreased during the CCLP for five of these coalitions and remained stable for three coalitions (A, E, and F), which had specific missions that necessitated representation from the advocacy, education, or health care/public health sectors.

As coalitions became more involved in the CCLP, they could have changed how they were structured in response to new information learned, both about how coalitions work and about member needs. Participants from 10 of the 11 coalitions that existed before the CCLP indicated that they created a leadership team or changed the number or structure of the coalition's committees or work groups in response to the CCLP. (See Table 2.) For example, in seven coalitions, the team that participated in the CCLP became the coalition's leadership team. For many of these coalitions, leadership rested with a single organization before the CCLP. Three other coalitions restructured or established new committees or work groups to assess membership or engage new members. According to participants, establishing a core leadership team helped them with strategy and meeting planning, and the structural changes helped improve the coalition's direction and alignment, as well as renew member commitment.

Coalition functioning improved or remained stable for most coalitions over time. (See Table 3.) The number of items on the Wilder inventory identified as strengths increased for eight coalitions, suggesting improved coalition functioning during the program. Respondent assessment across seven leadership characteristics showed increased scores from baseline to follow-up for seven coalitions. The number of areas that respondents identified as working well in the coalition also increased for all but three

TABLE 2 Characteristics of Coalition Membership and Structure

Coalition Characteristic	Coalition					
Coalitions with higher scores	*A*	*B*	*C*	*H*	*I*	*J*
Membership						
Membership changes from baseline to follow-up	Increase	No change	Decrease	No change	Decrease	Decrease
Number of sectors represented (baseline/follow-up)	5/9	12/9	12/11	10/11	11/12	8/7
Sector dominance baseline/follow-up)	Yes/Yes	Yes/No	No/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No
Structure						
Changes in leadership team (LT) or committees (C) from baseline to follow-up[a]	LT	LT	C	None	LT	C
Coalitions with lower scores	*D*	*E*	*K*	*F*	*L*	*M*
Membership						
Membership changes from baseline to follow-up	Increase	Increase	No change	Increase	Decrease	Increase
Number of sectors represented (baseline/follow-up)	6/6	11/ 10	11/11	5/6	8/7	12/12
Sector dominance (baseline/follow-up)	No/Yes	Yes/Yes	Yes/No	Yes/Yes	No/No	No/No
Structure						
Changes in leadership team (LT) or committees (C) from baseline to follow-up[a]	None	LT	LT	LT	LT	C

SOURCE: CCLP baseline survey (July–August 2013) and follow-up survey (July–September 2014); CCLP coalition rosters at baseline and follow-up; baseline and follow-up interviews.

NOTE: The appendix includes descriptions of the measures used. Additional statistical tables are available upon request.

[a] Structural changes are identified as (1) changes related to the leadership team (a change in the structure or composition of the team leading the coalition); (2) changes related to the committees of the coalition (including changes to the number, type, structure, or purpose of coalition committees, work groups, advisory groups, etc.); or (3) none (no changes in the coalition leadership team, committees, or their structures).

coalitions. Respondents most frequently identified the following areas as working well: having adequate expertise among members to accomplish coalition activities/goals, communication among members, leadership, and shared vision and direction on goals.

Collaboration levels. The number of organizations with which respondents indicated collaborating most frequently increased sizably

for three (B, H, and I) of the six coalitions for which we had sufficient data. (See Table 4.). Our assumption was that these levels would increase as a result of coalitions' CCLP involvement. In addition, the organizations represented by CCLP participants typically were more central to collaboration at the end of the program than at the beginning, as measured by increased collaboration for two to four of the participant organizations within each coalition.

TABLE 3 Coalition Functioning

Coalition Characteristic	Coalition					
Coalitions with higher scores	**A**	**B**	**C**	**H**	**I**	**J**
Number of areas of strength (of 22 items total on the Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory)						
Baseline	6	10	4	8	13	14
Follow-up	8	16	12	15	15	17
Leadership characteristic measures (average of 7 items on a 9-point scale)						
Baseline	5.86	6.29	6.37	6.27	7.33	6.82
Follow-up	6.30	6.93	6.89	7.22	7.09	7.41
Number of items working well (of 18 items total)						
Baseline	6	5	1	6	11	12
Follow-up	12	6	7	12	13	14
Coalitions with lower scores	**D**	**E**	**K**	**F**	**L**	**M**
Number of areas of strength (of 22 items total on the Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory)						
Baseline	12	17	8	5	4	2
Follow-up	8	5	1	7	6	2
Leadership characteristic measures (average of 7 items on a 9-point scale)						
Baseline	6.93	6.87	6.31	5.63	5.50	5.99
Follow-up	6.14	5.82	5.46	6.11	5.67	5.78
Number of items working well (of 18 items total)						
Baseline	7	11	6	3	4	2
Follow-up	10	6	3	5	8	2

SOURCE: CCLP baseline survey (July–August 2013) and follow-up survey (July–September 2014); CCLP coalition rosters at baseline and follow-up; baseline and follow-up interviews.

NOTE: The appendix includes descriptions of the measures used. Additional statistical tables are available upon request.

Summary results for coalitions with higher and lower scores. Six coalitions completed the program with higher scores. Of those, four coalitions (A, B, C, and H) began with mixed or lower scores at baseline and improved at follow-up:

- Coalition A, a small coalition at the start of the CCLP, assessed its membership using CCLP tools; both membership size and sectors represented nearly doubled during the CCLP, which reflected its focus on recruiting nontraditional allies. It established a

core team to make strategic planning decisions, which allowed CCLP participants to take more ownership of the group work.

- Similarly, CCLP participants from coalition B formed a leadership team to provide more structure and integrate CCLP leadership practices and tools within the broader coalition. It was among the coalitions with the largest number of areas identified as strengths in the Wilder inventory at follow-up. Participants reported at follow-up

TABLE 4 Coalition Collaboration Levels

Average Coalition Level (from 0 to 1)	Coalition					
Coalitions with higher scores	*A*	*B*	*C*	*H*	*I*	*J*
Baseline	0.25	0.14	No data	0.12	0.10	0.22
Follow-up	No data	0.20	0.08	0.22	0.21	0.25
Coalitions with lower scores	*D*	*E*	*K*	*F*	*L*	*M*
Baseline	0.18	0.21	0.13	No data	0.17	No data
Follow-up	No data	0.24	0.15	No data	No data	No data

SOURCE: CCLP baseline survey (July–August 2013) and follow-up survey (July–September 2014); CCLP coalition rosters at baseline and follow-up; baseline and follow-up interviews.

NOTE: The appendix includes descriptions of the measures used. Additional statistical tables are available upon request.

that the coalition supported formation of the leadership team.

- Coalition C showed improvement on multiple measures, although it had high membership turnover during the program year. Despite having a large membership at baseline, participants reported that only about half of its members attended meetings. During the CCLP, the coalition reviewed its membership and implemented work groups to promote member engagement.

- Coalition H had among the highest-ranking scores across all measures at follow-up. The coalition credited the CCLP with introducing tools it otherwise would not have tried to strengthen its coalition. Program participants served as an executive committee for the coalition; one of the participants, a dedicated staff member in a backbone organization, functioned as a central coordinator for the coalition. In addition, during the program year, this coalition applied for the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's Culture of Health Prize, which helped focus the coalition and attract community representatives.

Two coalitions — I and J — had smaller increases in scores, maintaining relatively high scores in membership, functioning, and collaboration. These coalitions were established with decision-making processes already in place and used CCLP to become more effective in member recruitment and reengaging current members.

- Leaders from coalition I, a longstanding coalition, indicated that after the CCLP it became more intentional about recruiting new members and engaging current members in collaborative activities toward a shared vision. This approach differed from the way it operated before, when it met regularly only to share information and accomplishments of individual organizations.

- Coalition J grew from community residents voicing a need for community safety, opportunities for physical activity, and restorative justice interventions for their young adults. After the initial CCLP training, coalition leaders assessed their membership and reached out to additional stakeholders, but noted that many of the key stakeholders were already engaged in the coalition.

Participants noted that they used the tools with which they were most familiar or comfortable, those they had the opportunity to practice, and those that were simple to use and explain.

Of the six coalitions that completed the program with lower scores, three (D, E, and K) started with high or mixed scores at baseline, and three (F, L, and M) started with low scores. Program participants from the three coalitions starting with high or mixed baseline scores encountered challenges that were difficult to resolve or overcome during the program year, but they reported that the program had positive influences on coalition processes and structure and provided tools to assess and adapt their approaches.

- Coalition D, a newly formed work group of a larger informal partnership, redirected its focus from school policies to food-related issues. Potential barriers to progress included time constraints on key coalition members during their CCLP involvement and the role the work group defined for itself. Work group members, although convening regularly, primarily coordinated efforts of their own organizations or other collaboratives rather than building collective action.

- Coalition E had high baseline scores in membership, functioning, and collaboration, but realized through the CCLP coaching process that it had little influence or leverage with public school system governance and an acrimonious political environment. As a result, the coalition shifted its focus to increase public awareness about the school system and disparities in academic achievement in the district.

- For coalition K, the CCLP provided an opportunity to create leadership and an identity separate from a large community organization that had formed and led the coalition for two years up until the CCLP. Program participants reported they had to overcome perceptions of "us versus them" among some coalition members who did not participate in the CCLP. The coalition's lower scores at follow-up suggest that the coalition was still in transition.

Coalitions F, L, and M showed little movement in scores, relative to their baseline scores. Two of the three were still in a planning or earlier developmental phase than other participating coalitions.

- Based on interviews with participants, coalition F appeared to be in the planning phase of developing a shared approach to community health needs assessments (required of public health departments, hospitals, and health plans under the Affordable Care Act), leveraging data among partners to avoid duplication, and coordinating strategies based on the assessment findings.

- Participants from coalition L noted they were in an earlier developmental stage than others in their cohort. During the CCLP, they encountered difficulties in determining the direction of the coalition and in recruiting potential stakeholders.

- Coalition M was a large, established coalition with a complex organizational and leadership structure with multiple work groups that made it difficult to identify shared goals. This coalition nearly doubled in size during the year. Its lower scores were consistent across both administrations of the survey, which could reflect its size, the range in sectors represented among its membership, and the complexity of the issues it was trying to address within child development and education.

Implementation of CCLP Skills

Participants from nearly all the coalitions reported that they shared their CCLP experience and used the tools with the rest of the coalition. Participants from several coalitions described using the CCLP tools to help the coalition identify its areas of strength and weakness or to map out the coalition's vision and goals. Participants noted that they used the tools with which they were most familiar or comfortable, those they had the opportunity to practice, and those that were simple to use and explain. When asked which tools were most useful, participants most frequently cited seven of the 24 CCLP tools as ones they could translate easily to the full coalition; three of these related to the practice of mobilizing.

Participants used the CCLP tools to identify and understand their stakeholders and build cross-sector collaboration. Many coalitions had cross-sector representation within their memberships before the CCLP. However, the CCLP gave participants tools to assess member recruitment, sector engagement, and retention in purposeful ways. Participants reported that CCLP training and tools, particularly stakeholder mapping, helped them think about potential partners they would not have considered before.

- Coalition A members successfully reached out to larger financial institutions and chambers of commerce to support or be a part of their coalition's campaign, partners they did not expect would be willing to collaborate.

- Coalition C used its subcommittee structure to recruit topic experts. Members identified that law enforcement was a missing sector and invited a representative to present to the coalition. After the coalition engaged this law enforcement representative as a speaker, he continued to attend meetings.

- Coalition E's strategic-planning committee assessed its coalition membership and identified the need for organizations that represent parents and teachers. The coalition engaged these organizations by inviting

Participants overwhelmingly reported positive experiences, with many commenting the program was transformative to them individually or for their coalition work.

them to participate in community forums on education. During the program year, the coalition increased its membership by 13 percent (from 38 to 43 members).

Some CCLP teams encountered common challenges translating the program's tools to the broader coalition. First, some participants described needing more assistance explaining the boundary-spanning leadership concepts and tools to the rest of the coalition. In addition, many noted that using the tools within the time constraints of a coalition meeting was challenging. Furthermore, because most coalitions met monthly, the frequency of coalition meetings and inconsistent meeting attendance made it challenging to keep members engaged in the process. Finally, in a few coalitions, members wanted to move to action and resisted spending time to reflect and go through the capacity-building steps participants learned in the CCLP.

Participant Feedback on CCLP

Participants overwhelmingly reported positive experiences, with many commenting the program was transformative to them individually or for their coalition work. Participants also had very positive feedback about the Center for Creative Leadership staff; as one participant said, "They were spot-on ..., practicing even in the moment when they were trying to teach us." When asked to provide feedback on the program, participants made suggestions related to the initial weeklong training, intersession support, and role of the coalition coach:

- Initial weeklong training. To improve the transfer and application of CCLP skills, participants had suggestions related to preparation for the initial training, additional time for discussion about roles and strategic planning, and peer learning. Participants commented that they did not have a clear understanding of what to expect from the initial training, that it was difficult to absorb all the concepts and information during one intense week, and that more discussion during the orientation webinar about the pre-training required reading might better prepare participants. Participants from coalitions would have liked time at the end of the training for teams to debrief and start strategic planning. Finally, some participants indicated that more connectivity and peer-learning opportunities outside the in-person sessions might have been available had coalitions had more in common.

- Intersession support. Coalition coaches and participants valued having a mentor coach, but had mixed opinions about the webinars. Nearly all the coalition coaches indicated that when they reached out to their mentor coach for input, the feedback was valuable. Mentor coaches helped coalition coaches with problem solving, on-site observations, and additional perspectives. Several coaches mentioned they did not use all the time allocated to them for mentor coaching and indicated they might have met with their mentor coaches more if the interactions were more structured and did not depend on their initiating the contact. Webinars focused on using the tools or management practices were most helpful; however, participants thought a more effective way of communicating information about pre-event planning or logistics would have been via email and not during webinars. Although participants enjoyed hearing from the other coalitions during the in-person sessions, providing similar updates did not translate well in a webinar format.

- Characteristics of the coalition coach. Participants across coalitions identified several qualities that were critical to the role of the coach, including willingness to learn, understanding the community, being comfortable helping others lead (and not being in the spotlight themselves), and active listening. Participants from most coalitions also indicated that having respect from the community, a strong network, and knowledge of what coalition building entails were important qualities. Having previous knowledge of the coalition's history facilitated the coach's ability to build trust and credibility with the leadership team and broader coalition.

Discussion

This evaluation demonstrated that the CCLP has the potential to benefit other community coalitions. In particular, the evaluation offers insights about the aspects of the program model, as well as characteristics of the leadership teams and their broader coalitions, that facilitated learning transfer.

Boundary-spanning leadership practices focus on building direction, alignment, and commitment across group boundaries in pursuit of a shared vision or goal (Ernst & Chrobot-Mason, 2011). The CCLP provided a common vocabulary and tools for understanding and diagnosing challenges to collaboration, critical skills for those leading stakeholders with varying interests and priorities to achieve common goals.

Several aspects of the CCLP model facilitated learning transfer. The model included layers of support to facilitate learning transfer through collaborative learning and mentors. The program built in collaborative learning within teams — four participants from each coalition, and peer learning across teams; seven teams participated together in one room. The coalition coach, who had a central role in helping coalition leaders "deepen their thinking, unearth tensions or underlying conflicts, or get 'un-stuck' during a discussion or group process," received ongoing support through a mentor coach (Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 2013, pp. 4). Participants embraced the idea that their coalition coach had a mentor — that is, that no one had be the

smartest person in the room. Finally, reflective learning was an integral part of the CCLP model. In particular, the Sharing the Impact event enabled participants to use the CCLP tools to reflect on their progress and share insights with other participants and program leaders.

Among the coalitions that completed the program with improved or consistently high survey scores, we noted characteristics common to these teams and their coalitions, in contrast to the coalitions with low scores. First, high-scoring coalitions had a clear mission. Second, coalitions tended to have a staff person dedicated to managing the coalition. Third, coalition coaches with more coaching or community leadership experience tended to better understand the ins and outs of coalition building and had a well-established network in the community to draw upon as needed. In addition, coaches who had some experience with the coalition could move more quickly into the roles of facilitator, expert, and coach, without first having to build relationships and trust with the leadership team and broader coalition. Finally, many of the coalitions that scored highly at the follow-up survey operated in a local environment supportive of their work.

Coalitions completing the CCLP with high scores tended to have most of these characteristics, but did not share all of the same characteristics, nor were any of these characteristics exclusive to coalitions with high scores. In complex and dynamic systems such as community coalitions, multiple factors are important for improving coalition operations, and different combinations of factors are possible in different communities. Yet, coalitions completing the program with higher scores were those with many of these characteristics — most likely because they had capacity to build upon, rather than having to start at the beginning and define goals that reflect community priorities, for example. Foundations can look for these characteristics as some of the key indicators of capacity to identify coalitions likely to make short-term progress on similar dimensions of coalition operations. However, building leadership capacity within community coalitions, in which membership and leadership turnover is common and often

> *[B]uilding leadership capacity within community coalitions, in which membership and leadership turnover is common and often presents barriers to progress, is a long-term investment. Thus, even modest improvements within coalitions that struggled can be viewed as important gains.*

presents barriers to progress, is a long-term investment. Thus, even modest improvements within coalitions that struggled can be viewed as important gains. In addition, staff working closely with the coalitions observed that readiness for change was an essential characteristic for coalitions to benefit from the program.

Conclusion

Foundations and nonprofits have a long history of supporting leadership development, such as fellowship, individual skill-building, social entrepreneurial, and grassroots leadership programs (W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 2002). Leadership of cross-sector coalitions requires systems thinking and skills different from leading others within an organization setting or within a single system. Our evaluation suggests that the CCLP, a program teaching interdependent boundary-spanning leadership, can build leadership capacity within cross-sector coalitions by improving their ability to strengthen direction, alignment, and commitment. The CCLP is a resource-intensive model and thus might not fit every community.

The evaluation of the CCLP suggests three areas for consideration with regard to coalition capacity building. Benefits from coalition involvement in the program accrued to both more established and newer coalitions. In selecting coalitions for participation in foundation-sponsored programs,

a coalition's focus on goals and commitment to its purpose might be more relevant than other coalition characteristics, such as its age, size, or duration of member involvement. However, coalitions with clearly defined goals and committed members are likely to have a certain level of development or maturity. In addition, future funders would benefit from adopting a developmental perspective with regard to their expectations for the rate or pace of growth or change among coalitions with different experiences, relationships, and resources; expecting all coalitions to reach the same threshold in the same time frame is not realistic. Finally, funders should articulate their expected program outcomes to help inform the appropriate evaluation design. Funders that wish to better understand the potential effect of a leadership development program on coalition or community goals should prioritize a systematic assessment of dosage and uptake over an adequate period of time to capture changes over time. Other funders might prioritize building leadership capacity in historically under-resourced communities, which could require a longer-range strategy of investments.

Readiness for change on the part of individual participants and the coalition coach, as well as the broader coalition, is likely an important factor in the successful adoption and application of leadership skills and practices. Assessing applicants' understanding of the expected change process, potentially through brief screening interviews, could provide useful information during the selection of appropriate coalitions for a foundation's investment in leadership development. Second, although the foundation and the Center for Creative Leadership did not intend for cross-team learning to be the primary goal, particularly given that the CCLP was a pilot, they still thought teams might learn from one another and establish networks with their peers. However, we found that participants perceived a lack of a purposeful approach to peer learning and networking and did not make connections outside of their teams. Thus, if a limited pool of coalitions is available (as in the case of the CCLP pilot), the program might benefit from focusing on within-team learning; if a more deliberate

approach to team selection is feasible, efforts to facilitate peer learning might be worthwhile.

Reflecting on feedback from the final in-person event and the evaluation, the center and the foundation made several changes to what became the next iteration of the program, the Boundary Spanning Leadership Institute for the New Jersey Health Initiatives. In response to participant feedback about information overload during the initial training and challenges applying the tools with the broader coalition, the program now delivers the initial in-person training in two separate two-day sessions separated by six weeks. In addition, the center sharpened the content during the in-person sessions to focus on aspects of training that participants rated as most useful. Together, these two changes allow teams more time to practice their new skills and focus on applying the tools. The Center for Creative Leadership and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation also developed a more strategic approach to selecting coalitions that demonstrate a readiness and interest in learning and applying the boundary-spanning leadership tools.

Acknowledgments

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APPENDIX Description of CCLP Evaluation Measures

Variable	Source	Description
Membership: Number of coalition members	Coalition roster	Coalition lead submitted a roster of all individual members participating in the coalition before each survey administration. We assessed changes from baseline to follow-up as an increase, decrease, or no change in number of members.
Number of sectors represented	Survey	Self-identification in response to the question: What sector(s) do you and your organization represent? Select all that apply: advocacy, business, community development, education: higher education, education: primary and secondary, government, health care provider, health care system, law enforcement, public/community health, social services, other.
Sector dominance	Survey	Whether half or more respondents reported representing a single sector (see previous item).
Leadership team or committee structure	Interviews	We identified structural changes from baseline to follow-up as (1) leadership team changes (a change in the structure or composition of the team leading the coalition); (2) changes related to the committees of the coalition (these could include changes to the number, type, structure, or purpose of coalition committees, work groups, advisory groups, etc.); or (3) none (no changes in the coalition leadership team, committees, or their structures).
Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory	Survey	22-item scale to assess coalitions along six collaboration factors: environment, membership characteristics, process and structure, communication, purpose, and resources. The responses for each item ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Coalition means above 4.0 represented a strength for the coalition; coalition means from 3.0 to 3.9 might need attention; and coalition means below 3.0 might indicate an area of concern (Mattessich, Murray-Close, & Monsey, 2001). Environment a. Agencies in our community have a history of working together. b. Others (in this community) who are not a part of this collaboration would generally agree that the organizations involved in this collaborative project are the "right" organizations to make this work. c. The political and social climate seems to be "right" for starting a collaborative project like this one. Membership characteristics d. People involved in our collaboration always trust one another. e. The people involved in our collaboration represent a cross-section of those who have a stake in what we are trying to accomplish. f. People involved in our collaboration are willing to compromise on important aspects of our project. Process and structure g. The organizations that belong to our collaborative group invest the right amount of time in our collaborative efforts. h. The level of commitment among the collaboration participants is high. i. People in this collaborative group are open to different approaches to how we can do our work. They are willing to consider different ways of working.

APPENDIX Description of CCLP Evaluation Measures (continued)

Variable	Source	Description
Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory	Survey	Process and structure (continued) j. People in this collaborative group have a clear sense of their roles and responsibilities. k. There is a clear process for making decisions among the partners in this collaboration. l. This collaborative group has tried to take on the right amount of work at the right pace. Communication m. People in this collaboration communicate openly with one another. n. I am informed as often as I should be about what goes on in the collaboration. o. The people who lead this collaborative group communicate well with the members. p. Communication among the people in this collaborative group happens both at formal meetings and in informal ways. q. I personally have informal conversations about the project with others who are involved in this collaborative group. Purpose r. People in our collaborative group know and understand our goals. s. People in our collaborative group have established reasonable goals. t. My ideas about what we want to accomplish with this collaboration seem to be the same as the ideas of others. u. What we are trying to accomplish with our collaborative project would be difficult for any single organization to accomplish by itself. Resources v. The people in leadership positions for this collaboration have good skills for working with other people and organizations.
Leadership characteristic measures	Survey	7 leadership characteristics that the CCLP sought to improve Please indicate your agreement with the following statements on a scale from 1 (to no extent) to 9 (to a very great extent): a. The collaborative group recognizes the strength of partners and leverages opportunities. b. The collaborative group is innovative in collectively creating solutions to address the goals of the collaborative group. c. The collaborative group influences stakeholders as necessary to meet the goals of the collaborative group. d. The collaborative group has been successful in achieving its goals to date. e. The collaborative group is able to move to solutions and take action. f. Diverse perspectives are sought and incorporated to create innovative solutions. g. Collaborative members are able to work effectively across the different organizations they represent.

Results

APPENDIX Description of CCLP Evaluation Measures (continued)

Variable	Source	Description

Number of items working well	Survey	18 items related to membership, process and structure, communication, purpose, and resources
		
		What is working well in your collaborative group? Select all that apply.
		
		Membership characteristics
		    Adequate expertise among members to accomplish our activities/goals
		    Appropriate community and stakeholder connections
		    Inclusion of appropriate members/sectors
		Process and structure
		    Ability to address member conflicts and disagreements
		    Agreement on roles and responsibilities
		    Community support
		    Decision-making ability
		    Member involvement/engagement with collaborative group
		    Member meeting attendance
		    Visibility in the community
		Communication
		    Communication among members
		    Communication between leadership and members
		Purpose
		    Developing and implementing activities that will achieve our goals
		    Shared vision and direction on goals
		Resources
		    Adequate time for members to commit to activities/goals
		    Adequate funding to accomplish our activities/goals
		    Leadership
		Other

Number of items needing improvement	Survey	18 items related to membership, process and structure, communication, purpose, and resources What needs improvement in your collaborative group? Select all that apply. Items are the same as those in previous measure.
Collaboration level		The average proportion of organizations that cited one another for frequent collaboration, based on the question: With which individuals or organizations do you collaborate most frequently regarding collaborative group issues? (Please list as many as apply.)