

Generation Work Strategic Framework Guide

Framework Overview

During the planning year, you and your partners will develop a strategic framework. The strategic framework is a comprehensive picture of the local partners' approach. It is guided by a bold vision, but includes meaningful indices of progress, a set of strategies that key activities needed to implement those strategies, and performance measures that assess whether your strategies are successful. Through the initial application process, you have already begun to develop components of the strategic framework, including a defined result and strategies that will assist in achieving systems change and scale within your communities.

The notion of a strategic framework differs from that of a strategic plan, in that a plan assumes a predictable future, where a framework assumes change. For some additional thoughts on how strategic plans must evolve, please see:

[The Strategic Plan is Dead. Long Live Strategy from the Stanford Social Innovation Review Kill that Strategic Plan and Build a Framework Instead from Insigniam](#)

Thus, we hope the concept of the strategic framework will allow you to develop a roadmap to achieve your partnership's Generation Work results and contribute to the overall results for the initiative, but will also allow you to adapt to constantly shifting realities and make any necessary mid-course corrections without having to abandon your plan. In this way, the framework provides flexibility for the partnerships to chart how they will continue to build evidence for the integration of demand driven and positive youth development approaches and how they will achieve the systems changes needed to support scaling these approaches.

To provide structure to this fluid approach, the proposed template provides guidance in the development of a strategic framework for Generation Work. Over the course of this planning year, we will work together to continue to gather information to help develop our approach. For example, Child Trends will help identify opportunities to better incorporate the positive youth development. AspenWSI will help us better understand how you target jobs and employers on behalf of young adults, and where these relationships create opportunities to bring about systems change. And, through our evaluation work, MDRC will help assess your existing data capacity and define performance measures that inform the initiative.

Framework Components

This section contains the major components of a strategic framework that will need to be defined as you develop your approach, as well as a set of prompts to help you think through each component. *We do not expect you to answer each of these questions, but rather to use them as a reflective tool while you develop the strategic framework.*

- **Results** – Otherwise known as the bold goal, vision statement, the North Star, etc. The result is the quality-of-life condition for a whole population of individuals, children or families in a place, or for a place itself. It should describe what the partnerships are seeking to achieve and their desired future.

The results for the Generation Work initiative are:

1. All young adults have the education, skills and connections with employers to access quality training and employment.

2. Practitioners and public agencies take up, scale, and sustain a demand-driven youth employment approach through their networks.
3. Employers hire and invest in the career development of young adults.

As part of your application, you provided a proposed local result for the Generation Work initiative. When developing your strategic framework, please take a second look at the proposed result and make any changes, if necessary, to ensure it accurately describes the partner's vision and contributes to the results for the initiative overall. You will also need to develop indicators that measure or quantify the achievement of the result (a percentage, ratio or rate) based on the population named in the result.

- **Analysis of Current Situation** – A review of the context which the partnerships finds itself, including driving factors and challenges, can help establish a strong foundation for the framework as well as ensure the identified strategies are aligned with other initiatives.
 1. What are the opportunities or drivers for achieving systems changes that support your stated result?
 2. What are the gaps or barriers in your current system that you will need to address?
 3. What are the needs of your local employers? What are the major trends within the local labor market? How are these working for or against you?
 4. What are the needs of the young adults in your area? Are there any disparities between different types (e.g., race, gender, education level) of young adults?
 5. What data backs up your analysis?
 6. Are there other local initiatives that may enhance Generation Work? Compete against?
- **Identification of Strategies** – Strategies are the broadly defined key approaches the partnership will use to accomplish the result.
 1. What strategies will you employ to scale positive youth development within the system? To scale demand driven approaches?
 2. How will you try to resolve the natural tensions between demand driven and positive youth development strategies?
 3. What policy-advocacy strategies will you employ to support your work?
 4. What are your strategies around communication with various external audiences?
 5. How do the strategies contribute to the results for your partnership? For the initiative?
 6. How are you using the identified opportunities, drivers, barriers, and gaps to inform your strategy?
 7. Are there strategies you will prioritize? Why?
- **Partnership Management** – Your approach to building, organizing and managing internal and external partners as you collectively implement your work.
 1. How are you going to organize internal and external partners to implement the strategies?
 2. What are the partner's roles and responsibilities for executing the strategies?
 3. What resources do the partners bring?
 4. Do the partners at the table have the authority to carry out the strategies?
 5. Are there additional partners or resources needed that are not at the table? If so, how will you seek to involve them?

6. How will you communicate with one another? Are there any rules or norms that need to be put in place to help manage the partnership?
 7. What supports are necessary to continue to build the partnership?
 8. How will you plan for any change or transition in partner leadership?
- **Performance Measures** – Performance measures are used to measure the success of the strategies and progress towards the result. There are three questions that performance measures can answer:

How much did we do (quantity of effort)? This type of performance measure helps to quantify the number and type of activities that were engaged in, the number of people who were engaged and the amount of effort expended.

Example: # of new champions recruited to support the work

How well did we do it (quality of effort)? This type of performance measure helps to measure the quality and efficiency of strategies, direct services and operations.

Example: % increase in funders leveraging funds for specific program or community priorities

Is anyone better off? (the difference we made – quantity and quality of effect) This type of performance measure helps to quantify the effect of our efforts on people's lives. These performance measures quantify demonstrable improvement in skills, knowledge, attitude, opinion, behavior or circumstances for individuals, programs, organizations or clients served.

Example: #/% of entities within the system adopting best practices

1. Are the identified measures appropriate given the strategy and result? Do they actually measure what is intended?
 2. What is the target for the performance measures?
 3. What data is needed for each measure?
 4. Do you need a baseline measure to ensure the ability to measure progress?
- **Implementation Action Plan** – When implementing the framework, it is crucial to have a comprehensive plan that addresses the actions, responsible actors, timeframes, resources, and method of evaluation for each strategy.
 1. What are major milestones to begin to build towards scale and systems change for Year 1? Year 2? Year 3?
 2. What are specific the actions and tasks that are necessary to implement the strategies?
 3. Who are the actors and entities responsible and accountable for the work?
 4. What is the timeframe, including the scheduled time to start and complete?
 5. In addition to people, what other resources may you need to implement the strategies?
 6. How will you collect the data to inform the success measures?
 - **Partnership Agreement** – It is critically important that every partnering organization has agreed and “bought in” to the framework. The partnership agreement should be used to provide clarity for any additional partners through expansion or transition, and as a guide to maintain strong partnerships. The strategic framework should include a partnership agreement, or a MOU, in which each of the partners signs a written agreement that defines each partner's roles, responsibilities, and their overall commitment to the work.

Framework Scope & Key Dates

The strategic framework should outline your strategies for years 2-8 of the initiative (2016-2023). The implementation action plan should be for three years (Dec. 2016 – Dec. 2018), recognizing that some of the identified strategies and measures will take longer to complete and achieve.

Key Dates for Year 1	
Revised framework distributed	February 12, 2016
Two progress check-ins	TBD with sites
Cross-site learning meeting (report out on framework)	July 20 – 22, 2016
Frameworks due	September 2, 2016