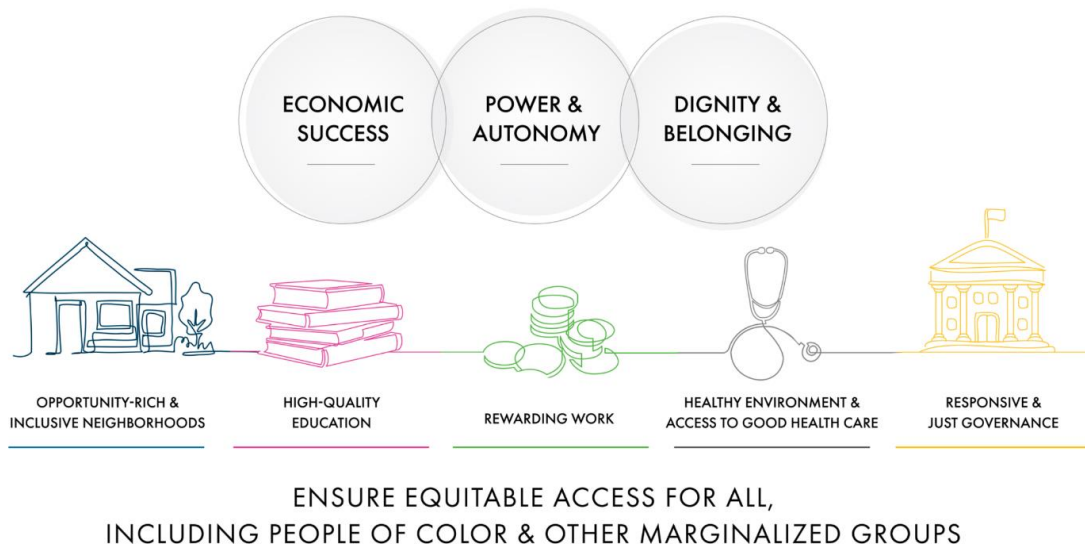


UPWARD MOBILITY FROM POVERTY



Through our Bridges to Prosperity Rockford Region initiative, we have launched a new planning process to boost upward mobility from poverty and reduce racial inequities in our community. This planning process will utilize data from Urban Institute's Boosting Upward Mobility from Poverty and Advancing Equity project to identify key racial and ethnic disparities and barriers to boosting upward mobility from poverty in our community.

We are launching this process because our community is falling behind on indicators that demonstrate how likely someone in our community is to advance out of poverty. We plan to use this opportunity to assess systems in our community against the Mobility Metrics and identify weaknesses or gaps. This project will not duplicate planning already being done by our local government.

Working with nonprofit, business, philanthropic, anchor institutions, and faith-based leaders in our community, we will publish a Mobility Action Plan that plots a new course forward and addresses the systems and barriers to advancement in our community.

We also have obtained the full support of Winnebago County Chairman Joe Chiarelli and City of Rockford Mayor Thomas McNamara to create our Mobility Action Plan. Both have also pledged support, partnership and advocacy in this effort, as well as staff members to serve on the Team and sub-committee. Additionally, our recommendations will be championed through the appropriate staff members and committees at the City and County level to implementation.

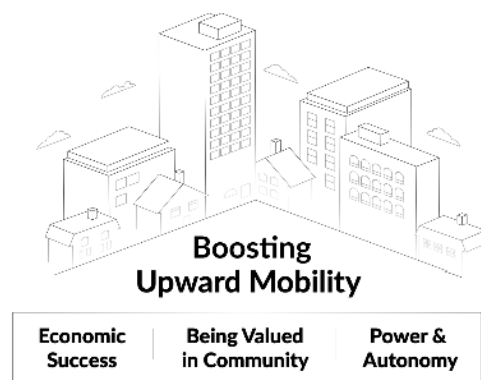
Learn about Our Approach to Boosting Mobility and Advancing Equity

The first element of the framework is the three-part definition of mobility from poverty, advanced by the US Partnership on Mobility from Poverty. This definition holds that meaningful and sustainable mobility from poverty requires movement across three mutually reinforcing dimensions: economic success, power and autonomy, and being valued in community.

Economic success: Having rising income and assets.

Power and autonomy: Having control over one's life, the ability to make choices, and the collective capacity to influence larger policies and actions that affect one's future.

Being valued in community: Feeling the respect, dignity, and sense of belonging that come from contributing to one's community.

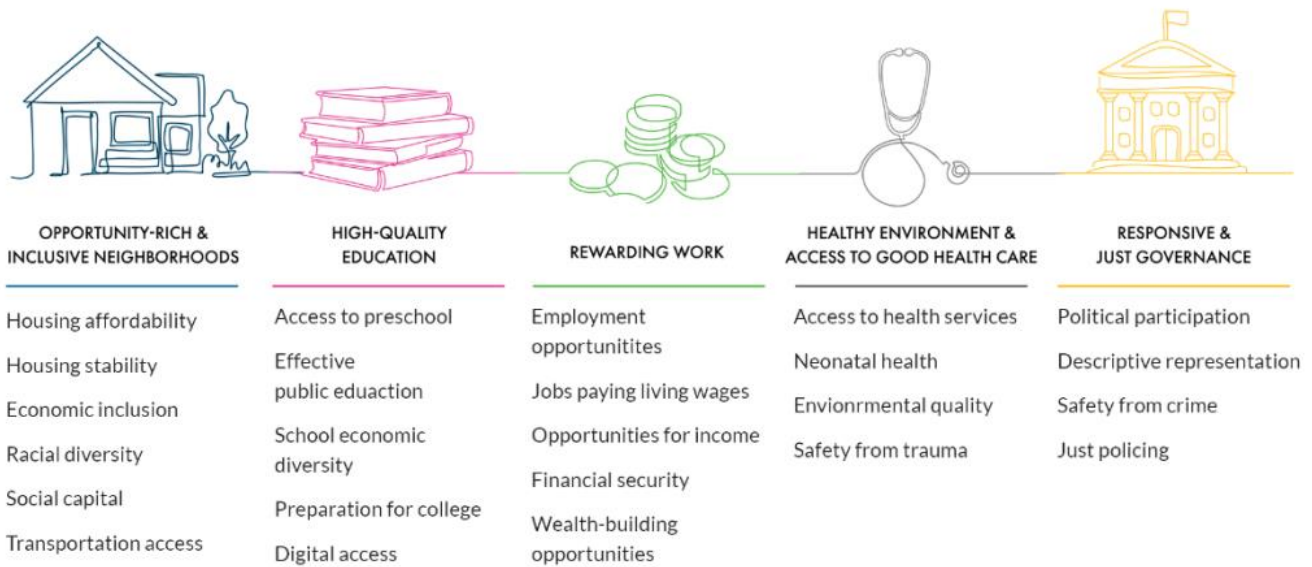


Having a shared approach helps focus and strengthen collective action for boosting mobility from poverty and advancing equity. Urban Institute's framework and approach to Mobility Action Planning helps us:

- **champion** evidence-informed systems change that will remove barriers blocking upward mobility and equity;
- **engage partners** who are committed to this work for the long haul;
- **change the narrative** on poverty in our community;
- **identify a set of comprehensive solutions** that respond to the root causes of inequities and the full range of our community's needs and assets;
- **build our and our partners' capacity** to track progress over time and adjust your work as needed; and
- **stay focused** on your goals and hold ourselves and our partners accountable for action.

The Framework for Boosting Mobility and Advancing Equity is the core knowledge base around which this work is focused. It was developed by distinguished scholars and Urban Institute researchers, field-tested by people working in local governments across the country, and updated to more explicitly center racial equity and the local systems that either block or boost the efforts of individuals and families to achieve mobility.

UPWARD MOBILITY PREDICTORS



Local communities aspiring to boost upward mobility and narrow equity gaps should focus on building or bolstering five essential and interconnected pillars of support that families and individuals need to achieve economic success, power, and dignity. These include: Opportunity Rich & Inclusive Neighborhoods, High-Quality Education, Rewarding Work, Healthy Environment & Access to Good Healthcare, Responsive and Just Governance.

The pillars were identified in 2019 by an Urban Institute working group composed of 11 distinguished scholars with expertise in economics, sociology, political science, and psychology and with diverse perspectives with respect to race, geography, policy domains, and political ideology. The working group systematically reviewed various factors that influence mobility from poverty for adults, families, and children. The group's ultimate aim was to connect the longer-term mobility outcomes identified in the five pillars to specific measures that can be tracked in the short and medium term. The next step in that process was identifying key predictors that are strongly associated with the five pillars and that can be influenced by state and local policies in the near term. These predictors can be used to convert high-level concepts into areas for action. The working group came up with 24 predictors across the five pillars.

Finally, the working group assigned each of the predictors at least one observable metric that could measure how a community fares according to each predictor, both at baseline and over time. The group proposed metrics that were valid measures of the predictors, collected at regular intervals, available for important subgroups and subareas in cities and counties nationwide, and not overly sensitive to residential moves in and out of jurisdictions. Importantly, the proposed metrics also reflected structural conditions rather than individual-level outcomes.

We have created Working Groups around each of the pillars. Our Working Groups will champion the use of both quantitative and qualitative data because it can help our Mobility Coalition prioritize areas that most need support, highlight interconnections across policy domains, set targets for improvement, and monitor progress over time.

A description of each of the five pillars can be found here:

Opportunity-rich and inclusive neighborhoods

Inclusive and well-resourced neighborhoods play a central role in shaping families' stability, their access to social and economic opportunities, and their children's chances to thrive and succeed. Neighborhoods are where children experience critical stages of socio-emotional and physical development, where social ties form, and where people access resources and life opportunities. The ability to find and afford quality housing, to feel welcomed and respected in one's community and social circles, and to have equitable access to local resources all reflect essential aspects of an inclusive neighborhood.

High-quality education

Education—from prekindergarten through postsecondary—provides a crucial avenue to economic and social mobility. High-quality preschool programs, elementary schools, and high schools boost academic achievement, college enrollment, and adult success. Schools also provide children and teens with networks of friends, peers, and mentors, helping to shape their social identity and feeling of belonging. And adults can continue to build skills and credentials throughout life, expanding their prospects for upward mobility.

Rewarding work

Jobs and wages constitute the primary source of income and economic security for most people in the US today. Steady work enables people to gain skills and experience so they can advance to higher-paying jobs, building both income and wealth to support their families and boost their children's prospects. Work can contribute to one's sense of personal autonomy and power and provide feelings of accomplishment and dignity. Reliable income and sufficient savings enable people to better weather life's inevitable challenges and disruptions and to provide a stable and supportive home for their children.

Healthy environment and access to good health care

Good and stable health helps people of all ages surmount life's challenges, excel in school and on the job, ensure their families' well-being, and fully participate in their communities. Environmental quality reduces people's risk of health complications that may undermine school or work performance. Access to and utilization of health services can help parents ensure their children receive basic care through critical formative years and enable adults to obtain tests needed for early detection of diseases, enhancing the likelihood of effective treatment.

Responsive and just governance

Governance that is attentive to the needs of all community members and residents who are deeply engaged in collective decision-making are hallmarks of a community that supports upward mobility. A responsive local government empowers the people it serves by ensuring their concerns are addressed. By allocating resources equitably, local governments can help ensure all residents have good prospects for economic success. And when public institutions that are intended to serve and protect communities act with justice and restraint, residents feel they are valued and respected members of the community.

At the local level, we have created Working Groups for each of the five pillars, they are being led by key stakeholder partners, and include:

Jas Bilich, Winnebago County

Mary Cacioppi, Bridges to Prosperity Rockford Region

Owen Carter, City of Rockford Health & Human Services

Ron Clewer, Gorman & Company

Michael Jarvis, Winnebago County Health Department

Shelton Kay, Rockford Regional Health Council

Anqunette Parham, City of Rockford Health & Human Services

James Patterson, Community Foundation of Northern IL

Trisha Tousant, YMCA Rock River Valley

Planning Principles

In addition to the core elements that underscore the necessity of undertaking this work, we will also follow a set of planning principles based on Urban Institute's research; experience working with community leaders trying to make systems change at the state, local, and federal levels; and the lived experiences of people experiencing poverty and structural racism.

Data-informed decision making

The use of data to prioritize areas of greatest need, highlight interconnections across policy domains, set targets for improvement, and monitor progress over time. The data that inform such decision making can be both quantitative (for example, local administrative data, national Census data) and qualitative (for example, insights derived from community engagement focus groups or community advisory boards, surveys, or storytelling).

Deep and meaningful community engagement

A process by which community members come together to reflect on and make decisions about the future of their community. When done properly, this process is accessible, fair, engaging, redistributes power, uplifts local values and knowledge, and builds trust among community members.

Systems change

A fundamental shift in practices, underlying values, or norms by local actors that can reshape policies, processes, relationships, and power structures and addresses the root causes of racial and economic inequities in our communities.

Partnerships with cross-sector organizations across policy domains

Engaging with different types of stakeholders (e.g., from the public, private, nonprofit, and philanthropic sectors) across multiple policy areas.

Continuous learning and improvement

The continuous gathering and use of information to assess and reflect on progress, improve organizational practices and services, and drive better outcomes in the long run.

Key Project Partners



Although government has a primary role to play in boosting upward mobility, there is increasing recognition that other groups can bring unique resources, expertise, and social capital to this mission. Many local governments have built cross-sector, cross-policy teams to take on poverty from all sides. These include:

Government

Our upward mobility work will include elected representatives or staff from city, county, or state government or other organizations and agencies like public school systems, housing authorities, economic development agencies, and regional planning authorities.

Nonprofits and Community-Based Organizations

Local and national nonprofits may include charitable and direct service organizations, volunteer service organizations, labor unions, chambers of commerce, and child care organizations. They may be based around a specific issue (such as homelessness) or they may serve an intermediary role and provide technical assistance to boost the capacity of other organizations.

Advocacy Groups

Advocacy groups are organizations that advocate on behalf of a specific cause. Because they are typically nonprofit organizations, they may also function similarly to the nonprofit and community-based organizations listed above. Their goal is to elevate and promote policy priorities to powerful private and public partners who can draft policy and enact systems change in favor of their goals.

Philanthropies

Philanthropies are organizations that provide financial support to other organizations that is typically charitable in nature.

Research Organizations

Research organizations include universities, think tanks, and advocacy groups that can assist with collecting and analyzing data and evaluating programs and policies.

Anchor Institutions

Anchor institutions are the local for-profit and nonprofit organizations that have a significant and longstanding presence in a community, such as universities, health care systems and hospitals, financial institutions, religious organizations, and arts and cultural organizations.

Private-Sector Partners

Private-sector partners are businesses whose primary interest is in gaining profits. Their funding largely comes from investors and product sales, and they are responsive to the supply and demand requests of the market. Private-sector actors include banks, major companies, and developers.

FAQ's

What Is a Mobility Action Plan?

- A Mobility Action Plan (MAP) is a document that details the strategic actions we will take to boost upward mobility and promote racial equity in our community. It is developed through a Mobility Action Planning process that our community will undertake with cross-sector partners and community members.
- We will use a set of evidence-based, community-level Mobility Metrics developed by the Urban Institute, in combination with other local data and community and stakeholder engagement, to draft a MAP for our community. The MAP will propose new evidence-based strategies to achieve our community's goals.

Why Should We Take on This Work?

- Now is the time to tackle inequities in our community that result from longstanding structural racism, discrimination, and disinvestment. Addressing these inequities will boost the economic competitiveness and prosperity of everyone in our community.
- Our government and many other governments across the country have contributed to inequities by developing racist and discriminatory policies and failing to rectify the disparities that these policies have created.
- These inequities disproportionately impact [people of color, people with low wages, immigrants, youth, people with mental and physical disabilities, people who are justice-involved, the elderly, and people living in rural communities] in our community. When inequities exist in our community, everyone suffers, and our economy is not as strong as it can be.
- With a comprehensive approach that changes the way we and our partners work, we can boost mobility from poverty and reduce racial disparities. Government cannot do this alone - we need everyone in our community to work together.
- Our leaders have the right tools and teams in place to provide resources that promote upward mobility from poverty.

How Do We Do This Work?

- We will undertake a year-long Mobility Action Planning process, where we will develop partnerships with cross-sector actors across policy domains, conduct deep and meaningful community engagement, access and use data to inform our decisions, and continuously learn and improve from our challenges and successes.
- Boosting mobility from poverty is a pressing need in our community that demands action now. Although we will work with urgency to tackle challenges in our community, boosting mobility from poverty for everyone will likely take years. We commit to doing this work as long as it takes to improve prosperity, health, belonging, and quality of life for everyone.

Who Does This Work?

- We will develop a coalition of committed regional partners, including local governments, anchor institutions [like the local hospital and university], nonprofits and community-based organizations, research organizations, philanthropic partners [like the local community foundation], members of the private sector, and advocacy groups.
- Collaborating with these key partners will grant us greater access to a diverse group of
 - community members who can help us learn about what's working and what's not,
 - better data that can provide a more complete picture of conditions in our community,
 - more resources and capacity for boosting mobility from poverty, and the levers we need to make lasting systems change.

Next Steps

Join Our Mobility Coalition

Join A Working Group to help us create our community's first ever Mobility Action Plan for poverty reduction. Please let us know which area(s) below you would like to contribute to, and we will keep you updated on meetings and next steps. [Complete the form HERE](#)

Poverty Reduction Assessment

Take our short, ten question survey to help us assess our community's commitment to poverty reduction. [Click On the Survey HERE](#)

Stay Updated On Our Project

Join our Bridges to Prosperity Rockford Region Facebook Group, you can find it here: [Bridges To Prosperity Rockford Region | Facebook](#)

To learn more about the Upward Mobility Framework created by Urban Institute, [click here.](#)

Learn more about our local efforts on our project website, www.BridgesRockford.com.