

# HUMAN RELATIONS TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

**OVERVIEW:** The Human Relations Task Force recommends to the Chatham County Board of Commissioners that the county form a new collaborative, community-led partnership, using a modified *collective impact model*\*. See **last page** for summary of the traditional collective impact framework.

**HISTORY & BACKGROUND:** Traditional structures, such as the county-appointed boards and committees, have valuable roles but the county's history with these models (similar to other communities) had not led to the broad community ownership needed to resolve deep-rooted issues, such as discrimination, intolerance, and inequities. In 2017, the County Manager's Office convened five diverse focus groups in 2017 to listen to their concerns and ideas related to human relations. They also provided information on alternative ways to address such issues. The focus groups felt strongly that we needed a different model that would foster community buy-in and community leadership around human relations. They also agreed that while we had several groups across the county doing related work, most focus on one or two issues. We also found gaps not addressed by any groups in the county.

This led the Board of Commissioners to form the Human Relations Task Force in January 2018 to explore this type of framework. We believe that the recommended collaborative entity will more likely generate the community ownership needed, because membership will be open to all is open to all who want to be involved in improving human relations. Additionally, it will develop and use shared measures to track progress and serve as a catalyst for new strategic efforts.

However, we do have some words of caution. Several studies and critiques of the collective impact model for social change have revealed some potential weaknesses that the leadership may need to address. For example, ensuring that the engagement of community members not in positions of power or those not affiliated with partner groups must be an intentional part of the action plan. It is important that the leadership of the newly formed entity review these lessons learned in further detail than we have been able to do.

While we are aware of a few successful models of human relations work around the nation, most are in urban settings, have a limited focus and do not a broad partnership model.

**THE COUNTY'S ROLE:** It may be that the collaborative will develop and mature to become its own organization, likely a nonprofit, within a few years. However, we provide no set timeline for this to occur given the uncertainty of how the collaborate entity will evolve. A few members expressed strong feelings about the independence of this new entity to be truly community-driven and not directed by the county. This also related to fears of potential political intervention. The co-chairs had a discussion with Interim County Manager Dan LaMontagne and Health Director Layton Long, who is involved with the Health Alliance, to get a better understanding of how this would work so that the initiative retains its community ownership despite having support based in the County Manager's Office. We do see major benefits of this arrangement, especially in the startup phase, given the range of resources available and access to other county staff expertise related to human relations. This proposal reflects our understanding about the county's role.

**OPTIONS FOR NAME OF NEW COLLABORATIVE ENTITY:** We developed a list of possible names for the new entity, but believe the future coalition should select the name. Here are a few considerations:

- Chatham Human Relations (Community) Partnership
- Chatham Human Relations Alliance
- Chatham Human Relations Coalition
- Committed to Change in Chatham

**WHAT IS HUMAN RELATIONS?** The task force defined it as communication and collaboration between individuals and diverse groups.

**RECOMMENDED VISION STATEMENT:** Chatham County will be a diverse community where all people thrive and experience non-discrimination, mutual understanding, equality, opportunity and equitable outcomes.

*\*Similar to the Chatham Health Alliance which has been very successful.*

**RECOMMENDED MISSION STATEMENT:** We are a collaborative partnership making measurable progress toward non-discrimination and equity for all Chatham County residents through education, engagement, empowerment and advocacy.

**INTERIM LEADERSHIP TEAM:** We recommend the formation of an Interim Leadership Team consisting of five diverse individuals, who will have the key role in launching the new collaborative entity with the following initial goal: structure an organization with policies and procedures that ensure community needs are sought and systemic barriers are reduced. This core team of five will be appointed by the Board of Commissioners based on recommendations from the Task Force. Additionally, a sixth non-voting member will serve as an advisor from the County Manager's Office. The Interim Leadership Team would serve **no longer than two years**.

The Human Relations Task Force will provide a list of interested individuals to the Board of Commissioners for appointment to the Interim Leadership Team. Service on this team will involve hard work and a substantial time commitment. They must agree to do the following:

- Select an initial chair and vice chair to lead the Interim Leadership Team and the Steering Committee of the collaborative entity for the first two years.
- Suggest criteria for a staff coordinator, review applications, and recommend interview questions. The chair and vice-chair will serve on the interview team.
- Suggest performance measures for the staff coordinator and provide feedback to the county on the coordinator's performance. The feedback may need to be more frequent during startup period, but then at least twice a year.
- Help identify budget needs for the upcoming budget process.
- Identify and contact existing potential partner groups and individuals in the county to engage in formational activities.
- Co-host a minimum of two community forums (with the assistance of an experienced facilitator) for the purpose of: informing the community of this effort; demonstrating its potential in fostering community change; and enlisting additional individuals to serve on the Steering Committee and initial organizing subcommittees.
- Form initial organizing subcommittees, which could focus on such areas as development of bylaws, organizing community forums, growing the membership, and promotional activities.
- Solicit potential new members for the Steering Committee and develop a simple application form. Interview and select additional Steering Committee members and chairs of subcommittees. All initial organizing subcommittees will be represented on the Interim Leadership Team and the full Steering Committee once it is organized.
- Create and adopt clear expectations for all Steering Committee members encompassing meeting attendance, liaison roles, recruitment, outreach, etc. to ensure that all applicants fully understand the commitment.
- Work with a staff coordinator on a community needs assessment, if needed, which will include a review of existing data and collection of additional data to identify issues and needs in Chatham.
- Engage the community in the development of initial goals, strategies and measures for the new entity, based on identified needs and priorities. The strategic plan should cover at least three years.
- Make decisions by consensus whenever possible.

**PERMANENT LEADERSHIP TEAM:** No later than two years after the Interim Leadership is appointed, it will dissolve and be replaced by the Permanent Leadership Team. This team will be similar to an executive committee and will always include the Steering Committee chair and vice chair elected at a meeting of the full membership. It also will include the chairs of any subcommittees and an advisor from the County Manager's Office. The duties of the team will include:

- Continue to provide feedback on the performance measures for the staff coordinator and provide feedback to help evaluate the coordinator twice a year.
- Provide direction on and approve the budget for the entity's work.
- Actively encourage members of the Leadership Team and Steering Committee to raise issues and concerns directly and promptly.
- Develop a routine process for all partnerships, including the county and nonprofit partners, to jointly evaluate how well the partnerships are working and identify areas that need improvement.
- Monitor progress (or lack of progress) on goals, strategies and measures to recommend changes.
- Develop a meeting schedule for the Steering Committee and the full membership.
- Evaluate and recommend revisions to processes and bylaws.
- Advise the Steering Committee about the need to form or dissolve subcommittees.

**INITIAL & PERMANENT STEERING COMMITTEE:** As noted above, the Interim Leadership Team will help form a larger team of 12 to 15 people to become a Steering Committee (including the Leadership Team itself). Other Steering Committee seats will ensure representation of key population groups. No later than two years after its formation, active members will elect the chair, vice chair and Steering Committee members. All subcommittee chairs will have a seat on the Steering Committee, just as they do on the Leadership Team. All members will have staggered three-year terms, but initial members will have staggered terms of one to three years. As vacancies occur or terms end, members will be nominated and voted on at a membership meeting.

The Steering Committee will have the following responsibilities:

- Lead the full membership in development of a strategic plan covering at least three years with **measurable** priority goals and strategies. The plan will be informed by the needs assessment and substantial input from partners. The membership must agree with the goals, strategies and measures\*\*.
- Create, revise or dissolve subcommittees needed to implement the strategic plan.
- Recruit members for subcommittees based on the strategic priorities and administrative tasks.
- Ensure all activities are consistent and support the mission and goals.
- Help develop the agenda for upcoming meetings of all members and other public events.
- Develop the initial bylaws, which should be approved by the full membership.
- Enlist outside experts in a periodic review of the collaborative entity to ensure success.
- Work with the staff coordinator to produce an annual progress report to include specific actions related to goals, measures, and finances. Should be presented at an annual member meeting.
- Recommend ways to grow participation, especially from diverse groups, and get the word out about the work of the collaborative entity.
- Ensure that the Leadership Team has feedback on the staff coordinator's performance and the work of any consultants doing work for the entity.
- Attend meetings regularly and complete assigned work.

**OFFICERS:** No later than two years after the appointment of the Initial Leadership Team, the full membership will elect a chair and vice chair of the Steering Committee, who also lead the next Leadership Team. They will serve one-year terms. The chair will be succeeded by the vice chair, unless the situation changes and the vice chair no longer can serve.

**SUBCOMMITTEES:** The Initial Leadership Team may form several organizing subcommittees focused on startup work, such as the needs assessment, bylaws & governance, and promotion & recruitment. However, the Steering Committee will have the ongoing responsibility to form and appoint subcommittees needed to carry out strategic priorities of the collaborative entity. We expect that as strategic priority subcommittees get underway, the initial subcommittees will be completing their work and will be phased out. Subcommittees will elect their own chairs, vice chairs or co-chairs annually, but the Steering Committee may help recruit people for these roles, if needed.

*\*\*Examples of measures: graduation rates for minorities, equitable access to services, hate crime reports, etc.*

**STAFF COORDINATOR:** The staff coordinator will, at least initially, be a shared full-time position in the Chatham County Manager’s Office. We expect about half of the time on average for human relations work, but this will vary throughout the year, based on timing of key projects. This arrangement will be evaluated after year one and year two to ensure that this is still a workable plan. We have discussed the need to hire someone with a community organizing background. The coordinator would have the following duties:

- Help schedule meetings and help plan agendas.
- Take and distribute minutes of meetings.
- Develop a proposed budget, keep expenses within the budget, and produce quarterly budget reports.
- Seek and manage grant funding to support the work of the collaborative entity.
- Facilitate communications within the entity and with the public.
- Help gather needed information and do research as needed or identify others who can help with this work.
- Help subcommittees with their meetings and agenda activities.
- Produce or have produced any promotional items, such as news releases, flyers, ads, etc.
- Create and manage any related social media accounts.

**MEMBERSHIP:** The collaborative entity will be open to groups and individuals who are committed to the mission and who positively participate in its work. We believe the membership must be a uniquely diverse group comprised of people from all age groups, ethnic-racial backgrounds, disabled populations, political, gender orientations, religious organizations, income levels and Chatham’s unique cultural and geographical divisions. Membership diversity will be a major focus and challenge requiring substantial work. We expect that many members will represent specific groups, but we believe it is important to engage individuals without a group affiliation.

No later than year two, members attending annual meetings will vote on the Steering Committee chair and vice chair and other Steering Committee members. The members will review results of the needs assessment and help determine priority focus areas based on the data presented. Members will have the chance to serve on any and all subcommittees of interest.

**DRAFT INITIAL BUDGET FOR FY 2019-20:** The plan is for the county to seek and apply for grant funding to cover much of the initial startup costs. Debra Henzey is already researching foundations that focus on related issues. However, we recognize that the county could have to cover most or even all costs. This is an estimated budget, except for staff coordinator position, which has not yet been reviewed for salary range as a shared full-time position.

Phone	\$200.00
Supplies	\$500.00
Computer & accessories (initial year purchase)	\$1,000.00
Printing & copying	\$800.00
Promotional materials	\$700.00
Contract help (research, marketing, facilitation of forums, etc.	\$12,000.00
Training for Steering Committee and/or coordinator	\$3,500.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$18,700.00</b>
<i>NOTE: Half of salary &amp; benefits of staff position rough estimate \$35,000-\$42,000</i>	

## POSSIBLE TIMELINE FOR YEAR ONE:

<b>April 2019</b>	Five-member Interim Leadership Team appointed
<b>March –April 2019</b>	Recruitment & selection process for staff coordinator***
<b>July 2019</b>	List of potential partners completed and contacts with them initiated
<b>November 2019</b>	Two community forums completed with help of facilitator
<b>December 2019</b>	Full Steering Committee and initial subcommittees formed
<b>December 2019</b>	Needs assessment work underway
<b>February 2020</b>	Bylaws draft completed
<b>February 2020</b>	Needs assessment work completed
<b>April 2020</b>	Community meeting of partners held to identify three priority focus areas based on community assessment and gaps; bylaws approved
<b>May 2020</b>	New subcommittees formed around priority focus areas
<b>June 2020</b>	Subcommittees work has begun to develop goals, strategies and measures
<b>August 2020</b>	Membership has approved goals, strategies and measures for 2020-22

## REQUESTED ACTION:

The Human Relations Task Force requests that the Board of Commissioners provide feedback on this report and consider approval of the formation of a community-based Human Relations collaborative entity in Chatham County based on these recommendations and authorize county staff to proceed with the outlined plans.

*\*\*\*The chair and vice-chair will suggest interview questions and serve on interview team.*

## The Collective Impact Framework

Collective Impact is a framework to tackle deeply entrenched and complex social problems. It is an innovative and structured approach to making collaboration work across government, business, philanthropy, non-profit organizations and citizens to achieve significant and lasting social change.



The Collective Impact approach is premised on the belief that no single policy, government department, organization or program can tackle or solve the increasingly complex social problems we face as a society. The approach calls for multiple organizations or entities from different sectors to abandon their own agenda in favor of a common agenda, shared measurement and alignment of effort. Unlike collaboration or partnership, Collective Impact initiatives have centralized infrastructure – known as a

backbone organization – with dedicated staff whose role is to help participating organizations shift from acting alone to acting in concert [image courtesy of Centre for Community Child Health (2013)].

John Kania & Mark Kramer first wrote about collective impact in the **Stanford Social Innovation Review** in 2011 and identified five key elements:



1. All participants have a **common agenda** for change including a shared understanding of the problem and a joint approach to solving it through agreed upon actions.
2. Collecting data and **measuring results consistently** across all the participants ensures shared measurement for alignment and accountability.
3. A plan of action that outlines and coordinates **mutually reinforcing activities** for each participant.
4. Open and **continuous communication** is

needed across the many players to build trust, assure mutual objectives, and create common motivation.

5. A **backbone organization(s)** with staff and specific set of skills to serve the entire initiative and coordinate participating organizations and agencies.

*“... we believe that there is no other way society will achieve large-scale progress against the urgent and complex problems of our time, unless a collective impact approach becomes the accepted way of doing business.”* ~John Kania & Mark Kramer