



BOONE COUNTY
UPWARD MOBILITY



Boone County
Children's Services Fund

BOONE COUNTY'S UPWARD MOBILITY ACTION PLAN

2023 COMMUNITY UPDATE

RELEASED: OCTOBER 2023

ABOUT

Upward Mobility is the idea that everyone deserves the chance to improve their lives and economic well-being, to be valued and feel like they belong, and to have power and autonomy. Thriving communities are those that support opportunities to boost upward mobility and aim to narrow racial and ethnic inequities for children, youth, and adults.

Boone County was one of eight counties nationwide to join the Urban Institute's Upward Mobility Cohort. At the beginning of 2021, the Urban Institute provided awardees with funding, technical assistance, and peer learning opportunities to help communities develop a Mobility Action Plan (MAP) aimed at improving upward mobility and reducing racial inequities. The county's engagement in the Urban Institute's Upward Mobility Cohort came at a critical time. Across many metrics of well-being, Boone County appears to be a community where everyone excels. However, when data is disaggregated by race/ethnicity, a very different story emerges. White families with resources fare well within the county. They have lower poverty rates, higher scores in measures of achievement in school, and better health outcomes. Families of color, specifically Black families, disproportionately experience higher poverty rates, poorer school outcomes, more referrals to juvenile justice, and poorer health outcomes. These disparities mean, if you are a person of color within the county, you are at a severe disadvantage for economic mobility. Within the county, those in poverty are impacted by limited upward mobility across generations. Boone County sought to create a holistic approach to improving education, health, housing, safety, and work to foster generational economic success for those most in need in Boone County.

Boone County's Mobility Action Plan describes goals, strategies, and target outcomes for boosting mobility from poverty. Central to the development of the Mobility Action Plan was engaging community members with lived experiences to identify results, indicators, root causes, and strategic actions. Through the development of the plan, three workgroups were established: Early Grade Literacy, Fair and Inclusive Housing, and Jobs and Workforce Development. Each workgroup, led by Stakeholder Facilitators, engaged in the Results-Based Accountability planning processes to develop three interconnected strategic action plans.

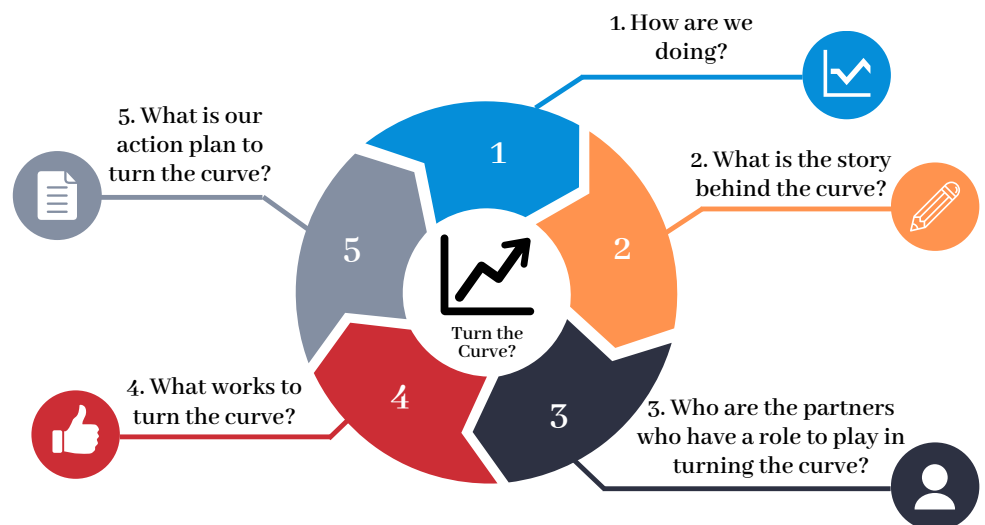
This community report is a summary of progress made toward implementing the Boone County MAP. The original report is available at <https://www.showmeboone.com/community-services/upward-mobility.asp> and includes comprehensive descriptions of the community engagement process and data used throughout the Upward Mobility project. This report is intended to provide an update of the Upward Mobility project for community members to use as we continue implementing strategies from the plan.

RESULTS-BASED ACCOUNTABILITY FRAMEWORK

The Results-Based Accountability (RBA) framework connects local data related to a community issue to drive work toward a common population result. This is followed by a set of goals and activities that will create the desired impact on the focused trendline, which projects how data trends will continue without intervention. Results-Based Accountability begins with the end results groups want in their communities and works backwards toward the how the change can be accomplished.

Results-Based Accountability utilizes 'Turn the Curve Thinking' to guide planning activities, which involves using five questions to create an action plan. Each step has corresponding processes which moves planning activities forward. These processes allow for participants to rank ideas to find solutions which are tailored to the community context and planning groups. Participants move through the Turn the Curve Thinking process multiple times as planning progresses.

Turn the Curve Thinking



BOONE COUNTY STAFF UPDATE

The Boone County Community Services Department (BCCSD) filled several positions since the release of the original report that help coordinate the Upward Mobility project. The BCCSD also added a Program Manager position to be fully dedicated to leading the Upward Mobility project alongside the Program Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Specialist. The BCCSD Director, Deputy Director, and Data and Performance Analyst also provide support as needed.



Verna Laboy, Program Manager

Verna Laboy (she/her) has a strong history of community engagement spanning over three decades in Boone County and now serves as the Program Manager for Upward Mobility at the Boone County Community Services Department. She led the City of Columbia's award-winning "Live Well by Faith" program which addressed health disparities within the African American faith community. She is a Certified Community Health Worker and a founding member of the Worley Street Roundtable, an organization addressing education disparities in the local public school system. She was born in Peoria, Illinois and a graduate from Columbia College. Verna looks forward to forming partnerships with local leaders and community members to help turn the curve toward upward mobility to see all Boone County families thrive.

Lenna Peterson, Program DEI Specialist

Lenna Peterson (she/her) is currently serving as the Program Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Specialist at the Boone County Community Services Department. Her commitment to positive change ignited during her high school student government involvement in Chillicothe, Missouri, fostering a passion for community work. She is particularly attuned to the needs of often-overlooked rural communities. Lenna also honed her skills in planning and organizing as part of the leadership team at QTPOC (Queer and Trans People of Color) at the University of Missouri. Recognized for her unwavering dedication and innovative thinking, she fearlessly embraces challenges, motivating others towards excellence. Lenna's empathy and sincerity underpin her pursuit of meaningful connections, guiding transformative approaches to complex issues with a strategic mindset. She aspires to inspire lasting change, evident in her enthusiasm for the Upward Mobility project and her goal to foster belonging throughout Boone County.



Supporting Staff Members



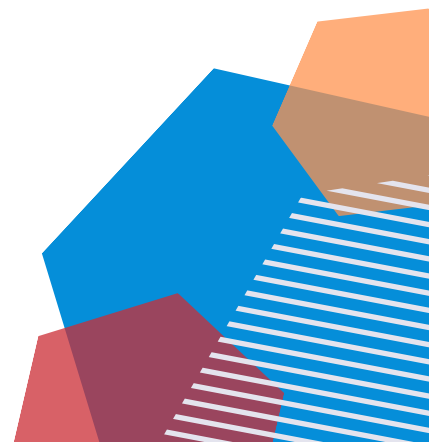
Joanne Nelson
Director



Kristin Cummins
Deputy Director



Gina Jenkins
Data & Performance
Analyst



UPWARD MOBILITY PROJECT UPDATES

UPWARD MOBILITY MISSION STATEMENT

The Upward Mobility project empowers Boone County communities to create and implement action plans for upward mobility, reducing inequities and empowering families to prosper.

UPWARD MOBILITY LOGO

The BCCSD recently developed a logo for the Upward Mobility project. Conceptually, the Upward Mobility logo, with its interlocking gears, symbolizes the complex and interconnected nature of human lives. It suggests that when a family faces multiple challenges, various aspects of their lives need to work in harmony, like gears, to propel them toward upward mobility. It's a visual representation of the intricate balance required to overcome obstacles and achieve progress.



CRADLE TO CAREER ALLIANCE DONATION

The BCCSD received a generous donation of \$100,000 from the Cradle to Career Alliance. The financial support from the Cradle to Career Alliance will facilitate the expansion of critical programs under the Upward Mobility Project and address fundamental aspects of individual growth and development. The donation comes as part of the dissolution of the Cradle to Career Alliance earlier this year and the desire to continue the upward mobility work. The Cradle to Career Alliance was a leading non-profit organization devoted to improving opportunities for children and families.

UPWARD MOBILITY PROJECT MARKETING

The last year has seen continued support and engagement from community members across different sectors to begin implementing the Upward Mobility project. Marketing primarily consisted of email communication. The BCCSD is looking forward to increasing outreach with a goal of bringing more community partners to the table. One aspect of RBA is to always ask who are the partners that have a role in turning the curve.

New Website (Coming Soon)

The BCCSD is developing a new website to host all information regarding the Upward Mobility project. Community members will be able to access meeting agendas and minutes for all project workgroups. The site will have an updated meeting calendar containing Upward Mobility meetings and community initiatives. The website will serve as an entry point for community members to get involved with the Upward Mobility project.

Quarterly Newsletters (Coming Soon)

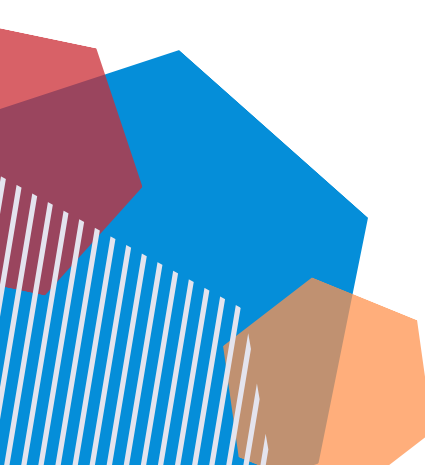
Quarterly newsletters will be released to highlight progress throughout the year on the Upward Mobility project and community initiatives. The newsletters will celebrate the work of additional community partners and how we are working together to turn the curve for upward mobility.

Social Media

Announcements for the Upward Mobility project will be made through the BCCSD's social media accounts. Find us on Facebook and LinkedIn at Boone County Community Services Department.

Resource Tables

Community partners attending workgroup meetings will have an opportunity to share fliers on programs, resources, and upcoming events.



EARLY GRADE LITERACY

Result Statement:

All children in Boone County learn to read and write and see themselves as readers and writers.

The Early Grade Literacy workgroup developed multiple strategic actions for the Boone County MAP:



Strategic Action: Improve wraparound services for young children.

- Increase targeted tutoring
- Coordinate services for young children including transportation
- Increase corporate investments in wraparound services
- Increase social/emotional/behavioral supports for children
- Improve access to afterschool programs
- Increase enrichment activities for parents and children

The workgroup wanted to narrow their initial focus on two of the strategic actions:

- Coordinate targeted literacy exposure to young children and their families
- Increase social/emotional/behavioral supports for young children

The workgroup brainstormed ideas to implement the two strategic actions. An RBA approach was used to rank their ideas based on leverage, feasibility, specificity, values, and equity. After reviewing the ranking data and having further discussions, the workgroup saw the need to streamline resource guides and information for families. The goal is to have a centralized location for families and community members to access existing resource guides.



Strategic Action: Improve Early Childhood Experiences.

- Increase access to quality childcare
- Increase access to targeted home visiting services
- Improve community messaging including parent education on importance of literacy
- Coordinate targeted literacy exposure to young children and their families



Stakeholder Facilitator

Alvin Plummer, Minority Men's Network

The year has been challenging, yet productive. Applause is extended to all the Early Grade Literacy workgroup members who continue to persist in finding answers to the challenge. Narrowing the action steps became a monumental endeavor. At times the discussions were difficult; however, the workgroup continues to explore options. At this point the group has settled on a plan to establish an informative resource website. The focus here is to provide information on what services are available and where they can be found. The journey to find solutions is not over. The dedicated members of the workgroup and Boone County Community Services staff will remain on course to discover more ways to improve Early Grade Literacy. More good news is in the air.

FAIR AND INCLUSIVE HOUSING

Result Statement:

All people in Boone County have safe, quality, and affordable housing.

The Boone County MAP identified three strategic actions:

- Increase affordable housing stock in Boone County
- Implement an Adopt-a-Block Home Maintenance program
- Increase 'Second-Chance' leasing opportunities

During the first year, efforts have focused on strategies under increase affordable housing stock in Boone County and increase second-chance leasing opportunities by forming two workgroups:

Affordable Housing Coalition

The workgroup originally started as “Increase affordable housing stock in Boone County” and was facilitated by Randy Cole, CEO of the Columbia Housing Authority (CHA). Discussions at the initial meetings determined the first step was to conduct a county-wide housing study. Multiple action steps under this strategic action depended on an analysis of the current housing market and housing policies and provide recommendations. The workgroup and key stakeholders provided suggestions of what should be included in Boone County’s housing study. The BCCSD released a Request for Proposals (RFP) in June 2023 to hire a consultant to conduct the county-wide housing study. The scope of work was built on the recommendations of the workgroup, key stakeholders, and housing studies conducted in similar communities. Five proposals were submitted through the RFP and a review committee has been established to evaluate proposals.

As the housing study is being conducted, efforts around increasing affordable housing are continued by merging with another community-led group. The Upward Mobility project was offered the opportunity to merge with the Affordable Housing Coalition led by Jane Williams, Executive Director of Love Columbia. The goal is to streamline efforts and capitalize on momentum generated by the Affordable Housing Coalition. The group is active in researching planning and zoning, historical housing policies, and alternative housing solutions. The group as also chosen to form three sub-committees to address these issues:

- Policy Change
- Affordable Housing Solutions (starting with Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs))
- Community Marketing



Stakeholder Facilitator

Jane Williams, Love Columbia

The Upward Mobility Affordable Housing Workgroup is dedicated to increasing affordable housing stock by raising community awareness about our local housing shortage and inviting community members to join together to identify and promote solutions that best serve Boone County. The workgroup seeks to bring diverse perspectives and resources together by including concerned citizens and members of business, government, education, and social service sectors in order to best serve the interests of all residents and optimally use our collective talent, skills, and resources to see our neighbors housed.

Increase Second-Chance Leasing Opportunities

The workgroup primarily consists of housing providers, social service agencies, and residents. Jessica Macy with Flourish helped facilitate initial meetings following the release of the Boone County MAP. The BCCSD has continued to lead the meetings. The workgroup has discussed multiple strategies and is in the process of prioritizing next steps. Next steps may include developing trainings for housing providers and residents, expanding wrap-around services, developing second-chance lease agreements, and improving messaging around housing assistance programs.

JOBS AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Result Statement:

Boone County is a flourishing community where everyone can live, learn, and grow.

The Boone County MAP included multiple strategic actions and action steps:

Strategic Action: Implement upwardly mobile business practices

- Improve community messaging on importance of business community to support upward mobility practices
- Train and support businesses in creating Upwardly Mobile business practices
- Create opportunities to acknowledge and incentivize businesses which support employees' upward mobility
- Develop career pipelines across industries
- Support policy changes to expand access to workforce training programs

Strategic Action: Enhance supports for justice-involved individuals

- Expand Ban the Box within Boone County and ensure eligible Columbia businesses are compliant
- Increase capacity to coordinate with individuals who are justice-involved/post-release and employers who will hire justice-involved individuals
- Create and coordinate internships and apprenticeships for justice-involved individuals

Strategic Action: Increase youth leadership opportunities

- Increase opportunities to expose youth to careers in middle and high school
- Expand opportunities for high school students to earn associate degrees (Middle College Program) for all Boone County schools

The workgroup planned to split three sub-groups, with each group addressing one strategic action. The sub-groups were meant to be incorporated within existing community initiatives focused on jobs and workforce development. The BCCSD wanted efforts to be community-led to avoid duplicating efforts. Another benefit was to reduce the number of meetings workgroup members were attending across these different strategies. Over time, structure of the sub-groups and efforts became confusing. The Jobs and Workforce Development workgroup reconvened and determined to work as one cohesive group. The workgroup is using the RBA process of prioritizing which strategic action to focus on initially.

In addition to reconvening, the BCCSD Program Manager and Program DEI Specialist are meeting with key stakeholders within the business sector. These conversations are intended to build insight and understanding of what each sector needs. One identified strategic action is developing career pipelines across industries. The benefit of developing career pipelines is to create pathways to livable wage employment opportunities, especially for those who have been historically marginalized. There is a need to increase awareness of internship and apprenticeship opportunities. Career pipelines can also help businesses reach their diversity and equity goals. Highlights of these discussions will be shared in future quarterly newsletters.



Stakeholder Facilitator

Alvin Cobbins, Minority Men's Network

Upward Mobility is a creative and progressive community-based initiative. The primary goal for Jobs and Workforce Development is create pipelines that are accessible and available to everyone in Boone County. Our community will be at the ready to connect employment seekers to other organizations and opportunities via the pipelines. The Jobs and Workforce Development workgroup's ultimate goal is to increase access to available resources and opportunities for everyone in Boone County.





BOONE COUNTY UPWARD MOBILITY

Scan for more
information on the
Upward Mobility Project:



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