Homelessness Response System Leader

Scoping Guide

Updated November 2023

COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS

Introduction

What gap does this guide aim to fill?

Communities receive support from BfZ around ***what*** to do (form and lead improvement teams, incorporate meeting facilitation best practices into case conferencing, build quality data infrastructure, etc.) and ***how*** to accomplish that work. However, when it comes to **who** should do what, the work is often left to those who raise their hands ✋. These system improvement actions often end up as extra work for those staff on top of a full plate of other priorities.

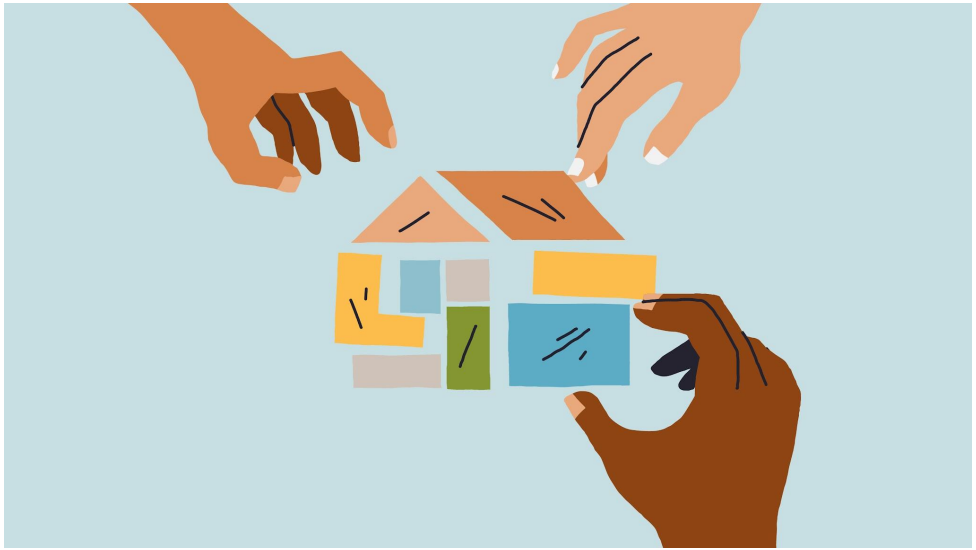
This guide aims to give structure to the question of "**How do we shape a position to execute system improvement work?**"



Introduction

Who is this toolkit for?

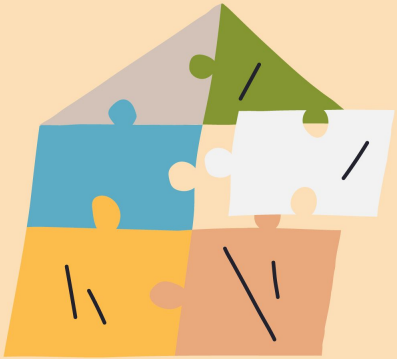
If you are someone who can influence the shape of job roles in your community - whether that's a **hiring manager**, **people manager**, **system leader**, or some other position - this toolkit is designed for you! Use this toolkit as a grounding document and conversation starter when your community has the opportunity to hire a new system leader or re-scope existing positions.



Introduction

By the end of this guide, your community will be able to...

- Identify the difference between system-level leadership supporting **operational effectiveness** and **influencing enabling conditions**
- Assess **where to situate a system leader** within your community, given your function gaps, scoped role, and community characteristics
- Evaluate common **community characteristics** and how they impact critical functions



Problem Statement

Community Solutions partnered with Dalberg Associates to facilitate conversations with a range of community leaders and Built for Zero coaches on the challenges of scoping new system leader positions. In those conversations, two distinct needs were identified:

Defining

Delineating roles and responsibilities for a system leader: When the system leader role is unclear, it becomes more difficult to identify the generalizable competencies required for the position. Not only does this make system change more challenging, role ambiguity may result in a narrower candidate pool to the exclusion of candidates who may be coming from a different sector or background, including those with lived experience.

This guide will... Define the core functions of an effective system leadership staff and identify two common archetypes through the functions they generally perform.

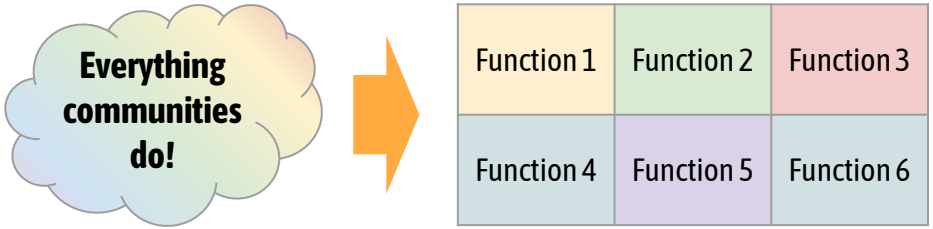
Situating

Placing the system leader at the right organization and at an optimal level within the hiring organization: Who someone interacts with on a regular basis can facilitate or hamper their ability to create system change. In order for a new hire to effectively perform their functions, system leaders need to be situated in the *right agency* within their community and in the *right organizational position* within the agency where they have the institutional support to be successful.

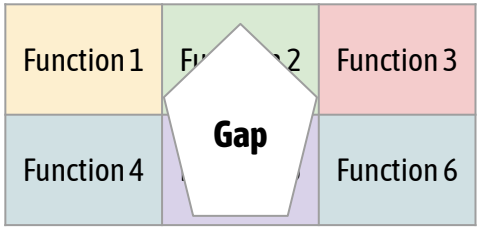
This guide will... Pose a series of questions that will spark conversation around how community characteristics influence system leader functions and how that can influence a new hire's position within a community.

How to Use This Guide

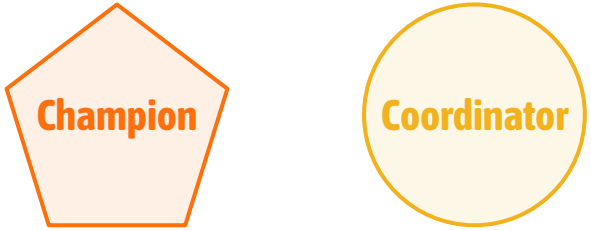
1 We will identify the key system-level functions of effective homeless response systems...



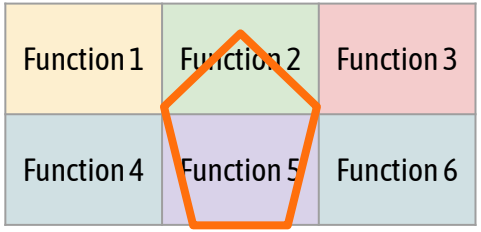
2 ...so your community can define your functional strengths and capacity gaps...



3 ...and then introduce some common job archetypes as starting points...



4 ...so you can tailor your job scope to fit your community's unique characteristics and gaps.



BFZ Vision: Build an equitable future where homelessness is rare and brief.

INPUT

Intermediary supports and resources

help build system capacity and new ways of working

+

Community inputs

include readiness to engage, participation, and local context

BUILDING EFFECTIVE, RESILIENT HOMELESSNESS RESPONSE SYSTEM

Set foundations for an effective, resilient HRS

- System commitment to work toward a shared goal
- Broad and diverse partnerships
- Leadership and staff capacity / capability for system improvement
- Implementation, accountability, and decision-making mechanisms for system change work
- Quality data and infrastructure
- Knowledge of available system resources, funding, partners, policies, and housing

Establish new ways of working

- Partnerships and collaboration to build trust and deepen relationships
- Coordination and alignment
- Evidence-informed practice and ongoing learning
- Equitable and person-centered approach
- Testing and refining strategies

IMPLEMENT STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE AND SUSTAIN REDUCTIONS

Influence enabling conditions in broader ecosystem

- Policy change efforts
- Narrative change efforts
- Cross-sector partnerships and alignment
- Resource mobilization and alignment

Reduce homelessness

- Prevent and divert homelessness through cross-sector partnerships with upstream systems to address health, economic, mental/behavioral health challenges highly predictive of becoming unhoused
- House those currently experiencing homelessness through outreach/identification, coordinated, person-centered case conferencing,
- Keep people housed after exiting homelessness through supportive wrap-around services and property management

DESIRED SYSTEM AND POPULATION CHANGES

Changes in enabling system conditions

- Policies that support person-centered solutions to homelessness
- Public will to solve homelessness
- Preferred narratives about homelessness causes and consequences
- Expanded and diversified funding
- Sustained adequate supply of affordable housing (including housing stock, services, programs, etc.)
- System-wide commitment to sustainability

Achieve equitable housing outcomes

- Decreased inflow
- Decreased number of actively homeless persons
- Reduced and equity gap reduction in time to permanent housing placement
- Increased and more equitable permanent housing placements
- Increased and more equitable stability/retention in housing

Community context mediates entire change cycle through variation and enabling conditions.

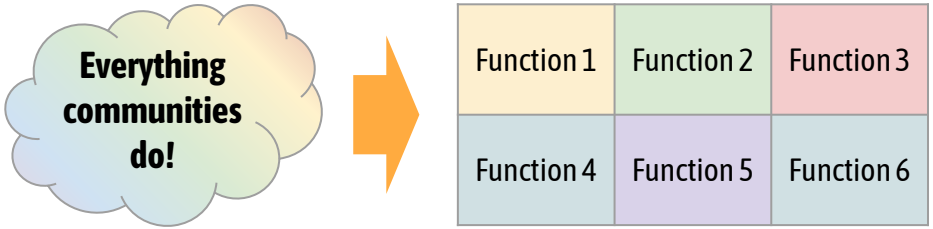
The process is non-linear: Communities may engage in different aspects of the ToC at any given time depending on their priorities and progress.

NORTH STAR

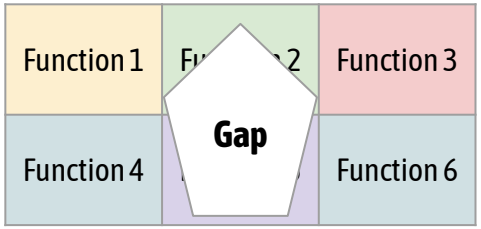
SUSTAIN EQUITABLE REDUCTIONS & END HOMELESSNESS FOR ALL

How to Use This Guide

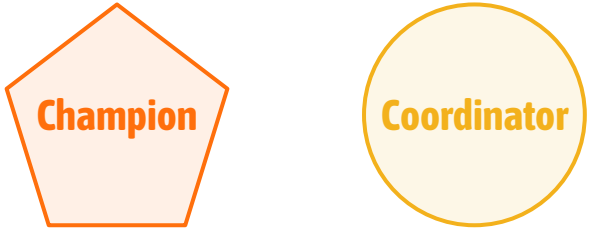
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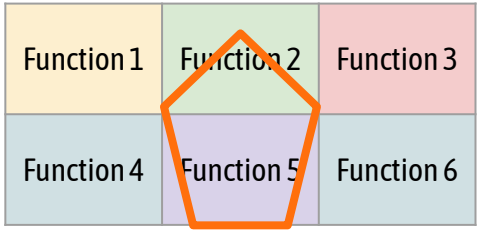
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4 ...so you can tailor your job scope to fit your community's unique characteristics and gaps.



Functions of Effective System-Level Capacity

COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS

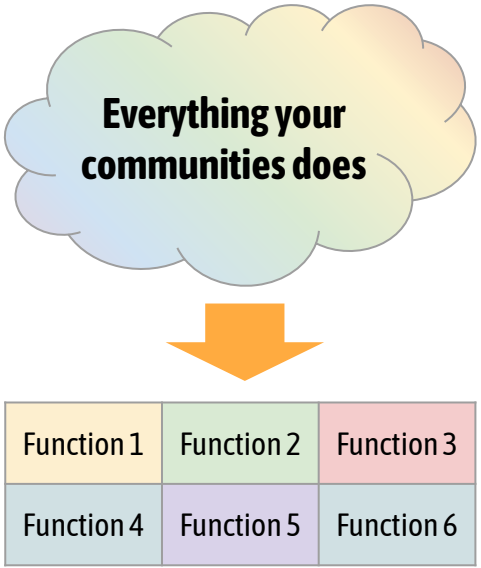
Functions of Effective System Leadership

System-level staff execute important **functions** of a homelessness response system. Starting with identifying the key system-level functions of effective communities helps **define** your capacity gap and what type of position could fit.

While every community needs staff capacity for each function to be most effective, every community situation is different - that means **how these functions show up in your community might be different** than others! For example:

- Not every function needs to live in a single agency
- Some functions will be more immediate priorities for your communities than others
- Functions can be shared between agencies, functions can be divided between staff at the same or different agencies, etc.

The framework on the next slide lays out seven system-level functions of effective homeless response systems 👉



Functions of Effective System Leadership

Key System-Level Functions for an Effective Homeless Response System:

- Community Engagement and Network Building
- Visioning and Goal Setting
- Partnership Coordination and Communications
- Fund Development and Resource Alignment
- Measuring Community-Level Impact
- Building Partner Capacity
- Organizing and Advocacy for Systems Change

These functions are derived from the key functions of effective **backbone organizations**. Even if your organization is not a backbone, these functions are critical to an effective community response system.

To learn more about backbone organizations, check out Nonprofit Finance Fund: How Place-based Partnerships Can Improve Communities

"What's in a Frame?"

Frameworks such as this system function framework (and the archetypes we'll introduce later) are *conversation facilitation tools*. They establish shared language for complex topics which allows your team to spend more time action planning vs. getting on the same page. Use frameworks and archetypes in your conversations to give specific shape to your system function strengths and capacity gaps.

Functions of Effective System Leadership

Community Engagement and Network Building

What this looks like: Harnessing the power of **bringing people together**. Creating connections between community members and organizations. Building networks and convening community partners from different sectors with intention and purpose to foster collaboration, set goals, and advance a shared agenda.



How to do this well:

- Building and practicing skills in relationship management, meeting design, and facilitation
- Creating touchpoints with partners and community members and spending time building trust between individuals through a range of means of collaboration (group meetings, one-on-one conversations)

Visioning and Goal Setting

What this looks like: Facilitating the creation of **a shared vision for the community**. Setting clear and measurable community-wide goals. Securing the buy-in of partner organizations and aligning them around common outcomes and goals.

How to do this well

- Centering those most impacted by the systems being improved
- Gathering and prioritizing the views, inputs, and expertise of partners and community members into a cohesive strategy with specific, measurable, and time-bound community goals



Functions of Effective System Leadership

Partnership Coordination and Communication

What this looks like: Keeping **all partners moving forward** on a shared action plan to advance the collective vision. Holding the community accountable to shared goals. Facilitating the flow of information between partners. Communicating about the community's work to the public.



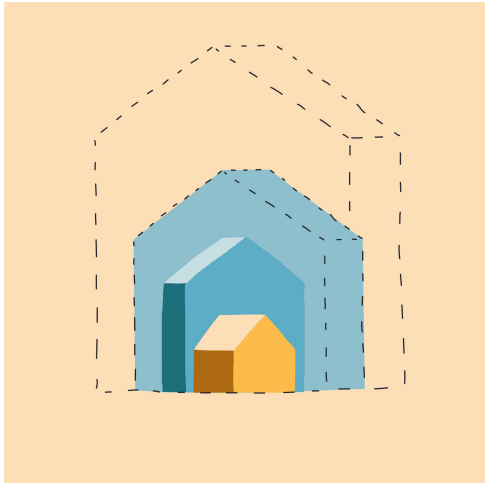
How to do this well

- Developing a shared action plan for continuous advancement towards equitable outcomes
- Building a data-oriented culture and regularly disseminating information on the community's progress, both internally and externally

Functions of Effective System Leadership

Fund Development and Resource Alignment

What this looks like: Securing financial **resources aligned with community goals** and action plans. Managing and directing the flow of funds across the partnership toward activities tied to outcomes. Handling fundraising, resource management, and financial reporting to sustain both key operations and the participation of partner organizations and community members.



How to do this well:

- Securing, blending, and braiding funding from various sources and with various restrictions to pass through to community partners. Tracking budgets, facilitating report writing, and ensuring compliance
- Securing resources sufficient to ensure partners are appropriately and regularly compensated for their participation

Functions of Effective System Leadership

Measuring Community Impact

What this looks like: Managing shared **systems for collecting and analyzing community-level data**. Utilizing data to help the community understand and track its progress toward shared goals over time, to engage in continuous improvement, and to make the case for funding.



How to do this well

- Developing mutually agreed upon measures that are important to the community, center equity, and enable understanding of system performance
- Facilitating the utilization of data for improvement including sharing reports, monitoring data quality, translating data into actionable insights, and coaching partners on using data to inform their work

Community Self-Assessment

- Who within your community excels at measuring community impact and where are they situated in your community?
- How does their skillset and position within your community help them be successful in measuring community impact?
- What other part of your community system would benefit from someone with measuring community impact skills?

Functions of Effective System Leadership

Building Partner Capacity

What this looks like: Collaborating with community partners to help them **build and strengthen lasting practices, capabilities, and systems** that support the advancement of community outcomes.



How to do this well

- Responding to the needs and interests of partner agencies and community members. Using data to spot opportunities for improvement.
- Leveraging the expertise of individual partners and recognizing opportunities to access capacity-building resources from broader, aligned efforts

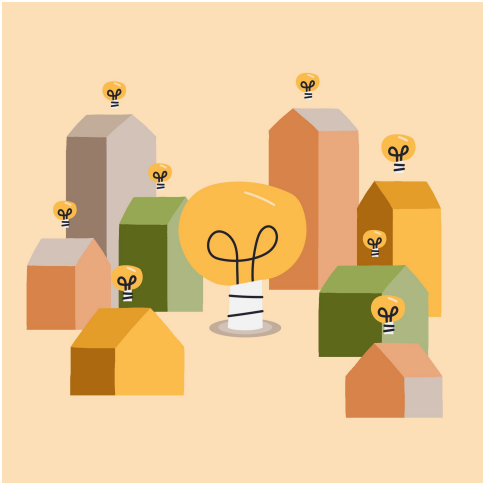
Community Self-Assessment

- Who within your community excels at building partner capacity and where are they situated in your community?
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- What other part of your community system would benefit from someone with building partner capacity skills?

Functions of Effective System Leadership

Organizing and Advocacy for System Change

What this looks like: Coordinating a range of efforts to **align policies**, organizational practices, public opinion, and funding allocations with the outcomes sought by the place-based partnership.



How to do this well

- Developing collective advocacy agendas. Leveraging community strengths and recognizing limitations in message delivery
- Connecting advocacy work to broader aligned efforts

Community Self-Assessment

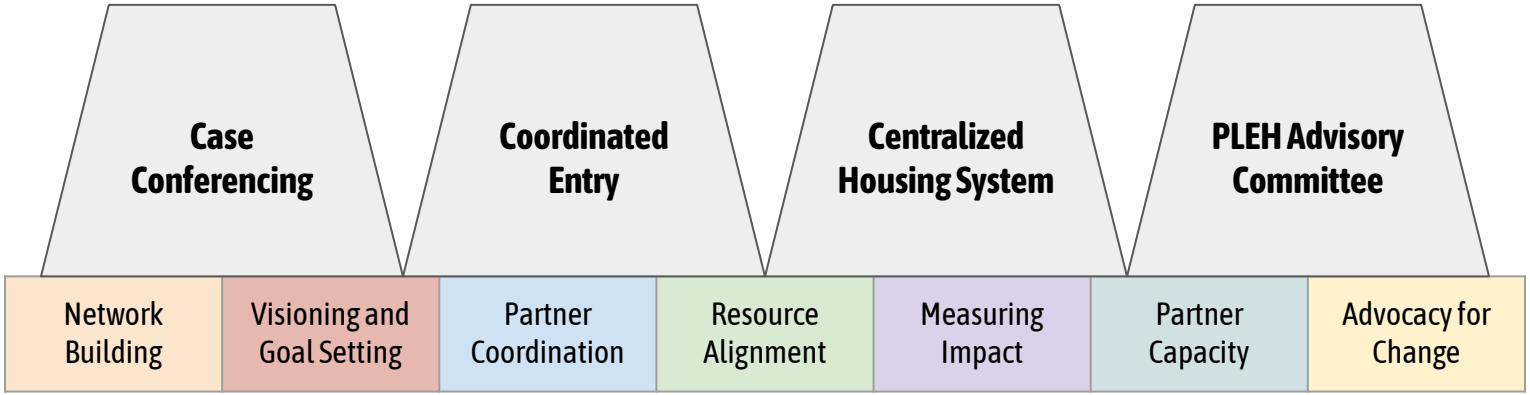
- Who within your community excels at organizing and advocacy for system change and where are they situated in your community?
- How does their skillset and position within your community help them be successful in organizing and advocacy for system change?
- What other part of your community system would benefit from someone with organizing and advocacy for system change skills?

Functions of Effective System Leadership

What about Coordinated Entry? Outreach? Property Manager Engagement?

System-level functions serve as the connective tissue between and within programmatic efforts. They support both the immediate effectiveness of programs and are critical **precursors to system improvement** within programs.

For example, a community with strong **Visioning and Goal Setting** and **Partnership Coordination and Communications** functions would be more immediately effective in their case conferencing because more action would happen between meetings and would be more able to address emerging needs because all participating agencies are on the same page about what success looks like.

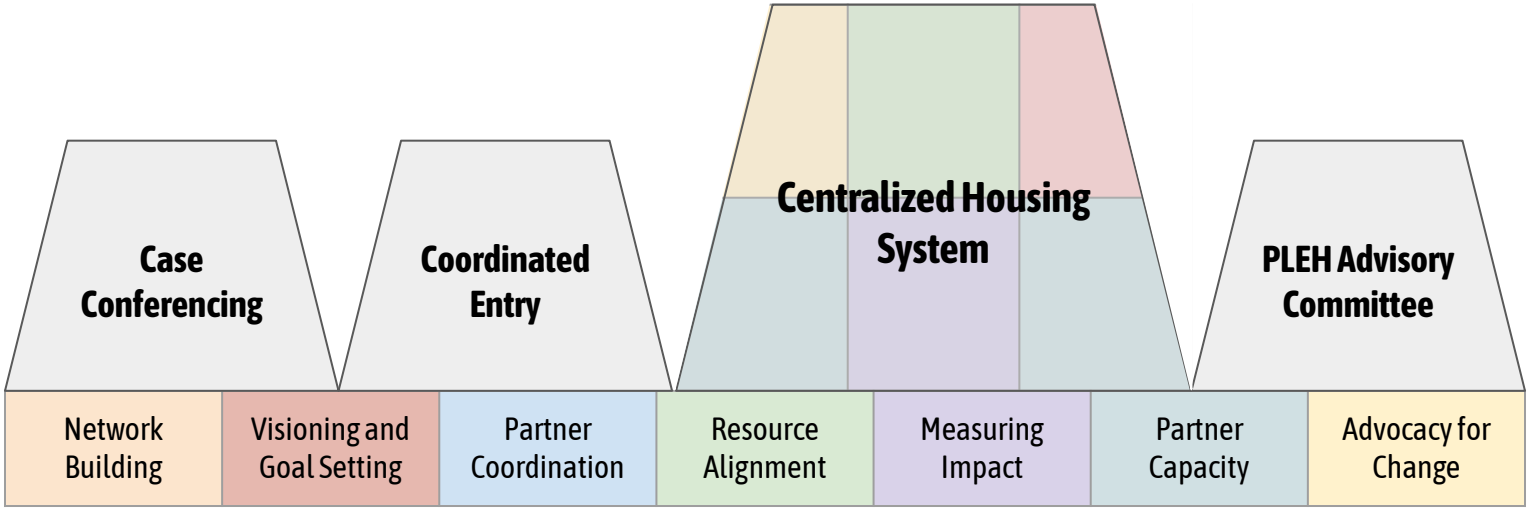


Functions of Effective System Leadership

What about Coordinated Entry? Outreach? Property Manager Engagement?

Depending on the complexity of your community and its programs, it may be beneficial to ensure you have dedicated capacity for system-level functions both at the **community level** and **within a major program**.

For example, if your community has a major centralized housing system program and is looking to develop a housing resource database, it may be beneficial to have dedicated capacity for **Partnership Coordination and Communications** and **Measuring Community-Level Impact** at the program level.



Functions of Effective System Leadership

Let's have a conversation!

The next few slides are observations from four different communities about challenges they're facing. Read each observation and identify a few key system-level functions the community would benefit from strengthening.

There are always many avenues for improvement. System challenges are inherently complex which means there are many functions that can contribute to a solution and more than one right answer. Think of what functions you would *prioritize* strengthening.

1. A community building its system-improvement foundations
2. A community serving a large metro area with a range of partner entities
3. A Balance of State community spread over a wide geographical area
4. A community working in a challenging political environment

Functions of Effective System Leadership

1 "Our community is just starting on its Functional Zero journey. We have some strong relationships across our partner agencies but it's been challenging making inroads with our local housing authority."

Which Key System Functions Should Be Prioritized?	What's the Impact of Strengthening Those Functions?
▢ Community Engagement and Network Building ▢ Visioning and Goal Setting ▢ Partnership Coordination and Communications ▢ Fund Development and Resource Alignment ▢ Measuring Community-Level Impact ▢ Building Partner Capacity ▢ Organizing and Advocacy for Systems Change	

Functions of Effective System Leadership

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Functions of Effective System Leadership

2 "We have a dozen different systems to track our by-name data. A lot of talented people work with our data but they've all built up their own ways of getting things done which makes it hard to leverage data at the community-level."

Which Key System Functions Should Be Prioritized?	What's the Impact of Strengthening Those Functions?
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☐ Community Engagement and Network Building ☐ Visioning and Goal Setting ☐ Partnership Coordination and Communications ☐ Fund Development and Resource Alignment ☑ Measuring Community-Level Impact ☑ Building Partner Capacity ☐ Organizing and Advocacy for Systems Change	Strengthening community-wide data systems and developing standardized training/ skill-development would reduce data processing time, increase the community's ability to use real-time data, and improve the community's collective data literacy.

Functions of Effective System Leadership

3 "We're having trouble getting everyone on the same page about using data for improvement. Everyone agrees 'data is important' but we aren't following through on making system changes"

Which Key System Functions Should Be Prioritized?	What's the Impact of Strengthening Those Functions?
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Functions of Effective System Leadership

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☐ Community Engagement and Network Building ☑ Visioning and Goal Setting ☑ Partnership Coordination and Communications ☐ Fund Development and Resource Alignment ☐ Measuring Community-Level Impact ☐ Building Partner Capacity ☐ Organizing and Advocacy for Systems Change	Strengthening this community's ability to operationally define what it looks like to use data for improvement and to lay out an actionable strategy would build accountability structures and generate momentum for system improvements.

Functions of Effective System Leadership

4 "Our community is starting to see measurable population-level reductions but we're swimming upstream against challenging narratives which makes it hard to make progress on policy changes at the local government level"

Which Key System Functions Should Be Prioritized?	What's the Impact of Strengthening Those Functions?
▢ Community Engagement and Network Building ▢ Visioning and Goal Setting ▢ Partnership Coordination and Communications ▢ Fund Development and Resource Alignment ▢ Measuring Community-Level Impact ▢ Building Partner Capacity ▢ Organizing and Advocacy for Systems Change	

Functions of Effective System Leadership

4 "Our community is starting to see measurable population-level reductions but we're swimming upstream against challenging narratives which makes it hard to make progress on policy changes at the local government level"

Which Key System Functions Should Be Prioritized?	What's the Impact of Strengthening Those Functions?
☐ Community Engagement and Network Building ☐ Visioning and Goal Setting ☐ Partnership Coordination and Communications ☐ Fund Development and Resource Alignment ☐ Measuring Community-Level Impact ☐ Building Partner Capacity ✓ Organizing and Advocacy for Systems Change	Strengthening this community's ability to develop a strategic communications and policy advocacy plan would allow the community to speak with one voice and advocate for specific policy points.

Functions of Effective System Leadership

Let's review the **key system-level functions** for an effective homeless response system:

- Community Engagement and Network Building
- Visioning and Goal Setting
- Partnership Coordination and Communications
- Fund Development and Resource Alignment
- Measuring Community-Level Impact
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Think about your own community:
What do you see is a major gap or "rock" in your community's ability to create system-change?

_____

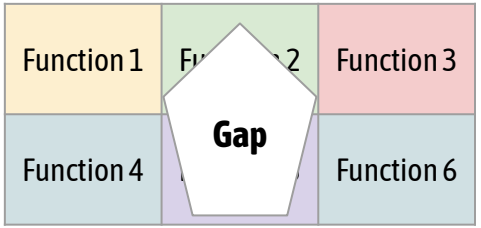
Which key system-level function, if strengthened, would help fill that gap or move that rock? Does more than one come to mind?

_____

What would the impact be if your community were to strengthen that system-level function?

_____

You've defined your community's strengths and capacity gaps using a system-level function framework… What's next?



System Leader Archetypes & Community Characteristics

COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS

System Leader Archetypes

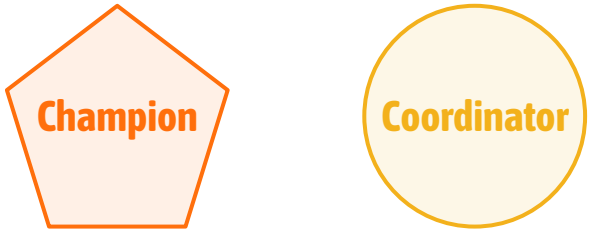
System-Level Functions and Staff Capacity

In order to perform each system-level function, a strategy needs to be **developed** and then **executed**. While strategy is often developed and executed seemingly simultaneously ("building the plane as you fly it"), we separate these two phases because each often require interacting with two distinct stakeholder groups:

- **Developing** strategy requires convening and building buy-in with **key decision-makers** across the range of entities in your community
- **Executing** strategy requires coordinating between the **staff who implement** the work of ending homelessness

Building strong, reciprocal relationships takes time! While these stakeholder groups aren't mutually exclusive, our observation is each group often requires the capacity of a full-time staff person devoted to the long-term work of building those coalitions.

These roles show up as two staffing archetypes: **Champions** and **Coordinators**



System Leader Archetypes

Communities are best served when system-level functions are performed across every corner of the system

Rapid tests of change up and down your system require staff who can perform system-leadership functions situated across a variety of agencies, organizational levels, and system components. The first archetype is the **Champion**:

System Champion

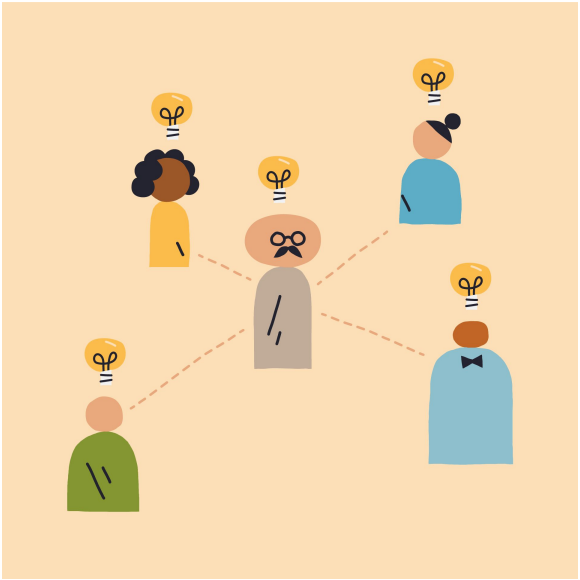
- Generally responsible for **developing** strategy, building community-wide buy-in, and shaping narratives around system improvement
- Generally interacts most closely with a wide range of stakeholders and decision-makers across the community including agency leadership and government entities
- May require someone with deep, long-term relationships with community entities or an understanding of the stakeholder landscape



System Leader Archetypes

Communities are best served when system-level functions are performed across every corner of the system

Rapid tests of change up and down your system require staff who can perform system-leadership functions situated across a variety of agencies, organizational levels, and system components. The second archetype is the **Coordinator**:



System Coordinator

- Generally responsible for strategy **execution**, building project management norms, establishing system improvements, and leading rapid tests of change
- Generally interacts most closely with other coordinators and staff from across the community tasked with executing the strategy
- May require someone with technical expertise or experience interacting with the community's data systems

System Leader Archetypes

Supporting the Same System Functions in Different Ways

Even though they interact with different stakeholder groups, the core competencies needed to support each system-level function should be common across *all* Champions and Coordinators, regardless of specialization and subject-matter expertise.

Key System-level Functions	**Competencies shared by both Champions and Coordinators**
Community Engagement and Network Building	The ability to facilitate conversations and build relationships among diverse stakeholders
Visioning and Goal Setting	The ability to think at a system-level and break down shared goals into procedural steps
Partnership Coordination and Communications	The ability to set up accountability structures and communication norms
Fund Development and Resource Alignment	The ability to understand the cost of work (staff time, material resources, $) and plan accordingly
Measuring Community-Level Impact	The ability to promote the use of data for decision-making and support building of data infrastructure
Building Partner Capacity	The ability to identify and create skill development opportunities for staff
Organizing and Advocacy for Systems Change	The ability to design and advocate for policy improvements

System Leader Archetypes

Even though there are shared core competencies, depending on whether a strategy is being **developed** or **executed**, the actions and behaviors - and therefore, required skill sets - will be different. **Champions** and **Coordinators** each perform system-level functions, just in two flavors. These are examples of how each role contributes to system-level functions in their own ways.

Function	Champion Actions	Coordinator Actions
Community Engagement and Network Building	Lays the foundations for community-wide collaboration through strategy meetings involving diverse sets of stakeholders	Sets regular touchpoints with other coordinators from across the community to develop strong working relationships, aligns operational goals across disparate stakeholders
Visioning and Goal Setting	Facilitates the development of community-wide aims/goals and socializes a desired end state of population-level success	Operationalizes high-level strategy into actionable goals and milestones
Partnership Coordination and Communications	Develops shared accountability structures and streamlines interdependencies between community players	Introduces project management best practices such as timelines, responsibility matrices, etc.

Focus and Excel: A role may be better positioned to contribute to some system-level function vs. other functions. For example, it may be easier for a Champion to directly support "Fund Development and Resource Alignment" than a Coordinator - that's ok! Identify the most critical function gaps in your community and shape your role to fit those gaps.

System Leader Archetypes

These are examples of how each role contributes to system-level functions in their own ways.

Function	Champion	Coordinator
Fund Development and Resource Alignment	Aligns community resources to agreed upon population-wide strategies, coordinates efforts to acquire grants and resources for the whole community	Coordinates allocation of staff capacity and community resources to accomplish implementation plans
Measuring Community-Level Impact	Champions the development of quality data infrastructure. Leverages data for strategy development and to articulate long-term progress	Makes community-wide data accessible and actionable. Uses process data (e.g. reporting timeliness) to make system improvements.
Building Partner Capacity	Lifts up available resources from across the community and aligns capacity development to wider strategy	Cultivates the community's data literacy and builds training systems to onboard new staff
Organizing and Advocacy for Systems Change	Develops strategic communications plans to combat harmful narratives	Generates data and analyses to support advocacy for policy change

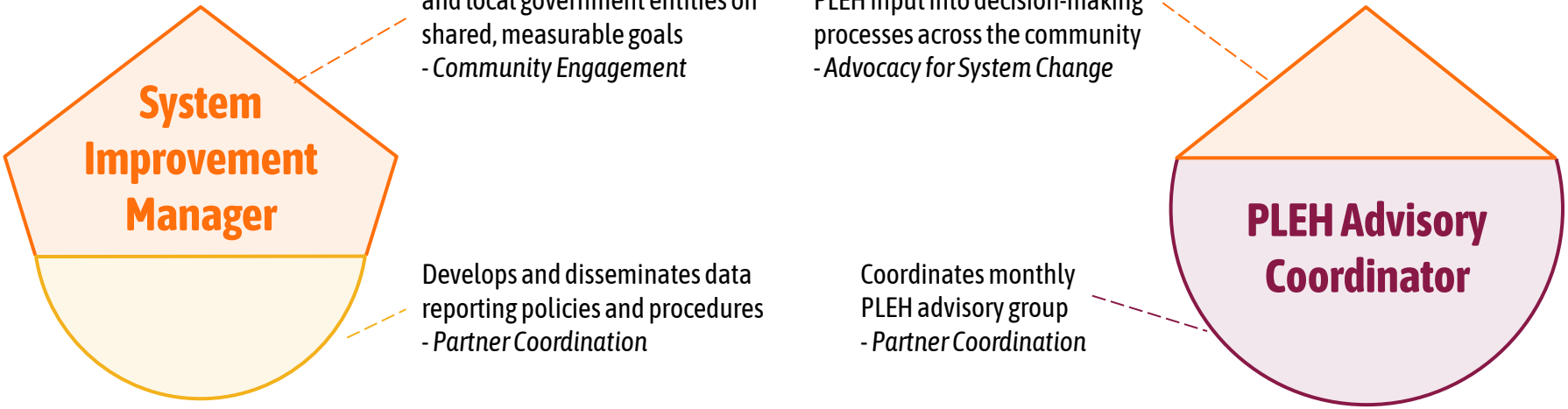
To stay flexible, remember to stretch: Whether your new position is a Champion or Coordinator, consider using stretch assignments to help your staff develop skills in the other role. Assigning low-risk projects that are slightly outside of your staff's current skill set will help them grow in new and satisfying ways resulting in a deeper "bench" for your community. Be sure to support them during their assignment!

System Leader Archetypes

What about program-level leaders?

If your position operates at the programmatic level, this may mean they take on activities associated with both **Champions** and **Coordinators** - they may have to both develop buy-in for strategy within their program lane and execute the strategy.

Be thoughtful about which system-level functions are most important to your particular program. Specify your position's responsibilities - both in terms of function and role - accordingly!



System Leader Archetypes

What about program-level leaders?

Even if your system leader position requires specialized skills such as with a Data Lead or a PLEH System Improvement Coordinator, frame your job description in terms of system-level functions. This centers the *end objective* of the position and foregrounds how specialized knowledge is only one part of the skill set necessary for success. For example, here's how a Housing System Lead's required competencies could be described.

Note how each competency is rooted in the **core competency** of the system function and expressed through the lens of the **specific skills/knowledge** required to be effective for that speciality.

Key System-level Functions	Competencies for an Effective Housing System Coordinator
Community Engagement and Network Building	The ability to build relationships between property managers and the community at-large
Visioning and Goal Setting	The ability to articulate the vision for a centralized housing system to community partners, clients, funders, and property managers
Partnership Coordination and Communications	The ability to develop MOUs with property managers and communication norms with partner agencies

System Leader Archetypes

Note how each competency is rooted in the **core competency** of the system function and expressed through the lens of the **specific skills/knowledge** required to be effective for that speciality.

Key System-level Functions	Competencies for an Effective Housing System Coordinator
Fund Development and Resource Alignment	The ability to understand the local housing resource landscape and advise on how to leverage the community's collective pool of housing resources
Measuring Community-Level Impact	The ability to coordinate the development of a housing database and create reports on housing placement successes for distribution across the community
Building Partner Capacity	The ability to develop training on how to engage with property managers and what housing resources are available to clients
Organizing and Advocacy for Systems Change	The ability to align messaging on local housing policy so the community speaks with one voice

Fit to a T: The concept of a T-shaped skill set refers to someone with deep knowledge in a single focus area with the ability to collaborate across stakeholder groups. Think of your system leaders as holding deep knowledge in their focus area and broad competencies across each system level functions.

Functions of Effective System Leadership

Let's have a conversation!

Let's revisit the four community scenarios. Read each observation and, based on the key stakeholders the position would have to engage with, determine whether the **Champion** or **Coordinator** position would be more appropriate.

Again, there are many avenues for improvement. Some challenges could be best addressed by introducing either role or even both roles at once!

1. A community building its system-improvement foundations
2. A community serving a large metro area with a range of partner entities
3. A Balance of State community spread over a wide geographical area
4. A community working in a challenging political environment

Functions of Effective System Leadership

1 “Our community is just starting on its Functional Zero journey. We have some strong relationships across our partner agencies but it’s been challenging making inroads with our local housing authority.”

Key Functions to be Strengthened	What’s the Impact of Introducing This Role?
☑ Community Engagement and Network Building ☑ Visioning and Goal Setting	
Which Archetype Would Strengthen These Functions?	
☐ Champion ☐ Coordinator	

Functions of Effective System Leadership

1 "Our community is just starting on its Functional Zero journey. We have some strong relationships across our partner agencies but it's been challenging making inroads with our local housing authority."

Key Functions to be Strengthened

- [x] Community Engagement and Network Building
- [x] Visioning and Goal Setting

Which Archetype Would Strengthen These Functions?

- [x] Champion
- [ ] Coordinator

What's the Impact of Introducing This Role?

This community would benefit from someone who can facilitate tough conversations with decision-makers across a range of entities and develop community-wide buy-in for shared goals.

Functions of Effective System Leadership

2 "We have a dozen different systems to track our by-name data. A lot of talented people work with our data but they've all built up their own ways of getting things done which makes it hard to leverage data at the community-level."

Key Functions to be Strengthened	**What's the Impact of Introducing This Role?**
☑ Measuring Community-Level Impact ☑ Building Partner Capacity	
Which Archetype Would Strengthen These Functions?	
☐ Champion ☐ Coordinator	

Functions of Effective System Leadership

2 "We have a dozen different systems to track our by-name data. A lot of talented people work with our data but they've all built up their own ways of getting things done which makes it hard to leverage data at the community-level."

Key Functions to be Strengthened

- [x] Measuring Community-Level Impact
- [x] Building Partner Capacity

Which Archetype Would Strengthen These Functions?

- [ ] Champion
- [x] Coordinator

What's the Impact of Introducing This Role?

This community would benefit from someone with strong project management skills and who can meet people where they're at when they're training staff up on standardardized data practices.

Functions of Effective System Leadership

3 "We're having trouble getting everyone on the same page about using data for improvement. Everyone agrees 'data is important' but we aren't following through on making system changes"

Key Functions to be Strengthened	**What's the Impact of Introducing This Role?**
☑ Visioning and Goal Setting ☑ Partnership Coordination and Communications	
Which Archetype Would Strengthen These Functions?	
☐ Champion ☐ Coordinator	

Functions of Effective System Leadership

3 "We're having trouble getting everyone on the same page about using data for improvement. Everyone agrees 'data is important' but we aren't following through on making system changes"

Key Functions to be Strengthened

- ☑ Visioning and Goal Setting
- ☑ Partnership Coordination and Communications

Which Archetype Would Strengthen These Functions?

- ☑ Champion
- ☑ Coordinator

What's the Impact of Introducing This Role?

This community would benefit from someone who can articulate the value of using data for improvement and then create actionable steps towards that end state. This could be a Champion or Coordinator depending on the key gap and other functions this role would be responsible for supporting.

Functions of Effective System Leadership

4 "Our community is starting to see measurable population-level reductions but we're swimming upstream against challenging narratives which makes it hard to make progress on policy changes at the local government level"

Key Functions to be Strengthened	**What's the Impact of Introducing This Role?**
☑ Organizing and Advocacy for Systems Change	
Which Archetype Would Strengthen These Functions?	
☐ Champion ☐ Coordinator	

Functions of Effective System Leadership

4 "Our community is starting to see measurable population-level reductions but we're swimming upstream against challenging narratives which makes it hard to make progress on policy changes at the local government level"

Key Functions to be Strengthened

- [x] Organizing and Advocacy for Systems Change

Which Archetype Would Strengthen These Functions?

- [x] Champion
- [ ] Coordinator

What's the Impact of Introducing This Role?

This community would benefit from someone who can coordinate a unified message for the community that incorporates both qualitative experiences of clients and quantitative data and bring it to key decision-makers within local government.

Functions of Effective System Leadership

Let's review the **two archetypes for system-level leaders:**

System Champion

Responsible for strategy **development**, developing community-wide buy-in, and shaping narratives around system improvement

Example Champion JD from a community

System Coordinator

Responsible for strategy **execution**, building project management norms, establishing system improvements, and leading rapid tests of change

Example Coordinator JD from a community

Think about your own community:

Based on the system-level function your community would benefit from strengthening, which stakeholder group would this role most commonly interact with?

_____

Which archetype fits your community needs better? What specialized knowledge would they need to support their functions?

_____





You've identified what job role would strengthen your community's system-level functions... What's next?

Key Considerations When Situating the System Leader

COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS

Situating the System Leader

Once you've identified what functions to support and what type of system leader you need, you will have to determine where is the best place to **situate** your leader.

The needed **functions** you've identified and your community **characteristics** will influence **where** within the community this leader should be situated. As you consider where to situate them, ask yourself:

- How will being placed at a particular organization, or within the lead organization, impact the system leader's ability to drive system improvements?
- What are the existing relationships & power dynamics within the community and/or at a particular organization that will impact this person's ability to be successful in this role?
- Does this person need access to certain levels of decision-makers, elected officials that would dictate where they are placed?
- Does this person need to be able to drive day-to-day work of the system, and therefore have a need to be closer to front-line workers/providers?

Placement Matters!
Where someone sits within an organization or community heavily influences who they interact with on a daily basis. If your community organizational structure doesn't lend itself to interaction between the right stakeholders, consider how your new hire could anchor new structures or relationships.

Situating the System Leader

One key consideration is whether to situate the system leader in the **lead organization** or **another organization** in your community:

Situating in the Lead Organization

In many cases, situating or placing a System Leader **within the homeless response lead organization or CoC** in your community is ideal compared to hiring the System Leader into another organization:

- Ensures the system leader is directly accountable to the broader continuum of care within the homeless response system
- Provides direct connection to other system-wide homelessness planning that is already happening
- Allows direct access to elected officials and decision-makers, such as the CoC Board

Situating in Another Organization

In some cases, situating or placing a System Leader **outside of the lead organization** in your community may have benefits:

- Buy-in with front-line workers/providers in the community
- More nimble, easier to make decisions and implement change

Remember... Not every system-level function needs to live in one organization. Consider each entities' strengths and capacity gaps and potential interplay between functions when situating a new hire.

Situating the System Leader

Here are other considerations to spark conversation around where within your community to situate the system leader where they can be most effective:

Considerations	Benefits	Drawbacks
Whether the homeless response lead organization is part of local government (city, county, balance of state)	• Ensures local, state or federal buy-in • May increase access to resources and supports, such as access to other departments adjacent to the HRS. • May attract a larger and more diverse applicant pool than in a smaller or more niche organization	• At times, can slow down decision-making. • May limit their ability advocate for change due to political pressure or restrictions
Whether the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), Coordinated Entry (CE) and the lead agency are all one entity or delegated to different organizations	• Can allow a System Leader placed within the lead organization to increase its focus on system change when the separate entities are strongly connected	• Institutional separation requires additional collaboration among agencies

Situating the System Leader

Let's have a conversation!

Each community's makeup of characteristics influencing placement is unique. We won't presume to know what characteristics are most important for our four example communities but use this opportunity to think through what each community might take into consideration when situating their system leader.

Based on what we know about each community, **what are some questions you would ask to help them situate their system leader?**

1. A community building its system-improvement foundations
2. A community serving a large metro area with a range of partner entities
3. A Balance of State community spread over a wide geographical area
4. A community working in a challenging political environment

Situating the System Leader

Let's review some considerations when **situating** your system leader:

- Placement matters! Think about how placement at a given organization in your community and placement with the organizational structure influences who the leader interacts with.
- Consider the pros/cons of situating your leader at the **CoC lead organization** or **another organization**.
- Think about whether placement within a government entity would facilitate effective system functions.

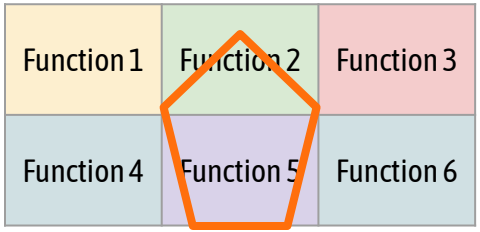
Think about your own community:

Who are the key stakeholders your position will have to interact with in order to most effectively support their system-level function? Who or what are the gatekeepers to those stakeholders?

_____

Which organization within your community would give your position access to those key stakeholder groups? What position within that organization?

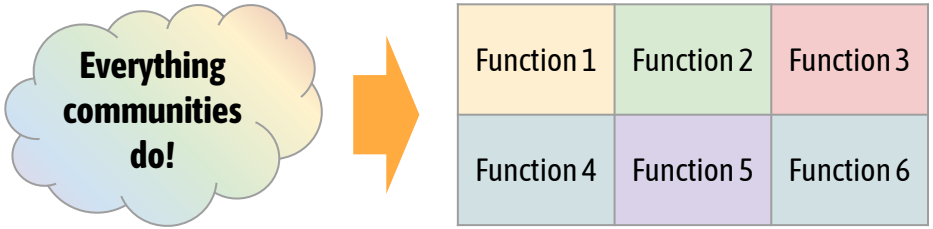
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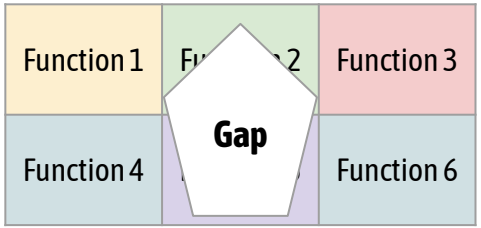
You've now right-sized your role and placed them in a position to succeed!

Guide Recap

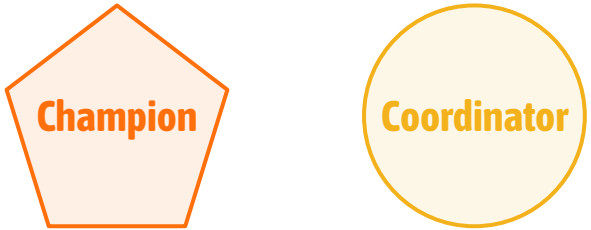
1 You identified the key system-level functions of effective homeless response systems...



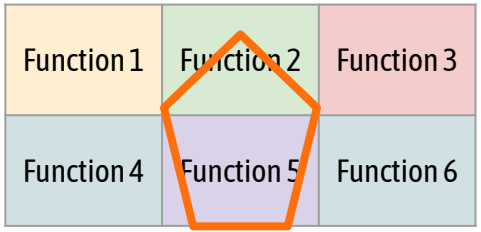
2 ...so your community could define your functional strengths and capacity gaps...



3 ...and then reviewed some common job archetypes as starting points...



4 ...so you could tailor your job scope to fit your community's unique characteristics and gaps.



Appendix

Creating the Conditions for Success for the System Leader

Specific support is needed for these unique system-level positions regardless of where they are situated.

- **Key stakeholder preparation:** Ensure that working groups, core committees and other key stakeholders understand the new system leader's role and their anticipated contribution to move the community towards Functional Zero before the system leader is hired
- **Relationship support:** Maintain relationships with key stakeholders instead of fully handing off relationships to the system leader; ensure that multiple individuals working towards Functional Zero in the community continue to foster relationships to ensure that those relationships continue long-term
- **Time protection:** Allow system leaders to focus most of their time on their prescribed roles and responsibilities; protect the system leader from being tasked with other unrelated assignments or responsibilities
- **Skills training:** Provide training opportunities related to key competencies including data literacy and analysis, human centered design, facilitation, fundraising, relationship and partnership management, communications, community organizing, monitoring and evaluation, cultural competency and trauma informed care
- **Cross-training:** Encourage system leaders to understand the roles of different individuals within the organization and across the homeless response system through shadowing and observation

Equitable Hiring Practices

Before you begin to hire a new System Leader, conduct an overall assessment of internal hiring practices including application, recruitment, interview, and selection processes to ensure that the hiring process is equitable and supports racially diverse talent and individuals with lived experience

JD and application process

- Center importance of cross-sector generalist experience and lived experience
- Provide transparency around salary and benefits
- Ensure competitive financial compensation and non-financial support
- Ensure job descriptions do not include language that would preclude or discourage applicants with lived experience, such as specific number of years of experience unless they are absolute requirements
- Highlight organization's commitment to hiring and supporting racially diverse candidates and candidates with lived experience

Recruitment process

- Prioritize recruitment of racially diverse, skilled talent in key roles with the competencies and lived experience needed to provide effective, credible and committed leadership
- Develop relationships with recruitment partners, local institutions, networks and organizations that are capable of identifying and referring proximate talent
- Avoid relying solely on technology or AI driven recruitment tools

Interview process

- Provide bias and diversity training and guidance for interviewers to combat unconscious bias, micro-affirmations, and micro-aggressions
- Ensure diverse slate of interviewers and hiring committee
- Consider removing identifying information from applications including name, address, and terms related to gender or identity
- Include skills assessment as part of hiring process
- Standardize interview questions for all candidates
- Develop objective, numerical scoring for interviews, but allow room for nuance and cultural differences
- Provide financial support to interviewees to take time off work or travel for interviews

Sources: "Strengthening Talent for Place-Based Partnerships," Tilt Shift, Foggy Paxton Consulting and Ballmer Group, 2022; "5 Steps to Improve Diversity Recruiting," SHRM, 2017; "10 Recruiter Strategies To Improve Diversity And Inclusion In Hiring", Forbes, 2019.

Appendices

TBD...

- Assessments, facilitation guides, etc. to have conversations about what your capacity gaps look like
- Example structures (brightspot how other communities have structured similar positions)
- Example job descriptions
- Equitable hiring practices (considerations, best practices, links + resources)