



SPARK POLICY INSTITUTE
igniting public policy and community change

ST. LOUIS EQUITY
in entrepreneurship
COLLECTIVE

Prepared by Spark Policy Institute

December 2018

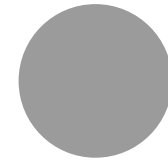
St. Louis Equity in
Entrepreneurship Collective

History and Progress Report

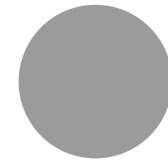
Overview of Presentation

- 1 History to the Collective
- 2 Key Progress of the Collective
- 3 Key Insights
- 4 Recommendations

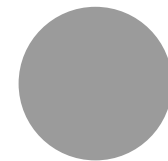
History of the Collective



Timeline – History of the Collective

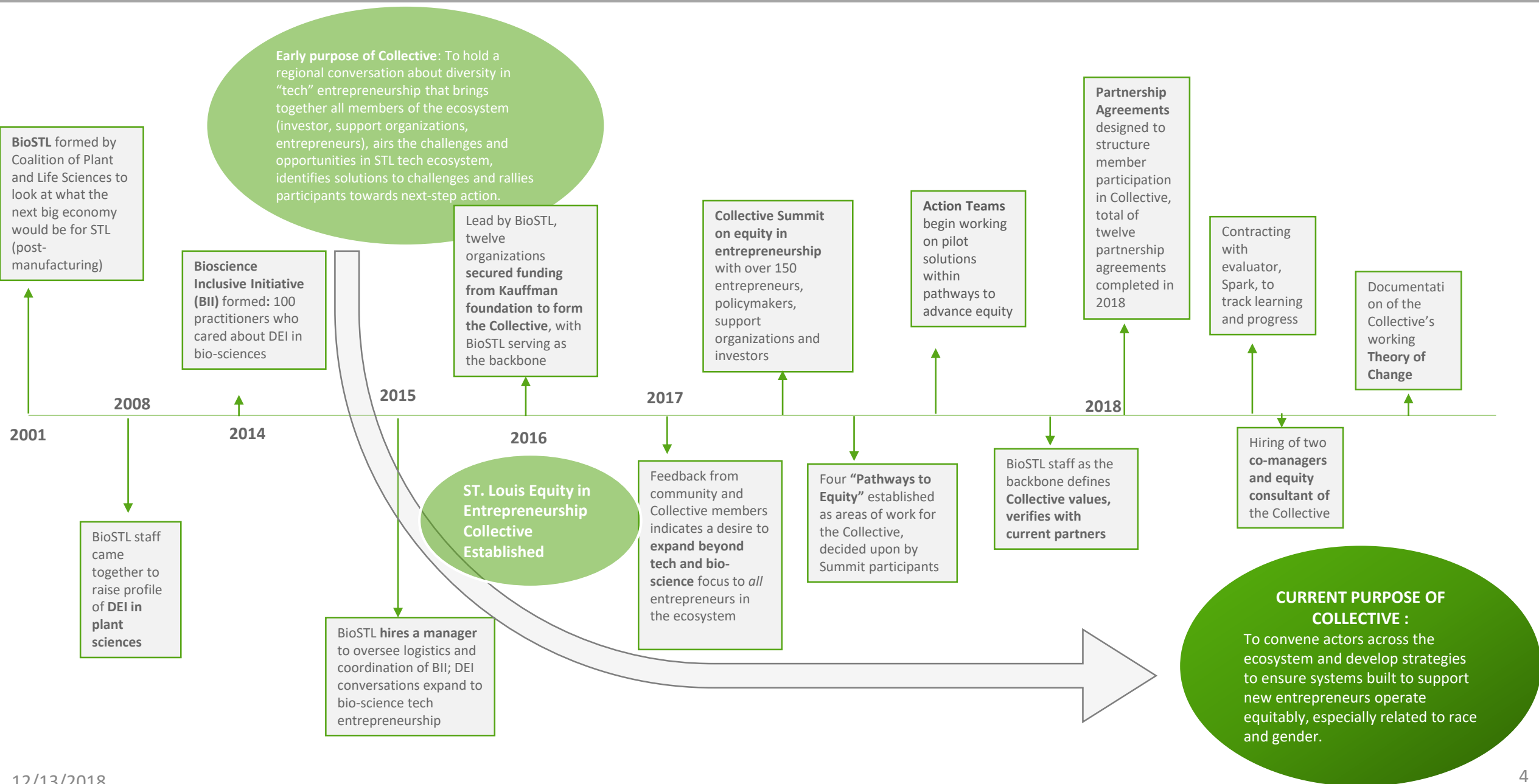


Theory of Change – Collective Purpose and Strategies



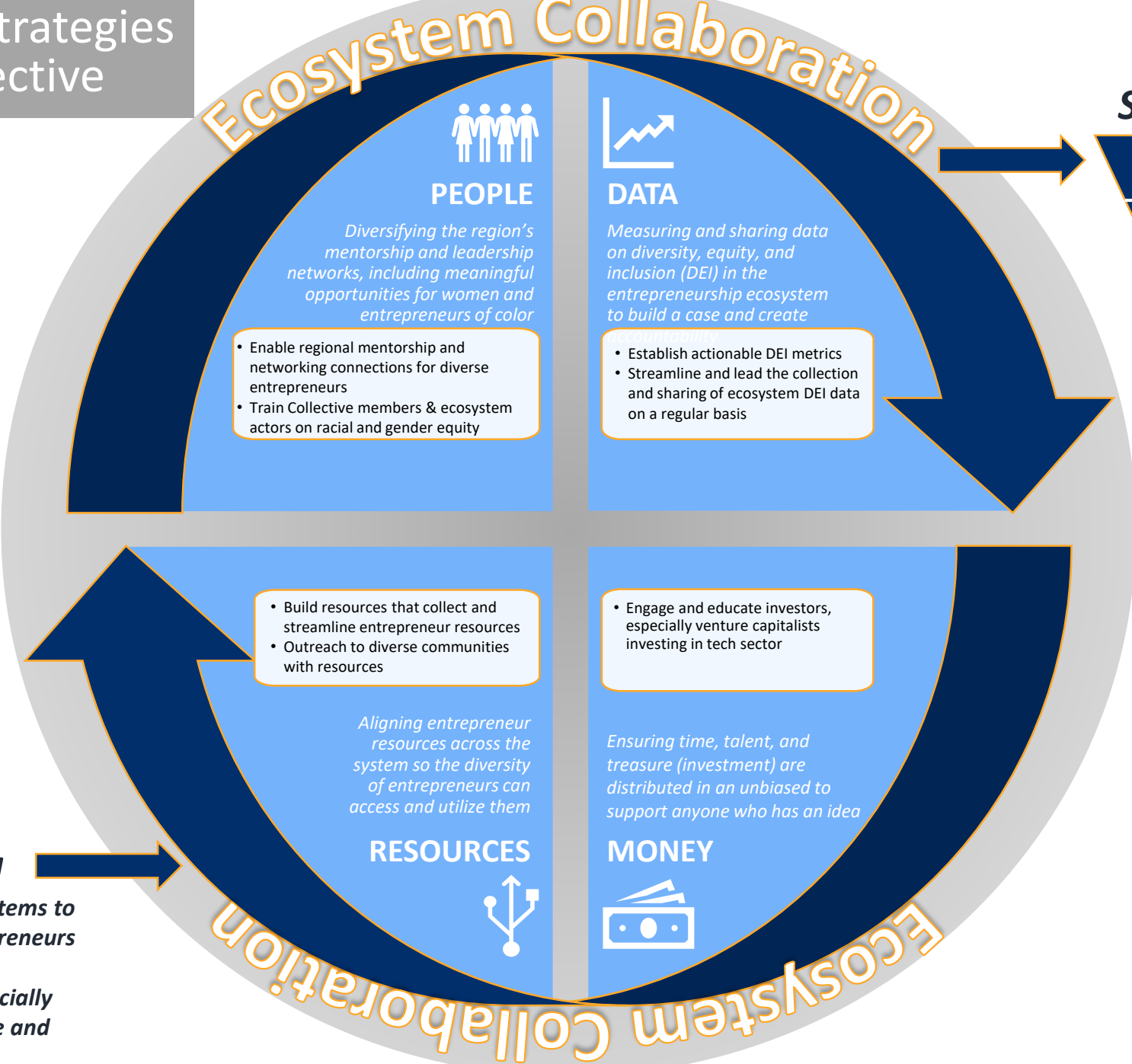
Structure – Current Operations

Timeline of the Collective

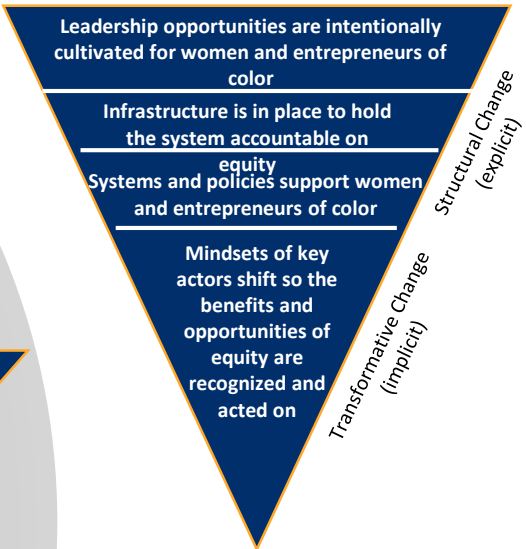


Purpose and Strategies of the Collective

Ecosystem Collaboration



SYSTEMS CHANGES



IMPACT

In St. Louis, an entrepreneur's success will not be pre-determined by their race or gender.

PROBLEM

In St. Louis, systems to support entrepreneurs do not operate equitably, especially in terms of race and gender.

Ecosystem Collaboration

Strategies and Purpose of the Collective (cont'd)

The Collective's Theory of Change

The Collective is a collaborative effort of stakeholders across the entrepreneur ecosystem including entrepreneur support organizations, government- and education-based members, investors, and entrepreneurs. BioSTL houses the Collaborative with two part-time staff guiding coordination, with support from a strategy consultant. The Collective established a set of values to guide its work (sidebar).

The Collective's theory of change (TOC) tells the story of how the Collective contributes to systems change in St. Louis that support equity in entrepreneurship.

The Collective, formed in 2016, identified four 'pathways to equity' where the Collective will direct resources to influence change (represented by the four light blue quadrants in the visual). The combined work on the pathways will contribute to collaborative outcomes within the larger ecosystem of entrepreneurs (represented by the gray circle surrounding the light blue quadrants). In 2018, the Collective has identified the need for a strong leadership entity to drive ecosystem collaboration and results.

The Collective believes their strategies alone will not lead to systems changes and depend on other efforts in the broader system working on racial and gender equity. The Collective's efforts combined with efforts in the broader system will result in the structural (policies, programs, and structures at the top of the triangle) and transformative changes (shifts of mindsets and mental models at the bottom of the triangle) needed to achieve impact. These transformative changes are represented in the dark blue triangle in the upper right corner of the visual, intentionally placed outside the Collective's sphere of influence.

Ultimately, the Collective believes these systems changes will lead to the overall impact desired in the system: *In St. Louis, an entrepreneur's success will not be pre-determined by their gender or race.*

Values of the Collective

These values define the Collective's culture and beliefs. They guide the Collective's perspective as well as its actions, uniting Collective members as they work together on equity issues in the ecosystem.

The Collective is committed to addressing root causes of inequities through **systems level change** by asking tough questions, facing unpleasant truths, and having authentic dialogues about structural, cultural, institutional impediments to equity.

Public accountability and transparency around these shared values allows the community to hold the collective, its members, and the larger ecosystem accountable to the goals, benchmarks, and data that drive and explain the work.

There is no playbook for creating an equitable ecosystem. The Collective uses **inquiry and experimentation**: working from a solutions-based perspective, developing and testing solutions, iterating and investing in the most effective strategies.

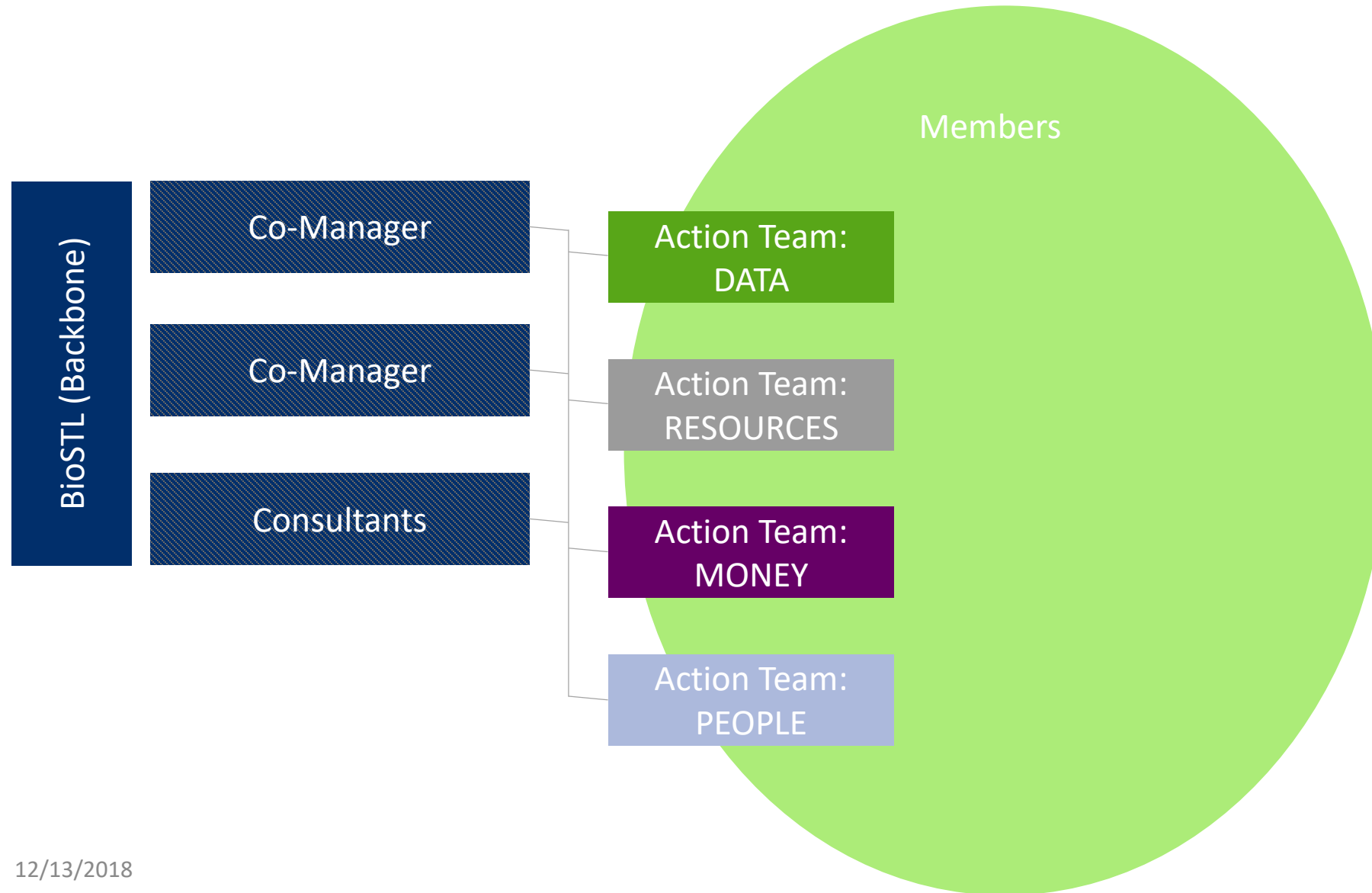
The Collective supports individuals and institutions as they **question the default** way of thinking, acting, and being, challenging myths, biases, and assumptions about the right flow of resources in the ecosystem.

Collecting data is important, but the Collective believes there is sufficient quantitative and qualitative data upon which to **act now**.

The absence of women and entrepreneurs of color in the ecosystem is not the result of natural selection or survival of the fittest, but a result of systems. The Collective is committed to **telling the truth** about root causes of inequities.

Through **collaboration and co-creation** and in the spirit of learning, radical listening, an abundance mindset, the Collective creates new opportunities beyond resource constraints.

Structure – Current operations



BioSTL, as the backbone, sub-contracts Collective leadership to two co-managers and consultants.

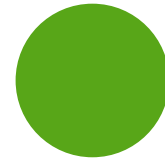
Action Teams are distinct but there is overlap of members across all four.

Members are not paid for their participation in the Collective.

Key Progress of the Collective



Collective Actions



Collective Membership Demographics



Members with Signed Partnership Agreements



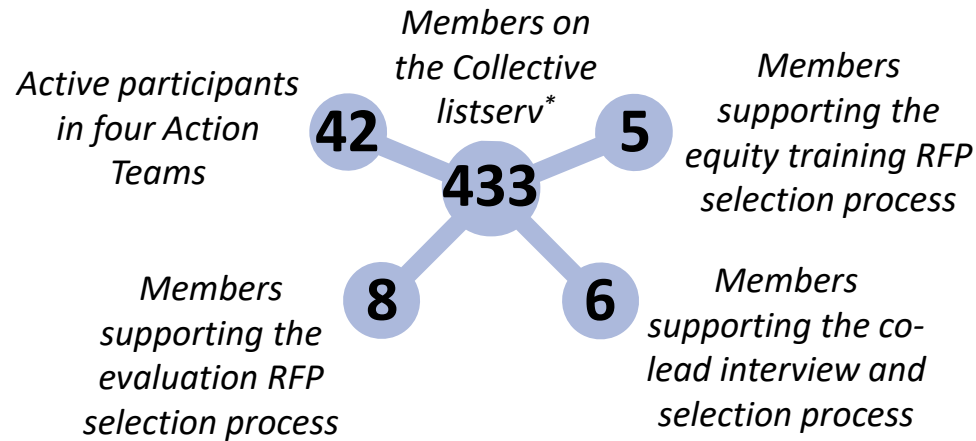
Action Team Progress

Collective Actions

The following statistics represent activities and actions completed since 2017 by the broader Collective, managed by the backbone and supported by the co-managers and external consultants.



Participants in the 2017 St. Louis region's first-ever summit focused on disparities in entrepreneurial opportunities and outcomes



**Members may have participated in more than one activity; activities are not mutually exclusive*



Racial and gender equity trainings offered



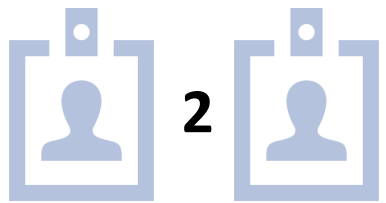
Attendees, 15 of whom attended more than one training

The equity trainings' facilitators and training content were rated very highly overall.

Training participants greatly appreciated engaging in dialogue with colleagues about oppression and equity.

Participants requested more trainings and a deeper dive into tools and solutions for operationalizing the dismantling of racial and sexual oppression.

Participants also wanted follow up on and educational resources to continue the training.



Collective co-leaders selected by members of the Collective to support Collective planning, momentum, and evaluation



Partnership agreements signed with members of the Collective, outlining shared values, purpose, and commitment

Participants in a September 2018 Collective convening to share updates; clarify strategies, values, and vision; and build momentum around the Collective's work



Organizations with Signed Partnership Agreements



Level of Participation indicated by size:
Advocate < Activator < Co-Creator*



Entrepreneur



Collaborative workspace



Entrepreneur support organization (ESO)



Investor

Partnership agreements have primarily been signed by ESOs.*

Entrepreneurs and investors have minimal representation.

Government/policy and educational participants have no representation.



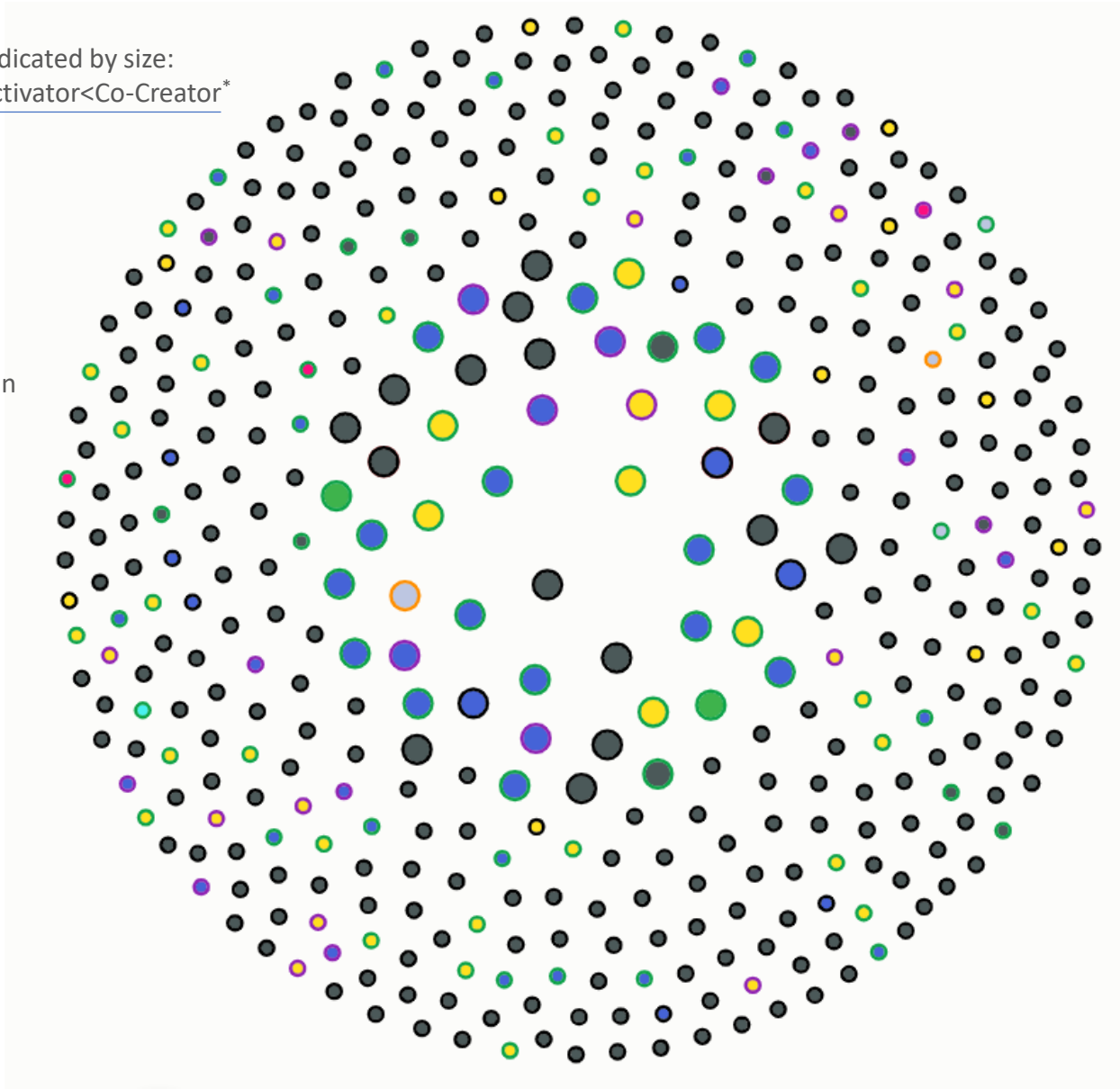
* Partnership agreements had been signed at the Advocate and Co-Creator levels as of November 30, 2018. Additional partnership agreements have been signed since that date and others are in progress of being finalized.

Collective Membership Demographics

Level of Participation indicated by size:
Unknown < Advocate < Activator < Co-Creator*

- Female
- Male
- Prefer not to respond
- No data
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Hispanic or Latino
- Middle Eastern
- White or Caucasian
- Prefer not to respond
- No data

N= 432



Although many members are on the Collective's listserv, limited demographic data is available for the majority.

Gathering demographic data is an opportunity for additional engagement with members and broadening the Collective's understanding of the ecosystem.

For members who provided demographic information:

- There is limited Hispanic, Asian and Middle Eastern representation, especially within the core group of co-creators.

Action Team Progress



Compiled data from 13 ESOs to understand how many entrepreneurs were being served within the system.

- Data was compiled from existing survey data to limit burden on entrepreneurs.
- Data represented a baseline of existing support.
- Data showed 835 unique entrepreneurs were being supported, primarily by one organization.

An initial data report was completed and is in process of being prepared for public consumption.

A communications plan for sharing the report is also in progress.

Conducted survey of 22 ESOs

- ESOs are generally not using third party/partner's calendars to promote their events and using some gatekeeping for access.
- Entrepreneur referrals to ESOs come primarily through word of mouth.

Navigation needs to respect/reflect that and use inclusivity to support those who are entering the ESO system by word of mouth.

Assessing technical solutions in which to house a connected, thorough wayfinding tool (e.g., a website that says where resources are and how to access them).

- Considering culturally how people get word of mouth out and who people turn to when looking for support.
- Based on how entrepreneurs enter the system, step-by-step guidance will be important rather than a simple map of resources.
- Technical solutions will be matched to community needs and informed by race and gender considerations.

In the process of convening local and regional investors at a summit around equity and inclusion problems and principles of best practices, including developing tools for investors.

Investors are being invited to participate in the Collective by signing partnership agreements.

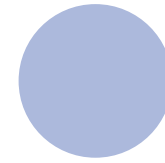
Conducted scan of the entrepreneurship landscape that considered other organizations working on entrepreneurship race and equity issues as well as incubators and accelerators focused on women and people of color.

Exploring the development of an organizational toolkit to help other organizations improve their internal equity practices and be more equitable in their interactions with and support for entrepreneurs with some additional considerations to assess/address.

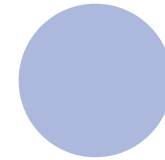
- Tools in the absence of training and technical assistance may be under- and incompletely utilized
- Best practices are supported and reinforced through a community of practice
- Creating equitable organizations takes time and intentionality

Considering existing resources, potential partnership opportunities, and options for internal support to continue driving the work forward.

Key Insights



What's working about the Collective?



What are the critical questions and challenges facing the Collective?

The Collective is working because...



The Collective is unique in its approach

One of the first and most advanced initiatives in the country blending equity in entrepreneurship

Data collection around where and how diverse receive supports and investments is first of its kind

Access to 'big players' of investors and powerful people in the system mean the initiative can really make a difference

Being entrepreneurial, the Collective is ready to act



The Collective is powered by deep values

Respect for competing priorities – understand that entrepreneurs are busy and have day jobs. This means the Collective is very intentional about the time they have together

Equity is a core value, evidenced by the consultants they hire, the desire for consensus, and the high bar for inclusion.

Actions are taken by a 'coalition of the willing' demonstrating the drive and passion of the members

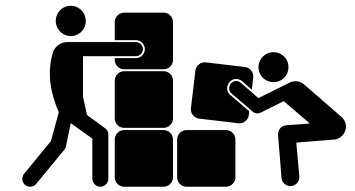


The Collective is responsive to challenges

Listened to feedback in the beginning that the approach wasn't participatory or inclusive, and changed the strategy

Practiced self-reflection to be honest about where the strategies are currently, and where they ideally would like to be

Ultimately want to seek guidance from the end user (entrepreneurs experiencing the problem)



The Collective is building a foundation to drive systems change

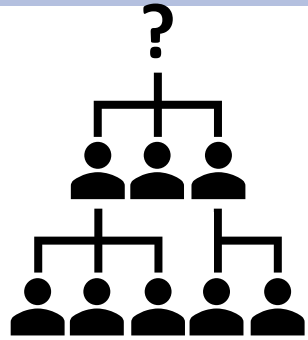
Committed to a theory of change that outlines how strategies contribute to systems changes

Developed relationships with and convened critical stakeholders to address systems change

Established an initial structure to build off of in phase 2.0

Considering other regional initiatives to most effectively advance systems change on equity

The Collective's challenges are...



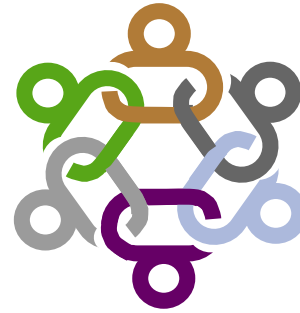
There is no clear central decision-making or leadership body

Consensus-seeking without a clear leadership body is causing decision-making paralysis

Staff are hesitant to make decisions for members, valuing member-driven leadership and consensus; Members are unclear about who is 'in charge' or who can make decisions and feel unclear about *how* to participate. Members are seeking opportunities for deeper involvement

Multi-sector collaboratives function effectively when roles and responsibilities are clearly defined

- Literature notes backbone roles and responsibilities need to be clearly delineated to avoid confusion
- Literature notes a centralized leadership body with transparent decision-making power must be established to avoid decision-making paralysis

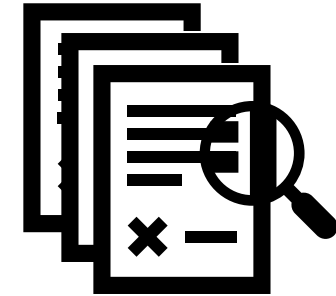


Current membership does not reflect inclusion of necessary stakeholders

Collective members, staff, and the broader community all recognize the Collective has a weak community engagement strategy

While membership includes some entrepreneurs of color and women entrepreneurs, members do not feel the Collective has engaged 'target entrepreneurs' (those experiencing barriers of inequity in the ecosystem) in membership and leadership.

Membership also lacks active engagement from policymakers and investors.



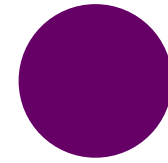
The Collective lacks a policy change strategy, which is critical to systems change

While formed around systems change, the current strategies do not include engagement to shift policies that influence equity in entrepreneurship.

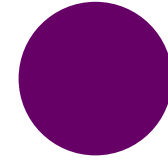
Literature notes policy change is a key strategy of systems change, multi-sector collaboratives, and equity initiatives.

Other equity initiatives in the region are working on critical policy changes (at the organizational, regulatory, local and regional level) to advance policy changes around equity.

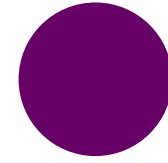
Recommendations



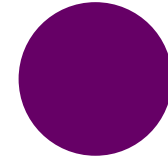
Timeline of Recommended Next Steps



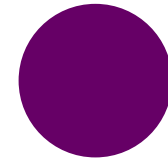
Find Bridge Funding



Form Interim Planning Task Force

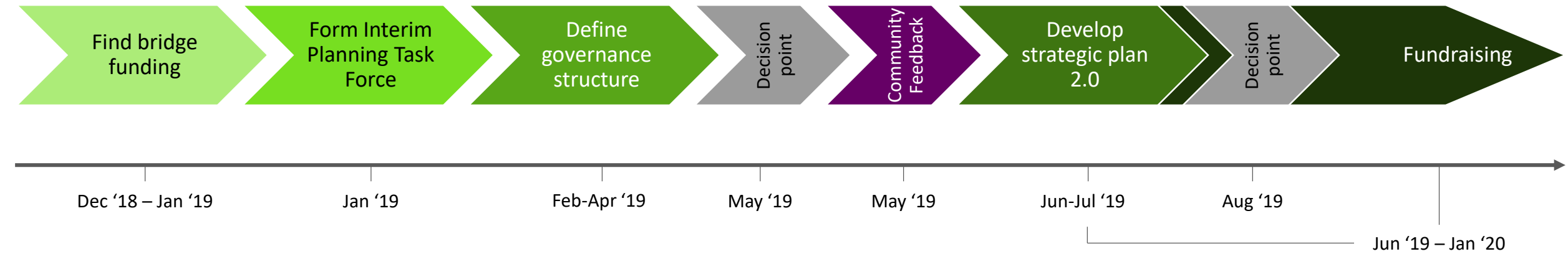


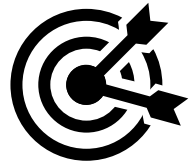
Define Governance Structure



Fundraising

Timeline of Recommended Next Steps

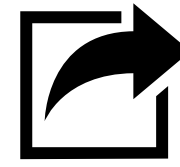




Bridge funding ensures consistency and stability throughout the restructuring process and until longer-term funding is secured



Bridge funding enables ongoing efforts by the team currently supporting the initiative: Allie, Tamitha, and Christy; as well as external consultants when needed



Bridge funding supports a smoother transition to the new structure and leadership body when the restructuring process is complete



Bridge funding supports the inclusion of task force members for whom expense is prohibitive to their participation, particularly target entrepreneurs

RECOMMENDATIONS

Dec '18 – Jan '19

Find bridge funding

Form Interim Planning Task Force

Define governance structure

Decision point

Community Feedback

Develop strategic plan 2.0

Decision point

Fundraising

RECOMMENDATIONS

WHY

A temporary leadership body that will make decisions about the Collective's structure as it moves forward






To finalize a governance structure for the initiative, including a backbone or other support mechanism and a leadership and decision-making body such as a steering committee






How

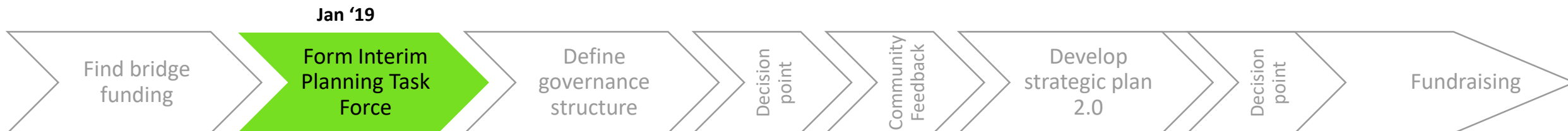
Makeup

Ideally no more than 10 members (not including Allie, Tamitha, and Christy)

-  Consider currently active, engaged Collective members who self-nominated
-  Conduct intentional outreach to the entrepreneurs of color and women entrepreneurs who are the initiative's intended audience ("target entrepreneurs") for inclusive representation and decision making - provide financial support to target entrepreneurs for whom participation is a financial burden
-  Include at least one representative from the investor community

Management and Logistics

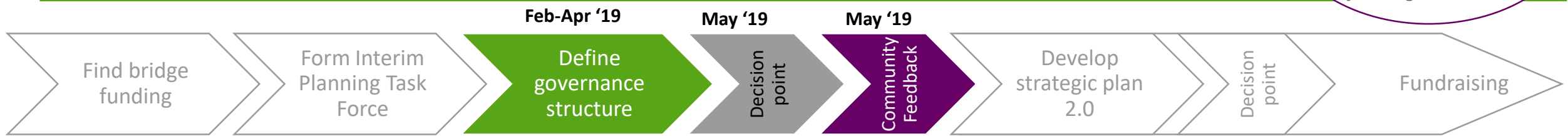
-  **Retain BioSTL as interim backbone** with consultants as support team to provide a solid foundation for the structuring process
-  Bring in **external facilitation support** to guide the strategic planning process
-  **Establish ground rules** to support trust and decrease the impact of potential power dynamics among participants
-  Based on the recommendations presented here, **finalize the goals and timeline** for the strategic planning process
-  Identify dates (approximately monthly) during which all members of the Task Force can **meet in person** for strategic learning and decision-making processes



RECOMMENDATIONS

WHY	
The interim planning task force should address Collective confusion and paralysis by establishing a backbone, leadership body, and decision-making authority.	
HOW (2-HOUR MONTHLY MEETINGS)	
Feb Explore findings in Pathways Forward interim memo	➔ Review Equity and Justice collaborative model, explore what can be kept from Collective Impact, map where the Collective is currently with backbone, action teams and leadership
Mar Walk through decision-making matrix (Spark can provide)	➔ Explore tradeoffs and funding implications for prioritized governance changes. Use data to drive decision-making through a decision-making matrix
April Group finalizes governance structure 2.0	➔ Finalize governance structure recommendations with details on (1) backbone – who and what they do; (2) Leadership steering committee – function, structure and decision-making authority, and (3) Action Teams – roles and responsibilities. Assigns tasks for public feedback process
May Public feedback	➔ Public meeting with ecosystem actors Internal and external publications of proposed structures Collective meeting with members
June Incorporate revisions to governance structure	➔ As appropriate, incorporate suggested revisions to structure Finalize commitments from leadership body and backbone members

It will be important to decide whether the existing backbone (BioSTL) or the new support body will support governance processes until permanent funding is secured



WHY

Now that a leadership body is established, a strategic plan should be finalized to provide clarity to Collective members and the community. Spark developed a theory of change to be confirmed by the broader Collective; Spark also identified critical areas of strategy to be considered by the Collective to achieve its systems and equity goals.

HOW (1 HALF-DAY RETREAT IN JUNE/JULY)

Develop Community Engagement Strategy to Support Inclusion

Review Equity and Justice Collaborative community engagement strategy tool & other equity initiatives' strategies

Ensure target entrepreneurs are in leadership. Develop plan for how target entrepreneurs will be engaged. Explore collaboration with other initiatives to engage community.

Establish process for incorporating community feedback on regular basis

Ensure communications –internal and external – are consistent to share what Collective is doing with target entrepreneurs and ecosystem to receive feedback.

Consider Policy Change Strategy

Review policy strategies from other initiatives.

Review matrix Spark developed demonstrating collaboration opportunities for policy change in the region related to entrepreneurship.

Define Relevance and priority of policy change to overall systems change goals

Develop plan for collaboration and/or establish an Action Team to stay engaged and active on policies that effect equity in entrepreneurship.

Policies can be “little p” (organizational or procedural), or “big P” (legislative or regulatory policies at local/State/Federal level)

Review and update the Theory of Change

Update theory of Change to reflect new strategies

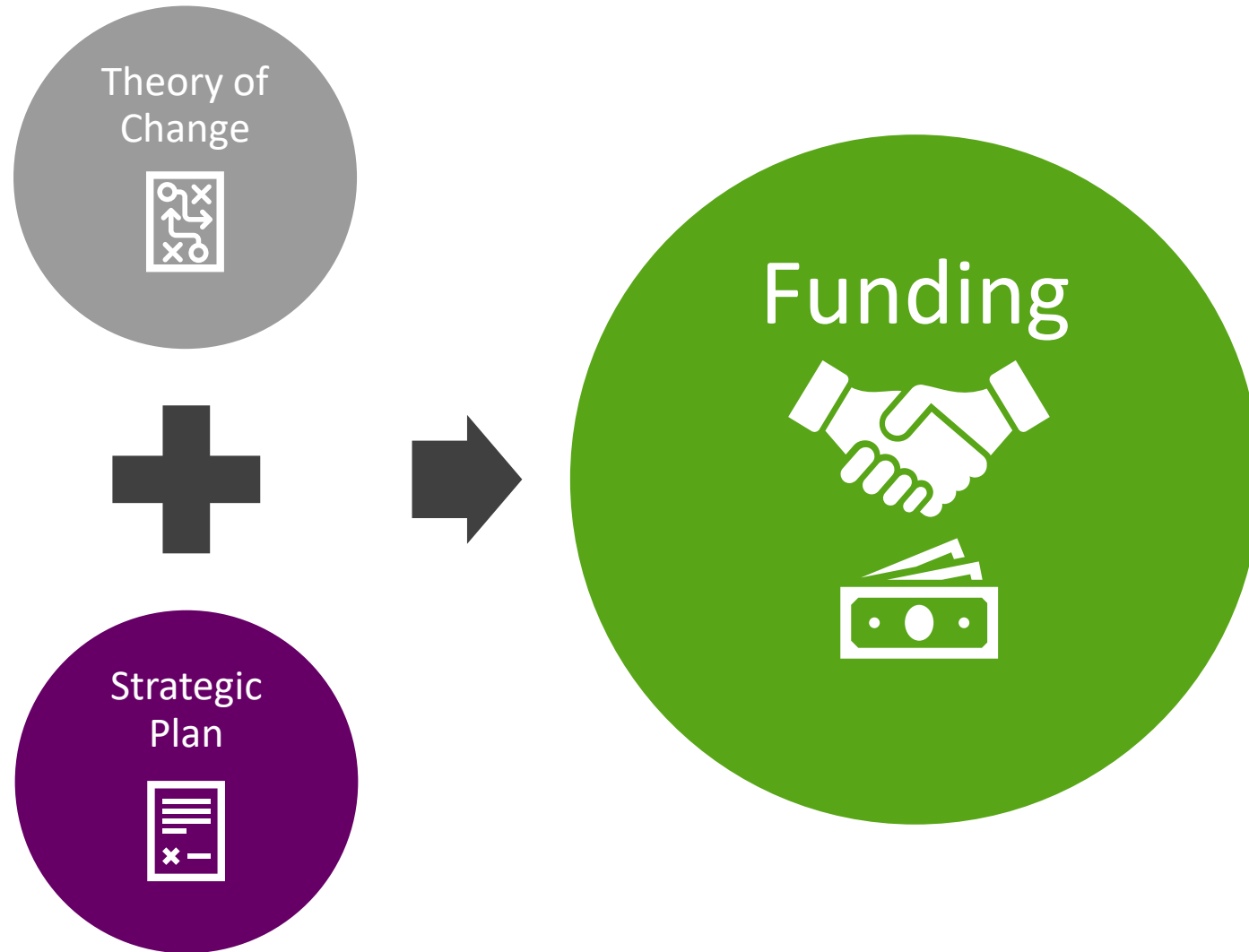
Considering how the leadership body decides on community engagement or policy change strategies, the theory of change developed with Spark in 2018 should reflect new strategies.

RECOMMENDATIONS

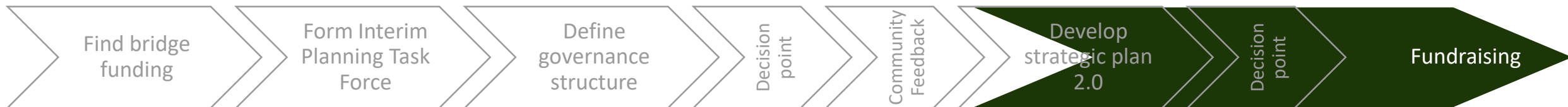


RECOMMENDATIONS

The theory of change developed in partnership with Spark and the strategic plan finalized by the permanent leadership body can be taken to potential funders to gather financial support for the Collective 2.0 on a longer-term basis



Jun '19 – Jan '20





SPARK POLICY INSTITUTE
igniting public policy and community change

Prepared by Spark Policy Institute on behalf of
the St. Louis Equity in Entrepreneurship Collective


December 2018

Attachment: Sources of Insights and Recommendations in this Report

Spark conducted several data collection activities in the evaluation to support the findings represented in this report.




Interviews with Collective members, Collective staff, BioSTL staff



Review of existing Collective documentation to date (meeting notes, summit reports and notes, membership databases, etc.)




Literature review of healthy collaborative models



Environmental scan of equity initiatives in the St. Louis region



Collective member engagement via in-person convening, email



Observation and participation in strategy meetings, Action Team meetings, and Collective staff meetings