Six Core Functions for the Backbone Organization

- Guide Vision and Strategy
- Support Aligned Activities
- Establish Shared Measurement Practices
- Build Public Will
- Advance Policy
- Mobilize Funding

*Backbones must balance the tension between coordinating and maintaining accountability, while staying behind the scenes to establish collective ownership*

Source: FSG Interviews and Analysis
# Backbone Effectiveness: 27 Indicators

|---------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------------------|-------------------|---------------|-----------------|
| • Partners accurately describe the **common agenda**  
• Partners **publicly discuss** / **advocate for** common agenda goals  
• Partners’ **individual work is increasingly aligned** with common agenda  
• Board members and key leaders increasingly **look to backbone** organization for initiative support, strategic guidance and leadership | • Partners **articulate their role** in the initiative  
• **Relevant stakeholders** are engaged in the initiative  
• Partners **communicate and coordinate** efforts regularly, with, and independently of, backbone  
• Partners report increasing levels of **trust** with one another  
• Partners increase **scope / type of collaborative work**  
• Partners improve **quality** of their work  
• Partners improve **efficiency** of their work  
• Partners feel **supported and recognized** in their work | • Shared **data system** is in development  
• Partners **understand the value** of shared data  
• Partners have robust / shared **data capacity**  
• Partners **make decisions** based on data  
• Partners **utilize data** in a meaningful way | • Community members are increasingly **aware** of the issue(s)  
• Community members express **support** for the initiative  
• Community members feel **empowered** to engage in the issue(s)  
• Community members increasingly **take action** | • Target audience (e.g., influencers and policymakers) is increasingly **aware** of the initiative  
• Target audiences **advocate** for changes to the system aligned with initiative goals  
• Public **policy** is increasingly **aligned** with initiative goals | • Funders are asking nonprofits to **align** to initiative goals  
• Funders are **redirecting funds** to support initiative goals  
• **New resources** from public and private sources are being contributed to partners and initiative |

Source: FSG and Greater Cincinnati Foundation