

Community/INC

Incubating and Accelerating Workforce Intermediaries and Funder Collaboratives

WORKFORCE FUNDER COLLABORATIVE OVERVIEW

What Are Funder Collaboratives and Why Are They Important?

The past 20 years have seen significant growth in **funder collaboratives**—collectives of like-minded donors seeking to invest in charitable causes together and thereby create a greater impact than any single donor could have on their own. Indeed, a [2023 research study](#) by Bridgespan on growth trends with funder collaboratives concluded that such collaboratives may be the most significant trend in how philanthropy is operating today.

A **workforce funder collaborative** is a group of private and corporate foundations that agree to work together and pool funds to build a more effective workforce system in a community or region. It consists of a broad base of funders who combine their resources, skills, and networks to foster high-impact solutions. To date, most workforce funder collaboratives have focused on the needs of urban communities because that is where foundations and corporate funders are typically based. However, as research from the Urban Institute points out, poverty has recently been growing rapidly in non-urban areas, many of which lack the necessary infrastructure and services needed to address the workforce needs of their low-income residents.

JobsFirstNYC was created through investment by the Tiger Foundation, the Clark Foundation, and the New York City Workforce Funders, a collaborative of private philanthropic investors. As it was with JobsFirstNYC, the **funder collaborative** component is key to building a sustainability strategy for workforce solutions. Through JobsFirstNYC **Community/INC**, which incubates and accelerates workforce intermediaries and funder collaboratives, we aim to apply JobsFirstNYC’s successful 18-year strategy in communities that can benefit from a well-organized infrastructure that addresses local needs.

How Does a Workforce Funder Collaborative Work?



LEVERAGE

Vehicle for investment

Provides a point of investment for corporations (e.g. banks, retail companies, etc.) and foundations to make an investment in a community or region that they would not likely make in a single organization or in an issue area.

Collective benefits

Members of the collaborative identify key issues and opportunities where other key stakeholders—including employers, the public sector, and community-based organizations—have designed ready-to-implement solutions.



LEAP

Shared cost/minimized risk

A workforce funder collaborative minimizes the risk of individual funders when investing in high-impact solutions and provides them with a more logistically flexible tool for diverse funding opportunities.



LOGISTICS

Minimum investment

Most funder collaboratives establish a minimum member investment level (e.g., \$50,000).

Repository

Funds are held by a lead organization and distributed with accountability measures.



LEARNING

Education

Participating funders receive education on the specific needs in a community and the most effective workforce strategies for addressing them.



LEADERSHIP

Staffing

Staffing is coordinated by an experienced consultant/employee knowledgeable of workforce issues and focused on funder member’s interests.