

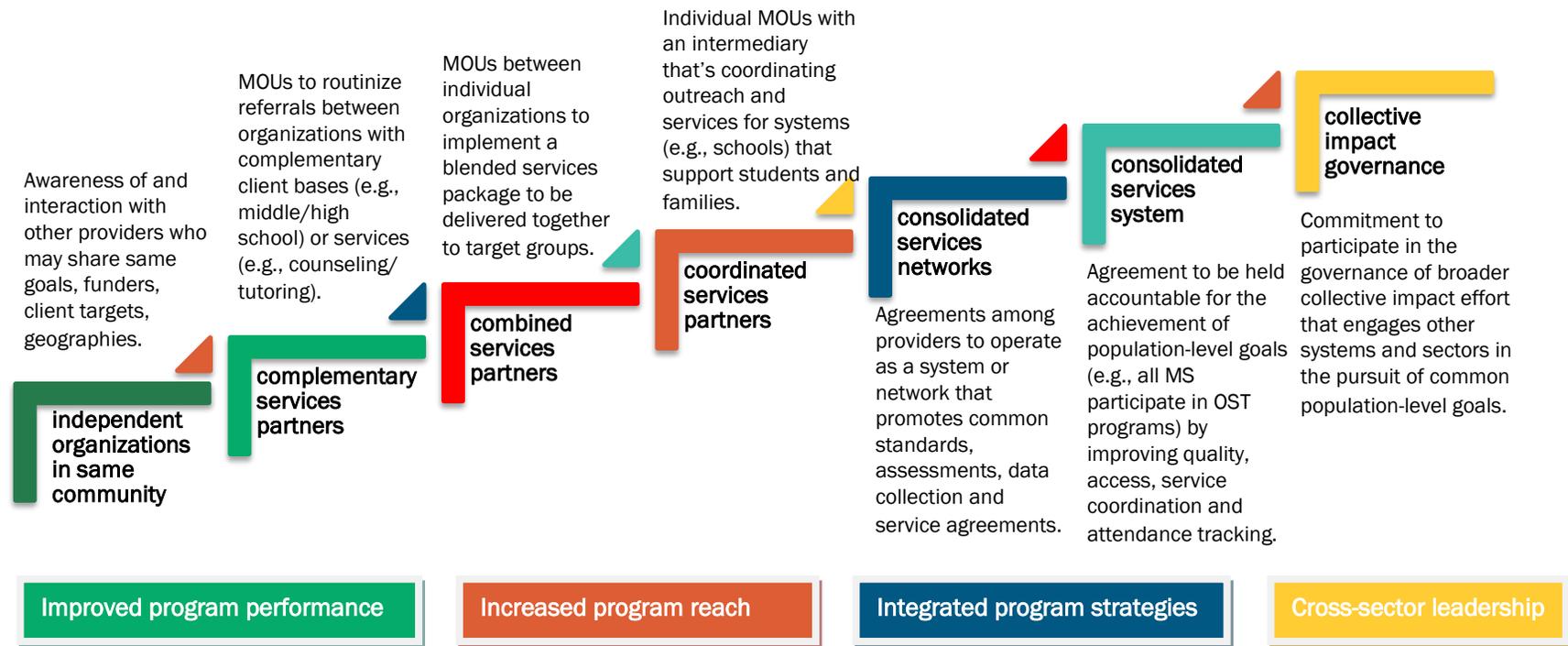
# From Program Performance to Collective Impact

Direct service programs, by design, focus on improving the quality of services they offer and expanding the number of people they serve. The typical performance questions asked are: How many? How well? What difference? *(Mark Friedman, Results Based Accountability)*

Programs often use population-level data (e.g., city dropout rates) to make the case for their services but they do not usually set their performance goals against this data (such as, “We will reduce the number of dropouts in the city by 3 percent”). This is because in most cases, the percent of the total population (e.g., middle school students) served by a single program or a network of local affiliates is usually small; thus, the change that they could make at the population level would be a decimal point at best (less than 1 percent). The need to provide funders with attribution data can make programs reluctant to commit to population goals that they can contribute to but not meet on their own.

Collective impact initiatives, by contrast, focus on population-level change. The collective impact strategy: Engage a range of programs to align their activities in service to a common agenda (e.g., on-time graduation) that is anchored in shared measures. Collective impact initiatives that focus on youth development frequently include nonprofit leaders at the table. These leaders are seen as key for achieving the goal of “mutually reinforcing activities.” More often than not, however, these leaders are not formally representing a system of providers that can make commitments to shift priorities, resources or practices. They provide important perspectives, but they do not wield sufficient power to make them true peers at the table.

Programs, on the other hand, can and do change lives. How can program providers partner to demonstrate the essential role they play in collective impact efforts?



## Strengthening Partnerships: From Co-Existence to Collaboration<sup>1</sup>

This tool can help you understand the nature of your current partnerships and track how they change over time. Name a partnership you are currently engaged in, note what kind of partnership it is, and reflect on the commitment level of you and your partners. Make notes in the commitment level columns regarding specific roles that you play or activities that you conduct. See example in the first row.

Name of Partner/ Partnership	Purpose (what type of partnership is it? See <b>stairsteps on reverse</b> )	Partnership Commitment Level			
		Communicate Information- sharing	Cooperate Informal interaction on discrete activities or projects	Coordinate Partners adjust and align their work with each other to promote efficiency & better outcomes.	Collaborate Partners develop long-term interaction based on shared mission; shared-decision-making, and resources
<i>United Way - homeless youth initiative</i>	<i>Consolidated Services Network</i>	<i>On group listserv</i>	<i>Attend UW's trauma informed care training</i>	<i>Plan and execute homeless youth count</i>	<i>Activities and plans on goal of reducing homelessness by 2020</i>

<sup>1</sup> Adapted from Tamarack, 2013