

# DANBURY COLLECTIVE

## Welcome Overview

Fall 2024





# What is the Danbury Collective?

- A non-profit, **cradle-to-career collective impact** organization
- United Way of Coastal and Western CT serves as our backbone organization
- Member of the national [StriveTogether Cradle to Career Network](#)
- Not part of the public schools or the City of Danbury, but in **partnership** with those institutions and community members
- Led by the **community**
- A **network** of more than 40 community members, organizations, and institutions
- We **advance equity** by learning together, aligning, and integrating our actions to achieve **systems change**
- We share power, trust, resources, and effort to achieve a **common purpose**

# Danbury Collective Mission

**What's a mission?**

**An organization or group's purpose, goals, and beliefs**

**Danbury Collective's  
Mission**

**Led by the community, we work collectively to foster positive, measurable, and sustainable life outcomes for Danbury children, families, and young adults.**

# Danbury Collective Vision

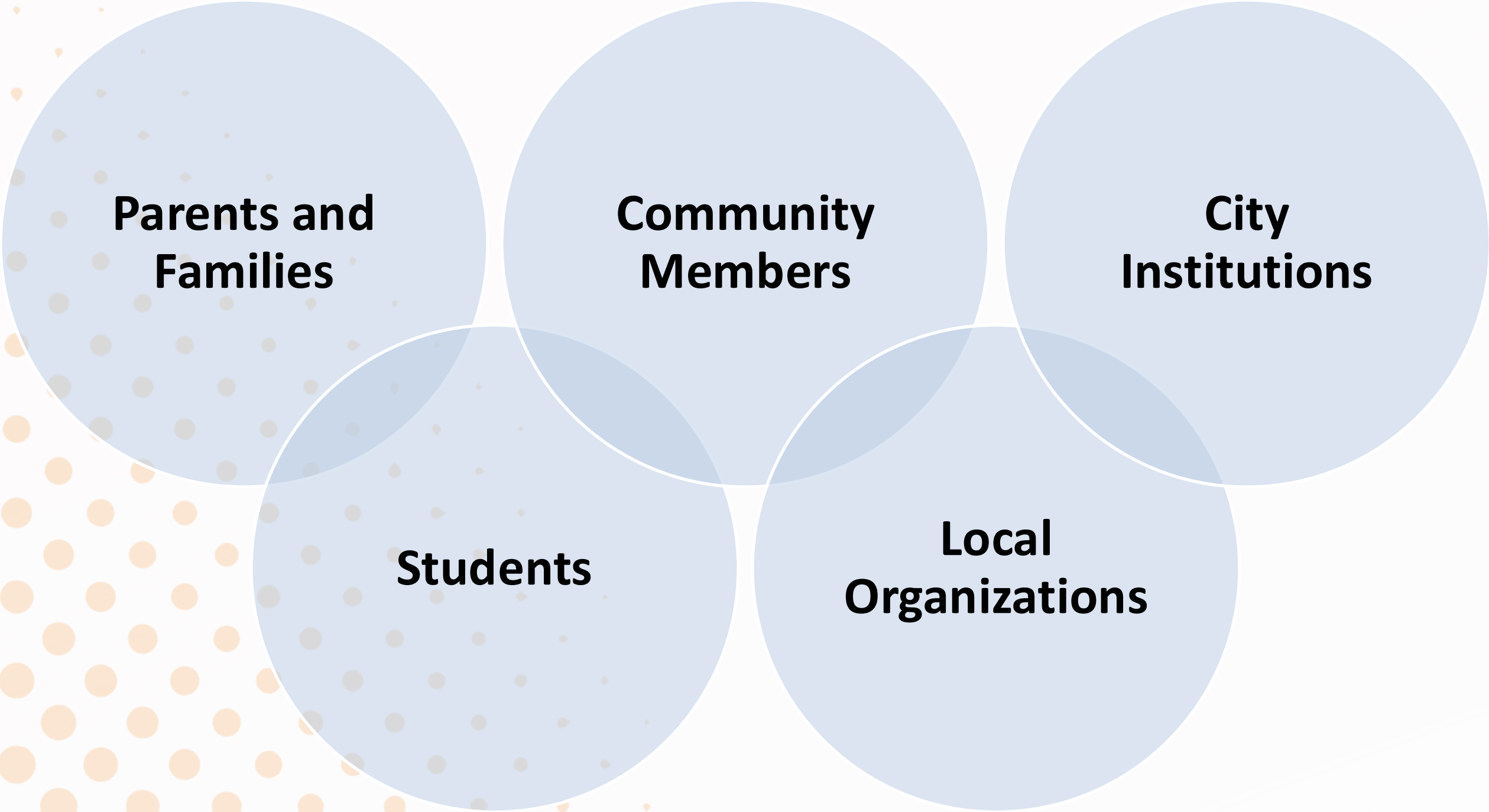
**What's a vision?**

**What an organization or group wants the world to be**

**Danbury Collective's  
Vision**

**All Danbury children, families, and young adults have full and equitable access to opportunities to be successful and thrive in life.**

# Who is Part of Danbury Collective



# Guiding Principles/Pillars

<b>Principles of Collective Impact</b>	<b>StriveTogether Pillars</b>
Common Agenda	Shared Community Vision
Shared Measurement	Evidence-Based Decision Making
Mutually Reinforcing Activities	Collaborative Action
Continuous Communication	Investment Sustainability
Backbone Support	



# CT & National Collective Impact Landscape

In addition to Danbury Collective, four Connecticut cities have a cradle to career collective:

[Bridgeport Prospers](#)



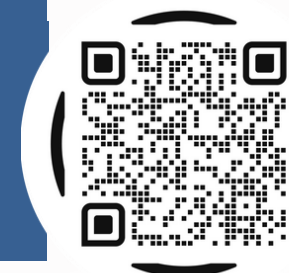
[Norwalk ACTS](#)



[Stamford Cradle to Career](#)



[Waterbury Bridge to Success](#)



All CT organizations are members of [StriveTogether](#), a national, nonprofit network of 60+ communities working to improve outcomes for children


# Current Priorities

## *Working Groups*

- ★ Chronic Absenteeism & Learner Engagement
- ★ Early Childhood Education
- ★ Youth Mental Health







# History & Future

# Catalyst & Building the Pillars

*November 2022 - November 2023*

The [Nellie Mae Education Foundation](#) (NMEF) granted a coalition of Danbury organizations with a \$250,000 grant to support the development of a Collective Impact organization & Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion capacity building work over a 24 month period (November 2022-November 2024)

# Pillars Progress – Civic Infrastructure

- **Shared Community Vision**

- Hosted a series of eight Community Meetings (December 2022 – November 2023) leading to:
  - A shared understanding of Collective Impact work
  - Establishing or strengthening relationships among attendees
  - Baseline dialogue around the vision of equitable C2C outcomes
  - Co-construction of the organizational mission and vision
    - Creation and signing of [Membership Agreement](#)

- **Evidence-Based Decision Making**

- Community Asset and Data source mapping completed in March 2023
- Youth and family perspectives represented by a subset of Danbury community members that have attended Community Meetings
- Assessment of CT Collectives' practices including coalition building and shared practice





# Pillars Progress – Civic Infrastructure

- **Collaborative Action**

- Equity as Collective Action in practice has been integral throughout community meetings with a capacity building session in Winter 2023 meeting
  - Collective now beginning a journey to develop a formal equity statement/commitment/philosophy
- Initiative Areas identified: Chronic Absenteeism & Learner Engagement, Early Childhood Education, and Youth Mental Health
  - Mutually reinforcing activities concept introduced with leaders identifying “fast first moves” to leverage the Collective
  - Working Groups formed around each initiative area and meeting regularly as of December 2023, led by Co-Chairs

- **Investment & Sustainability**

- Critical Social Sector leaders/organizations committed to work including the “signers” on NMEF grant, with critical support from Danbury Public Schools and the City of Danbury
- United Way of Coastal and Western Connecticut (UWCWC) established as Backbone
- Development of organizational structure
- Hiring of inaugural Executive Director as of November 2023

# Exploring & Emerging

*November 2023 - Today*

In November 2023, inaugural Executive Director, Melissa Hannequin, was hired as the first full-time staff member dedicated to the Danbury Collective



## Milestones

### March 2024

Hosts Winter Convening for all members, bringing together 60+ people to learn more about collective impact, hear from elected officials, join Working Groups, and voice opinions.

### Summer 2024

Hires a full-time Communications Manager, Grant Writer, and Senior Vice President of Collective Action - with these positions supporting Danbury, Bridgeport, & Stamford toward a shared infrastructure.

### September 2024

Danbury Collective receives membership to the national StriveTogether Cradle to Career Network, joining 70 similar organizations nationwide. Attends National Convening in Salt Lake City. CT C2C Coalition receives \$500K grant for statewide policy coalition work.

### January 2024

Danbury Collective joins the CT Cradle to Career (C2C) Coalition, joining sister organizations Bridgeport Prospers, Norwalk ACTS, Stamford Cradle to Career, & Waterbury Bridge to Success. Coalition focuses on state-level policy & civic infrastructure.

### May 2024

Resulting from ongoing funder relationship-building, secures general operating funding from several private family and corporate foundations.

### August 2024

Chronic Absenteeism & Learner Engagement Working Group publishes an attendance toolkit and parent brochure, to support education on the importance of regular school attendance.

### Today & Beyond

Received first municipal investment in our work, via City of Danbury ARPA funds. Continuing infrastructure building, community convening, and Working Group activities. Launching civic engagement efforts.



# Organizational Structure



# Danbury Collective Staff

**Purpose:** Drive and support the Working Groups and oversee the day-to-day operational functions of Danbury Collective to ensure that the Mission, Vision, and core values of Danbury Collective are continually put into practice.

**Roles:** Danbury Collective key staff including Founding ED and future staff.

**Reports to:** Advisory Council; UWCWC CEO (technical supervisor)

**Role:**

1. Drive the work of Danbury Collective and entities on the ground by coordinating and supporting the Working Groups, including enabling access, analysis and utilization of data.
2. Provide feedback, guidance, and make recommendations for strategy and action plans to the Advisory Council regarding how best to improve Danbury Collective community level outcomes as efficiently and effectively as possible.
3. Ensure sound governance, fiscal oversight, and sustainability.
4. Actively advocate at the local, state, and national level to improve outcomes and eliminate barriers to success.
5. Communicate key messages and findings internally and to the broader community.

***Backbone Organization - United Way of Coastal and Western Connecticut (UWCWC): Act as fiduciary of the initiative, sustain employee value proposition for Staff, leverage backbone role with other CT Collectives to leverage efficiencies and maximize impact.***

# Danbury Collective Advisory Council (AC)

**Purpose:** Provide targeted governance and strategic guidance to the Collective. Act as public advocate in support of Danbury Collective model generally and in support of Working Group strategies and outcomes.

**Process of Engagement:** Recruitment by the executive committee of the AC. Nomination by AC and voted on by Collective Members in good standing.

**Membership:** A diverse group of cross-sector leaders from education, non-profit, philanthropy, business, civic, faith-based, community organizations, and individual community leaders. The Advisory Council is led by an executive committee of two Co-Chairs, a Vice Chair, and DC Executive Director.

**Commitment:** Monthly or as needed Advisory Council meetings, attendance at DC Convenings, and deep working knowledge of at least one Working Group.

**Role:** Bring leadership and influence to the Collective Impact process to improve DC community level outcomes by:

1. Outreach & Advocacy to further the Danbury Collective's mission, policies, strategies, and needs
2. Resource Development to identify, leverage, and align connections and resources to achieve the mission
3. Backbone Staff Support
4. Organizational Oversight



# Advisory Council Members

## Advisory Council Leadership

- Co-Chairs: Katie Curran & Kara Prunty
- Vice Chair: Grace Molina

## Advisory Council (AC)

- Danbury Parent Representatives (3x), Danbury Community
- Chairs (2-4 seats), Working Groups, Danbury Collective
- Superintendent, Danbury Public Schools
- Board of Education Chair or Proxy, Danbury Public Schools/City of Danbury
- Mayor or Proxy, City of Danbury
- President & CEO, United Way of Coastal and Western CT (Backbone)
- President & CEO, CT Institute for Communities
- Executive Director, Community Action Agency of Western CT
- Outreach Director, Danbury Public Library
- Director of Health & Human Services, Danbury Dept. of Public Health
- Director Family, School & Community Partnerships, Danbury Public Schools
- Educator (up to 3 seats), Current Teacher and Building Leader, Danbury Public Schools
- Executive Director, Danbury Collective

To see who is on our Advisory Council and who are our current members, visit our website: <https://www.unitedwaycwc.org/danburycollective>

# Danbury Collective Working Groups (WG)

**Context:** Selected priority areas linked directly and indirectly to the seven cradle-to-career outcomes as identified by StriveTogether Theory of Action, including: Kindergarten readiness / Early Grade Reading / Middle grade Math / High School Graduation / Postsecondary Enrollment / Postsecondary Completion / Employment

**Purpose:** Identify successful strategies and integrate data-driven improvements into action plans and programs in support of these three initial areas of focus:

1. Chronic Absenteeism and Learner Engagement
2. Youth Mental Health
3. Early Childhood Education

**Process of Engagement:** Recruitment by existing Advisory Council, WG, Collective Members, or DC Staff.

**Membership:** Cross-sector organizations & individuals who align around community level outcomes. Each Working Group will be led by a Chair (or Co-Chairs) who will also hold a seat on DC Advisory Council.

**Commitment:** Monthly meetings

**Is supported by and reports to:** DC Advisory Council and DC Staff

**Role:** Working Groups are charged with furthering or implementing a proven strategy focused on a specific target or outcome/s. WG will be comprised of empowered representatives from organizations that are participating in the effort to move the identified outcome/s forward.

# Danbury Collective Collective Membership

**Purpose:** Contribute feedback on the progress and direction of Danbury Collective. Develop community awareness and alignment in support of Strategy and Action Plans created and put forth by Working Groups and the Advisory Council/DC Staff.

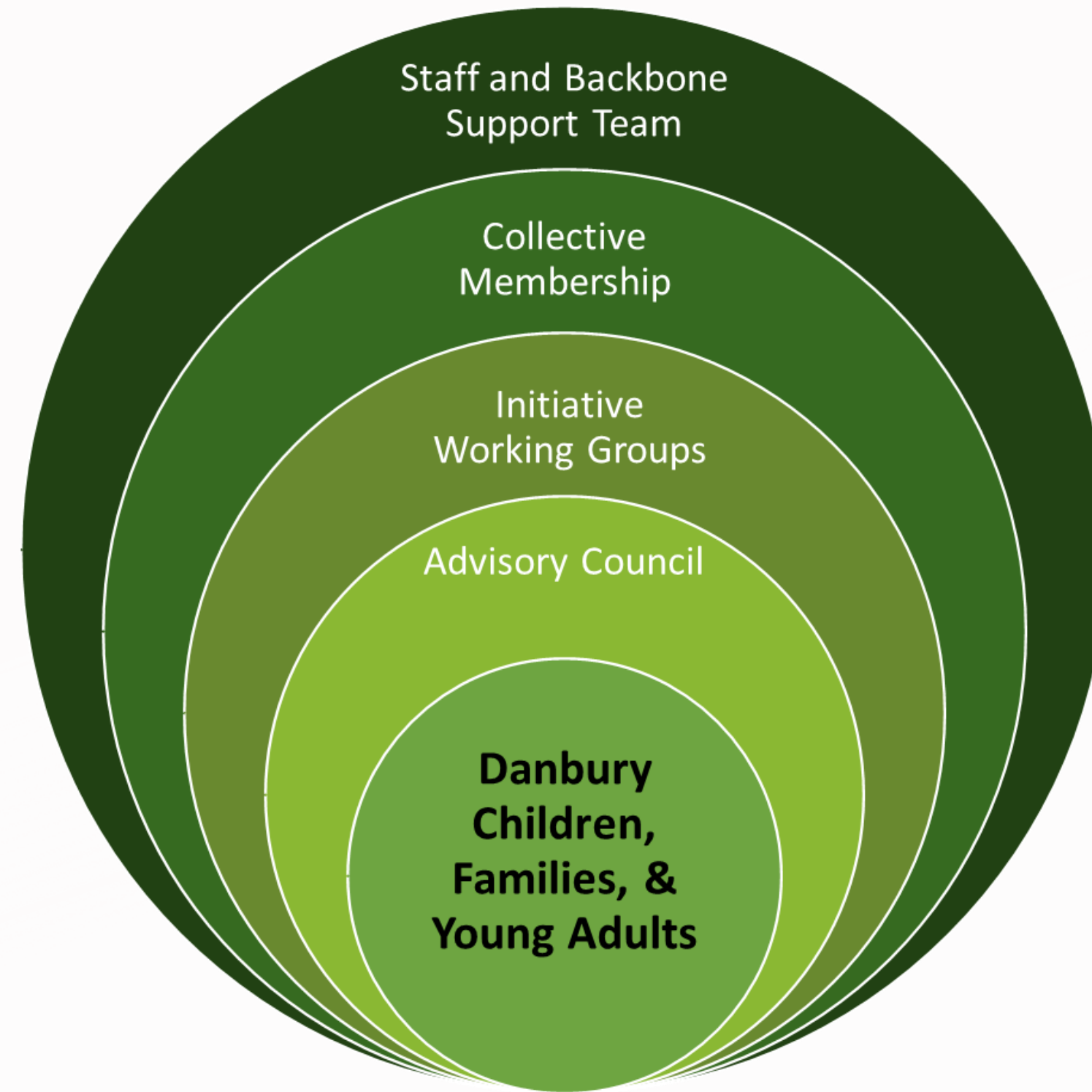
**Process of Engagement:** Ongoing external communication and recruitment by the active Collective members, DC Staff, and other community stakeholders.  
**Membership:** Cross-sector community stakeholders with an interest in improving children and youth outcomes.

**Commitment:** Attendance at Danbury Collective Convenings (one every few months) and signing of Membership Agreement.

**Role:** Active participation and advocacy to positively advance the Mission and community level outcomes of Danbury Collective .



# Accountability Structure



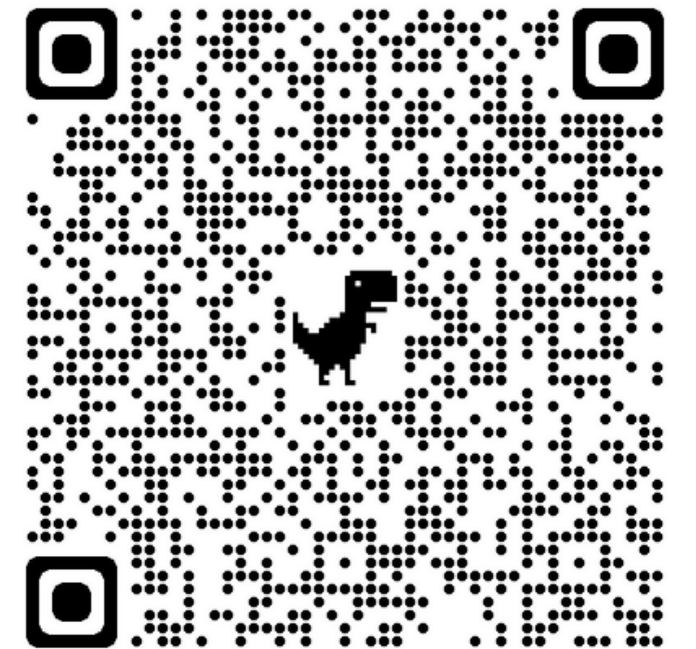
All Danbury children, families, and young adults have full and equitable access to opportunities to be successful and thrive in life.

Investors Network

# Change starts with YOU **GET INVOLVED TODAY!**

## Next Steps:

- Join our [email list](#) – get resources and updates
- Sign our [Membership Agreement](#)
- Join a Working Group
- Share your opinions in a parent or community member focus group
- Attend community meetings
- Spread the word about Danbury Collective
- Reach out with feedback and questions
  - Email: [melissa.hannequin@unitedwaycwc.org](mailto:melissa.hannequin@unitedwaycwc.org)
  - Visit our website: [www.unitedwaycwc.org/danburycollective](http://www.unitedwaycwc.org/danburycollective)

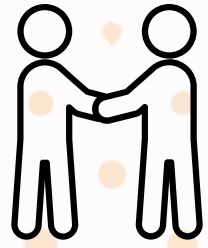




# Important Definitions



# Non-Profit Organizations



**Organizations that work to achieve a social cause, with a specific focus**



**Work to benefit the public**



**Raise money through donations, grants, government funding**



**Don't make money for their owners, instead use money to support their community**

# Partnership and Collective Impact

- We listen to the community and **uplift** parents' and youths' voices
- We make decisions based on that information and on data, **together**
- We don't just listen, but incorporate and take direction
- **Partnership** =
  - Collaborative relationship (working together!)
  - Based on the idea that we are all important to a child and community's success
  - We share responsibility for making a change in our community
- We are a network that shares power, trust, resources, and effort to achieve a **common goal**

# Systems Change

- Examples of **systems** =
  - Public schools
  - Childcare
  - Healthcare
- Changing the big picture
- Root causes: Why do problems exist? Why is there inequity in life outcomes?
- We want to change the way systems - like the public schools - serve people, not just fixing one part of the problem
- It means looking at how a whole group of things work together and making big changes to improve them



# Cradle-to-Career

**CRADLE-TO-CAREER  
OUTCOMES:**



# Equity

