

NORTH COLUMBIA YOUTH EMPOWERMENT INITIATIVE

**A Summary of Trust,
Readiness, and Opportunities
for Action from Year 1**

November 2019

**DEVELOPED FOR THE
NORTH COLUMBIA
YOUTH EMPOWERMENT
INITIATIVE COMMUNITY
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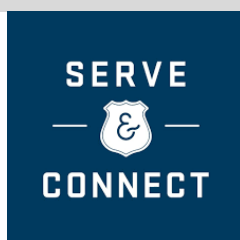


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This report summarizes findings from the first year of the North Columbia Youth Empowerment Initiative. The report includes a project overview including purpose, goals, theory of change and methods. Successes, challenges and solutions, key findings, lessons learned, and next steps are organized into two primary categories: 1) activities, processes, and actions to mobilize the base, and 2) key needs and relationships identified as important for improving collaboration around youth empowerment in North Columbia.



The report was developed by the Wandersman Center in collaboration with Serve & Connect. Findings reflect shared leadership among key partners, including Columbia Police Department, Richland County Sheriff's Department, and the NYCEI steering committee.



With contributions from Brittany S. Cook, PhD, Kassy Alia Ray, PhD, Lauren Hajjarr, PhD, Ariel Domlyn, MA and special acknowledgment of Abe Wandersman, PhD, David Laird, MSW, and Jose Soler.

Executive Summary

The primary goal of the North Columbia Youth Empowerment Initiative (NCYEI) is to cultivate a community where youth can thrive via community safety partnerships. Serve & Connect's theory-informed COMPASS model lays a foundation for effective community-driven change through collaboration. This report provides a synthesis of the first year of the NCYEI from November 2018 to November 2019. The first year corresponded with Phase II of COMPASS, which focuses on stakeholder engagement, readiness, and relationships. In this report, we provide evidence that the COMPASS work in North Columbia has been effective at building readiness—particularly the capacities needed for the NCYEI to function well, and has moved conversation from broad needs to specific action. Through COMPASS, the NCYEI has also demonstrated improved trust within the community, with residents trusting and becoming engaged with the NCYEI steering committee and with the police. Residents are reporting feeling heard, and expressing a desire for more police interaction and presence in the community. Many of the needs identified have begun to be addressed by the NCYEI work in North Columbia, including increased collaboration, better coordinated resources, and more positive interactions with the police. Through community conversations, opportunities for action have been identified including a strong sense of community and community leaders—many of whom have been integral at helping to get other residents engaged and voices heard. Serve & Connect has demonstrated through COMPASS the ability to adapt strategies to meet the community's needs, shifting from a formal survey to interactive and engaging methods for providing community members opportunities to share their voice. The trust, collaboration, and momentum built during over the past year has resulted in a number of well received events and movement towards more specific action.

Overview

Purpose

This report summarizes findings from the first year of the North Columbia Youth Empowerment Initiative (NCYEI). Founded in November 2018, the purpose of the initiative is to cultivate a community where youth can thrive via effective community safety partnerships.

The need for addressing youth safety was identified in collaboration with police and community partners after initial trust-building efforts in 2018. Specifically, police expressed concern regarding the risk for youth to be engaged in criminal activity. Community members were concerned about youth safety from violence, and expressed that youth lived in fear of “where the next bullet” might be coming from.

Taken together, these perspectives illuminated a pathway for police and community partners to work together over a shared goal of creating a community foundation that would prevent youth risk for violence and, more importantly, foster opportunities for youth living in the 29203 zip-code to thrive.

Serve & Connect, a nonprofit organization focused on igniting positive change through police-community partnerships, served as the convening organization for the NCYEI, working in direct partnership with key law enforcement agencies, including Columbia Police Department (CPD) and Richland County Sheriff's Department (RCSD). Leadership at CPD and RCSD recognized that while police play a critical role in promoting community safety, sustainable progress would only be possible with authentic and effective partnerships within the community. However, the North Columbia community has historically experienced distrust in law enforcement and other forms of government, thus making partnerships particularly difficult.

The NCYEI was launched in November 2018 with the intention of identifying opportunities for building trust among police and community partners with the intention of facilitating effective action that leads to improved youth outcomes. The findings of this report summarize learnings from this first year. The report is structured as follows:

1. The theoretical framework used to guide the NCYEI is presented
2. Findings from comprehensive qualitative and quantitative data are summarized with a focus on: readiness for effective collaboration; trust and relationships; and needs
3. Reflections on findings and recommendations for next steps

This report was developed by the Wandersman Center in collaboration with Serve & Connect. The Wandersman Center is a leader in practical implementation science and empowerment evaluation. The Wandersman Center has key expertise in examining community-capacity building initiatives, and is committed to coordinating and leading qualitative and quantitative data analysis and using empowerment evaluation strategies to support police-community partners in developing action plans that lead to measurable improvements. Generous support provided by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation enabled the Wandersman Center to serve as the research and evaluation partners for year one of the NCYEI.

Theory

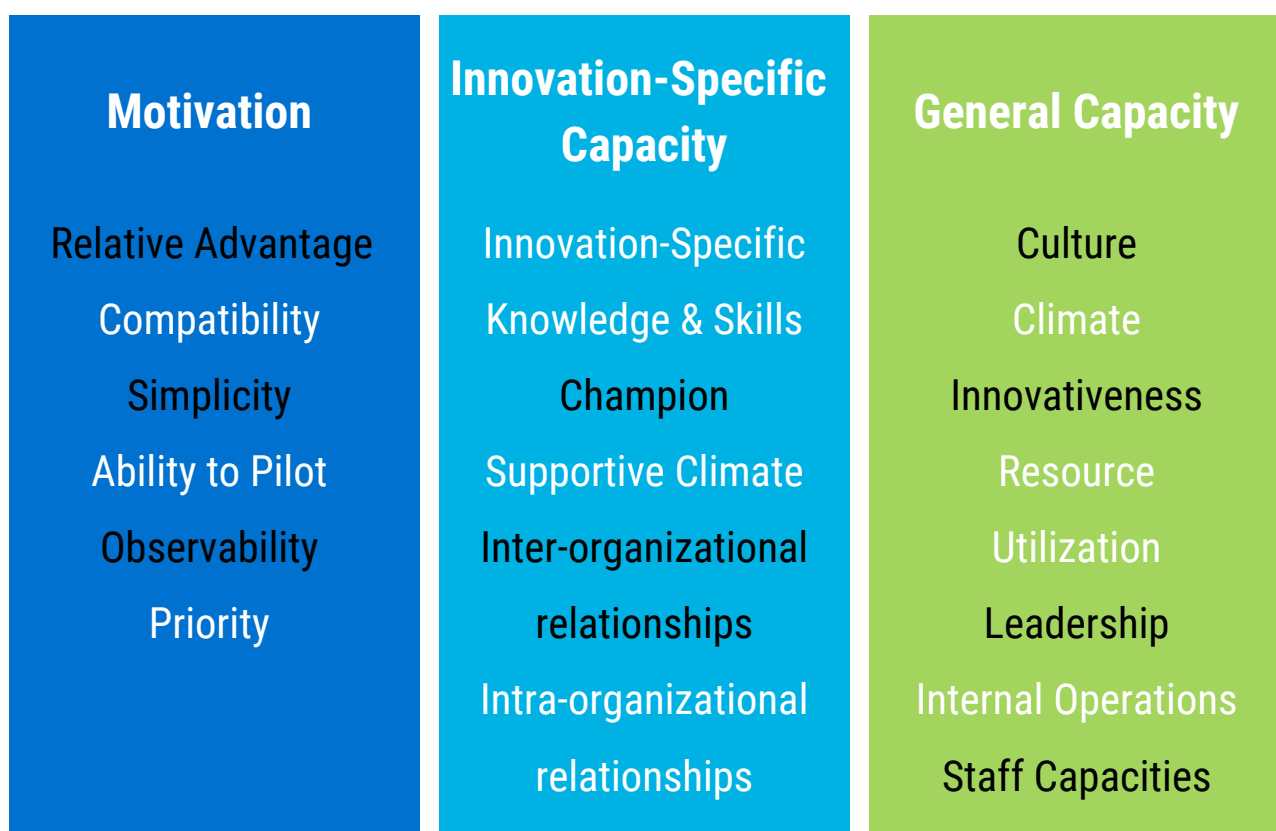
The NCYEI is guided by Serve & Connect’s COMPASS model, which is a phase-four model guided by best practices evidence on the processes that drive authentic community transformation; it facilitates positive community-level change through effective collaboration between police, residents, youth and community organizations. Table 1 shows the four phases of COMPASS. This report focuses on Phase II—the period between the kick-off of the NCYEI in November 2018 through October 2019.

Table 1. COMPASS STRATEGIES

<p>Phase I:</p>	<p>Cultivating Trust and Establishing Shared Community Vision</p> <p>A foundation of trust is established by listening to understand community challenges and opportunities for change. A shared, community vision is identified that will contribute to addressing the correlates of poverty and crime.</p>
<p>Phase II:</p>	<p>Stakeholder Engagement, Readiness & Relationships</p> <p>This phase focuses on systematically engaging diverse stakeholders, identifying needs and resources, setting goals, and action planning. Serve & Connect works closely with diverse stakeholders to optimize their ability to work together towards shared goals. Together, we map needs and assets and establish a shared voice, vision, and action for community development. There is an emphasis placed on elevating community voices, especially those with lived experiences who have been historically marginalized.</p>
<p>Phase III:</p>	<p>Community Action</p> <p>This phase focuses on community action guided by quantitative assessment, systematic implementation, and empowerment evaluation. In partnership with community stakeholders, coalition partners engage in sense-making about baseline results and identify, tailor and implement best practices to address needs. Guided by the community-designed goals, Serve & Connect provides support for quality implementation that leads to improvements in community safety.</p>
<p>Phase IV:</p>	<p>Sustainability</p> <p>We help create the conditions necessary to support the long-term sustainability of coalition efforts. This may include community leadership development and building coalition capacity led by coalition leaders. The goal is to ensure that the collaborations fostered through our work last for years to come, something that is necessary for true systems transformation.</p>

COMPASS draws from multiple evidence-informed theories, including Empowerment Evaluation (Fetterman, & Wandersman, 2005), the results-based accountability approach for planning, implementation, and evaluation; Getting To Outcomes (GTO®; Chinman, Imm, & Wandersman, 2004); the R=MC2 model of organizational readiness (Scaccia, et. al, 2015); and Relational Coordination (RC: Gittell & Suchmann, 2013).

R=MC2 separates readiness into three components: motivation (an organization's willingness to implement a new policy, practice, or program), innovation-specific capacity (the capacities needed to implement a particular policy, practice or program), and general capacity (the capacities needed for healthy organizational functioning regardless of what is being implemented). Motivation, innovation-specific capacity, and general capacity can be further broken down into discrete subcomponents, so that facilitators and areas for improvement can be identified and targeted for support. These include:



An article expanding on the conceptual model of the integration of R=MC2+RC drawing from this work is currently in press (Hajjar, Cook, Domlyn, Alia Ray, Laird & Wandersman, 2020).

Methods

The primary interest for phase II of COMPASS as focus of this report is on readiness building and understanding opportunities for action. Quantitative and qualitative data (described in more detail below) were collected across a variety of events from multiple stakeholders. Analysis focused on identifying themes around readiness and changes in readiness (the capacities and motivation to work together towards youth safety), and the needs and opportunities for action within the community. Some themes came from targeted questions, while others emerged from broader conversations.

This process is in line with an empowerment evaluation approach, which is a core foundation for the COMPASS model. Empowerment evaluation is an approach that uses “evaluation concepts, techniques, and findings to foster improvement and self-determination” (Fetterman, 1994). Empowerment evaluation is guided by ten principles that are paramount to how Serve & Connect approaches the work in North Columbia. These principles are:

1. Improvement – help people improve program performance
2. Community ownership – value and facilitate community control
3. Inclusion – invite involvement, participation, and diversity
4. Democratic participation – open participation and fair decision making
5. Social justice – address social inequities in society
6. Community knowledge – respect and value community knowledge
7. Evidence-based strategies – respect and use both community and scholarly knowledge
8. Capacity building – enhance stakeholder ability to evaluate and improve planning and implementation
9. Organizational learning – apply data to evaluate and implement practices and inform decision making
10. Accountability – emphasize outcomes and accountability

An example of empowerment evaluation in action in the work with North Columbia was the adaptation of an evidence informed survey to better fit the community voice. While a formal survey was adapted including the validated Readiness Diagnostic Scale (RDS; based on the R=MC2 model of organizational readiness) and RC items, it was not used. Measuring readiness and relationships through a formal survey was cautioned as being culturally inappropriate—specifically “A very white thing to do.” Instead, “dot surveys” were conducted at community events. Questions were placed on large pieces of paper, and community members placed a sticker, or dot, next to the responses they most agreed with. Dot surveys have a history of been used effectively in Empowerment Evaluation (Fetterman & Bowman, 2002). Overall, the adapted method demonstrated good response rates and useful information about the community’s feelings of hope, trust, safety, and resource access. Qualitative feedback about a particular event garnered some of the most powerful support for the dot survey method. One community resident responded to the question *what did you like best about today’s event?* By stating that her favorite thing was that “Right away, you wanted to know what I thought [with the dot survey].”

In order to capture the readiness and opportunities for action, a variety of methods were used to collect relevant data about the COMPASS initiative in North Columbia. These included: attendance tracking data, meeting notes, community conversation and interview transcriptions, event surveys, dot surveys, meeting and event activity photos and notes. Attendance tracking data provided information about formal steering committee member status, organizational affiliation, residential address (specifically whether or not individuals lived within the North Columbia 29203 zip code), and attendance at meetings and assistance with community events. Attendance data included 35 meetings, 5 community events, and 2 community conversations spanning from November 2018 to November 2019. We analyzed attendance and notes for 32 meetings. Nineteen meetings and sixteen interviews or community conversations were transcribed, which were then analyzed using Natural Language Processing (NLP). NLP is a method that uses computer-based algorithms to discover underlying patterns in data. This can include how words cluster together (topic modeling) and the types of emotions people express in the words (sentiment analysis). Event surveys and dot surveys were included for six events (one event—the Summer Series—had multiple dates and dot survey data was collected at each). Specific activities during Visioning Day, some steering committee meetings, and community conversations were also included in qualitative analysis.

Results

This report divides findings into two main categories. The first section is [readiness for base building and mobilization](#). This includes the key events and activities, participation and engagement, readiness—the capacities and motivation—to collaborate towards improved youth safety and empowerment, and trust building. The second section focuses on [needs and opportunities for action](#) within North Columbia. We will provide a brief overview of key findings here, with further evidence and depth provided in the following sections.

Readiness

Stakeholders agreed that improving collaboration across organizations and building trust among the community and police were essential for addressing youth safety and fostering youth empowerment in North Columbia. Motivation to work together remained fairly stable, with a clear focus on capacity building over the year. This included addressing the general capacity of the NCYEI steering committee through building the steering committee's structure, climate, and cultural norms, and led to a focus on action as momentum was built. The focus of the steering committee meetings moved from broad needs to building readiness overtime. Engagement in the steering committee also increased, with more community resident involvement and leadership.

Trust

Building trust was an explicit focus during phase II of COMPASS. Through community conversations and steering committee meeting discussions, it became clear that trust and mutual understanding needed to be built among steering committee members in order to work together effectively. Through the Welcome Table, lead by the South Carolina Collaborative for Race and Reconciliation, steering committee members engaged in conversations and activities that promoted internal reflection, trust, and deeper relationships. Participants reported increased trust and perceived personal power for change.

Trust between the community and police was identified as a major focus of the NCYEI. Residents voiced improved trust as they saw the consistent presence of the NCYEI and opportunities to engage with police in informal, personal ways including through steering committee meetings, events like Visioning Day, and particularly through the Summer Series. In fact, the Summer Series was a tipping point of positive momentum, with increased resident participation, leadership, and focus on action directly correlated to the events.

Needs and opportunities for action

Multiple needs were identified through conversations, activities, events, surveys, interviews, and meeting minutes. Themes that emerged across opportunities for sharing included: collaboration, better coordination and access to resources, positive role models, safer environments, and youth voice. However, many opportunities for action were also identified within the North Columbia community including: a strong sense of community, existence of positive programs and organizations, and strong community leaders. Residents often identified specific individual and organizations that were assets to the community.

Readiness for base building and mobilization

Project Activities

Several strategic activities occurred between November 2018 and August 2019 to cultivate trust, relationships, community engagement, and formalization and mobilization of work in 29203 to foster police-community relationships (Table 2). Common threads across the activities included bringing together of law enforcement and community members and partners in positive interactions and improving the wellbeing of the youth in the community.

Table 2. COMPASS Activities

Activity	Date	Description
Compassionate Acts Program (CAP)	Ongoing	A program to enhance the impact of police officers by providing expanded resources, tools, and knowledge to assist those they serve. CAP provides officers with ready access to resources that they can give out to people they interact with. CAP includes Greg's Groceries (providing boxes with enough food to feed a family of 4 for a week), Warm the Winter (providing winter coats), and Cool the Summer (providing bottles of water).
NCYEI Kick Off	November 2018	A meeting and of community stakeholders (police, community organizations, community leaders) to discuss the vision for partnership in North Columbia and the North Columbia Youth Empowerment Initiative.
Visioning Day	April 2019	A convening of community partners, leaders, community members, to discuss the shared vision for the North Columbia Youth Empowerment Initiative. Definitions of youth safety and empowerment were discussed. Relationships between stakeholders were mapped. Needs, resources, and capacities were discussed.

Mission DreamPossible	May 2019	A youth day event providing activities, guests, and vendors to provide youth with information about future career opportunities.
Welcome Table	June-July 2019	An evidenced-informed series of conversations around trust-building and the history of racism led by the SC Collaborative for Race and Reconciliation with the NCYEI steering committee.
Farmday Funday	June 2019	A community event focused on healthy food, including meal distribution, cooking demonstrations, and activities.
Summer Series	July-August 2019	Four afternoon events, once a week, held at two high need housing communities where police and community members could engage in fun activities together (e.g., water fun day, cookout, sports day).
Weekly Steering Committee Meetings	Ongoing	Weekly meetings of the NCYEI steering committee, always open to new participants, provide an opportunity for discussion, updates, planning, and relationship building
One-on-One Meetings	Ongoing	One-on-one meetings with stakeholders (local leaders, chief of police, community residents) to understand context, identify needs, and opportunities for action.

While some activities were part of the initial NCYEI implementation plan, adaptations were made based on formative evaluation learnings.

Setting the stage: NCYEI Launch

The work in North Columbia kicked-off with a Launch in November 2018. Police, community partners, and community leaders (including Parks and Rec, Columbia PD, local housing among others) participated in a facilitated focus-group discussion, called World Café, and identified needs within the community around goals for the North Columbia Youth Empowerment Initiative and critical pieces for fostering positive relationships and supporting the work.

Launch participants provided answers to the following five questions. Themes are provided for each.

1. How might police be better integrated in the 29203 community to support positive youth outcomes? What specific partnerships could be strengthened or created?
 - More informal police presence (out of uniform, visiting schools and parks)
 - More positive press
 - Better formal communication
 - Visible interaction between police and trusted others (partner orgs., adults)
2. What barriers and challenges will we face as we promote community police collaboration? What are possible solutions?
 - More informal police presence
 - More positive press (social media is a challenge but also opportunity)
 - Trauma
 - Negative past experiences
 - Improved police training
3. How do we meaningfully engage youth as leaders in this movement in 29203?
 - Engage with schools, churches, and businesses
 - Provide incentives for youth participation
 - Recognize and invite youth leadership in different settings
4. What are some possible positive outcomes of this Youth Empowerment Project? Why is this important to do? What would the “dream” scenario look like?
 - Youth empowerment
 - Safer, less violent community and schools
 - Higher graduation rates and youth opportunity to excel in life
 - Resources available and accessed by youth
 - Positive, thriving community
5. What is critical for the first phase of the 29203 Youth Empowerment Project? What is needed for this be successful? What do you need from Serve & Connect?
 - Commitment and follow through
 - Collaboration
 - Making sure diverse youth voices are heard (younger youth, less high-achieving youth)

Common themes across all the questions included the need for collaboration and youth involvement, positive interactions and media coverage, and a desire for a safe community that supports youth’s ability to thrive.

Participants at the Launch were invited to complete a brief survey to reflect on the experience. They were asked if they felt the objectives of the Launch were met, if they felt the time and energy put into the Launch was worthwhile, and what they felt were critical for moving forward. All participants who responded to the survey either “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that the objectives were met and that the Launch was worthwhile. In terms of critical next steps, respondents identified: connecting with schools, building strong relationships with government entities, making sure to follow through (“not just talk the talk, but walk the walk”), develop clear objectives and communication structures, and support the police and youth.

Understanding and making connections: Visioning Day

Visioning Day was a opportunity for even more stakeholders to come together, and provided a variety of information about the relationships with North Columbia and buy-in for a collaborative collation around youth empowerment and safety. Visioning Day participants reported positive opinions about understanding material presented at the event (including RC and R=MC2; on a 5 point Likert-scale; morning sessions M=4.8, afternoon M=4.3), value of the materials (morning M=4.4, afternoon M=4.3), inclusivity and engagement of sessions (morning M=4.7, afternoon M=4.8), and the relevance for 29203 (morning M=4.7, afternoon M=4.6)

Participants also responded positively about the event overall. Respondents noted that the most valuable parts of the day were networking and knowledge-sharing and defining youth empowerment. Less valuable aspects were noted as the imbalance of talking versus action planning, and several lamented that the day would have been more constructive if all participants stayed throughout the day and if more youth were present (two students who attended high school in 29203 were present in the morning session, but were unable to stay for the entire event). Opinions on a mapping exercise—where connections between relevant stakeholders and organizations were identified—were mixed.

Table 3. Summative Event Survey (N=12)

Question	Mean	Median	Mode	Range
The purpose of today was clearly stated.	4.4	5	5	3-5
The event agenda was followed.	4.2	5	5	2-5
The event time was managed effectively.	4.2	5	5	3-5
The event's objectives were met.	4.2	4.5	5	2-5
Everyone was encouraged to actively participate.	4.8	5	5	4-5
Leadership was balanced among event participants.	4.5	5	5	2-5
The group worked well together.	4.5	5	5	3-5
Decisions were made as a group.	4.3	5	5	3-5
I was comfortable expressing my ideas and opinions.	4.4	5	5	1-5
I felt my ideas and opinions were heard.	4.3	5	5	1-5
I felt my time today was well spent.	4.3	5	5	2-5

Regarding the initiative, participants overall responded positively. There was a high excitement and perceived value of this effort for North Columbia, and a general willingness and ability of attendees to contribute their time to the initiative. Respondents noted that the most promising parts of the initiative are the connections, collaborations, and increased communication it will forge. Some questions remained for respondents, particularly around clarifying the overarching goal of the initiative and what the process will look like. Some individuals are additionally concerned about the time it will take for the initiative and their own involvement. One suggestion was to provide all event attendees with a list of fellow participants' contact information and affiliation so that their networking and resource sharing may begin immediately.

Table 4. Perception Survey on NCYEI (N=12)

Question	Mean	Median	Mode	Range
I understand the purpose of NCYEI.	4.0	4	4	2-5
I think NCYEI could be valuable for North Columbia.	4.7	5	5	3-5
I think achieving the goals of NCYEI is feasible.	4.2	4	5	2-5
I understand the process and key steps for NCYEI.	4.2	4	4	3-5
I know what is expected of me for being part of NCYEI.	4.2	4	4	3-5

I am <i>happy</i> to contribute my time and effort to ensure success of NCYEI.	4.8	5	5	4-5
I am <i>able</i> to contribute my time and effort to ensure success to NCYEI.	4.6	5	5	3-5
NCYEI fits well with my work.	4.7	5	5	4-5
NCYEI fits well with my passion.	4.7	5	5	4-5
I am excited about what NCYEI can accomplish.	4.8	5	5	4-5

Readiness: Understanding the motivation and capacity to work together

Readiness can be thought of as the ability and willingness of an organization or group to do something new. Using the R=MC2 model for organizational readiness, which identifies discreet factors that influence motivation (e.g., priority, ability to pilot, observability of change or outcomes), general capacity (leadership, culture, resource utilization), and innovation-specific capacity (capacities needed for a particular thing—such as organizations collaborating in a new way around youth safety and empowerment—including the knowledge, skills, and abilities to make the change, and people who champion the innovation). This specificity allows for depth of understanding regarding strengths and inhibitors of readiness and knowledge about where to target support to build readiness. Using R=MC2, we were able to learn about the readiness of stakeholders to work together in the NCYEI. We captured readiness data in a number of ways: through listening sessions and interviews, and steering committee meeting notes.

Through listening sessions and interviews, we were able to compare how police and community members discussed readiness (Figure 1). Despite notable differences in leadership and resource utilization—police focusing more on leadership and community members focusing more on the utilization of resources—both police and community members were generally in sync about how they talked about the readiness of North Columbia.

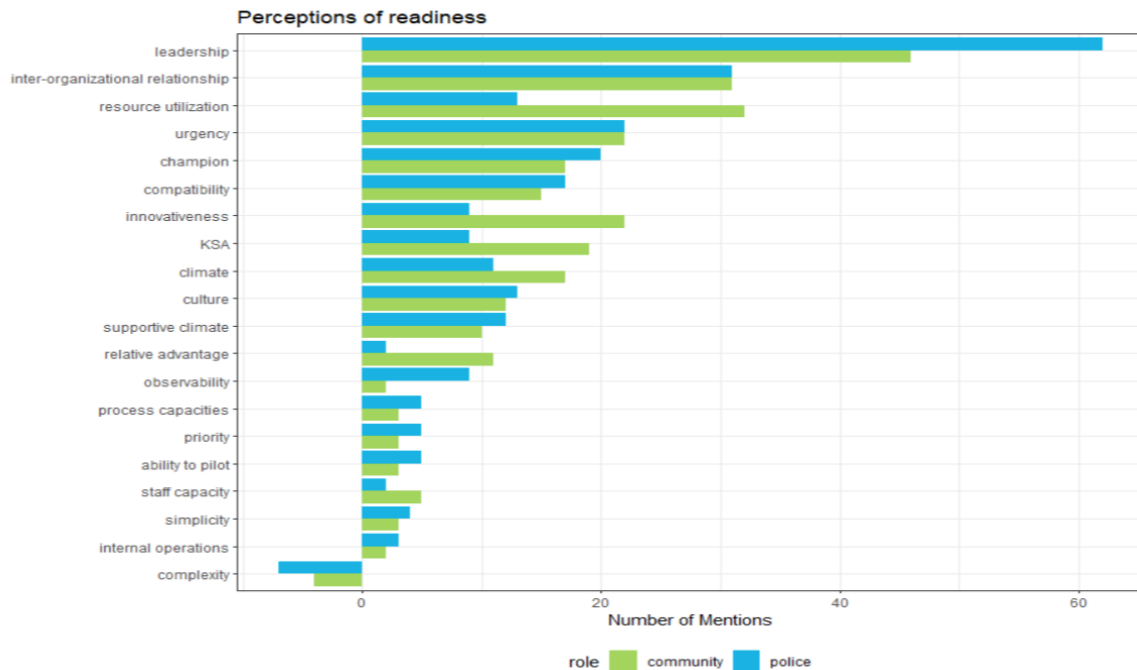


Figure 1. Perceptions of Readiness by Role

NCYEI Steering Committee

The NCYEI steering committee was an integral group for learning more about the readiness within North Columbia. The steering committee included residents, members of local organizations, police, and people who worked within the community. Notes were recorded for each steering committee meeting. Using the R=MC2 model for organizational readiness, topics from the meetings were distilled into themes and categorized by the capacity and motivation subcomponents. Table 5 shows these themes. The steering committee tended to focus on issues of capacity more than motivation. The four readiness subcomponents most often brought up in the steering committee meetings were: culture, structure, resource utilization, and inter-organizational relationships. Some of these themes were focused within the steering committee (developing a culture of trust and equity, addressing the need to change steering committee structure over time). Others were focused on the broader community (how to utilize and connect resources, strengthening relationships across organizations). The two community focused themes, resource utilization and inter-organizational relationships—echoed major needs identified during Visioning Day and are directly related to areas of focus in COMPASS.

Table 5. NCYEI Meeting Themes

General Capacity		
Themes	Quotes/Examples	Subcomponent
Developing norms within NCYEI and the community	Steering committee norms, using first names	Culture
	Trust, Equity, and Cultural Bias/Competency are issues	
	"Intentionality & consistency is key"	
	"Wearing normal clothes over a uniform will allow these community members to open up and tell police the resources they may need"	
	Trust between the community and law enforcement is growing	
Feeling empowered by being part of the NCYEI	"Now that I have you guys I feel empowered, I feel hopeful. I see solutions. I see change." "This isn't about reducing crime - it is about giving someone food or safety or a better life so crime doesn't happen in the first place."	Climate
Revisiting/revising NCYEI structure	May have grown passed the Friday meetings, and we will rethink our structure. Turn-over in housing management role is an issue.	Structure/internal operations
Coordinating systems	There are a lot of systems at play. Political, housing, there are lots of layers. There is a lot we can do in this community to build up community.	
Need good communication processes	Mention that clear communication processes are important [but no real discussion about what those processes should be]	
Need to try new things and organizational structures to get things done	Thinking about how to work smarter, not harder. 1) a leadership committee that meets once a month 2) that would allow for more ability to be engaged with specific things	Innovativeness
Need for a community navigator	A community navigator is needed to connect people with case manager	Staff Capacity
Need to connect and build resources	Lack of jobs, resource center needed, but there are resources for access to food	Resource Utilization
	"bring together police and community for financial literacy"	

	The importance of resources. "The pastor and his wife. The community being there for us. It didn't matter what we needed, no matter what time of day. They were there."	
Resources already in the community	See Visioning activity. 2) "Mission": "There are many great assets in the community. If we all work together to achieve our shared goals, we can make it happen faster."	
Need an assets database	ceasefire specific asset map	
How data is used and communicated	Using data from Visioning Day report; 2) Community Conversations, how data was used and communicated (5.19)	Process capacities
Balancing planning and action	90% is planning, for 10% of action... [NCYEI members] want to see more balance.	
Innovation-specific capacity		
Building Empowerment	NCYEI steering committee feels empowered to take this [work] on.	Knowledge, skills, abilities
Education on support	"Educate all of our communities to support each other"	
Parents need resources	"By working in the school system, I know how out of control children can be. Not saying the parents are bad, but the parents don't have the resources that they need. It's a generational issue.", 2) "What was missing for me? We have to find a way to empower the parents as well as the kids. As a recruiter, I knew what it was like to look for a kid who didn't have a parent, a dad. I knew how to get them to sell drugs for me...Once we figure out how to get parents engaged, we need to teach them parenting skills. They don't know what signs to look for. They can't tell if their kid is in a gang."	
Point person for different projects	"It will be helpful to have a point person for each area/project."	Program Champion
Developing a supporting climate	Letting people know they have a place at the table. If they can't make it to the table, we bring the chairs to them.	Supportive climate
	"Through empowerment you have ownership, through ownership you have sustainability"	
	"It's more than just food when they come to you for food; this is how you build a relationship and trust."	
Consistent relationships	"Consistency is needed"	Inter-organizational relationships
Good police-community relationships	A good relationship between law enforcement and the community can affect how bad situations are handled	
Create opportunities for youth leadership.	Youth voice advisory council development (2.19). 2) Inviting youth to the steering committee meetings (5.19)	

Desire to bring people/orgs/groups together	"Maybe Serve and Connect can draft letters and send them to churches to invite them to these meetings." 2) Missing 50% of the people at the table 3) We must bring the kids to the table!, 3) List of who else to engage 4) Inviting youth to the steering committee meetings, 5) The idea of having someone with lived experience brought to the table was brought up.	
Diversity within NCYEI is important	There is a positive view of the diversity at the table - it sparks new ideas	Intra-organizational relationships
Improve relationships within the NCYEI steering committee	Can we make things more relational (within the steering committee?), 2) Welcome Table idea introduced (5.19), 3) more Welcome Table planning and establishing steering committee ground rules, 4) more Welcome Table planning	
Motivation		
Need to prioritize the work	It's hard to get people to prioritize this work.	Priority
Benefit of COMPASS/NCYEI	We care about empowerment "So this generations and the next generation can have the support they need."	Relative Advantage
Need for different ways to address youth crime	Youth as young as 10 are being recruited into gangs. The options are to either arrest them or let them go. What if there was a different option?	
Seeing change and momentum	People are grateful for "the momentum and changes that have been seen so far in the community"	Observability
	Seeing buds of change - seeing positive light beyond planned events, in interaction with others. Starting to see growth. "Now that I have you guys I feel empowered, I feel hopeful. I see solutions. I see change."	
	I see what the coalition is trying to do in this community. I know it is going to work.	

Early on broad needs were discussed; over time the focus changed as unified understanding and needs were identified, relationships were strengthened, and the steering committee moved to considerations of readiness. Additionally, meetings began focusing on concrete action steps and how to best structure the work. We used an analytic method called Natural Language Processing to look deeper into what the NCYEI steering committee meeting minutes could tell us about the readiness of NCYEI. The plot below shows the changes in the "big three" readiness components over 2019 (motivation, innovation-specific capacity, and general capacity). While readiness waxed and waned, the steering committee meeting minutes showed potential gains in the capacities. Specifically, it appears that general capacity was a major focus, which makes sense as the steering committee was forming and developing norms and processes. Innovation-specific capacity as a focus declined over the summer, as the steering committee was focusing on building their internal culture and climate (through the Welcome Table), but increased in the fall as specific action and campaigns began to be more in focus (e.g., food bank at North Pointe). Motivation for the work fluctuated less throughout the year and appeared stable.

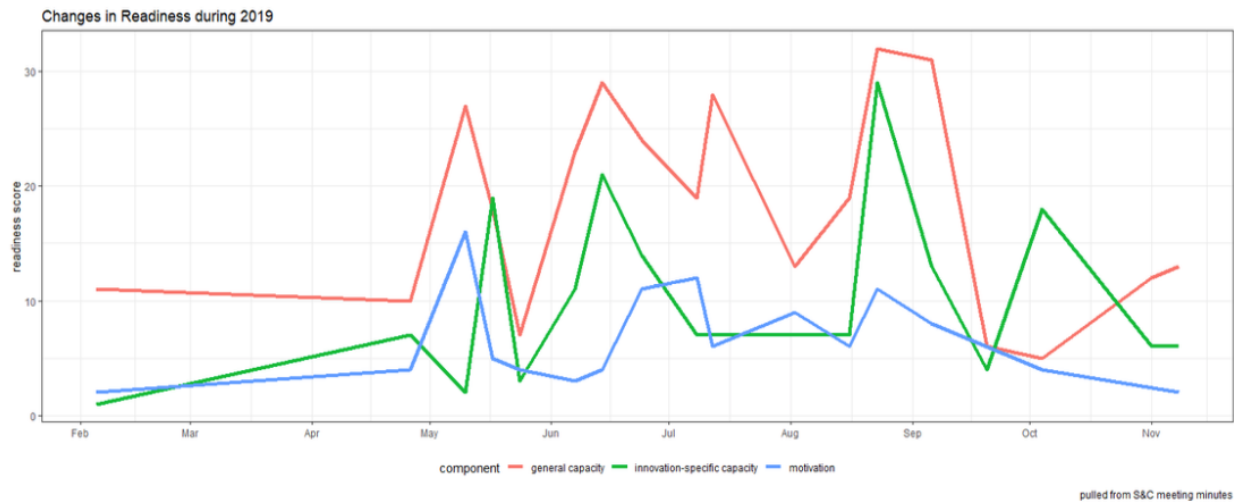


Figure 2. Change in Readiness

Breaking down motivation subcomponents (below), we can see the primary drivers of the fluctuations (priority and compatibility). Most other subcomponents were stable, though urgency has crept up over the year, indicating increased readiness for action.

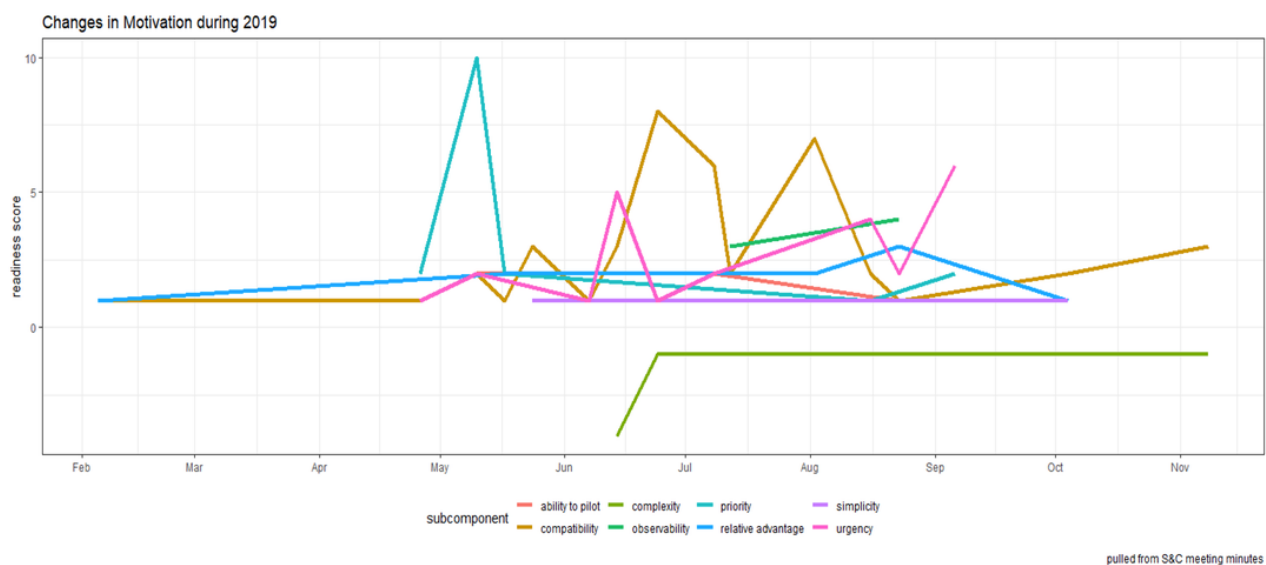


Figure 3. Change in Motivation

There were large swings in the innovation-specific capacity subcomponents except for supportive climate. This indicates that steering committee members felt an increase in supportive climate as relationships became stronger and more individuals became involved in the steering committee. There may have been a drop in innovation-specific capacity over the summer, again, likely due to the focus on general capacity (specifically climate and culture) during that time.

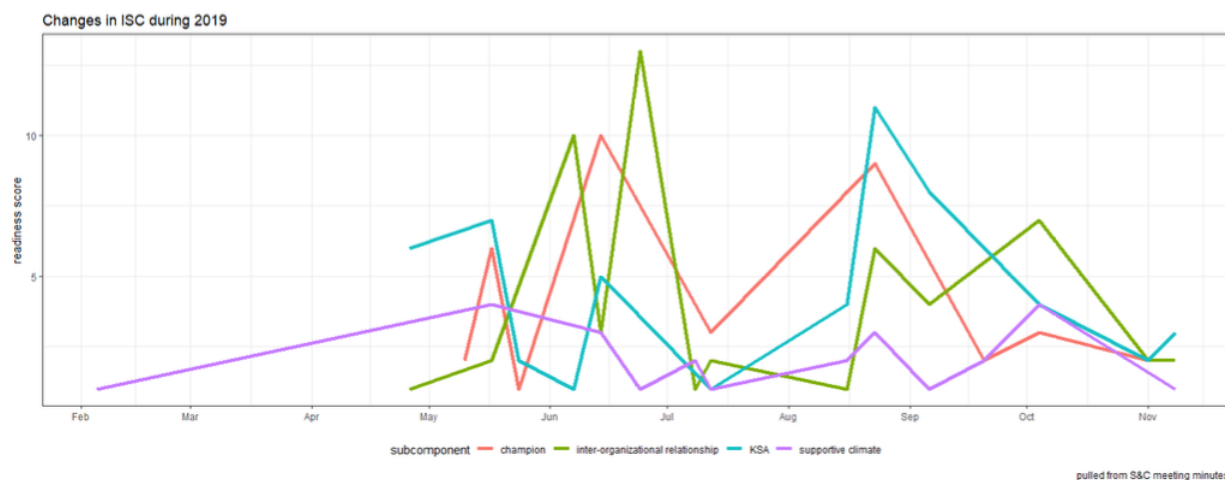


Figure 4. Change in Innovation-Specific Capacity

We also reviewed minutes for positive or negative words. The length of bar shows the number of times + or – words were used in the minutes. The mid-August meeting appears to have been especially volatile. At that meeting, multiple community members shared their personal stories of struggle and perseverance within the community. Those stories included trauma, past experiences of abuse, and current bullying of youth. There was a focus on the need for parents to be involved if any programs were to effectively impact youth.

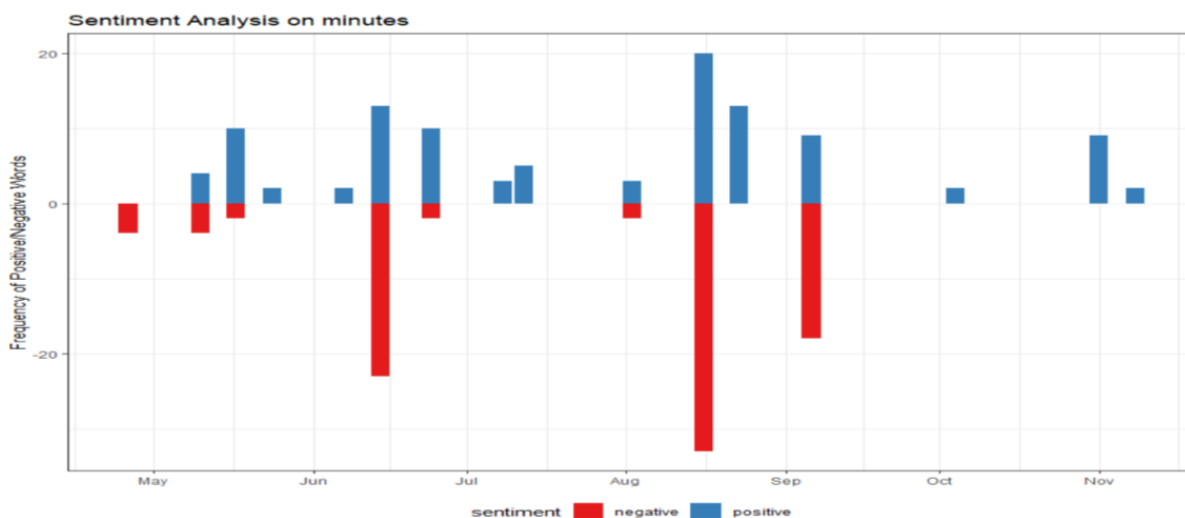


Figure 5. Positive and Negative Words

Despite some negative foci in the steering committee meetings, correcting for the length of meeting minute, we can see that the majority of meetings were positive.

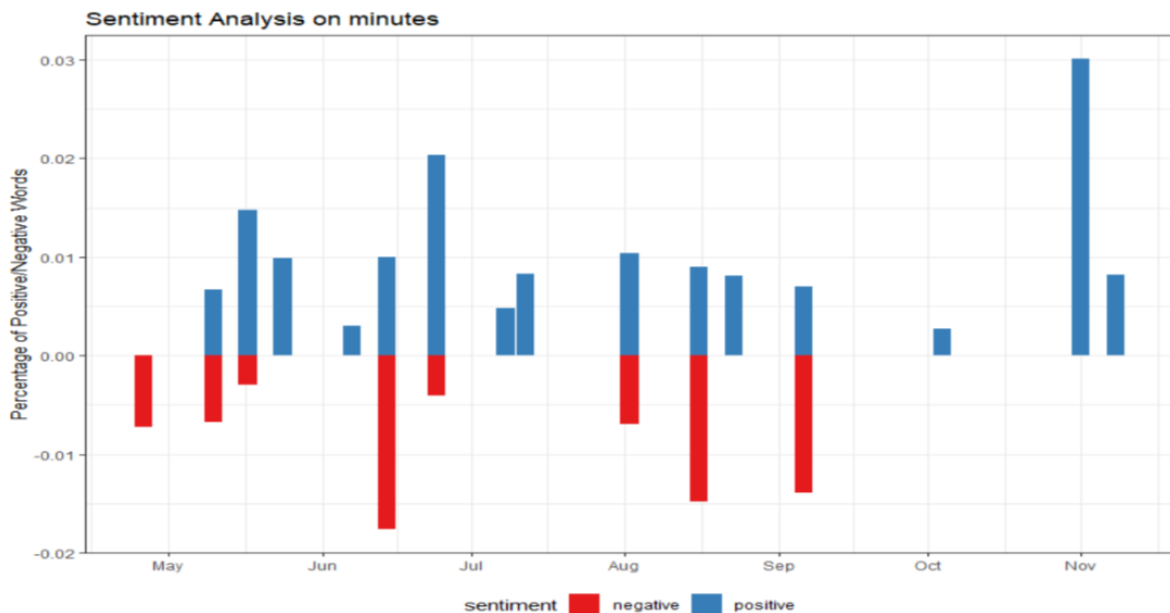


Figure 6. Sentiment Adjusted for Length

Unlike the Launch, Visioning Day and steering committee meetings, some events were not part of the initial implementation plan. One of these additions was the Welcome Table SC, a series of workshops designed to help create relational trust, unity, teamwork, and cohesiveness through a group of community members who want to improve racial relations and other problems in their communities. Serve & Connect facilitated the scheduling of the Welcome Table SC, hosted by the South Carolina Collaborative for Race & Reconciliation housed at the University of South Carolina. Many of the formal steering committee members elected to participate in a Welcome Table during the summer of 2019. Community conversations led to a recognition that NCYEI steering committee members needed to develop a shared understanding of the historical context regarding police and community partnerships and build internal trust. While the increased engagement and empowerment of community members is one

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"Trust is why we are here today. It is hard to trust with so many past experiences of harm. Even just one bad interaction sets individuals down a path of mistrust."

"This community lost trust. All they need is love. You guys are giving this community what they need. This community has learned to trust y'all."

"Now that I have you guys I feel empowered, I feel hopeful. I see solutions. I see change."

"I see what the coalition is trying to do in this community. I know it is going to work."

”

factor towards empowering North Columbia to enact and eventually sustain change with minimal support from Serve & Connect, it was clear that the relationships and trust within the NCYEI steering committee needed to be strengthened before the steering committee would be ready to work together in the community effectively. Participants completed a survey about their experience in the Welcome Table. Positive changes in trust and perceived personal power of steering committee members through the Welcome Table process were reported. As one NCYEI steering committee members put it: “I have more power because of the connections I have made.”

Change in Trust and Perceived Power

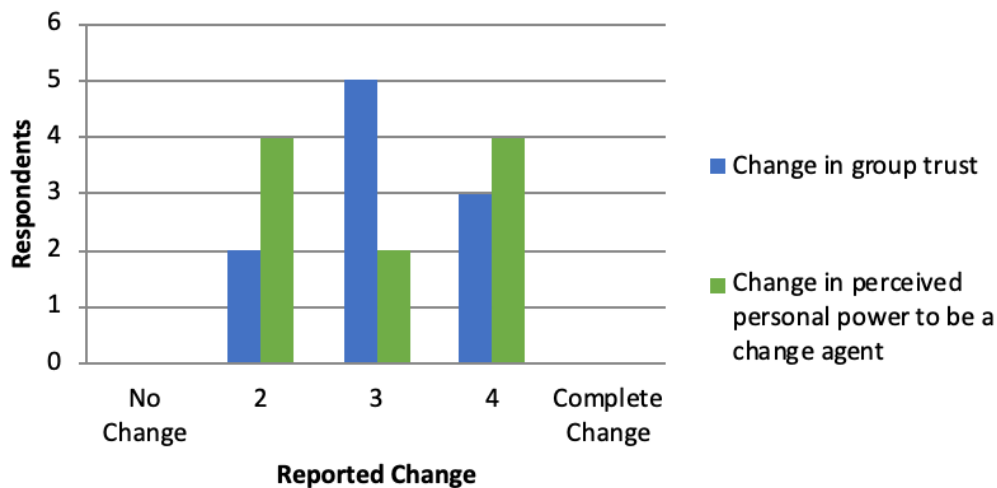


Figure 7. Impact of the Welcome Table on NCYEI Steering Committee Members

Analysis of NCYEI steering committee meeting notes also show an explicit focus on trust over time. The plot below shows how often phrases related to trust and mutual respect were documented in the meeting minutes. Though trust was discussed more often earlier on, it has consistently been mentioned across steering committee meetings, demonstrating trust as integral to the NCYEI.



Figure 8. Discussion of Trust

We also compared how often trust and relationships were discussed by different roles—specifically police compared to community members. It is important to note that the chart below includes more community interviews than police interviews. This can in part account for the difference in the amount of time trust and relationships are mentioned.

It is clear that both police and communities recognize the importance of relationships, but the interviews reflect differences in specificity. Community members recognize the specific relationships needed to move toward health and wellness (i.e., calling out by name specific organizations or people; see the example quotes below). Police know that these are important but talk more broadly about the relationship state. However, trust is the second most frequently occurring word used by police when we looked at positive and negative words within interviews. This demonstrates that trust is extremely important to police.

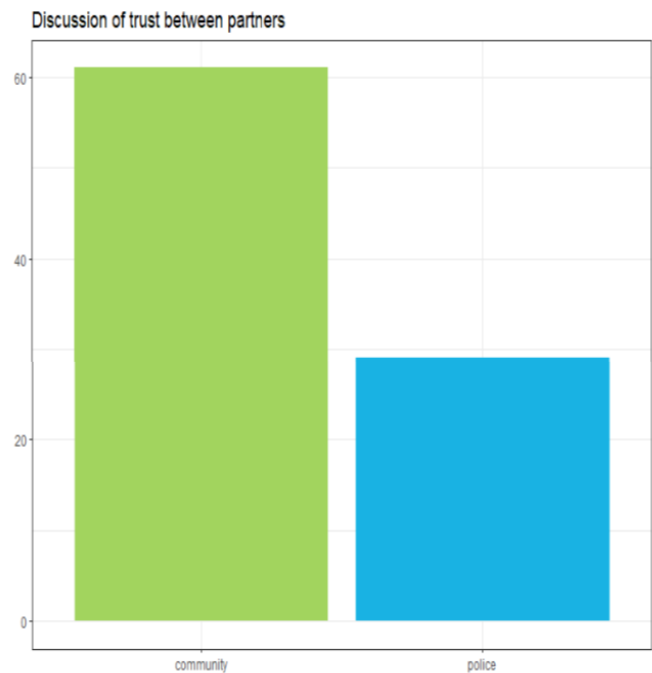


Figure 9. Discussion of Trust by Role

“We can’t support them on their own, just like Harvest Hope and Serve and Connect can’t do it on their own. When you pull together organizations who have similar mindsets of really wanting to do some good in the community, it is much more powerful than if we tried to do this on our own...There is just something about bringing organizations together for the community, so thank you for that.”
-Community partner

“Serve and Connect along with Harvest Hope did a great job getting the word out [about Bountiful Harvest]. I have never seen community folks looking so happy, appreciative, and engaged. And for us, at Bi-Lo, it is something we are going to want to do every year, or throughout the year, whenever Serve and Connect and Harvest Hope have other activities for us. This really gave us an opportunity to do something good while doing something good for the company. This community, like all of our communities, is really important to us.”
- Bi-Lo community partner

Another example of a series of activities that had a profound impact on trust between the community and police and building the NCYEI base was the summer series events. Through community conversations, it was clear that trust in the NCYEI steering committee (and involved police) by the 29203 community needed to be built.



First, community members voicing attitudes of “here today, gone tomorrow” in response to a new group coming to work with the community led to the formalization of the NCYEI steering committee. However, the steering committee also needed to demonstrate their consistent presence and commitment to the North Columbia community.

A summer series of events was held to provide fun and casual opportunities for police and community residents to interact. The summer series was strategically held each week for four weeks, alternating between weeks at two high need housing complexes in the community. This allowed the NCYEI and engaged police to meet residents where they lived and demonstrate consistency. These events involved fun activities including a water fight, cookout, and sports.

Table 5 shows the engagement of partner organizations and individuals in the NCYEI, including engagement by people who live in 29203 and by formal involvement in the steering committee. The two columns of data in Table 6 show changes in engagement before and after the summer series.

Table 6.Engagement in NCYEI

	Jan-July 2019	Aug-Nov 2019
Number of organizations represented	67	78
Total engaged individuals	193	208
Partners who attended at least 1 meeting or helped facilitate an event	146	162
Average number of meetings attended or events attended in a support role	3.1	2.9

Average number of meetings attended or events attended in a support role by partners who attended at least 1 meeting or event.	3.3	3.8
People who have formally joined the steering committee	69	86
Average number of meetings attended by formal steering committee members	5.2	5.7
People whose zip code we have recorded	43 (22.3% total)	43 (20.67% total)
People who live in 29203 zip code	19 (9.8% total; 44.2% of recorded zip codes)	19 (9.1% total; 44.2% of recorded zip codes)
Steering committee members reported living in 29203*	8 (4.2% total; 11.6% steering committee)	8 (3.9% total; 10.8% steering committee)
Total hours of engagement	978.3	1322.5

*The number of community members who attended and took active leadership roles in the NCYEI steering committee increase substantially at the end of July 2019. However, many who attended did not sign in or provide contact information initially. Therefore, this number is an underrepresentation of current community member steering committee membership.

Beyond blanket engagement in steering committee meetings, we can also see where increases in meeting attendance occurred. The spike in meeting attendance at time point 20 in Figure 10 occurred directly after the summer series of events. Several neighborhood leaders became engaged in NCYEI through the summer series and began regularly participating in meetings. Moreover, these community leaders actively recruited other community members to come to meetings. This shift, towards an even more community-led base, resulted in the ability to move more strategically towards actions to address community needs. In fact, the dip in attendance during the later time points is a result of restructuring as meetings began being separated between strategic planning and community sharing meetings.

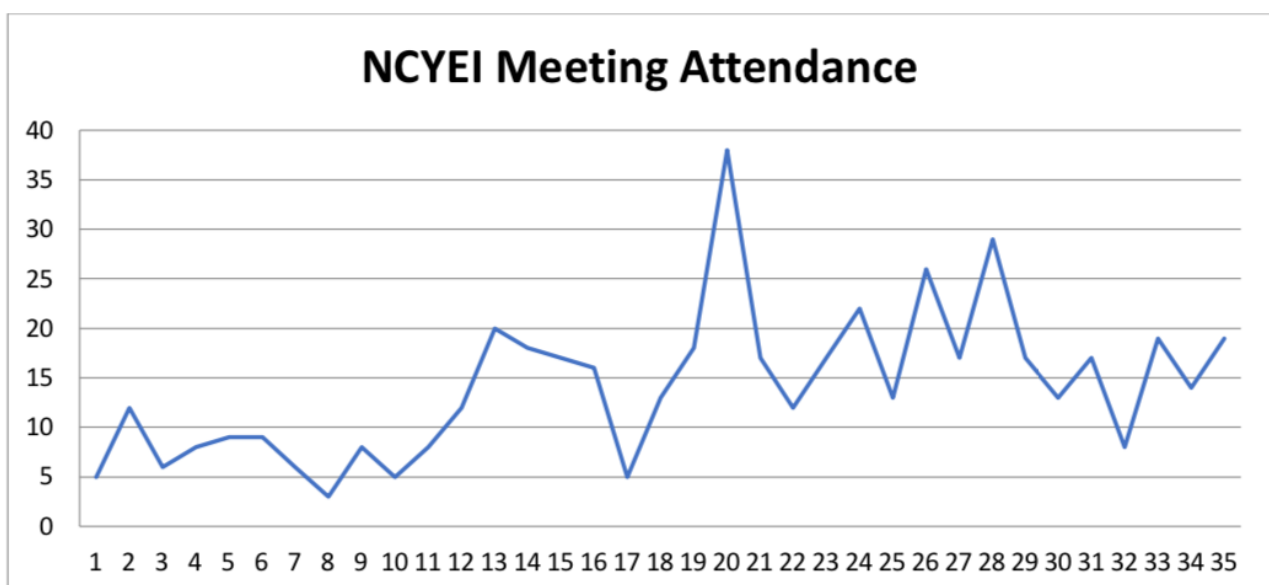


Figure 10. NYCEI Meeting Attendance Over Time

Qualitative data arose that community residents were beginning to gain more trust and comfort with police presence and intervention in the neighborhood. A common theme at community conversations at the end of summer 2019 was that residents wanted more police presence in the community. This was a clear theme in multiple community conversations where residents were explicit about wanting more police around to help the community feel safer. The box to the right includes quotes from community members with suggestions for increasing police presences and trust.

Police officers also reported evidence of increased trust in police. There has been a history in the community of residents not calling the police to intervene in potentially dangerous altercations. However, following a number of NCYEI events that facilitated more police-community interaction (Farmday Funday, Mission Dream Possible, and three of the four summer series events), police were called about a heated argument occurring at one of the community housing complexes where the summer series events were being held. While the argument unfortunately resulted in a fatal shooting before police could arrive, officers on the NCYEI steering committee were encouraged that police had been contacted in an attempt to prevent violence.

“

“Take off the uniforms and come around. Put on a shirt and just come to a barbeque or come to a meeting...”

“I would say just for them to come out and not just patrol the area, but come out and talk to the people so they know that you’re here no matter what. Just a little bit more of that so people can get a little bit more trust.”

“Our police officers are a valuable jewel”

”

Identified needs and opportunities for action in North Columbia

The intentional focus of COMPASS on relationships and trust did more than lead to a growing base of actively engaged community members, police, and community partners in North Columbia. It also enabled Serve & Connect and the NCYEI to receive authentic feedback and communication about the community's needs from residents and stakeholders. A community model developed in April 2019 identified components the community saw as important for impacting positive safety and youth empowerment.



Figure 11. Community Model

Visioning Day

Multiple events and activities provided community residents and partners to identify needs and opportunities for action within North Columbia. Participants at Visioning Day identified factors influencing youth empowerment, including strengths within the community, and the challenges the community faced around youth safety. Table 7 shows these strength and needs.

Table 7. Visioning Day Identified Needs and Strengths

Needs/Challenges	Strengths
Safety	Many great programs in the community
Building trust	Connection to the community
Building relationships	Collaborations between stakeholders
Addressing whole family (trauma, parenting skills, housing, racism, transportation)	
Building youth skills	
Getting youth input on needs	
Limited resources	
Lack of knowledge about resources	
Coordinating resources	

Needs included improved safety, building trust and relationships between individuals and organizations in the community, and limited and poorly coordinated resources. Participants in Visioning Day also emphasized the importance of getting youth input and the systemic and social challenges the families in the community face that impact youth empowerment and safety. Participants noted that many youth and their families in the community have experienced trauma, racism, and unsecure housing and transportation. They agreed that these social determinants are essential to address if changes in safety and youth empowerment are to be systemically improved.

A mapping exercise was facilitated by Dr. Lauren Hajjar, our academic partner from the Relational Coordination Research Collaborative, to help participants visualize relationships and the strength of relationships related to youth accessing resources in the community. Participants in Visioning Day broke into five groups, each of which mapped their perception of the interrelationship of different individual (e.g., parents, teachers) and organizational (e.g., the police department, library, department of social services) stakeholders relevant for youth receiving the resources they need to thrive. Green lines between stakeholders represented strong positive relationships, blue lines indicated some positive relationship, and red lines indicated weak relationships. The activity provided additional themes about the relationships and connections within the community. Though each map differed, overall, the maps indicated fairly strong connections between youth and schools and parents and schools in the community. The stronger relationships represent opportunities to action because connection and collaboration are already in place. Weak connections were reported between youth and law enforcement, as well as parents and law enforcement. There was variability in how connected groups thought faith-based organizations, non-profits, the library, and parks & recreation were. Mental health services were not connected to other community assets. This demonstrated that certain organizations were not strongly connected (e.g., mental health) and indicated particular needs within the community.

Table 8. NYCEI Steering Committee Visioning Exercise

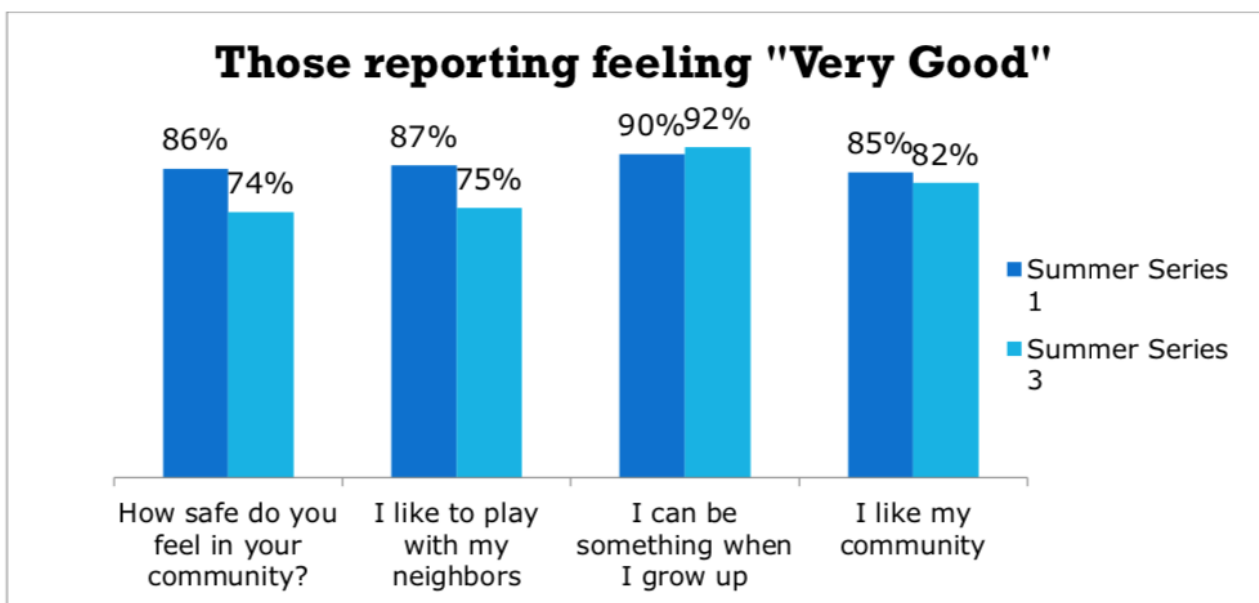
Safety Needs	Strengths	Safety Wish
Collaboration: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Transparency - Activities - Education in schools, churches, & communities - Protection from negative influences 	Willingness: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Voice(s) - Love & compassion for youth - Unity planning - Passionate community leaders willing to collaborate their resources - Community Pride - Community Members 	Collaboration: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Awareness, getting the word out on the good things - Greater funding & resources - Education for the community on dealing with change - For everyone to come together, not just in time of need
Resources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Resource Availability - Knowledge of issues - Ensuring safety while outdoors - Conflict resolution - Safety in school, stores, & streets 	Networks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Historical roots in the community - Community Collaboration for change - Schools, organizations, & local government investing time, energy, & resources 	Direction: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - S.M.A.R.T Goals - Community ownership - Community in which each member lives self-determination, reconciliation practices, & restorative justice practices. The community is defined by its members.
Relationships: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mentorship - Relationship Building - Positive Role Models being in the community promoting unity - Understanding & addressing schools role in youth safety (not just physical, but social, emotional, and mental safety) 		Physical: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Safer, better, up to code public housing - Increase in bike and horse patrols for parks - Kids go home from school to a safe, supportive home and community - Mentorships for kids/families in dangerous, low-income housing - Reduction in violent crime

The visioning exercise raised some of the same recurring needs: better collaboration and relationships and connection to resources. However, the visioning exercise also brought out more specific safety needs such as having positive role models, protecting youth and the community from negative outside sources, easy access to guns, and need to conflict resolution support. While many of the same community strengths identified at Visioning Day were also reiterated (strong sense of community, individuals and local organizations as resources), the NYCEI steering committee attendees voiced a desire to have more police presence in the community, community ownership, and a way to communicate about the good things that occur in North Columbia.

Community Events and Conversations

Understanding the needs of North Columbia could not be done by only relying on those who attended Visioning Day and the NYCEI steering committee meetings. Residents were invited to community conversations and asked their opinions during community events. One positively received method for getting community feedback during events was the utilization of dot surveys. Questions were written on large pieces of paper, and community members placed a sticker, or dot, next to the responses they most agreed with.

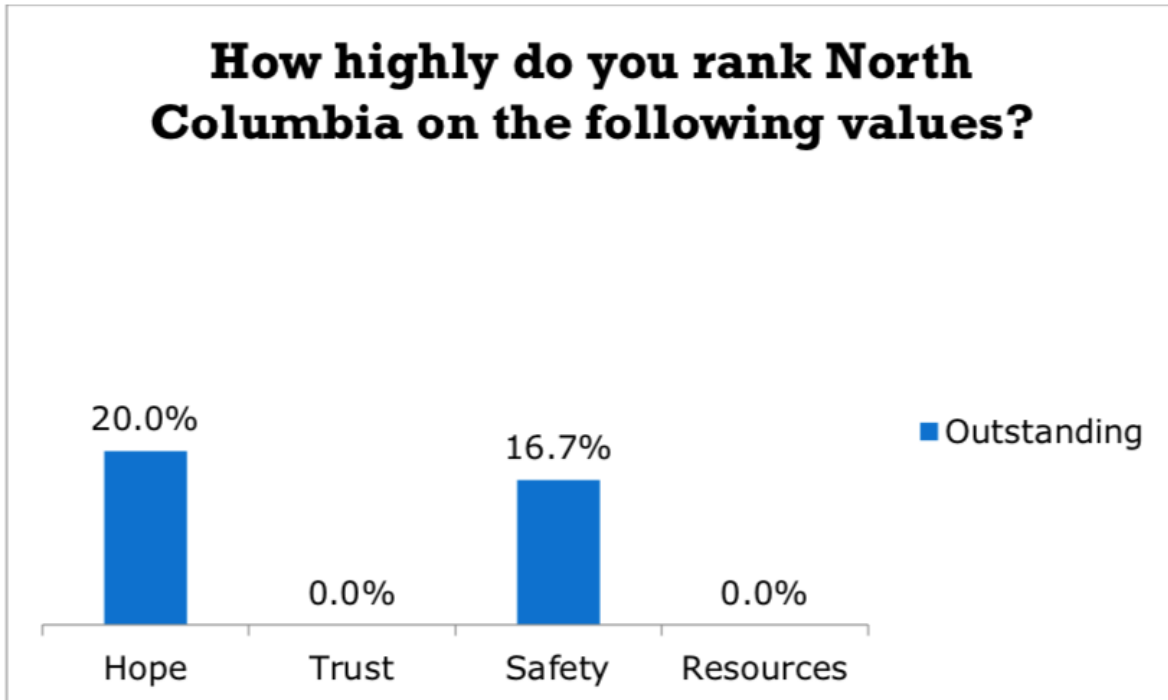
Examples of dot survey responses are shown in the tables below. Overall, the adapted method demonstrated good response rates and useful information about the community's feelings of hope, trust, safety, and resource access. Summer Series dot survey data indicated positive perceptions about the community overall. Responses tended to be somewhat more positive for the first Summer Series event, and more response options on the dot survey at the second event resulted in more variability in responses and few participants choosing the highest response option. Participants in Farmday Funday tended to choose responses that were in the highest or lowest category compared with more neutral responses. Responses were more positive than negative for all questions, with the highest option of outstanding being reported most often for each question. However, safety and trust were rated as outstanding only slightly more often than very poor, indicating that those were two areas with particular room for improvement. Qualitative feedback about a particular event garnered some of the most powerful support for the dot survey method. One community resident responded to the question what did you like best about today's event? By stating that her favorite thing was that "Right away, you wanted to know what I thought [with the dot survey]."



*Very Good was the highest option on a scale of Very Poorly to Very Good

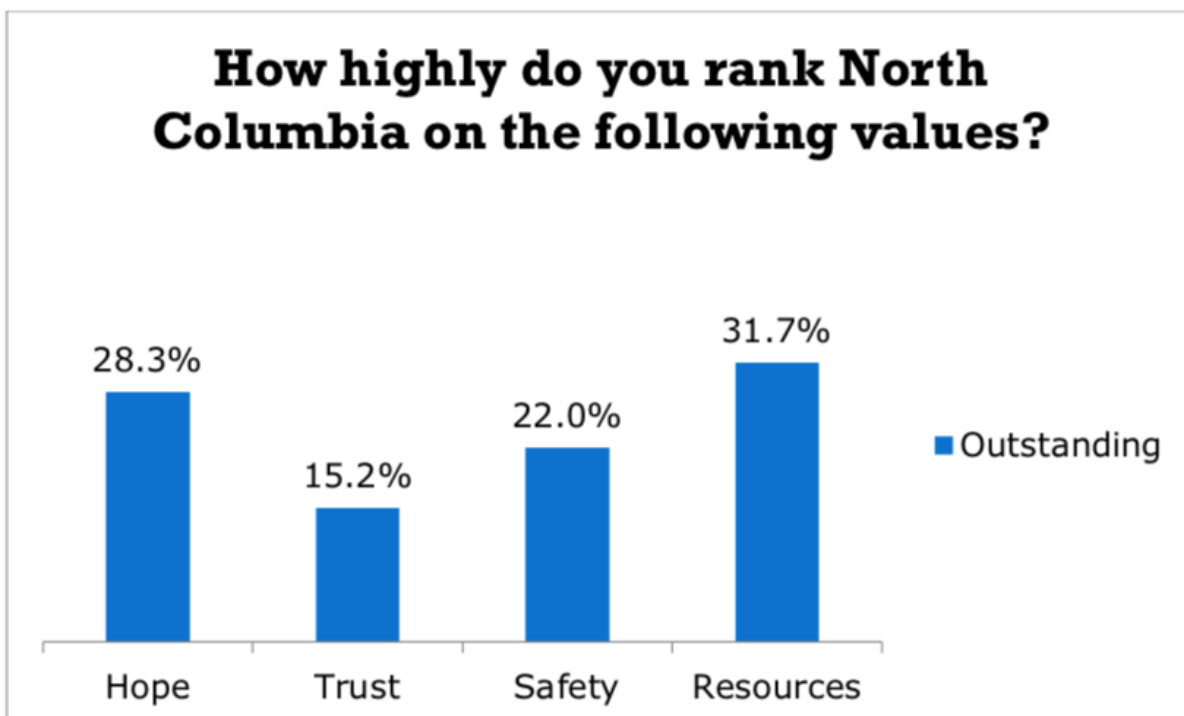
*Represents over 100 respondents. The number of responses per question varied.

Figure 13. Summer Series 1 and 3



*Outstanding was the most positive response option on a scale from Very Poor to Outstanding

Figure 14. Summer series 2



*Outstanding was the most positive response option on a scale from Very Poor to Outstanding

*Represents over 113 respondents. The number of responses per question varied.

Figure 15. Farmday Funday

Additionally, strategic listening sessions were held to provide residents and police opportunities to voice their concerns, needs, and hopes for the community and police-community relationships. These included one-on-one conversations and group sessions. Sixteen listening session recordings were transcribed.

The listening sessions not only provided information about stakeholders' perceptions of police-community relationships and readiness to collaborate, but acted as a method for promoting relationships through deeper understanding. For example, a listening session was held with a mothers group in the community where the mothers voiced frustration that police were dismissive of their concerns and even preventing or addressing crimes because the area was known for dangerous and criminal activity. One mother said, "My house got broken into. They kicked the deadbolt down and the police came 45 minutes later. The police said "what did you expect? Look at the neighborhood you live in". In the real world you're supposed to take fingerprints, but I ended up feeling worse after they came than before. And my house ended up getting broken into again and I didn't even call the police. I felt like calling the neighborhood crack head because he could protect me better than them." Based on the concerns and mistrust raised by the mothers group, the chief of police asked if the mothers would be willing to talk with him. A conversation was scheduled, bringing the community mothers group and the police chief together.

Summary

Serve & Connect has worked very closely with the North Columbia community and partner organizations with the implementation of COMPASS to work towards improved youth safety and empowerment in the community. The COMPASS model, which integrates multiple evidence-informed theories including empowerment evaluation, organizational readiness and relational coordination, places an explicit focus on building readiness for trusting relationships and coordinated collaboration of resources. Trust and resources have been identified by the North Columbia community as important needs to address community safety. This demonstrates face validity of the COMPASS model. Moreover, quantitative and qualitative data indicates that Serve & Connect and the NCYEI have built trust and relationships in North Columbia over the past year. These relationships have allowed for open conversations with the community which have led to understanding about how to adapt methods to meet the community's needs, a larger base of community members within the NCYEI, and momentum towards actionable change.

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