

Leading on Opportunity
Charlotte-Mecklenburg County, NC

Education, Children and Families

A young person who has been well-served by our education system is one who is prepared to thrive in life as a contributing member of society. This journey begins with early childhood care and education and continues into the K-12 system, but that is only part of the picture. Teachers and schools have a central role, but as part of a larger constellation of systems and supports that impact a young person's development. These include (but are not limited to) family stability and well-being, access to meaningful post-secondary opportunities such as college or skills-based credentials, and workforce development and community and economic development.

Vision

Charlotte-Mecklenburg County, NC, is a community that cares about all our children and youth – regardless of income, race, and zip code – and where all our children feel they belong, dream big, and find the opportunities to achieve their dreams. Within a generation, every child in Charlotte-Mecklenburg will have an equal chance to achieve social and economic success.

Overview of the Initiative

Leading on Opportunity was created in response to a troubling finding in a 2013 study by Harvard University/UC Berkeley: the economically thriving Charlotte-Mecklenburg region ranked 50th out of 50 communities in upward mobility for children born into the lowest income quartile. Representatives of the public, private, and nonprofit sectors as well as residents convened and ultimately launched ***Leading on Opportunity***, a champion and catalyst for community engaged action focused on systems change in Charlotte-Mecklenburg County. The initiative seeks to improve three systems: early childhood education, college and career readiness, and family stability and serves as an amplifier and convener across to encourage innovation, improve systems integration and measure outcomes. The impact of segregation and the importance of social capital are cross-cutting factors informing all efforts.

There are 21 different strategies across the three issue areas and two cross-cutting factors. Information about them can be found in the attached document (see below).

In response to the COVID-19 crisis, ***Leading on Opportunity*** is supporting the [COVID-19 Response Fund](#), a local multi-sector effort providing assistance to families and individuals in need. Funding partners include Lending Tree and the City of Charlotte.

Partners

Key partners include: Bank of America, Central Piedmont Community College, Charlotte Executive Leadership Council, Charlotte Mecklenburg Community Foundation, Charlotte-Mecklenburg School District, City of Charlotte, Communities in Schools, Foundation for the Carolinas, Mecklenburg County, Read Charlotte, and the United Way of Central Carolinas.

Other Resources

Opportunity Task Force Report (2017) - [link](#)

Information about the 21 strategies - [link](#)