2025 CONFERENCE

RISING *to* NEW HEIGHTS
Where Communities Lead & Impact Grows

October 14-15, 2025 | Sheraton Denver Downtown Hotel

SCHEDULE-AT-A-GLANCE

Tuesday, October 14, 2025: Workshop Day

9:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.   **Registration**

10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.   **Impact Workshop: Community Data Lab**
This interactive, hands-on workshop is designed for community leaders who want to make smarter, more meaningful use of community data to advance local priorities.

Participants will bring their own strategic action plans, datasets, or community goals, and work alongside peers and expert facilitators to explore what they are, could be, and should be measuring to build healthier, more collaborative communities.
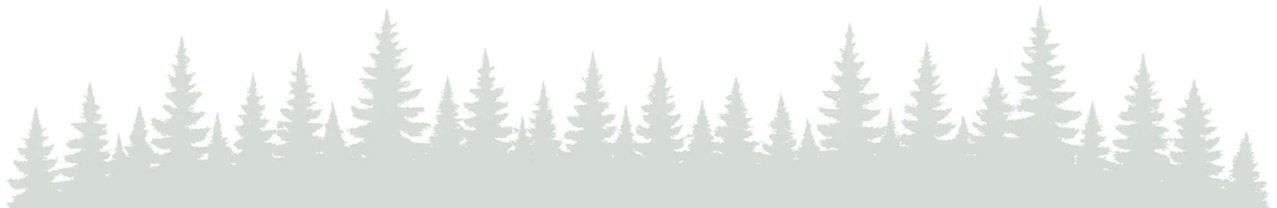
The workshop combines instructional guidance with collaborative working sessions. Facilitators will provide practical tools, real-world examples, and step-by-step support to help participants:

- *Distinguish between activities and outcomes, and understand how to connect day-to-day efforts to long-term impact*
- *Determine whether an intervention is making a difference using real-world data and community-driven indicators*
- *Identify and track meaningful measures such as increased access, improved trust, or reduced disparities*
- *Develop a sustainable process for managing data, ensuring the capacity to reflect, adapt, and improve over time*
- *Apply the Communities of Excellence Common Community Scorecard, including a new tool for monitoring internal process measures related to governance and operations*

Whether you're launching a new initiative, coordinating a multi-sector partnership, or building on a long-standing collaborative effort, this workshop will help you build the habits, knowledge, and shared language needed to evaluate progress and strengthen outcomes.

Note: *All participants should bring their current scorecards, dashboards, strategy maps and/or related data. Current participants and Alumni of the COE National Learning Collaborative should also bring their most recent COE application and feedback report.*

4:30 – 6:00 p.m.   **Community Awards Celebration & Reception**

Wednesday, October 15: Community Spirit Day

You are encouraged to wear apparel to represent your community.

7:30 – 8:30 a.m.	**Registration & Continental Breakfast**
8:30 – 9:00 a.m.	**General Session: Welcome and Communities of Excellence 2026 Update**
9:00 – 9:45 a.m.	**Opening Keynote**
9:45 – 10:00 a.m.	**Morning Coffee Break**

10:00 – 10:45 a.m.   **General Session: From The Future Is Already Here – Elevating the Next Generation**

What do rising leaders want from the communities they call home, and how can we better understand and engage with younger generations as we climb toward stronger, more connected futures? In this dynamic panel, young professionals and students will share what inspires them, what challenges they see, and what they need to thrive. From affordable living and meaningful careers to belonging, creativity, and civic voice, these emerging leaders will offer a fresh perspective on the path forward. Join us as we explore how to:

- *Build bridges across generations and sectors*
- *Design strategies that elevate what matters to younger residents*
- *Shift from assumptions to authentic engagement*

Come ready to listen, reflect, and take away practical ideas for building stronger connections across generations.

10:45 – 11:00 a.m.   **Stretch Break**

11:00 – 11:45 a.m.   **BREAKOUT SESSIONS: Tools for the Journey**

Ready to scale the summit? These sessions will feature practical tools to help support your journey. Explore your interests with sessions in four specialized tracks.

1. ***Governance and Sustainability****: Designing governance structures that foster long-term, cross-sector collaboration and sustainable community impact.*
2. ***Community Voice and Equity****: Centering equity in action by amplifying resident leadership and creating meaningful opportunities for engagement.*
3. ***Collaboration and Strategy****: Strengthening partnerships and aligning strategies to accelerate progress and shift from reactive to integrated approaches.*
4. ***Impact and Data****: Identifying, measuring, and communicating what matters most to drive learning, accountability, and lasting change.*

11:45 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.   **Communities of Excellence Networking Luncheon**

12:30 – 1:10 p.m.   **General Session: Roots of Collaboration – Community Roundtable**

*Every thriving community is built on strong roots **–** relationships, trust, and shared purpose. In this interactive roundtable, you'll join peers from across the country to exchange stories, successes, and challenges around building collaborative partnerships. Whether you're working across sectors, navigating power dynamics, or striving to deepen trust in your community, this is your space to connect. Come ready to:*

- *Share what's working and what's not in your collaboration efforts*
- *Hear real-world strategies for building and sustaining cross-sector partnerships*
- *Reflect on the foundational values that drive your work forward*

This session is about conversation, not presentation, because real change begins when communities listen, learn, and grow together.

1:10 – 1:15 p.m.   **Strech Break**

1:15 – 2:00 p.m.	**BREAKOUT SESSIONS: Rising Together – Community Networking Sessions** *Alumni Gathering* *Impact Journey Gathering* *General Participants Session – Getting Started with the Communities of Excellence Framework*
2:00 – 2:15 p.m.	**Stretch Break**
2:15 – 3:15 p.m.	**BREAKOUT SESSIONS: Promising Practice Lightning Rounds** *These interactive, rapid-fire sessions feature two communities presenting a promising practice.*
3:15 – 3:20 p.m.	**Stretch Break**
3:20 – 4:30 p.m.	**Keynote & Closing Session**