Implementing the Upstream Solutions Working Group

A Guide to Align Systems and Organizations in Newcomer Resettlement

Maliha Ali, Charlene Nguyen, Danielle Agraviador, Trenita Childers

American Institutes for Research® (AIR)

Advisory Panel:

Seyoum Berhe, Virginia Office of New Americans
Susannah Lepley, Church World Services
Jill Grumbine, Virginia Department of Health
Neelab Yousafzai, FreshStart Refugee Assistance Center
Baktash Manocher, Newcomer Representative
Subhanullah Shafaq, Newcomer Representative

October 2025

The **Upstream Solutions Working Group Implementation Guide** was developed by a team of researchers at the American Institutes for Research (AIR) as part of the Systems Alignment for Effective Resettlement project, with funding from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's Systems for Action program. The guide incorporates insights from a yearlong process of working with an advisory panel of resettlement experts to develop an alignment approach—the Upstream Solutions Working Group—and assess its feasibility through a pilot test.

The guide offers an introduction to the alignment approach for first-time users and steps to implement the approach. It will benefit from periodic updates as part of ongoing continuous improvement and evaluation at local resettlement sites that implement the Upstream Solutions Working Group.

S4A
Systems for Action

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) is committed to improving health and health equity in the United States. In partnership with others, we are committed to taking bold leaps to transform health in our lifetime and paving the way together to a future where health is no longer a privilege but a right. To achieve that vision, we are deepening our focus on dismantling one of the biggest barriers to health in America, structural racism. For more information, visit www.rwjf.org.

Contents

Section 1: Background

What is systems alignment?

In the United States, newcomer resettlement[1] takes place in a complex environment involving multiple stakeholders: federal, state, and local agencies; nonprofit organizations; health care systems; educational institutions; and community partners. With so many organizations serving the same group of people, resettlement efforts benefit from timely and coordinated responses across multiple systems, programs, and actors.

Systems alignment is a deliberate process to coordinate the work of independent systems and sectors, including the development of shared priorities and goals, governance and decision-making processes, financing and resource allocation approaches, and data and information sources, and coordinated implementation practices and policies.[2]

Quarterly consultations[3] are an opportunity to better align the diverse representatives and stakeholders involved in newcomer resettlement and integration, and center collective efforts around newcomers' priorities. Led by state refugee coordinators in 50 states, quarterly consultations serve as a collaborating platform that regularly convenes partners in resettlement efforts. Quarterly consultations allow different representatives to be apprised of expected newcomer arrivals, examine local capacity to receive them, solicit input from system partners and receiving communities, and prepare for services to match anticipated health and human service needs. These representatives are from the departments of social services, health care, and public health; school districts; public safety; resettlement agencies; and numerous community partners. A critical gap in quarterly consultation procedures is the absence of effective participatory methods for cross-systems efforts, particularly in identifying and addressing bottlenecks in service delivery and policy implementation that affect newcomers as they resettle and integrate.[4,5] Moreover, quarterly consultations miss opportunities to engage

---

[1] Newcomer resettlement refers to the process by which people designated as refugees, asylees, and humanitarian parolees who have left their home country (due to war, persecution or other crises) enter a new country that has granted them permission to stay on the basis of long-term or permanent residence.

[2] Systems for Action. (n.d.). *What is a systems alignment strategy?* Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. https://systemsforaction.org/faq/what-systems-alignment-mechanism

[3] Quarterly consultations are mandated by the Immigration and Nationality Act to provide federal, state, and local stakeholders an opportunity for enhanced information exchange, coordination, and collaboration. The QC process is overseen by Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Refugee Resettlement and the Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration. https://acf.gov/sites/default/files/documents/orr/ACF-ORR-RPB-Policy-Letter-25-03-and-PRM-RA-01-REV-Quarterly-Consultation-Requirements.pdf

[4] Hinkle, L. (2023). *The unmet potential of community consultations in U.S. refugee resettlement.* Migration Policy Institute. https://www.migrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/publications/mpi-us-resettlement-consultations_final.pdf

[5] U.S. Government Accountability Office. (2012). Refugee resettlement: Greater consultation with community stakeholders could strengthen program. https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-12-729

meaningfully with newcomers to identify the extent to which programs and approaches are effective or could be more effective.[6]

How to use this guide

This implementation guide describes a systems alignment approach for quarterly consultations known as the **Upstream Solutions Working Group**. The approach uses a distinct working group structure, process, and set of activities to conduct system mapping (see details below) with the goal of identifying and addressing systemic barriers to resettlement efforts. This guide introduces system mapping in newcomer resettlement, provides steps for developing the working group, and outlines a schedule of activities congruent with quarterly consultation procedures (see Exhibit 3). Included in the Appendix are materials and practical examples to help local resettlement sites get started.

Who may use this guide

A guided approach to systems alignment can give resettlement agency leaders and state refugee coordinators a more structured way to use quarterly consultations for long-term strategic impact, rather than just compliance. State refugee coordinators and resettlement agency leaders and staff can use this guide to implement the alignment approach in their local contexts. Representatives from local and state agencies, schools, hospitals and community partners can be invited to participate in the working group to contribute to a collective strategy that addresses systemic barriers affecting the health and well-being of newcomers and other community members as well.

How the guide was developed

The Upstream Solutions Working Group was developed as part of the Systems Alignment for Effective Resettlement project, with funding from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) Systems for Action program. The Core team partnered with an advisory panel of six resettlement experts and newcomers over 12 months to create the alignment approach—the Upstream Solutions Working Group. The team applied human-centered design to develop the approach and tested its feasibility through a pilot test. The guide incorporates insights from this yearlong process and input from newcomers and resettlement practitioners expected to use the approach. This guide serves as the initial step of introducing the alignment approach for first-time users. Moreover, the pilot test of the approach focused on the specific issue of newcomer housing in northern Virginia. The guide is intended to be flexible for adaptation to other systemic issues in resettlement and various contexts. We recommend periodic updates of

[6] Ali, M., Childers, T., & Awate, E. (2024). *Collaboration in refugee resettlement efforts: Opportunities and strategic recommendations.* American Institutes for Research.

the guide as part of ongoing continuous improvement and evaluation efforts at local resettlement sites that implement the Upstream Solutions Working Group.

Section 2: A Systems Alignment Approach: Upstream Solutions Working Group

The Upstream Solutions Working Group is an alignment approach that was developed with funding from the RWJF Systems for Action program. The approach involves the creation of **a working group that implements a set of processes and activities to identify and address systemic barriers to resettlement efforts**.

Implemented at the local (county or city) level, the approach engages representatives from public health, social service, and human service organizations to create a system map, and leverages insights gained from system mapping to develop actionable strategies.

Why focus on upstream solutions in newcomer resettlement

Common upstream issues often disrupt newcomers' access to resettlement services and supports, and to socioeconomic opportunities that are important for self-sufficiency. These include barriers to affordable and stable housing, lack of culturally relevant behavioral health services, limited access to social and medical benefits, and limited access to employment opportunities.

Such upstream barriers make the work of resettlement harder for resettlement agencies, staff, and other service providers. Because of the intersection of numerous systems involved, there is often no clear or efficient pathway to identify actionable solutions to persistent issues, such as housing instability, that create hurdles for effective resettlement and drain time and resources. **Upstream barriers need upstream solutions.** The goal of the Upstream Solutions Working Group is to align distinct system representatives to address upstream conditions that influence the health, well-being, and resettlement experiences of newcomers.

What is system mapping

The Upstream Solutions Working Group anchors its efforts to an approach known as **system mapping**. System mapping is a process that helps visualize how different factors in a complex problem influence one another through cause-and-effect relationships and feedback loops. Identifying these factors is the first step to understanding the system and environment that health and social services representatives operate within, and to determining potential leverage points for improvement. It helps groups identify the most effective places to intervene and create change within the system.

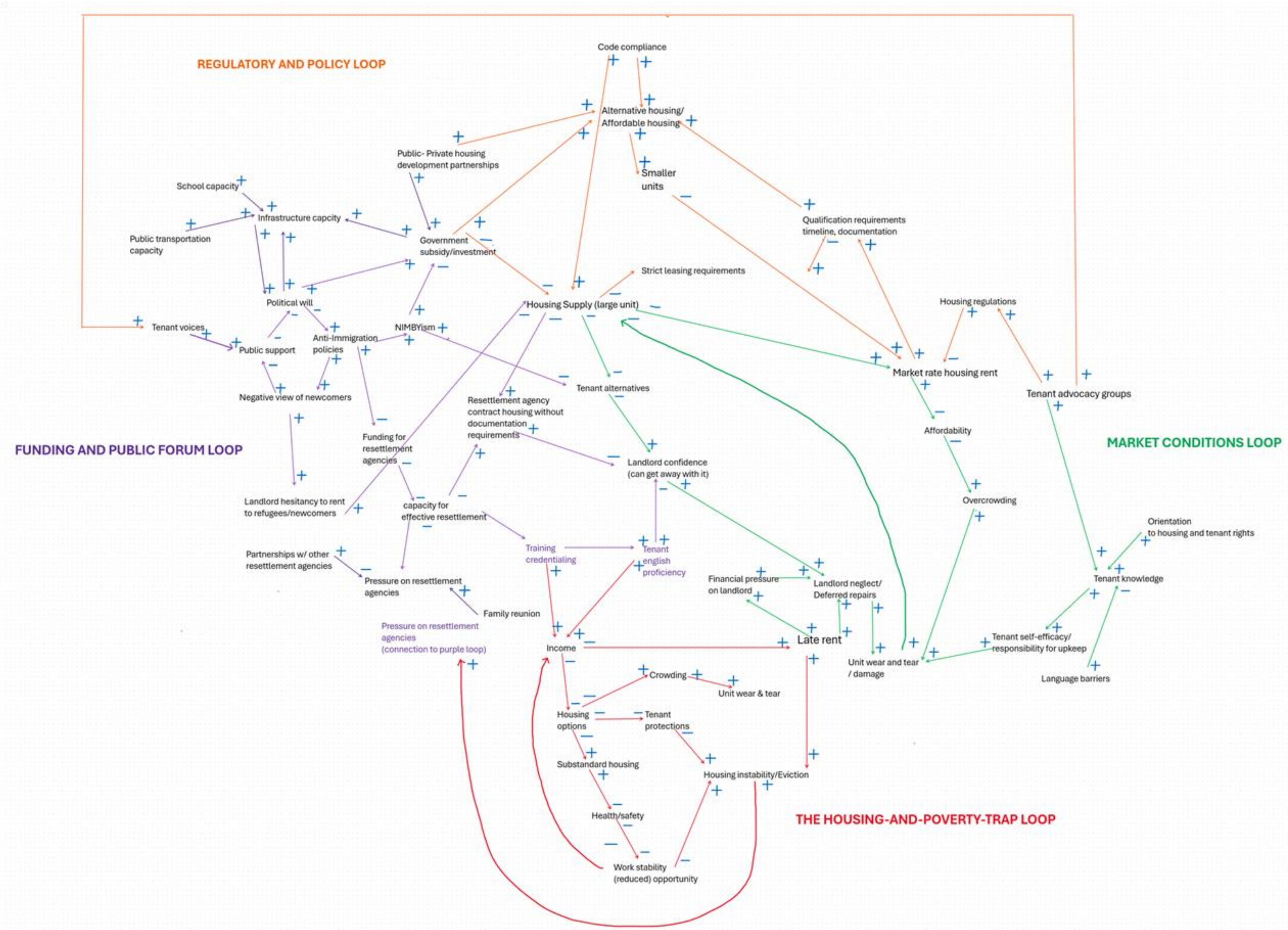
For resettlement providers and the system representatives they engage with, understanding and mapping the current systems they operate within is a powerful tool to collectively understand how the system works and to identify opportunities for maximum impact. In refugee resettlement, system mapping can transform the approach from a "task list accomplished" or downstream view toward creating a more functional system through upstream solutions with far-reaching, long-lasting benefits.

Collectively developing a system map can be a strong driver for stakeholders to stay engaged with the group and motivated to channel understanding into action. Once the system map has been developed, the Upstream Solutions Working Group can use it to identify areas of leverage in the system that promise large impact with relatively small changes. Using the system map as a guide, working group members can strategize, propose, and analyze changes and assess the feasibility of those changes and the extent to which they align with the roles of system representatives. Appendix A provides an overview of the different steps in system mapping.

System maps help visualize how different parts of a system connect and influence one another. They show key factors and the relationships between them, including feedback loops that help us understand how a complex system works (see Exhibit 1).

- When several feedback loops are combined, they create a system map. Like a geographical map, a system map organizes large amounts of information into a clear visual format.
- System maps work best when they bring people together to build them—naming the different forces and factors and working together on how to structure and arrange them.
- The process of building a system map together helps different stakeholders develop a shared understanding that goes beyond individual perspectives and areas of expertise. By creating a system map together, participants can better understand where their own organizations and others stand, helping them plan more strategically for the future.
- As an example, when experts who typically work in public health, refugee resettlement, social services, housing and community development, property management came together to understand what drives housing for newcomers, they developed the preliminary map in Exhibit 1.

Exhibit 1: Example of a preliminary system map of factors influencing housing for newcomers.



Upstream Solutions Working Group—structure, process, and outcomes

Overview

The working group will conduct a series of regular meetings to implement a set of scheduled steps and activities that overlap with the quarterly consultation meetings calendar. Successful implementation requires a team with clearly defined objectives, roles, and responsibilities; established processes; and a series of clear activities.

Prior understanding of system mapping may be beneficial, but the working group assumes the process is new for all participants and incorporates orientation, training, and guided facilitation using worksheets. Participants develop a familiarity with system mapping by working through activities at each working group session. Appendix A includes some examples.

Image 1: Core team and extended team engage during orientation

Structure

The structure of the working group is defined by its team composition and the delineation of roles and responsibilities. More details on how to develop the structure and composition of the Upstream Solutions Working Group are included in **Section 3**. The working group includes a core team of staff and members from quarterly consultation meetings, supported by an extended team of invited experts.

- The **core team** manages the day-to-day planning, implementation, and meeting cadence. Its responsibilities include convening working group sessions, facilitating outreach and communications to invited experts, managing data, contributing subject matter expertise, designating shared roles to newcomer representatives, and leveraging infrastructure and resources.

- The **extended team** includes invited experts, partners, and community members, who may or may not attend quarterly consultation meetings. The extended team is not responsible for the working group's operations but is called upon to provide subject matter expertise and lived experience during system-mapping exercises. Extended team members may take on participatory roles during working group sessions (such as debriefing or cofacilitation). They also have the option to continue engaging with the core team for potential strategic collaborations beyond the development of the system map (see Exhibit 3).

Exhibit 2: Composition of the core team and extended team of the working group

The **core team** includes: • State refugee coordinator (Department of Social Services–Office of New Americans) • State refugee health coordinator (Department of Public Health) • Resettlement agency directors • Newcomer representatives • Refugee-led community-based organization	The **extended team** of invited experts includes: • County government and local agency representation (social service, public schools, public safety) • Private and not-for-profit system representatives (social services, real estate, housing, health care) • Subject matter experts from resettlement agencies (housing, employment, mental health, public safety)

Image 2: Participants muse over a feedback loop as they work through the steps in system mapping

Process

To balance time and capacity constraints for participants, the Upstream Solutions Working Group employs a hybrid participatory process. This model balances participation between core staff (from the Office of the State Refugee Coordinator and quarterly consultation representatives) and invited experts, using a mix of in-person and virtual meetings.

The core team handles primary responsibilities for planning, facilitation, and communications, while leveraging external expertise during the system-mapping phase. All meetings may take place in a virtual setting, with the potential to have in-person meetings when feasible for orientation, launch, or to celebrate key milestones and learnings. The working group will complete five phases of work over 15 to 18 months.

Image 3: Participants go through a system mapping step

Here is a brief description of the different phases of work.

Phase 1: Launch. To start, the working group determines the specific problem they would like to address and the system they need to understand to address it. This may be a focus on housing, behavioral health, employment, or education.

Phase 2: Map the system and identify upstream barriers. Phase 2 is the cornerstone of the working group's process, in which the working group gains clarity of the system through a series of activities that result in a visual system map (see Exhibit 1). This phase helps the working group identify systemic or upstream barriers that contribute to the problem of focus and prepare the group for the next phase. Appendix A provides further details and examples of what this phase may look like.

Phase 3: Identify opportunities to address upstream barriers. Phase 3 channels the clarity and understanding of the system that was gained in the previous phase into actionable ideas for what changes would make the system more effective or efficient for the people it serves. The working group prioritizes which upstream barriers to address and finds leverage in the system through participation of system representatives to determine which type of changes, or leverage areas (e.g., changes in people's behaviors, programs, procedures, policies), have the greatest potential to create positive change that is feasible with available resources.

Phase 4: **Plan actionable strategy.** Once the working group has narrowed a set of leverage areas (e.g., addressing leasing practices, education of newcomers on maintenance of rental units), it develops a systems-change strategy that affects the specific barrier it prioritized in Phase 3. The strategy could be simple and require small tweaks to the system, modify actions of stakeholders in the system, or be more complex and need the development of new lever, such as a new policy or program.

Phase 5: Engage the system to act, learn and adapt. In this last phase, the working group revisits the systems map to revise or adapt it based on a more mature understanding of the system. The core team leverages shared understanding and buy-in with invited experts to engage them in implementing changes determined in Phase 4. In this phase, the core team engages closely with invited experts to implement these changes. The core team develops and disseminates to invited experts and quarterly consultation members a final systems map, lessons learned, and recommendations. The working group may choose to iterate the process and apply it to a different issue or continue to focus on the same issue.

Exhibit 3 offers a high-level view of the process[7] and serves as a planning roadmap for the Upstream Solutions Working Group. It maps out the five phases of work over 12-18 months, showing specific steps within each phase, participation in different phases (core team versus extended team of invited experts), and estimated timeframes.

Working groups can use this visual to schedule meetings, coordinate participation, and track progress. The shaded areas indicate when the core team and extended team are actively involved, with some steps marked as optional for the extended team based on capacity. Built-in steps for evaluation and quarterly consultation report-outs help maintain accountability and communication between relevant stakeholders throughout the process.

Outcomes

At the end of each phase, the working group evaluates progress, in terms of shared understanding, change in systems alignment, and capacity for collaborative action. In addition, the group reports back at quarterly consultation meetings. The complete process may take the working group 12 to 18 months or longer, depending on the duration of Phase 5. At the end of the process, the Upstream Solutions Working Group would have developed a system map (see Exhibit 1) that not only informs the core group's efforts in newcomer resettlement but also is relevant to the work of invited experts within different systems. The group would have also developed actionable strategies and developed recommendations for implementing the systemic changes determined during the process. With buy-in from experts in the extended team, working group members may determine how they implement those strategies.

[7] Adapted from the Systems Practice Workbook developed by the Omidyar Group. https://www.socialchangeinnovators.com/site/templates/files/Systems%20Practice%20Workbook-012617%20Omediar%20Group.pdf. This material is reprinted with permission CC BY-SA.

Exhibit 3. Upstream Solutions Working Group Process: Phases and Steps[8]

PHASES AND STEPS (Duration: 12 to 18 months)	CORE TEAM	EXTENDED TEAM	ESTIMATED DURATION
PHASE 1: Launch			1 to 2 months
Frame the issue you seek to address			
Set your goals			
Outreach to experts for extended team			
PHASE 2: System Mapping to Identify Upstream Barriers			2 to 3 months
Explore Forces			
Analyze Causes and Effects			
Create loops, discover deep structure			
Build system map and iterate		optional	
Evaluate progress			
Debrief and report out at Quarterly Consultation			
PHASE 3: Identify Opportunities to Address Upstream Barriers			2 to 3 months
Find opportunities to leverage			
Develop propositions and proposed change			
Assess feasibility for proposed changes			
Evaluate progress			
Debrief and report out at Quarterly Consultation			
PHASE 4: Plan Actionable Strategy			3 to 4 months
Action planning		optional	
Feasibility assessment			
Debrief and report out at Quarterly Consultation			
PHASE 5: Engage the System to Act, Learn and Adapt			4 to 6 months
Engage system leaders to implement actionable strategy		optional	
Document lessons			
Revise system map and disseminate			
Evaluate progress			
Debrief and report out at Quarterly Consultation			

[8] Adapted from the Systems Practice Workbook developed by the Omidyar Group. https://www.socialchangeinnovators.com/site/templates/files/Systems%20Practice%20Workbook-012617%20Omediar%20Group.pdf. This material was adapted and reprinted under license CC BY-SA.

Section 3. Developing the Upstream Solutions Working Group

Given that leaders and staff working in newcomer resettlement often wear multiple hats and work with limited resources, it is essential to carefully plan and develop the Upstream Solutions Working Group to achieve its purpose. While working groups are not new to resettlement stakeholders, the Upstream Solutions Working Group is unique in both its structure, process, and a shift in focus from service delivery to consider the broader systemic influences on resettlement services and supports. Planning out the working group is essential for successful implementation because it creates the structure, clarity, and shared understanding needed to coordinate complex efforts across multiple partners and across system boundaries.

The planning process needs to help identify the right mix of participants, build and maintain trust, and establish clear goals, roles, and expectations and processes for communication, decision-making, and accountability. Here are some steps to consider in developing an Upstream Solutions Working Group at your specific resettlement site:

A. Develop the Core Team

- **Define objectives.** Clarify the goal of the Upstream Solutions Working Group by developing objectives you seek to achieve. Objectives should be actionable and measurable and may include a mix of building knowledge and capacity and taking action. Ensure the objectives reflect what the core team would like to achieve and how these would be meaningful for invited experts.
- **Assign the leadership structure.** Define key roles of the core team and select the working group chair and staff roles (e.g., facilitator, project coordinator, liaison, notetaker). Consider staff who have familiarity performing these roles in regular quarterly consultation meetings, other working groups, and who have interest and capacity to commit to the role for at least 1 year.
- **Identify key agency representatives.** State refugee coordinators' offices and staff are responsible for coleading quarterly consultations with their resettlement agency partners and would be best suited to be members of the core team. Consider inviting the state refugee health coordinator who works closely with the state refugee coordinator, as well as

Example objectives:

- Engage and deepen working relationships with key system representatives and community partners in health and human services
- Develop a shared understanding of the factors influencing newcomers' experiences of housing, employment, education, and mental health
- Identify and address upstream barriers in refugee resettlement
- Gain clarity about newcomer experiences navigating the different facets and periods of resettlement
- Build a basic systems map to guide strategic implementation of resettlement programs and services
- Build capacity for collaborative efforts across working group participants.

staff from resettlement agencies who work as specialists in different refugee programs (e.g., mental health, housing, workforce) and can offer a depth of knowledge and experience navigating systems related to their field of expertise. Include a mix of seasoned experts and recently resettled refugees employed by resettlement agencies.

- **Create guiding documents.** Develop a plan and timeline for the working group. This can be a working document but should have the foundational information for the core team to reference, including roles and expectations, expected outcomes and indicators of success, a glossary of key terms, and communication procedures. Create a timeline that outlines major milestones, such as orientation, kickoff, session schedules for system-mapping steps, and reporting back to quarterly consultations.

B. Conduct Outreach and Engage Invited Experts

- **Identify needed expertise.** The core team identifies agencies and organizations that would be important to have at the table, based on their role in the larger system and based on the perspective they offer and which the core team might not have. For example, to better understand the housing system, the core team may engage county housing and community development agencies, property management organizations, housing specialists at resettlement agencies, housing authority members, and property owners.
- **Develop an outreach plan.** Based on prior experience conducting outreach, it's important to develop an outreach plan that identifies the point of contact for outreach, a timeline, and a follow-up approach. The plan may include communication scripts for emails and phone calls. Identify opportunities for a warm connection through your internal or external professional networks.
- **Incentivize participation and create buy-in.** To keep invited experts engaged while limiting the burden of participation and responsibility, determine what would incentivize participation and ensure buy-in. Many government employees cannot access honoraria or in-kind compensation. A valuable incentive can be articulating to experts how their participation might enhance their own work at their organization.

Image 4: Participants go through a system-mapping step

Have one-on-one conversations with experts, who are important but also difficult to engage in quarterly consultations. Use those conversations to glean whether the system-mapping experience and outputs might offer gains to the invited expert that they may take back to their own organization.

- **Create flexible options for participation.** Creating flexible options for participation can deepen commitment by accommodating the unique capacities and schedules of invited experts and ensuring that valuable expertise is not limited by logistical barriers. Offer hybrid meetings, rotate facilitation roles, or provide clear opportunities to contribute through written or spoken input on small bite-sized tasks. Such inclusivity will broaden participation and sustain engagement from people with limited capacity or time.
- **Ensure newcomer representation.** Newcomers bring firsthand insight into how policies, systems, and services support or fail successful resettlement. Their participation helps identify hidden barriers, such as eligibility gaps, cultural and linguistic restraints, or unintended consequences of policies or programs, that resettlement practitioners alone may overlook. Prefer engaging newcomers who might be no more than one or two years into the resettlement process, and recruit newcomers from different cultural backgrounds, e.g. South America, Afghanistan, Africa. Offer newcomer participants with clear explanations of the group's goals, emphasize the value of their input, and clarify supports they may expect to facilitate their participation—such as interpretation, stipends, transportation, and childcare.

C. Determine Working Group Meeting Schedule and Frequency

- **Codevelop the schedule and set a meeting cadence** with input from invited experts and newcomer representatives. Choose a frequency that balances momentum with sustainability.
  - The Upstream Solutions Working Group core team may meet regularly each month, while the extended team may attend specific consecutive sessions, during designated steps in system mapping.
  - Publish the schedule at least 6 months in advance to support consistent attendance.
  - The core team ideally should report to quarterly consultation meetings (15-minute designated report time) on progress and findings.
  - Alternate morning and evening meetings to enable participation, especially for invited experts and newcomers.
- **In-person versus virtual.** Consider participants' convenience and productivity when planning out which meetings are in person and which can be sustained virtually. Plan on

having an in-person orientation and kickoff, followed by intermittent in-person check-ins to celebrate milestones and assess progress and outcomes.

D. Conduct Orientation and Training

- **Orientation session and activity.** Begin with an orientation session and activity that introduces members to one another, clarifies the group's purpose, and explores how their roles contribute to collective goals. Use icebreakers and team activities that create group camaraderie.

Image 5: Working group participants receive orientation to goals, structure, process, roles and responsibilities, and timeline

- **Introduction to system mapping.** Include an introduction to system mapping to help participants visualize how policies, programs, and lived experiences interact within the refugee resettlement system. Consider setting up small system-mapping exercises that participants can work through.
- **Resource sharing.** Provide resource sharing, such as reference guides, glossaries, and examples of successful alignment efforts, to ensure all members have equal access to background knowledge. Create guidance that fosters a shared language for identifying leverage points and barriers in the system.
- **Low burden training**. Keep it as a low-burden training by focusing on short, interactive sessions that respect participants' time and diverse levels of experience, emphasizing learning by doing and discussion instead of lengthy presentations. Use videos or stories over narrative materials.

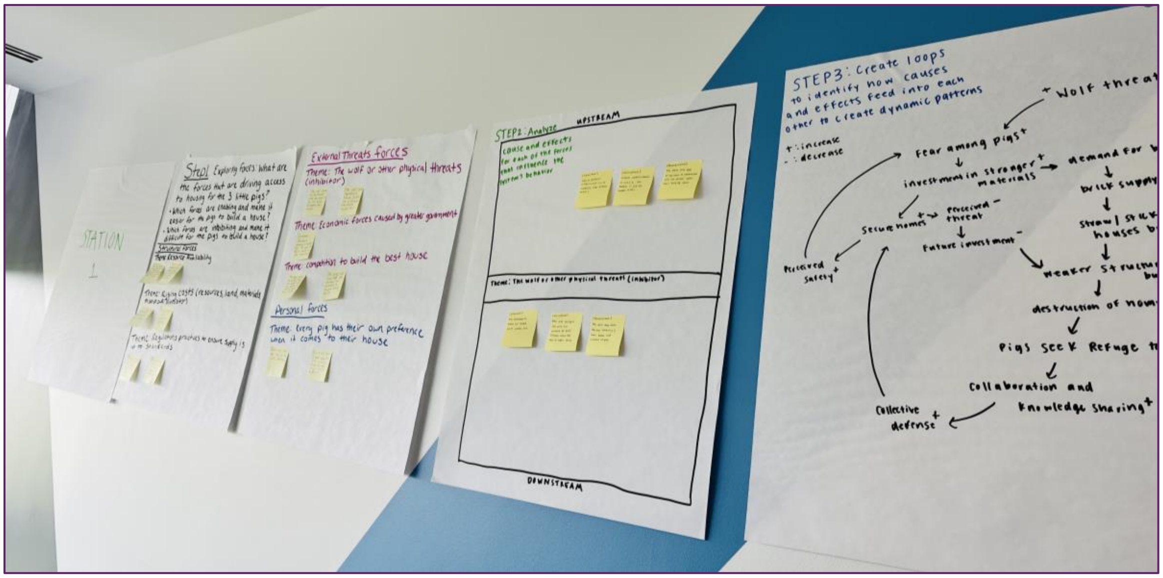


Image 6: Training participants on system-mapping steps with opportunities to practice

E. Launch and Conduct Working Group Sessions

- **Premeeting agenda and session materials.** Before each meeting, develop and distribute a premeeting agenda and session materials so participants can review key topics, data, and decisions they need to make in advance. Send reminders and confirm attendance to plan session facilitation based on group dynamics and representation from different experts.
- **Kickoff session.** Begin with a kickoff session that reaffirms the group's purpose, shared goals, and norms for collaboration, setting a positive and inclusive tone. Clarify what each participant gains by being part of the working group.
- **Facilitation practices.** Convey expectations and establish consistent facilitation practices—such as time management, rotating facilitators, and methods that balance participation—to keep discussions productive and equitable. Create multiple ways for newcomers and invited experts to contribute—through storytelling, surveys, or cofacilitation.
- **Documentation and follow-through.** Maintain thorough documentation and follow-through by recording decisions, action items, and next steps and sharing meeting summaries promptly. At the start of each session, recap what was covered in prior sessions.
- **Participation supports.** Ensure participation supports—like interpretation, stipends, and accessible meeting formats—are in place to enable all members, including newcomers, to contribute meaningfully and consistently.

- **Rotate roles and responsibilities.** The **lead facilitation** role may be held consistently with core team members, but consider alternating the **cofacilitation** role with invited experts to deepen buy-in. The cofacilitator role is to assist the lead facilitator and perhaps lead breakout group discussions and activities. Create opportunities for participants to develop a new skill by allowing them to work on developing loops for causal maps or reviewing loops. Invited experts may also be designated the role of **notetaker** or **debriefer**, giving them an opportunity to take on one responsibility and have a share in accountability and decision-making. The debriefer's primary responsibility is to summarize the information and conversations shared during the group's meeting to ensure participants share the same level of understanding.

Image 7: A member of the core group and an invited expert work together

Effective Engagement in the Upstream Solutions Working Group

The greatest hindrance to the success of the working group is lack of or inconsistent participation from members. Working group dynamics and participation contribute to meaningful information exchange and insight that are essential for system mapping, and for the working group to achieve its goals. Here are some dos and don'ts to guide your engagement approach and optimize participation.

DO

- **Maintain clear expectations.** Before the working group meetings, set clear expectations. This includes facilitating an orientation that provides background materials, outlines expectations, and provides session agendas. This ensures all participants are on the same page and can participate fully. It also includes having a clear understanding of the limitations of participants and what they may or may not have capacity for.

- **Foster participation.** Encourage active participation by familiarizing participants with the background materials necessary to fully participate in the working group. Use inclusive facilitation methods that create excitement, motivate participants, encourage equal participation, recognizing that power dynamics and cultural differences may affect who feels comfortable speaking.

- **Test virtual tools.** Schedule technology rehearsal meetings to test the virtual tools that will be used before the working group meetings. This helps facilitation run smoothly and minimize confusion or disruption for participants.
- **Evaluate participant experience.** At the end of each session, hold space to capture participant experience and gather feedback. This will help assess gaps or gains in understanding, any obstacles to participation, and opportunities for improving subsequent sessions. See Exhibit 4 for sample questions to help evaluate participant experience.
- **Follow up and debrief.** When possible, schedule debrief sessions with participants to assess the progress of the working group meetings. Follow through on participants' feedback by demonstrating how their perspectives shape the group's work, reinforcing that participants are cocreators in systems change.

DON'T

- **Overload participants.** It is important to engage participants but avoid overloading them with too many materials or tasks at once. This can lead to burnout and reduced engagement.
- **Organize breakout groups without balancing voices.** Avoid organizing breakout groups without considering the different voices that need to be represented. This avoids unequal power dynamics that subdue participants from fully engaging.
- **Skip orientation.** Skipping an orientation or onboarding meeting with participants can lead to confusion and lack of engagement during working group meetings.
- **Neglect feedback and follow-up.** Failing to address feedback can result in missed opportunities for improvement. Ensure there is a process for continuous assessment and evaluation. Acknowledge participant input and demonstrate to participants how their feedback was or was not utilized.

Exhibit 4: Sample questions to evaluate working group participants' experience

Based on your experience in this session, please select the degree to which you agree with the following statements:						
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Not applicable
I can better understand challenges related to housing for newcomers after this session.	○	○	○	○	○	○
I gained new knowledge about systems mapping from this session.	○	○	○	○	○	○
I was able to engage with experts from a sector/organization different that my own.	○	○	○	○	○	○
As a participant, I felt welcomed, heard, valued, and respected throughout the session	○	○	○	○	○	○
Based on your experience in all the sessions thus far, please select the degree to which you agree with the following statements:						
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Not applicable
The working group helped participants gain a shared understanding of systemic issues related to housing.	○	○	○	○	○	○
The working group help participants identify opportunities for collaboration and change.	○	○	○	○	○	○
The working group helped improve participants' understanding of the roles and perspectives of different system representatives.	○	○	○	○	○	○
System mapping is a useful way to build shared understanding and collaboration across people working in different sectors.	○	○	○	○	○	○
The working group experience was useful for my role in my own organization.	○	○	○	○	○	○

Appendix A. Sample working group session materials

Appendix A includes sample materials that offer a practical example and help audiences better experience a typical working group session activity.

The sample materials were developed by adapting resources available in the Omidyar Group's Systems Practice workbook.[9] Audiences may choose to adapt these materials for the specific context in which they are implementing.

These materials were used over three sessions of a pilot test of the Upstream Solutions Working Group, which focused on the housing system. Each session lasted for 90 minutes. Exhibit A–1 provides an overview of the different system-mapping activities that were accomplished. Outputs from each of the activities conducted in session 1 are also included as examples.

[9] Omidyar Group's Systems Practice workbook https://www.socialchangeinnovators.com/site/templates/files/Systems%20Practice%20Workbook-012617%20Omediar%20Group.pdf. This material is adapted and shared with permission CC BY-SA.

Exhibit A–1. Overview of systems mapping activities

Session 1 Materials for Participants

The Upstream Solutions Working Group Builds a System Map

In the next three sessions, we will collectively work towards building a system map that illustrates the different forces driving housing access for newcomer families, and the patterns and relationships between these forces. The question we are seeking clarity about is: *"What are the forces driving affordable housing for newcomer families (in the specific region you work in)?"*

To answer this question, we will go through a series of steps described in this and subsequent sessions.

Session 1 Overview

(Estimated time: 60 minutes)

In this first session of the Upstream Solutions Working Group, we will begin to shed some light on the housing system by exploring the different forces that cause current conditions within the system and then identifying causes and effects of relevant forces. Today's activity has two steps:

- Step 1 (30 minutes). To explore forces that cause the housing system to behave the way it does
- Step 2 (30 minutes). To complete a cause-and-effect analysis where we will identify the structural, attitudinal, and transactional factors at work.

You will complete today's activity by using Microsoft whiteboard in a large group and in small breakout groups.

What You'll Do

- **Step 1.** Explore forces through a collective brainstorming session and whiteboard activity in a large group (30 minutes)
- **Step 2.** Analyze causes and effects in a whiteboard activity in small groups (30 minutes)

Preparing for Session 1

- **Review** the pre-session materials
- **Look** at the sample Microsoft whiteboard to familiarize yourself with how it works

- **Think** about important forces that impact how the housing system works (these forces can include people, trends, events, norms, beliefs, phenomena, institutions, laws, policies, etc.). For inspiration, you can draw upon data and stories from your own experiences. Try to complete the statement: "*You cannot understand the housing system unless you understand the following forces at play*:………."

Terms and definitions we will use

- **Forces**: Forces are important drivers of the housing system. These can be financial, supply, demand, or regulatory forces.
- **Themes**: Themes describe forces at a more granular level. Every theme describes how a force may have an enabling or inhibiting effect. *For example, demand forces can be described as different themes such as 'knowledge or communication gaps' or 'proximity to resources and social supports'.*
- An **enabler** is a significant force in the environment that supports, encourages or increases the health and effectiveness of the housing system.
- An **inhibitor** is significant force in the environment that undermines or prevents the health and effectiveness of the housing system.
- **Upstream causes**: Upstream causes are things that lead to the theme, or that cause it to happen.
- **Downstream effects:** Downstream effects are things that the theme causes to happen.

What is SAT analysis?

SAT stands for Structural, Attitudinal, and Transactional. This analysis provides a holistic way of looking at a system that helps us avoid focusing solely on what is immediately obvious. By systematically examining causes and effects across these categories, we increase our chances of identifying the most important drivers in the housing system. Descriptions of each category are provided below:

Structural: Refers to the physical and social environment in which people live; both the natural (e.g., air quality or drought) and built environment (e.g., housing stocks, a transportation system); as well as political, social and economic institutions and infrastructure (e.g., the electoral system, legal system, economic policy, labor unions, church associations).

Attitudinal: Refers to widely held beliefs, values, norms and intergroup relations that affect how large groups of people think and behave (e.g., social capital, fears, group trauma, beliefs, and attitudes like trust in people or process)

Transactional: Refers to the processes used by and interactions among key people (e.g., leaders at all levels) as they deal with important social, political and economic issues (e.g., negotiations, conflict resolution, problem solving, influence, and leadership). Key transactional factors might include things like lobbying, advocacy, or the influence of a community leader or organization.

Session 1 Worksheet

Step 1: Explore Forces (Large group activity, 30 minutes)

In this first step we will generate a list of the many forces that cause the housing system to behave as it does.

We will arrange and display information using Microsoft Whiteboard for this activity. The core team has identified a few forces and themes based on our experience and arranged this information on Whiteboard sticky notes. In this activity, we will incorporate insights from expert participants in the Upstream Solutions Working Group and make adjustments.

Action Steps:

1. Take a look at the whiteboard and review sticky notes which have been organized into sub-categories called *themes.* Similar themes are grouped under larger buckets called *forces.*
2. As you review sticky notes, discuss the following questions with your group:
   a. **What are the forces that drive access to affordable housing for newcomer families?**
   b. **What forces are missing? What would you add? What more information do you think we need?**
3. Look for the positive and negative. Some forces are <u>inhibiting</u> and make it harder for newcomers to find affordable housing, while others are <u>enabling</u> and make it easier for newcomers to find and maintain affordable housing. While the tendency might be to focus on forces that lead to negative behaviors in the system (inhibitors), we also want to dig deep and find forces that lead to positive behaviors that are creating healthy, effective parts of the systems (enablers).
4. Discuss with the group:
   a. **Which forces are enabling, and make it easier for newcomers to find housing?**
   b. **Which forces are inhibiting and make it difficult for newcomers to find housing?**
5. If you come up with new themes, identify whether these are enablers or inhibitors and post them on sticky notes under existing or new categories of forces. Move similar ideas next to each other and give the groupings a new name that describes how they are related – this is your theme.

6. As a group prioritize 3-4 themes to dive deeper into causes and effects. To help prioritize, fill in the blank: *You cannot understand what influences affordable housing access for newcomer families unless you understand the following themes*:

   Consider the following:

   a. **Consider your personal or professional experiences that highlight important themes.**
   b. **What themes best reflect the issues that make it challenging for newcomers to find affordable housing?**
   c. **What themes do you think this group can explore further?**
   d. **Which themes are the most impactful, or with the greatest potential for leverage?**

7. Write down/or share during the debrief the prioritized themes below. The themes we select will be the starting point for the next step in the process.

   Theme 1:

   Theme 2:

   Theme 3:

   Theme 4:

[NOTE: Debrief after Step 1, and then proceed to Step 2]

Exhibit A–2. At the end of Step 1, participants would have identified different forces and themes as shown in this exhibit.

Step 2: Analyze Causes and Effects (Small group activity, 30 minutes)

In this next step we will do a deep dive into two of the themes we prioritized in Step 1 as being the most relevant or influential in terms of how they drive access to housing for newcomers.

In Step 2, we will look at each theme and explore its upstream causes and downstream effects. These causes and effects will be referred to as 'factors' that have a relationship to the theme, either as being a contributing cause of the theme or emerging as an effect of the theme.

We will use a method called SAT analysis—which is a structured way of ensuring that we consider the housing system holistically. SAT stands for Structural, Attitudinal, and Transactional. Each of these components - Structural, Attitudinal, and Transactional – can help us understand why and how each force has an impact on the housing system.

The causal relationships we identify in Step 2 will be the major inputs for drawing connections between factors as we create causal loops in Step 3.

Action steps:

1. Form teams of 5–7 people. Each group has been pre-assigned a theme. (Note: Your team can either focus on the selected theme or decide to choose a different theme from the prioritized themes list in Step 1)
2. Begin by reading all of the forces in your thematic cluster and ask your group questions about anything that is unclear. This discussion should help to build a rich understanding of the theme you are analyzing.
3. Now it's time to illuminate the upstream causes and downstream effects. Upstream causes are things that lead to the theme, or that cause it happen. Downstream effects are things that the theme causes to happen. To do this we are going to use SAT analysis.
4. Keeping this in mind, review the Whiteboard. Themes are positioned in the center, with a section for causes above it (the causes drive the theme), and a section for effects below (the theme drives the effects).
5. Start with your Cause section first. What causes the theme to occur? As you brainstorm causes, determine if a cause has structural, attitudinal, and/ or transactional (behavioral) implications. Write down the causes on sticky notes and place them under Cause. There should be lots of discussion to make sure you are considering all the possibilities.
6. Move on to your Effects and do the same process.
7. Write down below/or discuss during the debrief the upstream causes and downstream effects from the Whiteboard.

UPSTREAM CAUSES:
STRUCTURAL
ATTITUDINAL
TRANSACTIONAL
Theme:
DOWNSTREAM EFFECTS:
STRUCTURAL
ATTITUDINAL
TRANSACTIONAL
Theme:

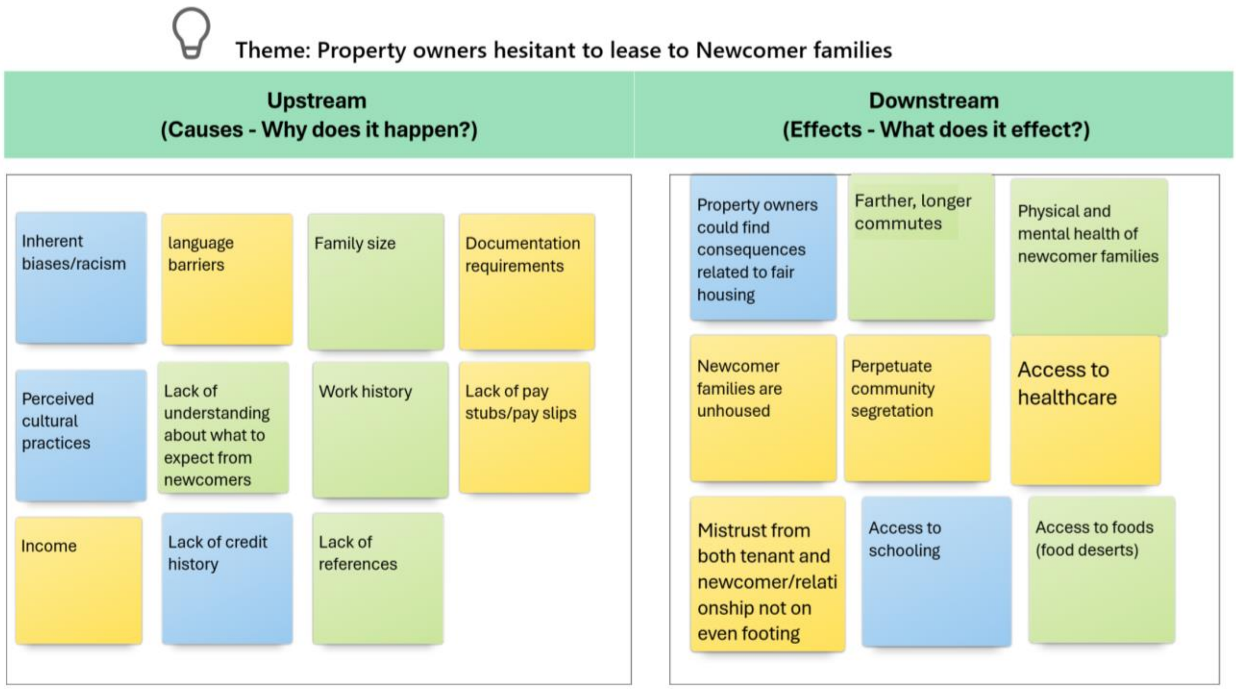
TIPS:

- Before you start, it can be helpful to look at your prioritized themes with fresh eyes. Has your thinking changed? Anything to modify?
- When you are doing a SAT analysis, communication is essential. Talk through specific examples and parse challenging concepts with stories and personal knowledge.
- Sometimes, factors that show up as causes can also appear as effects. That's okay!
- The causes and effects will not have a 1:1 relationship.
- Having more of one or the other is okay but be sure to cover SAT for both upstream and downstream.
- How do you know when you're done (at least for now)? When you find that, for each theme, you are not identifying new factors as causes or effects.
- Take photos of the finished upstream and downstream analyses.

Optional:

- Repeat the process if you would like to address a second priority theme.

Exhibit A–3. At the end of Step 2, participants would have identified upstream causes and downstream effects of a specific issue



Session 2 Materials for Participants

What is a feedback loop?

In systems mapping, a feedback loop is a circular pattern where a change in one element of a system affects other elements, and those changes eventually loop back to influence the original element, creating a cycle. These loops can be either reinforcing (positive), where the feedback amplifies the initial change, or balancing (negative), where the feedback counteracts the initial change.

In Session 2, we will focus on identifying two types of feedback loops: one identifies patterns that lead to worsening access to affordable housing (vicious), and the other identifies patterns that lead to improvements in access to affordable housing (virtuous)

1. **LOOP TYPE: VICIOUS (Things are getting worse and worse)**

   E.g. As inflation increases, the cost of living and housing goes up.

2. **LOOP TYPE: VIRTUOUS (Things are getting better and better)**

   E.g. More jobs for newcomers help them maintain stable housing.

Step 3: Create Loops

In this step, we will identify patterns in the housing system. Each force that contributes to the housing system has interrelated causes and effects. The forces that drive the system are always tied together through **feedback loops**. These feedback loops will become the building blocks for our Upstream Solutions Working Group systems map for affordable housing.

A key premise of systems thinking is that large-scale systems change can only be sustained by changing the entrenched patterns that drive the system. The first step in changing these patterns is to identify them.

To identify patterns in the housing system, we will share stories that help us start with the most important factors and trace their downstream effects. When those downstream effects ultimately circle back and affect the factor you started with, you have uncovered a potential loop.

Preparing for Session 2

- In Session 1, your group identified forces that cause current conditions in the housing system. For Session 2, we will examine how these forces connect with each other. **Consider: What happens when the effects of one force become the causes that drive another force?** Together, we will look for these cause-and-effect chains and feedback loops between the forces you previously identified.

- Reflect on a personal or professional experience you had acquiring, renting, managing, or regulating affordable housing for newcomer families or others eligible for affordable housing. Come to Session 2 prepared to share the story of that experience. **As you prepare, identify the different factors that influenced your experience and consider how they created a chain of causes and effects that shaped what happened.**

Session 2 Worksheet

Step 3: Building Causal Loops to Discover the Deep Structure

Session Overview (Estimated Time: 90 minutes)

In this session, we will build feedback loops and uncover the deep structure of the housing system. We will complete the activity using Microsoft Whiteboard in small break out groups. At the end of today's activity, we will have a rough visual representation of dynamic feedback loops that will become the building blocks of our system map.

What You'll Do

- Create feedback loops in a whiteboard activity in small groups (45 minutes)
- Discuss feedback loops and causes and effects in large group (45 minutes)

Actions steps:

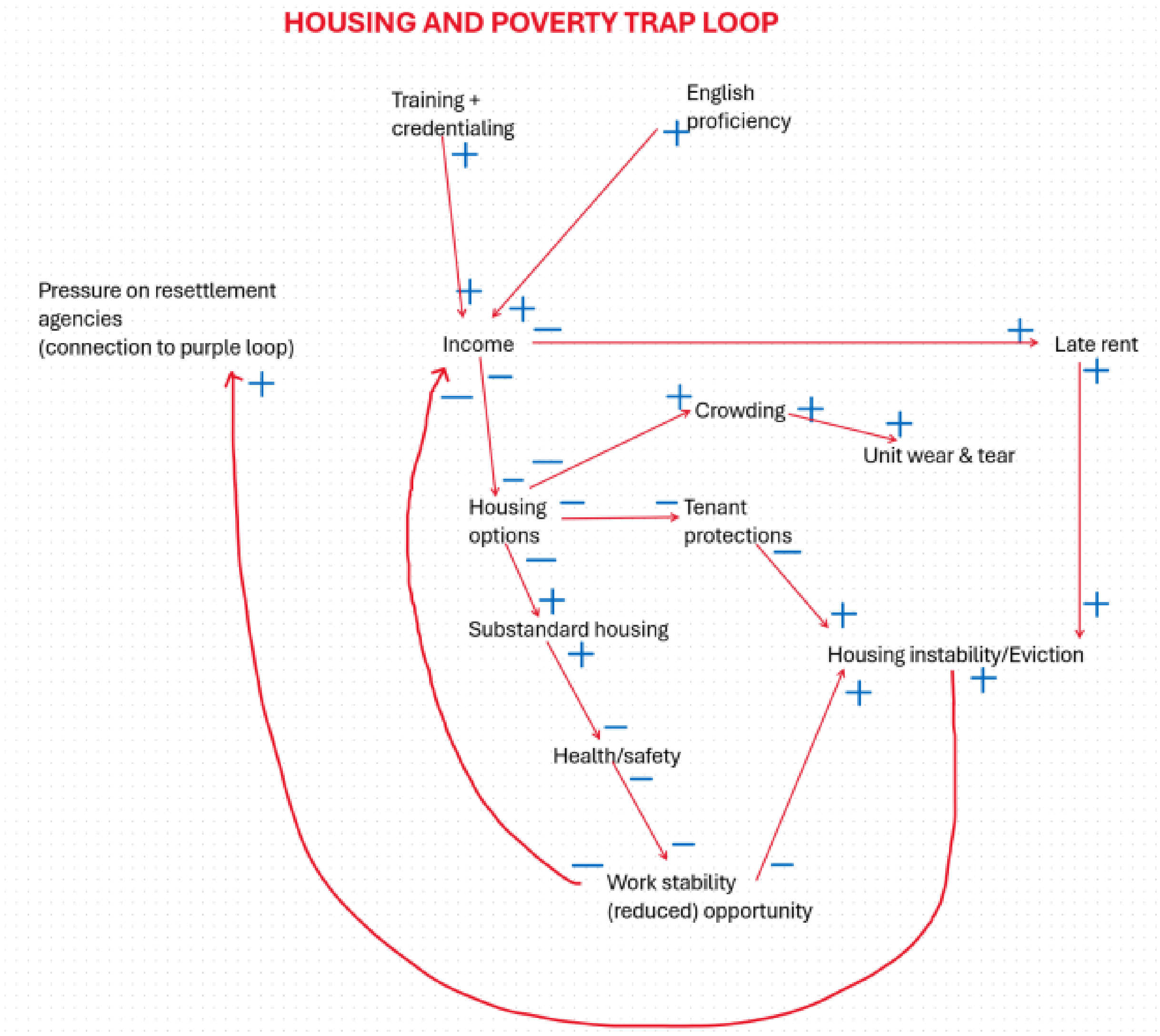
1. In your small group of 5-7 people, choose a **factor** (see tip box) from Step 2 that the group decides is important. A factor can be any word or short phrase that captures something important from your upstream causes and downstream effects analysis in Step 2 from the previous session.
   a. *Tip: Think of a personal or professional experience related to the factor and share with your team. Are there any other factors that seem related? Share with your team. Keep those factors in mind or write them down to help with the next step.*
   b. *Everyone should get a chance to share a story or experience. Each story or experience may inform a separate causal loop such that each factor generates 2-4 separate causal loops.*
2. Start working downstream from that factor. What does it cause? And what does that cause? Keep looking at the downstream effects. Ultimately, if it is a loop, it will have an effect on the original factor.
   a. *Tip: The factor may cause an action that affects a structural change (a service or policy changes, for example is delivered, obstructed or denied) or a change in attitude (a person's action, behavior or mindset), or a change in a transaction (increases or decreases)*
3. As you are developing your causal loop, notice and document how each factor affects the downstream factor.
   a. *Is an increase in factor A creating a decrease in factor B? If so, create a '+' at the beginning of that path and a '-' at the end.*
   b. *If less of factor B creates less of factor C add '-' at both ends of that path and so on.*

4. Once you have formed what appears to be a promising loop, give it a brief yet descriptive name. Also label what kind of a loop it is: Virtuous, Vicious
5. Create at least one loop for each story that needs to be told. A theme will typically generate 2-4 loops, if not more! [Note: Take about 20-25 minutes for one loop. Goal is to have 1 complete loop, and perhaps two.]
6. Continue to build loops that account for the behavior of the system. Keep going until you have covered all of the important stories in your system.
7. Practice narrating your loops. Check them for logic and make note of any leaps or gaps you find. Add in new causes, effects or complete loops if you feel that things are missing
8. **Debrief.** Discuss the loops your group has developed in the larger group. (45 minutes)
   a. **Think through the process of building the loop. What factors emerged that weren't apparent to you initially?**
   b. **What factors or relationships seem surprising?**

TIPS

- Frame your key factors as nouns that can increase or decrease. They should capture the essence of what you feel is important. Examples: Leasing requirements, Adequate/inadequate housing supply, Feelings of exclusion, Smaller units, Unsafe housing
- Ask what's missing in the logic of the story. If there is too big of a jump between two factors, add intervening factors that make the story easier to follow.
- Here's a sandbox of potential factors/variables to explore as you think of intervening factors: Rent prices, availability of affordable housing, refugee arrivals, employment opportunities, income levels, language barriers, unit maintenance, landlord expectations, newcomer expectations, family size, stigma, community support.
- Describe what is, not what you want to be. Focus on the dominant forces in the current state of the system.
- When you feel stuck, let the story be your guide to drawing a loop: tell and retell the story as you go.
- Don't get stuck on one arrangement; keep trying new ways to think about the links among factors.
- How do you know when you are done creating loops? **Fill in the blank: "No full description of the system is complete without a story of ________?"** Did new and important stories emerge? If not, move on to the next step. Input from experts and stakeholders in Step 7 will help you to know whether you have covered the important stories.

Exhibit A–4. At the end of Step 3, participants would have developed different causal loops such as the one shown below.



Session 3 Materials for Participants

Session overview (Estimated Time: 90 minutes)

In the third session of the Upstream Solutions Working Group, we will bring the different causal loops together to build our preliminary map of the housing system that visualizes the complex connections among contributing forces. This culminating session represents the synthesis of insights gathered from our previous discussions and will serve as a foundation for identifying strategic intervention points.

The primary focus of Session 3 will be the collaborative construction and refinement of our housing systems map. Through facilitated dialogue and iterative feedback loops, team members will work together to map interconnected components, explore systemic dynamics, and validate our collective understanding of the housing system.

While we recognize that one session cannot capture the full complexity of the housing system, our goal is to develop a deeper, more nuanced understanding of a significant segment of the broader ecosystem. This collaborative mapping process will position the working group to move from analysis to action, with a clearer understanding of where and how to focus upstream solutions efforts.

What You'll Do

- Step 4: Build and refine your map in a small group (45 minutes)
- Step 5: Find leverage opportunities and identify one systems change strategy (45 minutes)

Preparing for Session 3

- Review the Causal Loop Diagrams that your group created in Session 2
- Reflect on connections and insights from Session 2. Think about the different stories and experiences participants shared in the previous session, considering how the factors you connected relate to each other.
  - **How has your understanding of newcomer experiences changed?**
  - **How has your understanding of the housing system changed?**
  - **What new factors or relationships have emerged that you had not considered before?**
  - Consider your/your organization's role in the housing system. **What are some levers or assets that you can maneuver to address or influence some of the factors/relationships you uncovered?**

Step 4: Build/Refine Your Map (45 minutes)

To help streamline and simplify the map building process, the core team has consolidated and refined some of the loops from Session 2 created by both groups to the beginnings of a minimum viable map.

In this step, the core team brought all the feedback loops together, spotted overlapping factors and drew shared intersections between them to create a holistic and cohesive visualization of the housing system.

To refine your systems map, you will now work on the consolidated Whiteboard with the preliminary map. This is an iterative process; this is the start of a living document that will continue to be updated and evolve as you get feedback from each other during this session. You can also refine your systems map over time after the working group ends.

Step 5: Find Leverage Points (45 minutes)

Congratulations, we now have a Preliminary Systems Map (see Exhibit 1) for the different forces that influence the housing system. In this final step, you'll identify leverage opportunities for potential strategies for systems change.

First, examine your map in the large group and talk through places where there might be opportunities to leverage existing assets at different points in the system. Discuss these questions with your group:

1. **Where do we want to engage the housing system? Which dynamic, or combination of dynamics, do we want to engage to start?** (15 minutes)
   a. Why is this an opportunity for leverage? (what evidence/indicators point to this?)

b. What dynamic, if changed, might have the biggest potential impact?

2. **What impact are we seeking to make on this dynamic?** (15 minutes)
   There are a few basic ways to affect a dynamic to support systems change. You can:

   a. Weaken a force that is making a system less healthy or keeping it from getting healthier.

   b. Strengthen a force that is making the system healthier.

   c. Make a new connection between forces that would make the system healthier.

3. **How can we achieve this impact?** (15 minutes)

Sesson 3 Worksheet

Step 4: Build/Refine Your Map (45 minutes)

In our third session of the Upstream Solutions Working Group, we will collaboratively refine our map of the housing system to visualize the complex connections among contributing forces.

This culminating session represents the synthesis of insights gathered from our previous discussions and will serve as a foundation for identifying strategic intervention points in Step 5.

Action steps

1. Let’s review the loops our group has been assigned, and go through the different relationships that show up (10 minutes)
    a. Group quietly reviews the preliminary map for 10 minutes
    b. Thought prompt: Think about the different relationships that are showing up. Consider the dynamics (relationships) and deep structure (factors) that are revealed.
    c. As you follow the arrows making connections in the loops, look for the stories we talked about in Session 2. Are they showing up?
    d. Now ask, “What are the next important stories to tell? What is not showing up?” (*eg. if you don’t have tenant protections, it could increase unit wear and tear*)
2. Refine the preliminary map through collaborative discussion and revising the clusters of loops by adding more loops. (35 minutes)

Facilitator opens discussion: Now let’s see how these loops and this map can be further refined.

- Is there anything in here that detracts from your ability to see the whole system?
- Are there factors that should belong here that aren’t?
- Are there factors that we need to eliminate?
- Are there assumptions in this map that are being made?

Note: These stories should affect one or more factors in the deep structure or should explain why the loops in the deep structure exist. Start by identifying 2 or 3 “next most important stories”. This might be a difficult process as team members will likely have different opinions about what stories are the next most important.

TIPS for refining the map:

- As you are refining the map, ask whether each particular loop is adding new information that is essential to understanding the system, versus loops that might be interesting, but are not essential.
- An important way to eliminate business from your map is to use and reuse causal connections so that the same connections might be part of three or four different loops. Also, try to minimize arrows that cross, as this is visually confusing.
- Be sure the map is as evidence-based as possible, and is grounded in what the current system really is, not what you'd like it to look like.
- Walk through each region of the map in greater depth; highlighting particular insights you have taken from your map.
  - Name the region of the map to set the context for the loops.
  - As you walk through the loops, be sure that each loop has a compelling name that tells the "so what" of the loop. Comment on the impact the loop has on other loops or the system as a whole. Tell the summary story and avoid the more mechanical approach to reading loops by factors *(e.g., as x increases, y decreases, as y decreases, z decreases...)*
  - Show how loops within the region are connected to each other by telling a connected story that builds with each additional loop.
  - Share key insights about selected loops in the region *(e.g., Notice how this loop undermines progress, while this one bolsters it).*

Step 5: Find Leverage Points (45 minutes)

Congratulations, we now have a Preliminary System Map for the different forces that influence the housing system. In this final step, you'll identify leverage opportunities for potential strategies for systems change.

First, examine your map in the large group and talk through places where there might be opportunities to leverage existing assets at different points in the system. Discuss these questions with your group:

1. **Where do we want to engage the housing system? Which dynamic, or combination of dynamics, do we want to engage to start?** (15 minutes)
   a. Why is this an opportunity for leverage? (what evidence/indicators point to this?)
   b. What dynamic, if changed, might have the biggest potential impact?

2. **What impact are we seeking to make on this dynamic?** (15 minutes)
   There are a few basic ways to affect a dynamic to support systems change. You can:
   a. Weaken a force that is making a system less healthy or keeping it from getting healthier.
   b. Strengthen a force that is making the system healthier.
   c. Make a new connection between forces that would make the system healthier.
3. **How can we achieve this impact?** (15 minutes)