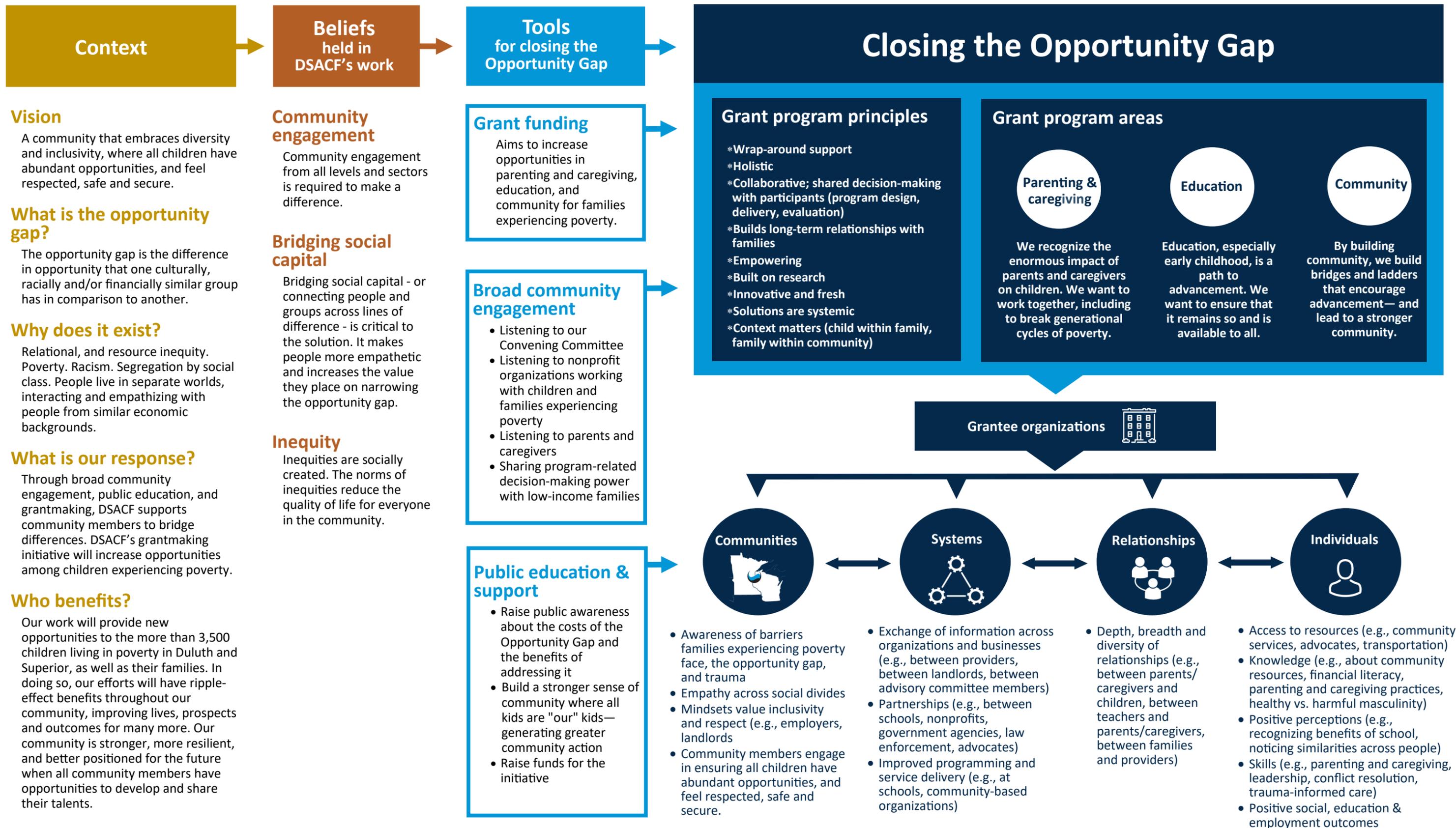


# Opportunity Gap Initiative Theory of Change

This Theory of Change was co-developed by The Improve Group, Duluth Superior Area Community Foundation, and grantee organizations.

The **Improve** Group



# Opportunity Gap Initiative

## Theory of Change



### Vision

A community that embraces diversity and inclusivity, where all families have abundant opportunities, and feel respected, safe and secure.

### What is the opportunity gap?

The opportunity gap is the difference in opportunity that one culturally, racially and/or financially similar group has in comparison to another.

### Why does it exist?

Relational, and resource inequity. Poverty. Racism. Segregation by social class. People live in separate worlds, interacting and empathizing with people from similar economic backgrounds.

### What is our response?

Through broad community engagement, public education, and grantmaking, DSACF intends to support community members to bridge differences. DSACF's grantmaking initiative will increase opportunities among families experiencing poverty.

### Who benefits

Our work will provide new opportunities to the more than 3,500 children living in poverty in Duluth and Superior, as well as their families. In doing so, our efforts will have ripple-effect benefits throughout our community, improving lives, prospects and outcomes for many more. Our community is stronger, more resilient, and better positioned for the future when all community members have opportunities to develop and share their talents.

### Community engagement

Community engagement from all levels and sectors is required to make a difference.

### Bridging social capital

Bridging social capital - or connecting people and groups across lines of difference - is critical to the solution. It will make people more empathetic and increase the value they place on narrowing the opportunity gap.

### Inequity

Inequities are socially created. The norms of inequities reduce the quality of life for everyone in the community.

### Grant funding

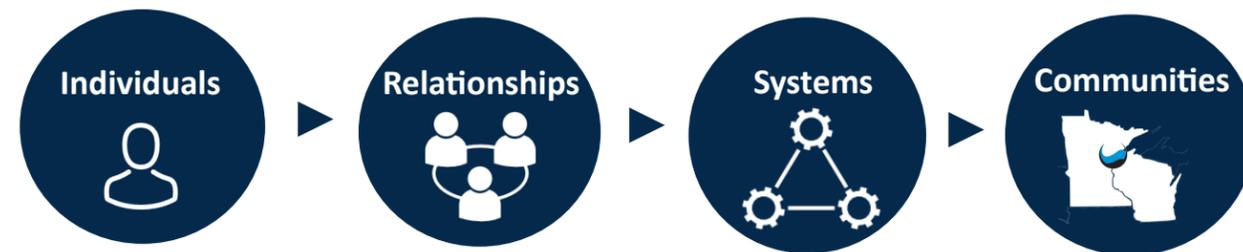
Aims to increase opportunities in parenting and caregiving, education, and community for families experiencing poverty.

### Public education & support

- Raise public awareness about the costs of the Opportunity Gap and the benefits of addressing it
- Build a stronger sense of community where all kids are "our" kids—generating greater community action
- Raise funds for the initiative

### Broad community engagement

- Listening to our Convening Committee
- Listening to nonprofit organizations working with children and families experiencing poverty
- Listening to caregivers
- Sharing program-related decision-making power with low-income families (through grantees)



- Access to resources (community services, advocates, transportation)
- Knowledge (about community resources, financial literacy, parenting and caregiving practices, healthy vs. harmful masculinity)
- Perceptions (about school, differences across people)
- Skills (parenting and caregiving, leadership, conflict resolution, trauma-informed care)
- Positive social, education & employment outcomes

- Depth, breadth and diversity of relationships (between parents/caregivers and children, between teachers and parents/caregivers, between families and health providers)

- Exchange of information across organizations and businesses (between providers, between landlords, between advisory committee members)
- Partnerships (between health organizations and schools, nonprofits, government agencies, law enforcement, advocates)
- Changes in programming and service delivery (at schools, community-based organizations)

- Awareness (of barriers families experiencing poverty face, the opportunity gap, trauma)
- Empathy across social divides
- Evolved mindsets (employers, landlords)
- Community members are involved in ensuring all children have abundant opportunities, and feel respected, safe and secure.

### Grant program areas

#### Parenting & caregiving

We recognize the enormous impact of parents and caregivers on their children. We want to work together, including to break generational cycles of poverty.

#### Education

Education, especially early childhood, has been a path to advancement. We want to ensure that it remains so and is available to all.

#### Community

By building community, we build bridges and ladders that encourage advancement—and lead to a stronger community.

### Grant program principles

- \*Wrap-around support
- \*Holistic & collaborative
- \*Builds long-term relationships with families
- \*Empowering
- \*Built on research
- \*Innovative and fresh
- \*Solutions are systemic
- \*Context matters (child within family, family within community)



DULUTH SUPERIOR AREA  
**COMMUNITY  
FOUNDATION**