A Decade of Difference: Convergence’s Record of Impact

Convergence brings America’s leaders to a shared table, creating unlikely alliances across traditional silos to tackle some of the country’s toughest challenges. Over the last decade, we have convened over 300 individuals for dialogue-leading-to-action across ten issues including long-term care, health reform, economic mobility, recidivism in the criminal justice system, and K-12 education. Our work has had substantial impact on the government, the business sector, and non-profits, yielding collaborations, ideas, and solutions never thought possible.

Our work rests on the premise that no individual or organization can unilaterally bring about necessary change on complex and critical social and economic challenges facing the country. It takes the collective action of many partners. We use this same perspective towards understanding our impact. To evaluate our work, we don’t look only at how we alone caused certain results. Rather, we seek to understand our contribution to advancing progress on the important issues we address. In shorthand, we look at our contribution, not only attribution.

BUSINESS

Our project on economic mobility helped Walmart and McDonald’s improve employee education and training, develop career pathways, and provide workers predictable scheduling.

- Walmart is making significant investments in these three areas, which will increase mobility and earnings over time at very low cost to the employees. We are gratified to have played a role in shaping the opportunity-focused agenda for the largest private sector workforce in the country.
- Similarly, McDonald’s has expanded tuition assistance so workers can obtain credentials and degrees at a low cost, improve English language skills, and access technology to help determine future career options.

“Walmart is going through a lot of changes, and I hope you all know how tremendously influential this group has been. Thank you all for teaching me and helping Walmart grow.”

-Ellie Bertani, Walmart

“McDonald’s continues to invest in U.S. restaurant employees, through the Archways to Opportunity program that recently expanded to help more people access education and training as they climb their own chosen career ladder. The recommendations from this Convergence dialogue are aligned with these investments as our group found solutions that meet the needs of employers while strengthening access to opportunity for workers."

-Lisa Schumacher, McDonalds

Our Project on Nutrition and Wellness collaborated with the National Association of Convenience Stores (NACS) to enable their industry to better provide healthier food and beverage choices to consumers across the country.
Convergence partnered with NACS, which represents 150,000 stores nationwide, to test and then publish strategies to increase sales of healthier foods and beverages. This enabled more and more of their members to implement these strategies and contributed to an increase in stores stocking more fruits and vegetables, growing their sales of water, and other improvements. More than two in five NACS retail members (41%) said they stocked more fresh fruit and vegetables over the first six months of 2018. They now sell a quarter of a billion dollars of fruit, and $4 billion in water sales, an increase from a few years ago.

GOVERNMENT

Convergence projects on long-term care financing, health reform, and federal budget process reform have generated solutions that -- in each case -- were incorporated into proposed federal legislation.

- Our Long-Term Care Financing Collaborative’s recommendations were the basis for a refined proposal included in proposed legislation in 2019 by the Chair of the House Energy and Commerce Committee.
- As the 2017 health care debate roiled the nation, Convergence’s Health Reform Roundtable, consisting of experts who helped create the Affordable Care Act and those who worked to dismantle it, reached bipartisan agreement on how to strengthen the health care system. This work received coverage in dozens of national media outlets and proposed legislation reflected many recommendations of our Roundtable.
- Our Building a Better Budget Process project shaped Congressional deliberation on the federal budget process. Our group’s proposals were included in 2018 legislation considered by the Joint Select Committee on Budget and Appropriations Process Reform and are included in 2019 legislation developed by the Senate Budget Committee.

Convergence is supporting the House of Representative’s Bipartisan Working Group through 2021.

- We are helping these Members of Congress develop stronger, more productive relationships; and consensus-driven solutions to complex policy challenges.

“We believe Convergence is uniquely situated to support the Bipartisan Working Group’s mission to help Members strengthen relationships across the aisle and find common ground so that they are able to work more effectively to advance their shared policy goals.”

- Co-Chairs of the Bipartisan Working Group: Representatives Derek Kilmer, Susan Brooks, Andy Barr, Kathleen Rice, and Mike Gallagher

NON-PROFITS

Our Education Reimagined initiative created a national network of dozens of national and regional non-profits who are working to transform K-12 education in the United States.

- These organizations are collaborating to build public will, advance learner-centered schools and systems, and remove policy barriers to spreading learner-centered education.
- This project was so successful that Convergence spun Education Reimagined off in 2019 to become its own independent advocacy organization to promote learner-centered education nationally.