

PRINCIPLES

SparkPoint Centers are the result of unique collaborations of Fresno County agencies

that are committed to improving financial stability services and outcomes for members of the Fresno community. Led by United Way of Fresno County in conjunction with nonprofits and other stakeholders, these agencies are replicating and improving the most innovative and promising national model, developed by the Annie E. Casey Foundation through its Center for Working Families program. The model rests on principles around common goals, best-practice service provision, and a partnership approach.

Each SparkPoint Center is being developed organically according to local community needs and assets, but partners at each Center share a commitment to seven central concepts:

- (1) offer an array of services in three areas – credit, income, and assets;
- (2) seamlessly integrate service delivery, appropriately “bundled” and sequenced;
- (3) provide financial counseling for all clients and motivate and support them with culturally competent staff;
- (4) promote and provide access to public and private benefits and mainstream financial services ;
- (5) commit to continued engagement with clients over two-three years;
- (6) evaluate, learn from and share data, supported by a user-friendly IT system that demonstrates results; and
- (7) promote SparkPoint through the power of a common brand and marketing.

The partners have also committed to common goals and developing new indicators to measure the extent to which we reach these goals.

JOINT GOALS AND METRICS

Long-Term Goal: Families achieve a self-sufficient wage, reduce debt to less than 40% of monthly income, improve credit score to at least 650, and accumulate liquid assets equivalent to at least 1 month (and ideally 3 months) of living expenses.

Intermediate Goal: Families improve credit, increase their income to narrow the gap between current income and self-sufficiency, and begin to build savings or assets.

<i>Service Area</i>	<i>Metrics</i>	<i>Strategies</i>
Credit Enhancement <i>Families improve credit scores and debt-to-income ratios</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o #/% who improve credit score o amount improved o #/% who reduce their debt-to-income ratio o % change in ratio 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Financial counseling o Credit counseling o Debt restructuring
Build Income <i>Families increase their income toward their Self-Sufficiency Standard</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o # who achieve certifications o #/% clients narrow gaps toward their Self Sufficiency Standard o Typical % narrowed o # who complete units toward a degree 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Workforce Development (hard and soft skill development) o Education Counseling o Micro-enterprise Development
Build and Preserve Savings and Assets <i>Families accumulate liquid assets equal to three months of living expenses</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o #/%/\$ saving regularly o # banked o # participating/ benchmarks achieved in micro-enterprise or homeownership programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Savings and IDA Programs o Micro-enterprise Development o First-time Homeownership Programs

PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS

SparkPoint Center agencies commit to the following partnership agreements in order to make common aspirations possible:

1. Create a joint mission that complements partner organizations' core missions.
2. Agree to full participation, including to:
 - Provide a decision maker from the organization to attend most of the planning and design meetings
 - Leverage and bring some of the agencies' existing resources to the table
 - Cross-train staff to communicate and promote partner services
 - Develop a joint budget
 - Jointly develop resources (fundraise)

3. Agree to set aside individual organizational identity when communicating about the SparkPoint Center.
4. Create a welcoming and respectful environment for clients.
5. Work differently as needed to achieve common goals, for instance:
 - Use an empowerment model when providing services
 - Use a membership model for client enrollment
 - Expand qualified client profile from women only to women and men
 - Offer services during nights and weekends
 - Manage clients jointly and share client information. Create confidentiality principles and guidelines.
6. Agree to be held accountable by the partners within the SparkPoint Center.
7. Track common metrics, share data, and evaluate results. Participate in peer learning within the Center and across the region. Strive for continuous improvement.
 - Utilize the UWFC licensed Ec-Impact web-based data system or utilize other product that allows organization to share the same data.
8. Commit to sustain this effort over time – at least 5 years.
9. Bring in additional partners as appropriate to develop the Center and help its services evolve.