

Quiet Shift—Systemically Reducing Needs and Costs
We can do this. We can do the right thing.
Executive Summary

Our assessment indicates that the U.S. can reduce the numbers of abused and neglected children, hungry, homeless and others in need — which remain high despite significant efforts — by more than 80+%, and direct costs by 20–30+%, by retargeting the system, restructuring it systemically, and organizing the enormous capacity that already exists to bring it to bear on solving the systemic problem. The assessment is half complete. You can accelerate the solution.

Background

- **Situation—always those in need and efforts:** Despite the enormous success of the U.S. and its people, there have always been abused children, the hungry, the homeless and others in need— and, fortunately, efforts to address those needs.
- **Problem—despite efforts, needs and costs high:** The problem is that, despite these efforts, the number of those in need — along with the costs, issues, and controversy surrounding these efforts — remains high.
- **One reason—gaps in solution efforts:** We decided to focus our consulting firm on helping address the systemic issues in helping those in need. Our review of past efforts revealed several gaps likely contributing to this persistence of need and cost. While the causes are systemic, most solution efforts have not been. Many have significant operational and structural challenges, and few have started with the goal of truly solving the problem and working back from that outcome to restructure the system — without constraint — to achieve it.
- **Quiet Shift—fill the gaps:** We undertook the needed systemic, highly operational, and unconstrained assessment.

Quiet Shift approach

- **Approach—Treat as basic capacity-building challenge:** Quiet Shift is using basic systemic restructuring approaches to iteratively assess — with increasing focus and depth — the most foundational causes of persistent costs and needs, identify the highest-leverage solutions, and develop a roadmap enabling those who believe in a systemic solution to further develop and deploy them.
- **Status—halfway:** We've completed two and a half of the planned five iterations.

Findings

The most important findings to share at this point are:

- **Cause—belief that a systemic solution is impossible:** There are five increasingly foundational causes for why need and cost remain high. The most foundational cause is the belief that the system is too big and the risk too high to fix systemically. Consequently, solution efforts have not targeted solving the systemic root causes of this persistence
- **Solution—decide not to accept and try:** The first step in solving the problem is for enough people to decide not to accept this belief — to begin the systemic solution process. We have already made that decision. The assessment, opportunity, and roadmap are halfway complete. The need now is for enough people to make the same decision to enable us to complete it.
- **Opportunity—reduce needs by 80+% and cost by 20–30%:** reduce needs by 80+% and cost by 20–30+%, while aligning system performance with the success of citizens and the nation at every level. This can be achieved by:
 - **Retarget—target outcomes needed for success:** Targeting the system on an explicit assessment of what citizens and the nation at all levels need, what will contribute materially to their success, and what is scientifically possible.
 - **Restructure—align system systemically:** Restructuring the system from end-to-end so that the parts work together systemically, by and across populations, to achieve those outcomes while mitigating the high levels of fragmentation, diseconomies of scale, and other operational problems — thereby greatly reducing cost and increasing effectiveness.
 - **Organize—bring existing capacity to bear on systemic:** Recognizing that the problem is not technical but organizational — and that the most powerful driver of success will be organizing to build the processes, organization, and other infrastructure needed to bring the enormous existing capacity to bear on developing and deploying the needed systemic improvements.

Moving forward

- **Priority—finish iterative assessment and roadmap:** Our current focus is completing the assessment to the degree needed to be confident in the solution architecture and roadmap for moving systemic improvements forward — particularly in addressing stakeholder issues. This includes: 1) completing the assessment and roadmap, including the iterative assessment of issues and opportunities across populations, and conducting in-depth analyses of key cross-cutting issues such as developing the first comprehensive assessment of the total problem; 2) formally organizing and expanding the effort; 3) increasing stakeholder engagement and communications.
- **Accelerate—you can accelerate the solution:** You can accelerate the solution by contributing your experience, leadership, and resources to completing the work that remains across the three major work streams. You can also provide valuable input as part of the network of people dedicated to ensuring that efforts to help those in need address the systemic nature of the problem.