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# 10 Essential Practices for Transforming Health and Well-Being Through Regional Stewardship

Transforming the system that produces health and well-being is no small task. To do it well, regional stewards need to work together to intentionally take responsibility for facilitating the cross-sector collaboration and alignment that creates the conditions for lasting change. Informed by multiple national studies and over ten years of work with regional stewards, ReThink Health, an initiative of the Rippel Foundation, has created a [Pathway for Transforming Health and Well-Being Through Regional Stewardship](#) and has carefully depicted what is known about [The State of Regional Stewardship in Each Pathway Phase](#). But what are the most essential practices that stewards must pursue in order to create equitable opportunities for everyone to reach their potential for health and well-being? We've summarized ten in this document.

The Essential Practices are best understood by stewards—people or organizations who take responsibility for forming working relationships with others to transform health and well-being across a region. Stewards may be affiliated with organizations, or may act on their own agency (e.g., [residents](#)). If this is you, ReThink Health recommends that you take a good look at the [Pathway and Glossary](#) before you get started so you can get at least somewhat familiar with the common processes and language stewards use to describe their work.

The practices are organized into three key areas of stewards' focus—broad stewardship, sound strategy, and sustainable financing—all of which are anchored in a shared vision. They articulate aspirations for stewards firmly in Pathway phases 2 and 3 who would like to eventually be in phases 4 and 5, including everything it takes to develop and implement an [interdependent portfolio of interventions](#) (a balanced and impactful set of policies, programs, and practices that stewards implement to produce equitable health and well-being in their region).

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The Discussion Starters will help you focus your dialogue and action around how to cultivate the practices that are essential for transformation. The Discussion Starters are not intended to be a checklist and there is no right order for pursuing essential practices. We intentionally depict them in a circle because stewards hardly ever pursue them in a linear path. Changes in one practice area often cascade into shifts and insights elsewhere. Most regional efforts like yours are already strong in some practices, while other practices are either areas for improvement or new frontiers altogether.

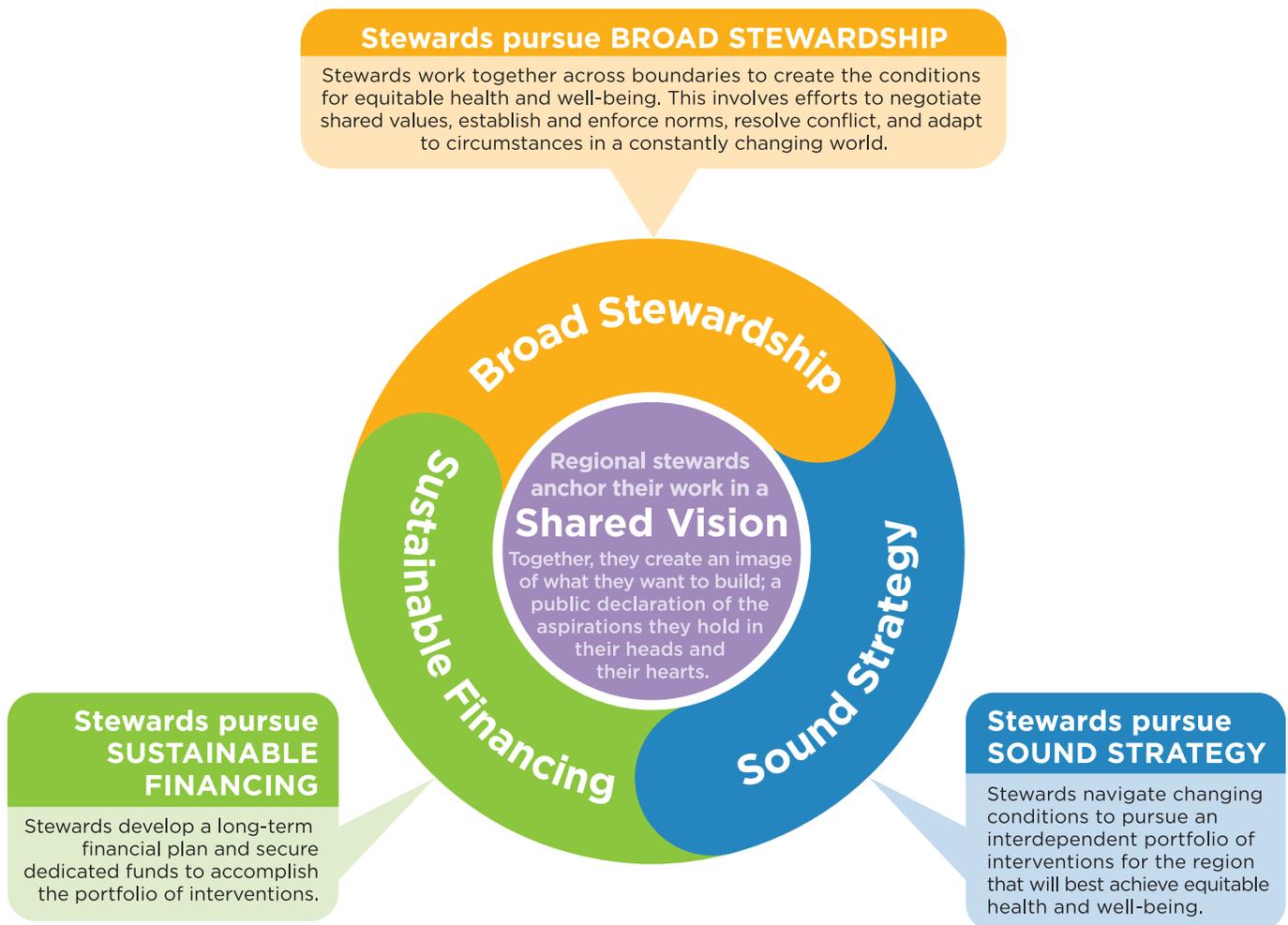
As stewards, you can use the Essential Practices and associated Discussion Starters and Resources provided throughout this document as a means to define what you have already achieved and what work is ahead so you can best advance your collective capacities and discover ways do business differently, together.

## GLOSSARY

The Rippel Foundation uses **innovation language** to nurture highly innovative cultures with the power, direction, and energy necessary for change. [Click here](#) and see page 4 for definitions of terms that might be new to you.

# Transforming Health and Well-Being in Your Region?

The most successful stewards use these essential practices:



## Shared Vision

**Regional stewards anchor their work in a SHARED VISION.** Together, they create an image of what they want to build; a public declaration of the aspirations they hold in their heads and their hearts.

### 1 Stewards articulate and routinely pursue a clear, compelling, shared vision for the region.

#### DISCUSSION STARTERS FOR SHARPENING PRACTICE:

- Are we, as stewards, working together routinely to pursue a clear, compelling, and shared vision for the entire region that benefits all of its residents?
- Have we articulated a compelling case to advance the shared vision among a critical mass of stewards? Do we each understand our own unique contribution to the vision's realization?
- Do we use the shared vision to guide our investments and actions? Do we continuously reflect on outcomes and refine activities to ensure the vision is being achieved?

#### RESOURCES:

[Value Proposition Narrative Toolkit](#) (tool)

[Anchoring to Strengthen Your Region's Case for Systems Change](#) (blog)

# Broad Stewardship

Stewards work together across boundaries to create the conditions for equitable health and well-being. This involves efforts to negotiate shared values, establish and enforce norms, resolve conflict, and adapt to circumstances in a constantly changing world.

## 2 Ensure that stewards' efforts, including governance and management activities, are aligned to achieve their shared vision.

### DISCUSSION STARTERS FOR SHARPENING PRACTICE:

- Have we, as stewards, figured out how to move past our own preferences and approaches to our work? How well have we been able to align our collective work in order to create a more interdependent region and achieve the shared vision?
- What must we do to ensure efforts to build an interdependent portfolio of interventions are seen as legitimate? How might we work together more effectively, as a network, to manage and modify a shared portfolio of interventions so it produces the system change we desire?
- How will we become adept at developing and championing new roles and mindsets, and conducting all the management functions (operational, legal, financial, etc.) necessary for our success?

### RESOURCES:

[Regional Transformation Efforts Conduct Governance and Management Activities Differently Than We Thought](#) (blog)  
[Integrative Activities Assessment Tool](#) (tool)

## 3 Stewards seek to expand the diversity and number of other stewards involved.

### DISCUSSION STARTERS FOR SHARPENING PRACTICE:

- Are we, as stewards, structuring our work to enable the broadest possible participation from stewards not already in the mix? Are we reaching out to involve more people and organizations when assessing options and making decisions?
- What do those not involved need so they can see the regional effort as a legitimate path to change, worthy of their contribution of knowledge, expertise, and other resources?

### RESOURCES:

[Developing a Public Narrative: Using Powerful Storytelling to Motivate Action](#) (Tool)  
[Value Proposition Narrative Toolkit](#) (tool)

## 4 Stewards increase their commitment to the regional effort, relative to their vested interests.

### DISCUSSION STARTERS FOR SHARPENING PRACTICE:

- Are we, as stewards, becoming more aware and respectful of one another's vested interests so we can better engage in negotiation processes to align and advance our work?
- Are we learning to be mindful about distribution of resources as we strive to ensure organizational interests are more in sync with our shared vision?
- How will we surface and reconcile any conflicts that might arise as we enact new policies and financial incentives?

## 5 Stewards create the conditions for robust, routine, and transparent resident leadership.

### DISCUSSION STARTERS FOR SHARPENING PRACTICE:

- Are we, as stewards, routinely incorporating practices of meaningful participation, feedback, input, and support for active resident leadership?
- What are we doing to ensure that resident voices are integral to the design and decision-making processes we use to produce health and well-being in the region?

### RESOURCES:

[Developing a Resident Engagement Strategy: A Planning Curriculum](#) (tool)  
[Exploring Resident Engagement for Health System Transformation](#) (part 1 of a 3-part blog series)

## 6 Stewards use common measures and integrate data. They share knowledge and use it to reflect on and refine their practice.

### DISCUSSION STARTERS FOR SHARPENING PRACTICE:

- Have we, as stewards, clearly defined the expected outcomes and impacts for the work we do individually and together?
- Are we developing common measures that are aligned with our shared vision?
- How are we establishing integrated structures and processes for sharing data, ensuring data is widely understood, reflecting on data, and using it to refine our practice?

### RESOURCES:

[The Universal Difficulty \(but not Impossibility\) of Sharing Data](#) (blog)

## Sound Strategy

Stewards navigate changing conditions to pursue an interdependent portfolio of interventions for the region that will best achieve equitable health and well-being.

### 7 Stewards develop a comprehensive theory of system change.

#### DISCUSSION STARTERS FOR SHARPENING PRACTICE:

- Do we, as stewards, collectively acknowledge that the many forces that produce equitable health and well-being in a region work together as a system? Do we seek to understand how the system tends to change or resist change over time?

#### RESOURCES:

[No More Fragmentation: Crafting a Comprehensive Strategy for Regional Health and Well-Being](#) (part 1 of a 7-part blog series)  
[Transformation Strategy: An Assessment](#) (tool)

### 8 Stewards design an interdependent portfolio of interventions.

#### DISCUSSION STARTERS FOR SHARPENING PRACTICE:

- Have we, as stewards, selected a balanced and impactful set of policies, programs, and practices that are intended to work together and yield both short- and long-term benefits?
- Do we work to ensure the portfolio is effectively balancing urgent needs (such as acute care for illness/injury, or food assistance) with those intended to assure the vital conditions that everyone depends on to reach their full potential (such as humane housing, living wage, education, routine care, and others)?

#### RESOURCES:

[Negotiating a Well-Being Portfolio Exercise](#) (tool)

## Sustainable Financing

Stewards develop a long-term financial plan and secure dedicated funds to accomplish the portfolio of interventions.

### 9 Stewards develop a long-term financial plan for implementing the portfolio of interventions and related integrative activities.

#### DISCUSSION STARTERS FOR SHARPENING PRACTICE:

- Are we, as stewards, creating (perhaps even executing) a financial plan for enacting our portfolio of interventions, including for integrative activities?
- Does our financial plan estimate spending for each intervention and integrative activity; identify revenue resources; and communicate agreed-upon, appropriate allocations of funds to each intervention?

#### RESOURCES:

[Beyond the Grant: A Sustainable Financing Workbook](#) (tool)

### 10 Stewards secure long-term financial sustainability.

#### DISCUSSION STARTERS FOR SHARPENING PRACTICE:

- Are we, as stewards, exploring and accessing diverse, long-term funding sources that will be needed to implement the portfolio of interventions and related integrative activities?
- Are we shifting our organizational resource allocations in concert with the portfolio of interventions?

#### RESOURCES:

[Beyond the Grant: A Sustainable Financing Workbook](#) (tool)

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