

CoreAlign

# IMPACT LABS

2017

# Introduction: Impact Lab

## ABOUT COREALIGN

CoreAlign works to shift culture in the reproductive rights, health and justice movement toward innovation, collaboration and impact, with the ultimate goal of supporting people to develop and implement a long-term, emergent strategy fighting for the resources, rights and respect for their sexual and reproductive lives.

In four years, CoreAlign has created space for almost 800 leaders to practice risk-taking while being generous, generative and curious. This year we are launching new programs to deepen and support leaders' practices of innovation and speaking race to power, and provide new opportunities for connection and collaboration.

## ABOUT THE IMPACT LAB

CoreAlign's *Impact Lab* offers an opportunity for individual teams of 3-8 leaders to practice innovation together. We invite leaders within the reproductive health, rights, and justice movement to collaborate with their colleagues to explore, test and implement innovative solutions to complex movement issues with the support of tools, skills, practices, and coaching.

The process of bringing innovative ideas to fruition is not easy; it requires imagination, determination, and a willingness to collaborate in service of shared goals. In order to thoughtfully address some of our movement's most persistent challenges, the reproductive movement needs leaders committed to innovation, collaboration, and impact.

Some notes about the language we use:

**Innovation:** The word innovation is used in many ways, and can be hard to define. In fact, most people will tell you that they "know it when they see it" but don't have an actual definition for it. At CoreAlign, we define innovation as doing something in a non-habitual way; or, a process by which we do things differently and do different things. The Design Thinking methodology we use is imported and adapted from the technology and development sectors for use in social change and social justice settings. We believe that the curiosity to ask difficult questions, as well as the practice of testing idea sand assumptions through experimentation, should not be used solely by the business sector. These skills are necessary for creative and responsive leadership.

**Collaboration:** We live in a world where the problems we face are too complex and too big for an individual leader to solve alone. The power, creativity and strength required to meaningfully address today's challenges require us to work together collaboratively. Collaboration is the bringing together of people toward a common purpose in a way that leverages the collective diversity and strengths of a group or team. Our Impact Lab is intended to encourage collaboration within a team; each lab team will

receive support for the development of their ideas, give and receive feedback on the clarity and execution of ideas, and deepen relationships with their teammates through the work.

**Impact:** While innovation and collaboration are key processes for facilitating social change within our movement, we must also pay attention to outcomes and impact. An orientation towards impact requires a commitment to learning, and a willingness to let ideas respond, adapt, and evolve based on what is learned. How will we know that our ideas are addressing the right needs, and for whom? How will we know when social change has occurred? Focusing on impact allows us to develop authentic markers for making a difference in people’s lives, which is the central work of movement building. It also allows us to consider failure, and accept it as part of an iterative, experimental process. When we can practice failing fast to learn fast, our failures to create impact allow us to adapt from what we’ve learned and try something new.

The *Impact Lab* is a space for leaders to identify questions and problems that are ripe for exploration and experimentation, and bring a team together to learn frameworks, tools, and practices for idea and solution generation.

We are now accepting applications for the Impact Lab on a rolling basis. **To be included in the first round of the Impact Lab (April 17<sup>th</sup>-May 31<sup>st</sup>), teams must [submit an application](#) by Monday, April 10<sup>th</sup>.** Each team will develop an individualized plan to carry out their project. CoreAlign will provide virtual technical assistance and coaching to aid teams with their experiments over the course of 4-8 weeks.

# Details: The Process

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Impact Lab is designed to help teams of leaders tackle tricky problems and develop scalable solutions with maximum impact. CoreAlign will provide virtual or in-person tools, practices and coaching tailored for each individual team. Labs run from 4-8 weeks, with weekly 60-90 minute sessions, depending on the team's needs. The first 10 hours of coaching support are pro bono, after which additional support can be offered at a sliding scale rate.

Each team will fulfill a design challenge of their choice that addresses a complex reproductive movement issue related to ensuring that all people have the love, sex, family and community they desire. Team participants will self-organize to carry out lab activities and CoreAlign will provide virtual support to aid teams in their progress. Teams will be encouraged to convene in-person meetings to facilitate brainstorming and ideation.

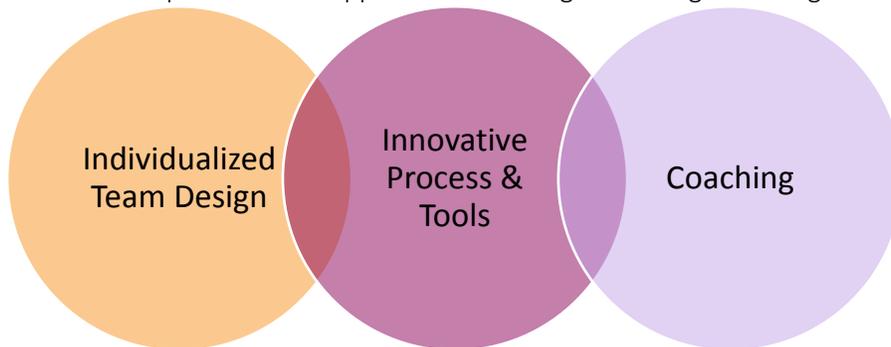
## PROGRAM GOALS

By offering this Impact Lab, CoreAlign seeks to:

- Support leaders in thoughtfully and collaboratively addressing the issues that matter most to them, their organizations, networks, and communities
- Foster the development of tangible, innovative solutions that can address complex and deeply-entrenched reproductive movement issues.

## PROGRAM FEATURES

Three key features of the Impact Lab will support teams through the design challenge.



### INDIVIDUALIZED TEAM DESIGN

Teams will select a project of their choice, self-organize and coordinate how and when they will meet and collaborate on their projects. Here are some of the design challenges teams have chosen to address in the past:

*How might reproductive rights and health organizations like Planned Parenthood of NYC and girls' organizations like Sadie Nash Leadership Project and Girls for Gender Equity foster radical collaborative opportunities in the following areas: education and service provision; public policy and systems change; and culture shift, in order to create realities for young women of color that are rooted in safety, liberatory practices, and their own agency?*

*The reproductive health, rights, and justice movement is composed of human beings, many of whom work in organizations so focused on crisis management that employees struggle to be healthy and thrive. Many leaders say they wish they could afford to do better by their people; meanwhile, employees take their expertise elsewhere, sometimes leaving the movement entirely, due to toxic working environments or occupational burnout. How can our movement and organizations be accountable to cultivating practices that recognize a person's whole self, in and beyond the workplaces, to help people thrive while sustaining the movement?*

*White folks committed to racial justice are struggling to transform themselves and their organizations in service of disrupting the racial status quo, often putting undue burden on friends, family, and colleagues of color. What do white people need in order to shed white toxicity, and call in other white people to center racial equity within their own organizations and progressive social movements? How might we transform ourselves, our organizations, and our movements to become strong, co-conspirators in racial justice?*

In order to address their design challenge, teams will develop a launch plan to guide their process, set goals, and coordinate meetings. Teams can assign team leaders/facilitators to help coordinate team activities. To help you assess the level of time commitment involved, we recommend planning for the following activities over the course of nine months:

- Weekly 60-90 minute meetings for 4-8 weeks (could happen virtually or in-person)
- Three to four 1 hour coaching sessions with a CoreAlign coach

In addition, individuals will likely work on assignments between meetings, and team leaders/facilitators will need to build in extra time to prepare for meetings, send reminders, etc. Previous lab teams have

shared that meeting more frequently helped to sustain momentum and progress with their design challenge.

### INNOVATION PROCESS AND TOOLS

Tools and resources will support teams with generating ideas for solving their problems, designing solutions, and trying out experiments. CoreAlign will provide teams with resources to help facilitate team activities, including:

- Tools and practices to support creative problem-solving.
- Sample agendas to help facilitate team meetings and touch points.
- Suggested activities for teams to carry out each phase of the design process.
- Worksheets and tools to guide process and facilitate sharing of progress.

### COACHING

Teams will have access to a CoreAlign coach to support teams with project development and experimentation. Teams are expected to connect with their coaches three to four times during the lab (coaches may be available more frequently upon request).

## IMPACT LAB PHASES

Lab meetings will help support teams towards meeting their goals. Lab meetings are divided into phases with tools and support structures in place to facilitate successful projects. We have outlined the anticipated timeline and process flow below, however teams may move more quickly or slowly through the phases and may establish their own milestones.



# Application Instructions

To be included in the first round of the Impact Lab (April 17<sup>th</sup>-May 31<sup>st</sup>), please complete the online application by 12 p.m. PT on April 10, 2017.

Only [one application](#) needs to be submitted per team, but must include all team members' information. You will need to complete the following information in the online application:

1. **Proposed team:** Complete demographic information for each team member
2. **Application questions:**
  - Question 1: What is the problem you're seeking to solve? Who is impacted by this problem?
  - Question 2: What impact do you want your team to have? What would you like to see changed, for your organization(s), your networks, movement(s), and the larger community? How will you know that you've been successful?
  - Question 3: What is your team interested in committing or bringing to the Impact Lab process in order to effectively address your problem?
  - Question 4: How will you prepare to collaborate, both virtually and in person? What are the biggest challenges you currently anticipate for your effort, and how does your team plan to address them? What steps will you take to ensure that you can work together effectively?
  - Question 5: What questions do you have about the Impact Lab?

If you have questions or concerns about the application process, please contact Poonam Dreyfus-Pai, Senior Manager, Action and Impact, at [poonam@corealign.org](mailto:poonam@corealign.org).