



# Beginning Your Impact Journey: A Rough Road Map

The foremost mission of the **Catholic Impact Investing Collaborative** is to further the conversation around impact investing in Catholic communities so that those investors can have a positive impact on people and planet. There is a diversity of missions and impact that investors are seeking to accomplish in their goals and CIIC does not aim to consolidate or dictate these goals into any singular objective. However, in our work promoting Catholic impact investing, we have also seen certain commonalities among the investors that have been successful in aligning their investments with their values. Here we have identified steps that successful investors often take in their impact journey.

## STEP 1: GET LEADERSHIP INSPIRED

Almost all of the successful impact advocates we have seen are championed by a respected member of the leadership team of the institution in question. This individual can either be a religious member of leadership, a layperson in the finance department/investment committee, or ideally multiple individuals who are well-respected regarding their respective charism and financial acumen.

## STEP 2: EDUCATE DECISION-MAKERS

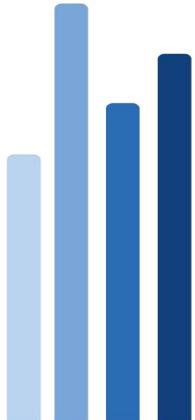
Once you have sparked an interest among leadership, it is important to establish a foundational understanding of impact among the board. Establishing definitions will help you have a common conversation. Dispelling myths is fundamentally important, especially regarding the false assumption that impact investing inevitably leads to financial under-performance. We encourage you to explore Resources to find reputable studies and case-studies outlining successful incorporation of impact.

## STEP 3: FIND YOUR PARTNERS

Most of our members have an active and collaborative professional investment advisor working with the client in some capacity to help implement their impact vision. If you already have an advisor, we would suggest you engage them to better understand the resources and strategies they would suggest you undertake to further your impact journey. If your advisor does not seem open to exploring impact, we would encourage you to speak to your peers about effective ways to further this conversation or, potentially, recommendations of other advisors who are more open to helping you in this work.

## STEP 4: ESTABLISH THE GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

A well-defined governance structure is critical to impact investing success. In some cases we have seen the impact investing program be incorporated into the existing governance structure and in other cases the program has had a newly-created unique structure. It's important that the key decision makers and clearly defined roles be identified.



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## STEP 5: DEFINE YOUR GOALS

What issue areas are fundamental to your organization? What impact metrics are important to you? How much (if any) private investments can you take on? As you set out on your impact journey, we encourage you to work with stakeholders to create distinct markers along the way with which you can measure your success. These can be iterative and evolving markers, and should serve to help you spark conversation and evaluate progress in your goals.

## STEP 6: ASSESS AND LEARN FROM EXPERIENCE

Impact investing programs can be evaluated in multiple ways. Traditional performance reporting and benchmarking is a logical starting point, especially for those that are pursuing market rates of return or better. Traditional performance reporting can be complemented by either ESG or Impact reporting and accomplished via internal or external resources. Providing consistent and transparent information around the impact investments will increase the likelihood of success and support. It is important to document lessons learned from the experiences and periodically review whether different segments of the impact investing process should be evolved.

## STEP 7: IMPLEMENT AND SHARE YOUR STORY

After you have taken the above steps you should be well on your way to the implementation of impact investment within your own investment portfolio. Once you have established and set forth your own impact journey using the steps above, we would ask that you come join CIIC as a signatory of the Catholic Impact Investing Pledge and share your story of impact! In collaborating with others in broader coalitions such as CIIC, ICCR, GCCM, and countless others, you can help contribute to the broader movement of those in the Catholic impact community wishing to create a more sustainable, prosperous, and hopeful future.

**If you're looking to connect to a peer, find a gathering, or want to be more involved with CIIC, we'd love to hear from you!**

**To learn more about our work and how you can get involved, please visit our website [www.catholicimpact.org](http://www.catholicimpact.org) or reach out at [info@catholicimpact.org](mailto:info@catholicimpact.org).**

