**A brief explanation of Getting Ahead in a Just-Gettin’-By World: What it is and how it fits into a broader community approach to poverty**

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[Getting Ahead in a Just-Gettin’-By World](http://www.ahaprocess.com/store/getting-ahead-facilitator-notes-workbook/) is a book used by focus groups of people in low-wage jobs to examine the impact that poverty has on them and their communities.

[Evidence shows](http://www.ahaprocess.com/getting-ahead-study/) that focus group participants, known as investigators, make significant positive changes in poverty-related knowledge and in seven psychosocial areas: stress, mental health and well-being, social support, hope, self-efficacy, and goal-directed behavior and planning.

Getting Ahead graduates are known as the high-octane fuel in [Bridges Out of Poverty initiatives](http://www.ahaprocess.com/solutions/community/) in the U.S. and six other countries. Getting Ahead and Bridges make it possible to bring people from all economic classes to the planning and decision making tables in institutions and communities.

The success of the original Getting Ahead (GA) has evolved into a series of books: [Getting Ahead while Getting Out](http://www.ahaprocess.com/store/getting-ahead-while-getting-out-set/)*,* [Getting Ahead in the Workplace](http://www.ahaprocess.com/store/getting-ahead-in-the-workplace-workbook/)*,* [Investigations into Economic Class in America](http://www.ahaprocess.com/store/kit-investigations-into-economic-class-in-america-facilitator-notes-set/)) for citizens returning from prison, employees and people joining the workforce, and people entering college who are first-generation, low-income students.

Getting Ahead is an agenda-free facilitated learning experience covering 16 sessions of two and a half hours each. GA groups generally meet twice a week. A diverse group of 12 people uses life experiences as the context for learning about the causes of poverty, the environments of economic class, the hidden rules of class, and the theory of change that will help them build a [stable and resource-rich future](http://www.ahaprocess.com/solutions/community/getting-ahead/).

The Bridges/Getting Ahead model calls for long-term support for people who make the journey from poverty to economic stability. This support comes from community collaboratives that apply the concepts found in Bridges and GA. Studies show that organizations from various sectors including business, corrections, education, health, legal, social services, and faith have improved outcomes for people in poverty who attend their programs.

Bridges collaboratives operate above institutional and departmental silos to overcome barriers encountered by Getting Ahead graduates. (see [Bridges to Sustainable Communities](http://www.ahaprocess.com/store/bridges-to-sustainable-communities-book/) and read about [the training](http://www.ahaprocess.com/workshop/bridges-to-sustainable-communities/)) Member organizations are expected to take ownership of Bridges concepts, embed them in their program designs, and share their innovations with other organizations, thus forming a sustainable learning community. Using the common language of Bridges/Getting Ahead to analyze and act on poverty issues, the collaboratives work to transform their communities into places where everyone can live well. (See [locations on map](http://www.ahaprocess.com/aha-locations/)).