The Building Neighborhood Capacity Program

Findings from Flint, Fresno, Memphis and Milwaukee

Building Neighborhood
Capacity Program

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2

About This Report

At the outset of the Building Neighborhood Capacity Program (BNCP), the Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP) commissioned a formative assessment that would inform and strengthen BNCP's ongoing work with the target neighborhoods and contribute to the field's knowledge about effective strategies for building neighborhood capacity. This report is one product of the formative assessment, covering BNCP's original timeline from January 2012 to April 2014 as well as its six-month extension to October 2014.

The report is based on multiple sources of data: CSSP materials and tools; sites' letters of interest, selection process materials and quarterly site director reports; and the technical assistance (TA) team's site visit reports and cross-site meeting assessments. The assessment consultant, Prudence Brown, periodically interviewed site directors and lead agency staff, observed the selection process, participated in bi-weekly TA team meetings and site phone meetings, attended cross-site meetings and interviewed TA team members and joined them for at least three site visits in each city. Her co-author, Leila Fiester, conducted additional interviews with TA team members, local staff and community stakeholders, and those interviews became the basis for the profiles that appear throughout the report. Some material is adapted with permission from an unpublished Mid-Term Formative Assessment Report and other internal memoranda.

Overview of the Building Neighborhood Capacity Program (BNCP)

The Building Neighborhood Capacity Program (BNCP) helps low-income neighborhoods build the capacity and resources needed to plan, implement and sustain comprehensive revitalization efforts that improve the lives of residents. Targeting persistently poor neighborhoods that historically have faced barriers to revitalization, BNCP seeks to catalyze a results-driven community change process involving residents, civic leaders, public and private funders, nonprofit organizations and local businesses. The working assumption behind BNCP is that connecting efforts to build capacity at the neighborhood level with efforts to strengthen a citywide partnership committed to neighborhood development can lead to concrete results for residents over a two-year period and to significant prospects for additional neighborhood gains in the future.

This overview provides a brief history of the program; summarizes its values and expectations, key actors and budget; and describes the targeted neighborhoods.

BNCP'S HISTORY

BNCP grew out of the Obama Administration's Neighborhood Revitalization Initiative (NRI), an interagency strategy to make it easier for communities to access the necessary tools and resources to transform neighborhoods of concentrated poverty into neighborhoods of opportunity that support the optimal development and well-being of children and families. The NRI partnership involves five federal agencies: the departments of Education, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, Justice and Treasury.

NRI generated three centerpiece programs—*Promise Neighborhoods, Choice Neighborhoods and the Byrne Criminal Justice Innovation*—and has connected them with other federal place-based programs providing vital neighborhood services and resources. Aware that federal investments rarely reach neighborhoods that have significant needs but limited capacities, NRI's designers created BNCP as a strategy for building the capacity of distressed neighborhoods to effectively access, use, and leverage public and private resources and to facilitate the alignment of investments in housing, education, public safety, health and economic development.

Selected through a competitive process, the Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP) operates as BNCP's manager and technical assistance provider. CSSP worked closely with the federal partners to select eight neighborhoods in four target cities and provide resources and customized technical assistance. This process helped teams in neighborhoods develop and pursue results-driven revitalization plans, while also building needed capacities at both the neighborhood and citywide partnership levels. CSSP also developed an online resource center, convened a community of practice for participating neighborhoods and conducted a formative assessment to inform and strengthen BNCP's ongoing work and develop lessons from the initiative.

To help carry out this work, CSSP created working agreements with several BNCP partner organizations: The Aspen Institute Roundtable on Community Change, the Institute for Community Peace (ICP), Living Cities and the National League of Cities (NLC).[1]

Planning for BNCP began in 2011, with CSSP formally beginning its work at the beginning of 2012. Because BNCP represented a new way for the federal government to work with a nonprofit partner like CSSP, it took more time than a standard federal grants program to move from design through site selection to a full-scale launch. These circumstances meant that the original plan to include two years of technical assistance (TA) to sites was reduced to about 18 months. However, with additional federal resources and local matches, the scheduled ending date of March 31, 2014, was extended six months to September 30, 2014.[2] (See Appendix A for BNCP's detailed timeline.)

BNCP'S IDEAS, VALUES AND CORE DELIVERABLES

Community capacity is the combination of knowledge, skills, relationships, processes and resources that residents, local organizations and cross-sector partners need to work together to achieve their goals. BNCP assumes that building neighborhood capacity will lead to better results for residents and a stronger neighborhood voice in the city. Drawing from its own history of capacity-building work, CSSP developed a model with nine capacities that enable a neighborhood to foster positive change and generate residents' desired results.[3] BNCP's technical assistance strengthens these capacities as each neighborhood works on two core deliverables:

1 All four partners were engaged in BNCP's selection process, but only ICP and NLC were involved throughout BNCP.
2 These additional federal resources also enabled each city to select a third neighborhood for BNCP participation, starting in October 2014. BNCP's expansion is discussed in Section V of this report.
3 See Section II of this report for an in-depth discussion of BNCP's capacity framework.

- A **neighborhood revitalization plan** that addresses at least one desired "result" for the neighborhood, defined as a statement of well-being, such as "We live in a safe community" or "All our children have access to good schools." The plan includes initial solutions intended to generate progress toward the desired results and indicators for measuring success.
- A **"learn while doing"** project, intended to produce a tangible outcome for the neighborhood in the short run, while building capacities that enable the neighborhood to attract and make effective use of resources in the future.

By developing specific capacities in each neighborhood and weaving capacity building into BNCP's two core deliverables, CSSP catalyzes a revitalization process that has increasing power and sustainability during and beyond BNCP support. That increased neighborhood capacity provides a platform for a new, more equitable way of doing business that engages multiple sectors across the city and generates the resources, policy decisions and collective commitment needed to address the neighborhoods' revitalization goals.

BNCP's Process Map illustrates the interdependence of BNCP's core elements and the sequence of steps to help a neighborhood move forward, with increased capacity, to achieve positive results for residents (see Appendix B).

BNCP's core deliverables are produced through a "values-driven" approach. CSSP's Request for Letters of Interest and the Performance Agreements established with sites both underscore the central role of an ever-expanding group of residents who serve as leaders and owners of the work. Other BNCP values emphasize meaningful results for children and families and the neighborhoods in which they live, use of data for learning and accountability and strategic partnerships that share authority and accountability for building capacity and sustaining growth.

BNCP'S KEY ACTORS

BNCP calls for three key local entities to work together to support an emerging neighborhood partnership: the **lead agency, anchor partner(s)** in each neighborhood and the **cross-sector partnership**. Although the core functions of these entities are consistent across BNCP cities, their particular organizational and funding arrangements differ considerably.

The **lead agency** serves as or identifies a fiscal agent for the site's BNCP resources and local match and provides overall guidance of the work, including the selection of **site directors** and participation with local partners in neighborhood revitalization planning. The **neighborhood anchor partner** organizes the neighborhood partnership, contributes to the capacity-assessment process, participates in neighborhood planning and spearheads the "learn while doing" project. BNCP expects both the lead agency and the neighborhood anchor partner(s) to bring credibility and to leverage key networks within and outside the neighborhood in service of the revitalization effort.

Recognizing that neighborhoods need external partners and resources to support and sustain their

6

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BNCP's assumption is that increased neighborhood capacity will provide a platform for a more equitable way of doing business that engages multiple sectors and generates the resources, policy decisions and collective commitment needed to address the neighborhoods' revitalization goals.

efforts, BNCP requires that each city work with an existing **cross-sector partnership** or constitute a new collaborative entity to support the work of the target neighborhoods. Composed of key public agency and private sector leaders, the cross-sector partnership secures matched funding for BNCP and assists the revitalization efforts, particularly in areas of policy, data and financing.

Flint, Mich. (Wards 1 and 3)	**Memphis, Tenn.** (Binghampton and Frayser)
Fresno, Calif. (El Dorado Park and Southwest)	**Milwaukee, Wisc.** (Amani and Metcalfe Park)

BNCP'S BUDGET

Each BNCP city received and matched $225,000 in federal funds to support two target neighborhoods and the cross-sector partnership, in approximately equal shares (see Appendix C for a detailed budget).

BNCP'S NEIGHBORHOODS

CSSP worked with the Federal Management Team (FMT) and its partners to design and implement a six-month competitive selection process to identify 2–4 cities and 2–3 neighborhoods within each city for participation in BNCP. The goal was to identify cities with: (a) a cross-sector partnership—or collaborative entity at the city/county level—that could help build neighborhood capacity and work to align policy and sustainable funding with neighborhood needs and priorities and (b) "high-need" neighborhoods with just the "right" amount of capacity— enough to take advantage of the relatively short infusion of resources and assistance that BNCP would bring but not so much that it didn't really need BNCP to move forward. This selection process is described in Appendix D.

In August 2012, the Assistant Secretary of the Department of Justice announced BNCP's selection of the following cities and neighborhoods at the United Neighborhood Centers of America (UNCA)'s Neighborhood Revitalization Conference:

Appendix E includes a demographic portrait of each neighborhood.[4] Selected neighborhoods vary considerably, most strikingly in population size, ranging from 1,589 in El Dorado Park (Fresno) to 40,871 in Frayser (Memphis). What they share is considerable distress in terms of economic insecurity, unemployment, vacant housing, poorly performing schools and other symptoms of disinvestment. Their city contexts also were similar. BNCP launched when all four cities were undergoing the economic dislocation and reduction in public resources caused by economic restructuring and the Great Recession (2007–2009). Citywide poverty rates ranged from 26 to 38 percent, with unemployment rates between 12 and 24 percent.

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4 In some cases, the BNCP teams targeted somewhat different—sometimes smaller—areas than the footprints originally proposed.

TAKING ACTION

HOW
COMMUNITIES CAN GET THE RESULTS THEY WANT
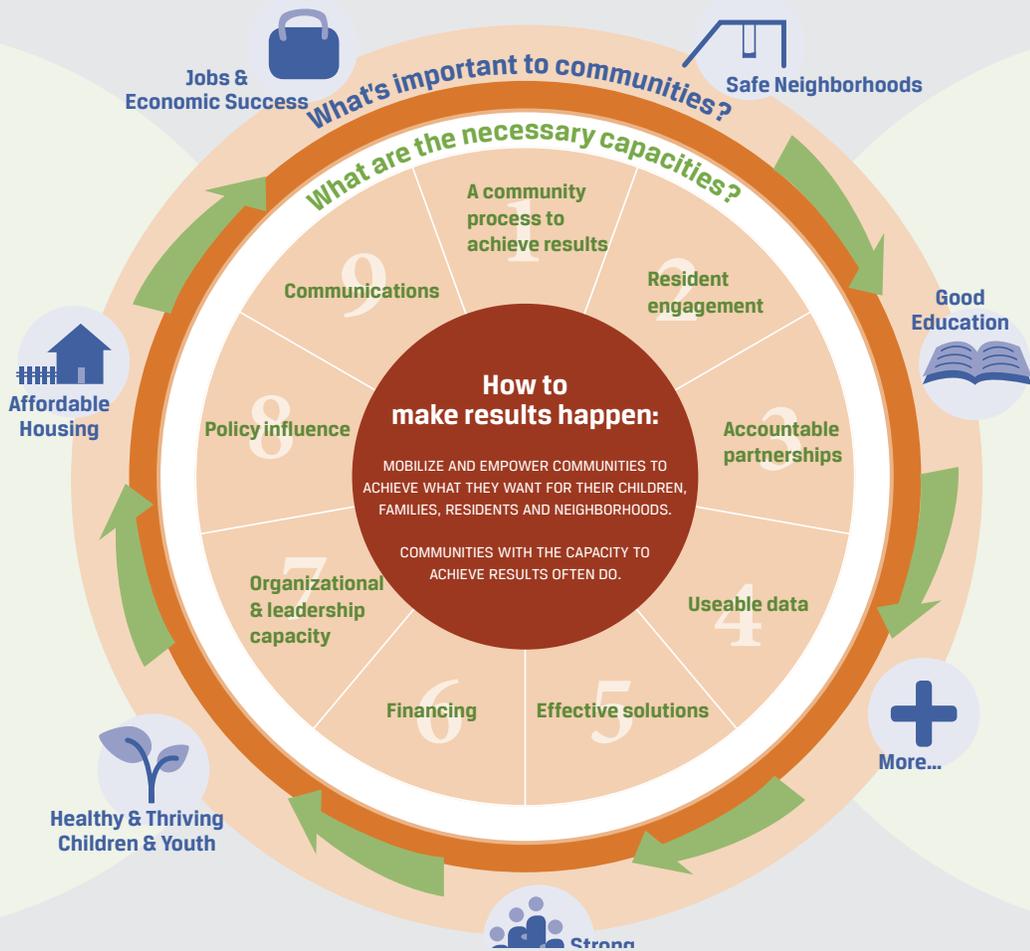
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Policy

FIGURE 1.: THE BNCP CAPACITY BUILDING FRAMEWORK

Jobs & Economic Success

What's important to communities?

Safe Neighborhoods

What are the necessary capacities?

A community process to achieve results — 1

Resident engagement — 2

9 — Communications

Good Education

How to make results happen:

MOBILIZE AND EMPOWER COMMUNITIES TO ACHIEVE WHAT THEY WANT FOR THEIR CHILDREN, FAMILIES, RESIDENTS AND NEIGHBORHOODS.

COMMUNITIES WITH THE CAPACITY TO ACHIEVE RESULTS OFTEN DO.

8 — Policy influence

Affordable Housing

Accountable partnerships — 3

7 — Organizational & leadership capacity

Useable data — 4

6 — Financing

Effective solutions — 5

More...

Healthy & Thriving Children & Youth

Strong

Capacity Development in BNCP Neighborhoods

At the core of BNCP's approach is the belief that sustainable neighborhood transformation requires the development of knowledge, skills, relationships, processes and resources—what BNCP calls community capacity. This section describes CSSP's nine-part capacity-building framework and the process of assessing BNCP neighborhoods' existing capacities and setting targets. We then look more closely at the four capacities, which all or most of the sites prioritized and which dominated the TA Team's focus:

1. Residents are leaders and owners of the work. A diverse cross-section of residents is engaged.
2. A strong, accountable neighborhood partnership guides the work.
3. The neighborhood partnership uses data to inform the design and implementation of the work.
4. The neighborhood partnership is increasingly able to align and target existing resources and leverage new resources for the neighborhood.

Though we cannot reliably measure exactly how much capacity the BNCP neighborhoods developed in each of these four areas over two years of implementation, we offer an analysis of how the neighborhoods worked to build these capacities and the challenges they faced in doing so, along with extended profiles to illustrate the nature of the work.

THE CAPACITY FRAMEWORK AND PROCESS

CSSP's capacity framework links nine areas of community capacity to positive results for residents in education, employment, safety, housing and other key areas (Fig. 1, p. 5), enabling neighborhoods to develop comprehensive revitalization plans and secure the resources needed to achieve the desired results.

After orienting site directors and cross-sector partners to the capacity framework, CSSP's TA team facilitated retreats for a mix of residents and neighborhood stakeholders. The retreats aimed to produce the following results:

- **Better understanding of the BNCP capacity-building framework** and the role of capacity building in developing the neighborhood's revitalization plan
- **Baseline descriptions of neighborhood capacity** in each of the nine capacity areas
- **Clear and measurable targets** for deepening capacity in several priority areas selected by the emerging partnership for development over the life of BNCP
- An initial foundation for **technical assistance plans** detailing how BNCP resources would be used to help each neighborhood achieve its capacity targets and successfully develop revitalization plans

The CSSP TA Team worked to translate the capacity framework into a rubric and set of tools that would help the neighborhood partnerships with the capacity assessment process. Before the retreat, for instance, participants were asked to complete a pre-assessment tool that helped them identify examples of capacity in each neighborhood, so that findings from the tool could guide the facilitated process. At the retreat, using a rubric that described what the growth of community capacity looks like over time in the nine areas of the BNCP capacity-building framework, the TA Team asked the group to assign numerical baselines (on a six-point scale) and select numerical targets for each area. The team encouraged participants to back up the assessments with specific examples, but also emphasized that future targets could be modified as work progressed.

The capacity assessment process, however, faced a fundamental dilemma: how to develop valid and measurable capacity baselines and targets with an emergent partnership that had yet—almost by definition—to ever engage a diverse group of residents and stakeholders who would be driving the work. Ideally, capacity baselines—and especially targets intended to shape the work going forward—would reflect a broad consensus of neighborhood residents, anchor partners and other community organizations and stakeholders responsible for implementing BNCP. The retreats, however, needed to occur early in BNCP's implementation, both to capture a true baseline and to provide the foundation for technical assistance over the next year.

Consequently, the capacity assessment retreats occurred before the neighborhood partnerships had formed or matured sufficiently to have all the "right" people at the table who fully understood and embraced what BNCP aimed to accomplish and represented the diverse interests of the neighborhood. Some retreats had little or no resident representation, while others involved residents who were meeting each other for the first time and/or were unclear about BNCP or their role in it. Furthermore, because the TA team had not yet become acquainted with neighborhood residents and stakeholders, expectations regarding use of the rubric proved unrealistic.

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Few participants completed pre-assessment tools, and most found it difficult to establish numerical baselines and targets within the limited amount of time.

Although the capacity assessment process did not provide a rigorous test of the capacity tools or establish precise capacity baselines at the beginning of BNCP against which to measure each neighborhood's progress, the capacity *framework* deeply resonated within BNCP. We now look more closely at four key components of that framework.

CAPACITY 1: RESIDENT ENGAGEMENT

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Resident engagement is both a core value for BNCP and a strategy for building sustainable community capacity. Charged with helping to create and manage a community process to improve results for residents, BNCP site directors used a wide range of strategies to make initial contact with residents and other neighborhood stakeholders. The choice of strategy depended on a host of local factors, such as the role and strength of the BNCP anchor organizations and other neighborhood groups/networks; the neighborhood's history of resident organizing and externally driven initiatives; divisions across racial/ethnic, service provider/resident and renter/homeowner lines; and the size and geography of the neighborhood. Despite the differences, sites used many of the same approaches for initial engagement with neighborhood residents, including (Fig. 2):

- Conducting outreach to learn about the neighborhood and let people know about BNCP
- Leveraging the contacts and networks of existing community groups and leaders
- Holding community-building events and activities
- Gathering and sharing data on the neighborhood
- Connecting residents to services
- Engaging local government representatives and institutional stakeholders

These activities publicized BNCP and enabled site directors to form new relationships and to learn much more, firsthand, about individual neighborhood dynamics. Early, visible community-building activities like barbecues and school beautification projects built credibility and momentum. They also addressed the many obstacles to resident participation that site directors reported in the initial assessment: lack of hope and confidence, isolation and mistrust, the stresses of chronic poverty, crime and safety concerns and negative past experiences with some of the organizations involved in BNCP.

A central tenet of BNCP is that initial engagement must grow into ownership and leadership if the change process is to gain power and be sustained over time. Beginning with initial engagement, site directors found ways to create an ever-widening circle of engaged residents in ever-deepening levels of leadership. At one site, for example, residents participated in a 10-month Neighborhood Leadership Institute sponsored by several of the cross-sec-tor partners or a six-week Certified Neighborhood Leadership Training course offered by the city. At another site, residents were invited to sit on a grant committee of one of BNCP's funders to determine how to distribute the foundation's resources in the neighborhood. And in El Dorado Park (Fresno), site directors took time to build trusting relationships and then stepped back at every opportunity for residents to take the lead (Fig. 3).

FIGURE 2. : THE BNCP CAPACITY BUILDING FRAMEWORK

Outreach
- Knocking on doors, attending informal coffee hours, conducting listening sessions, BNCP Meet and Greets, focus groups
- Distributing flyers, providing information on BNCP in neighborhood newsletters, inviting local news-papers to publish stories on BNCP and/or the neighborhoods
- Presenting at schools, churches, housing complexes, parent advisory councils, town hall meetings and other standing committees and community groups (e.g., Police Joint Agency Task Force, Inter-faith Association)
- Creating a local website, Facebook and Twitter accounts and blogs

Leveraging Contacts and Networks
- Partnering with anchors, nonprofits and churches
- Mobilizing informal community networks of a neighborhood association
- Encouraging participants to invite their friends and neighbors to BNCP activities
- Collaborating with partner organizations that serve or could reach neighborhood subgroups (e.g., youth, immigrants, formerly incarcerated individuals)

Community-Building Events and Activities
- Barbecues, back-to-school parties, block parties
- Garden planting, neighborhood beautification projects and clean-ups, neighborhood banners

Gathering and Sharing Neighborhood Data
- Conducting surveys, interviews, focus groups
- Partnering with a public agency or nonprofit collecting data in the neighborhood
- Obtaining neighborhood data and maps, making them accessible to residents

Connecting Residents to Services
- Referring parents to financial services at lead agency
- Helping residents access new services leveraged by BNCP anchor partners

Engaging Local Government Representatives and Institutional Stakeholders
- Connecting with existing initiatives by serving on committees, fostering communication between residents and these initiatives
- Representing BNCP on committees and initiatives

El Dorado Park's residents took the reins of neighborhood revitalization by gradually replacing the BNCP team that initiated activities. How did a core group of residents become involved, widen its circle and then deepen involvement not just as participants in change but as drivers of it?

The process started with gentle outreach by BNCP Site Directors Michael Duarte and Eduardo Rodriguez, who came to the neighborhood from different starting points. Duarte had earned a master's degree in organizational leadership and was completing a doctorate of education in organizational leadership at Pepperdine University. After working to build the capacity of grantee organizations for First 5 Fresno County, an early childhood education agency, he wanted to apply theory and practice "on the street level."

Rodriguez dreamed of helping transform neighborhoods since high school, when his family participated in a self-help home-building program. While earning an undergraduate degree in political science at California State University, Fresno, he worked as a community organizer and interned for a downtown revitalization effort, and later he coordinated the Fresno Housing Authority's program for homeless individuals. By the time Eduardo joined the BNCP team, he had seen community change from the grassroots, city government and public agency perspectives.

Duarte and Rodriguez began by spending a lot of unstructured time in El Dorado Park. "We didn't identify ourselves as being from BNCP or a federal program or an agency that was going to change people's lives," Duarte says. "We hung out in the neighborhood—fixing bikes, walking around, playing basketball." El Dorado Park is small enough that the BNCP site directors ran into the same residents frequently, and each time they struck up a conversation. "We're just here to see who's interested in making change in the neighborhood," they would say. After a few months, Michael and Eduardo had gained the residents' trust and learned quite a

bit about the neighborhood and its families. The site directors then began hosting hotdog barbeques. After each dinner, they invited residents to stay and talk about the neighborhood. "We made it clear we weren't coming in with money," Duarte recalls. "We didn't flash gift cards and balloons and free passes to the zoo. We presented it as a good opportunity for them to develop some skills and meet people who can help them achieve their goals." The first meeting attracted only a few residents, but those residents brought friends the next time.

As the number grew, Duarte and Rodriguez asked if residents wanted to form a leadership group to work on things they cared about. They did, so the site directors helped them formalize the commitment by developing a mission, bylaws and principles that articulate "what it means to us to be the go-to group of residents." This process helped establish a sense of identity and a consistent message about the group's purpose. The group also created an operating model with primary leaders and back-ups to ensure continuity.

Next, resident leaders completed a strategic planning exercise to identify priority actions. They selected neighborhood safety and took on a series of projects to address it. Initially with help from Duarte and Rodriguez, and then on their own, residents organized to clean up and maintain alleys, streets and common areas around apartment buildings. They advocated successfully for the city council to replace a broken streetlight. When a methamphetamine lab exploded in the fall of 2012, displacing several families, the group arranged to provide food and clothing for the children. To raise money, they worked with a local church, the Boys and Girls Club and Fresno State to donate space and supplies for family game nights.

The group's success posed an unexpected challenge, however. Soon, every nonprofit organization in the vicinity wanted the group's input and labor for its own projects. Resident leaders began to burn out. "The group almost ended up helping everyone else but not achieving its own

12

outcomes," a site director recalls. "We had to learn to say no to some people." So in the fall of 2013, with assistance from CSSP Senior Associate Rigoberto Rodriguez, the group held a neighborhood summit to clarify priorities. Participants decided that the group's work would focus on parental involvement in children's lives, creating self-worth and positive mentoring. It would not target economic development or planning issues.

To advance this goal, resident leaders worked with Wesley United Methodist Church to open a small resource center, open from 9 a.m. to noon on weekdays and staffed by neighborhood volunteers. It soon became a place where residents could socialize over a cup of coffee, discuss plans for neighborhood cleanups and other activities and get help with basic needs, such as obtaining Social Security cards. But the leadership group discovered that people wanted more resources, including space to hold meetings and classes. And they wanted these opportunities to be available in the community and not at a church.

With Duarte and Eduardo Rodriguez facilitating connections, resident leaders negotiated with the Fresno Housing Authority and the city, which were beginning a $4.2 million renovation of the 32-unit San Ramon Apartments, to designate one apartment as a neighborhood center. Resident leaders wrote a proposal to design and staff a center that offers counseling services, education programs, workshops, after-school youth programs and space for meetings and social functions. The center opened in July 2014.

To help resident leaders become self-sufficient as these activities unfolded, Duarte and Rodriguez tried not to do things for the residents. "I could have printed bylaws off the Internet and handed them out, but it was important for them to fit the dynamic of the group and to mean something to people," Duarte explains. The site directors pushed residents to facilitate their own meetings and their own planning for the neighborhood resource center, a process that involved meeting with attorneys, negotiating contracts and resolving liability issues. "We provided space for resident leaders to incubate or become more confident," Eduardo says. The site directors also included resident leaders every time they met with representatives from an institution inside or outside the neighborhood, to establish ongoing relationships.

What lessons do Duarte and Rodriguez take away from this experience?

- **Make it personal.** Provide lots of one-on-one contact and coaching. Observe emerging leadership skills and encourage people to take on new roles.
- **Be patient.** Don't try to accomplish everything right away. Take time to listen, establish trust and fill gaps in knowledge and experience.
- **Let the residents lead.** Work directly with residents, not just institutional leaders. Don't impose a prescribed model or structure for resident leadership. Find out what matters to residents, and make that the priority. Encourage organizations to give up some control to residents.
- **Advocate for residents' abilities.** For instance, leaders of a church may not understand that "it's not just about distributing food but about training residents to give away the food bag." Representatives from a youth-serving organization may not have thought to involve parents as volunteers. Housing authority officials may need prompting to make an apartment available for community activities run by residents.

What comes next? As of mid-2014, El Dorado Park residents were working to establish several family programs. The church hired a recreation coordinator to provide youth programming several hours a day. And residents were developing a summer science and math program for students in grades 6-8. Meanwhile, the BNCP site directors were getting ready to wrap up their role. "We've become family," Duarte said. "The only thing I'm not prepared to do is say goodbye."

CAPACITY 2: ACCOUNTABLE PARTNERSHIPS

A strong, accountable neighborhood partnership guides the work.

A second capacity goal for BNCP is an accountable neighborhood partnership involving a core leadership group empowered to select BNCP's first desired result and guide the creation of the revitalization plan. The BNCP model is agnostic about the form of the neighborhood partnership; it does not require a particular collaborative structure, nor does it specify how the partnership should be developed. Rather, BNCP highlights the characteristics of a strong partnership:

- A diverse and inclusive membership broadly representative of the key groups having a stake in the neighborhood, including those whose voices may not have been commonly heard
- Clear roles and effective processes for decision-making
- A system for ensuring accountability to and within the neighborhood
- Strong links to organizations and stakeholders outside the neighborhood that have power over policy and resources

The TA teams stood ready to invest in building the capacity of this leadership group to function effectively as roles and responsibilities were defined, additional members were added to reflect the neighborhood's diversity and decision-making processes were put in place. In practice, their ability to provide direct assistance to the neighborhood depended to some degree on the existence of such a partnership or "receptor" for their training.

BNCP neighborhoods took different approaches to forming this core group, ranging from organic self-selection of residents who consistently showed up and demonstrated interest in working together (as in El Dorado Park) to a more formal process involving an application for membership (Flint) or a communitywide election (Frayser). The development of the Neighborhood Advisory Council in Flint illustrates one such path to partnership development (Fig. 4).

With a few exceptions, this process took longer than anticipated, although this is not surprising given the isolation and fragmentation, weak organizational landscape and lack of trust characteristic of most high-need neighborhoods. In addition, although site directors appreciated the flexibility BNCP provided regarding the choice of structure and form for the neighborhood partnership, they were new to this work and suggested that it might have been helpful to learn early on about the advantages and disadvantages of different types of governance structures. The TA team did not want to constrain local ideas or impose external models, but in retrospect team members appreciated the value of exposing sites to a range of possibilities. Nonetheless, most of the neighborhoods ended BNCP's first two years with formal or semi-formal neighborhood partnerships, although a few relied on more loosely constructed leadership groups.

FIGURE 4. DEVELOPING A NEIGHBORHOOD ADVISORY COUNCIL: FLINT, MICH.

Every BNCP site developed a resident leadership group, and in doing so, experienced the ups and downs of this time-consuming and often delicate process. The Neighborhood Advisory Council (NAC) for the two areas of Flint's North Side that participate in BCNP offers a glimpse into the choices and challenges involved in developing resident leadership groups.

The approach taken by Flint differed from that used in other BNCP communities. Instead of holding an election or issuing an open call, Site Director Diana Kelly and her team developed a brochure to recruit residents to participate and distributed it broadly, seeking residents who would commit to two years of participation in leadership meetings and activities. Neighborhood elections didn't make sense, Kelly says, because the BNCP team wanted a single leadership group to serve the entire two-neighborhood area. Moreover, although elections work well in places where strong civic engagement exists, they work less well in places where few people vote.

But the NAC proved to be a hard sell. "People knew this would be a lot of work, and they don't trust the city or federal government, and they didn't want to be part of something that was business as usual," she explains. "Ultimately, I just went out and started talking to people I knew who lived in the area and were committed to it. I also developed a good relationship with managers of a housing complex, and I asked for their help recruiting folks." This approach, along with recruitment support from anchor partners, produced a NAC board with 10 residents, four anchor partners and one at-large member appointed by the lead agency.

To orient NAC members to their role, BNCP Cross-Sector Partner Robert Brown provided training in results-focused planning, participatory research, working as a team and the "strategic doing" process, in which planners combine their assets to achieve more systemic results.

The NAC began meeting monthly to pursue tasks involved in developing a neighborhood revitalization plan: vetting a resident survey created by the University of Michigan-Flint, analyzing data to create a vision for change and identifying target outcomes. NAC members reached consensus on four neighborhood values: safety and security, social well-being, orderliness and cleanliness and self-sufficiency. Working with other residents, service providers, community-based organizations and cross-sector partners, the NAC examined strategies for improving the community and worked with a professional planner, hired by the lead agency, to include them in the revitalization plan. Once the plan was complete, the NAC formed action teams to mobilize residents around its components. For example, the team for economic development planned a series of events to complement the job fair hosted by a neighborhood church, including a seminar on personal finance, a workshop on choosing a career and a session on entrepreneurship and business plan development. Presenters included residents who have become business owners, staff from organizations that provide grants and other resources, college recruiters and representatives of companies that hire formerly incarcerated individuals.

Throughout these activities, Kelly kept the focus on residents' contributions. She explains, "When we held public sessions, we talked about why we were all there and what we wanted to come out of it. But I didn't introduce people at the first meeting, because there were folks with big titles in the room and I knew that some other folks would shut down because they don't think they count, or they would play up to who was in the room. We didn't do formal introductions until the third meeting."

Flint's NAC has helped to foster relationships, increase trust and demonstrate that residents have a role in revitalizing neighborhoods. "They're working together as one. They all have something they can bring to the table to help do the work," says Site Coordinator Monica Frazier, who manages BNCP in the Ward 3 Anchor Zone area and coaches several action teams.

FIGURE 4. DEVELOPING A NEIGHBORHOOD ADVISORY COUNCIL: FLINT, MICH.

NAC members like resident Carolyn Tyler point to tangible results: After they helped the city conduct a blight inventory, 20 decrepit buildings were torn down. When the NAC complained about a reduction in buses, the city's Mass Transportation Authority listened, and when the transportation department considered changing a bus route, staff came to the NAC to ask for input. "Now they know we're interested and concerned, so they're asking our opinion. Before, they didn't do that at all," says Tyler, a homeowner who joined the NAC because she was "passionate about my new neighborhood and wanted to stay up with what was going on."

But there have been challenges, too, including the low number of residents on the NAC, and their high turn-over. Kelly estimates that about six of the 10 original resident members are "active;" the others have either dropped out or don't attend regularly. Two recently secured full-time evening jobs. They both want to be involved but with the NAC taking place in the evening it was impossible for them to attend. "The challenge is finding that perfect fit of commitment and availabil-ity. There may be turnover until you get that fit," Kelly says. To address this issue, the NAC formed a net-working team to increase active resident participation in BNCP from public housing, low- to moderate-in-come apartments and specific geographic areas. The team has recruited about 25 residents to the action teams that will mentor new leaders and serve as a pipeline for identifying future NAC members.

The NAC's slow pace of development is another frustration. The group is still developing operational guidelines, and officials have yet to be designated. "People want things to happen quickly. They don't want to go through the grind of [developing] it," Fra-zier says. "Getting people committed to establishing the foundations and being there from beginning to end—that's what the struggle is." Adds Kelly:

I don't like that it takes so long, but many residents are still standing by watching to see if this is real and is going to last. They've seen people and programs come and go before. And for some of our residents, every day is about survival. Some don't have trans-portation, so we pick them up. Some don't use email, so we have to call or drop by. Some deal with illness or deaths in their families, which slows things down. When people disappear, we have to find them and learn what happened and what can we do to help…. If we want to have residents understand and own this process, if we're going to do it together, we have to develop it together.

People in Flint take these lessons from the NAC's experiences:

- **Give leadership groups time** to form and find traction.
- **Make each meeting substantive** so people see that their participation matters.
- **Periodically, invite policy and decision-makers from outside the community to attend** meetings. Residents "want to sit at a table of mutual respect, knowing that other people need their knowledge."
- **Elevate the group's status** so it is seen as a driver of change, not just as an entity formed to meet program requirements. Position NAC members as civic leaders, not just "advisors."
- **Build commitment in the early stages** through short-term, tangible projects that produce quick wins.
- **Support the group with administrative infrastruc-ture.** Alliances with local universities or Ameri-Corps volunteer programs can provide help with data collection and other supports that reduce burnout.
- **Cultivate a core group of participants** who un-derstand the dynamics of group partnership to help the group weather the ebbs and flows of the revitalization process.

CAPACITY 3: USABLE DATA

CAPACITY 4: RESOURCES

The neighborhood partnership uses data to inform the design and implementation of the work.

Central to results-focused neighborhood development is the capacity to collect, analyze and use data to achieve the neighborhood's desired results. Gathering and distilling data creates a common language that residents and partners can use to develop a detailed, nuanced picture of current conditions and to create a results-focused plan for improving those conditions. Data also provide a means for tracking progress, adjusting strategy and ensuring accountability of all parties involved.

Most sites began BNCP with limited knowledge about and access to neighborhood-level data. As the TA team shared a framework for results-focused planning with sites, local participants began to understand the need to collect baseline data to set realistic goals and track progress. In some cases, cross-sector partners helped neighborhood planning groups gain access to specific data (such as crime data). However, most sites ultimately collected some data on their own to fill gaps in knowledge they considered critical to the planning process.

CSSP's guidance to sites also highlighted the important role of the "story behind the data" (i.e., what residents and stakeholders know and believe about why some aspect of the community is the way it is). The process of revealing the underlying story can demystify what it means to use data and increase investment in a data-informed change process, as illustrated in the profile of The Heights (Fig. 5).

The neighborhood partnership is increasingly able to align and target existing resources and leverage new resources for the neighborhood.

A key rationale for creating BNCP was to help neighborhoods become more competitive in attracting investments (federal and local) that could improve residents' lives. Leveraging resources through partnerships and grants is a key strategy for supporting the solutions developed in a neighborhood's revitalization plan and for sustaining the ongoing costs of neighborhood capacity building.

Attracting new investments and aligning existing resources with community priorities requires a neighborhood partnership that has (and is perceived by funders to have) the skills, knowledge and relationships to achieve results. If it is perceived as a legitimate voice for the neighborhood, rather than as a competitor for resources, the partnership can use its power to foster financial sustainability following the end of BNCP.

The significantly heightened recognition that target neighborhoods gained by participating in BNCP is an initial indication of leverage. In some cases, the neighborhoods' very existence was acknowledged for the first time by the larger city and county. Disinvested neighborhoods that have long histories of being isolated or ignored have now "surfaced" in the eyes of representatives from foundations, city government and citywide nonprofits. In some cities, it is almost as if there was a pent-up demand just waiting for a signal that the neighborhood was "safe"

for investment. These factors, in turn, led a few site directors to have discussions with neighborhood leaders about establishing guidelines to make sure residents have some say in how future partnerships are structured and investments are targeted.

A second form of leverage is new financial resources, often gained in partnership with an anchor organization or other neighborhood group. Site directors have written grant applications for beautification and blight elimination projects, generated support for a community garden, or developed an understanding with a local reinvestment office to direct resources to support BNCP anchor organizations.

A third form of resources leveraged by BNCP is the willingness of both public and nonprofit agencies to link, align and/or target their initiatives and resources toward the BNCP neighborhoods. For example, a foundation required its citywide grantees to work in BNCP neighborhoods. A housing authority and local police department asked residents for guidance on subsidized housing design and policies. A citywide planning process designated BNCP neighborhoods for special focus and development. Nearby universities developed new ways of connecting with and providing services to the neighborhoods, and a lead agency allocated its AmeriCorps VISTA staff to work with BNCP site directors. Frayser's experience (Fig. 6) is a good example of how a BNCP neighborhood with strong leadership and a solid revitalization plan influenced and leveraged significant resources.

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BNCP neighborhoods gained significant recognition; in some cases, their very existence was acknowledged for the first time by the larger city and county. It is almost as if there was a pent-up demand just waiting for a signal that the neighborhood was "safe" for investment.

How does a small neighborhood with little infrastructure establish a sense of identity, mobilize city and county resources, and pinpoint solutions to big problems? For The Heights, the key was to collect, analyze and use data strategically.

Anna Terry, who directed BNCP in The Heights for the initiative's first 18 months, began with a sense of what residents thought about their neighborhood. "I would sit down with people on their porches and hear the concerns. There was a narrative," says Terry. But BNCP technical assistance providers Beth Leeson and Anand Sharma pushed her to develop practical measures of these intangible impressions.

Terry and her "vision team" began with a project called Cards for Community. They printed postcards asking residents to indicate what they were proud of in The Heights, what their biggest concerns were, whether they were willing to help change the community and with what activities they wanted to help. They mailed the cards four times over six months, each time reaching 5,000 homes. Residents could return the cards to special boxes set up in public places. "We didn't get a ton of cards back but it generated a lot of phone calls," Terry says. "That created a pathway for sharing resources, for widening the circle."

Cards for Community reinforced a hunch that crime, vacant houses and lack of social connectedness were prime concerns. Just as importantly, the project generated a database of residents who either needed help or wanted to get involved. And it left Terry eager to collect and use more data to address residents' concerns. "We kept hearing that the neighborhood used to be a place where people were responsible to each other, but residents didn't feel that way anymore," Terry recalls. BNCP advisors directed her to the research of Robert J. Sampson, a sociologist whose studies of Chicago neighborhoods found that collective efficacy—social cohesion among neighbors, combined with their willingness to intervene on behalf of the common good—is a factor in reducing violence. Energized by the research, Terry worked with Community LIFT, BNCP's lead agency in Memphis, to design

a phone survey that measured collective efficacy. Using BNCP funds, they hired a local market research firm to conduct the survey. Responses from 308 residents revealed that the level of collective efficacy was higher than expected but a desire for connectedness persisted.

The postcard and survey data gave the BNCP team a clear sense of what residents cared about, and the priorities—safety and connectedness—were incorporated into the neighborhood's revitalization plan. Next, the collaborators turned to collecting data on a specific issue believed to influence safety: blighted housing. Using a smartphone app developed by a neighborhood resident, four members from The Heights Community Development Corporation began driving through the neighborhood, uploading photos of problem properties and completing a checklist for each:
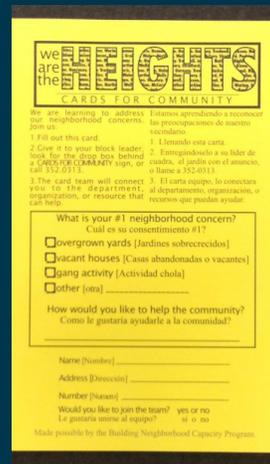
- Is it vacant or abandoned?
- Is it securely boarded?
- Is the grass higher than 12 inches?
- Is there evidence of gang-related activity?

The app included every possible code violation. "We look at every property every three months, so when neighbors say there is a vacant housing problem we can verify and show where the properties are and what the violations are," Terry says.

The data confirmed that The Heights had lots of abandoned houses, so Jared Myers (who succeeded Terry as BNCP site coordinator in 2014) organized young residents into a blight cleanup squad. But then someone asked an interesting question: Who owns these properties? "When we overlaid data from the smartphone app with the 65 properties owned in our neighborhood by the Shelby County Land Bank, we found 30 or 40 that matched," Jared says. He and an Amer-

iCorps VISTA volunteer collected new data to update the entries, and about 25 properties remained troublesome.

With the house data in hand, a team from The Heights approached the mayor's office, the county land bank, and the city's code violations department. "We put the data in a spreadsheet and combined it with photos, some going back a year," Myers recalls. "We were able to say, 'These are properties you own, and we hope we can work together to do something about them.' " Within two weeks, 16 of the offending properties were fixed and others were slated for demolition. In addition to starting the conversation with city officials, the data "showed we care about our neighborhood, and we're very organized in the approach we want to take," Myers says. Moreover, The Heights team—including residents—proved it could generate data that were even more accurate than those kept by the city.

Next, The Heights team requested several years' worth of city crime data so they could verify residents' belief that vacant homes breed crime. To unpack the story behind the data, they focused on larcenies—the area's most frequent type of crime—and the locations where they were committed. The team looked for trends and held focus groups with residents to find explanations. A spike in larcenies was attributed to changes in the city's reporting system, and a drop in late-afternoon crime by teenagers was linked to the start of youth ministries. Surprisingly, the data showed that larcenies were more associated with commercial properties than with abandoned homes. So, working with city police, the team created a business watch that encourages business owners and employees to work together to reduce crime.

The effort is working: Recently, after staff members of a church alerted other business owners that they'd been robbed, a nearby gas station attendant helped apprehend the suspected thief. And, with help from the BNCP team and a high-school technology club, some of the hardest-hit stores are installing security cameras. More broadly, the data focus has reduced residents' skepticism and distrust of the revitalization initiative. "There was a wave of hope that grew, a sense that things are moving and people care, when the data confirmed what people were telling us," Terry says.

It hasn't all been easy. Terry had to translate the academic vocabulary and complicated graphs of traditional measurement into language that resonated with residents. It took time—and an offer of paid labor—to extract data from the police department. And the blight-mapping project didn't sit well with some residents, who didn't want to document neighborhood "failures." Overall, however, the experiences left collaborators hungry for more data. "We're trying to create a culture of measurement, to know whether we are moving the bar," Terry says.

What lessons do collaborators in The Heights take from this experience?
- **Start simply.** Cards for Community wasn't a fancy project, but it helped people understand the neighborhood and mobilized grassroots involvement.
- **Ask residents what they want to know and involve them in getting answers.** "Residents can be a catalyst for what data to collect and how to use it," Sharma says. By generating data that may be better than the city's own information, neighborhood residents have become involved in a self-affirming, two-way flow of expertise and resources.
- **Don't do everything from scratch.** Seek data from government agencies and other organizations. Work with a data partner, such as a university or survey firm, to create data that don't already exist.
- **Dig for data specific enough to guide strategies.** Instead of tracking crime at the population level, for instance, figure out which people and places are most affected by certain types of crimes. "It's not just important to have data but to have good data," Myers says.

In the future, Myers says, "I want to use data to track success, not just to highlight the negatives. If we can show positive growth and change, it will bring hope, and that will create changes in behavior and personality and culture. I believe we can use data that way moving forward."

20

FIGURE 6. ALIGNING AND LEVERAGING RESOURCES: FRAYSER (MEMPHIS, TENN.)

A neighborhood with capable, representative and credible leadership coupled with a viable revitalization plan can influence the way existing resources are spent and leverage new resources—as the Frayser neighborhood of Memphis demonstrates.

Frayser wasn't always poised for success, however. Home to some 41,000 residents, it has nine neighborhoods served by many small nonprofits that compete with each other for funding. Even when organizations united around an issue, they rarely have included residents in planning or actions. "At an early meeting we had about 35 people in the room; residents all sat on one side and organizational representatives on the other," recalls technical assistance provider Beth Leeson. "When we asked how involved the residents were, on a scale of 1 to 6, the organizational leaders all said 'Six' and the residents all said 'One.'"

The steering committee that launched BNCP in Frayser selected Shep Wilbun, Jr., as site director. Wilbun, a former city councilman and county commissioner, promptly called for the creation of a new entity, Frayser Neighborhood Council (FNC), modeled after the Empower L.A. initiative in Los Angeles. Anyone who lived, worked, worshipped or owned property in Frayser could join the FNC, which would have a 15-member governing board of directors. The group would include residents, youth, seniors and leaders of businesses and community organizations. Wilbun appeared on TV talk shows to drum up interest. On Election Day, voters used official voting machines acquired through Wilbun's connections to elect 12 of those original board members. "It was a brilliant match between the vehicle for community engagement and the environment," an observer says. These 12 members then appointed three others to form the initial FNC Board.

Once elected, the FNC board developed bylaws, chose officers and built relationships with other council members. With training by Community LIFT, the lead agency for BNCP in Memphis, the FNC surveyed 5,000 residents and other stakeholders on concerns and solutions. At five public visioning sessions, the FNC discussed goals and indicators of progress for the top priorities, which all centered on making Frayser

"a place where residents live in a safe, attractive, and nurturing neighborhood where healthy residents are prepared to succeed in college, career, and community; have marketable skills; and have living-wage jobs." The most important concern was to transform Frayser into "a neighborhood that is, feels, and is perceived as safe."

Over 18 months, the FNC incorporated the priorities and ideas into the Frayser 2020 Plan. At its center was the transformation of a former strip mall into a town center. Through Community LIFT, the FNC secured a $48,000 Mid-South Regional Greenprint subgrant (funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development) for a consultant to flesh out the concept. The FNC released the finished plan on Frayser Day, an event held July 26, 2014, with several goals: to share the revitalization plan, pre-register students for the Frayser schools and mobilize voters for upcoming political elections. The event drew plenty of city, county and state officials and candidates to Frayser, where they found 1,000 residents celebrating their community and experiencing a mocked-up version of the proposed town center.

Wilbun and his colleague Gene Burse (then an AmeriCorps VISTA volunteer and now a fellow at Community LIFT) both have degrees in architecture and planning. "We know a lot of times when you show plans to people they don't really get it. They need to see and experience it," Wilbun explains. So, the sanctuary of a church near the planned site became a performing arts center for the day, the gym was a health and fitness center and the parking lot hosted fire and police substations. A former transit bus that has been converted into a mobile produce market called the "Green Machine" represented the farmer's market. The FNC rented nine vans to demonstrate the transit hub, and they shuttled festival-goers around while a pop-up café served transit patrons.

Through activities like this, the FNC became known as "Frayser's city council"—an entity that residents view as fair and representative and that outsiders see as well-organized and able to use resources effectively. The FNC then began implementing strategies from the 2020 plan and seizing other opportunities to

create or direct resources. Among other successes, the council has:

- **Prevented the redevelopment and expansion of a mobile home park** opposed by neighboring churches, schools and businesses. When the FNC persuaded the local land use control board and city council to veto the proposal, Wilbun said, "People saw the value of coming together with common purpose. It gave everyone the feeling we can have control over what happens in our neighborhood."
- **Secured $1.6 million in city funds to improve a park and install sidewalks** in front of an elementary school. Gangs had controlled Denver Park until a woman who lived nearby worked with police to take it back. The park was in poor shape, so the FNC convinced the city to renovate it. The new park will have a baseball diamond and basketball court, picnic gazebo, walk/bike path, playground, benches, parking and trash cans. The Memphis Grizzlies, a professional National Basketball Association team, has adopted the park's basketball courts and will assist in their construction. Similarly, after a child was hit while walking to school because the street lacked a sidewalk, the FNC successfully appealed to the city to install walkways.
- **Implemented Unity in the Community, a program that recruits residents as Frayser Ambassadors.** Each Ambassador forms a neighborhood watch and organizes other residents for blight cleanup, repairs and block parties. The Ambassadors also attend FNC meetings and act as conduits of information between their block and the FNC. Instead of paying Ambassadors, Unity offers scholarships for their children to attend the after-school program run by a community organization.
- **Negotiated an agreement with a major social service provider.** When Agape Child and Family Services asked the FNC to be its partner in applying for a grant from the U.S. Department of Education, the council agreed—on the condition that Frayser residents will be considered for jobs,

a monitoring and accountability process will be set up to provide community oversight and residents will have input on the type of services being provided. "When Agape came to the FNC, it was seen as a huge milestone in terms of the clout and influence the FNC has built in just over a year," Burse notes.

The FNC also is cultivating human resources. Unity in the Community is a leadership pipeline for residents who ultimately may serve on the FNC board. And in 2014 an FNC member won an at-large seat on the school board. States one observer, "I suspect she would not have had the confidence and knowledge to run without her BNCP experience."

Frayser's success in garnering resources can be linked to: (1) the time and effort spent building a skilled, representative and well-organized leadership group; (2) unity within the FNC around one purpose, revitalization and one vehicle: the 2020 Plan; (3) Wilbun's political savvy, connections and advocacy skills, combined with Burse's experience in urban planning and architecture; (4) strong partnerships with other funders and organizations, including Community LIFT; and (5) residents' energy and activism.

What lessons have collaborators in Frayser learned?

- **Promote a big vision.** "If the vision isn't big enough, people start splintering," Wilbun notes. "You have to have a big enough pie that everyone sees the opportunity to obtain what they need."
- **Create a structured vehicle for decision-making** in which all stakeholders can air their differences, reach consensus and move forward.
- **Develop a strategy for connecting with powers outside the community** and gaining their support.
- **Have at least one full-time manager**—preferably someone who is attuned to individual perspectives and group dynamics and can coach outliers to see the benefits of collaboration.

NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION PLAN

The process of developing a Neighborhood Revitalization Plan (NRP) is a key strategy through which BNCP works to build local capacity. Developing an NRP requires many of the capacities BNCP assumes to be necessary for neighborhood revitalization: developing a partnership committed to core values and principles, using neighborhood input to prioritize a desired result, selecting indicators to measure progress toward that result, analyzing data to inform the selection of solutions and developing and beginning to implement an action plan.

BNCP's underlying assumption is that, by completing all steps of a planning process focused on producing a single result, site teams will develop the skills and relationships needed to apply the same process to other results following the end of BNCP. (The NRP also includes a "Learn While Doing" project that enables neighborhood collaborators to "practice" by planning and implementing a short-term, tangible project that contributes to the long-term desired result.) To support this process, the TA team developed guidance on aspects of plan development, along with a sample plan and a template to help sites structure their thinking and present their plans effectively (see Appendix F). All of the sites submitted NRPs by the required deadline (March 31, 2014, the original end of BNCP). The TA team reviewed the NRPs and used a standardized template to provide extensive feedback to sites, including recommendations for improvement and next steps.

Although they were not required by BNCP to do so, all sites selected safety as their prioritized desired result. Some also articulated additional desired results. Each NRP focused on a particular aspect of safety suggested by an analysis of neighborhood needs and priorities, and the NRPs varied considerably in the specificity of their results, solutions and indicators. Some centered on crime and blight, while others targeted specific age groups. Metcalfe Park

in Milwaukee, for example, chose to focus on young people ages 18–24, while El Dorado Park (Fresno) prioritized children feeling safe at home and in the community. Proposed solutions ranged from alley clean-ups and parent engagement to training on the national Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) for a mix of residents, anchor and cross-sector partners. The Flint site worked to align its plan closely with the city's master plan (Fig. 7).

Development of the NRPs generated new capacities within the sites and provided guidance for future work. For instance:

- Site directors learned the language and skills involved in applying results-based planning to advancing neighborhood goals related to a desired result.
- Sites improved their ability to use data and to generate new data to inform and support their plans.
- Site directors and, in some cases, the neighborhood partnership, continue to use the NRP as an organizing framework that provides focus and helps others understand the neighborhood's work.

However, analysis of the NRP development process and feedback from site directors reveal some challenges, largely related to what sites experienced as an overly compressed timeline. In particular:

- Tension existed between developing a strong plan and undertaking a process that built neighborhood capacity and ownership. Given time constraints, most sites ended up with plans that were staff-driven, which meant that the results-driven planning approach did not fully take hold in most sites.
- The cross-sector partnerships were only modestly involved in developing the NRPs, which limited the degree to which the plans incorporated the expertise or resource opportunities that cross-sector partners potentially offered.

LEARN WHILE DOING PROJECT

As portrayed in BNCP's process map (Appendix B), the Learn While Doing project aims to build neighborhood capacity while producing early, tangible benefits that contribute to the neighborhood's longer-term desired result. Findings from other neighborhood revitalization planning efforts demonstrate the value of early action that can reinforce initial engagement, nurture local leadership, provide opportunities to build new relationships and "practice" new skills together and support projects that generate visible community improvements and neighborhood pride. In addition to these benefits, BNCP designers viewed the Learn While Doing project as an opportunity to expose participants to the principles and practices of results-based planning and accountability that would be key to the development of their NRPs.

Operationalizing the Learn While Doing project within the NRP process and BNCP timeline proved difficult for most sites. BNCP required that the neighborhood partnership select a long-term result before deciding on a Learn While Doing project that would serve as a first step toward this result. However, the process of selecting a target result took much longer than anticipated. Learn While Doing projects were integrated into the NRPs that were submitted in March 2014 but, in most sites, did not launch early enough to fully serve either the capacity-building "practice" or the visible results functions for which they were designed. Only two neighborhoods completed their projects by March 2014, and two sites had not completed their projects by November 2014. Thus, however well-conceived the Learn While Doing

projects were or will be, the opportunity to "practice" new skills or build momentum by generating visible early community improvements early on did not occur for most sites as anticipated in the BNCP approach.

Even though the Learn While Doing projects did not fully serve the goals BNCP originally intended, they did generate positive consequences both in terms of capacity building and in terms of tangible outcomes:

- Three completed projects involved significant data collection that would inform or lay the foundation for subsequent action. (The Cards for Community project described in the Heights Profile, Fig. 5, and the Unity in the Community Ambassadors Program described in the Frayser Profile, Fig. 6, are good examples.)
- Although not a Learn While Doing project, Flint's use of the Strategic Doing methodology (see Fig. 7) fulfills some of the same iterative learning-and-doing functions while accomplishing something concrete.

OBSERVATIONS ABOUT CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT IN BNCP NEIGHBORHOODS

Although BNCP did not succeed in establishing precise capacity baselines in each neighborhood at the outset, all eight neighborhoods built varying amounts and types of capacity over the two-year period. Each site can point to specific knowledge, skills and relationships that would not have occurred without BNCP. Particularly striking is how consistently the sites internalized a strong value on resident participation and operationalized that value in practice.

FIGURE 7: CONNECTING NEIGHBORHOOD AND CITY REVITALIZATION PLANS: FLINT, MICH.

BNCP's rollout in Flint coincided with the city's own effort to develop a master plan, its first since 1960. "It was a perfect alignment of several things," recalls Megan Hunter, the city's chief planner. "The mayor and planning commission wanted the plan to be very community-driven. I was able to bring on some great staff. And we had a great steering committee that was very supportive." It also didn't hurt that Hunter's previous jobs included community organizing and directing grassroots programs, so she knew how to reach out and connect with residents.

The city's strategy for involving residents in master planning was extensive. Hunter and her staff attended 300 local meetings at neighborhood associations, public housing complexes, afterschool clubs, schools and other places. With private funding they offered small grants to neighborhood groups for local projects, in exchange for help inventorying the quality of all residential and commercial properties. One Saturday, they held a town hall meeting that attracted 500 participants, who uploaded their ideas into a computerized database; staff distilled themes and, within minutes, the entire room voted on priorities. "One quote that came from a tabletop discussion, which everyone loved—'Human development equals economic development'—became the guiding principle of our plan," Hunter recalls.

The city plan coalesced around eight topics: land use; housing and neighborhoods; transportation and mobility; environmental features, open space and parks; infrastructure and community facilities; economic development and education; public safety, health, and welfare; and arts and culture. The city formed a community advisory group for each topic, which met monthly to generate strategies. Hunter's team took 60 community members, including partners from the BNCP areas, on a bus trip to Detroit to find inspiration by touring a community market, wraparound services center, community gardens and other creative strate-

gies. At two city workshops, more than 350 residents from the BNCP areas and other neighborhoods proposed new uses for areas they were concerned about. The exercise resulted in 40 composite maps, which were refined through more community meetings to produce a final land use map. "There is not one piece in the master plan that residents did not influence," Hunter states.

BNCP neighborhood residents shared in these efforts, and others, to shape the city's plan. In one neighborhood, for example, an artist recorded residents' aspirations for the city's future and turned them into public service announcements. With support from the University of Michigan-Flint, residents and BNCP staff fielded a survey to solicit input on community concerns.

Meanwhile, BNCP collaborators were also working on their own revitalization plan, spearheaded by the Neighborhood Advisory Council and facilitated by a professional planner who could help the BNCP plan capitalize on connections with the city's master plan. Not only did the planner understand the technical aspects of the city planning process, he (along with the Metro Community Development CEO) also ensured that the neighborhood plan was expanded during the BNCP extension period to cover the same eight topics as the city's master plan.

Through neighborhood workshops, surveys, community dialogues and individual interviews, the BNCP collaborators reached consensus on a vision for a community that is safe, has high-quality housing and provides opportunities for employment at family-supporting wages. Then they used an iterative process called "strategic doing" to develop the solutions in the neighborhood plan. In this approach, collaborators identify their assets, combine them to solve a problem and then test and refine solutions. "We try to land initially on things that have high impact but are relatively easy to do, so people can have success," explains BNCP Cross-Sector Partner Robert Brown,

25

who is also the associate director for university—community partnerships at Michigan State University's Outreach and Engagement division. Brown coached residents in the process:

Then we figure out what the outcome of the effort would be and refine it further: What are the different characteristics of that outcome? What tasks do we have to do to enact each one? Is there a sequence? What could we do with each other? What should we do? What will we do?

People put their names next to each piece they're willing to do. Then we go out and do it for 30 days and see what did and didn't work. We come back and reflect on what we did and decide what we're going to do in the next 30 days to reach our goals. It's a useful approach on very complex issues, when you know where you're trying to go but don't know how to get there. You very quickly get to the coalition of the willing—the people who are really going to do what they say they'll do and aren't just in it for the money.

Once the expanded version of the neighborhood plan was set, the BNCP team organized residents, cross-sector partners and other stakeholders into eight action teams to specify steps in implementing it. To address housing, for example, they agreed to create "neighborhood revitalization labs" that will map assets, analyze data and identify strategies for specific places. To improve public safety, they committed to being trained in Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED), an urban design process used nationally to reduce crime. Again, they used the "strategic doing" process. At one point, concerned that participants might be burning out, Site Director Diana Kelly asked if the groups wanted to extend the time between reflection sessions from 30 to 45 days. After a moment of silence, an anchor partner said he liked the one-month limit because "it gives a sense of urgency." A resident agreed: "I think we shouldn't lose sight of what we're doing." Added another, "I like to see we're moving forward."

Through these processes, the neighborhood plan became a roadmap "for how to implement the master plan at a micro level," as Hunter says, while the city plan serves as a framework with potential to create broader support for the neighborhoods. The extensive neighborhood input also ensured that the city plan has "a level of commitment to social justice that you don't usually find in a master plan," notes Brown.

The work of converting plans into action continues. "Now that we have our plan and also the action teams to move the work forward, we have a blueprint," Kelly says. Recently, the city reached out to 400 residents for input into a blight elimination framework based on the master plan, and the best-attended meeting was in BNCP's Ward 1. Meanwhile, Hunter was promoted to oversee the city divisions for building and safety, blight elimination, community and economic development, and parks and recreation along with planning, and she expects "to carry this community orientation over to the other divisions."

Participants on the neighborhood and city sides take these lessons from the planning process:

- **Meet people where they are.** Both planning processes worked because they didn't wait for residents to come to them— they created alternative forums through which residents could get involved.
- **Don't underestimate neighborhood residents' ability** to propose, refine and implement strategies.
- **Expect to invest time and resources**, including training, to support residents who participate in planning.
- **Recognize and appreciate the differences in skills and interests** that exist across communities. Not every neighborhood will approach planning in the same way or come out of it with the same product.

BNCP found many different ways to engage residents in dialogue about the neighborhood changes and new capacities that were most important to them. Feedback from sites and the TA teams reflects consensus about BNCP's positive contribution to helping participants begin to develop a shared understanding of the capacity framework and reflect on what capacities were priorities for development.

Currently, some neighborhood's new capacities are more emergent than mature, an expected reality given that BNCP targeted high-need neighborhoods. Such neighborhoods face real barriers to participation and partnership—the stresses of chronic poverty, safety concerns, isolation and mistrust—and have only modest organizational infrastructure that can assist. BNCP neighborhoods will continue to require intentional trust-building work to address deep and often painful racial histories and divisions for some time to come.

Moreover, it takes time to create new, stable relations among partners in high-need neighborhoods and to prepare people to work together on achieving desired results. As discussed earlier, BNCP's two-year timetable created some unplanned tension between the need to build partnership capacity within emergent groups and the need to develop a strong neighborhood plan.

Although BNCP neighborhoods and cities differed considerably in their specific opportunities and challenges, one essential ingredient for revitalization was a strong local staff working full-time on BNCP. With so many players and moving parts, dedicated staff were critical to achieving success. Conversely, turnover among local BNCP staff slowed down capacity-building efforts considerably. The engagement of strong neighborhood anchor partners, lead organizations and cross-sector partners also proved important for building neighborhood capacity. In a few cases, all three types of partners were highly engaged, but effective engagement by even one type of partner could compensate somewhat for a lower level of engagement by other partners.

Finally, as we discuss in Section III, the presence of TA team members who served as capacity-building coaches strengthened local neighborhood efforts in important ways and ensured that BNCP kept moving forward.

It takes time to create new, stable relations among partners in high-need neighborhoods and to prepare people to work together to achieve results. The two-year timeline created some unplanned tension between the need to build this capacity and the need to develop a strong neighborhood plan.

ROLE OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE IN BNCP

As BNCP's manager and technical assistance provider, **CSSP assigned each city a two-person TA team** that provided resources and customized technical assistance to (a) build neighborhood capacity to develop and pursue results-driven revitalization plans as well as (b) build needed capacities at the cross-sector partnership level. CSSP's technical assistance role included developing an online resource center and convening a community of practice for participating neighborhoods, including a series of cross-site meetings and conversations, webinars and training opportunities. Here we describe the TA team's general activities and the actions taken to support learning, before offering observations about BNCP's technical assistance.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TEAM ACTIVITIES

Although CSSP had a lot of experience working with communities, it adopted an active "learning" stance regarding BNCP, building in a formative assessment to inform and strengthen BNCP's implementation and identify lessons. The TA team met almost every other week and convened periodic one or two-day retreats to review and reflect upon ongoing experience across the eight neighborhoods and adjust TA strategies as needed.

As in many start-ups, TA team members were at first hesitant to impose their assistance, although they felt pressure to make sure the sites implemented the program as planned. It also took time for them to build trust with site directors, who were somewhat intimidated by what needed to be accomplished in a relatively short timeframe and were unsure about what constituted appropriate technical assistance. Because the site directors had not led similar planning efforts previously, they were eager to understand BNCP and to obtain guidance on its core components. But because BNCP was new, the TA teams were only able to produce relevant materials and case examples in real time, as BNCP evolved. To address these concerns and to help the TA teams get a better grasp of the work on the ground, CSSP initiated bi-weekly phone calls with each city and, in some cities, with each neighborhood. These regular phone meetings, along with periodic site visits, helped to position TA team members as informed coaches who could respond to the particular implementation challenges of each site.

As a result, site directors reported a wide range of ways in which TA teams helped them be more effective, encompassing coaching, providing BNCP-related knowledge and skills and contributing direct assistance (Fig. 8). Not all of these diverse TA activities were reported in every site, but it is clear that all site directors received meaningful support that they characterize as essential to their success in implementing BNCP.

FIGURE 8: TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE ACTIVITIES

Broad Support/Coaching
- Serving as a sounding board and problem-solving partner
- Providing emotional support, buffering the stress of the work
- Debriefing/drawing lessons from community and cross-sector partnership meetings
- Managing conflict among residents and between stakeholder groups
- Asking questions and relating local work to similar efforts elsewhere
- Assigning exercises that provide structure for focus and accountability
- Drawing on examples of strategies and lessons from other similar work
- Suggesting materials to review and resource people to contact

BNCP-Related Knowledge and Skills
- Help learning jargon and understanding results-based planning
- Help using BNCP templates and process
- Providing new understanding and skills through webinars, seminars and training
- Brainstorming indicators and data sources
- Help developing a realistic BNCP work plan through the backward mapping process

Direct Assistance
- Facilitating the site's community process
- Using methods, such as Future Search, to help select key results and indicators
- Mediating difficult relationships within the team and partnership
- Identifying and facilitating connections with outside consultants
- Arranging peer exchanges and site visits to other community initiatives
- Working with the site to address organizational challenges with its anchor partners
- Helping the site gain access to cross-sector partners and participate effectively in their meetings
- Using TA team site visits to galvanize local partners and stakeholders

FOSTERING LEARNING

Fostering cross-site learning in a two-year initiative is a daunting task given the logistics, differences across sites and time it takes to build the trust necessary for sharing and learning. To support learning, CSSP set up monthly site director calls starting in April 2013 and experimented with different ways to stimulate cross-site dialogue, convey information and focus discussions. CSSP also managed a web-based community of practice on the Building Neighborhood Capacity Resource Center website (www.buildingcommunitycapacity.org), which aimed to give site directors a private forum to post and access documents and to pose questions for each other and CSSP. While BNCP participants used the online Resource Center to access publicly available BNCP documents, tools and links to other resources, the community of practice forum was only modestly used in an interactive fashion.

Most successful from the sites' perspective were the three large cross-site meetings that CSSP hosted in the District of Columbia, Milwaukee and Fresno. Each city brought a team of eight to 10 people, including residents, partners and staff. CSSP used these meetings to: expose participants to new material, let them hear directly from experienced practitioners about promising approaches elsewhere, provide time to meet and solve problems within and across teams and deepen understanding and skills related to BNCP's core components. These meetings typically generated very positive evaluations. Participants reported that they helped people see themselves as part of a larger enterprise; provided new knowledge and inspiration in the face of challenges; and strengthened ties among residents, partners and staff within each city. Participation and follow-up by members of the Federal Management Team also contributed to sites' understanding of resources that could inform and potentially support their work.

OBSERVATIONS ABOUT TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE IN BNCP

A key strategic issue for the TA teams was to identify the primary beneficiaries of technical assistance. As the local staff in charge of implementing BNCP, site directors became the natural contact points for the TA teams—they participated on the bi-weekly phone calls, arranged meetings when the TA teams visited and prepared BNCP's quarterly reports. Much of the ongoing coaching was directed to site directors, helping them navigate the landscape of local resident and stakeholder politics, overcome roadblocks preventing access to city officials and understand key steps in the results-based planning process.

Over time, however, the TA teams came to see the limits of focusing so exclusively on site directors. Such a focus missed the opportunity to build capacity within a larger group that could carry the work forward, and much learning was lost when a site director left BNCP. Instead, working more broadly with the emerging neighborhood partnerships positioned the site directors less as isolated, intermediary translators of the assistance they received from the TA team and more as partners in the work. Doing so also underscored for site directors the importance of bringing resident groups along in terms of understanding BNCP and becoming invested in it as part of a larger neighborhood effort.

As the technical assistance evolved, TA teams were challenged to engage residents in skill-building activities because it took six to 18 months for a formal (or even semi-formal) group of residents to emerge as a consumer of such training. Thus, although some group training occurred within the two-year timeline, most TA was delivered directly to the site director.

A second challenge for TA Teams was to support BNCP's goal of "changing the way business is done" in terms of how decisions made by outsiders affect

BNCP neighborhoods and other high-need places. This work required an understanding of the larger economic and political context in which the BNCP neighborhoods operate and the relationships with key civic actors (some of whom were members of the cross-sector partnership) that defined the context. Because they had their hands full preparing guidance materials and staying ahead of the work at the neighborhood level, TA teams generally were unable to devote a significant amount of time to this dimension of BNCP's approach.

A final challenge in testing any new program involves balancing what can seem like conflicting pressures between cultivating neighborhood ownership and complying with a process. TA teams needed the site directors to produce deliverables within a set timeframe while at the same time encouraging resident initiative and ownership. Similarly, TA teams aimed for fidelity to the core BNCP approach while customizing that approach as needed in response to site preferences and opportunities.

TA team members stayed open to learning from these challenges and listened to feedback from site directors and others at every opportunity. Despite different experiences with BNCP's technical assistance, site directors concluded that providing a clearer picture of BNCP's key components and deliverables (as outlined in the BNCP Process Map in Appendix B) from the start would result in even more powerful TA as BNCP moves into new neighborhoods. The site directors found the use of "backward mapping" very helpful but recommended that it be applied from the outset with materials and examples that concretely illustrate what each of BNCP's components might look like operationally. This was not a call for an overly standardized, top-down implementation of BNCP, nor a desire to undermine authentic community process and choices. It simply suggests that the site directors would be better positioned to implement their roles if they understood the entire BNCP process in some depth at the outset. Such understanding was almost by definition impossible to convey in BNCP's first test, but the TA teams will be much better able to do so as BNCP moves into new communities.

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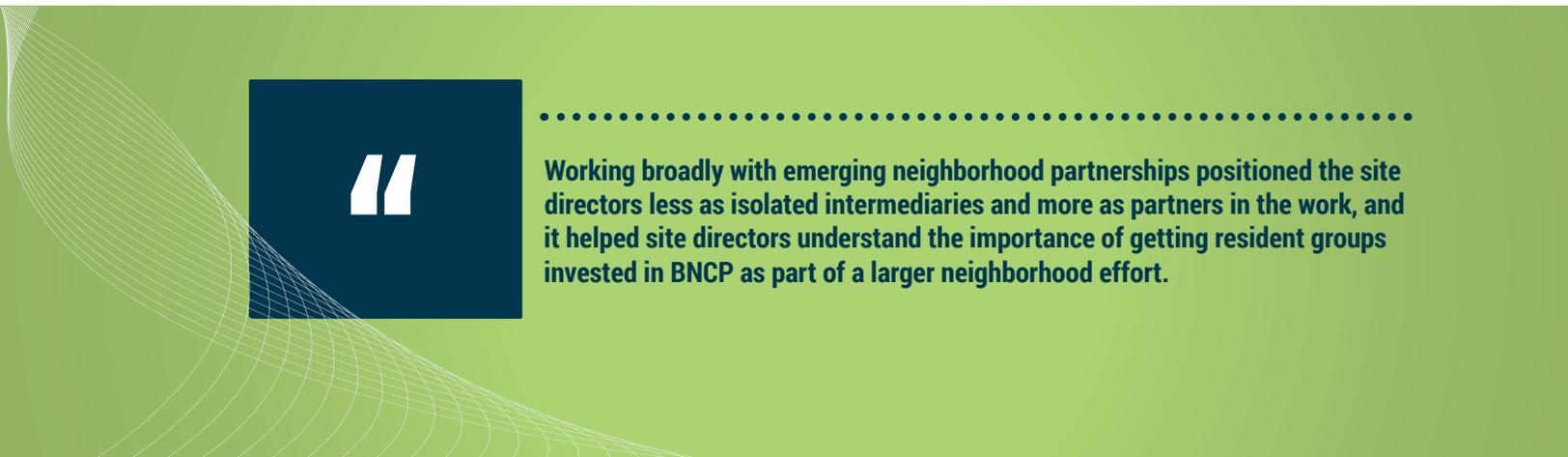
Working broadly with emerging neighborhood partnerships positioned the site directors less as isolated intermediaries and more as partners in the work, and it helped site directors understand the importance of getting resident groups invested in BNCP as part of a larger neighborhood effort.

BNCP'S OPERATING STRUCTURE: LEAD AGENCIES, ANCHOR ORGANIZATIONS AND SITE DIRECTORS

CSSP established performance agreements with the lead agency, the cross-sector partnership and the partner(s) in each BNCP city. The particular organizational and funding arrangements varied considerably by site, as did the ways in which site directors were hired and supervised. Here we examine the roles that lead agencies and anchor organizations played in BNCP and explore the qualities that help a site director function effectively under challenging circumstances.

LEAD AGENCIES

BNCP's application invited each city to select a lead agency that would serve as the fiscal agent and provide overall guidance to the initiative. Two of the cities selected citywide community development intermediaries: Community LIFT in Memphis and Metro Community Development in Flint. These organizations play a leadership role in their cities regarding community revitalization and share BNCP values surrounding strengthening neighborhoods and resident voice.

The two other cities selected public agencies: the Office of the Mayor in Fresno and the Milwaukee Police Department. As Fig. 9 illustrates, having city government serve as the lead agency can help reinforce efforts to institutionalize neighborhood revitalization within the government structure.

ANCHOR ORGANIZATIONS[5]

The idea behind engaging one or more neighborhood organizations in BNCP is that the site director specifically—and the emerging neighborhood partnerships more broadly—could benefit from the infrastructure, knowledge and networks of an organization that already is embedded in the neighborhood and supports BNCP's goals and values. Although the specific role of neighborhood anchors was customized in each city's performance agreement, the generic anchor role encompasses working with the site director to help organize the neighborhood partnership, contribute to the capacity assessment process, participate in neighborhood planning and help spearhead a Learn While Doing project.

In practice, the organizations operating as BNCP anchor partners (Fig. 10) differed considerably in their engagement with the BNCP process. Some were integrally involved in the neighborhood partnership and its working committees, some provided space for the site directors and partnership meetings, and some voiced their support for site directors from a distance.

Anchor organizations, for example, worked within BNCP to:

- Share ideas and provide a sounding board for the site director
- Provide access to and credibility with their own neighborhood constituencies/networks
- Provide space and food for meetings
- Sponsor or co-sponsor neighborhood events
- Help implement BNCP activities
- Join the neighborhood partnership as members
- Become a full partner with residents, providing a long-term home and sustainability

Some site directors built strong relationships with neighborhood anchors. Sometimes these relationships helped the anchor and residents find new ways to communicate and connect with each other, to mutual benefit. Sometimes, it involved linking the anchor to much-needed resources and services. Whatever the form, a close and productive relationship with a neighborhood anchor organization was an important asset for those BNCP partnerships that established them.

As important as these anchor roles proved to the neighborhood's success, however, BNCP encountered some challenges to connecting effectively with anchor organizations, such as when:

- The anchor organization was seriously underfunded or understaffed and had hoped BNCP would increase its own capacity and/or compensate the anchor for its time.
- The anchor organization perceived BNCP as a competitor for power and resources.
- Residents did not perceive the anchor organization as sharing their values and goals, especially concerning the role of residents in making decisions.

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5 The term "anchor" organization caused some confusion in BNCP because in the community development field it typically refers to either (a) a neighborhood intermediary through which funds flow or (b) a large institutional presence that serves as an "anchor" in the neighborhood, such as a university or hospital. We continue to use the term in this report for consistency's sake but note that in the third BNCP neighborhoods, these organizations will be referred to as neighborhood partner organization, not anchor organizations.

- The anchor organization wanted to maintain its role as a community gatekeeper or was unable/unwilling to work with other neighborhood anchors.
- The anchor organization did not envision what it might take to shift its operations or expand its agenda to incorporate BNCP.

ROLE OF THE SITE DIRECTOR

In most BNCP cities, site directors worked for the lead agency, although the way supervisory relationships were structured varied. Lead agencies had to move quickly to identify candidates who had relevant experience, skills and local knowledge, but to whom BNCP could only make about an 18-month commitment. They also had to negotiate space in the neighborhoods to house the site directors. Some ended up working out of local schools, some in anchor partner offices, and others in independent offices.

Site directors varied considerably in their educational backgrounds (from high school to professional school degrees) and experience (e.g., community organizing, ministry, urban planning, human services, business, elected public office). Some lived in or close to the target neighborhoods, while others had worked in these or nearby neighborhoods in other capacities.

Although each site director brought important talents and experience to the job, it was a new and very challenging role for all of them. Many talked about their personal growth during BNCP—of acquiring more confidence, better stress management and new ways of negotiating the demands of BNCP's multiple moving parts. (See Fig. 11, which profiles Metcalfe Park Site Director Danell Cross, for an example of such growth.)

It is difficult to identify the qualities of a successful site director, because success depends not only on

his or her talents and experience, but also on the particular assets and obstacles in the neighborhood, the supports provided by the anchor organization and cross-sector partnership and the city's responsiveness to neighborhood revitalization. Nonetheless, the following characteristics seem to distinguish the most successful site directors. No site director had all of them, but some combination seems likely to enable someone new to the role to function effectively:

- Commitment to BNCP's basic goals and values, especially a deep belief in resident engagement and ownership
- Readiness to hit the ground running and work within a 24-month structure with goals and deliverables
- Experience and/or training in neighborhood revitalization, including community organizing, managing a community process and building individual and organizational capacity
- Familiarity with the target neighborhood and deep networks within the neighborhood and city
- Ability to stay focused rather than being overwhelmed or diverted by conflicting agendas (either the site director's own or those of others)
- Ability to work collaboratively while navigating complex local and citywide dynamics and pushback
- A strategic understanding of and ability to exploit the links between neighborhood change and citywide policies and practices
- Curiosity and a desire for learning and excellence

Not surprisingly given the challenges of the role, site director turnover reached almost 50 percent during the two-year period. Such turnover slowed BNCP's progress, especially because so much of CSSP's technical assistance focused on site director development.

FIGURE 9: INSTITUTIONALIZING NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION IN CITY GOVERNMENT: FRESNO, CALIF.

The City of Fresno's Community Revitalization Division illustrates how city government can institutionalize the capacity to help residents of high-need areas improve their neighborhoods. The city's Community Revitalization Division was formally established in July 2014, when the Fresno City Council approved the city's nearly $1 billion budget. But the seeds were planted in January 2009, when Mayor Ashley Swearengin took office and committed to long-term, transformational revitalization. The Swearengin administration focused on neighborhood and housing efforts, including BNCP, addressing homelessness and updating the city's General Plan to support neighborhood revitalization. According to Kelli Furtado, Swearengin's deputy chief of staff, "Revitalization of historically neglected neighborhoods is a complex process—one that depends on a cross-sector partnership with multiple agencies as well as resident leaders. Institutionalizing community and neighborhood revitalization at the city level was a critical first step to becoming a better partner and lead agency in this work."

Dan Zack, assistant director of the city's Development and Resource Management Department, oversees the Community Revitalization Division. Elaine Robles-McGraw manages and coordinates a Neighborhood Revitalization Team (NRT), composed of individuals within and outside the division, which focuses on priority neighborhoods and corridors in the city. Robles-McGraw, who grew up in one of Fresno's underserved neighborhoods, had worked for the Fresno County Probation Department for almost two decades. While in that job, Robles-McGraw held twice-weekly "office hours" at a local McDonalds, where residents sought her assistance with housing issues and other concerns. These experiences led Robles-McGraw to a graduate program in community economic development at Southern New

Hampshire University and, ultimately, to her position with the City of Fresno.

As the Neighborhood Revitalization Manager, Robles-McGraw coordinates neighborhood-related efforts by all city departments. "The Mayor's strategy is that we know budgets are tight, but if every department could focus 10 percent of its resources to these efforts, we could make significant changes," she explains. The NRT also includes: Angie Isaak, one of the city's Problem-Oriented Police (POP) officers, who are assigned to a smaller-than-usual geographic area and given extra resources to respond to residents' concerns; four city code enforcement specialists; and the two site directors of Fresno's BNCP work. The Community Revitalization Division is in the process of adding three additional community outreach members.

The NRT's first task was to develop a sustainable model for neighborhood revitalization. The model was tested in Fresno's Lowell neighborhood, named by the Brookings Institution in 2005 as having one of the highest concentrations of poverty in the United States. The model is being further developed and implemented in one of three NRT focus neighborhoods, the BNCP target neighborhood of Yokomi. It begins with a "feet-on-the-street" neighborhood assessment, during which team members photograph every house, alley, bus stop and other physical features to document assets and detriments. The next step is to establish relationships with residents. In Yokomi, the NRT gathered every day for six weeks at the elementary school, where team members helped children cross the busy street where the school is located. This visibility and involvement at the school was a crucial step in establishing a presence in the neighborhood.

Team members walk door to door, meeting residents and asking about issues and concerns. Behind the questions lies one of NRT's most powerful tools: a municipal code stating that landlords are responsible for any problems at a property. About 90 percent of homes in Yokomi are rental units. Many aren't in

good repair, and others are vacant or boarded up. When NRT members are invited inside residents' homes, they note violations and offer to initiate code enforcement cases. The team then notifies property owners and works with them to rectify the problems.

Officer Isaak uses these "walkthroughs" to establish rapport with residents, explain how to report criminal activity to the police department and underscore the importance of giving as much information as possible. Many residents do not report crime because they don't trust police, don't want to get involved or fear retaliation from criminals. Isaak offers the residents anonymity when obtaining information. She follows up on the police complaints and compiles enough information to identify the problem-causers and make arrests when needed.

Isaak also uses the city's enforcement power to hold the homeowner/property owner responsible for criminal activity that occurs on his or her property. Fines are significant. Meanwhile, the BNCP site directors evaluate opportunities to build neighborhood capacities. For instance, when a woman living near property owned by the railroad complained about illegal dumping, they suggested options and assistance in coordinating neighbors to collectively work on solutions with local agencies. The NRT met with the residents, resulting in a commitment to have the area cleaned by the railroad within a two-week period. The property owner also agreed to remove large mounds of dirt, as requested by neighbors.

Every other week, Robles-McGraw convenes the NRT with all appropriate city staff, including the mayor, city manager, department directors (police, fire, public utilities, public works, development and resource management, redevelopment, information services, parks and recreation, transportation) and others to address community concerns and discuss action items. "We update them on what we've seen, and they update us on what they have done since the last meeting," the NRT manager says. "We might let the streets department know where there are potholes to be fixed, and the fire department might

tell us they provided ladders to everyone living in a two-story home." After three months, the goal is for the NRT to coordinate a neighborhood meeting attended by the mayor, city manager, city council, department heads and other key stakeholders to report directly to residents on how their concerns have been addressed.

The networking that occurs through these high-level, biweekly NRT meetings is invaluable. Problems get resolved more efficiently when discussed at this level, and having the buy-in of the administration and department directors helps to prioritize revitalization efforts. It's also beneficial for police and code enforcement staff to serve on the same team. Isaak says, "Working together, we're able to do so much more than just arrest people or issue fines. I recently suggested to an apartment owner that he clean the place up, paint it to have a brighter look, lock the gate to stop drug traffic. Those aren't code issues. If code enforcement had gone in there alone, [the owner] would have done the minimum to pass inspection. With me going along, it changes the whole perspective."

Although newly created, the NRT has achieved some early successes. The model developed in Lowell found mentors for children and brought after-school programs into the neighborhood. In 2009, at the mayor's direction, the newly created Downtown and Community Revitalization team worked with stakeholders to develop a Downtown Neighborhoods Community Plan that encompasses 7,200 acres of the city and "correcting 50 years of suburban development in the urban core of the city," Robles-McGraw says. A community development corporation that the city's Community Revitalization Division helped establish in Lowell continues to support programs on homeownership in addition to housing rehabilitation and new home construction. And in Yokomi, when the NRT asked to set up an inspection for a neglected apartment complex in Yokomi, the property owner responded by sending in a crew to rehab the units, trim trees, plant bushes and fix sidewalks before the inspection even occurred.

Three strategies in particular have helped institutionalize the city's capacity to address neighborhood revitalization. One is the decision to build the Community Revitalization Division and NRT into the city budget, which makes it sustainable. "In a community with so many needs and limited resources, acknowledging that focused and collaborative revitalization is a priority was a critical step in the budgeting process," Furtado says. The second strategy is the combination of two tools—police support and code enforcement—that have a strong basis in city government as well as a powerful role in revitalizing neighborhoods. The third strategy involves building the capacity of residents who can continue to advocate for their neighborhood with the city and other agencies in an effective manner. As Robles-McGraw says, "Once people get involved and realize their voice counts, and have seen changes happen because of their voice, then there's no taking that back. We give them the tools, but eventually—sometimes—

they go straight to City Hall on an issue. When that happens, we realize we've had a success."

NRT members offer these lessons about embedding neighborhood revitalization within city government:

- Cultivate buy-in from every department head and elected official involved to ensure responsiveness on the front lines and throughout the organization.
- Ensure regular communication, such as the biweekly cross-departmental management meetings, attended by the mayor and/or city manager in addition to department heads and other key stakeholders, to keep people informed and accountable.
- Focus on one area at a time. "Don't try to work on a bigger area than you can handle," Robles-McGraw advises. "Start small and learn from your mistakes."

OBSERVATIONS ABOUT BNCP'S OPERATING STRUCTURE

BNCP's experience illustrates that although there can be different ways to operationalize the lead agency and anchor partner's roles, when these entities are strong and aligned, BNCP is more likely to function effectively at the neighborhood level. Anchor partners play a particularly unique role in

BNCP. Although a strong lead agency with close connections to neighborhoods can compensate somewhat for a weak but supportive anchor partner, the presence of a strong anchor should be prioritized in BNCP's neighborhood selection process. TA teams could then look for opportunities over time to integrate BNCP into the anchor organization's structure and culture so that BNCP's goals can be sustained at increasing levels of scale.

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The site director role was new and very challenging for all who served this function. Many talked about their growth [as leaders] during BNCP.

FIGURE 10: BNCP ANCHOR ORGANIZATIONS

Flint
- Ward 1: WOW Outreach and Our Savior Lutheran Church
- Ward 3: Habitat for Humanity and Foss Avenue Baptist Church
- Fresno

Fresno
- El Dorado: El Dorado Park Community Development Corporation and Wesley United Methodist Church
- Southwest: Centro La Familia, Fresno Street Saints, West Fresno Resource Center and Westside Church

Memphis
- The Heights: Binghampton Steering Committee (Binghampton Development Corporation)
- Frayser: Frayser Steering Committee (Frayser CDC, Rangeline CDC, Frayser Community Association)
- Each of these two "anchors" is composed of neighborhood organizations that agreed to collaborate on BNCP and co-signed the performance agreement.

Milwaukee
- Amani: Dominican Center for Women
- Metcalfe Park: Next Door Foundation (until March 2014); United Neighborhood Centers of Milwaukee (starting March 2014)
- Milwaukee is the only city where BNCP funds flow through the anchors, which provide fiscal management and budgeting, support, supervision and professional development.

FIGURE 11: BUILDING NEIGHBORHOOD CAPACITY TO MOBILIZE: METCALFE PARK (MILWAUKEE, WISC.)

BNCP fostered two types of neighborhood capacity in Metcalfe Park: residents' collective ability to act on important issues, and individual residents' leadership skills. A vivid example of both occurred in May 2014, when 10-year-old Sierra Guyton, who was playing in a park, was critically wounded during a shootout between two young men. Moved by the tragedy, a handful of residents—people who had previously organized community movie nights—called on their neighbors to take a stand against violence. One of these organizers was BNCP Site Director Danell Cross, a resident of Metcalfe Park who knew the injured girl's family. Finding most neighbors too scared to come out, Cross and a dozen colleagues walked the neighborhood for three days, asking for people with information about the shooting to come forward. They stood next to the girl's home with a microphone, talking to people on porches, in doorways and behind windows. "I said, 'My heart is breaking because I need you to help me let the world know we are tired of this,'" Cross recalls, 'All we're asking is for you to come outside and stand together to show this city we care.' Giving them that one thing they could do, that's what they needed. Then they came out."

The residents did more than come into the street. They held prayer vigils while waiting for news of Sierra's progress and the capture of the perpetrators. Sierra died, prompting residents to organize a call-to-action rally. The rally—attended by more than 350 residents, government officials, law enforcement representatives

and BNCP cross-sector partners—marked a turning point in Metcalfe Park. Relations between the neighborhood and police force had long been strained. But when Cross looked out from the stage and saw that Metcalfe Park Police Captain Jason Smith seemed unsure of his reception, she reached down and invited him to stand beside her. "I was trying to tell him it has to be one relationship at a time," Cross explains. "People need to know why you're in their community and that it's in their best interest. And I wanted the community to know this is not something we, or the police, or our cross-sector partners can fix. We all have to work together."

Cross' actions at the rally also marked a change in her own capacity to work with leaders outside Metcalfe Park. She has extensive networks and trust in the community. People who know her describe her as a compassionate, intelligent, passionate person around whom others naturally coalesce. Cross and her six children, ranging in age from 7 to 33, have experienced many obstacles common in Metcalfe Park, including poverty, substance abuse, domestic violence, school dropout and teen pregnancy. But despite her credibility within the neighborhood, Cross was also seen as a challenging figure—especially when, shortly after being hired as BNCP's site coordinator, she objected that the organization then serving as anchor institution was paying her far less than the young white woman hired to direct BNCP, even though Cross (who is middle-aged and African American) was doing similar work. With coaching from CSSP's Senior Policy Analyst Kirstin Yeado and BNCP consultant Linda Bowen, and intervention by Milwaukee's cross-sector partners, the two women's salaries and titles were equalized and Cross received back pay. "I'm a bulldozer," Cross says. "I

tear down walls that shouldn't be there in the first place. I kick in doors that residents have not been able to get through. It has challenged residents who haven't been comfortable speaking in that space, and it's challenged partners [who are] a little afraid of what residents might say."

When Cross and Smith lifted their clasped hands in partnership at the rally, therefore, it was "a seminal moment," Bowen observes. "The cross-sector partners finally saw that Danell wasn't trying to benefit personally. She was truly a person in her community who wanted to see good things happen there."

After the rally, Cross and other residents continued to walk through the neighborhood "to let people know we were watching and we needed to go back to life." Eventually, children came outside to play again; residents wanted to make sure the play space remained available. A neighborhood steering committee formed, chaired by Cross and populated by residents, funders and representatives of local institutions and programs. As their Learn While Doing project, residents met with young adults to elicit their vision for the future, which led to creation of an internship and job training program.

The steering committee also helped organize Arms Around Us, a collaboration between Metcalfe Park and the neighboring Amani neighborhood in which residents and police linked arms along a major street to symbolize their shared commitment to confronting neighborhood violence. Young adults and police officers worked together to plant trees and gardens, and a basketball league in which police and youth play on the same teams, not against each other, is in the works.

As Metcalfe Park residents mobilize to address their concerns, they have become more comfortable speaking candidly with representatives of the city, local organizations and foundations. The steering committee's combination of engaged residents and powerful resource brokers has attracted new partners who want to work in the neighborhood. And Cross has learned how to communicate and collaborate with people outside the neighborhood to get things done. CSSP's Kirstin Yeado provided training on the BNCP model, and Bowen equipped Cross to use the jargon used by funders and helped strengthen her administrative and computer skills. "I got this job because I was a resident, not because I had all the skills to do the work," says Cross. "I felt everyone was watching me, and they didn't expect a resident to be able to do all this. Linda helped me get past my fear and learn how to write reports." Bowen also counseled Cross on how to express concerns to outsiders assertively without being aggressive. "She helped me see that the way I knock down a door sometimes keeps people from hearing the message. Learning how to reframe things so people can hear it [was important]," Cross explains.

Mobilizing the neighborhood takes ongoing effort. Cross works hard to keep people engaged in the steering committee despite disruptions in their lives and in her own. "A lot of times I go to work and haven't had sleep because I've been listening to gunshots in the street all night. I have to deal with a lot of deaths and incarceration of young people I know," Cross says. Meanwhile, outside observers worry about sustaining resident involvement; it will be crucial to expand the circle of neighborhood leaders. Racial inequities remain embedded in the structures of the broader city, which has implications for how people think about

the supports that places like Metcalfe Park need. But Cross is confident that both she and the neighborhood are on the right track. "I really want to work on policy change and structural change," she says. "I don't know how it will happen, but it will happen. BNCP is the beginning of that."

Collaborators in Metcalfe Park learned these lessons about building capacity to mobilize:

- There are clear benefits to hiring a resident as site director, but that person may need extra time and coaching to operate successfully in all of the roles and settings required.
- Residents need to feel they're getting something out of the process, even if it's something as intangible as a sense of accomplishment.
- It's important to have an organization that serves as a consistent convener and supporter of resident action—for instance, by helping to create a resident leadership group or securing funds for projects.

However, the organization must have capacity to partner with residents.
- Residents are not the only people who need to build capacity to achieve results. Some organizational leaders also need new skills to work more effectively with residents.
- A broad range of residents' views is key to finding solutions that work. "When there were 10 people representing [the views of] 7,000 it didn't feel like enough," Cross says. "So we put questions to the larger community and asked how to fix things."

ROLE OF THE CROSS-SECTOR PARTNERSHIP IN BNCP

Although BNCP's primary goal is to build capacity in neighborhoods, external partners and resources also are needed to support and sustain neighborhood efforts. Therefore, BNCP aims to "change the way business is done" regarding citywide policies and practices that affect struggling neighborhoods. BNCP envisions a cross-sector partnership, composed of leaders from public agencies, nonprofits and the private sector as a vehicle for collaboration with neighborhoods to develop and implement revitalization plans.

As BNCP was launched, each city's cross-sector partnership secured match funding, selected two target neighborhoods and established an operating structure that involved a lead agency and anchor organization(s) in each neighborhood. Between November 2012 and July 2013, the lead agencies and the cross-sector partners finalized and signed performance agreements with CSSP detailing their respective roles and responsibilities.

Although members of the cross-sector partnerships voiced support for BNCP, they were uncertain (as were site directors) exactly how or when to exhibit that support following the launch. The partnerships were mostly new collaborative bodies without concrete goals, clear roles, or operating procedures. (The exception was the Greater Memphis Partnership (GMP), which was established in 2010, prior to BNCP.) Site directors felt they needed to engage residents and stakeholders before a neighborhood partnership could make significant requests of the cross-sector partners on behalf of their neighborhoods. They also were cautious about overwhelming the emergent community process with the participation of powerful cross-sector partners. The TA teams, meanwhile, focused on helping site directors begin the neighborhood work, and they devoted little attention to building the strength and commitment of cross-sector partnerships.

Consequently, the partnerships were slow to evolve as formal entities with their own goals and agendas for supporting either the target neighborhoods or neighborhood revitalization efforts citywide. Nonetheless, individual and small groups of cross-sector partners became engaged in BNCP—sometimes very actively so. They engaged through:

- The donation of facilities or office space for site directors
- Help with neighborhood surveys and access to other sources of data
- Participation and, in some cases, co-sponsorship or facilitation at key BNCP meetings and events

- Assisting the site director by making connections with power brokers, mediating conflicts and suggesting resources

As the Milwaukee profile illustrates (Fig. 12), a cross-sector partnership—or in this case, its executive committee—can play a crucial role in a neighborhood's BNCP experience.

Evidence also suggests that BNCP changed the way some cross-sector partners carried out their work in the target neighborhoods. For example, the Police Department in Milwaukee, the Housing Authority in Fresno, and the City of Flint's Planning Process all embraced some new policies and practices to connect more effectively with neighborhood residents. Similar examples illustrate how some of BNCP's private funders, partner nonprofits and schools operated differently as a result of BNCP's strong value on resident leadership.

Milwaukee's cross-sector partnership built on a pre-existing alliance that began in 2010 when representatives of several local foundations met to discuss the status of community development in the city. Using a scan commissioned 10 years earlier, they studied who was funding what and where the gaps were. Soon the group engaged national consultant Paul Brophy to conduct a fresh assessment and suggest how funders could collectively promote community development.

Brophy recommended forming a partnership of civic and business leaders who could bring their perspective on the city's economy to the work in neighborhoods. A small group, now known as the Community Development Funders Alliance (CDFA), coalesced around the goal of "creating a common agenda for Milwaukee neighborhoods." It was driven by three funders: Susan Lloyd, executive director of the local Zilber Family Foundation and former director of the MacArthur Foundation's investment in Chicago's New Communities initiative; Kathryn Dunn, vice president of the Greater Milwaukee Foundation; and John Kordsmeier, president of the Northwestern Mutual Foundation.

Later, when several sector leaders in Milwaukee received letters inviting them to participate in BNCP, Lloyd, Dunn and Kordsmeier seized the opportunity to further expand the group. They invited leaders from city government and agencies, the United Way and other organizations to make the group a real cross-sector partnership. Mayor Tom Barrett and Police Chief Edward Flynn responded enthusiastically, and Flynn designated Inspector Bill Jessup, and subsequently Inspector Mary Hoerig, to represent the agency in the group. The police department had recently received a federal Byrne Criminal Justice Innovation Program grant, which supports community strategies to address crime, and the BNCP partnership "fit Chief Flynn's philosophy that police have a role in making neighborhoods capable of sustaining civic life," Hoerig says.

Lloyd, Dunn, Kordsmeier and Hoerig became the partnership's executive committee. Each partner brought a different perspective and value to the table. Lloyd's foundation was looking for ways to reach beyond the three communities in which it already invested. Dunn's foundation has a history of convening partnerships and is well-respected by city leaders. The mayor's office, with Hoerig's support, gave the cross-sector group "a gravitas it might not otherwise have had so quickly," Lloyd notes. Kordsmeier's foundation was retooling its strategy to shift from "giving a little money to lots of things" to making larger investments with greater impact. And, by publicly endorsing the cross-sector approach, the Northwestern Mutual Foundation—the state's largest corporate foundation and the philanthropic arm of the city's largest employer—moved the partnership forward.

The cross-sector partnership provides a venue for discussing neighborhoods from both a "people and place" perspective—a valuable resource in a city where relatively few philanthropies invest in neighborhoods, and most do not have a stated strategy for doing so. Partners have commissioned a neighborhood market analysis, developed an institute to help residents learn leadership skills and co-funded a small grants program to support local projects (with residents serving as reviewers and grantmakers). The partners also co-fund a news service that reports on 17 neighborhoods, including those in BNCP, from a resident perspective. While implementing these activities, the partners have contributed "not only dollars but mentoring, leadership and technical assistance," Hoerig says.

The cross-sector partnership has helped the executive committee members, their organizations and the city as well as neighborhood residents. "The four of us trust each other explicitly now, and that may not have happened if we weren't forced into making decisions, taking risks and doing things that matter together," Kordsmeier says. Participation in the partnership has also "transformed" the way Northwestern Mutual thinks about neighborhood residents, he adds:

"When we launched a significant new building project, the company committed to having minority-owned and small businesses participating in the project. Meetings were convened in multiple neighborhoods in Milwaukee, explaining the nature of the construction project, followed by a job fair at which residents were taken through the process to apply. If they didn't have a driver's license or GED credentials, people were there to help them. That type of focused collaboration hasn't happened before."

For the police department, the partnership provides connections to residents who can advocate for police during times of conflict and to other stakeholders with ties to key constituencies. When Chief Flynn wanted to reach pastors to discuss community violence, for instance, Hoerig turned to a funder in the partnership whose organization works closely with the faith community. The partners also see evidence that the group is influencing city government. The city has prioritized cleanup of foreclosed and vacant properties in the BNCP and Byrne program neighborhoods. And as the city was developing its new budget, two staff members met with the cross-sector partners to discuss plans for job development and blight remediation. "Now more than ever before, the city is positioned to reach out to private funders to preview something and give a reaction," Lloyd observes.

The group has faced some challenges. Participation by the school system has not been as strong as originally hoped. At times, some of the public partners have had competing interests or different perspectives that have played out at the BNCP table. The bankers at the table have yet to become fully involved. And a person hired to direct the partnership didn't stay, leaving group members to handle administrative and program tasks on their own.

Looking ahead, the executive committee hopes to merge the cross-sector partnership and the CDFA into a single entity that is seen as the go-to source

for broader, more strategic community development discussions. Committee members expect to develop more co-investment opportunities. They want to connect with state and national funders, and they hope to find an institutional partner to manage the group.

Meanwhile, the executive committee takes these lessons from creating the cross-sector partnership:

- Institutional readiness and individual leadership style matter. The departure of the partnership's first director may have been as fortuitous as it was disruptive, an executive committee member suggests. "It may have been that we needed to get our act together before having a more permanent structure. It forced us to have conversations and develop a way of working together that has enhanced our ability to work on issues."

- Expert facilitation is crucial, especially in the beginning. Brophy played an important role by "interpreting different institutional perspectives to the partners" in a tactful, confidential, accurate and trusted manner. Executive committee members agree.

- Partnering helps people share accountability for solutions as well as for problems. "In policing we like to know what goals we have to reach, and the chief constantly asks me what we have achieved. I have to say, 'It's a process, an evolution,'" Hoerig explains. "It's taught us to be better partners because we realize we don't have to solve all the problems at the table."

OBSERVATIONS ABOUT CROSS-SECTOR PARTNERSHIP IN BNCP

Neither the cross-sector partnerships nor the BNCP city's broader neighborhood revitalization agenda were a significant focus for TA teams during the program's first two years, given the teams' focus on site directors and neighborhood leaders. In February 2014, however, with additional federal funds, CSSP invited each city to consider extending its two neighborhoods' participation in BNCP for an additional six months (from April 1, 2014 to September 30, 2014) and to expand BNCP to a third neighborhood.

The invitation came with more explicit expectations for the cross-sector partnership that involved "developing a vision for revitalizing neighborhoods across the city, helping to build neighborhood capacity, and working to align policy and sustainable funding with neighborhood needs and priorities." The framework for the performance agreement between the cross-sector partnership and CSSP in this next phase of work was similar to the original but added expectations for the development of a formal structure for the cross-sector partnership "in the context of what makes sense in their city" and inclusion of neighborhood residents "as participants and leaders

in the partnership." The performance agreement also indicated that CSSP's TA teams would, among other activities, provide capacity-building technical assistance to the cross-sector partnerships as well as to BNCP neighborhoods.

As the TA teams met with cross-sector partners in the spring and summer of 2014, it became clear that local differences in organizational and political dynamics required flexible thinking about the form and institutional auspices of the partnership in each city. If the partnership was to be sustainable, it needed to be embedded in the local political process so it could become an integral part of "doing business differently." The TA teams worked closely with each site to identify a possible structure and institutional home for the partnership, as they consistently underscored the critical role of residents in the partnership. Productive conversations about these questions were still under way in all four sites at the end of the period covered by this report.

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FINAL OBSERVATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR BNCP GOING FORWARD

Did BNCP accomplish what it set out to do? As the work expands into a third neighborhood in each city, how can partners benefit from the knowledge gained thus far? And what do these lessons imply for future programs that seek to build capacity for neighborhood revitalization?

BNCP has successfully fulfilled the broad purpose for which it was designed: it targeted eight high-need neighborhoods and tested a results-based planning approach for building their capacity to compete effectively for federal and other investments. After two years, we see much evidence of enhanced capacity resulting from the engagement of many different neighborhood, city and national players in the capacity-building effort. The neighborhoods and cities participating in BNCP benefitted from the program's support for dedicated staff, its connections to and support from well-respected anchor organizations and/or powerful cross-sector partners and its status as a national initiative with multiple federal partners and support from a technical assistance team.

BNCP built on lessons from previous place-based approaches but combined community capacity building and results-based planning in new ways in eight very different neighborhoods in four different cities. CSSP and its partners tested this new method of working with high-need neighborhoods by intentionally investing in learning, so they could identify the elements of this new approach that were successful and those that required adjustment. This meant they could modify BNCP in real time as needed. For example, when it became clear that some residents and stakeholders might perceive the initial capacity-assessment process as involving only a small group of people in determining priorities for the entire neighborhood, the TA teams emphasized that priorities can be modified over time with further experience and information, and they dropped the focus on numerical capacity ratings.

Familiar critiques of externally designed, funder-driven initiatives that require new implementation structures and processes are that they can unwittingly reinforce existing power dynamics or open up deep rifts that they are not prepared to address. These initiatives can raise unrealistic expectations in neighborhoods that have experienced many failed promises. They can reinforce gatekeeper roles

among organizations that come to the fore, and, if they fail to produce tangible results in the eyes of residents and/or local funders and civic leaders, they can reduce the likelihood of future external investment. Attuned to these dynamics, the TA teams tried to maintain a balance between staying flexible and responsive to local conditions and focusing on the implementation of BNCP's core components. As the work developed, TA teams began to adopt a wider lens and attended more intentionally to BNCP's broader context.

The balance that TA teams sought required thinking of BNCP less as a standalone intervention or self-contained program and more as a change strategy being implemented in a dynamic environment that had an ongoing and significant impact on communities' success. Such a stance supports the following implementation principles as BNCP goes forward:

- Treat neighborhoods as embedded in a larger social/political dynamic that needs to be leveraged for maximum impact and sustainability.
- Adapt BNCP to build opportunistically on local energy and assets, both neighborhood and citywide.
- Work expansively and strategically with diverse neighborhood, city and state partners to build a set of powerful relationships that can help to get things done.

IMPLICATIONS FOR BNCP SITES' THIRD NEIGHBORHOOD

Because federal partners were able to fund a third neighborhood for start-up shortly after the first two neighborhoods had officially "graduated," CSSP has an opportunity to test the next version of BNCP, which has been reconfigured based on lessons from the last two years. There will be three major changes, based on the findings presented in this report, as follows.

1. Refine the process for building results-based planning capacity.

As the first two years of BNCP drew to a close, the CSSP TA team worked hard to simplify and improve the sequence of steps involved in building results-based planning capacity. Examples of key refinements include: changing the sequence of capacity-building steps so that the Learn While Doing project is planned and launched early in the BNCP process and expediting the selection of a priority result to allow for more in-depth capacity building around strategy development. New guidance materials also will support work in the third neighborhood.

2. Build a local support team around the site director and deliver TA to that team, rather than primarily to the site director.

This change expands the technical assistance approach to a larger team, whose members will vary by site but likely will draw representatives from the cross-sector partnership, lead agency, key neighborhood anchor organizations, resident leadership and a local TA provider. The teams likely will operate less as formal bodies and more as a network of people and organizations sufficiently knowledgeable about and invested in the BNCP capacity-building process to support the planning process and sustain the neighborhood's work.

Involving a local TA person, who is ideally situated in a university or citywide organization that provides training and technical assistance, should help to create a seamless web of support that is less dependent on the national TA team over time. Doing so at the outset will allow the CSSP technical assistance team to expose the local TA provider, along with the site director and other members of this local team, to the BNCP approach. And by focusing its own TA less singularly on the site director, CSSP will buffer BNCP's efforts from the disruptions caused by inevitable site director turnover.

Engaging a few cross-sector partners and/or other civic champions on the team from the start will help to foster new relationships and create an opportunity for all parties to understand the perspectives and assets each brings to the table regarding neighborhood revitalization. Functioning as a team also enables different parties to "practice" effective collaboration with the support of ongoing technical assistance, thus operationalizing BNCP's notion of linking neighborhood and system change.

3. Engage city-level actors (cross-sector partners and other key leaders) from the outset so they understand how BNCP might connect with the local context and they support neighborhood revitalization in BNCP places and citywide.

BNCP's success depends in part on effective connections between the neighborhoods and "downtown" decision-makers. So BNCP will spell out more clearly in the performance agreement and other BNCP materials (a) the assumptions underlying BNCP's dual-track focus and (b) BNCP's expectation that the cross-sector partnership develop goals and strategies for increasing local support (i.e., resources, policies, practices) for neighborhood revitalization.

The idea is that the cross-sector partnership may not be a new free-standing entity if there are other groups that could be expanded or strengthened to take on this agenda. Whatever form the partnership takes, however, clarity about its functions and accountabilities is essential, as is support from the TA team.

Such an approach will require TA teams to assess the city's neighborhood development landscape (and politics) and work to adopt a capacity-building strategy for cross-sector partnerships that creates more inclusive and informed decision-making, greater connections and accountabilities with neighborhood leaders and a long-term institutional base conducive to sustainability.

IMPLICATIONS FOR NEW CITIES

BNCP's expansion to a third neighborhood in the four cities currently participating will be limited to two years of support, as originally planned. Because the TA teams, the lead agency, and the cross-sector partners have already had experience with BNCP in these cities, the two-year timeframe may pose fewer challenges for the new neighborhoods than for the original ones. Should BNCP expand to new cities in the future, however, experience suggests that high-need neighborhoods require more time to prepare for implementation—specifically, at least 12-18 months to develop readiness for a community results process that will build the foundation for lasting change.

The mismatch between BNCP's two-year timeline and its selection of high-need neighborhoods can be addressed either by extending BNCP's commitment to 3-5 years or by selecting neighborhoods with more pre-existing capacity, in particular those with an emerging or existing neighborhood group that is ready (or almost ready) to engage in the BNCP community results planning process. Targeting high-needs neighborhoods fills a critical unmet need, but it requires a longer engagement than BNCP originally anticipated.

FINAL THOUGHTS

BNCP's designers and implementers have used BNCP's first test to learn what elements of the approach work well and what elements might be strengthened to increase impact and sustainability. CSSP is well-positioned to test an approach that has been redesigned based on these lessons. Moreover, federal partners should take great credit for creating the "learning by doing" conditions needed to develop and refine new programs like BNCP before going to scale.

Most importantly, neighborhoods that have struggled for recognition, connection and a voice in four cities now have a chance to demonstrate that they can overcome past barriers to investment and improve the lives of residents in tangible ways.

49

Targeting high-needs neighborhoods fills a critical unmet need, but it requires a longer engagement than BNCP originally anticipated.

APPENDICES

2011

June	Federal government releases Competitive Grant Announcement for BNCP's Training and Technical Assistance (TTA) Coordinator.
Sept.	CSSP is selected as BNCP's TTA coordinator.
Dec.	Federal Management Team (FMT) and CSSP finalize BNCP budget.

2012

Jan.	CSSP formally begins BNCP work.
Feb.	BNCP hosts launch Meeting with FMT, TTA Partners and CSSP Staff (2/23-24). Invitations to submit letters of interest sent to 30 cities (2/24).
March	Webinar for potential BNCP applicants held (3/13).
May	14 Cities submit letters of interest (5/8), eight are recommended for site visits (5/29).
June-July	BNCP conducts site visits to eight finalist cities; four are recommended for BNCP participation (7/16).
Aug.	BNCP cities are announced at UNCA Neighborhood Revitalization Conference (8/2).
Sept.–Oct.	CSSP conducts site visit #1: orientation around BNCP processes/deliverables.
Nov.	Site director orientation meeting held in Washington, D.C. (11/29-30).
Nov.–Jan.	CSSP conducts site visit #2: capacity assessment and target-setting meetings.

2013

Jan.	Cross-site meeting #1 held in Washington, D.C. (1/28-30).
Feb.-Dec.	Ongoing TA phone meetings held and site visits from CSSP teams continue.
April	First monthly site director/coordinator phone call held (4/2).
Oct.	Cross-site meeting #2 held in Milwaukee (10/23-25).

2014

Feb.	Cross-site meeting #3 held in Fresno (2/19-21). Invitations to submit letters of interest for BNCP extension/expansion sent (2/1).
March	Cross-sector partnerships submit LOIs for BNCP extension/expansion (3/21). Neighborhood revitalization plans are submitted to CSSP (3/31).
April	All eight neighborhoods continue work under the extension provision (4/1).
Sept.	BNCP neighborhoods officially "graduate" to "light touch" TA (9/30).

51

APPENDIX B: BNCP PROCESS MAP

Building Neighborhood Capacity Program

Timeline: Jan/Feb 2013 .... March 2013 .... April 2013 .... Summer 2013 .... March 2014

Community Results Process

- Identify and involve "Close/Deep" partners
- Agree on initial **values** and **principles**
- Develop plan to **engage** neighborhood residents and partners to **agree** on desired result
- Provide inclusive **opportunities** to broaden neighborhood resident base
- We are ready to sustain a process that continues to improve results for the neighborhood.

Capacity Building

- Develop **baseline & target** statements
- Determine **technical assistance** needed to achieve targets
- Determine the **capacities, resources** and **TA** needed to complete the "Learn While Doing" project
- **Build capacities** during the "Learn While Doing" project
- We have seen observable increases in our neighborhood capacity.

"Learn While Doing" Project

- Gather input from BNCP partners and the neighborhood
- **Identify** a project and specify how it will contribute to the neighborhood's desired result
- Ensure the project is **aligned** with one or more of the **capacity building targets**
- **Implement** "Learn While Doing" project
- We have completed a tangible project that has helped our neighborhood address our desired result.

Neighborhood Revitalization Plan

- Agree on initial **values & principles**
- Use neighborhood **input to select a desired result for focused attention**
- **Gather data** about the desired result, including the "Story Behind the Data"
- Develop the **partnerships and capacities** needed to complete the plan
- Build **neighborhood support** for the plan inside and outside the neighborhood
- We have a revitalization plan that addresses at least one desired result and will help us identify next steps in addressing additional results over time.

At the end of BNCP…

- The neighborhood has a revitalization plan with a clear plan for moving forward and a partnership in which residents occupy equal voice with organizations and other partners in determining how resources are used in the community
- The neighborhood has developed a structure and relationships that will enable it to make effective use of and attract a range of federal, state and local resources.
- The learn while doing project has supported the achievement of an important aim in the revitalization plan
- The neighborhood has begun to assert itself as an equal partner with organizations and stakeholders in neighborhood and with cross-sector partnership and has begun to build strong and accountable partnerships with various stakeholders, including residents, local organizations and civic leaders.

Each BNCP city received and matched $225,000 in federal funds to support the work in two neighborhoods and to support the cross-sector partnership, in approximately three equal shares.

$1,500,000	CSSP. staff/consultants to work with sites, build National Resource Center website (includes indirect costs)
$900,000	Direct funding to sites ($75,000/neighborhood, $75,000 for sross-sector partnership), matched 1:1 with local funds
$525,000	Travel to sites (including selection site visits) and brokered TA
$200,000	Partner organizations to advise, provide TA to sites
$180,000	Community of practice/cross-site meetings
$160,000	Formative assessment
$50,000	Website development

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$3.5 million

APPENDIX D: BNCP SELECTION PROCESS

DESIGNING AND DISTRIBUTING INVITATIONS TO SUBMIT LETTERS OF INTEREST

CSSP invited cross-sector partnerships in 30 cities to submit a letter of interest to participate in BNCP. The cities were identified and ranked using data indicating the existence of at least three or more Census tracts with high need, as defined by income, employment and educational attainment. Although cities could submit only one application, signed by the mayor, the RFP was disseminated throughout the city to the mayor, local government officials and philanthropic and nonprofit leaders. Several weeks later, CSSP invited all potential applicants to attend a webinar to introduce them to BNCP, review the selection process and ask questions.

REVIEWING LETTERS OF INTEREST, CONDUCTING SITE VISITS AND SELECTING BNCP SITES

Fourteen of the 30 cities submitted letters of interest (LOIs). Panels of at least three reviewers from CSSP, the Federal Management Team and BNCP Partners rated these LOIs according to four factors:

- Identification of at least two appropriate neighborhoods
- Description of need and how lack of capacity prevents these neighborhoods from meeting the needs described
- Capacity of the cross-sector partnership
- Commitment to working with BNCP

Following discussion of the proposals and their scores, the reviewers reached a consensus about the eight semifinalist sites that they would recommend to the FMT for site visits. CSSP then composed teams of three or four reviewers each to conduct two-day site visits, during which they met with the cross-sector partnerships and visited potential target neighborhoods. Each team rescored the site using the same four factors above as well as a fifth one: an overall assessment of the likelihood that BNCP would be successful and make an impact in the city and the proposed neighborhoods.

Once again, reviewers met as a group and discussed the results of the site visits. Three of the sites that had the highest LOI scores received high site-visit scores as well. An assessment of a fourth site not originally in the top tier generated a similarly high score on the basis of information gathered during the site visit. These four applicants received scores significantly higher than the other four, so a clear consensus emerged from reviewers about which cities to recommend for FMT final selection. Reviewers also discussed initial recommendations about which two neighborhoods within each of these cities would be best suited to participate in BNCP.

The six-month selection process involved significant time and resources. Fifteen reviewers from CSSP, the federal departments and BNCP partners contributed directly to the process by reading letters of interest and/

or visiting potential sites; others contributed less directly. Much deliberation went into constructing the scoring rubric for reviewers, composing diverse teams to review site LOIs and/or conduct a site review and managing thoughtful discussions and decision-making processes over the six months.

Although costly, the process allowed reviewers with different experiences and perspectives to develop a shared view of (1) what conditions needed to be in place locally to operationalize and maximize BNCP goals and (2) a fair and transparent way to assess these conditions. Furthermore, although also costly, the site visits proved an important component of the selection process, giving reviewers the chance to learn more about the strength of the cross-sector partnerships and to have a more extended dialogue about the selection of target neighbor-hoods. In retrospect, issues that could have been explored in more depth during the site visits include: the history of resident organizing and relationships with key organizations in the neighborhood and citywide, cross-sector partners' understanding of BNCP and their role in it and the role of race and ethnicity in the power dynamics within neighborhoods and between neighborhoods and city decision-makers.

The following snapshots of the BNCP neighborhoods draw upon population data that were calculated using Census block group data and demographic information that was collected using Census tract data. The Census tracts do not align exactly with neighborhood boundaries, however, the data provide an approximate portrait of local demographics.

Flint: Ward 1 Neighborhood Population & Demographics		
	Ward 1 Neighborhood	City
Population*	3,718	102,434
Census Tracts	2	4	
Race*			
African American	90.1%	92.4%	56.6%
White	4.6%	4.1%	37.4%
American Indian/Alaska Native	0.2%	0.3%	0.5%
Asian	0.1%	0.1%	0.5%
Pacific Islander	0%	0.2%	0%
Other	0.8%	1.1%	1.1%
Two or More Races	4.2%	1.9%	3.9%
Ethnicity*			
Hispanic or Latino	2.4%	2.3%	3.9%
White/Non-Hispanic or Latino	97.6%	97.7%	96.1%
Education**			
<HS Degree	24.5%	20.6%	18.5%
HS Degree or Equivalent	44.6%	52.4%	37.8%
Economic Security**			
% Below Poverty Line	44.2%	41.8%	38.2%
Unemployment	46.1%	31.2%	23.9%
Housing*			
% of Vacant Housing Units	29.7%	25.1%	21.1%

Flint: Ward 3 Neighborhood Population & Demographics		
	Ward 3 Neighborhood	City
Population*	3,749	102,434
Census Tracts	17	18	
Race*			
African American	91.4%	73%	56.6%
White	5.1%	22.1%	37.4%
American Indian/Alaska Native	0.5%	0.3%	0.5%
Asian	0.1%	0%	0.5%
Pacific Islander	0%	0%	0%
Other	0.7%	0.3%	1.1%
Two or More Races	2.3%	4.3%	3.9%
Ethnicity*			
Hispanic or Latino	1.7%	2.8%	3.9%
White/Non-Hispanic or Latino	98.3%	97.2%	96.1%
Education**			
<HS Degree	29%	27.3%	18.5%
HS Degree or Equivalent	49.8%	29.1%	37.8%
Economic Security**			
% Below Poverty Line	49.4%	48.7%	38.2%
Unemployment	22.9%	16%	23.9%
Housing*			
% of Vacant Housing Units	20.2%	35.7%	21.1%

*Census Data, 2010.
**American Community Survey Data (ACS), 2007-2011.

Fresno: El Dorado Neighborhood Population & Demographics		
	El Dorado Neighborhood	City
Population*	1,589	494,665
Census Tracts	54.03	
Race*		
African American	16.5%	8.3%
White	47%	49.6%
American Indian/Alaska Native	2%	1.7%
Asian	14.3%	12.6%
Pacific Islander	0.3%	0.2%
Other	14.3%	22.6%
Two or More Races	5.7%	5%
Ethnicity*		
Hispanic or Latino	36%	46.9%
White/Non-Hispanic or Latino	64%	53.1%
Education**		
<HS Degree	27.6%	25.3%
HS Degree or Equivalent	30.3%	23.7%
Economic Security**		
% Below Poverty Line	50%	25.9%
Unemployment	20.4%	14%
Housing*		
% of Vacant Housing Units	13.7%	7.6%

Fresno: Southwest Neighborhood Population & Demographics						
	Southwest Neighborhood					City
Population*	15,780					494,665
Census Tracts	3	4	9.01	9.02	11	
Race*						
African American	26.6%	6.7%	23.1%	22.8%	25.6%	8.3%
White	26.6%	44.9%	27.8%	21%	32.3%	49.6%
American Indian/Alaska Native	2.2%	2.8%	1.1%	2.2%	2.6%	1.7%
Asian	5.9%	5.6%	19.2%	18.1%	3.7%	12.6%
Pacific Islander	0.2%	0.1%	0%	0%	0%	0.2%
Other	34.8%	35.6%	24.2%	31.7%	31.5%	22.6%
Two or More Races	3.7%	4.4%	4.5%	4.2%	4.2%	5%
Ethnicity*						
Hispanic or Latino	62.8%	78%	54.4%	57.9%	65.3%	46.9%
White/Non-Hispanic or Latino	37.2%	22%	45.6%	42.1%	34.7%	53.1%
Education**						
<HS Degree	47.9%	62.8%	43.6%	53.4%	59.2%	25.3%
HS Degree or Equivalent	18.8%	19.9%	29.1%	20.8%	20.1%	23.7%
Economic Security**						
% Below Poverty Line	39.1%	45.8%	40.8%	52.6%	41.2%	25.9%
Unemployment	10.4%	12.7%	20.9%	31.4%	15.7%	14%
Housing*						
% of Vacant Housing Units	10.3%	7.7%	6.4%	5.9%	8.4%	7.6%

*Census Data, 2010.
**American Community Survey Data (ACS), 2007-2011.

Milwaukee: Amani Neighborhood Population & Demographics		
	Amani Neighborhood	City
Population*	**2,510**	**594,833**
Census Tracts	64	
Race*		
African American	95.4%	40%
White	1.5%	44.8%
American Indian/Alaska Native	0.4%	0.8%
Asian	0.5%	3.5%
Pacific Islander	0%	0%
Other	0.5%	7.5%
Two or More Races	1.8%	3.4%
Ethnicity*		
Hispanic or Latino	1.2%	17.3%
White/Non-Hispanic or Latino	98.8%	82.7%
Education**		
<HS Degree	31.6%	19.4%
HS Degree or Equivalent	48.3%	31.5%
Economic Security**		
% Below Poverty Line	58.1%	27%
Unemployment	32.7%	12.4%
Housing*		
% of Vacant Housing Units	23.4%	9.9%

Milwaukee: Metcalfe Park Neighborhood Population & Demographics					
	Metcalfe Park Neighborhood				City
Population*	7,560				**594,833**
Census Tracts	88	89	90	98	
Race*					
African American	94.5%	91.2%	91%	81.3%	40%
White	2.1%	4.9%	2.4%	3.3%	44.8%
American Indian/Alaska Native	0.6%	0.1%	0.5%	0%	0.8%
Asian	0.6%	1.1%	4.2%	11.9%	3.5%
Pacific Islander	0%	0.1%	0%	0%	0%
Other	0.2%	1.9%	0.6%	0.4%	7.5%
Two or More Races	2%	0.5%	1.4%	2.9%	3.4%
Ethnicity*					
Hispanic or Latino	2.6%	5.5%	3.1%	3.6%	17.3%
White/Non-Hispanic or Latino	97.4%	94.5%	96.9%	96.4%	82.7%
Education**					
<HS Degree	38.3%	27.1%	27%	31%	19.4%
HS Degree or Equivalent	38.2%	37%	42.1%	39.3%	31.5%
Economic Security**					
% Below Poverty Line	47%	54%	55.5%	55.1%	27%
Unemployment	43.6%	15.7%	35.9%	27.1%	12.4%
Housing*					
% of Vacant Housing Units	18.4%	25.1%	24.7%	19.9%	9.9%

*Census Data, 2010.
**American Community Survey Data (ACS), 2007-2011.

	Memphis: Frayser Neighborhood Population & Demographics								
	Frayser Neighborhood								City
Population*	40,871								646,889
Census Tracts	99.01	99.02	100	101.1	101.2	102.1	102.2	103	
Race*									
African American	45.4%	80%	90.3%	88.8%	86.6%	90.9%	85.8%	95.3%	63.3%
White	39.3%	18.9%	7.9%	9.8%	11.4%	7.8%	12.5%	2%	29.4%
American Indian/Alaska Native	0.6%	0.1%	0.1%	0.4%	0.1%	0.1%	0.2%	0.3%	0.2%
Asian	0.2%	0.1%	0.3%	0.1%	0.4%	0.3%	0.2%	0.2%	1.6%
Pacific Islander	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other	11.9%	0.2%	0.2%	0.1%	0.4%	0.1%	0.5%	1.2%	4%
Two or More Races	2.7%	0.7%	1.1%	0.8%	1.2%	0.9%	0.9%	1.1%	1.4%
Ethnicity*									
Hispanic or Latino	17.1%	1.1%	0.6%	0.5%	1.4%	0.5%	1.1%	1.9%	6.5%
White/Non-Hispanic or Latino	82.9%	98.9%	99.4%	99.5%	98.6%	99.5%	98.9%	98.1%	93.5%
Education**									
<HS Degree	32.7%	35.1%	25.8%	21%	20.8%	28.4%	17.2%	17.3%	18.1%
HS Degree or Equivalent	43.6%	36.6%	38.6%	42.2%	45.7%	46%	49.7%	55.5%	30%
Economic Security**									
% Below Poverty Line	39.5%	53%	42.9%	38%	50%	39.4%	28.1%	55.6%	26%
Unemployment	13.6%	23.6%	21.3%	17%	12.1%	13.2%	15.2%	26.9%	13%
Housing*									
% of Vacant Housing Units	17.2%	23.1%	12%	18.9%	20.1%	13.4%	16.9%	23.9%	14.2%

*Census Data, 2010.
**American Community Survey Data (ACS), 2007-2011.

Memphis: Greater Binghampton Neighborhood Population & Demographics									
	Greater Binghampton Neighborhood								City
Population*	21,425								646,889
Census Tracts	11	12	13	14	15	27	28	30	
Race*									
African American	43.9%	22.5%	74.4%	79.2%	82.1%	43.2%	84.8%	53.5%	63.3%
White	36.6%	56.6%	14.6%	9%	14.3%	33.2%	10.7%	42.4%	29.4%
American Indian/Alaska Native	0.5%	0.2%	0.3%	0.2%	0%	0.1%	0.1%	0.3%	0.2%
Asian	0.4%	3.5%	1.7%	0.4%	0.8%	7.5%	0.4%	1.8%	1.6%
Pacific Islander	0.1%	0.2%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other	15.1%	13.8%	7.5%	9.9%	1.7%	12.8%	2.8%	0.5%	4%
Two or More Races	3.4%	3.2%	1.4%	1.4%	1.1%	3.1%	1.2%	1.5%	1.4%
Ethnicity*									
Hispanic or Latino	22.9%	19.8%	11%	14.1%	2.2%	14.8%	3.7%	1.3%	6.5%
White/Non-Hispanic or Latino	77.1%	80.2%	89%	85.9%	97.8%	85.2%	96.3%	98.7%	93.5%
Education**									
<HS Degree	32%	30.5%	22.2%	36.9%	22.7%	24.9%	32.1%	18.5%	18.1%
HS Degree or Equivalent	40.6%	27.1%	51.8%	28.4%	43.1%	33.3%	37.2%	29.5%	30%
Economic Security**									
% Below Poverty Line	27.2%	35.2%	38.4%	21.6%	47.1%	43.7%	53.7%	30.4%	26%
Unemployment	17.5%	13.7%	19.7%	21.9%	25.9%	11.7%	25.6%	21.8%	13%
Housing*									
% of Vacant Housing Units	17.6%	14.3%	24.4%	18.5%	22.7%	17.8%	17.1%	16.9%	14.2%

*Census Data, 2010.

**American Community Survey Data (ACS), 2007-2011.

Name of Our Neighborhood: _____

I.   Values, Assumptions & Principles

A.   List of values and principles that are important to your neighborhood as you shape your neighborhood revitalization plan:

1. *Example:* All participants have an equal voice.
2. *Example:* Good data and information will help drive our decisions.

II.   Our Neighborhood Vision: Desired Results
(PLEASE NOTE THAT THE FOLLOWING ARE EXAMPLES ONLY. EACH NEIGHBORHOOD WILL DEVELOP ITS OWN SET OF RESULTS, INDICATORS AND A SHORT-TERM PROJECT.)

A.   To identify the desired results of our community, we participated in an inclusive and results-focused visioning process. The process included:

(Here, we're looking for brief description – a paragraph – describing what this process looked like.)
Example: Upon completing the Capacity Assessment Tool, we (list partners) engaged additional residents and stakeholders in a conversation about the most important issues and concerns in our neighborhood. Individuals had the opportunity to identify and explain the vision that we have for our neighborhoods and the residents who live there…

B.   The vision of our neighborhood includes the following **desired results**:

1. *Example: Our neighborhood is safe.*
2. *Example: Our children are healthy.*
3. *Example: Residents have access to safe and affordable housing.*

III.   Describing Our Vision: Indicators

A.   As we work to transform our neighborhood, we know that we are making progress toward our desired results when we see the following:

1. *Examples of indicators* for "Our neighborhood is safe."*
   a. *We have working streetlights on most streets.*
   b. *Children feel safe walking to school.*
   c. *Violent crime rates are dropping.*
   d. *Adults feel safe walking through the neighborhood.*
   e. *More neighbors are attending community events/meetings.*
   f. *Our public spaces are better tended.*

*Note: indicators may include targets, such as 75% of our streets have working streetlights. Additionally, only about two or three indicators would be necessary as measures of progress.

61

IV.	**Measuring our Vision: Data**

B.   Before tackling our vision, it's important to take note of what's currently going on in our neighborhood as it relates to our desired results. Here's what we currently know based on data, and here's what we know about why the data looks the way it does.

    1. *Example: Our neighborhood is safe.*
       a. *What we know (Baseline Data)*
          i. *X% of streets in our neighborhood have working streetlights.*
          ii. *X% of children feel safe walking to school.*
          iii. *Violent crime rates*

       b. What does this existing data tell us?
         Here, we're looking for a brief description of the "story behind the data." What does the neighborhood know about root causes of issues the neighborhood wants to address? Are certain streets or parts of the neighborhood more challenged than others? Are there policies or regulations that either assist us or challenge us in our efforts?

V.	**Achieving our Neighborhood Vision: What Works?**

A.   **Short-Term Actions – "Learn While Doing" Project**
We recognize that making progress toward our desired results is a long and complex process. In taking small steps to achieve these results, we commit ourselves to doing the following in the next 12 months. (This is the BNCP "Learning While Doing" activity.)

Example:
Desired Result: Our neighborhood is safe.
Indicator: Children feel safe when walking to school.

This project should be short-term (up to 12 months) and will have a direct impact on improving the safety of the neighborhood.

Example:
Project description: We will partner with at least one neighborhood school, as well as neighborhood parents and youth, to learn more about why children don't feel safe walking to school. When we have gathered data about how much this issue exists, where it is most problematic, and have talked to a broad group of participants, we'll decide on one "do while we learn" project that will impact this issue.

    Capacities needed to inform and implement our project:
       • *Use of data for learning and decision-making*
       • *Residents as leaders and owners of the work*
       • *Creating effective partnerships*
       • *Determining responsive solutions*
       • *Addressing policy barriers*
       • *Others?*

 What capacity already exists? What are the steps we will take to develop additional strength in these capacities?

What training or technical assistance is needed to develop additional capacities to implement our project (for example…)
       • *Assistance with a process to survey/gather data about how youth view safety while walking to school*
       • *Assistance in how to research promising or best practices for responsive solutions*
       • *Other?*

Action plan and budget (including low-cost and no-cost options) for this project (roles and responsibilities, timelines, etc.)?

B.   Completing your Neighborhood Revitalization Plan (This section to be completed by the end of the BNCP.)

At this point, each neighborhood will have established a process for engaging residents and other stakeholders in visioning and planning. Desired results and indicators of success have been identified (prior to beginning the "learn while doing" project).

During the next 16 months, a neighborhood revitalization plan should be completed using a results-based frame for one or two of the desired results identified through the planning process.

Example:
Desired Result: _____

Indicators of success (two or three are enough):
•
•
•

Data baseline for each indicator

What is the story behind the data? In other words, what do you know about the conditions and root causes that have caused the conditions that are problematic? Does the challenge(s) exist for everyone in the neighborhood, or only certain geographic areas or others segments? Can the data be broken down (disaggregated) by age, race, gender, etc.?

What strategies, activities and solutions could be implemented to make progress toward achieving better results?

Will additional capacities be needed to implement each of the selected solutions? If there are gaps in the capacity needed and the capacity available, what steps will be taken to help develop these additional capacities and strategies? How will you plan to develop the strategies needed to develop solutions for the additional results?

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