

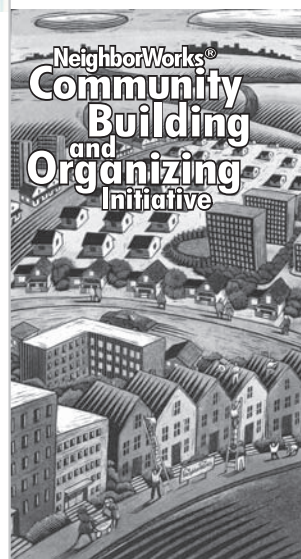
# DEMONSTRATING OUR VALUES, IMPACT AND EFFECTIVENESS



Final Report of the  
**NeighborWorks® Community Organizing  
Pilot Program**

A Publication of NeighborWorks® America and the  
NeighborWorks® Community Building and Organizing Initiative

September 2005



# Demonstrating Our Values, Impact and Effectiveness: Final Report of the NeighborWorks® Community Organizing Pilot Program

**The vision** and implementation of the NeighborWorks® Community Organizing Pilot Program (COPP) would not have been possible without the support and commitment of many people in the NeighborWorks® network.

A COPP Advisory Committee steered the pilot program from its inception, and provided insight and input from the perspective of local community-based organizations implementing organizing work within their communities. COPP Advisory Committee members included:

June Bailey, Community Housing Services of Wichita/Sedgwick County  
James Cruickshank, Oak Hill Community Development Corporation  
Janice Forte, UNHS NeighborWorks HomeOwnership Center®  
Maria Garcia, Salt Lake Neighborhood Housing Services  
Ron Walker, Atlanta Mutual Housing Association.

A team of accomplished organizing consultants provided critical training and on-site technical assistance to participating organizations. This COPP consultant team included Alfredo De Avila, Kim McLaughlin, Fernando Menendez, Salvador Miranda, and Karimah Nonyameko.

Support for data collection and analysis was provided by the following NeighborWorks® America staff:

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The Community Organizing Pilot Program is a program of the NeighborWorks® Community Building & Organizing Initiative (formerly Resident Leadership Initiative). The members are:

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Former NeighborWorks® Resident Leadership Initiative staff who were instrumental in launching the program include Pam Bender, James Johnson, and Becky Venne.

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# Demonstrating Our Values, Impact and Effectiveness:

## Final Report of the NeighborWorks® Community Organizing Pilot Program

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### I. Introduction

The NeighborWorks® Community Organizing Pilot Program (COPP) was created by organizations within the NeighborWorks® network to:

- ▶ Place organizing in a central position as a strategy for community development and neighborhood revitalization;
- ▶ Report to the broader community development field the significant value-added quality of community organizing to communities; and
- ▶ Systematize ways of reporting improvements beyond housing development and investment that are important to the life of the communities in which community development organizations operate.

The impetus for COPP came from the organizations most concerned with the state of community organizing within the NeighborWorks® network. Their commitment to give

organizing a privileged place as a development strategy went beyond funding and recognized that the most valuable products of this pilot might be the insights gained and a better ability to tell the story of organizing to the outside world. On a broader scale, most participating organizations wanted to demonstrate that community organizing is a crucial element of neighborhood revitalization deserving of increased support.

The Community Organizing Pilot Program was both a program with specific objectives, and also an applied research project that explored the effects of organizing activities on the work of selected NeighborWorks® organizations.

**As a program,** COPP worked to formalize and structure two practices in participating organizations: work planning for organizing, and data gathering and reporting. It provided grants, technical assistance, training, and peer support to 18<sup>1</sup> organizations over a period of three years to support these practices. It did not dictate the nature or focus of the participants' organizing work, but, rather, supported and

built upon their existing approaches and activities. Organizations were asked to:

- ▶ Identify a specific organizing project,
- ▶ Submit an organizing work plan with goals and measurable objectives for the selected project, and
- ▶ Report data using a format provided by the Community Building & Organizing Initiative.

**As an applied research project,** COPP developed a system for capturing data about community organizing activities, outputs and outcomes of the participating organizations. As the data began to accumulate, a clearer narrative

began to emerge of the contributions of organizing to the NeighborWorks® organization and its community. COPP produced valid and systematic evidence of the contribution of organizing in three areas:

- ▶ Democratic participation and collective action,
- ▶ Community revitalization, and
- ▶ Organizational effectiveness.

This report presents the work and accomplishments of COPP both as a program, and also as a project in applied research.

A primary goal of the Community Organizing Pilot Program was to explore whether causal relationships could be demonstrated between community organizing and success in community development. *In sum, COPP did show that community organizing contributed to successful community development.* COPP provided powerful evidence of the impact of organizing on communities, and on the community organization itself – helping it build strong relationships, gather more resources, and make its activities more effective. In addition, because COPP participants were all members of the NeighborWorks® network, NeighborWorks® America could use its annual survey data to compare network organizations that engaged in community organizing with those

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**On a broader scale, most participating organizations wanted to demonstrate that community organizing is a crucial element of neighborhood revitalization deserving of increased support.**

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that did not. This broader network-wide data provided additional evidence of the positive impact of organizing on community development. Comparing organizing and non-organizing groups (and using rigorous statistical controls) provided convincing evidence of the power of organizing to help community development succeed.

The success of the Community Organizing Pilot Program can best be expressed by NeighborWorks® America's decision to convert it from pilot status to a permanent program within the NeighborWorks® network. In spring 2005, as a direct result of systems developed and lessons learned from COPP, NeighborWorks® America launched the NeighborWorks® Community Building and Organizing membership program, with an initial membership of 24 organizations and plans for expansion. This support is NeighborWorks® America's vote of confidence that organizing does make a critical difference to the effectiveness and impact of community development organizations.



## II. Executive Summary

The NeighborWorks® Community Organizing Pilot Program supported a disciplined approach to planning and documentation of local community organizing efforts within a community development context. It sought to develop evidence of the impact of organizing on communities and organizations. Over a three-year period, COPP did demonstrate that community organizing contributes to successful community development.

Two tools developed and utilized in COPP were key to its success:

1. **Organizing work plans** were required of participating organizations. They were developed by each local organization during the first phase of the pilot program with the assistance of a trained and seasoned organizing consultant. The discipline of articulating a situational analysis, objectives, strategies, indicators, and expected outcomes led to better defined programs, increased resident engagement, and a systematic approach to assessing program effectiveness.

2. **Quarterly data reporting** enabled the program to assemble and analyze data from multiple organizations and a diversity of organizing activities, and thus create a collective story of organizing activities, outcomes and impacts.

The data provided by participating organizations demonstrated three types of results:

**1. VALUES: Organizing supports the values of democratic participation and collective action** by engaging residents in volunteer activities that improve their lives and their communities, and by supporting residents to serve in leadership roles.

**Key Findings** – COPP groups documented thousands of residents contributing to their communities through neighborhood improvement projects and community-building activities, as well as serving in organizational and community leadership roles. Many participating groups reported doubling and tripling of resident involvement over the two and a half years of COPP reporting.



Across the NeighborWorks® network, organizations that have community organizing staff averaged four times as many volunteers as those without community organizing staff.

**2. IMPACT: Organizing helps community development organizations achieve neighborhood revitalization goals** by strengthening social capital and leveraging investment of other resources into the community.

**Key Findings** – Organizing efforts of COPP participants resulted in millions of dollars invested in new affordable housing, new and upgraded parks and community gardens, new street lighting, new child care programs, improved public service delivery, and improvement to blighted properties in targeted communities. These outcomes were possible as a direct result of volunteer effort and new partnerships generated through community organizing. Specifically, COPP groups documented \$20 million in new funds and more than 26,000 volunteer hours invested in communities as a result of their organizing efforts over the two and a half years these data were tracked.

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**The program supported existing organizing activities of each organization, with a focus on establishing a common approach to work planning and documentation.**

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Across the NeighborWorks® network, organizations that have community organizing staff documented, on average, 50 percent more collaborations and partnerships compared to those without organizing staff.

**3. EFFECTIVENESS: Organizing improves the organizational “bottom line”** by increasing the visibility of the organization, strengthening relationships with communities, and creating new partnerships that lead to more responsive programs, higher levels of production, and new resources.

**Key Findings** – Many COPP organizations reported an increase in the number and diversity of participants in their homebuyer programs as a direct result of their organizing activities.

Across the NeighborWorks® network, for organizations that have organizing staff, the average number of people attending post-purchase counseling tripled between 2001 and 2004. For those organizations without organizing staff, the number remained flat.

Virtually all the organizations participating in COPP reported that the work planning and documentation processes developed through the pilot program were useful to their efforts. Specifically, they cited how these processes:

- ▶ Pushed them to better articulate what they intended to achieve, then evaluate progress regularly and more systematically;
- ▶ Increased resident involvement in organizational planning;
- ▶ Increased accountability for organizing work, both internally within the organization and externally with residents and other community stakeholders;
- ▶ Generated valuable new data that helped tell their organizing stories in new ways and to broader audiences; and
- ▶ Placed organizing in a higher priority position within their organizations.

These efforts led directly to NeighborWorks® America establishing in spring 2005 the NeighborWorks® Community Building and Organizing membership program, thus supplanting the pilot with a permanent program in the NeighborWorks® network.

The pilot program supported the development, testing and refinement of measures for articulating the work of community organizing and some of its key outcomes and impacts. These measures now are being utilized by an expanded number of organizations.

The groundwork laid by the Community Organizing Pilot Program thus enabled the NeighborWorks® network to expand support for a vital set of programmatic activities, and move forward with confidence that community organizing activities *do* make a critical difference in the effectiveness and impact of community development organizations.

### III. The Program

The NeighborWorks® Community Organizing Pilot Program (COPP) provided grants, training and technical assistance to 18 NeighborWorks® organizations for a period of three years. (See Appendix A. for a list of participating organizations.)

The program supported existing organizing activities of each organization, with a focus on establishing a common approach to work planning and documentation. While organizing approaches varied, many of the groups took an asset-based approach that focused on creating and building upon existing community assets through leadership skill-building, capacity-building of voluntary associations, expansion of networks and partnerships, and leveraging economic investment in communities.

Organizing activities included leadership training, support for crime watches and neighborhood associations, neighborhood clean-up and beautification projects, affordable housing campaigns, youth leadership development, resident involvement in revitalization planning, and voter registration. They also included collective action to address specific issues of concern to residents such as child care, code enforcement, traffic, and street lighting.

Participating organizations were located across the United States, serving big and small cities as well as rural communities and multicounty areas. Organizations ranged in capacity from a paid staff of six to more than 80. Some owned and managed hundreds of units of affordable rental properties; the housing services of others were primarily focused on preparing first-time homebuyers and providing low-interest loans for home repair.

For some, the Community Organizing Pilot Program provided primary funding for a part-time community organizer. Others had an entire organizing team that was more broadly engaged in community programming and/or resident services. Groups participated in order to improve their organizing work, share the successful in which they were already engaged, and learn from each other. COPP brought

them together annually for peer learning, training, and to build a common language and set of tools with which to support community organizing.

The focus of COPP's first year was on work planning. Each organization was provided technical support to create a structured analysis, set of objectives, key strategies, and measures of progress for their locally defined organizing work. The second year focused on identification of common measures of results across all participating organizations. The third year served to further refine these measures and understand their impacts.

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**The discipline of the work-planning process encouraged organizing staff to face the “so what?” question that led to articulating demonstrable outcomes that people from other organizational or skill backgrounds could appreciate.**

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#### **Organizing Work Plans**

The program emphasized work planning to ensure that participating organizations approached their organizing work with specific goals and measurable objectives.

All participating organizations were required to create their own organizing work plans during the first phase of the pilot, with technical support provided by NeighborWorks® America consultants. Each plan included a situational analysis, identification of organizing objectives and strategies, and determination of appropriate indicators to measure progress. Each organization created its community organizing work plan based on its own circumstances, analysis and local priorities. The work-planning process changed the way many of the participating organizations approached the neighborhoods they served. (See Appendix B. for organizing work plan template.)

Many organizations already were doing this type of planning. For others, attaching this level of structure to community organizing presented a real challenge. This structure pushed them to articulate their vision, connect it to a schedule of activities, and review it regularly.

Community involvement in work planning varied across organizations, ranging from staff-written plans that were then shared with the board of directors and community, to plans the elements of which were identified by the community from the outset. All had some element of community



involvement built into the planning.

Some organizations reported that this process helped them understand the value of approaching neighborhoods to find out what they want, rather than bringing predetermined projects to them for approval. Others reported using the process to turn over control such that residents drove the work rather than staff.

As it happened, this practice anticipated the development of business lines at NeighborWorks® America, so that COPP organizations had a head start in developing a fully formed business line in community building and organizing.

### **Data Gathering and Reporting**

The NeighborWorks® organizations that provided the momentum for creating COPP had come to appreciate the power of telling success stories through systematic quantification. For example, the ability to count the number of new homeowners in a community evoked in an effective way the powerful symbol of the “American dream.” In addition, success in homeownership work could be linked to the evolving literature on asset building and wealth creation.

However, stories concerning the success of organizing, while powerful in that they conveyed the involvement of large numbers of people, their influence on institutions, and noteworthy accomplishments, remained largely anecdotal. There was no way to aggregate these stories to determine whether organizing and success in community development were related in a positive and consistent way, or whether the relationship between the two was merely accidental.

The discipline of the work-planning process encouraged organizing staff to face the “so what?” question that led to articulating demonstrable outcomes that people from other organizational or skill backgrounds could appreciate. This enabled COPP participants to tell the story of organizing more effectively to an increasingly production-focused network.

Even so, quantifying the work of organizing seemed a daunting task. Previous efforts by NeighborWorks® organizations had identified the following challenges to systematic data gathering and quantification:

1. Because means and ends were often in dispute, it was not clear what should be counted. Invariably, when some-

## **Community Organizing Defined**

The following definition of community organizing was adopted by COPP groups during the first phase of the pilot program:

**“Organizing is based on the belief that people have the ability to name their problems and identify the additional information and resources they need to solve them. Organizing is a process that brings the talents, resources and skills of people in the community together to increase their collective power to transform themselves and their community and work for social change. Organizing is more than mobilizing and service work. It involves leadership development, building relationships, and consolidating thoughts and ideas into structures creating sustainable change.”**

thing was identified as quantifiable, its significance was questioned.

2. Because organizing encompasses a great variety of activities, it was questionable whether common data points could be established for all organizations. However, a system that contained different data points for different kinds of activities would be too complex. Could sufficient commonality be found between such disparate activities as tenant organizing and youth work?

3. Because of disputes over ends, it was difficult to interpret the relative importance of measures. Were some measures inherently more significant than others, or were all measures equal?

The process of creating a data system was iterative and thus complex and time-consuming. It took three years to begin to produce useful data consistently. (See Appendix C, for list of indicators and data collected.)

- ▶ **Year One:** Developed consensus about what should be measured.
- ▶ **Year Two:** Reviewed, eliminated inherently inconsistent data and non-performing measures, and reformatted reporting system. Developed a hierarchy (organizing principle) for measures.
- ▶ **Year Three:** Specified data points with greater precision and refined data-aggregating system.

The results of this data gathering are featured in the second part of this report, which presents COPP as an applied research project.



## IV. Learning from Network Practices: COPP as an Applied Research Project

The NeighborWorks® organizations that launched COPP are among the best practitioners of community organizing in the NeighborWorks® network. Their work is often exemplary of the different styles of organizing being practiced across the United States.

They devote staff to community organizing and work to integrate organizing into all their activities. In short, they were well positioned to explore the relationship between organizing and success in community development.

### Three Kinds of Results

By the second year of COPP, an analysis of the emerging data led NeighborWorks® staff to conclude that community organizing measures could be categorized into three kinds of results. One focuses on the **values of democratic participation and collective action**. A second focuses on the overarching goal (and explicit mission of many NeighborWorks® organizations) of the **impact of achieving neighborhood revitalization**. A third relates to enhancing the **effectiveness of the organization's work**. The cumulative evidence of COPP is that organizing has measurably produced results in at least one of these three categories for each participating organization.

While COPP focused on translating impacts into measurable data, it did not abandon the narrative in order to pursue the quantitative. There is a great deal of power in telling a story. The following data, therefore, include compelling numbers as well as narrative examples that illustrate the relationships between organizing and community development.

## Values: Democratic Participation and Collective Action

COPP participants demonstrated great faith in the power of ordinary people to create change. They developed programmatic activities that engage people and structured opportunities for them to take active roles in their communities. Such activities highlight the values of democratic participation, collective action, and collective power.

These values are deeply embedded in the core of a democratic society. The kinds of practices that organizations undertake to promote this kind of participation include:

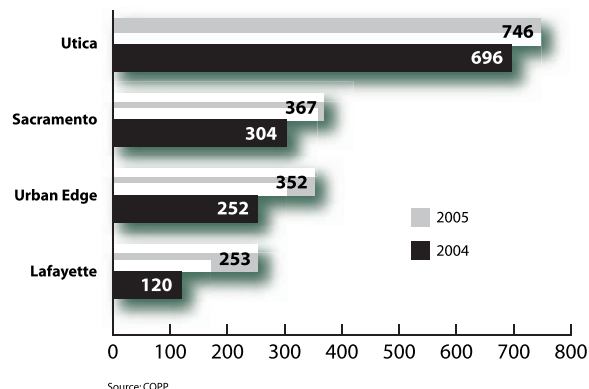
- ▶ Recruiting residents to meetings to discuss development priorities or common problems,
- ▶ Mobilizing residents to meet with elected or appointed officials,

Figure 1  
**Resident Participation on Committees, Block Clubs, Neighborhood Associations**

### All Reporting Organizations:

2004 1,701  
2005 2,242

### Top Four Reporting Organizations



- ▶ Convening tenants to give them voice in the management of their properties, and
- ▶ Organizing youth to take part in programs and serve in leadership and governance roles.

### Democratic Participation: Highlights

- **Anchorage Neighborhood Housing Services** initially focused on revitalization planning of the commercial corridor of the Mountain View neighborhood. It logged 450 volunteer hours and 26 partnerships in a single three-month period, as it built support and momentum for the project.

Over time, however, NHS shifted its focus to Mountain View residents, concerned that commercial revitalization would not by itself turn around a community, if its residents were not engaged. The challenge was to find ways to get people involved in a community that historically had very little civic

engagement, high rates of family mobility, and great ethnic diversity, as evidenced by 12 different languages spoken at the neighborhood elementary school.

When Lisa Mills came on board as NHS's new community organizer in April 2004, she distributed fliers with her photo on them throughout the neighborhood to introduce herself and let people know she would be coming around and knocking on their doors. The strategy worked, and the NHS has slowly built new relationships with Mountain View residents. During the winter of 2005, a variety of creative opportunities for resident involvement resulted in 15 new residents taking on leadership roles, in such activities as Neighborhood Leadership Circles, workshops, and events hosted by the Mountain View Unity Team. **Data highlight: 15 new resident leaders.**

- Celeste Stanback, resident services coordinator with **Atlanta Mutual Housing Association**, works closely with residents of the MHA's properties to build community, develop leaders, and involve them in a variety of community improvement projects. The MHA regularly has more than 80 residents involved in such activities as organizing youth events, serving on committees, and running a local food

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**If you live here,  
raise your family here,  
or do business here,  
you're a stakeholder here**

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bank. These activities create a sense of community that distinguishes the MHA from other multifamily developments, making it a desirable place to live. **Data highlight: 85 residents active in the AMHA community.**

- **Housing Partnership Inc. of West Palm Beach** focused its organizing efforts in the rural Pahokee community of Palm Beach County. In Pahokee, most residents who participate in organizing efforts do so because they recall "how the neighborhood used to be" and want to restore it to its earlier standards. With the help of Head Organizer Cornesha Dukes-Chisholm, Pahokee residents have conducted clean-ups and secured new trash receptacles for their community. These efforts have been appreciated by residents, one of whom labeled them "the best thing you can do for the neighborhood."



Demonstrating the organizing adage that the people closest to the problem are the experts, residents in one development devised and implemented their own plan to prevent crime, which included the purchase and installation of a new security gate, fencing, and additional lighting. Organizing in Pahokee has had its challenges in a community that has not had a recent history of civic engagement, yet HPI organizers understand that change takes time, trust and persistence. **Data highlight: Number of residents active in community doubled in two years.**

- **Lafayette Neighborhood Housing Services** in Indiana supported tenants from its rental properties to step into leadership roles through its Resident Leadership Team (RLT). During their participation in COPP, a successful partnership was formed between the RLT, the Ellsworth/Romig Neighborhood Association, and a Purdue University student organization. According to NHS organizer Glenda McClatchey, "The RLT was able to provide the students with a tenant's point of view, giving the students additional, valuable insight into the neighborhood along with the neighborhood leaders' views as homeowners."

The RLT also built new relationships between renters and the neighborhood association, which was composed exclusively of homeowners. One RLT member who lives in the neighborhood has become an active, contributing member of the neighborhood group.

This organizing work has significantly shifted relationships between renters and homeowners, overcoming an historical division and fostering a new level of respect and cooperation among neighbors. **Data highlight: 253 residents active in the community.**

- At **Oak Hill CDC** of Worcester, Massachusetts, community involvement is viewed as the foundation that makes all other programmatic success possible. Because its goal is to build a strong community, not just housing units, Oak Hill CDC places special emphasis on resident input and leadership. As Executive Director Jim Cruickshank explains, “if you live here, raise your family here, or do business here, you’re a stakeholder here.” Dedication to this principle is reflected by the high level of resident participation on the board of directors and a strong commitment to organizing.

Ralph Rosario, a community and youth organizer with Oak Hill, believes its commitment to resident leadership is paying off. During the past five years, he has noticed a change in attitudes from “I don’t care” and “so what?” to a greater sense of community awareness and “I do care, what can I do?” Accordingly, resident participation has increased in the neighborhood crime watch, annual food drive, and resident leadership committee. There also have been multiple beautification projects, and, most recently, creation of a community garden.

Resident participation and organizing can also reverse negative trends. Community organizing in one target area resulted in an increase of voter turnout among those registered of more than 12 percent in the 2004 general election over the previous general election.

Furthermore, by placing a special emphasis on youth, Rosario is creating a generation of future neighborhood leaders. His popular youth program provides young people with a chance to have their voices heard and become better members of their community. One result is that two youth now serve on the CDC’s board of directors. **Data highlight: 77 percent of board members are neighborhood residents, including two youth members.**

## Measuring Democratic Participation

Indicators of democratic participation and collective action:

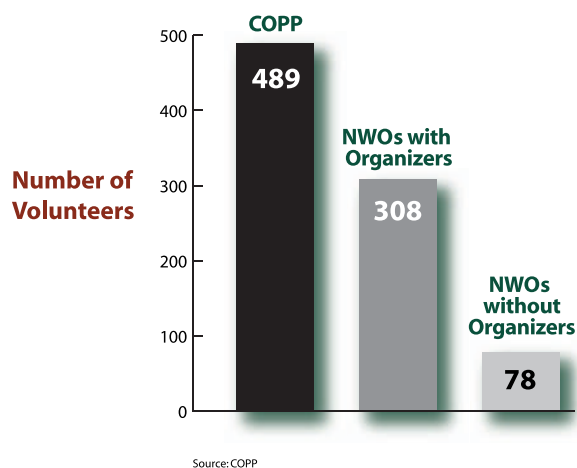
- ▶ Number of residents participating on committees, block clubs, neighborhood associations as a result of organizing activities
- ▶ Number of residents active in leadership roles
  - as officers or committee chairs of community organizations
  - as board members of the NeighborWorks® organization
  - as participants in other organizations
- ▶ Number of residents involved in public advocacy or organizing campaigns
- ▶ Number of residents interacting with decision-making bodies
- ▶ Number of new registered voters

- In Roxbury, Massachusetts, **Urban Edge Housing Corporation’s** resident organizing resulted in new board representation from its multifamily rental properties and election of a tenant association officer as board president. Two other tenants were elected to other offices in 2004, making Urban Edge’s executive committee 50 percent tenants of their subsidized multifamily properties.

The organizing efforts of Urban Edge and its partners also led to outstanding participation of 200 residents, including young people, in a series of community workshops convened to provide input to a major new development project in the Jackson Square area of Boston. During these workshops, residents worked with development staff, architects, and other consultants in small groups to discuss their concerns, hopes, and ideas for the new development.



Figure 2  
**Average Number of Volunteers  
 per Network Organization**



According to Urban Edge staff, the result of careful attention to workshop planning and facilitation were that “shy people spoke up and domineering types lightened up” – thus ensuring that everybody was fully engaged in the planning process for the most significant new development coming to their neighborhood in decades. **Data highlight: 40 percent increase in resident involvement over two years.**

- **UNHS NeighborWorks HomeOwnership Center®** in Utica, New York, supports crime watch and block club organizing as well as an association of block clubs, which has become a significant political force in Utica and Rome, New York. The organization reported 238 members registered with their Association of Block Coalitions, and turned out more than 100 residents to public hearings on allocation of 2005-2006 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds.

During 2005, community meetings were held with the state attorney general and the state director of criminal justice. According to the HomeOwnership Center’s Communications Manager Gene Allen, these “public officials came to us ... asking for help in contacting residents to meet with them ... Residents are being recognized as a true force.” **Data highlight: Participation in block clubs increased 166 percent over two years.**

#### Democratic Participation: The Collective Story

While the work of individual organizations tells a compelling story, a look at NeighborWorks® organizations as a whole

demonstrates the collective impact of organizing. NeighborWorks® organizations that had full-time staff dedicated to community organizing were able to attract a substantially greater number of volunteers than those without full-time organizing staff. Even after controlling for organizational size, this difference was found to be statistically significant.

In fact, NeighborWorks® organizations with community organizing staff averaged four times as many volunteers as those without. Further, when COPP members were separated from other organizing NeighborWorks® organizations, COPP participants were found to have more volunteers than non-COPP groups, even with community organizing staff. Moreover, a statistically significant difference was present even after controlling for organization size.

#### Democratic Participation: Key Finding

NeighborWorks® organizations with community organizing staff averaged four times as many volunteers as those without.

## Impact: Achieving Neighborhood Revitalization

The underlying notion behind measuring revitalization impacts is that physical development as expressed in the creation or renovation of housing is not the end goal of community revitalization but only a way of achieving it. In order to achieve the full goal of revitalization, housing development must also be accompanied by strategies, such as organizing, that strengthen and multiply the ties among people in a community. The objective is to increase the sense of community, neighborliness, neighborhood pride, safety, leadership, and collective action for community improvement.

Put more simply, revitalization means that residents are better able to come together and enact local priorities they see as most important for bettering their communities. This requires social capital and political power, both of which are products of the community organizing process.

#### Neighborhood Revitalization: Highlights

- **Coalition for a Better Acre** (CBA) of Lowell, Massachusetts, organizes hundreds of community residents in its committees, community activities, and actions to build

power for social justice. Lowell is an old mill town where one of the legacies of 19th century manufacturing is industrial contamination of the land and the Merrimack River that snakes through the city.

As part of its effort to revitalize the Acre community of Lowell, CBA worked with residents on canal and brownfield clean-up projects that resulted in a less toxic environment, new partnerships, resident leaders, and national recognition from the Toxics Action Center.



CBA's partnership with the University of Massachusetts/Lowell enabled it to team university researchers with neighborhood residents to document and assess the pollution, then advocate for appropriate remediation, resulting in negotiating a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between CBA and the city.

Despite the MOU, it still was necessary for CBA to identify community resources and combine research with community organizing to put pressure on city officials, state environmental agencies, school committee members, and contractors to ensure that the city followed the agreement and the environmental regulations.

Ultimately this resulted in a more thorough cleanup of the Stoklosa Middle School. The school site cleanup was a two-year effort. According to Lindolfo Carballo, CBA community organizing director, "The contractor responsible for cleanup of the new middle school site complied more closely with environmental requirements (controlling contaminated dust, cleaning contaminated dirt, etc.) as a direct result of CBA member vigilance and frequent meetings with responsible authorities."

Residents have since decided to apply their new research, advocacy, and leadership skills toward waging an affordable housing campaign. Lowell is under ever-increasing affordability pressure from nearby Boston, where housing costs are among the highest in the country.

Using an organizing strategy called NETWORK (Neighborhood Empowerment Team), members co-host house meetings to

involve new residents and identify topics of common interest and concern. After the experience with environmental organizing, residents asked to learn more about government and political power, neighborhood mapping, and how to make their homes more environmentally friendly. **Data highlight:** *Organizing resulted in millions of dollars in environmental remediation.*

• In Kansas, **Community Housing Services of Wichita/Sedgwick County** focused on the Oaklawn

neighborhood, supporting the local neighborhood association to strengthen resident involvement, leadership, and sense of community. Barbara Stapleton, a resident of Oaklawn for 19 years and president of the Oaklawn Neighborhood Association for the past six, believes that "getting involved has its challenges but also its rewards."

The work of Community Housing Services (CHS) with the neighborhood association has produced a higher level of resident involvement, a new walking trail, neighborhood infrastructure improvements (including the first new homes built in the area in more than 50 years), and – perhaps most importantly – new partnerships and relationships.

When ice storms wreaked havoc on the entire county during the winter of 2004-2005, CHS found that its organizing had laid the groundwork for a different response than in the past. The damage created an opportunity for the Oaklawn Partnership team to show the assets of working together in the best possible light, according to CHS staff.



Government agencies, local businesses, neighborhood groups, nonprofits, and residents all pulled together after the ice storms. The county provided a dump trailer and expedited permit for burning fallen tree limbs that were cleared by resident volunteers, while other organizations donated the tools, labor, equipment and funds to assist the cleanup effort.

“The fact that governmental and private groups went to each other to request assistance and coordinate the clean up speaks well for the Oaklawn Partnership team that has been working together since January 2003,” according to CHS executive director June Bailey “No longer do area residents get a response that it is someone else’s responsibility to get things done.” **Data highlight: Partnerships increased from 24 to 38 over two years.**

- **Mutual Housing Association of South Central Connecticut** in New Haven also demonstrated how organizing can be a catalyst for revitalization. After determining that a blighted apartment building would make an ideal site for a proposed new childcare center, the MHA and its resi-

## Measuring Neighborhood Revitalization

Indicators of neighborhood revitalization:

- ▶ **Number and types of partnerships**
- ▶ **Physical community improvements that result from organizing**
- ▶ **New resources invested into community**
- ▶ **Positive media coverage of community**

dents sprung into action. When the owner refused to sell, MHA, in collaboration with the city, organized more than 60 residents and other community members, ultimately pressuring the owner into a situation where he had to sell or risk losing his property to eminent domain.

The efforts of residents convinced the city of New Haven to take the unprecedented step of authorizing the seizure of a blighted property by eminent domain. MHA staff believe this was the first time the city of New Haven has ever exercised its authority to take such action. This action laid the groundwork for negotiations between the owner and residents about development of the property into a child care facility – a project identified by earlier organizing efforts to fill a critical community need.

According to Lee Cruz, MHA director of community development, this success taught the community “a valuable lesson about the power of organizing ... [that will] ... serve

them and us well into the future as other obstacles requiring an organized community surely await ... The residents of the neighborhood have seen the power that can be exercised by an organized community.” **Data highlight: Organizing leveraged \$38,000 in new funds invested in the community.**

- Organizing by **Neighborhood Housing Services of Duluth**, Minnesota, identified the need to address neglected properties in the city’s Lincoln Park neighborhood. NHS organizer Damon Anderson’s work with the Neighbors with Hope group resulted in the launching of a citizen inspection program of blighted properties.

Since receiving training from the city, the group has identified the 16 worst properties in Lincoln Park and sent letters to their owners. When the first batch of letters was sent, the *Duluth News Tribune* ran a front-page story, including pictures of resident inspectors visiting the blighted properties. This was followed by a supportive editorial and another story about the residents’ efforts.

As a result, half the owners made improvements without further intervention. An additional property owner learned that their property was to be on the next list, and fixed the problem before even receiving a warning letter. All received thank-you letters from the neighborhood group, which then began planning its next round of letters. In the first year, eight out of 16 properties were voluntarily fixed up as a result of this approach.

An unanticipated result of the positive press for the citizen inspectors was a marketing push for NHS. Following the newspaper articles, NHS received numerous phone inquiries about its housing rehab program.

In another neighborhood in which NHS of Duluth is working, the Campus Neighbors Group took a different approach to problem properties. It decided to engage the local university and students in one-on-one communication. This resulted in fewer parking problems, less parties, and new lines of communication between some of the residents and students. **Data highlight: 20 positive media reports during the first citizen inspection campaign.**

- **Pocatello Neighborhood Housing Services** in Idaho works closely with six neighborhood associations, providing organizing support for their activities, and, in turn, using





them as a base for resident involvement in NHS planning and leadership.

In 2004, Anita Valladolid, PNHS's community organizer, focused her effort on the Old Town Neighborhood Association, working with them under PNHS's Healthy Neighborhood Initiative. Through Healthy Neighborhoods, PNHS provides mini-grants to neighborhood associations, with the expectation that each group will build consensus for a project it then will implement to beautify or improve its neighborhood. Once a project is completed, the group is expected to mentor the next neighborhood association to do the same.

The planning process inevitably leads to group visioning for the neighborhood, building or strengthening relations among neighbors, and identifying new neighborhood leaders.

Old Town was PNHS's second group to take part in the Healthy Neighborhood Initiative. It identified a shared concern about street safety, which led to a project to install street lights. Inspired by the historic street lights being installed in an adjacent area, the group decided to install similar fixtures – not knowing how expensive or complicated the project was going to become.

It quickly developed that strong leadership was needed to advocate for the special lights, and several families stepped up to the task. The Mattox family emerged in a central leadership role, with Mike Mattox's passion for the project leading to relentless pursuit of the support needed to make it

happen. Much of the labor was donated, and along with bank and other cash contributions, Mattox doubled their money for installing street lights. He remains active with other neighborhood associations as a direct result of his participation in this project.

This organizing project has had a major impact on the sense of safety and community in Old Town. It even resulted in the mending of relationships between two neighbors who had been feuding for years about an overgrown tree. A block leader came forward and mediated the dispute, opening communication between the neighbors, and then volunteering to cut down the tree himself.

During the winter of 2004, the project stimulated another resident to shovel snow for others during the heaviest snowfall Pocatello had experienced in decades. An absentee homeowner on the target block flew in from California to participate in the street light installation celebration, renewing relationships and his accountability as a neighborhood property owner. **Data highlight: Organizing leveraged a \$7,000 mini-grant into installation of a block of historic street lights.**

- In California, **Sacramento Mutual Housing Association** includes in its mission statement a pledge to “stabilize communities through leadership development.” This is accomplished by an extensive commitment to community organizing. SMHA employs an organizing coordinator, three full-time organizers, and three organizing interns – all of whom help guide residents to make changes that they themselves believe to be important. As organizing coordinator Dahlia

Ward says, "If it's not resident led, it doesn't happen."

SMHA's River Garden Estates is home to the biggest community garden in Sacramento. Built on privately owned land, the garden is an important part of the community. In 2004, the community received a letter from the electric company demanding that the garden be destroyed. It claimed that in case of a terrorist attack, the garden would obstruct access to electric lines anchored by a structure based in the garden.

Determined to save their garden, residents with the help of an SMHA organizer fought back. They got a concession from the city that the garden did not compromise national security, then invited representatives from the electric company and city council to a meeting in their community room. The room was hot and completely full. One by one, residents told their stories. Each time electric company representatives stepped outside to discuss an offer, they were forced to move through the crowd.

As one board member and resident leader described, "The



guests could not leave the room without answering the people!" After seeing the residents' strength, the electric company agreed to let the garden remain, so long as they could access the pole in an emergency without being held responsible for any damage.

As a result of this successful action, Svetlana Kitanov, SMHA's senior community organizer, has noticed a change in residents. People who were shy now routinely speak up. People who were afraid to resist authority now are leaders. Because of organizing, the community now feels that it has a voice to influence its life – something that means a lot to a group of non-English speakers who aren't used to being heard or understood in their new country.

In 2005, SMHA also worked with representatives of several neighborhood groups to organize a "Town Hall" in the Lemon Hill neighborhood of Sacramento. City, county and state elected officials addressed the meeting, where four languages were spoken. Long-time residents spoke about what they loved about the neighborhood, while new immigrants shared their hopes and dreams for its future. This

action effectively demonstrated to the S. H. Cowell Foundation that Lemon Hill was worthy of becoming one of its place-based investments. The designation will mean millions of dollars for the neighborhood over the next five years. **Data highlight:** *Organizing led a major foundation to commit to a five-year, multimillion dollar neighborhood investment.*

- In New York, the organizing of **Troy Rehabilitation & Improvement Program** (TRIP) focused largely on concern about a local park that had been neglected by the city and had become a sore spot to neighborhood residents because of the illegal activity it attracted. TRIP organizing staff worked with local youth and a local grassroots organization, Troy LOOK, to address these concerns. Over a multiyear period, this organizing effort led to a complete renovation of the park, new partnerships for



TRIP, and new leaders for the community.

Kevin Pryor, "KP," had helped create Troy LOOK to support African-American boys in the community, and was one of the all-volunteer organization's lead volunteers. TRIP joined forces with Troy LOOK, co-sponsoring its annual block party, which brought out 400 people. It was tied to National NeighborWorks® Week and neighborhood improvement projects the following day.

KP was able to provide TRIP with an entrée to local youth and the local African-American community, while TRIP was able to provide Troy LOOK with the support of paid staff and an entrée to city government. Between them, they organized neighborhood teens to create a vision for a new park and pursue their vision with city authorities.

TRIP provided the young people with newsprint and markers and had them draw their ideas of what they wanted in the park. The youth thought about where to place equipment, learned new skills, and demonstrated to the city their thoughtfulness and seriousness about this project. As a result, in 2004 and 2005, the city installed new basketball and other play equipment, bleachers, fencing, and paving, and expanded the park into an adjacent lot where they installed picnic tables and barbeque grills.

By August 2005, Troy LOOK was running a movie night in the previously neglected park, where it distributed free back-to-school notebooks to the young people in attendance.

One of the youth who was instrumental in this organizing was Tyrell Pryor, KP's son, who had become involved in the neighborhood through his father. When TRIP invited him to attend a NeighborWorks® Community Leadership Institute in Puerto Rico in spring 2003, he confided to Hilary Lamishaw, TRIP's director of community affairs, that this experience provided him with his first inkling that he might be a neighborhood leader. Tyrell was often the one who got other young people to come out to meetings with the mayor, and at the end of 2003 was recognized by the *Capital District Metroland*, a local weekly paper, as one of 10 local heroes.

The park organizing process demonstrated to city authorities that the young people were a positive force, not a liability. They engaged in regular park clean-ups for several years that showed their willingness to share responsibility for a safer, cleaner park. TRIP believes this effort was instru-

mental in convincing the city to reinvest in the park.

Once the park was renovated, TRIP also found that local area businesses became interested in supporting their efforts. While TRIP's work in affordable housing had not directly appealed to the interests of some local businesses, citizen engagement and a park upgrade did. As a result, several additional local businesses are now contributing to TRIP. **Data highlight: Organizing led to major city improvements to a neighborhood park and seven new business partnerships.**

- The efforts of **Twin Cities Community Development Corporation** (TCCDC) of Fitchburg, Massachusetts, demonstrate the power of community organizing to revitalize neighborhoods. According to Pam Lawrence, a life-long Cleghorn neighborhood resident, growing up in Cleghorn meant being the butt of a lot of negative comments from childhood peers.

Figure 3  
**Community Improvement Projects**

**All Reporting Organizations:**

2004	23
2005	36

**Top Four Reporting Organizations**

<b>Pocatello</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Oak Hill</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Lafayette</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Coalition for a Better Acre</b>	<b>4</b>

Source: COPP

Since the CDC successfully organized residents to clean up the neighborhood and take an active role in planning for new affordable housing, Cleghorn has become a neighborhood of choice. The success of TCCDC's Plymouth Street Initiative in Cleghorn has resulted in a variety of ongoing resident-led improvement efforts, and a narrowing of the historical divide between Cleghorn and adjoining neighborhoods.

TCCDC organizers are sometimes pleasantly surprised by the leadership actions of residents. In organizing one community event, Erin Enwright, TCCDC director of organizing, said she "anticipated that the committee would propose an anti-crime theme ... Instead, the committee chose to empower a subcommittee of teens from the Cleghorn Neighborhood Center to plan a youth pride event. This is

an unprecedented turn of affairs in organizing in the time that I have been on staff, and it has not gone unnoticed by the teens. They have risen to the challenge ... and have been hard at work planning 'Hip Hop Halloween,' which has been successful around attracting more youth members to the committee."

TCCDC went on to work with youth on a presentation to local police about the importance of improving relationships between young people and law enforcement officers. The meeting took place at the police station, where the youth led a successful presentation before an audience of 20 people. Subsequently, TCCDC increased its focus on leadership training for youth, grooming the next generation of Fitchburg leaders. *Data highlight: 250 families applied to purchase one of six new, TCCDC homes in Cleghorn.*

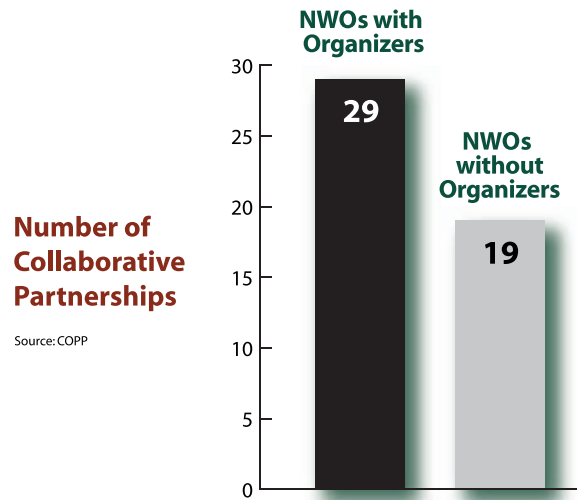
### Neighborhood Revitalization: The Collective Story

Community organizing helps build a community's "social capital" by increasing connections both among members of a single community and between that community and the outside world. These types of relationships have been respectively described as "bonding" and "bridging" forms of social capital.<sup>2</sup>

The NeighborWorks® organizations that participated in COPP, together with other NeighborWorks® affiliates that



Figure 5  
**Average Number of Collaborative Partners: Network Organizations With and Without Organizers**



devote resources to organizing, have increased their community development capacity by paying attention to the importance of social capital. Not only have they demonstrated higher levels of volunteerism – evidence of bonding social capital – but also a higher level of partnerships with other organizations and institutions, demonstrating bridging social capital.

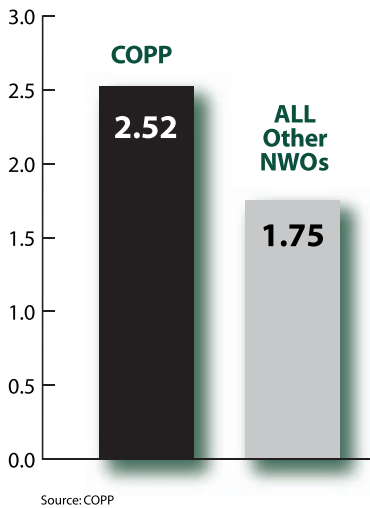
The number of partnerships that NeighborWorks® organizations had with other organizations was used to represent bridging social capital. These partnerships and collaborations may have included some organizations within the community (more akin to bonding social capital), but it was determined that the majority were with outside organizations.

The bridging form of social capital is important to neighborhood revitalization because it brings new resources into communities that often have substantial resource needs. Distressed communities often suffer from disinvestment because public and private organizations perceive they will not receive a return on resources invested there. By creating bridges to those outside, a distressed community can change those perceptions, thus increasing the potential for investment from other sources.

### Neighborhood Revitalization: Key Findings

Analysis of data from all NeighborWorks® organizations

Figure 6  
**Number of Collaborative Partners per FTE**



found that local affiliates that engage in organizing have more of both forms of social capital – bonding and bridging – and that the difference is statistically significant, even after controlling for size of the organization. Specifically, NeighborWorks® organizations with organizing staff had, on average, 50 percent more collaborations and partnerships than NeighborWorks® organizations without such staff.

COPP organizations – through their organizing efforts, high levels of volunteerism and partnerships – leveraged more than \$20.7 million in new funds, \$700,000 of in-kind resources, and more than 26,000 volunteer hours invested in communities as a result of their organizing efforts during the two and one-half years these data were tracked.

## Effectiveness: Effectiveness: The Organizational ‘Bottom Line’

Community organizing can result in increased organizational effectiveness in a number of ways. By raising organizational visibility and creating new partnerships, organizing can open doors to new resources for an organization. A higher level of resident involvement with an organization means that it reaches its community more effectively. Many COPP groups found that increasing the number and strength of relationships with residents generated new demand for their other programs and services. By support-

ing resident leadership development, these groups gained valuable input and new insights that improved service delivery and responsiveness. As informed and newly skilled residents move into leadership roles, organizational governance can also become more effective and accountable.

Organizing can positively and directly affect housing programs. To take homeownership, for example, the experience of COPP participants in Wichita, Kansas; Inglewood, California; Fitchburg, Massachusetts; and Duluth, Minnesota, has been that they were able to draw a larger and more diverse group of people to their homeownership classes as a result of their organizing activities.

Increased trust between residents and an organization also means that staff are more likely to learn that a new homeowner needs some additional support before they become delinquent on their mortgage, thus impacting postpurchase homeownership performance as well.

Community organizing can strengthen support for housing and other real-estate development projects by involving residents in identifying neighborhood priorities and maintaining a resident voice throughout the development process.

### Organizational Effectiveness: Highlights

- In California, **Inglewood Neighborhood Housing Services** is committed to the idea that “people can solve their own problems if given the tools to do so,” according to Executive Director Martina Guilfoil.

Organizers put this belief into practice by working to develop effective resident leaders. They began by creating a leadership council and waging a winning campaign to secure and clean-up a local park. The success of the park campaign was the first time that residents saw their power and



## How Organizing Impacts Social Capital

Volunteering with a community-based organization demonstrates a willingness to give up free time to support activities to benefit one's community, and provides additional resources that help the organization meet its mission. Increased volunteerism, whether for a crime watch or input on development decisions, demonstrates an enhancement of the bonding form of social capital. Residents feel a greater connection to each other and to their community, building trust and goodwill that can be reinvested at a later date.

The need for financial capital to rebuild neighborhoods is generally recognized, but empirical evidence has demonstrated the importance of social capital as well.

Much less tangible than financial capital, social capital has been defined in many different ways, but one study described it as "relationship-building" and "strengthening the social fabric of a neighborhood," and listed social capital as one of four elements of "ideal" community revitalization.<sup>3</sup> Strengthening both "bonding" and "bridging" types of connections increases the social capital held by the community, and complements other community revitalization efforts.

The importance of social capital to neighborhood stability has also been demonstrated empirically, with lower levels of social capital associated with lower housing values and incomes, and neighborhoods with higher levels of social capital considered less likely to decline, other factors held constant.<sup>4</sup>

Studies of development in other countries have also demonstrated a positive relationship between social capital and levels of investment.<sup>5</sup>

gave them the confidence to move forward with an even more ambitious project, the implementation of a community-run after-school program.

The decision to organize around an after-school program was community led from the start, with residents identifying, by survey, concern over lack of safe after-school activities for their children.

Growing dissatisfied with the slow progress of the school district in addressing their concern, residents took matters into their own hands. They began by talking to city council members, who endorsed their plan to operate the program, but offered no financial or logistical support.

Undaunted, the group organized a meeting with the superintendent of schools that was attended by 20 residents, all of whom spoke passionately about the need for an after school program. The result of this powerful meeting was a promise that the program could be run on school grounds. Residents then raised \$1,500 in cash and worked with the Department of Parks and Recreation to procure in-kind contributions of materials and recreational programming.

Run completely by parent volunteers, the program has been a smashing success. All students who have participated have won "student-of-the-month" at least once, and two children have received end-of-the-year school awards for overall improvement. In fact, the school district has been so impressed that it has promised to provide a professional teacher for the program for the 2005-2006 school year. ***Data highlight: Organizing leveraged more than 2,000 volunteer hours into a new after-school program serving 50 children.***

- **Sacramento MHA's** organizing around issues such as the community garden at River Garden Estates (see above, Organizational Effectiveness: Highlights) has been instrumental to building the strength and credibility of the organization.

During 2005, Sacramento MHA reported 367 residents active in dozens of MHA committees – including voter registration, safety, cultural preservation, street light advocacy, gardening, resident cluster ("living

## Figure 7 Supporting the “Bottom Line”

### All Reporting Organizations

	2003	2004	2005 YTD *	Cumulative Total
Total funds leveraged	18,697,438	559,350	600,819	\$19,857,607
Total in-kind contributions (\$ value)	414,501	233,150	67,821	\$715,472
Total labor hours donated	10,042	4,646	19,941	34,629

### Top Five Reporting Organizations

Total Funds Leveraged	Cumulative Total	In-kind Contributions (\$ value)	Cumulative Total	Total Labor Hours Donated	Cumulative Total
Salt Lake	\$18,238,500	Utica	\$410,500	Oak Hill	7,782
Sacramento	\$515,000	Wichita	\$23,607	Coalition for a Better Acre	6,250
Utica	\$61,050	Salt Lake	\$11,300	Lafayette	3,515
Duluth	\$50,000	Anchorage	\$7,500	Inglewood	2,880
Twin Cities	\$40,250	TRIP	\$6,000	Salt Lake	2,500

\* Source: COPP. All 2005 numbers through June 30.

room”) groups, homework clubs, a youth-run basketball league, and more.

The organization’s ability to engage volunteers enables it to offer programming that goes way beyond staff-only capacity. Its organizing in the Lemon Hill neighborhood, for instance, not only convinced a major foundation to commit a five-year, multimillion dollar investment in the community, but also resulted in a \$250,000 grant to SMHA for its community room at the Lemon Hill Townhomes and its community organizing efforts. **Data highlight: Organizing led to a \$250,000 grant for further community programming and organizing.**



- In Utah, **Salt Lake Neighborhood Housing Services** builds its success on partnerships, thus leveraging resources for community benefit that go way beyond its own capacity as a single organization.

A partnership forged with the University of Utah and Weed and Seed – Salt Lake, created the Westside Leadership Institute (WLI). The WLI provides Westside community residents with resources of the major higher education institution located on the other side of town.

In 2003, SL NHS, through the WLI implemented the newly developed Pew Partnership for Civic Change’s LeadershipPlenty curriculum and launched a leadership training program in the Westside neighborhood, using university professors to enhance and support the curriculum. At the end of the training series, participants design community improvement projects and are encouraged to apply for a mini-grant from the WLI. The mini-grants have resulted in a variety of resident-led initiatives including a community yard sale, recycling program, community-based family kick-ball activity, neighborhood beautification project, and a “School and Family Partnership” class. Offered in 2004 and 2005, the WLI has been taught in both English and Spanish.

Salt Lake NHS also has leveraged community organizing in support of major new real estate development in its target area. Its resident organizing efforts were instrumental to the organization's ability to develop CitiFront, a 155-unit mixed use development, which today is at 100 percent occupancy, with seven businesses that generated 27 new jobs, residents who meet twice monthly with neighborhood watch meetings, and an on-site community room. **Data highlight: Organizing leveraged an \$18- million mixed-use development project.**

### Organizational Effectiveness: The Collective Story

The social capital created through community organizing enhances organizational effectiveness by strengthening relationships between an organization and the people it serves. Regular communication and increased trust between residents and the organization can lead to more responsive program design and higher participation rates.

One piece of evidence that demonstrates this effect comes from data on post-purchase counseling. It is difficult to attract homeowners to this counseling. With rising foreclosure rates in many areas, post-purchase counseling is increasingly critical to sustaining the gains of homeownership. Organizing strengthens the bonds that bring past homebuying clients back to the organization, thus making their efforts more effective.

### Organizational Effectiveness: Key Finding

For NeighborWorks® organizations that have organizing staff, the average number of people attending post-purchase counseling tripled between 2001 and 2004, while remaining flat for those organizations without organizing staff.

## Measuring Organizational Effectiveness

Indicators of organizational effectiveness:

- ▶ New resources secured for organizational programming
- ▶ New resources secured for development projects
- ▶ Volunteer hours invested in organization and its programs



## Organizing Can Generate Homebuyers

Many COPP organizations across the country reported an increase in the number and diversity of participants in their homebuyer programs as a direct result of their organizing activities. Among them were Community Housing Services of Wichita/ Sedgwick County, Duluth NHS, Inglewood NHS, and Twin Cities CDC.



## V. Conclusion

Virtually all the organizations participating in COPP reported that the work planning and documentation processes developed through the pilot program were useful to their efforts.

The processes pushed them to articulate what they intended to achieve, then sit down regularly and reflect on what they were actually accomplishing. Many learned that they were not initially realistic in their strategies, objectives or timelines.

The processes helped ensure that work was driven by and accountable to community members, not just staff. The written work plans served as a useful management tool for staff and, in some organizations, helped place organizing in a higher priority position within the organization.

Many reported that they were documenting their organizing work for the first time and that they learned to see the value in doing so. Many found the new data they were able to generate helpful in sharing their organizing stories with funders. Some groups brought residents into the documentation process, thereby using it as a leadership development opportunity.

All of this presented a significant change to the organizing practices of some groups, and a culture change for some organizations. It showed that if you have a shared vision and a plan, there isn't much that residents cannot do.

Applying a disciplined approach to community organizing paved the way for useable data collection. It enabled NeighborWorks® America to document the value-added of integrating community organizing with housing development. It broadened the story of this added value beyond anecdotes.

These efforts led directly to NeighborWorks® America in spring 2005 establishing the NeighborWorks® Community Building and Organizing membership program, thus supplanting a pilot with a permanent program in the NeighborWorks® network.

The work planning, data collection and analysis, and peer sharing that took place in the pilot tested and refined measures that matter most and best convey the impact of organizing and community building in a community development context. These measures are now being utilized by 24 member organizations, with plans to expand membership each year.

The groundwork laid by the Community Organizing Pilot Program enabled the network to expand support for a vital set of programmatic activities, moving forward with confidence that they do make a critical difference to the effectiveness and impact of community development organizations.

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>Eighteen organizations were originally selected to participate in COPP. One chose to discontinue participation in the program in the final year.

<sup>2</sup>Ross Gittel and Avis Vidal, *Community Organizing: Building Social Capital as a Development Strategy*, Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

<sup>3</sup>Xavier de Souza Briggs and Elizabeth Mueller (with Mercer Sullivan), *From Neighborhood to Community: Evidence of the Social Effects of Community Development*. New York: New School for Social Research, 1997.

<sup>4</sup>Kenneth Temkin and William Rohe, "Social Capital and Neighborhood Stability: An Empirical Investigation." *Housing Policy Debate*, Volume 7, Issue 2, pp. 201-229. 1996.

<sup>5</sup>Stephen Knack and Philip Keefer, "Does Social Capital Have an Economic Payoff? A Cross-Country Investigation." *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, Volume 12, pp. 1251-88. 1997.

## Appendix A: Participating NeighborWorks® Organizations

Following are the NeighborWorks® organizations that participated in the Community Organizing Pilot Program, together with their principal community organizing activities.

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### **Anchorage Neighborhood Housing Services**

#### **Anchorage, Alaska**

(907) 243-1558

E-mail: [info@akanhs.org](mailto:info@akanhs.org)

Web: [www.akanhs.org](http://www.akanhs.org)

- Business district revitalization as arts/cultural district
- Community-building and resident leadership development in target neighborhood

### **Atlanta Mutual Housing Association**

#### **Atlanta, Georgia**

(404) 355-2642

E-mail: [amha@bellsouth.net](mailto:amha@bellsouth.net)

- Food bank and other opportunities for residents to do community service within development
- Resident leadership development training
- Support for resident-owned businesses to expand, establish contracts with MHA

### **Coalition for a Better Acre**

#### **Lowell, Massachusetts**

(978) 452-7523

- Issue organizing
- Affordable housing campaign
- Leadership development

### **Community Housing Services of Wichita/Sedgwick County**

#### **Wichita, Kansas**

(316) 685-2656

E-mail: [chs\\_june@swbell.net](mailto:chs_june@swbell.net)

Web: [www.chswichita.org](http://www.chswichita.org)

- Work with neighborhood association in target community
- Community building and revitalization

### **Housing Partnership Inc. of West Palm Beach**

#### **West Palm Beach, Florida**

(561) 924-6544

E-mail: [info@pbhp.org](mailto:info@pbhp.org)

Web: [www.pbhp.org](http://www.pbhp.org)

- Pahokee Action Group - resident organizing in rural community focused on improving community services
- Work with Neighborhood Crime Watch

### **Inglewood Neighborhood Housing Services**

#### **Inglewood, California**

(310) 674-3756

E-mail: [info@homeownershipcenter.com](mailto:info@homeownershipcenter.com)

Web: [www.homeownershipcenter.com](http://www.homeownershipcenter.com)

- Organizing after-school programming
- Work with resident groups in two city council districts
- Other organizing focuses on crime prevention, neighborhood beautification

### **Lafayette Neighborhood Housing Services**

#### **Lafayette, Indiana**

(765) 423-111284

E-mail: [psteph@nhslaf.org](mailto:psteph@nhslaf.org)

Web: [www.nhslaf.org](http://www.nhslaf.org)

- Voter registration led by tenants
- Tenant-led community organizing on a variety of local issues (e.g., safety)

### **Mutual Housing Association of**

#### **South Central Connecticut**

#### **New Haven, Connecticut**

(203) 562-4514

E-mail: [smosquera@mutualhousing.net](mailto:smosquera@mutualhousing.net)

Web: [www.mutualhousing.net](http://www.mutualhousing.net)

- Organizing to create a community day care center
- Issue organizing
- Resident organizing in their properties

### **Neighborhood Housing Services of Duluth**

#### **Duluth, Minnesota**

(218) 727-8604

E-mail: [ggarnett@nhsduluth.org](mailto:ggarnett@nhsduluth.org)

Web: [www.nhsduluth.org](http://www.nhsduluth.org)

- Organizing around neighborhood safety issues, including traffic and street lighting
- Work with block clubs

### **Neighborhood Housing Services of Rochester**

(withdrew from COPP, spring 2004)

#### **Rochester, New York**

(585) 325-4170

E-mail: [kbrumber@nhsrochester.org](mailto:kbrumber@nhsrochester.org)

Web: [www.nhsrochester.org](http://www.nhsrochester.org)

- Community revitalization planning
- Work with block clubs

### **Oak Hill CDC**

**Worcester, Massachusetts**

(508) 754-2858

E-mail: [info@oakhillcdc.org](mailto:info@oakhillcdc.org)

Web: [www.oakhillcdc.org](http://www.oakhillcdc.org)

- Leadership development
- Community improvement projects and community-building activities
- Affordable housing campaign
- Youth leadership training

### **Pocatello Neighborhood Housing Services**

**Pocatello, Idaho**

(208) 323-9468

E-mail: [info@pnhs.org](mailto:info@pnhs.org)

Web: [www.pnhs.org](http://www.pnhs.org)

- Leadership training
- Working with neighborhood associations
- Beautification projects

### **Sacramento Mutual Housing Association**

**Sacramento, California**

(916) 453-8400

E-mail: [smha@mutualhousing.com](mailto:smha@mutualhousing.com)

Web: [www.mutualhousing.com](http://www.mutualhousing.com)

- Leadership Development Institute for adults and youth
- Slavic Organizing Project
- Asset-based organizing; financial literacy, job training, IDA program
- Support resident councils and property-based committees, including committees for community crime watch, youth activities, gardening, nuisance, playground improvement

### **Salt Lake Neighborhood Housing Services**

**Salt Lake City, Utah**

(801) 539-1590

E-mail: [maria@slnhs.org](mailto:maria@slnhs.org)

Web: [www.slnhs.org](http://www.slnhs.org)

- Westside Leadership Institute (using Pew Leadership Plenty curriculum)
- Work with community councils

- Weed & Seed organizing

- Yard clean-ups

- Traffic calming

### **Troy Rehabilitation & Improvement Program (TRIP)**

**Troy, New York**

(518) 272-8289

E-mail: [info@triponline.org](mailto:info@triponline.org)

- Youth organizing – leadership training, advocacy, improvements to Dark Angels Park
- Voter registration and “Get Out the Vote”
- Work with block clubs

### **Twin Cities Community Development Corporation**

**Fitchburg, Massachusetts**

(978) 342-9561

E-mail: [mdohan@twincitiescdc.com](mailto:mdohan@twincitiescdc.com)

Web: [www.twincitiescdc.com](http://www.twincitiescdc.com)

- Affordable housing campaign
- Work with crime-watch committee
- Youth leadership development

### **UNHS NeighborWorks HomeOwnership Center®**

**Utica, New York**

(315) 724-4197

E-mail: [home@unhs.org](mailto:home@unhs.org)

Web: [www.thehomeownershipcenter.org](http://www.thehomeownershipcenter.org)

- Organize block clubs across city and county
- Weed & Seed organizing
- Resident leadership training
- Yard of the Month
- Work with neighborhood watch groups
- Youth Voice Initiative – leadership training and organizing

### **Urban Edge Housing Corporation**

**Roxbury, Massachusetts**

(617) 989-9233

E-mail: [Istoddard@urbanedge.org](mailto:Istoddard@urbanedge.org)

Web: [www.urbanedge.org](http://www.urbanedge.org)

- Voter registration/education – added to First-Time Homebuyer Training classes
- Leadership development for residents of their rental properties
- Resident involvement in local revitalization project

## Appendix B. Community Organizing Work Plan Template

The following template was used to guide development of an organizing work plan for each participating organization.

### A. Situation Statement (one-page limit)

Document the environment in which this action plan is being generated. It should include all pertinent information necessary for one to conclude that the identified objective is the right thing to do at this time. It is important to include social and economic conditions, business data, explain how they align with the overall resident-led, community-change goal, results of past efforts, and any other information that could influence the organization's course of action. This statement should be limited strictly to one page.

### B. Objectives (two or three – one-page limit)

Identify the most important thing to be accomplished, based on the situation. It is recommended that it be written in "issue statement" format, e.g., include (1) an indicator of change, (2) a number that will measure the change, and (3) the process to be changed.

### C. Strategies and/or Activities (two or three per objective – two-page limit)

To accomplish the identified objective, activity will be required in different areas or using multiple techniques. The strategy section documents the more detailed activity necessary to achieve the objective. Only critical strategies should be noted. It is recommended that you document no more than five key strategies. The sum result of all the key strategies should assure the achievement of the objective. One should ask, "If all the strategies were accomplished, will the objective be achieved?" "Issue statement" format is also suggested for strategies.

When using the Planning Table instrument, strategies and their indicators should be copied verbatim. Each strategy should stand alone and be well understood. The specific inputs (people, money, equipment, etc.) to begin the task should be available. The actual time (calendar) to accomplish the activity should be predictable with reasonable accuracy. The finished product or deliverable should also be obvious.

### D. Indicators (numerical goals and targets for each objective and strategy – two pages)

An objectively verifiable indicator (OVI) that will be monitored to track progress. At least one OVI must be noted, specifically the one addressed in the objective or key strategy. These indicators will also be monitored to initiate corrective action for each objective and strategy.

### E. Outcomes and/or Expected Results (tangible evidence that the objectives have been achieved, plus means of verification for each indicator – one page)

This will describe the finished product of an activity/strategy. An outcome or expected result is tangible evidence that a task is complete.

## Appendix C: Community Organizing Indicators

*Measures of progress in achieving resident-driven community change*

### Background

These indicators were developed over a period of two years by NeighborWorks® America Resident Leadership (now Community Building & Organizing Initiative) staff and consultants working with the 18 NeighborWorks® organizations participating in the Community Organizing Pilot Program. The goal was to identify a set of common indicators for measuring the impact of community organizing work carried out by community-based development organizations.

### Indicators

#### 1. Number of residents assuming leadership roles in organization or community, as defined by:

- a. Number of residents participating on committees, block clubs, and neighborhood associations that organization has had a role in forming or supporting;
- b. Number of residents serving as officers or committee chairs in community meetings, organizationally sponsored meetings, or in other community organizations as a result of organizing efforts;
- c. Number of residents taking on other leadership roles (not counted in b., above) in community – such as citizen committees, elected offices, etc. – as a result of organizing efforts; and
- d. Number and percentage of residents participating on NeighborWorks® organization's board of directors.

#### 2. Number of partnerships

- a. Government agencies
- b. Educational institutions
- c. Nonprofits
- d. Faith-based institutions
- e. Grassroots groups
- f. Other

#### 3. Economic impact resulting from organizing efforts:

- a. Dollar value of funds leveraged and invested in the organization or the community.
- b. Dollar value of in-kind resources secured and invested in the organization or the community.
- c. Hours contributed by volunteers and how they were used.

4. **Physical community improvements** resulting from organizing efforts such as cleaner or safer public spaces.
  - a. Commercial property and/or business district
  - b. Community facilities
  - c. Parks and/or playgrounds
  - d. Residential property
  - e. Streets

For each of above, specify if improvement was: clean-up, improvement of existing property or facility, or new construction

- f. vacant and/or dilapidated building demolition
- g. Other

#### 5. Shifts in power dynamics as measured by (*complete only those that are relevant to organizing efforts*):

- a. Number of new registered voters
- b. Number of residents involved in public advocacy or organizing campaigns
- c. Number of residents interacting with decision-making bodies (contacting elected officials, attending city-sponsored meetings, speaking at public hearings, etc.)
- d. Positive media attention and/or coverage of community

#### 6. Institutional change as measured by (*complete only those that are relevant to organizing efforts*):

- a. Improved public service delivery or public resource distribution to your community
- b. Crime rates
- c. Homeownership rates
- d. Resident stability and/or mobility
- e. Property values
- f. Voting rates
- g. Unemployment and/or employment rates
- h. School attendance, dropout, or graduation rates
- i. other:

#### 7. Identify the outcome(s) achieved (quantifiable or unquantifiable) during each reporting period that is (or reporting periods that are) *most significant* to your organization and/or the community your organization serves.

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