



**Minneapolis
Center for Neighborhoods**

2000 – 2001

A catalyst and resource
for strengthening
neighborhoods



MISSION STATEMENT

The Minneapolis Center for Neighborhoods, founded in 1994, serves as a catalyst and a resource to promote and encourage ideas, alliances, policies, and actions that strengthen neighborhoods and their capacity to preserve the livability and vitality of their communities.

The Center is dedicated to building a city in which neighborhoods play an active role in identifying shared goals and collective action; where community-based organizations shape how their communities are governed, developed, and sustained.

Why is the Center's work critical to the neighborhood movement in Minneapolis and St. Paul?

- **Making the case for investing in neighborhoods**

By revealing the unique role that neighborhood organizations play within the community, and communicating that role to funders, government officials, and the broader public, the Center creates a more supportive environment for neighborhood work.

- **Keeping an eye on the bigger picture**

The Center creates an environment for learning about the larger system that neighborhoods operate in. From funding trends to policy implications, the ability to discern the forces that impact neighborhood organizations is essential for understanding what connects them.

- **Providing a bridge to diverse audiences interested in neighborhood scale activity and goals.**

Neighborhood level activity often offers ideas for innovation and creative problem solving. It serves as a testing ground for new approaches to public services and community-based strategies, igniting an awareness of the role that we all play as citizens.

Dear Friends:

The work of the Center for Neighborhoods continues at an ambitious pace. The complex and exciting work going on at the neighborhood level continues to inspire us to develop strategies that support and assist those efforts. Over the last year the Center launched four initiatives designed to strengthen neighborhood organizations and the innovative work they are involved in (Technical Assistance Program, Commercial Corridors Institute, Restorative Justice Evaluation, and Neighborhood Funding Analysis – see the later pages of this report for descriptions).

Last year's activities also included the signature pieces that define and inform the Center's work:

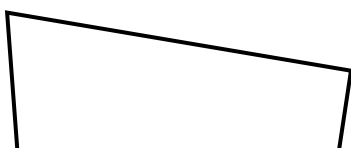
- **The Fifth Annual State of the Neighborhoods Address** – The Role of Citizens in Public Decision-Making: A critique of the Minneapolis citizen participation system (May 2000).
- **Neighborhood Assembly** – Building Smarter Organizations that Get Results: Learning from our experiences (Nov 2000)
- **Strengthening Neighborhood Partnerships II** – Sharing Ideas: Getting neighborhood development done (Oct 2000), cosponsored with the Minneapolis Consortium of Community Developers and Twin Cities Local Initiatives Support Corporation.
- **Neighborhood Leadership Breakfast Series 2000** (bimonthly)
- **Roundtable Dialogues** (This year's topics included: Strengthening Neighborhood Partnerships with Foundations, Public Art and Public Spaces, and the Minneapolis Neighborhood Early Warning System)

In 2001 the Center will embark on four new projects: Exploring Methods and Models of Inclusive Organizations, Technical Assistance for Affordable Housing, Public Art Policy Initiative, and Success Measures for Citizen Participation (see below for descriptions).

The dynamic and compelling work of neighborhoods offers endless opportunities. The Center is pleased to participate as a catalyst and a resource to strengthen neighborhoods. Your support and involvement is vital to our efforts. We look forward to the year ahead, and to the promise of building a neighborhood movement that unites Minneapolis and St. Paul.

Sincerely,

The Board and Staff
of the Minneapolis Center for Neighborhoods



TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROJECT PARTNERS

Organizations and agencies interested in assisting this effort include: the Twin Cities Local Initiatives Support Corporation, the Minneapolis Consortium of Community Developers, the Family Housing Fund, Metro Interfaith Coalition on Affordable Housing, Family and Childrens' Services—Jobs and Affordable Housing Campaign, Corporation for Supportive Housing, MCDA, NRP, the Minneapolis Planning Department, & the Minneapolis City Coordinator's Office.

Public Art Policy Initiative

SUMMARY

Currently the City of Minneapolis and Hennepin County are independently discussing policy recommendations pertaining to public art that would benefit from a broader vision. A strategic and coordinated approach is necessary to draw together the fragmented pieces of the conversation, and to advance public art policy recommendations that suggest procedures and criteria for both the city and county to consider.

The Minneapolis Center for Neighborhoods, in partnership with the Minneapolis Office of Cultural Affairs, Intermedia Arts, and FORECAST Public Artworks, will be coordinating a year-long public dialogue to develop recommendations for public art policies for the City of Minneapolis and Hennepin County. We propose to establish a Public Art Task Force consisting of representatives from community groups, arts organizations and institutions, artists, and city and county staff to establish a long term approach to define government's role in support of public art. Outcomes the Task Force's work during 2001 will include;

- Increasing understanding among decision-makers of the value and benefits of public art
- Developing ongoing support systems to provide technical assistance to neighborhoods, artists and city/county departments who are developing public art initiatives, and
- Creating mutually agreed upon procedures, requirements and criteria to guide the development of future public art projects in Minneapolis and Hennepin County.

Success Measures for Citizen Participation

PURPOSE

- Create a set of standard operating procedures and expectations for conducting effective citizen participation to inform, shape, and support community planning and development projects.
- Identify outcomes that can be measured to monitor or evaluate the success of citizen participation (by neighborhood groups, public agencies, funders, and developers).

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Success Measures Project will be a collaborative effort between Minneapolis, St. Paul, and the neighborhood and community-based organizations that serve those cities. It will build from a series of local and national dialogues coordinated in 1998 – 99 that set out to define ways to measure successful citizen participation that informs and strengthens community development. A working document will be created to propose a set of standards for citizen participation, which will be reviewed and refined through a series of focus groups in Minneapolis and St. Paul. The final report and recommendations will be distributed for formal endorsement by community organizations, public agencies, and funders.

INTENDED OUTCOMES

1. To provide tools for measuring effective citizen participation that are both normative (how are we doing?) and summative (did we achieve our goals?).
2. To encourage organizations to utilize the same tools consistently, formulating a language and clear expectations for citizen participation processes.
3. Provide internal tools for community planning processes.
4. Establish guidelines that hold stakeholders accountable to community processes.

New Initiatives

Exploring Methods and Models of Inclusive Organizations

PURPOSE

- Learn from community-based initiatives, both local and national, that are effectively involving low-income residents, renters, youth, communities of color and new immigrants in neighborhood scale planning and revitalization.
- Coordinate clusters of neighborhoods interested in broadening community participation to create a learning lab of ideas and approaches that will be tracked to assess their impact.

THE PROJECT WILL EXPLORE...

- **Organizing Strategies** that involve and engage under-represented groups.
- **Organizational Structures** that elicit broad community participation and leadership development.
- **Collaboration Models** that strengthen relationships between diverse interest groups.

INTENDED OUTCOMES

1. A handbook on best practices for inclusive organizing, using case studies to describe strategies for expanding the base of involvement by under-represented groups in the activities of neighborhood organizations.
2. Convene neighborhoods in Minneapolis and St. Paul to share information about their work to include diverse populations in community planning and activities.
3. Work with organizations that provide training for community organizers to broaden their skills in engaging diverse populations.
4. Inform NRP Phase II planning to support neighborhoods' efforts to expand their citizen participation.
5. Track and monitor the impacts of inclusive organizing strategies that are identified or initiated through the project.

Technical Assistance for Affordable Housing

PURPOSE

The Center will serve as a liaison to bridge relationships between neighborhoods seeking to explore affordable housing needs and strategies, and technical organizations offering affordable housing expertise.

GOALS

1. Publish a resource guide of affordable housing technical assistance providers
2. Link neighborhoods with technical assistance organizations with expertise in affordable housing.
3. Develop a handbook for neighborhoods on how to be an effective partner with developers.
4. Host citywide workshops on affordable housing with neighborhood organizations and community development corporations.
5. Support neighborhoods to involve low-income residents in neighborhood planning .

INTENDED OUTCOMES

1. Connect neighborhood associations with the specific technical assistance they are seeking to plan and implement affordable housing activities.
2. Encourage more neighborhoods to include affordable housing goals and strategies in their NRP Phase II plans.
3. Support neighborhoods to plan projects that will be successful and sustainable over the long term because their affordable housing plans are the products of community support and input.
4. Encourage greater awareness and understanding of affordable housing opportunities and needs throughout the broader community.
5. Document & publicize innovative strategies for maintaining, rehabilitating and building affordable housing.
6. Strengthen partnerships between neighborhood organizations and community development corporations.

Taking Action through Convening, Policy and Support

Convening

The Center convenes and facilitates discussions that provide stakeholders a forum to address issues critical to the health of neighborhoods, learn best practices, share information, and highlight common interests and concerns that lead to strategies for problem solving.

Activities include:

- Roundtable dialogues
- Neighborhood Leadership Breakfast Forums
- Workshops and citywide assemblies

Policy

The Center provides policy analysis, comment on proposed public actions, sponsors research projects, and publishes position papers that increase public awareness of the challenges and opportunities facing neighborhood work.

Policy activities include:

- Annual State of the Neighborhoods Address
- Research projects
- Position papers and editorials

Support

The Center offers direct support & technical assistance information to neighborhood associations. The Center's Office of Technical Assistance was created to build the capacity of neighborhood organizations to recognize, choose and use the technical assistance they need.

Activities include:

- On-line Neighborhood Resource Guide
- Neighborhood capacity initiative
- Technical assistance grants
- Peer mentoring networks, and
- Vendor improvement program

Values

The following values and beliefs guide the Center's work:

• Broad-based citizen participation and involvement

We believe it is important to increase the number of citizens participating in public discussions and decision-making. Our work encourages the creation and support inclusive, respectful community-based environments that empower citizens to learn and work together across boundaries of race, socioeconomic class, and neighborhood.

• Social justice and equity

We believe neighborhood-based organizing and development have the potential to facilitate the networks, education, and changes required to create a more just and equitable society, one in which every child in the city has the opportunity and choices s/he needs.

• Facilitative leadership and governance

We believe the best public decisions draw upon and strengthen community members' capacities, values, and resources. To accomplish this, public officials and staff should play a facilitative rather than directive role in public decision-making; and key city services and policies should be neighborhood-based.

• Neighborhood scale

Working at a neighborhood scale holds a rich and powerful potential for effective, efficient, and multi-disciplinary systems of economic and social support, public decision-making, and accountability.

VISIT OUR WEB SITE

www.center4neighborhoods.org

For current information on the Center's:

- Activities and events
- Publications
- Summaries of roundtable topics, workshops and city wide gatherings

SEE OUR NEIGHBORHOOD RESOURCE GUIDE

For access to information and resources that are available to neighborhood organizations.

- A comprehensive directory of technical assistance organizations and resources available to neighborhoods, published by the Minneapolis Center for Neighborhoods)
- Small grants for technical assistance

Ongoing Projects

Technical Assistance Program for Neighborhoods

PURPOSE

- To build the capacity of neighborhood organizations to recognize, choose, and use the technical assistance they need, and
- Match neighborhood staff and volunteers with the existing public and non-profit resources to build strong community organizations.

ACTIVITIES

On-line Neighborhood Resource Guide provides quick and easy information about technical assistance and resources available to neighborhoods. It can be accessed on our web site at www.center4neighborhoods.org.

Neighborhood Capacity Initiative creates strategies that assist neighborhood organizations in their efforts to build capacity and strengthen organizational development.

Peer-mentoring opportunities are designed to assist neighborhood staff and volunteers in sharing information and ideas, and to build interpersonal connections that create temporary or long term problem-solving support.

Vendor Improvement Program links vendors and neighborhood organizations to share information on technical assistance needs and opportunities through workshops and an annual Vendor Information Fair.

Small Grant Fund providing resources for neighborhood organizations to purchase technical assistance and organizational development services.

Restorative Justice Evaluation

PURPOSE

To strengthen the field of Restorative Justice by developing an evaluation tool that aggregates information about the impacts of a range of community-based programs or models.

GOALS

- Articulate the core principles of Restorative Justice.
- Build greater recognition of the impacts and outcomes of community-based restorative justice initiatives.
- Increase financial resources and support for restorative justice efforts.
- Share information on restorative justice models with community groups seeking to start their own.

INTENDED OUTCOMES

1. Design a measurement tool and tracking system that allows Restorative Justice programs to collect data:
 - Through common procedures and protocol
 - That can be aggregated to demonstrate common objectives
 - That can reflect unique values and goals of specific Restorative Justice models
2. To track and monitor the caseload of 4 – 8 community-based Restorative Justice programs over the course of two years.

Commercial Corridors Institute

PURPOSE

- To create a Learning Team of ten major commercial corridor revitalization initiatives in Minneapolis and St. Paul to participate in a series of trainings, working sessions, and informal discussions about strategies to strengthen their efforts.
- To create an environment more supportive of the increasing number of community-based efforts that seek to reposition and revitalize their commercial corridors, particularly those major commercial thoroughfares facing significant changes in investment, transportation, and demographic patterns.

GOALS

- Provide immediate technical support and training to the commercial corridor revitalization initiatives in Minneapolis and St. Paul.
- Foster networking opportunities to share information and learn from one another about effective revitalization efforts.
- Identify policies that would further the work of commercial corridor revitalization and advocate for those changes.

QUARTERLY WORKSHOPS FOR 2000

- **Corridor viability:** Strategic market analysis and re/development (Feb 2000)
- **Corridor livability:** Making the avenue pleasant and convenient (May 2000)
- **Corridor “imageability”:** Improving perceptions and realities of safety and service (Sept 2000)
- **Corridor ability:** Organizing and coordinating the avenue’s many interests (Jan 2001)

PROJECT COSPONSORS INCLUDE

Minneapolis Center for Neighborhoods
Twin Cities Local Initiative Support Corporation
Minneapolis Planning Department
Minneapolis Community Development Agency
St. Paul Planning and Economic Development
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban
Development
Minneapolis Consortium of Community
Developers

Neighborhood Funding Analysis

PURPOSE

To gather information and analysis to advocate for adequate and sustained funding for neighborhood organizations in Minneapolis and St. Paul, particularly funding for general operations and community organizing.

PROJECT GOALS

- Coordinate research and analysis that clarifies neighborhood funding trends and identifies opportunities to expand funding support.
- Educate the public sector and private foundations about the valuable and unique role that citizen participation organizations play in the community, and advocate for additional resources to strengthen their work.
- Provide support for neighborhood associations to form or join collaboratives to leverage additional resources.

RESEARCH PUBLICATIONS

- **Funding for Neighborhood Organizations:** A study of trends over 1993 – 1996, by Joel Spoonheim (a CURA / NPCR Research Assistant)
- **Local and National Neighborhood Funding Collaboratives,** by Nicole Derse (a CURA / NPCR Research Assistant)

2000 Donors to the Minneapolis Center for Neighborhoods



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Every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of our donor records. If our report contains errors or omissions, please contact us so that we may extend our apologies and correct our records.

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