

SUSTAINING NEIGHBORHOOD CHANGE



**THE POWER OF RESIDENT LEADERSHIP,
SOCIAL NETWORKS, AND COMMUNITY
MOBILIZATION**



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THE ANNIE E. CASEY FOUNDATION is a private charitable organization dedicated to helping build better futures for disadvantaged children in the United States. It was established in 1948 by Jim Casey, one of the founders of UPS, and his siblings, who named the Foundation in honor of their mother. The primary mission of the Foundation is to foster public policies, human-service reforms, and community supports that more effectively meet the needs of today's vulnerable children and families. In pursuit of this goal, the Foundation makes grants that help states, cities, and neighborhoods fashion more innovative, cost-effective responses to these needs. The Foundation offers technical assistance to *Making Connections* sites through its Technical Assistance Resource Center (TARC). For more information, visit the Foundation's website at www.aecf.org.

THE CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF SOCIAL POLICY is a Washington, DC-based organization that provides public policy analysis and technical assistance to states and communities. The Center's work is concentrated in the areas of family and children's services, income supports, neighborhood-based services, education reform, family support, community decision-making and human resources innovations. This guide was prepared by the Center as part of their overall management of the Foundation's Technical Assistance Resource Center. TARC makes technical assistance available to *Making Connections* sites to assure that site leaders have access to the best possible ideas, expertise, evidence-based practice, and peer learning. For more information, visit www.cssp.org.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In the fall of 2006, at a cross-site Resident Leadership Network convening, our Executive Vice President Ralph Smith was asked by one of the resident leaders: “What do you look for to know that the resident engagement work in the sites is successful?” He answered saying that he looks for what he calls “Authentic Demand”—resident voices at decision-making tables, with competence and confidence to participate fully in the deliberations and who understand that they are connected to constituencies in their neighborhoods to whom they are accountable. Since that time, I have had the privilege of working with a team of people comprised of staff, consultants, and partners in the *Making Connections* sites to further develop our Authentic Demand approach to place-based, two-generation, family strengthening and neighborhood transformation work. Building on work we began in 2004 with strengthening positive social networks, developing resident leadership, and mobilizing communities, we began to see the combined power in connecting across what were then separate bodies of work, both in the Foundation and in the sites. As there is no blueprint for this work, we began and continue to “learn by/while doing,” developing this critical component of community engagement work conceptually and practically, between and among Foundation staff, consultants, and sites.

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Audrey Jordan
The Annie E. Casey Foundation

INTRODUCTION

Poverty and unemployment aren't spread evenly across cities or regions, but rather are concentrated in disinvested urban neighborhoods and rural communities around the country. These communities are home to the nation's most vulnerable children and families. Despite some signs of improvement in economic conditions for families in the United States, persistent and widening gaps in income, employment, assets, and school success exist. Many families remain cut off from the opportunities and supports they need to succeed as parents and in the workforce.

WHAT IS MAKING CONNECTIONS?

Making Connections, an initiative of the Casey Foundation, works to improve the lives and prospects of families and children living in some of America's toughest neighborhoods. Common sense tells us that children do better when their families are strong and that families do better when they live in communities that help them succeed. *Making Connections* works to increase family income and assets; ensure that young children have what they need to do well in school; and promote strong resident leadership, civic participation, social networks, and community mobilization. It is our belief that improvements in all of these areas—income, education, and community connections—can add up to a better life for families in some of America's most distressed communities. *Making Connections* was launched in 1999 in ten sites around the country to put our ideas to work.

MAKING CONNECTIONS GUIDES

This guide is one of four that the Foundation's Technical Assistance Resource Center has prepared that reflect what we have learned from this initiative and the amazing people who have led it. We offer the guides in the hope that you might find something useful and inspiring that will encourage you join us and will aid your own efforts. You may also want to take a look at the other three online guides at www.aecf.org/mcguides.aspx:

- *Starting Early, Starting Right: Children Healthy and Prepared to Succeed in School*
- *Building Family Wealth: Earn It, Keep It, Grow It*
- *Connecting People to Jobs: Neighborhood Workforce Pipelines*

THE BASICS

Sustaining Neighborhood Change: The Power of Resident Leadership, Social Networks, and Community Mobilization is designed to help you—neighborhood residents, service agencies, community organizations, local foundations, nonprofit groups, and policymakers—make the most of your investments of time and resources in the work of *Making Connections*. This guide documents some of the research, lessons, and best practices from our unfolding work in *Making Connections* neighborhoods.

A foundation-led initiative alone cannot generate enough interest, investment, and momentum to produce real and sustainable results for children and families living in tough neighborhoods. Money, programs, and interventions alone will not get us there. The key ingredient of success is whether the people who live, work, and worship in tough neighborhoods believe that better results for families and communities are possible and whether they are committed to pursuing those results. Residents themselves, along with their allies, must be the drivers of change: they have to own it, demand it, and work for it. People who live and work in tough neighborhoods are uniquely positioned to tap into existing networks of families and friends to assess needs, get the word out, and mobilize others. Their perspectives and knowledge of local needs, conditions, and history are critical to shaping effective strategies and the evaluation methods by which progress is measured. Without their meaningful involvement and leadership, efforts to achieve deep and lasting results are almost certain to fall short.

When residents enjoy strong, positive social networks; are trained and supported to lead; and are mobilized to reach for results on behalf of their families and communities, they possess the capacity to raise their voices and make authentic demands for change. We call the individual and community capacity to define, articulate, and work for results Authentic Demand, a phrase that Ralph Smith, executive vice president of the Annie E. Casey Foundation, uses to describe one of four essential parts of any successful approach to community change (the others are leadership, aligned stakeholders, and resources).

No single strategy can develop genuine community engagement in, and leadership of, a broad-based agenda to improve results for children and families. Instead, cultivating and supporting Authentic Demand involves a mix of approaches, including:

- **Leadership** strategies that offer training to residents and other partners in strategic planning, data analysis, policy advocacy, and other skills.
- Strong **social networks** that build relationships and reciprocal exchange among residents and between residents and community partners.
- **Community organizing** efforts that mobilize community members to take action to achieve better outcomes for children, families and neighborhoods.

- The kind of **civic participation** that enables residents to hold elected officials and service providers accountable through voting, local forums, community research, and policy advocacy.

Finally, Authentic Demand is not separate or different from the *Making Connections* work that creates sustainable workforce results, ensures that children are ready for school, and helps families accumulate assets. Authentic Demand gives that work power and sustainability, and embeds it in a framework of support that ensures that it is utilized and has impact.

What follows is a description of the crucial role neighborhood residents are playing in our community change effort; ways to cultivate, support and measure resident involvement and leadership; and examples of Authentic Demand strategies from *Making Connections* sites. The appendix provides additional information about the technical assistance available to *Making Connections* communities.

WHAT DOES AUTHENTIC DEMAND LOOK LIKE?

Authentic Demand is evident when residents and their partners:

- Believe that better results for children, families, and neighborhoods are possible and are committed to pursuing those results.
- Have a sense of personal power to improve conditions and circumstances for their own families and the broader community.
- Use that power to exert pressure on systems and agencies on behalf of the results they seek.
- Have the skill, will, and opportunity to lead, influence, and/or engage issues that matter to them and their community.
- Hold themselves and others accountable for achieving results.

When residents and other community members are authentically engaged in civic participation, social network, community mobilization, and leadership opportunities, they are able to influence a broad range of efforts, including:

PLANNING AND SERVICE DESIGN

Residents are the experts on issues in their neighborhood. Any community change initiative that doesn't involve them in planning and design will lack crucial information. The best new program will sit empty if it is not located where residents feel comfortable. Communities are more likely to embrace and support programs developed in partnership with residents, in contrast to programs created in a vacuum and imposed from the outside. Embedding Authentic Demand strategies



in community change efforts creates an infrastructure to engage large numbers of residents quickly and meaningfully in planning and design, as well as implementation and management processes.

OUTREACH, INFORMATION SHARING AND ENGAGEMENT

Often community residents are the best positioned to get others involved in a community change effort, or in specific activities and services. They can build on their existing relationships to reach families that might be less trusting of formal communication channels, and can provide information in a way that families readily recognize. In many areas of community change, engaging the families one most wants to reach can be a key challenge. In the area of assets, the Foundation has focused on increasing Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) participation in sites. National estimates are that only 25 percent of all eligible individuals apply for the EITC. Mary Herbers from the

Center for Economic Progress, a key EITC program partner, estimates that 60 percent of the center's EITC filers in Chicago come through the door because of word of mouth. Word of mouth is particularly important in the Latino community where most outreach is done through informal channels. Many sites have used Authentic Demand strategies to build a cadre of residents who provide outreach and recruitment around specific results areas. This type of neighborhood messenger strategy is being used not only around EITC campaigns, but also to link families to quality early childhood supports, to engage families in saving programs, and to connect families to other key services and supports.

RETENTION

Another key area where a number of social change efforts struggle is

recruitment and retention. Families whose lives are filled with stress and chaos can find it challenging to stay involved in activities that take place over a period of time, such as a parent education class or a job training program. The intentional use of Authentic Demand strategies can help to keep these families stay connected and can enhance their stability as they engage in efforts to improve their lives.

RESIDENT-LED SERVICES AND ACTIVITIES

Many *Making Connections* sites offer paid staff positions and stipends for residents to take part in the work of the initiative. Such community hiring requires investments in training and support, and often combines leadership training, task-specific training, and ongoing professional development. Community hiring builds a cadre of service providers who understand the needs and priorities of the families that they are trying to reach. Resident staff can provide services and activities in an environment that builds on the strengths of peer-linkages, mentoring, mutual assistance, and peer advocacy. Resident-led services and activities bridge the distance between service provider and recipient, using parity and shared experiences to break down barriers and support change.

DEVELOPING INFORMAL SUPPORTS FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Informal supports are an important tool that all families—but most especially low-income families—use to maintain stability in a crisis and meet day-to-day goals. Much of the recent work on family balance sheets shows that if you subtract market costs of child care,

transportation, housing, and other needed supports, low-income families are simply not making enough to get by. Families make it by depending on neighbors, friends, relatives, and supportive others to help out with child care, to offer a ride when the car breaks down, to provide a loan so that the rent check can get paid. For many families these informal supports are a key resource for averting a crisis that could impact their ability to keep a job, keep coming to a job training program, or get a child to a Head Start or child care program every morning. The more difficult to observe but no less important benefit of informal supports, especially for people living in such tough and discouraging circumstances, is the significant channel of self-esteem and confidence-building, and the belief—the hope—in new possibilities that comes through experiencing these supports.

At Beyond Welfare, a social networks intermediary organization in Ames, Iowa, regular community dinners often end with a closing circle where individuals make “I have” or “I need” statements. These are opportunities in supportive, non-judgmental environments for individuals to either give something away—“I have a bunch of work clothes that I am getting rid of”—or ask for something—“I need a ride to a job interview I am going to this week.” If a request can’t be met by someone in the circle, network weavers will work within the broader Beyond Welfare network to help meet the request.

Such exchanges do more than provide clothes, transportation, child care, and other help to

low-income families in underserved neighborhoods. They also cultivate self-reliance, confidence, and hope for people in tough and discouraging circumstances.

SHIFTING THE WAY SERVICES ARE PROVIDED WITHIN THE COMMUNITY

Authentic Demand strategies can help assure that social services, job training, education, and other services are respectful of and responsive to community needs. They seek to change systems of accountability at the individual, community, and systems levels in ways that achieve and sustain better outcomes in the well-being of children, families, and neighborhoods.

Even the most entrenched systems, and old ways of doing business in low-income neighborhoods can change when those who live, work, and worship in a community share a common identity, work together to improve neighborhood conditions, and influence elected officials to align policies and practices with their goal. When Authentic Demand strategies are used to create this kind of an environment, service systems become more effective and inclusive through broad-based participation and accountability.

Authentic Demand strategies can develop and expand the range of skills and capacities within communities to learn what’s working and what isn’t. They can help a neighborhood build the vision and alliances needed to improve conditions and outcomes for children, families, and neighborhoods.

THE **MAGIC** IS IN THE **MIX** OF **STRATEGIES**

Strengthening the number, diversity, and skills of community members to take leadership roles, promote positive social networks, support community organizing, and increase their civic participation all are important in their own right. *Making Connections* takes that work a step further by helping communities braid those strategies together to produce more durable and powerful results for vulnerable children and families living in areas of concentrated poverty. **What matters most is the accessibility and range of opportunities and choices available to shape and participate in a powerful and transformative community change agenda.**

Working with sites and some of the nation's leading community-building practitioners, the Foundation in 2007 developed a new way to look at how these elements of Authentic Demand support and reinforce each other—much like the individual cells of a **honeycomb**. We're learning that the magic is in the mix of these strategies—creating an opportunity-rich environment and new ways of doing business with the power to transform tough neighborhoods into places where children and families thrive.

The framework for *Making Connections* concept of Authentic Demand is depicted as a **honeycomb**, with the main types of Authentic Demand activity represented as the cells of the **honeycomb**. There is no single door into, or right way to implement, the Authentic Demand **honeycomb**. Each element of the Authentic Demand **honeycomb** represents a different way for

AUTHENTIC DEMAND HONEYCOMB



residents and other community members to engage in achieving results, sustaining progress, and building community capacity for change.

On the ground, this might look like a *civic participation* effort that empowers and motivates residents to give voice to issues they care about and participate in electoral politics, and which is also strongly supported by *community organizing* efforts to hold public officials accountable once they have been elected.

Sites' efforts might further include ongoing support for expanding and diversifying *community leadership* and ensuring that residents are equal partners at tables where agendas are set and decisions profoundly affecting them are made. And the role and importance of *social networks* can be amplified in *Making Connections* sites as members form alliances across traditional boundaries and take on leadership positions and support

community organizing and civic participation efforts.

You might also see more and more residents serving as trusted messengers in their neighborhoods, sharing information and connecting families to a range of resources, supports, and opportunities. *Membership networks* increase in size and effectiveness. Key stakeholders in faith- and community-based organizations, businesses, local philanthropy, and government partner with residents and carry their voices into their diverse and powerful professional and personal networks. *Resident leadership* courses might become institutionalized at community colleges, and *community mobilization efforts* lead to important changes in policy and practice. Throughout this guide, we provide some examples of how this work is taking shape in the *Making Connections* sites.

There are seven elements of Authentic Demand that are important to consider and incorporate

when building a community effort. They are:

- **Voice:** Those within the community have and take opportunities to make their needs, desires, and opinions known. Community members participate as equals in environments where decisions affecting the community are being made.
- **Accountability:** Community members are at decision-making tables representative of and accountable to the larger community. There is a demand environment, where the make-up of services, resources, and opportunities is determined by the needs and desires of those in the community, rather than what organizations have available.
- **Learning, skills, and capacity:** Community members have an opportunity to participate in leadership training, mentoring, or other skill-building opportunities that enhance their effectiveness and confidence at decision-making tables. Community members have an understanding and awareness of opportunities to engage effectively in civic life.
- **Identity:** Community members feel a sense of belonging to the larger community. The community identity is inclusive and representative of the diversity of the community. The different cultural groups within the community are represented and embraced within this larger identity.
- **Reciprocity:** There are ways for all members to contribute to the community. There is an understanding that all community members have gifts, and efforts are made to tap these gifts. There is a norm of participation and of action within the community.
- **Choice:** There are options for community members to engage and contribute to change efforts, and those options connect to the needs and desires of community members. The change environment is flexible and adaptive, so that it can keep pace with the changing needs and interests of community members.

GETTING GOING:

AUTHENTIC DEMAND STRATEGIES

Authentic Demand strategies have been a part of *Making Connections* since the start of the initiative. Early on, most sites used some sort of community engagement or information-gathering process to ensure that their work was grounded in the needs and interests of community members. Almost all sites have engaged residents in some way in the governance process for the initiative. And most sites have developed or worked with leadership training programs for resident leaders within the community.

Over time, a number of strategies have proven to have the power or potential to really move a change agenda, and are being used across sites. These include:

NEIGHBORHOOD MESSENGERS

Many sites engage a small group of community residents to connect the broader community to the work of *Making Connections*. There are Trusted Advocates in Seattle/White Center, Neighborhood Partners in Indianapolis, Community Builders in Oakland, MoneyWorks Messengers in Louisville. Generally, these individuals had a trusted role and a strong network of relationships within the community before the ini-

tiative started. Engaging them as partners has allowed the initiative to reach deeply into the community quickly. The work of these individuals also covers a broad range of important functions:

- **Outreach and engagement.** In most sites, these individuals serve as outreach workers, helping to connect community residents not only to the key strategies and programs, but also to other community resources and supports.
- **Peer education.** Often these individuals have specific training in the initiative's core results areas, and provide peer education and information to community members on issues such as the Earned Income Tax Credit, school readiness, or other core strategies.
- **Identifying community needs and concerns.** Because of their trusted role and pre-existing relationships, these individuals can help to ensure that the initiative is informed by the needs, concerns, and preferences of community members. This is done informally in some sites and formally in others. For example, in White Center, Trusted Advocates

regularly organize community meetings to engage the broader community in conversations about the strategic direction of the initiative.

- **Network Weavers.** In a number of sites, such as Oakland and Louisville, these individuals are asked to play a specific role in building social networks within the community by directly engaging isolated residents and connecting them to others.
- **Representation.** Because these individuals are community residents and deeply connected to specific constituencies within the community, they are often asked to represent the perspectives of the community in decision-making processes.
- **Organizing.** In a few sites, these individuals also receive specific training and support to play an organizing role within the community. Their organizing activities include educating and mobilizing residents around a specific issue, and leading campaigns.

Generally, these individuals receive stipends for their work with the initiative, and are engaged in their neighborhood messenger role less than full time. They are networked with one another, so that they can learn from each other's experience, work together, and receive training, resources, and support from a community organization hired to manage their work.

This year is like a new beginning in my life—I not only consider it an opportunity, I consider it a blessing. I've had opportunity to reach out to people and have them reach back. I've had opportunity to learn and it has really enriched my life. I've been giving all this information to people—and I've been learning.

—Resident Organizing Coordinator, Louisville



LEADERSHIP TRAINING PROGRAMS

Leadership training programs help resident leaders to build their skills and capacities so that they may engage others, sit at decision-making tables as equals, and lead change efforts within their communities. At some point, each site has started or supported a leadership training program. Many sites actually support multiple programs, some homegrown, and some from *Making Connections*—such as Resident Leadership and Facilitation (RLF) training—or other established programs. (More information on RLF training follows on page 11.) Some programs are exclusive to resident leaders, while others combine training for both resident and civic leaders. Most resident leadership training efforts use a structured approach and an established curriculum to build the leadership skills, competencies, and knowledge shown to help residents participate in decision-making as equals with other stakeholders.

Because they are very participatory, the programs create many opportunities for residents to get to know each other and build connections and social networks. They also tend to have an action component or practicum: participants receive small grants and work together to develop and implement projects in their neighborhoods.

SOCIAL NETWORKS

A number of sites are intentionally trying to build social networking strategies into their *Making Connections* work. These strategies help to apply the resource sharing, psychological, and community benefits of social networking to a community-change agenda. These social networking strategies often serve as a portal that will:

- Engage a broad range of residents in fun activities, to reach those who might not be ready to engage more formally.

- Strengthen, support, and expand existing networks of reciprocal exchange that support the well-being and stability of families in the neighborhood.
- Create or strengthen the trusted relationships that support information flow and forge connections between residents, community partners, and other stakeholders.
- Strengthen the community by building and supporting relationships that can be leveraged for change.

STRENGTHENING THE CIVIC INFRASTRUCTURE

A number of sites are utilizing strategies that connect residents within the community to existing civic infrastructure. These civic institutions include block clubs, neighborhood associations, and community-planning bodies. Often, they were part of the civic infrastructure of the city or neighborhood before *Making Connections* started. What *Making Connections* sites focus on is:

- Reinvigorating weakened civic institutions in the targeted neighborhoods.
- Ensuring that community residents have seats at the table within the existing civic infrastructure.

Building on the existing civic structures is an important strategy for sites. It allows them to connect community residents to a decision-making and influence infrastructure that already has resources and an operating infrastructure, and is

likely to have continuity and sustainability after the *Making Connections* initiative has ended.

SMALL GRANTS PROGRAMS

Small grants programs provide residents with the funds needed to carry out neighborhood-based family-strengthening projects in their community. These grants empower residents to turn their vision of the neighborhood into reality. Every attempt is made to eliminate barriers typically associated with foundation and public sector grant-making. Application processes are streamlined to make them quick, easy, and uncomplicated. The application design takes into account issues such as literacy and language skills to create an application process that is truly open to all. Grants are often quite small (sometimes only a few hundred dollars) and are available to individual residents and informal groups that might not have 501(c)(3) status.

Often, these grants are awarded for activities or events that help build social capital in the neighborhood; including community celebrations, peer networking or mentoring efforts, community cleanups, cultural-sharing activities, and inter-generational storytelling. Small grants programs:

- Give interested residents an opportunity to pursue and support their own vision for change by helping to build leadership and ownership in the community change process.
- Put in place concrete community-building activities that are resident-run and organized.

In a number of sites, small grants programs are explicitly connected to other Authentic Demand strategies. For example, sites have provided mini-grant opportunities for residents graduating from their leadership training programs. This provides these individuals with a concrete opportunity to apply their new skills. Some small grant programs are managed and run by resident leaders, again providing a capacity-building opportunity for these leaders while ensuring that the selected projects are responsive to community needs and priorities. Other sites provide guidance or are more likely to fund grants that will help get to results in the *Making Connections* core areas—assets, family economic success, and children healthy and prepared for success in school.

FAMILY CIRCLES

Family circles create opportunities for residents to discuss community issues and identify ideas for making a difference. A family circle (adapted from the study circles model) brings together a group of five to 15 adults or teens to discuss how to build a strong neighborhood that benefits children and families. During four weekly, two-hour sessions, participants learn from each other and work together to create common-sense solutions to common challenges. Through dialogue, residents build a sense of shared understanding and ownership of issues. They create connections with each other, and then act together to strengthen their community and its families.

Resident Leadership & Facilitation (RLF) training is a leadership development and local capacity-building strategy developed by the Annie E. Casey Foundation. It is the product of collaboration between Casey's Leadership Development Unit and its Technical Assistance Resource Center. RLF training is designed to assist resident leaders to acquire/strengthen their skills in leading successful meetings that result in actions for strengthening children, families, neighborhoods, and communities. The primary focus of RLF is facilitation skills. However, throughout the training, activities and practices emphasize how the key skills can also be applied to chairing meetings and acting as a constructive participant in a group decision-making process. Every site has participated in both beginning-level and advanced-level RLF training and seven of the sites have multiple residents trained to serve as RLF coaches—providing training and follow-up support to other residents themselves.

PUBLIC FORUMS

An initiative like *Making Connections* can serve as an important convener for public forums. Public forums provide an important opportunity to engage a broad group of community stakeholders around a specific set of issues. By creating a space for dialogue on issues, public forums help to educate and build awareness, serve as a forum for

debate and consensus building, and offer those who are often shut out of the decision-making process an opportunity to have a voice.

POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT

While *Making Connections* sites do not engage in political or electoral advocacy, a number of sites have adopted a strategic focus on helping residents understand and engage with the political process. These strategies don't mobilize residents to vote a particular way, or support a particular candidate, but rather to understand the structure of the political process and how it can be used to influence the community decision-making process.

COMMUNITY ORGANIZING

In some ways community organizing has been one of the more challenging areas around which Authentic Demand sites develop strategies. The nature of the *Making Connections* initiative demands close collaboration among community residents, community-based organizations, political leadership, businesses, developers, and others that have a stake in the community. This can make traditional organizing techniques somewhat challenging.

As sites move forward, however, and face the challenges of gentrification and major structural change at the local level, they are finding that organizing techniques and strategies play a crucial role in ensuring that the residents of the community, and those most in need of support, get an equal and fair opportunity to participate in community-change efforts.

AUTHENTIC DEMAND IN GOVERNANCE

One of the key areas to build Authentic Demand is the governance process for the initiative itself. Governance structures vary from site to site, according to the developmental curve of the initiative. Early on, more broad-based efforts were used to engage a range of residents in setting the goals and results for the initiative. As the transition to Local Management Entities (LMEs) moved forward, the importance of engaging residents both in the selection of the LME and in the ongoing oversight of LME work has proved important.

MAPPING THE LANDSCAPE

Sites can take several steps to develop their Authentic Demand learning agendas and evaluation

plans. Tools developed by Resident Engagement in Action and Leadership coordinators can be used to:

- Map existing approaches and activities.
- Develop or refine pathways that link approaches and activities to long-term goals and outcomes.
- Identify outcomes and indicators.
- Document strategic activities, structure, and process.

These tools provide some general guidelines for developing an evaluation plan and using the data to inform the work and track community change.

In order to create and track an effective change agenda, sites have begun to map their approaches and activities using the honeycomb tool to guide the discussion. Initial efforts are focusing on mapping strategies and activities by form or approach, such as resident leadership, social networks, community organizing, and civic participation. Sites can also sort by result area, such as work and earnings, assets,

When Neighborhood Grants for Growth was started, I applied for a grant to do a cultural festival. We had 15 different people coming together to do the planning. That was where I started being involved in the neighborhood. I got tired of hearing the same people say, "We've tried to do classes for the Latinos and they're not interested." I felt that they felt that the Latinos weren't contributing. I know Latinos and if they are asked to give they'll give. I straight away went to the businesses and asked them to get involved. Just about every one of them turned out and gave something. Planning that festival was my way of saying we're here and we're willing to give. —Neighborhood Grants for Growth recipient, Des Moines

We wanted to establish networks with residents and knew that just knowing who they were individually doesn't contribute to community-building—when residents identify issues together and come up with strategies to address those issues is where you build community. Site Team

Member, Making Connections Milwaukee

children's health, and school readiness.¹

Mapping in these ways serves multiple purposes for community practitioners and evaluators.

- Mapping by approach or form provides snapshots of the demand environment that, over time, can be expanded or amended to show changes in the number and range of strategies and activities underway. The snapshots can also be expanded to track levels of participation and the diversity of participants.
- Mapping by result area provides snapshots that show how Authentic Demand strategies and activities are directed toward specific improvements in policy, practice, or outcomes.

Both mapping exercises provide opportunities to identify strengths, gaps, and areas where technical assistance or other capacity-building may be needed. The exercises also provide information that can

help determine where to focus initial evaluation and learning efforts and resources. Once these decisions are made, sites can situate selected strategies and activities into a theory or pathway of change framework.

DEVELOPING OR REFINING A PATHWAY OF CHANGE

Authentic Demand is complex, and there are many moving parts and stakeholders. There is a need to be focused, but also a need to adjust to new information or changing conditions affecting the community. For these reasons, evaluators and practitioners must be deliberate in formulating, and clear in articulating, the questions they hope to answer in the short and long term. These questions will determine the kinds of data needed to address local learning needs and link capacity-building activities to improved well-being for children, families, and neighborhoods.

An operational theory of how Authentic Demand strategies and

activities are expected to contribute to sustainable results and accountability will provide the framework to guide the work, to develop a learning agenda (the questions to answer along the way), and to identify the most useful and relevant measures and data collection methods to monitor progress toward achievement.

Four qualities of an operational theory or pathway of change are:²

- **The theory is plausible.** The activities and pathways are defined with sufficient clarity that a reasonable person can see how they are linked to short-term objectives, short-term objectives are linked to intermediate-term objectives, and intermediate objectives are linked to achievement of long-term outcomes and goals.
- **The theory is feasible.** The community has the resources, skills, and capacities needed to implement existing or proposed activities that are necessary to achieve interim objectives and outcomes.
- **The theory is testable.** Success is defined with enough specificity that progress can be recognized, and the indicators for each outcome are sufficiently clear that evaluators and practitioners can develop focused and useful plans to measure and document them. For this reason, it's important that the local evaluator or evaluation team participate in the mapping and theory-building process.

¹ Other useful ways to map might include: function (e.g., skill/capacity-building, representation, community outreach, policy/advocacy); and investment (e.g., small grants to residents or resident groups and/or capacity-building grants to community-based organizations to support alignment of policies and practices with the goals of Authentic Demand.)

² Andrea Anderson, *The Community Builder's Approach to Theory of Change: a Practical Guide to Theory Development*, NY: The Aspen Institute, n.d.

- **The theory is communicable.** It can be and is converted into a simple and clear message about what's to be accomplished, who's involved, and what activities are underway. The message should be accessible to diverse audiences, should be memorable so it can be repeated throughout diverse networks at the community and systems levels, and should include contact or other information for those who want to learn more or become involved. For this reason, it's important to

include a local communications specialist in the process.

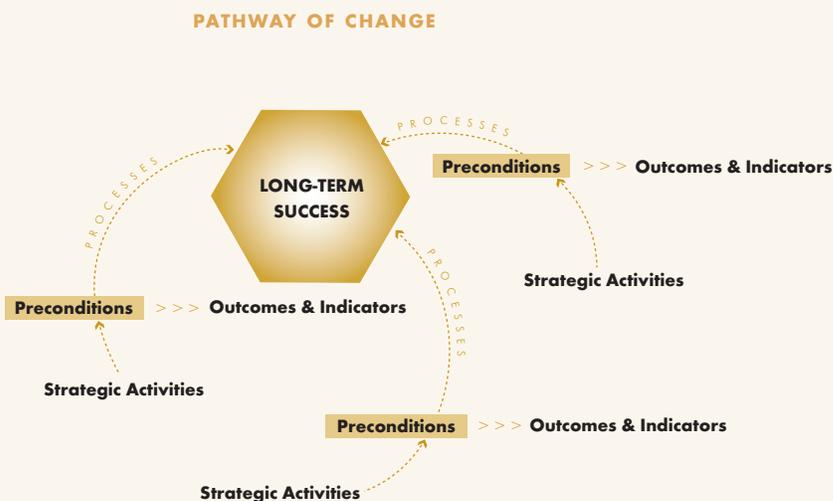
Development of a theory or pathway of change involves a process called backward mapping for each outcome. It's a useful tool for evaluators and practitioners, since it urges being intentional and clear about the way that approaches and activities are linked conceptually and in practice to long-term outcomes and goals. Experience has shown that this process itself can be a valuable tool for creating a shared vision that individuals and

organizations in communities can use to focus and coordinate their work, monitor progress, and sustain motivation to move off comfortable plateaus along the way to longer-term objectives and outcomes. It works best when facilitated by someone who understands backwards mapping and theory of change methodology, and who is familiar with *Making Connections* and the site's history and approach to the work. External technical assistance is available to assist sites with this, with the aim of developing these skills and capacities locally.

The Pathway of Change³ graphic presents a visual template of the components of a theory or pathway of change. Development begins with a statement of the **overall vision or goal**. This is followed by definition of **long-term success**. These are specific statements of outcomes and the indicators that will be used for measurements. This is followed by a series of **interim outcomes and indicators** that define success along the way. These are sometimes called preconditions, since they define what must occur before the work can move to the next level. These are also specific statements of the indicators to be used for measurements. These will include indicators of influence and process, as well as changes in well-being of children, families, and/or neighborhoods. **Strategic activities** describe the practical steps to take in order to change conditions and achieve specific outcomes. They describe what the individuals and groups or organizations within the community, and, where appropriate,

systems partners outside the community, will do. The lines connecting activities to preconditions and outcomes are the **processes** that describe what is being done and how the work is being organized in

order to affect change in norms, behaviors, and relationships at the individual, community, and systems levels; to influence policy and practice; and to sustain a results-based focus.



³ Andrea Anderson, *The Community Builder's Approach to Theory of Change: a Practical Guide to Theory Development*, NY: The Aspen Institute, n.d.

The specificity of results, goals, indicators, and performance measures of a particular community or neighborhood is an important part of the Authentic Demand approach. Without the ability to define results, the local ownership that is central to the Authentic Demand approach cannot happen.

SEVEN ELEMENTS OF AUTHENTIC DEMAND

AUTHENTIC DEMAND ELEMENT	RESULTS
VOICE →	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in number of residents voting • Increase in number of community members who feel that they can shape decision-making in their community • Key wins around resident-identified priorities • More residents sitting on boards of local community-based organization or community or systems change efforts • More community organizations and change efforts have formal and informal ways to engage residents in decision-making
ACCOUNTABILITY →	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of public forums for accountability between leaders and constituents • Percentage of the community that feels well represented by existing leaders • Size of constituency that leaders can mobilize for an event, action, or a campaign • Concrete evidence of service and system responsiveness to consumer/user feedback, needs, and desires
LEARNING, SKILLS, & CAPACITY →	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of resident leaders and number of community partners completing leadership training • Greater number of grassroots resident-led organizations • Increased stability of grassroots resident-led organizations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Increased budget size – Increased staff size • Increase in number of residents who feel they can understand and influence the civic decision-making process
IDENTITY →	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in number and percentage of community members reporting strong attachment to the community or network • Increase in number and percentage of community members or networks participating in voluntary community change activities • Greater diversity and representativeness of residents participating in community change efforts and public forums
RECIPROCITY →	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased participation in community change activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – More residents involved – Increased number of hours by residents • Increase in number of social connections between residents • Increase in resources available through informal, neighbor-to-neighbor channels • Increase in dollars donated for local philanthropy
CHOICE →	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater knowledge and awareness of local efforts to improve outcomes for children and families • Increase in the number of ways that community members can engage in the change process

MEASURING AUTHENTIC DEMAND

Advancing better ways to measure and assess what Authentic Demand looks like on the ground when community members are truly engaged in a result-focused, resident-centered change agenda is a critical part of the Foundation's Authentic Demand framework. Absent sound indicators and criteria, it will be difficult to develop strategies for and secure investment in this core capacity for durable community change.

Assessing Authentic Demand is not only about measuring what residents and community partners do, but also what they get. This includes job placements, opportunities to advance skills and increase income, as well as access to free tax preparation, child care, and transportation. Similarly, there are benefits accruing at the community level. More children are reading at grade level. Perceptions within and outside the community may change. Neighborhoods are now seen as

good places to raise children, open new businesses, recruit employees, or offer competitive and fair market financial products. Service providers benefit from more effective and efficient outreach and retention, and better results.

The Authentic Demand framework also pays attention to assessing the less tangible but no less important transformative benefits of genuine engagement for residents and their families. These include the positive social impact of parents engaged in their children's schools, youth volunteering in their neighborhoods, the social capital that's generated when neighbors share resources with each other, and the increase in service delivery and effectiveness when government and social agencies view families as customers or partners, not clients.

DATA AS A TOOL IN THE COMMUNITY CHANGE PROCESS

In all community change initiatives, there are tensions that arise as some actors place emphasis on the measurement or documentation of hard results, while others wish to measure processes and process outcomes. For some, the most important outcomes to track are those that measure or document changes in the well-being of children, families, and neighborhoods; for example, positive changes in employment and income, asset accumulation, children's health and success in school. For others, the most important focus of community change is the development of skills, capacities, and relationships that are the basis for implementing activities and tracking changes in civic engagement, systems of accountability, and influence.

Authentic Demand describes a bundle of approaches, processes, and outcomes that are essential to achieving both results and sustainability. Process documentation is a tool or set of tools that communities can use to un-bundle and define these approaches. Process documentation allows communities to examine approaches, ask questions, study their effectiveness, and periodically re-bundle their approaches to acknowledge the increasingly complex relationships within and across community organizations, systems, outcomes, and results.

Typically, this is an iterative and reflective process. Some initial framing data are collected to address a particular aspect of the work; community partners review the data and ask questions that



urge follow-up inquiries and so on. Over time, communities can begin to put the puzzle pieces together and raise higher-order questions about community-level efficacy and the systems of accountability they are putting in place.

There are many places that sites can begin approaching this deliberately and purposefully, and the mapping and theory-of-change exercises provide a basis for generating process questions. *Making Connections* has identified several potential starting points that are common across the sites. These may provide a basis for developing and using tools in a cross-site peer learning exchange. The following are two examples of starting points.

Mapping resident representation at the community and systems levels. Most simply, this might include a directory or spreadsheet that summarizes:

1. Key tables at the community, city, and county levels where decisions that affect neighborhood residents are made.
2. Name of the community representatives at each table.
3. Functions of the tables, particularly the outcomes they seek to affect or influence.
4. How constituencies are defined—e.g., by geography, population, or subpopulation groups.

This snapshot of representation can be used by the community to begin the assessment. It can be used, for

example, to identify gaps where community voice is missing at the table, and to stimulate debate on which type of participation is best. These sorts of discussions will raise questions about leadership transition and constituencies—that is, how leaders take information from the tables back to neighborhood residents so they can weigh in with resident perspectives, experiences, and insights. They also inform the relationships of community-based organizations to systems-level decision-making processes, among others that will inform the next generation of strategy development and data collection activities.

Mapping strategic networks.

As noted in an earlier section of this guide, all sites have developed a cadre of committed and hard-working residents who provide community outreach and recruit residents to a range of services and supports. Although they go by different names—Trusted Advocates, ambassadors, and messengers—their key functions are similar. Typically, they carry out their work on a one-to-one basis or with small groups. And as the work grows, so do the demands on outreach workers' time, limiting the number of contacts and connections they can make.

Networks are a very scalable form of representation and information flow in communities, which do not sacrifice the importance of personal contact and relationships. For this reason, a number of sites are exploring how network principles and practice can be applied to improve the level, quality, and flow

of information, inspiration, and support throughout the community.

As these approaches are implemented, there is a need to look at the process; to assess the structure of the network, what the value propositions are, how information flows, what the members do, the goals of the network, and how they are linked to local theories of change and to outcomes. It's also important to try and assess approaches to managing the network in a way that supports creativity and initiative among members but is not so loose that it lacks definition or value.

There is an array of evaluation and diagnostic tools available to help sites, including Geographical Information System (GIS) mapping to show geographic clusters of networks or outreach activities, and specialized software that can visually display the relationships, or flow of information or other resources, among individuals and networks, organizations, and systems, using data collected from surveys of members. These tools are fairly simple for small groups to use and implement but can be fairly labor intensive when the number of actors is large. They are useful for testing assumptions about the effectiveness and reach of strategies, and they can also inform the next generation of strategy development and data collection activities.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER: DEVELOPING A PLAN FOR COLLECTING AND USING DATA

Once sites have identified the key outcomes and indicators they want to use to track progress, and the

processes they want to monitor, the next step is to develop a data collection plan. Evaluators may want to take the lead on drafting a plan, but it's critical that the plan be discussed with residents and other key stakeholders to ensure that it meets their learning and evaluation needs, and that implementation, particularly if it involves them, is feasible and practical.

To complete a data collection plan, teams must answer the following questions for each outcome/indicator:

- **What outcomes, indicators, and processes are most important?** Just as the work is iterative, based on community learning and changes in condition or context, the evaluation plans need flexibility to adjust accordingly. For this reason (and to focus the planning), it is suggested that the initial evaluation plan focus on the two anchor points—the long term (that to which community partners are committed), and the short term (what's important now). The evaluation plan should be routinely revisited to assess its usefulness and relevance to the work.
- **What is the sampling plan?** To answer this question, the team must be clear about who or what the indicator is targeting. In the case of outcome indicators, this means defining who the community expects to reach or engage as a result of its activities. This could be a particular segment of the population, a particular number of people who voluntarily became engaged, a particular

organization or set of organizations, external actors, and so on. In the case of process documentation, this could be a particular set of community organizations or systems partners, resident leaders, network members, network managers or weavers, or key community meetings and events.

- **What are the existing sources of data?** Are these sources adequate to meet the learning and evaluation goals? What modifications or additional sources of information are needed? What interview protocol and other data collection instruments might the community need to create? How are other sites handling this? Is there value in developing common instruments that all sites can use or adapt? Who will be responsible for seeing that this gets done?
- **What methods will be used to collect data?** There are a range of methods of data collection. Decisions must be made to determine which are most appropriate to answer the learning and evaluation questions, and whether the methods are feasible. Are there sufficient human, technical, and financial resources to implement them? These include: individual, organizational, or group surveys (in-person, phone, web-based); administrative data (American Community Survey data, program records); focus groups; GIS mapping; network analysis; observations; and document review.
- **What training, technical assistance, or support will be needed to develop and implement the**

data collection strategies? Who is responsible for identifying this assistance or support locally and/or contacting the evaluation liaison to identify these needs and see that they are addressed?

- **Who will collect the data?** Evaluators may be responsible for collecting some of the data, but a main part of the job will entail training, monitoring, and supporting others in its collection. These others could include resident leaders, network weavers, organizational partners, diarists, communications specialists, and others. To make this happen, expectations must be reasonable, given competing demands on time; roles and procedures must be clearly defined and agreed to; and time and attention must be dedicated to communications and relationship-building.
- **What is the timeline for collecting data?** Given all that is going on in the sites, experience has shown that without a timeline, implementation of data collection plans can too easily fall off the radar. This is especially true in the early stages, before the value of the data to the site and community partners has been demonstrated. Certain forms of data should be shared routinely for purposes of reflection. Others need accountability timelines to ensure that the team is fulfilling its commitment to community partners and the initiative. This means someone, or some group, must be responsible for making sure that all trains are running on time and, when there are

problems, that these are shared with community partners in order to reach resolution.

- **How will the data be analyzed and interpreted?** Who will be responsible for seeing that whatever data are collected are processed and used? Answers to these questions will likely vary across sites. Evaluation specialists can do a lot of the nitty-gritty background work; running analyses, constructing tables, and writing briefs. However, it's critical that community partners engage in the interpretation of the data—its meaning; what it says about the effectiveness of their strategies and activities; what else they would like to know about; and how the data may be used for purposes of testing assumptions, learning and improvement, advocacy/influence, accountability, and celebration. The capacity of the community to use data in these ways, and to incorporate the data into the routine of doing business, should be supported, nurtured, and honored at every step along the way.

- **How will the data be integrated—across methods and strategies, and over time?**

Authentic Demand seeks to change the community environment by creating a wide range of opportunities for those who live, work, and worship there. It seeks to develop ties among residents, to encourage active participation in efforts to achieve individual and collective goals, and to leverage external resources. As the examples throughout the guide show, in any given community this is occurring in multiple venues, through a variety of approaches, to achieve multiple ends. Evaluation also seeks to demonstrate the linkages between Authentic Demand, development of sustainable accountability systems, and measurable improvement in well-being for children, families, and neighborhoods. This requires another level of theory-building, analysis, and perhaps data collection. Each site should consider who or what group might best carry this out locally,

and participate in regularly scheduled cross-site phone meetings with national evaluators to plan these tasks.



REAL LIFE LESSONS

Each *Making Connections* site has come up with Authentic Demand strategies that work for the community and that reflect local strengths, realities, and needs. The *Making Connections* work is focused around four strategies: **strengthening resident leadership, promoting positive social networks, increasing civic participation, and mobilizing communities for results.**

Each works in its own way, based on local needs. Here are some ways these strategies play out successfully in different sites.

STRENGTHENING RESIDENT LEADERSHIP

Resident leaders worked with *Making Connections* Milwaukee partners to design the Institute for Resident Leaders (IRL), developing the curriculum, reviewing applications for admission, and recruiting potential students. Since 2006, more than 200 residents have graduated from the Institute, and it already has a thriving alumni network. It serves as a pathway for some graduates into job and asset-building opportunities; while others go on to take up leadership positions in local organizations, boards, and commissions. IRL graduates have played a key role in Milwaukee's work to connect families to trusted, reliable financial education, credit repair, home-ownership, and other programs. The IRL also supports a network of block clubs, study circles, and civic forums focused on connecting residents in the initiative neighborhoods to jobs, supports, and ways to take action on community issues, such as increasing supports for men and women returning to the community from prison.

In **San Antonio**, some 1,200 residents received training in 2006 through the Community Leadership Development Collaborative (CLDC), which was developed by *Making Connections* with local colleges and universities, youth development programs, and faith-based organizations. The collaborative is able to train unprecedented numbers of residents because it has coordinated and strengthened the city's previously fragmented array of leadership development programs. In recent years, special attention has been given to training resident leaders in the three city council districts that serve the initiative's neighborhoods on San Antonio's West Side—nearly 170 participated in the CLDC last year and are emerging as important advocates for changes in city funding, policy, and service delivery.

In **Providence**, more than 160 residents have graduated from the Resident Leadership Institute, a locally developed resident leadership program, and many have gone on to participate in more than 50 neighborhood dialogues on combating predatory lending, the importance of parent involvement in local schools, strategies to increase family earnings and assets, and other issues. Graduates also have championed and helped implement key site strategies, such as Play and Learn groups that are helping some 60 parents serve as their children's first teachers, and the formation of a 150-member Family, Friend, and Neighbor child care provider network that provides access to early childhood education resources as well as financial education and asset-building programs.

All *Making Connections* sites are using the Resident Leadership and Facilitation (RLF) program, developed by the Foundation's Leadership Development Unit, to train residents in data analysis, results-based strategic planning, and meeting facilitation. To date, more than 450 residents have completed introductory and advanced RLF training, and **Des Moines, Indianapolis, Louisville, and San Antonio** are partnering with local community colleges to develop degree and certificate programs in resident leadership, some of which are based on the RLF model.

PROMOTING POSITIVE SOCIAL NETWORKS

Membership in **Louisville's** *Making Connections* Network increased to 2,600 in 2008. Launched in 2005, the Network allows residents in the four initiative neighborhoods to stay connected to each other through Network Nights—which draw up to 60 families per month—and earn concrete rewards as Network members, including discounts from local retailers, free bus fare and admission to local events. In addition, the Network connects residents to site workforce, asset-building, and early grade success strategies.

Oakland's San Antonio Neighborhood Network (SANN), which was launched in 2006, increased its membership to 400 residents during 2007. SANN opened an office in the Lower San Antonio neighborhood (the *Making Connections* neighborhood) that helps refer residents to leadership opportunities as well as community supports and services. SANN also serves as a platform for connecting

residents with site strategies to help families increase assets and ensure children are healthy and prepared to succeed in school. For example, Garfield Elementary School is working with SANN to recruit a team of part-time parent tutors to help children during the transition from kindergarten and throughout the primary grades.

Making Connections Denver is helping six community service agencies, including Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) contractors, use a social network strategy to help highly vulnerable families achieve self-sufficiency. An initial group of 15 single mothers is getting intensive support from peers who have made successful transitions from TANF to work, as well as help from case managers—retrained as coaches—to solve problems, stay on the job, and make good decisions. As these efforts are successful, participating TANF contractors will expand social network strategies to the more than 300 families they serve. This will help change business as usual as agencies are encouraged to treat those they work with as network members and participants, not clients.

INCREASING CIVIC PARTICIPATION

In **Seattle/White Center**, the team of ethnically diverse resident leaders known as Trusted Advocates is working to better connect residents to civic life. They created workgroups and public forums designed to increase awareness of the need for elected decision-making bodies to better represent White Center's cultural and ethnic diversity. As a result, Trusted Advocates have been

elected to the Highline School District Board, and residents have been elected to the Highline Unincorporated Advisory Council, the governing body for White Center.

In **Indianapolis**, residents leaders are helping the city and the Local Initiatives Support Corporation roll out the Greater Indianapolis Neighborhoods Initiative, which is using a range of strategies from *Making Connections*—including data gathering and analysis, and results-based strategic planning—to help residents lead community redevelopment and revitalization efforts within six low- to moderate-income neighborhoods across the city. Residents also led efforts to create new schools in the *Making Connections* Indianapolis neighborhoods. In Martindale Brightwood, for example, residents helped design a community school that offers neighborhood families a range of community supports and services.

MOBILIZING COMMUNITIES FOR RESULTS

Through its partnership with Metro Organizations for People (MOP), *Making Connections Denver* supports strong community mobilization efforts both in the initiative neighborhoods and citywide. These include a successful drive in 2006 to pass a city ballot initiative that provides universal preschool for Denver's four-year-olds, and reforms in the public school funding formulas that dedicate more revenue to students in the *Making Connections* and other low-income neighborhoods. *Making Connections Denver* also has helped analyze initiative cross-site and MOP survey data to document lack of child health

insurance among near-poor families who don't qualify for state and federally funded programs. MOP is using the data for a campaign to expand eligibility requirements for the State Children's Health Insurance Program (S-CHIP). One result of this effort is passage by the state legislature of a new law requiring that all children on Medicaid and S-CHIP have a continuous and comprehensive plan of medical care.

Making Connections Providence supported community mobilization efforts that led to city approval of a first source hiring ordinance, which requires that one-third of all municipal jobs go to residents living in the *Making Connections* Southside neighborhood. In addition, the ordinance requires that 15 percent of those jobs be set aside for people of color, as well as 37 percent for men and women who have been involved in the criminal justice system. *Making Connections Providence* supported data-driven advocacy training for resident leaders and community groups who helped lead the campaign.

Resident leaders from Frog Hollow, one of the *Making Connections Hartford* neighborhoods, were asked by the city's asset-building coalition to help increase the number of people from their neighborhood who filed for the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). They worked with a range of employers, banks, and community groups to create a campaign to boost participation for the 2007 tax season. Results of these efforts are impressive. The number of filers from Frog Hollow jumped 23 percent—from 195 in 2006 to 240 in 2007, and the number of residents who filed

for the EITC increased from 80 to 127. This is particularly notable given that the average EITC refund in Frog Hollow totaled \$1,544 for 2007, and total returns to the neighborhood exceed \$600,000 this year.

Data from the *Making Connections* cross-site survey also helped spur a successful community mobilization effort in **Des Moines** to reduce medical debt among low- to moderate-income families. A Mid-Iowa Organizing Strategy—a coalition of 23 churches and congregations in Des Moines—used survey data, that showed medical debt was a significant burden for one out of every three families interviewed, to negotiate with area health care institutions on why families without health insurance were paying more for medical treatment than those who are insured. The talks resulted in two hospitals increasing assistance to low-income patients by more than \$6 million last year.

Below are stories from two *Making Connections* sites that illustrate some of the ways Authentic Demand can result in positive change in low-income neighborhoods.

LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY

Before *Making Connections* began, Louisville partners emphasized the importance of thriving families and vibrant neighborhoods and made investments consistent with those values. Three community organizations fostered an awareness of the importance of strong neighbor



hoods and resident-driven community change through leadership training courses and grants to neighborhood organizations. In addition to these local initiatives, a government merger between the City of Louisville and Jefferson County provided an opportunity to partner with the public sector as it reinvented itself. *Making Connections* built a strong relationship with a mayoral candidate committed to revitalizing Louisville's urban neighborhoods. This individual had served three mayoral terms, and after the merger he was elected Louisville's first metro mayor.

From this starting point, *Making Connections* Louisville (MCL) residents and partners set out to build a web of opportunities and connections for families. This new type of organizing, called Network Organizing, combines community organizing and network theory, and reflects the following principles:

- Lead to follow, follow to lead.
- Make change together.
- Connect families to one another and to opportunities.

They envisioned a multifunctional network of residents and families, community-based organizations, faith-based institutions, neighborhood businesses, government agencies, and other stakeholders. From this starting point, MCL has created a network that generates synergy for community transformation. In Louisville, the Network is the organizing principle, rather than a strategy. Through the Network, residents and partners accept and share responsibility to achieve defined results for children and families. The results are the "what" and the Network is the "how."

Enacting the principles of Network Organizing requires all partners to adopt a new way of doing business.

Residents lead and own the change process, represented by a myriad of interconnected activities, projects, programs, and collaborations. To maintain the Network, residents work together to create and take advantage of valuable resources and opportunities. In addition, residents receive leadership training and take on leadership roles within the Network. Stakeholders and partners collaborate in new ways, adopting a precise focus on results and a greater accountability to the community.

Authentic Demand strategies in Louisville are designed to engage residents in the Network. In July 2005, MCL launched the *Making Connections* Network with the introduction of a Network membership card, to tangibly connect families in the Smoketown, Shelby Park, Phoenix Hill, and California neighborhoods to opportunities and to one another. The Network Card rewards participation in *Making Connections* activities with Network gear, discounts from local retailers and service providers. The Network Card builds the brand identity of the *Making Connections* Network and critical partners, expands the base of residents and partners who are part of MCL, and educates the MCL Team and partners about the opportunities that work for the community. MCL organizes regular events to promote and strengthen the Network's connections, including an annual celebration gathering that draws about 200, and monthly Network Nites events where between 30–40 families socialize and enjoy a meal together and learn about opportunities to connect to Network activities and supports.

By the end of 2006, 2,200 community members had joined the Network through the entry point that best suited their needs. MCL employs Resident Organizing Coordinators, School Readiness Ambassadors, and Money Works Messengers. Each of these individuals is a neighborhood messenger focused on a different result area. Resident Organizing Coordinators (ROCs) assist in developing resident leadership, facilitate meetings, and act as liaisons between the community and government bodies, neighborhood organizations, and community associations. School Readiness Ambassadors (SRAs) intentionally connect neighborhoods, early care environments, and the schools. Money Works Messengers (MWMs) are a renewable corps of resident leaders who are prepared to lead MCL's wealth-building movement. Over the course of 12 months, MWMs develop their own leadership and core financial skills and learn effective ways to share information about financial opportunities. Resident leaders employed as ROCs, SRAs, and MWMs are cross-trained across results areas to broaden their reach throughout the community and improve their ability to link network members who enter at different points.

In Louisville, the Neighborhood Institute reinforces the principle that active and connected neighbors are prepared to hold both the public sector and the private sector accountable to residents. Once a week for 13 weeks, existing and emerging leaders attend seminars to enhance their skills, knowledge, interconnectedness, and resourcefulness. The sessions include small group work, full group discussion,

guest speakers and presenters, and other forms of learning and instruction. Topics include Managing Neighborhood and Grass Roots Organizations, How to Get People Involved (and Keep Them Involved), Neighborhoods and Government, Dealing with Public and Elected Officials, Development and Planning and Zoning, Building Consensus, Managing and Resolving Conflict, Resources and Partners, Neighborhood Plans, and Strategic Plans.

Louisville's SRAs intentionally connect neighborhoods, early care environments, and the schools. SRAs provide informal and peer-based outreach and family support, helping parents and children prepare for school entry. SRAs conduct informal home visits, meeting with individual parents, grandparents, and neighborhood residents caring for young children. During these visits, they share information and materials and connect parents to supports and services, such as early learning/literacy home-based strategies, prenatal care, quality early care options, and preschools. SRAs also meet with schools, churches, child care centers, and homes and service agencies, sharing information to help partners tailor services to meet parents' and children's needs. Through these relationships, SRAs effectively navigate, understand, and translate in all three environments, ensuring a seamless transition from early care to school.

MCL is also using its community-wide Network as a tool for engaging and supporting residents entering its jobs pipeline. To date, 52 Network members have been connected through the jobs pipeline

to employment opportunities at Norton Healthcare and UPS.

And, with support from the federal Environmental Protection Agency, the Center for Neighborhoods and the University of Louisville brought residents, developers, and local government together to effectively address the many abandoned industrial properties within the California neighborhood. Seventeen residents participated in the program, which included workshops on standards and legislation, models of brownfields redevelopment, neighborhood industry history, connecting to other players and stakeholders within the community, and forming relationships across sectors. Program participants play a central role in determining next steps, including making recommendations for the task force that will directly influence future development.

SEATTLE/WHITE CENTER, WASHINGTON

Making Connections Seattle targets two communities, White Center and Boulevard Park, which are known in the region for their diversity. People of color make up approximately 42 percent of the population, representing no less than 15 ethnic groups. Recent immigrants make up approximately one-quarter of the population. While the influx of immigrants and refugees and high poverty rates contribute to tensions within and between communities, ethnic and cultural ties create cohesive social networks. For example, many refugee groups have organized grassroots mutual aid associations, providing important services and resources. The associations generate dialogue, surface community concerns, and identify

and develop grassroots leaders. In White Center and Boulevard Park, these pre-existing social networks formed the foundation for *Making Connections*.

New partnerships between service-providing and ethnically-based organizations rest firmly on a foundation of grassroots leadership and the neighborhood-based infrastructure. In 2006, the partners committed to realizing “the New Normal.” The New Normal describes a community change process that results in:

- A new way of doing business based on values, mutual validation, authentic partnerships, and accountability between residents and institutions.
- Realization of racial equity, with families of color confidently and effectively controlling their collective and individual destinies.
- Families and residents are connected to something bigger than themselves.
- A learning environment that recognizes community assets and mobilizes those assets to implement and document new best practices.

Making Connections Seattle supports Authentic Demand and promotes the New Normal at all levels of the initiative. Residents collaborate with community partners to make the decisions that determine the initiative’s direction. In addition, they serve on workgroups that design and monitor strategies in each result area. Finally, residents play a direct role in implementing

strategies; drawing on social networks to connect families to services and resources. Throughout the initiative, residents collaborate with partners to strengthen existing social networks and resident leadership.

In immigrant and refugee communities, deep divisions often complicate mainstream organizing and leadership development efforts. Rather than relying on traditional organizing models, *Making Connections* Seattle identifies and supports local leaders who have earned the trust of multiple factions within and outside the community. These individuals serve as Trusted Advocates and are at the heart of all of *Making Connections* Seattle’s Authentic Demand strategies.

The Trusted Advocate strategy engages and works with the recognized leadership within the various cultural communities in the neighborhood. Trusted Advocates are a close-knit cadre of leaders who: strengthen social supports; organize community members to communicate with schools, service providers, and other organizations; facilitate community involvement in advocacy activities; build the communities’ knowledge of issues that affect them; and solicit input and help to ensure that resident voices inform the *Making Connections* process. In addition to these goals, Trusted Advocates serve as bilingual facilitators, convene community meetings, share data, and connect people to needed services and with policymakers and funders.

The White Center/Boulevard Park neighborhood created a civic engagement workgroup whose

charge was to connect resident leaders in the political institutions that affect their lives. Trusted Advocates helped to develop and provide local workshops on civic engagement and engaged their local communities in a dialogue on the importance of representation on elected decision-making bodies. This focus has spurred significant political activism within the community. Two Trusted Advocates have run for and won seats on the local school board and three local residents have run for and won seats on North Highline Unincorporated Advisory Council for White Center and Boulevard Park. This advisory committee informed a crucial decision about whether the area would remain unincorporated or get annexed into the City of Seattle/City of Burien.

The neighborhood asked a Resident Leadership Council to play a central role in assessing community needs and assets, setting priorities, and designing and implementing strategies. Building on the Resident Leadership Council and community meetings in 2001, Trusted Advocates and partners developed strategy groups to focus on the results areas of work and earnings, school success, safe streets and neighborhoods, strong families, and civic engagement. A Trusted Advocate and community partner co-chair each work group. In 2006, Trusted Advocates collaborated with *Making Connections* Seattle partners to produce a Community Investment Plan to guide partners' and Foundation investments. Trusted Advocates shaped the planning process and set priorities. As *Making Connections* Seattle transitioned to local sustainability,

Trusted Advocates played a central role in all decisions. The White Center Community Development Association (CDA), *Making Connections* Seattle's Local Management Entity, has incorporated Trusted Advocates and Boulevard Park residents into its governance structure. The Advocates are working with White Center CDA staff members to develop a plan to expand and sustain the Trusted Advocates strategy. In addition, they have discussed staff roles for Trusted Advocates, further integrating them into the organization. Trusted Advocates are working closely with White Center CDA to develop a neighborhood plan that uses a social network approach to address the needs of multi-ethnic small businesses.

White Center Trusted Advocates also led a community conversation to define school readiness. Trusted Advocates did one-on-one outreach and convened small discussion groups of 6–12 parents, ultimately gathering perspectives from more than 120 parents on what school readiness might mean and what the barriers to school readiness might be. Parents who participated in these discussion groups were invited to continue their involvement by recruiting other parents, providing training on the issue, or taking direct action in the community. Trusted Advocates also held similar conversations with local schools, Head Start programs, and day care programs. The conversations served as a starting point for a multipoint school readiness strategy.

White Center/Boulevard Park's Family Connections approach uses school readiness as an entry point to work holistically with 60–90

families of children entering kindergarten and 100 families served through early learning programs. Trusted Advocates enroll families, establishing a trusting relationship and connecting families with a range of services to address identified issues. While working with individual families, Trusted Advocates also build and strengthen social networks among cohort families and within the broader community.

LOOKING AHEAD

It was only in 2006 that *Making Connections* began to convene sites to support peer learning and strategy development around Authentic Demand. Annie E. Casey Foundation staff and site representatives have collaboratively developed and refined the honeycomb model for Authentic Demand. They have worked together to identify ways existing site work currently reflects the honeycomb structure, and how it could be adapted to deepen the Authentic Demand work in each site.

Sites have learned a lot from the work that has been done to date. While all sites are doing some work in the area of Authentic Demand, they are not always covering all four segments of the honeycomb. Civic engagement and community organizing appear to be the segments where site work is the weakest and where more work could be done to improve the integration of new strategies into the sites' current work. A key mechanism for further development of Authentic Demand capacity in sites is the peer

exchange of the Resident Engagement in Action and Leadership Coordinators network, supported by a national team of Casey staff and consultants. This support comes through monthly conference calls, occasional face-to-face convenings, and a team website—all of which facilitate mutual exchange of insights, problem-solving, tools, and resources between and among sites and the Foundation.

There is work to be done to better align strategies and build connections and synergy across the cells of the honeycomb. For example, if a site is using social networking as a strategy to engage a broad range of residents, how are they identifying potential leaders within these networks and building their capacity to play a more active role in community change? Is there specific training or support they can give these individuals so that they can play a supportive role in community organizing and civic engagement work?

There is also work to be done to tie the specific Authentic Demand strategies to the work in Workforce, Assets, and Children Healthy and Prepared for Success in School (CHAPSS) programs. While much

interesting and innovative work is being done, more intentional connections are needed. Truly connecting Authentic Demand strategies to the strategies being used to create results in Workforce, Assets, and CHAPSS requires an intentional effort to provide coordinated technical assistance to help sites blend Authentic Demand strategies with strategies in the other areas.

- In 2007, the Foundation brought Authentic Demand technical assistance providers together with providers working with sites on supporting CHAPSS. This yielded better integration of Authentic Demand and CHAPSS strategies.
- A 2006 paper described ways Authentic Demand strategies could support work in Workforce and Assets. This paper provided a valuable resource for sites that are interested in a more focused connection between Authentic Demand strategies and their work in these areas.

Measuring change in an area such as Authentic Demand is challenging. The Authentic Demand framework encompasses several different types of activities—each with their own individual pathways to change. More challenging is the fact that Authentic Demand as a construct is about changes in individual and community behavior that are often difficult to quantify and measure.

Yet measuring and demonstrating change in an area such as Authentic Demand—while more difficult than in areas that are more easily measured quantitatively—is crucial. Those working on jobs or school success rarely get challenged



to demonstrate why their successes are meaningful. Increases in social networks, resident leadership, civic engagement, or community organizing, on the other hand, are often challenged with the need to prove that these boost results in other areas. Significant further investment is needed to support the Authentic Demand work.

Making Connections is still learning much from, and with, sites about how best to develop a framework for Authentic Demand that both reflects the complexity of work on the ground and is simple enough to serve as a useful communication tool.

- Foundation staff and consultants have been working to develop a number of learning tools that can support evaluation and learning in the area of Authentic Demand. A number of these tools are in draft form and ready to be piloted with sites interested in partnering in the development process. It is hoped that this partnership will yield a strong set of tools that all sites can use.
- The Foundation has long supported the development of Local Learning Partnerships in each *Making Connections* site. These non-traditional coalitions bring residents who seek community data together with data providers and analysts. These partnerships ensure that information is available to support community-based decision-making. Local Learning Partnerships are ideally where learning, evaluation, data analysis, and Authentic Demand come together. One focus of future

work is to engage Local Learning Partnerships more fully in the Authentic Demand work.

- Often the on-the-ground practitioners who are working on Authentic Demand feel isolated and alone. Bringing these individuals together across sites not only energizes them, but creates a rich and productive venue for cross-site learning. *Making Connections* capitalizes on this energy and excitement by working across sites to create a long-term learning agenda and structure for shared learning.

The Foundation offers a range of technical assistance, and technical assistance providers, to help sites, including:

- Facilitation of theory-building and backwards mapping of outcomes.
- Selection or development of indicators that can be used to track performance and measure outcomes.
- Evaluation planning; including sampling, identification of data sources and appropriate methods to answer evaluation questions; development of data collection instruments; data collection; and analysis, interpretation, and use of the findings.
- Qualitative analysis and methods for triangulating qualitative process data with quantitative measures of performance and outcomes.
- Data management.

- Reporting.

- Training and support in the use of specialized software packages, including network analysis, GIS mapping, Atlas, and others.

Finally, *Making Connections* has developed a routine schedule of phone conferences where evaluators and community members participate in discussions about measurement and documentation, share and create tools, and learn about and make the case for Authentic Demand.

AUTHENTIC DEMAND

Technical assistance is available to help sites—individually and collectively—develop plans and build local capacity for collecting and using data.

Technical assistance includes a variety of resources connected to each of the individual portfolios that make up the Authentic Demand honeycomb—resident leadership, social networks, community organizing, and civic participation. The Authentic Demand technical assistance providers may individually have a stronger background and experience in a particular strand of Authentic Demand, but each is committed to and versed in the complete Authentic Demand frame. Their charge is not only to support sites in developing a particular strategy, but to help sites to think holistically about supporting that strategy through all of the strands of Authentic Demand, and how it links to the *Making Connections* results areas. This results in technical assistance which, while targeted and focused to a site's specific needs, helps sites deepen the power and effectiveness of the work. Sites are supported in the development of models and approaches that build on the intersection of all aspects of the Authentic Demand framework. The following are the key areas of technical assistance.

AUTHENTIC DEMAND MAPPING

Authentic Demand mapping provides a supported opportunity to:

- Review its existing work around resident leadership, social networks, community organizing, and civic participation—and identify key opportunities to weave these

strands to work together in a way that is mutually reinforcing.

- Map existing work to the strands of Authentic Demand to identify areas of strength and gaps.
- Identify key results for the site's Authentic Demand work.
- Prioritize key opportunities to enhance the site's Authentic Demand work.
- Focus on how Authentic Demand strategies can support achievement of results in Workforce, Assets, and CHAPSS.
- Assist with developing a technical assistance plan to support the site's Authentic Demand work.

STRENGTHENING POSITIVE SOCIAL NETWORKS AND NETWORK ORGANIZING

Technical assistance and learning exchanges are provided by Lawrence Community Works, Inc. (LCW), an exemplary membership network organization in Lawrence, Massachusetts. LCW serves as the primary capacity-building partner for Casey places and others by sharing their experience, demonstrated success, and knowledge in translating social network principles, into powerful, results-oriented practice. Casey places engage with LCW through peer exchanges and learning forums in Lawrence; as well, LCW provides limited one-on-one consultation with sites when needed. These kinds of peer exchanges with exemplary practitioners from across the country (also occasionally with Beyond Welfare in Ames, Iowa, and LUPE in McAllen, Texas) have proved most

helpful for sites to experience the power of social network practice in particular, and to adapt their learning for application to their own site work.

For more information, please visit these websites:

LCW website: www.lcworks.org
Beyond Welfare website: www.beyondwelfare.org
LUPE website: www.lupenet.org

RESIDENT LEADERSHIP AND FACILITATION TRAINING

Resident Leadership and Facilitation workshops are two-day training opportunities for current and potential community and resident leaders in strategic planning, data use, meeting facilitation, and other skills. Sessions offer basic and advanced training, and can be modified for youth participants.

NATIONAL AND LOCAL RESIDENT LEADERSHIP CONVENINGS

The Casey Leadership Development Unit sponsors the Resident Leadership Network, which brings participants from the *Making Connections* sites, and other communities where the Foundation works, together for peer learning and support on a regular basis. Several sites are working with the Leadership Development Unit to create similar networks for skill-building and information-sharing at the local level.

RESIDENT LEADERSHIP CERTIFICATE PROGRAM

Several *Making Connections* sites are working with community colleges to develop certificate and for-credit programs in resident



leadership. The curricula are expected to include major elements of the Resident Leadership and Facilitation training and other components proposed by resident leaders, other community members, and college faculty and staff.

COMMUNITY DECISION-MAKING

Community decision-making is a process by which a local community assumes responsibility for developing and implementing a broadly supported plan of action to achieve desired results. These strategies help create an open and transparent structure of accountability for community members and partners as they work to strengthen families and communities. The Center for the Study of Social Policy, which works closely with the Casey Foundation on *Making Connections* and other initiatives, has developed a full array of tools and resources to support the local design and development of local decision-making.

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

This work, also supported by the Center for the Study of Social Policy,

encourages resident-consumers to partner with organizations in their neighborhood and use customer feedback strategies to improve the quality of local financial, retail, and nonprofit goods and services. As informed consumers, residents are empowered to push for higher-quality and more responsive service delivery in their neighborhoods.

COMMUNITY ORGANIZING SUPPORT

Community organizing efforts within the Authentic Demand framework focus on creating resident-led structures and processes that build long-term alliances among multiple partners for community change. This focus helps assure that organizing strategies achieve long-term policy and system changes.

Technical assistance in support of community organizing helps sites explore how these strategies build support for achieving results, and helps strengthen other parts of the Authentic Demand framework—such as promotion of positive social networks, increased civic participation, and active resident leadership.

TIME DOLLAR

Technical assistance from the national Time Dollar Institute helps sites learn how to connect residents to each other in reciprocal, mutually beneficial relationships that build on their strengths, talents, and skills. The Time Dollar approach is based on the belief that every member of a community has something to offer, and that each community has the capacity to pool these resources for its own social and economic abundance. Time Dollar programs encourage residents to contribute and exchange a range of goods and services, including home maintenance, child care, school supplies, and groceries.

For more information, please visit:

TimeBanks USA, Inc. website:
www.timebanks.org

SOCIAL NETWORK MAPPING

Social network software helps communities map the structure and interconnections of existing networks. Network mapping is an important tool for understanding how existing networks are structured and operate within the community, developing an action plan for network-building and quantifying the impact of network-building efforts.

Social network mapping technical assistance includes workshops, training, and ongoing support on using Smart Networks mapping software to develop an action plan for enhancing existing networks.

APPENDIX: TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO SITES

For more information on the technical assistance available for sites to use in developing Authentic Demand, please visit the Annie E. Casey Foundation's website at www.aecf.org/mcguides.aspx

THE AUTHENTIC DEMAND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE APPROACH

Technical assistance available to sites in the developing Authentic Demand portfolio includes a variety of resources connected to each of the individual portfolios that make up the Authentic Demand honey-comb—resident leadership, social networks, community organizing, and civic participation. This results in technical assistance which, while targeted and focused to a site's specific needs, helps sites deepen the power and effectiveness of the work. Sites are supported in the development of models and approaches that build on the intersection of all aspects of the Authentic Demand framework. For example:

- While specific technical assistance is available around narrow aspects of the Authentic Demand work—for example support for a site that wants to more fully develop its organizing work or work on network development—sites are encouraged to think of the Authentic Demand work holistically and will be supported developing models and approaches that build on the intersection of all aspects of the Authentic Demand framework.
- In general the Authentic Demand work is best supported by a community-of-practice approach. This involves bringing together groups

of practitioners to share, create, and implement knowledge. What unifies these approaches are:

- Practitioner-to-practitioner sharing.
- The creation of communities to help process learning and support implementation of knowledge.
- The creation of a common practice framework through the sharing of resources, tools, stories, and experiences.

SPECIFIC TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE

Networking of REAL Coordinators

Starting in 2007, the Foundation has regularly brought together in person and by phone, a set of individuals called Resident Engagement in Action and Leadership (REAL) coordinators. These individuals have a variety of official titles at the site level, but generally are responsible for coordinating the Authentic Demand work within sites. The regular meetings have served as an important focus for information exchange:

- First and foremost, REAL coordinators are able to learn from each other, share strategies and build a supportive network across sites.

- Second, they are able to hear from Foundation staff about things that would directly impact their work.
- Finally, they were able to inform the work of Foundation staff and consultants to ensure that it was responsive to the needs of residents in sites.

Through these dialogues, REAL coordinators played a key role in developing the Authentic Demand framework, and have served as key informants in the development of the Authentic Demand technical assistance strategies. At regular intervals, REAL coordinators were brought together with Authentic Demand technical assistance providers in a two-way information exchange that both served to inform the work of REAL coordinators on the ground, and to ground the work of technical assistance providers in site experience. The Foundation will continue to support the REAL coordinator network. For more information contact Rachel McIntosh at (410) 223-2917 or e-mail rmcintosh@aecf.org.

Authentic Demand Mapping

Authentic Demand mapping provides a supported opportunity for the site to:

- Review its existing work around resident leadership, social net-

works, community organizing, and civic participation—and identify key opportunities to weave these strands of work together in a way that is mutually reinforcing.

- Map existing work to the strands of Authentic Demand to identify areas of strength and gaps.
- Identify key results for the site’s Authentic Demand work.
- Prioritize key opportunities to enhance the site’s Authentic Demand work.
- Focus on how Authentic Demand strategies can support achievement of results in Workforce, Assets, and CHAPSS (Children Healthy and Prepared to Succeed in School).
- Assistance with developing a technical assistance plan to support the site’s Authentic Demand work.

Authentic Demand mapping is a key entryway to developing a supportive technical assistance relationship with the Authentic Demand team. In 2007, every site had the opportunity to work with a member of the Authentic Demand team on Authentic Demand mapping. Generally the process takes between four to six hours. To participate effectively, sites should convene a team that includes:

- The site coordinator.
- Resident leaders.
- Individuals working closely on civic engagement, community

organizing, resident leadership, or social networks within the site.

- Representatives from the site’s Workforce, Assets and CHAPSS work.
- Local Learning Partnership representatives.

Social Networks Immersions

The social networks team has been using a process called immersion as a form of intensive practitioner-to-practitioner learning and sharing within sites. Immersion describes a process where an individual or group spends an extended and intensive period of time in an activity in order to learn or become proficient at something. It is not an event, but rather a process of interaction, exchange, and preparation that occurs over a period of time. There is no one way to conduct an immersion; rather, it must be constructed around the unique needs of the participants AND around the stage of development of their practice. The social networks team has used immersion as a key learning process because it reflects many of the social networks principles:

- At its heart, immersion is about relationship-building.
- The immersion process is based on reciprocity: both seasoned and new practitioners should have learning goals, and are expected to share their experiences.
- The immersion process is designed to mirror the flexible and demand-driven environment of social networks. By thoughtfully observing and participating in practice, key questions such as

“How would this need to be adapted for my environment?” or “What am I observing about what works and what doesn’t about this structure?” rise to the surface. These drive the Technical Assistance agenda.

The social networks team has conducted a very successful immersion, where staff from Lawrence Community Works (LCW)—a social networks partner organization—came to Denver and observed and worked with the staff from six local nonprofits which were interested in infusing social networks into their work. In addition, two other social networks partners—Beyond Welfare and LUPE (La Union del Pueblo Entero) have structured processes for creating an immersion experience for sites that would like to come and visit their programs. A number of tools have been developed to provide overall structure and framing for the immersion process; capture the learning that occurs along the way; and provide support and guidance for both the TA providers and the site on the effective use of immersion. The immersion process is expensive and intensive. Structuring and paying for an immersion generally depends on a partnership between the site itself, the social networks team, and Technical Assistance Resource Center.

Lawrence CommunityWorks

Lawrence, Massachusetts CommunityWorks is a nonprofit community development corporation working to transform and revitalize the physical, economic, and social landscape of Lawrence. They do this with a growing network of residents and stakeholders, who are:

- Engaged in building family and community assets.
- Providing each other with caring and mutual support.
- Building leadership and civic engagement skills.
- Engaging in collective action for positive growth and change in Lawrence.

For the past four years, LCW has served as a primary learning partner and technical assistance provider for Casey places interested in adapting social network/membership principles and practice. LCW continues to be a national leader in the practice of social network-building and network organizing.

For more information, visit their website at www.lcworks.org.

Resident Leadership Facilitation

Resident Leadership and Facilitation workshops are two-day training opportunities for residents who are currently resident leaders, or have been identified by others as potential leaders. There are four workshops in this series—RLF 101 (basic); RLF 201 (advanced); RLF Train the Trainer, which prepares residents who have shown a high level of skill in 101 and 201 to become RLF workshop coaches in

their own communities; and RLF for Youth, a modified version targeted to youth ages 15–20. RLFs have been provided by a diverse team of national coaches and a resident coach from another site.

By mid-May, 2007, every *Making Connections* site had been provided with at least two 101s and two 201s, and seven of the sites had at least three residents who had been trained to be RLF coaches. RLF is moving into a new phase in which RLF workshops will be led by these local resident leaders. A national coach attends RLF workshops, led by local coaches, to assist the local coaches with their final preparation the day before a workshop and consult with them during breaks in the workshop.

Resident leaders who are graduates of RLF have increased skills and knowledge in meeting design, meeting facilitation, planning, effective meeting participation, listening, handling the difficult dynamics that arise in many community meetings; and gain increased confidence. They are valuable assets to MC sites as leaders, planners, and as voices expressing community needs and ideas.

Resident Leadership and Facilitation was created and is supported and managed by the Casey Leadership Development Unit, and is also

supported by the Center for the Study of Social Policy.

Local Resident Leadership Learning Convenings

The Casey Leadership Development Unit is offering support and guidance to MC sites that wish to create local counterparts to the national Resident Leadership Network.

These convenings have a unique name in each site and are planned and led by a Design Team of resident leaders, and are supported by local MC site staff and a consultant from the Leadership Development Unit. They are one- to two-day events that include skill-building, information-sharing, and relationship-building activities, all led by local resident leaders. Each targets 30–40 local resident leaders or potential leaders.

These events assist local sites to:

- Recruit more residents into the activities and work of *Making Connections*.
- Enhance the skills and knowledge of a growing body of resident leaders.
- Strengthen relationships between community residents.
- Provide resident leaders with additional opportunities to

Technical assistance available to sites in the developing Authentic Demand portfolio includes a variety of resources connected to each of the individual portfolios that make up the Authentic Demand honeycomb—resident leadership, social networks, community organizing and civic participation. Each of the Authentic Demand technical assistance providers, though having a stronger background and experience in one of the particular strands of Authentic Demand, is committed and versed in the whole Authentic Demand frame.

deepen, strengthen, and deploy their talents.

- Bring staff, residents, and partners together to discover opportunities and advocate for investments in resident leadership.

Each site develops additional specific results that it desires from its local convening.

A consultant from Casey's LDU provides both on-site and off-site consultation and guidance to the planning and preparation process.

Sites may access more information about this activity by contacting the LDU Manager for this program, Caroline Gaston, at cgaston@att.net.

Resident Leadership Certificate Program

The Casey Leadership Development Unit is offering support and guidance to MC sites that wish to work with a local college-level institution to develop a certificate or for-credit program in Resident Leadership.

Planning is led by committees that are structured differently at each site, but always include resident leaders and college administrators, and, in some cases, representatives of community-based organizations, business leaders, neighborhood association leaders, and representatives of city government. The curricula include major elements of the RLF curriculum, and other components proposed by planning committee members and college faculty and staff. A consultant from Casey's LDU provides both on-site and off-site consultation and guidance to the planning and



preparation process. Resident leaders who are graduates of RLF will have opportunities to be co-teachers in these college programs.

This work is expected to be of benefit to sites by:

- Expanding the number of skilled and knowledgeable resident leaders.
- Strengthening the leadership skills of residents who are involved in the planning process and/or who serve as co-teachers for the classes.
- Exposing many residents to college campuses and higher education learning opportunities.
- Helping residents to strengthen their resumes and have credible, marketable evidence of their knowledge and skills.
- Having a pool of resident leaders with the skills, knowledge and confidence that enables them to be more effective leaders and contributors at decision-making tables.

Each site is developing additional specific results that it desires from this program.

Sites may access more information about this activity by contacting the LDU Manager for this program, Caroline Gaston, at cgaston@att.net.

Community Decision-Making

Community decision-making is a process by which a local community assumes responsibility for developing and implementing a broadly supported plan of action to achieve desired results. Community decision-making processes help to create an open and transparent structure of accountability for community members and partners to guide local efforts to strengthen families and communities, and to define and continuously monitor those results that will improve the community's overall quality of life. Technical assistance available on the



community decision-making process can help sites to:

- Design a process and structure that responds to the community's agenda to strengthen families;
- Conduct a diagnostic assessment of existing structures and process to be more effective, and determine what's working (or not).
- Create a strengths-based plan of action to improve upon existing success, and expand community involvement and diversity and ownership.
- Assess the environment, authority, policies, and resources needed to fulfill the community decision-makers scope of work and desired results.
- Develop an appropriate community decision-making process that aligns goals with structures and builds upon what already exists in the community.
- Define the appropriate role of staff to support community decision-makers without controlling the process.
- Review the lessons learned and characteristics of effective

community decision-making processes.

- Troubleshoot problems with community boards or decision-making structures.

CSSP has developed a full array of tools and resources to support the design and development of local decision-making. For more information, contact Phyllis R. Brunson at (202) 371-1565 or via e-mail: phyllis.brunson@cssp.org.

Customer Satisfaction

The Customer Satisfaction body of work applies the basic self-correcting structures from for-profit market and demand approaches to efforts aimed at transforming vulnerable communities and empowering resident-consumers. This work encourages resident-consumers to partner with organizations in their neighborhoods to utilize consumer feedback strategies as opportunities to improve service quality and service outcomes. It also provides resident-consumers with a consumer advocacy component that provides comparative analyses of feedback from resident-consumers on goods and services that may be of interest to them, such as banking services, or grocery stores, or family support centers, etc. Once residents view themselves as informed

consumers, they use their power to shape the marketplace by communicating their preferences and standards to organizations that deliver services in their neighborhoods.

The Customer Satisfaction work is designed to:

- Improve responsiveness and effectiveness of service providers in the neighborhood;
- Link regular customer feedback to quality service improvement plans;
- Change the power balance between customers in poor and vulnerable neighborhoods and the organizations, agencies, and their workers that provide services;
- Promote a consumer base that is more informed and ready to take action in their neighborhoods and communities.

Sites wanting technical assistance in the area of customer satisfaction will receive support to develop a road map on:

- Conducting research on quality services.
- Educating consumers about their rights and what to expect from service providers.
- Organizing and mobilizing consumers to participate in service quality improvements.
- Where possible, developing effective partnerships with service providers who want to improve customer experiences.

For more information about the Customer Satisfaction work, please contact Phyllis R. Brunson at the Center for the Study of Social Policy, (202) 371-1565 or via e-mail at phyllis.brunson@cssp.org.

Community Organizing Support

Community organizing efforts within the Authentic Demand framework focus on:

- Creating an organizing structure and process that is community-led rather than organizer-led.
- Organizing within the context of long-term relationships (both pre-existing and to-be-built) not only between those who are part of organizing efforts, but between those and their larger base in the community; and even between those and their targets.
- Ensuring that organizing efforts are connected not only to short-term wins, but also long-term policy and systems change.

The technical assistance in the area of organizing has a two-part structure:

- Convening sites that are using organizing as a key strategy. This shared session helps sites to explore:
 - What is organizing within an Authentic Demand framework?
 - How does this type of organizing help support movement toward *Making Connections* core results?

—Connecting sites in a peer TA session about the implications of the above for organizing in sites.

—Developing action plans for sites to strengthen their organizing work; enhance its integration with the other strands of Authentic Demand; and focus its impact toward *Making Connections* core results areas.

- Individual technical assistance work will then support sites that want help implementing their action plans.

Our lead partner in learning about and adopting the principles and practices of community organizing within a community change initiative is Mike Kromrey, Executive Director of Metro Organizations for People (MOP) in Denver, Colorado. For more information contact Mike at www.mopdenver.org.

Time Dollars

The work of the Time Banks USA Inc. Institute addresses one of the major problems in *Making Connections* sites and other Casey places: the importance of better connecting residents to each other in reciprocal, mutually beneficial relationships. Several *Making Connections* sites are now using Time Dollars as an intrinsically logical and simple means to form networks of support that build on the strengths, talents, and skills of residents. The Time Dollar approach is based on the belief that every member of a community is a valuable resource (not just a “giver” or a “receiver”) and that

each community has the capacity to pool these resources for its own social and economic abundance. Time Dollars are a medium of exchange designed to recognize and validate the work of neighbors helping neighbors, by creating an economy that allows residents to earn one Time Dollar for each hour of service contributed to another neighbor or to the neighborhood. Earned dollars can be used in a number of ways, including receiving services from another neighbor or purchasing goods such as school supplies, food, and clothing.

The Time Dollar Institute is available to provide the following support for *Making Connections* sites:

- Training and workshops on the Time Dollar approach.
- Support in the development and use of software to track exchanges under the Time Dollars model.
- Ongoing consultation and support for a Time Dollar Coordinator with sites.

For more information, contact Time Banks USA Inc. at www.timebanks.org.

Social Network Mapping and Weaving

Network mapping and weaving uses social network software to help communities visually map out the structure and interconnections of existing networks. Network mapping is an important tool for:

- Understanding how existing networks are structured and operate within the community.

- Developing an action plan for network-building and weaving (enhancing connectivity and resource flow within networks).
- Quantifying the impact of network-building efforts.

Technical assistance is available to sites, including:

- Interactive workshops for up to 50 people to introduce them to the concepts of network mapping and weaving, and engage them in mapping key networks in their community.
- Training and ongoing support on using Smart Networks network mapping software to map and develop an action plan for enhancing existing networks.
- Ongoing consultation and support for community groups working on mapping, analyzing, and enhancing networks.

For more information about Smart Networks, contact June Holly at www.networkweaving.com.

Available Tools, Documents, and Resources

There are a number of tools, documents, and resources that are available to sites to support their work in Authentic Demand. The resources fall into the following areas:

- Tools produced by the Foundation. These include guidance documents, point-of-view papers, and supportive materials produced by the various Foundation units that have been supporting the Authentic Demand work.

- Tools produced by sites. During their implementation work, a number of sites have produced tools and resources that may be helpful to others trying to implement Authentic Demand strategies. While the bibliography does not include an exhaustive list of each of these tools, it does contain descriptions of key tools that have been used and tested and are ready to share.

- Tools produced by intermediary partners. These descriptions are of tools produced by community-based organizations whose field practice served as a model for some of the Authentic Demand strategies. While these tools were developed for specific community-based contexts, there is much to be learned from thinking about ways they can be adapted for other communities and contexts.

- Tools produced by the field. These include documents and resources that have been produced by other practitioners in the field, that may help to build understanding or support implementation of Authentic Demand strategies.

- Meetings with Movement is a resource for conducting meetings that MOVE groups to take actions which produce results because they are engaging, they have a focus, they seek ownership and participation both in the process and in the results of the meetings. Meetings with Movement are intended to support *Making Connections* (and other community change initiatives) efforts to ground their work on Authentic

Demand by using meeting structures that:

- Equalize power among diverse participants.
- Build relationships as well as knowledge.
- Engage different learning styles.

Contact Audrey Jordan at ajordan@aecf.org or 410.223.2952 for more information.

Making CONNECTIONS

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