



Why place-based strategies matter: WRAG briefing on Promise and Choice neighborhoods

The Annie E. Casey Foundation
◆ June 3, 2010 ◆



CENTER FOR FAMILY ECONOMIC SUCCESS

Connecting People, Place and Opportunity

Adopting a Two-Generation Approach

Kids do well when their families do well. Families do better when they live in supportive communities.



Building strong financial futures for families and communities

Overview of Presentation

- ▶ What are place-based strategies?
- ▶ What are the pros/cons and common pitfalls?
- ▶ What are roles for local and national funders?
- ▶ What are critical success factors?



Place-Based Strategies

Community Change Initiatives

- Long history of attempts
- Varied success
- Applied to a wide range of social issues
- National, state, and local initiatives
- Federal government and foundations, major supporters in US
- Internationally used

Community Change Initiatives

- Building community capacity to change the social, environmental, and systemic determinants of child well-being and success
- Aligning and changing systems and factors in the environment that impact on desired outcomes
- Promoting the Five C's (Community, Control, Cash, Connections, Collective Action, and Collaboration)
- Facilitating a bottom-up, top-down, meet in the middle response by the community. Find common ground.
- Start with small wins, build momentum. It's a movement, not a program

What is Making Connections?

10 cities

(Denver, Des Moines, Hartford, Indianapolis, Louisville, Milwaukee, Oakland, Providence, San Antonio, White Center/Seattle)

“Two generation” framework of results:

Families’ work and earnings, asset building
Children healthy and prepared to succeed in
school, aiming for proficient 3rd grade reading

Aim: “Close the gaps” in results between MC neighborhoods and the city/region

Lessons about a Results Focus

- ▶ **Advantages:**

- “Close the gap” frame can lead communities to go deeper with vulnerable families and to pursue policy solutions in order to get results at scale

- Results frame has strong resonance with neighborhood residents, and many residents are using “results based accountability tools”

- ▶ **Challenge:**

- Depending how it’s introduced, results-based accountability can be either a mobilizing force, or can lead to a compliance mentality, with tensions about “who’s results?”

Lessons About Community Capacity

- ▶ Community capacity has to be “braided” with the results focus: it’s the “work behind the work”
- ▶ Recognize and define community capacity
 - Resident engagement, leadership, “voice” and mobilization for results
 - Alliances of aligned and influential partners
 - Collaborating funders and adequate resources
 - Using data for decisions and accountability
 - Strong local leadership
- ▶ Community capacity is shaped locally

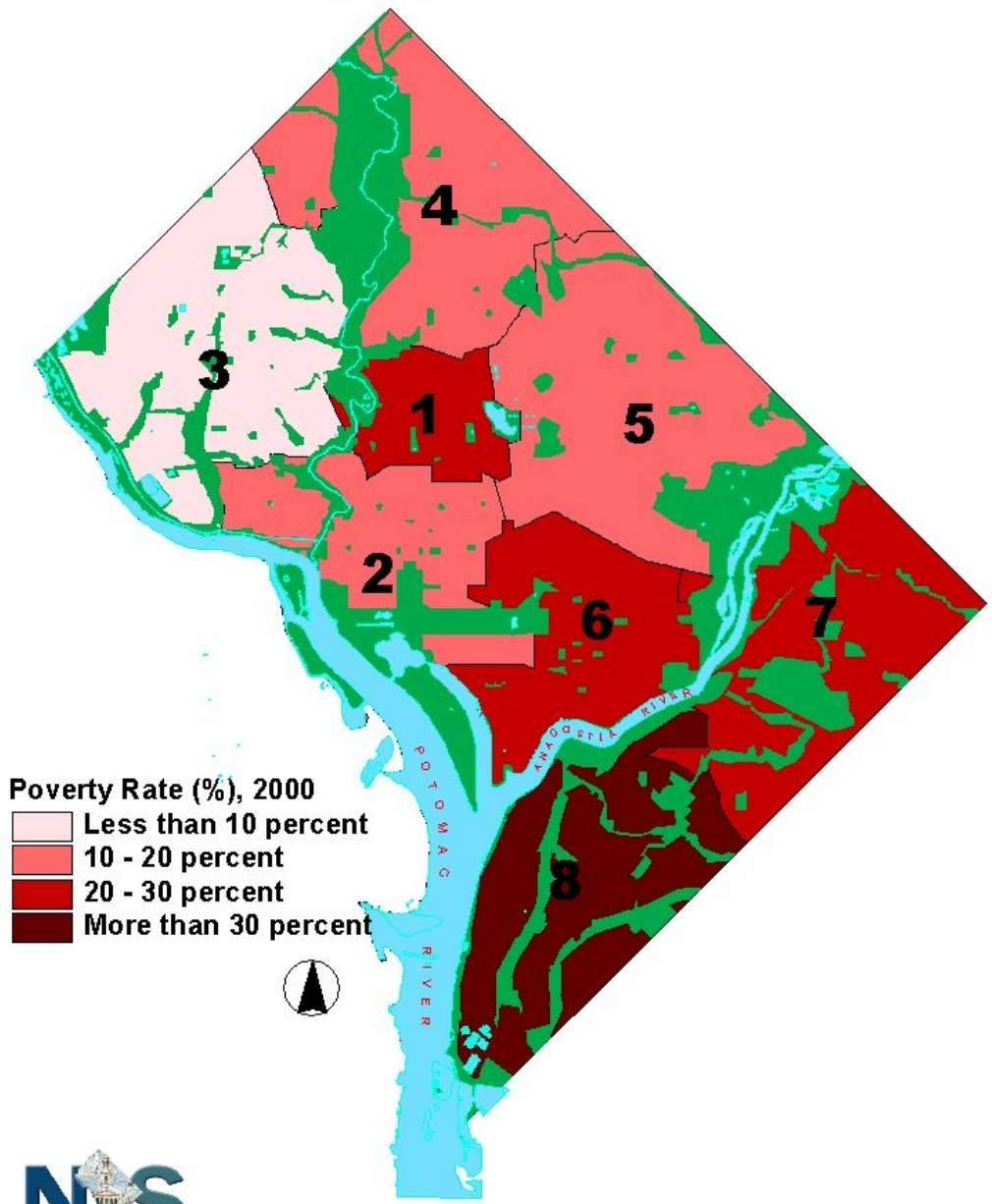
Measuring Success:

- ▶ Change in **PLACE**
- ▶ Change in **PEOPLE**
- ▶ Change in **COMMUNITY CAPACITIES**
- ▶ Change in **SYSTEMS OF SUPPORT & SERVICES**
- ▶ Change in **ENVIRONMENT & CONTEXT**

Defining success = setting targets, closing gaps

- Promise Neighborhoods example:
 - Four measurable goals for setting targets:
 - Children are healthy and prepared for school entry
 - Children and youth are healthy and succeed in school
 - Youth graduate from high school and college
 - Families and neighborhoods support the healthy development, academic success and well-being of their children
- Closing the gaps in health, academic success and college entry/graduation between children and families served within Promise Neighborhoods and the ward, city, school district

Washington, DC Wards



From pilots to building local ownership and sustainability

We are building a high performing cbo infrastructure East of the River which is:

- Demonstrating measurable gains for vulnerable children, youth and families
- Generating co-investment from local and national funders and the federal government
- Working collaboratively on service integration projects such as the Successful Families Initiative

Five year benchmarks (2006-2010)

- ▶ Demonstrate measurable gains for low-income families and neighborhoods East of the River
- ▶ Establish Casey as a thought and practice leader on place-based strategies to reduce child poverty East of the River
- ▶ Influence national and local decisionmakers to bring attention and resources East of the River
- ▶ Accelerate the move to local ownership and co-investment to ensure long-term sustainability



Pros/Cons/Pitfalls

Key lessons: Learn from old mistakes and make new ones

- ▶ Making Connections lessons:

- :importance of building capacity around data – for both community partners and the foundation - agreement on what to measure, track and evaluate

- :adding too much complexity (e.g., multiple results, systems, consultants) diminishes the chances of success

- Empowerment Zone lessons:

- :geographic eligibility hurts – low-income families move as neighborhoods improve; caused community divides – who's in/out of boundary



Roles for funders

Assessing funder readiness

- Knowing what you want and the ways to get there (pathways to change).
- Clear about role. What decision-making are you ready to share? What strings are attached? Partner, investor, or ruler?
- Understanding how long it takes to get outcomes that are impressive to your board.
- Having your board and top leadership accept that community change is slow and incremental.
- Foundation grants are small investments compared to need. How are they best used as a catalyst and leverage?
- How will you deal with the conflicts that come with real change?

Funder questions on D.C.'s Promise/Choice design:

- **Scope:** Degree to which the initiative takes multiple approaches to achieve its intended results among the same population.
- **Scale:** Degree to which the initiative creates sufficient change as to reach the population of a community.
- **Sustainability:** Degree to which the targeted outcomes and approach is integrated into community life with sufficient long-term resources and capacity.

Key factors influencing scope, scale and sustainability

- A single broker and keeper of the vision
- Clear, well defined roles and responsibilities
- Alignment and fit with the CCI's focus
- Meaningful community engagement
- Leadership and staff capacity
- Capacity to turn data into knowledge that is used

Role for funders in Promise/Choice application:

- ▶ Invest in building capacity for community, system and data/evaluation readiness
- ▶ Stay involved as part of a learning/action network
- ▶ Push for data and continuous improvement throughout the process versus waiting for an evaluation at the end of the initiative
- ▶ Use an investment in the planning process to learn how a place-based strategy can improve outcomes for vulnerable children, youth and families versus leading to gentrification and displacement



Critical Success Factors



Beyond a call to action: Theory of Aligned Contributions

Population level changes happen if a core group of multi-sector, cross-agency leaders take aligned actions at scope and scale toward a common result

- A focus on a single, measurable population result
- An indicator to measure what success looks like for the population selected
- A focus on a common population result is created
- The current condition is made more visible and emotionally accessible
- Leaders publicly commit to hold themselves accountable for accelerating progress in a single measurement period

Critical Success Factor: Aligned Leadership



- ▶ *Do you believe in me . . . Do you believe that all 157,000 students in Dallas can leave high school ready for college or the workplace?*
- ▶ *Do you believe that every single one of us can graduate ready for college or the workplace?*
- ▶ *You better. Because next week, we're all showing up in your schools – all 157,000 of us – and what we need from you is to believe that we can reach our highest potential.”*
- ▶ *Watch Dalton Sherman’s video on YouTube*