

# *Tackling Persistent Poverty in Distressed Urban Neighborhoods*

## *History, Principles, and Strategies for Philanthropic Investment*

MARGERY AUSTIN TURNER, PETER EDELMAN, ERIKA POETHIG, AND LAUDAN ARON  
WITH MATTHEW ROGERS AND CHRISTOPHER LOWENSTEIN  
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## Introduction and Summary

Despite significant civil rights advancements and enormous improvements in the US standard of living over the past half-century, public policies and private initiatives have largely failed to solve the problem of persistent, intergenerational poverty among families living in distressed communities. This problem is not new, of course, but it is especially worrisome in light of widening income inequality and low social mobility.

Persistent intergenerational poverty is a complex and daunting problem that requires action at multiple levels.<sup>1</sup> No single strategy offers a “silver bullet,” but strategies that focus on the places poor families live have an important role to play. Almost 4 million poor children—most of whom are children of color—are growing up in high-poverty urban neighborhoods.<sup>2</sup> Compelling research evidence finds that conditions in these neighborhoods significantly undermine children’s life-chances and increase their risk of remaining poor as adults.

This paper summarizes lessons learned and evolving practice in the field of place-based interventions, and it offers a set of guiding principles for child-focused, place-conscious initiatives focused on persistent, intergenerational poverty.<sup>3</sup> We focus on experience and insights from work in distressed urban neighborhoods. Rural communities—including Indian reservations—also face serious challenges of intergenerational poverty that warrant attention. But the conditions and solutions in these places differ from urban neighborhoods and warrant separate analysis and discussion.

We begin with a brief summary of the origins and evolution of place-based antipoverty initiatives. We then offer several emerging principles to guide the next generation of work in this field, arguing for an approach that is more “place-conscious” than narrowly “place-based.” Next, we illustrate these principles through descriptions of promising on-the-ground initiatives from across the country, then provide a conceptual framework—a theory of change—for a simultaneously place-conscious and child-focused approach to breaking the cycle of persistent, intergenerational poverty. We conclude with recommendations for the roles philanthropy can play in a next generation of child-focused, place-conscious interventions.

## Lessons Learned from a Century of Place-Based Investments

Since the late 19th century—with the creation of urban settlement houses—practitioners and policymakers inside and outside government have been devising and testing evolving strategies for tackling the problem of *poverty in place*. The accumulated experience provides strong evidence for focusing antipoverty efforts in neighborhoods where poverty is most concentrated. And it has generated a much deeper understanding of the complexity and stubbornness of the challenges.

Today, innovative practitioners, scholars, and advocates are defining a next generation of strategies that can best be described as “place-conscious” rather than place-based. This emerging approach recognizes the importance of place and focuses on the particular challenges of distressed neighborhoods, but it is less constrained by narrowly defined neighborhood boundaries, more attuned to region-wide prospects, and aimed at improving both quality of life and access to opportunities for families. More specifically, the next generation of place-oriented initiatives is guided by five key insights:

- Many of the opportunities families need to thrive are located outside their immediate neighborhoods. Place-conscious initiatives therefore work to **connect to city and regional opportunities** while expanding opportunities within target neighborhoods.
- The optimal scale for tackling neighborhood challenges varies across policy domains. To maximize effectiveness, place-conscious initiatives therefore **work horizontally**, by integrating efforts across policy domains within a neighborhood, **and vertically**, by activating city, state, and even federal policy levers and resources.

- No single organization can perform all the tasks and activities needed to transform a distressed neighborhood into one that effectively serves poor children and their families. Place-conscious strategies therefore **integrate the work of multiple organizations** with complementary missions.
- Place-conscious strategies explicitly **define, measure, and track progress** toward shared goals in order to hold themselves accountable and continuously adapt and improve their strategies based on solid information.
- Poor people move a lot, and the mobility of these households creates both challenges and opportunities for neighborhoods. Place-conscious initiatives **recognize and plan for residential mobility**, and they work to ensure that neighborhoods function effectively as “launch pads” for families.

## Creating a Child-Focused, Place-Conscious Strategy

Although most place-based and emerging place-conscious initiatives give at least some attention to the well-being and life-chances of neighborhood children, an enormous opportunity remains for strategic innovation at the intersection of place-conscious and child-focused antipoverty work. All children, regardless of where they live or how much their parents earn, share the same foundational needs. Children require responsive caregiving, safe and secure environments, adequate and appropriate nutrition, and health-promoting behaviors and habits. To meet these needs, parents must harness four clusters of capacities—financial resources, time investments, psychological resources, and human capital—all of which are depleted by family poverty. Moreover, families do not live or raise children in a vacuum. They are embedded in neighborhoods that can either enhance or undermine their essential capacities. Key neighborhood factors that weaken a family’s capacity to meet children’s needs include poor-quality services, from both public- and private-sector institutions; crime and violence; peer influences and social networks that undermine rather than support child and family well-being; and lack of access to jobs.

Breaking the cycle of persistent, intergenerational poverty requires sustained interventions at many levels. Nationwide efforts to expand employment opportunities, boost wages, strengthen systems of work supports, and bolster the social safety net are necessary, *but they are insufficient* for children living in severely distressed neighborhood environments. Dual-generation interventions that target the neighborhood conditions most damaging to children’s healthy development are also critical to “moving the needle” on persistent, intergenerational poverty. For poor children, five neighborhood-level interventions warrant the highest priority:

- **Increasing high-quality educational opportunities**, from early childhood through high school, and including before- and after-school care, summertime activities, and enrichment.
- **Reducing crime and violence**, so children and their parents feel physically safe and psychologically secure and are not subjected to repeated traumas.
- **Providing health-promoting services and amenities**, including affordable sources of healthy food; physical and mental health services for children and parents; safe places for children to play and exercise; and homes, schools, and community spaces free of environmental toxins and hazards.
- **Supporting social networks and collective efficacy** by strengthening the capacities of neighborhood residents to work toward shared goals, mutually support one another and each other’s children, and advocate effectively for resources that come from outside the neighborhood.
- **Expanding access to opportunities for financial stability and economic advancement**, including supportive services that strengthen families generally, summer job programs and apprenticeship opportunities for youth, alternative and adult basic education, training opportunities for all ages, and transportation links to regional employment opportunities.

## Roles for Philanthropy

Philanthropy has played a central role in the evolution of strategies for tackling the challenges of persistent poverty in distressed urban neighborhoods, providing multiple forms of capital that can help

sustain and strengthen on-the-ground initiatives. Lessons learned from past philanthropic and public sector experience point to five key attributes of effective philanthropic partners:

- **flexibility** to tailor investments to local needs and priorities;
- **respect for local leadership** and the importance of strengthening local organizational capabilities;
- **courage** to acknowledge and address contentious issues of race and ethnicity;
- **perseverance** to stick with local stakeholders long enough to have an impact; and
- **commitment to knowledge-building** both within and across communities and initiatives.

## The Origins and Evolution of Place-Based Strategies

Beginning with the settlement houses of the late 19th century, practitioners and policymakers have worked to tackle the challenges of *poverty in place* through an evolving set of strategies. Over this period, both the federal government and national philanthropies have played important—often complementary—roles in designing, funding, and evaluating interventions. This section briefly reviews the research evidence on the causes and consequences of urban neighborhood distress, and then summarizes the history of neighborhood revitalization efforts; for more elaborate histories, see Martinez-Cosio and Bussell (2013), Mossberger (2010), and Van Hoffman (2012).

### Place Matters: Causes and Consequences of Distressed Neighborhoods

Neighborhoods matter to the well-being of families and their children. They are the locus for essential public and private services—schools being perhaps the most significant of these. The availability of quality grocery stores, reliable child care, and safe after-school activities and healthy recreational facilities also shapes the quality of life a neighborhood offers its residents, as does access to employment opportunities. Neighbors and neighborhood institutions help transmit the norms and values that influence behavior and teach children what is expected of them as they mature. And where we live directly affects our exposure to crime, disorder, and violence, which in turn affects our physical and emotional well-being.

The term “neighborhood distress” encompasses an interconnected set of problems, including crime and violence; physical and environmental blight; private-sector disinvestment, weak (or absent) institutions and services; high rates of joblessness, dropping out of school, and teen births; and low levels of social capital and collective efficacy. Most researchers use the poverty rate of a census tract as a proxy for neighborhood distress, with tract-level poverty rates above 30 or 40 percent serving as indicators of severe distress (see Jargowsky 1998 for the seminal research on concentrated neighborhood poverty). However, not every neighborhood with a high poverty rate suffers the same degree or types of social and economic distress.

Neighborhoods of concentrated poverty and distress are not the products of “natural” or “normal” housing market operations; rather, past policies and practices have triggered a downward spiral. As Massey and Denton demonstrated in *American Apartheid* (1993), discriminatory policies and practices confining African Americans—who were markedly more likely than whites to be poor—to certain city neighborhoods produced communities with much higher poverty rates than existed in white communities. Subsequent job losses and rising unemployment pushed poverty and isolation in many central-city black neighborhoods even higher. These poor, minority neighborhoods were also starved of the resources and investments that communities need to thrive, such as financing for homeownership, business investment, and essential public-sector services, including schools. Nonpoor families fled these neighborhoods, further raising the poverty rate and accelerating disinvestment and distress.

Today, although blacks and Hispanics are less starkly segregated from whites than they were in the past, ongoing racial and ethnic segregation combines with rising income inequality to sustain neighborhoods of distress (Quillian 2012). Most high-poverty neighborhoods are predominantly black and/or Hispanic, while poor whites (and Asians) are much more dispersed. And when blacks and Hispanics move, they are less likely than whites to escape high-poverty neighborhoods; they move either

from one high-poverty neighborhood to another or from lower-poverty to higher-poverty locations (Sharkey 2013).

Other forces that have undermined living conditions in distressed urban neighborhoods are equally daunting and have been intensifying over recent decades. Globalization and advances in technology have eliminated manufacturing jobs, while the low-wage jobs that replaced them have left as much as one-third of the population a paycheck away from poverty. Many inner-city public schools, already struggling by the 1960s, have turned into veritable dropout factories. Finally, concentrated poverty has been exacerbated by rising violence—both on the street and in too many families—and by the mass incarceration of young, mostly minority men.

Conditions in severely distressed neighborhoods undermine both the quality of daily life and the long-term life chances of parents and children (see Ellen and Turner 1997 and Turner and Rawlings 2009 for reviews of the research literature on neighborhood effects). For example:

- Preschool children living in low-income neighborhoods exhibit more aggressive behavior when interacting with others.
- Young people from high-poverty neighborhoods are less successful in school than their counterparts from more affluent communities; they earn lower grades, are more likely to drop out, and are less likely to go on to college.
- Neighborhood environments influence teens' sexual activity and the likelihood that girls will become pregnant as teenagers.
- Young people who live in high-crime areas are more likely to commit crimes themselves, other things being equal.
- Living in disadvantaged neighborhoods significantly increases the risk of disease and mortality among both children and adults.

Finally, emerging evidence suggests that living in a high-poverty neighborhood undermines some outcomes across generations. For example, children whose parents grew up in poor neighborhoods score dramatically worse on reading and problem-solving tests than those whose parents grew up in nonpoor neighborhoods, other things being equal (Sharkey 2013). In other words, neighborhood distress contributes to the persistence of poverty across generations.

## **Origins of Place-Based Intervention: Settlement Houses**

The first notable attempts to address poverty in the context of urban neighborhoods were the settlement houses founded in major cities in the late 19th century to help immigrants adjust to their new surroundings. Spearheaded most famously by Jane Addams and the Chicago Hull House, settlement houses provided services to community members and advocated for urban reforms. Many settlements were funded directly by individual philanthropists, but this period also saw the emergence of modern foundations investing in poverty alleviation.<sup>4</sup>

Although the settlement houses helped ease the way for European arrivals, the response to the Great Migration of blacks from the South to the big cities of the North and West was far less welcoming. For much of the 20th century, blacks were largely excluded from more desirable city and suburban neighborhoods, and the neighborhoods to which they were consigned were largely neglected by both public- and private-sector institutions. With few exceptions, the settlement houses either avoided or exited these black neighborhoods, withering away in many cities around the country.

## **Early Federal Efforts to Tackle Urban Distress**

After World War II, the federal government responded to inner-city distress with the deservedly criticized Urban Renewal program, which, along with the construction of the interstate highway system, leveled poor, mostly minority neighborhoods in many cities. Cities with federal Urban Renewal funding used their eminent-domain powers to condemn and raze dilapidated housing and other properties, then sell the newly vacant land to private interests for redevelopment in accordance with city plans. Residents and

owners in the targeted neighborhoods had little or no input in these plans, and relocation assistance for displaced families and businesses was virtually nonexistent. Some residents were moved to newly constructed public housing (also funded by the federal government), but many of these new developments were built in isolated or undesirable areas, and their scale ultimately contributed to the emergence of new neighborhoods of concentrated poverty and distress.

In the 1960s, the civil rights movement, combined with a more responsive political environment, generated a backlash against Urban Renewal policies. A new generation of advocates—residents of the affected neighborhoods along with community organizers, philanthropic leaders, activist lawyers, and others—founded organizations that advanced principles of neighborhood empowerment. Mike Sviridoff of Community Progress, Inc., in New Haven (later vice-president of the Ford Foundation); Livingston Wingate of Haryou-ACT in Harlem; Ted Watkins of the Watts Labor Community Action Committee in Los Angeles; Arthur Brazier and Leon Finney from the Woodlawn Organization in Chicago; and Dick Boone at the Ford Foundation were among these pioneers. Perhaps the premier lawyer was Ed Sparer of Mobilization for Youth located on New York City’s East Side. All these leaders and advocates shared the view that the renewal and redevelopment efforts of the time, though sometimes purporting to help people in low-income neighborhoods, were actually paternalistic, controlling, and disrespectful. Their more empowering, collaborative, and bottom-up approach to the problems of poor neighborhoods came to the attention of Kennedy administration officials who were planning what would eventually become the War on Poverty. In particular, the Ford Foundation’s influential Gray Areas initiative served as a model for the federal Community Action Program in the Office of Economic Opportunity (Mossberger 2010) and, later, the Model Cities program in the newly created Department of Housing and Urban Development (Martinez-Cosio and Bussell 2013).

The initial governance of the local Community Action Agencies that were created and funded by the federal program was based on the “maximum feasible participation” principle. This meant that consumers and beneficiaries of neighborhood investment activities held control—a significant deviation from standard urban renewal practices. Unfortunately, maximum feasible participation collided almost immediately with the very different perspectives of big-city mayors, who ultimately regained control and blocked efforts by Community Action Agencies to refocus city planning and investment efforts. Community Action Agencies still exist today, delivering social services and supports, but they rarely play robust advocacy or empowerment roles.

The weakness of the Community Action Program led the Johnson administration to try a different approach: the Model Cities program. Model Cities was entirely place-based, while the Community Action Program had been neighborhood-based only in the biggest cities (in smaller cities, the agencies had operated citywide). It established the ambitious goal of creating a new agency in participating cities that would deliver a multidimensional system of services in low-income neighborhoods to make up for the poor performance of traditional public agencies. Sadly, Model Cities proved a disappointment. Under-resourced from the outset, the program’s limited funds were stretched across more than 150 recipient cities instead of the roughly three dozen that had been initially envisioned, and expected contributions from other federal agencies never materialized. In 1974 the Model Cities program, along with several other federal programs aimed at cities, was transformed into the Community Development Block Grant program, which continues today to provide relatively flexible funding that city governments must use to help low-income people and neighborhoods.

## **Bottom-Up Rather Than Top-Down: The Community Development Era**

Another enduring innovation from the 1960s was the community development corporation (CDC)—a nonprofit entity, incorporated to acquire and redevelop land, manage properties, and deliver services in low-income communities. CDCs typically serve a clearly defined neighborhood and include residents and businesses on their governing boards. They emerged from the neighborhood redevelopment work Robert Kennedy undertook in New York City that led to the creation of the Bedford Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation. Community leaders like Watkins in Los Angeles, Brazier and Finney in Chicago, and

Monsignor William Linder in Newark helped further develop and extend this new approach. In 1967, Senator Kennedy and New York Senator Jacob Javits spearheaded an addition to the Economic Opportunity Act that provided federal funding for the Bedford Stuyvesant project as well as other community development corporations springing up around the country. In turn, the Ford Foundation began a multiyear grant program to support community development corporations.

Community development corporations implicitly operated on the assumption that a neighborhood could be revitalized within the “four corners” of its boundaries. Outside funds and other assistance would be necessary, but the principal idea was to build and rehabilitate housing, provide community amenities, and expand jobs within the neighborhood, both through the creation and expansion of locally owned businesses and by attracting branches or facilities of larger, outside companies.

For almost two decades, place-based work was dominated by the CDC model, with substantial support from both foundations and federal programs. Early on, it became evident to the national foundations that directly funding numerous individual nonprofits was relatively inefficient. They therefore decided to build intermediary institutions to enhance CDC capacity and bundle the financial resources that would increasingly become available through the Community Reinvestment Act of 1977 (see Liou and Stroh 1998 for a good history of the creation of intermediaries). In 1979, the Ford Foundation launched the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC), which has become an important national organization mobilizing support for local CDCs from other foundations, government, and the for-profit sector. LISC provides technical assistance and connects on-the-ground work with state and federal policy reform agendas. And in 1982, James Rouse founded the Enterprise Foundation (now Enterprise Community Partners), which plays similar intermediary functions, though focused primarily on affordable housing development. Both LISC and Enterprise have made major contributions to the robust growth and performance of CDCs in cities across the country and have, in recent years, become important drivers of innovation and experimentation.

Community development corporations have made important contributions to the well-being of inner-city neighborhoods, in particular by increasing the availability of decent, affordable housing. But with the benefit of hindsight, it has also become evident that the basic theory of change underpinning the CDC model was too narrow to sustain operations in some cases or to effect change in others. By focusing primarily on housing, CDCs came to support their work by relying heavily on developer fees, which did not generate a sufficiently diversified or robust funding base. And CDCs’ work *within* neighborhoods gave insufficient attention to how neighborhoods operate and evolve within a larger market context, sometimes overlooking opportunities to help residents find jobs in the regional economy (by providing transit and work placement assistance, for example) or to support those seeking access to opportunities by moving out of the neighborhood. Also missing was an emphasis on improving educational outcomes for children in the neighborhood.

Today, of the approximately 4,600 CDCs in the United States (Mossberger 2010), most are relatively small and focus primarily on low-income housing development. Some also do modest economic development of small stores and the like. The strongest and most entrepreneurial, however, have expanded to become multidimensional, working on such matters as improving access to quality health care, child care, and even public education. Scaling up from the neighborhood model to a regional scale poses challenges that only a few organizations have overcome.

## **From Community Development to Community Building: More Comprehensive Thinking**

The twenty-plus years between the elections of President Nixon and President Clinton were a dry period for federally funded, multidimensional, inner-city initiatives. However, foundations remained active. Not only Ford, but also other national foundations such as the Annie E. Casey and MacArthur foundations made multiple efforts, along with local foundations like Steans in Chicago and Price Charities in San Diego. And in 1991, the federal government did join with leading philanthropic leaders to found the

National Community Development Initiative (now Living Cities) to channel resources that would support the capacity of CDCs affiliated with LISC and Enterprise Community Partners.

By the early 1990s, proponents of neighborhood-based interventions recognized that many CDCs lacked essential capacities. Some high profile CDC failures called attention to the limitations of an approach that focused primarily on retail and housing development as a neighborhood revitalization strategy in communities battling gang violence, declining school quality, and job losses. A new generation of place-based initiatives, all funded by philanthropy, began testing the concept of “community building,” linking housing and physical redevelopment with the delivery of needed services and supports, and explicitly engaging community residents and grassroots organizations in planning and implementation. From 1993 to 2005, this approach was explored, refined, and advanced by the National Community Building Network, which gave practitioners and thought leaders in the field—including many emerging leaders of color—opportunities to share and build upon lessons learned on the ground (Feister 2007).

Over this period, the traditional CDC model gave way to the new rubrics of community building and comprehensive community change, which sought to integrate social, economic, physical, and civic investments so as to catalyze the transformation of previously distressed neighborhoods. In 1996, for example, the Chicago LISC affiliate—in partnership with the MacArthur Foundation—convened community stakeholders in a year-long Futures Forum to reconsider the future of community development. The 100 participants (including then–state senator Barack Obama) emerged with a goal to “create healthy communities” that required CDCs to stretch their activities to address health, neighborhood safety, education, and other challenges. The Chicago practitioners and policymakers embraced “comprehensive community development” as a way to connect low-income Chicagoans and neighborhoods with the economic mainstream (Barry 2005).

Proponents of comprehensive community change also emphasized resident engagement and sought to build the capacity of neighborhood residents and institutions to advance shared goals. Supporters argued that place-based initiatives must be community-driven to be sustainable over time, and that the transformation of distressed neighborhoods was as much about relationships (and power) as about real estate or public services. The National Community Building Network played a central role in articulating this philosophy, assembling experience about how to operationalize it, and sharing lessons learned across communities and organizations (Feister 2007).

To date, although comprehensive community initiatives, or CCIs, have produced concrete outcomes for individuals and families, they have not achieved their larger goal of neighborhood transformation. This may stem, in part, from a lack of opportunities for robust partnerships with the public sector, but it also reflects the challenges in the work itself. Moreover, CCI efforts to strengthen the leadership capacities of neighborhood residents and institutions have not demonstrably led to improved outcomes for either families or communities, although many anecdotal examples support the view that this capacity building is worthwhile.<sup>5</sup>

## **Renewed Attention from the Federal Government: Income Mixing and Market Forces**

At the very end of his term, President George H.W. Bush initiated the first federal attempt at revitalizing distressed neighborhoods since the 1970s. The HOPE VI program, which evolved to become a signature initiative of the Clinton administration, focused on severely distressed public housing, which had become a major source of crime and blight in some city neighborhoods. The original idea behind HOPE VI was simply to demolish the distressed properties and replace them with better-quality housing for the same low-income residents. But under the leadership of HUD Secretary Henry Cisneros, the ambitions of the program expanded dramatically. Cisneros saw the redevelopment of failed public housing developments as an opportunity to transform whole neighborhoods by building high-quality, mixed-income housing and improving community amenities to attract more affluent residents along with low-income families.<sup>6</sup>

Like the proponents of comprehensive community change, Cisneros aspired to catalyze the transformation of distressed urban neighborhoods. But the HOPE VI vision put much greater emphasis

on income mixing and the activation of private market forces than on community building and resident empowerment. Proponents of income mixing argue that the presence of nonpoor residents—as tenants, homeowners, voters, and customers—is essential to attracting and sustaining high-quality, responsive services and investments from public- and private-sector institutions. Supporters also suggest that middle- and upper-income residents strengthen a community's social networks, norms, and collective efficacy.<sup>7</sup>

The HOPE VI vision has come to fruition in cities including Seattle and Louisville, where public housing redevelopment has dramatically changed both physical and socioeconomic conditions. These successes have confirmed the theory that mixed-income housing can help support healthier communities, with lower crime rates, better schools, superior access to healthy food and other goods, and better public services (Cisneros and Engdahl 2009). A handful of cities have since used their own resources to create local programs that extend the HOPE VI model to other public housing neighborhoods.<sup>8</sup>

The primary criticism of HOPE VI is that—like Urban Renewal—it has displaced low-income, mostly minority residents and failed to replace as many affordable housing units as it demolished. Most HOPE VI projects have built fewer subsidized housing units on the original site than were there previously, and only a few have built replacement units in other neighborhoods. Instead, most projects have provided housing vouchers to the original public housing residents, who have relocated (with subsidies) to privately owned rentals elsewhere in the city. Although many relocated families have ultimately been satisfied with their new housing circumstances, some have been frustrated by their inability to return to the redeveloped neighborhood. Further, in high-cost cities with tight rental markets, voucher recipients were sometimes unable to find decent housing in neighborhoods of their choice. And, in many HOPE VI sites, the most vulnerable and troubled of the original residents were simply shuffled to other public housing projects.

Similar concerns about the risks of displacement from neighborhood revitalization led the Annie E. Casey Foundation—building on the PolicyLink Equitable Development framework from the early 2000s—to articulate the “responsible redevelopment” principle. This idea affirms the value of reigniting market forces in long-disinvested neighborhoods, but it insists that the interests of the original, low-income residents and businesses be protected from the outset so they can benefit from the redevelopment of their communities. In effect, responsible redevelopment reflects a merger of the community-building principles espoused by comprehensive community initiatives with the income-mixing aspirations of HOPE VI.

The Obama administration has absorbed and synthesized many of the lessons from the history of place-based work, including the concept of responsible redevelopment. It has launched two important new programs: Choice Neighborhoods (led by the Department of Housing and Urban Development) and the Promise Neighborhoods Initiative (led by the Department of Education).

The Choice Neighborhoods program builds upon the lessons of HOPE VI. Like HOPE VI, it is centered on the redevelopment of distressed subsidized housing projects, and it aspires to create vibrant mixed-income neighborhoods with high-quality public and private-sector amenities. However, the Choice program places much greater emphasis on the preservation of affordable housing options for low-income families and on improving essential non-housing assets like public schools, parks, and community services. The expectation is that the revitalized neighborhood will attract more middle- and upper-income residents without displacing low-income families who rely upon subsidized housing. The program is being implemented in eight sites across the country, with another 56 sites in the planning phase.

The Promise Neighborhoods Initiative was inspired by the accomplishments of the Harlem Children's Zone, which focuses on the well-being of a neighborhood's children from “cradle to career” rather than on physical redevelopment or income mixing. Led by Geoffrey Canada, the Harlem Children's Zone has systematically expanded and improved the services and supports children in the neighborhood need. It has built an impressive continuum from prenatal services to safe after-school activities to college counseling.

The Obama administration has sought to align targeted investments like Choice and Promise with other, preexisting federal programs focused on public safety and health care delivery. Its first effort, the Neighborhood Revitalization Initiative, did not provide any new resources (and was not a new federal

program, per se) but targeted and coordinated available streams of federal dollars. It provided a continuum of support, from capacity-building assistance for cities interested in place-based tools but not fully equipped to employ them; to planning grants for neighborhoods meeting the criteria for the Choice and Promise programs; to large implementation grants that scale-up efforts in a handful of communities around the country.

In his 2013 State of the Union Address, President Obama announced a broad effort to create “Ladders of Opportunity” to the middle class. A centerpiece of his message was the designation of up to 20 Promise Zones, the first five of which (Los Angeles, Philadelphia, San Antonio, Eastern Kentucky, and the Choctaw Nation) were announced a year later. Each Promise Zone will identify the outcomes it will pursue, develop a strategy supporting those outcomes, and realign resources accordingly. Although not a grant-making initiative, the Promise Zones effort emphasizes the effective “braiding of funding streams” from the departments of Agriculture, Education, Housing and Urban Development, and Justice to ensure that federal programs and resources support efforts to turn around 20 of the highest poverty communities in the country. The federal government will partner with each Promise Zone, providing access to technical assistance resources and expertise it needs to achieve its goals.<sup>9</sup>

## Principles for a Next Generation of Place-Conscious Strategies

Today, organizations across the country are tackling problems in distressed neighborhoods with more vigor and sophistication than ever, cobbling together funding from multiple sources, both public and private. A century of evolving experimentation has generated substantial evidence to support arguments that efforts to combat persistent poverty should include initiatives focused on the neighborhoods where it is concentrated. But experience has also produced a much deeper understanding of the complexity of the problem. Building on this knowledge, innovative practitioners, scholars, and advocates are now defining a next generation of strategies that can best be described as place-conscious rather than place-based. These strategies recognize the importance of place and target the particular challenges of distressed neighborhoods. But they are less constrained by narrowly defined neighborhood boundaries, more attuned to market-wide opportunities and barriers, and aimed at improving both quality of life and access to opportunities for families. This new generation of initiatives is guided by five key insights:

- Many of the opportunities families need to thrive are located outside their immediate neighborhoods. Place-conscious initiatives therefore work to **connect to city and regional opportunities** while expanding opportunities within target neighborhoods.
- The optimal scale for tackling neighborhood challenges varies across policy domains. To maximize effectiveness, place-conscious initiatives therefore **work horizontally**, by integrating efforts across policy domains within a neighborhood, **and vertically**, by activating city, state, and even federal policy levers and resources.
- No single organization can perform all the tasks and activities needed to transform a distressed neighborhood into one that effectively serves poor children and their families. Place-conscious strategies therefore **integrate the work of multiple organizations** with complementary missions.
- Place-conscious strategies explicitly **define, measure, and track progress toward shared goals** in order to hold themselves accountable and continuously adapt and improve their strategies based on solid information.
- Poor people move a lot, and the mobility of these households creates both challenges and opportunities for neighborhoods. Place-conscious initiatives **recognize and plan for residential mobility**, and they work to ensure that neighborhoods function effectively as “launch pads” for families.

## Capitalize on Opportunities within and outside Target Neighborhoods

Historically, efforts to overcome the negative effects of neighborhood conditions on families and children have primarily focused on changing conditions *within the boundaries* of a distressed neighborhood—by renovating buildings, delivering needed services, or organizing residents to work collectively. But many of the services and opportunities families need are located outside the neighborhoods in which they live, and interventions that connect them to these opportunities may be more effective than interventions that try to create them within the neighborhood.

The best example is employment. Few people work in the neighborhoods where they live; rather, they commute to jobs in other parts of their metropolitan region. The primary employment challenge facing residents of distressed urban neighborhoods is *access* to job opportunities in the larger region. People may not know about those opportunities, they may not have the skills or credentials necessary to qualify for them, or the time and cost of commuting to them may be too high. A place-conscious intervention would improve access to regional employment opportunities rather than only trying to create jobs within the neighborhood. This might mean advocating for new bus lines or transit subsidies, enabling people to buy cars, or helping residents enroll in a city- or region-wide training and placement program with a strong track record of placing graduates in good jobs.

Educational opportunities are increasingly expanding in central cities through initiatives that modify school enrollment boundaries and delink a family's home address from its options for school attendance. Mandatory busing (to desegregate public schools) helped break this connection in many cities. Though busing has mostly ended, few city school districts have returned entirely to neighborhood-based schools. Instead, districts have provided increased levels of school choice. Additionally, public charter schools have emerged in many cities as alternatives to neighborhood schools. As a consequence, parents do not always have to settle for a failing neighborhood school or move to a neighborhood with a better school. Too often, however, low-income parents lack the time to gather meaningful information about school quality or options to transport their children to high-quality schools.

A growing understanding of how city and regional dynamics influence neighborhood outcomes is leading to the recognition that a single approach to place-conscious antipoverty work will not be equally effective everywhere. Many of today's best-known initiatives evolved in big northeastern and midwestern cities, where the legacy of racial segregation and poverty concentration has isolated and "trapped" residents in high-poverty neighborhoods—blocking their access to opportunities in the larger metro region. The geographic patterns and opportunity structures in other metropolitan areas differ and require different strategies. Moreover, metros vary widely in their civic leadership and institutional capacity, so the same interventions cannot necessarily be effectively replicated everywhere. Place-conscious practitioners (and researchers) need to further develop typologies of places that can support learning across metros about effective strategies and their implementation.<sup>10</sup>

## Integrate Horizontally (across Sectors) and Vertically (across Levels of Government)

The optimal geographic scale for tackling a problem varies across policy sectors or domains. In some cases, interventions can have the greatest impact by focusing at the block level. In others, it makes more sense to intervene at the city or even regional scale. For example, a child's exposure to crime and violence may be determined by conditions on the blocks immediately surrounding his or her home, so a violence-prevention intervention that targets a small subneighborhood might be essential to improve that child's life chances. In contrast, ensuring that the child has access to adequate health care, or that his or her parents can buy healthy foods, may call for larger-scale interventions (building a community clinic or affordable grocery stores, for example). And improving the quality of a child's education requires action at the scale of an elementary school enrollment zone and, possibly, the school district.

Correspondingly, while some neighborhood challenges can be addressed through work by and with residents and community-based institutions, many require action at higher levels of governance. Severe

distress within a neighborhood ultimately stems from the interaction between market forces and city, metropolitan and state policies that constrain opportunities for poor people and disinvest from the neighborhoods where they live. Therefore, the levers for addressing the many challenges facing these neighborhoods are not all contained within the boundaries of the neighborhood itself. The potential impact of initiatives focused solely on local collaboration can be limited because they are likely to have difficulty gaining access to resources at different levels of the political system and building the broader capacity necessary to sustain change (Weir, Rongerude, and Ansell 2011). Sustainable changes in neighborhood conditions are more likely to be achieved when all levers are activated—when place-conscious efforts reform policies and mobilize resources at city, state, and federal levels in addition to breaking out of conventional programmatic and institutional boundaries at the neighborhood level.

For example, some communities have complemented neighborhood-level changes with broader organizing efforts to ensure that low-income people have a seat at the decisionmaking table when resources are being allocated. Local organizing efforts have resulted in federal requirements for community input into the Consolidated Plan process, which guides how local governments use federal housing and community development resources, and within Metropolitan Planning Organizations, which decide about major transportation investments. These efforts are often led by intermediary organizations or associations that help community-based groups advocate for broader policy changes.

## **Integrate the Work of Multiple Organizations with Complementary Missions**

No single organization can perform all the tasks and activities needed to transform a distressed neighborhood into one that effectively serves poor children and their families. In any neighborhood, multiple organizations across the public and nonprofit sectors, operating at different scales, will have to work together. But experience argues strongly for one organization to coordinate, leading and facilitating these multiple stakeholders as they pursue a shared vision.<sup>11</sup> This is no easy task given the multidimensional challenges facing distressed communities and the complexities of race, ethnicity, and class that inevitably surface as goals and strategies are developed. Such a role has variously been described as “orchestra conductor,” “quarterback,” or “backbone.” However it is labeled, it is essential to achieving meaningful and sustainable progress (Erickson, Galloway, and Cytron 2012). Further, performing the role effectively requires financial support that is sustained over time. If funders are willing to support only direct service delivery or capital investments, and not the hard work of leadership, coordination, and capacity building, place-conscious efforts are unlikely to gain traction or be sustained (Kubisch et al. 2010b).

Many different types of organizations can be the “orchestra conductor”: a local foundation, a neighborhood-based organization, a public agency, or a citywide nonprofit. This organization does not have to do everything itself, but it must have the capacity to bring actors together across silos, to integrate their agreed-upon strategies, and to engage vertically with key city and regional actors. To succeed in this role, the conductor organization must be viewed as an authentic and viable leader across sectors, established and successful in its own area of expertise, comfortable with using data and evaluation to inform planning, and financially stable with strong internal leadership. Unfortunately, as the Citi Foundation discovered in its Partners in Progress initiative, fewer groups have this capacity than one might hope, partly because so few funders reward it. Citi (in conjunction with the Low Income Investment Fund) is funding organizations to change this dynamic, but the effort is limited to one-year grants, leaving significant room for amplification.

## **Explicitly Define, Measure, and Track Progress toward Shared Goals**

Too often, efforts to measure and assess the effectiveness of neighborhood transformation efforts are detached from the day-to-day work and provide little support for planning or continuous learning. The most effective initiatives today are taking the opposite approach, essentially building measurement and evaluation into their work from the outset, so that it contributes to continuous learning and accountability

along the way (Kubisch et al. 2010b). Many are effectively exploiting new data sources and technologies to map community needs and resources, measure the performance of programs and services, and track individual, family, and neighborhood outcomes.

The idea of *collective impact* reflects the reality that no organization can single-handedly solve complex problems like neighborhood distress or persistent poverty, and that significant progress only occurs when actors from different sectors work together in pursuit of a common agenda. When this agenda is made explicit by a set of agreed-upon and measurable goals, participating organizations can hold each other accountable and their work is more likely to remain aligned. It is important to recognize, however, that agreeing upon these collective goals and developing the data systems necessary to track progress takes time and money.

Given the complexity of the task, collective impact measures may be developed with the help of an embedded research organization that can translate desired outcomes into operational measures and assemble and process the data necessary to track these measures over time. But these data and measurement tasks cannot simply be handed off to a research partner while other key partners develop and implement strategies and activities. Collective impact measures will only be useful if they produce information that helps local actors learn from disappointments, as well as from successes, and continuously refine their efforts based on information. The hard work of measurement and analysis must be woven into the core planning and decisionmaking responsibilities of a place-conscious initiative.

## **Plan for the Reality of Residential Mobility**

Place-conscious practitioners increasingly recognize that residential mobility plays a critical—and complicating—role in the effectiveness of their work. Neighborhood distress is a dynamic process, sustained by the inflow of poor people (who have few alternatives for where to live) and the outflow of nonpoor people seeking better environments. About 12 percent of the US population moves to a new address each year; mobility rates are even higher among low-income households and renters (Coulton, Theodos, and Turner 2009). As a result, distressed neighborhoods frequently experience mobility rates that exceed the national average.

Residential mobility can reflect positive changes in a family's circumstances, such as buying a home for the first time, moving to be close to a new job, or trading up to a larger or better-quality house or apartment. But it can also be a symptom of instability and insecurity; many low-income households make short-distance moves because of problems with landlords, creditors, or housing conditions, or in response to family violence or conflict. Similarly, staying in place sometimes reflects a family's stability, security, and satisfaction with its home and neighborhood surroundings, but other times it may mean that a family lacks the resources to move to better housing or a preferred neighborhood.

High levels of mobility complicate the intended mechanisms of many neighborhood change strategies, both because families may leave before they have had time to benefit fully from enhanced services and supports and because new residents continue to arrive with needs that have not been met. For example, suppose a high-quality preschool program serving a large share of a neighborhood's children significantly boosts their school readiness. One might expect to see subsequent improvements in the neighborhood elementary school's third-grade reading scores as a result. But if many of the preschool children move within a year or two, the pool of third graders will include very few of those who attended the earlier program. Though school-level test scores may therefore show no evidence of neighborhood-level performance gains, this does not mean that the preschool program was ineffective. High mobility makes it more difficult to build up from individual-level gains to neighborhood-wide transformation.

One way to address this challenge is to try to reduce residential mobility among families living in a neighborhood who want to stay there. Helping families avoid unplanned or disruptive moves can play a critical role in their well-being and in the success of a neighborhood change strategy. Traditionally, many community improvement initiatives have reflected an implicit vision that a neighborhood should function as an incubator for its residents—especially its low-income or otherwise vulnerable residents (Coulton, Theodos, and Turner 2009). The theory of change underlying this approach is that investments in

neighborhood programs and services provide the supports that low-income families need to thrive as well as the amenities that make them want to remain as their circumstances improve. Simultaneous investments in community building strengthen social capital and civic capacity, further enhancing the well-being of individual residents and the vitality of the neighborhood. And, gradual improvements in resident well-being reduce overall neighborhood poverty and distress levels.

This aspiration is admirable, but it is not the only possible vision for neighborhood success. Place-conscious practitioners should also embrace mobility when it represents a positive step for a family. Staying in a distressed neighborhood may not always be in a family's best interest. Helping residents of a distressed neighborhood move to opportunity-rich neighborhoods should be part of a larger vision for improving outcomes. Better housing and neighborhood quality for a family should count as a success, whether it happens inside the boundaries of the original neighborhood or elsewhere. Thus, mobility strategies can be viewed as part of a larger portfolio of place-conscious tools, not as an alternative to neighborhood reinvestment and revitalization.

This approach reflects the view that some neighborhoods may be launch pads for their residents, instead of incubators (Coulton, Theodos, and Turner 2009). Like an incubator neighborhood, a launch pad offers needed services and supports, enabling residents to advance economically. But as residents achieve greater economic security, they move on to more desirable neighborhoods and are replaced by a new cohort of needy households. Launch pad neighborhoods would experience high mobility, and, even though many residents were making significant individual progress, the neighborhood as a whole might not show much improvement on indicators such as employment, income, or wealth.

Past research suggests that neighborhoods that serve as entry points for successive waves of immigrants may function this way (Borjas 1998). It may be fruitful to see these neighborhoods as highly successful, even though they remain very poor over time. For most neighborhoods, however, strategies that combine incubating and launching will offer the greatest promise. The key is offering choice: a realistic possibility of remaining in an improved neighborhood that has long been home or moving to a healthier neighborhood that offers more economic opportunity, better schools, and greater safety.

## Promising Models in Practice

Today, both place-based and place-conscious initiatives are under way in urban neighborhoods across the country. Many reflect a continuous process of experimentation, learning, adaptation, and expansion. Unfortunately, these interventions are extremely difficult to evaluate because they evolve over time, respond to the unique needs and priorities of the neighborhoods in which they operate, and often attempt to saturate a community with services or supports.<sup>12</sup> As a result, the question of "what works" has few clear-cut or definitive answers. Nonetheless, to illustrate the richness and complexity of this ongoing work, this section highlights highly regarded examples that reflect important lessons learned. We distinguish between two broad categories: initiatives seeking to fundamentally transform distressed neighborhoods and those seeking to improve outcomes for residents by making the neighborhood a platform for needed services and supports. This section concludes with a summary of current approaches for expanding choice among residents of distressed neighborhoods.

## Transforming Distressed Neighborhoods

We begin by describing initiatives that aim to transform distressed urban neighborhoods through a combination of multidimensional investments sustained over time and developed in response to community-defined needs and priorities. All these initiatives seek to *saturate* their target neighborhoods with needed services and supports, so the community as a whole becomes better for its residents. Some also seek to attract non-poor residents and private sector investment, with the goal of reactivating markets in long-neglected places. Appendix table A1 provides a more comprehensive inventory of initiatives from which these examples were drawn.

Chicago's **New Communities Program** exemplifies the shift toward more comprehensive thinking in community development initiatives. An outgrowth of the Futures Forum, the New Communities Program (NCP) is a large, ambitious, and long-term initiative of LISC's Chicago affiliate. Piloted in three Chicago neighborhoods, the strategy expanded over a decade to reach 14 different city neighborhoods with high concentrations of poverty. NCP practice and strategy reflect the continuing evolution of comprehensive community initiatives, building from the experience of the Comprehensive Community Revitalization Project (CCRP) in the South Bronx. Led by the Surdna Foundation, CCRP was a partnership between philanthropy and community-based organizations. Surdna made its agenda clear, but the community partners set and pursued their own goals rather than goals defined in advance by the foundation.

The participating communities conduct structured community planning processes involving residents and neighborhood leaders, then pursue activities to achieve goals in child care and education, commercial and retail development, employment, health care, housing, parks and recreation, and safety. LISC is an intermediary that distributes funds and supports coherence by providing assistance with strategic planning and project development and by sharing practices across neighborhoods. For each of the 14 neighborhoods, a lead agency receives ongoing support from LISC that covers two full-time positions, an NCP director and an organizer. These lead organizations play a critical role in carrying out projects consistent with neighborhoods' Quality of Life plans.

NCP was one of the first neighborhood-focused initiatives to capitalize on links with city government and with opportunities outside its target neighborhoods, extending the scope of community development beyond activities and investments within a neighborhood's boundaries. LISC helps the lead organizations in each neighborhood broker relationships with city political leaders and with other funders. This support has contributed to such achievements as developing health care centers in middle schools that serve as access points to other services for low-income families, establishing "safe streets" where children can play, launching midnight basketball programs for youth, and much more. The MacArthur Foundation has invested over \$47 million in NCP since 2002, leveraging a great deal of additional support, both locally (from Bank One, the City of Chicago, Joyce Foundation, State Farm, and the Steans Family Foundation) and nationally (from the Annie E. Casey Foundation, Atlantic Philanthropies, and Living Cities; see Dewar forthcoming).

The **Harlem Children's Zone** (HCZ) is a comprehensive effort that oversees a network of educational, social, and community-building programs and services for low-income children and families within a 100-block area in Harlem. The HCZ model, which focuses intensely on the social and educational development of children, is defined by its cradle-to-career pipeline—a continuum of targeted educational services for every developmental stage from infancy through college. This pipeline is complemented by comprehensive, coordinated services aimed at supporting healthy and stable families and building community.

HCZ has prioritized evaluating and analyzing the effects of its programs, and the results have been encouraging (see Tough 2008). For example,

- HCZ Baby College, a program of workshops and home visits for parents, has reported significant increases in positive parenting activities;
- at the end of the 2010 school year, nearly all students enrolled in the Harlem Gems Head Start Program had achieved average or above classifications for school readiness;
- all third graders enrolled in the HCZ Promise Academy Charter Schools tested at or above grade level in math;
- 90 percent of Promise High School students were accepted into college for the 2010–11 school year;
- all participants in the HCZ employment and technology after-school program stayed in school; and
- participants in the Zone's asthma initiative reported fewer visits to the emergency room and fewer missed school days.

Results like these have garnered attention from a wide range of funders as well as the federal government. The widely disseminated success stories came to the attention of then-Senator Obama who,

during his first presidential campaign, committed to replicating the successes of the Harlem Children’s Zone. Building on principles, a policy framework, and program design recommendations developed by HCZ, PolicyLink, and the Center for the Study of Social Policy, the Obama administration launched its federal **Promise Neighborhoods** program in 2010 as a key component of its plan to break the cycle of intergenerational urban poverty. The vision for Promise Neighborhoods is to provide all children in targeted low-income neighborhoods with "access to effective schools and strong systems of family and community support that will prepare them to attain an excellent education and successfully transition to college and career."<sup>13</sup>

Like the Harlem Children’s Zone, Promise Neighborhoods are intended to surround children with high-quality, coordinated health, social, community, and educational supports beginning at birth. Between 2010 and 2012, the US Department of Education funded a series of planning grants (of roughly \$500,000 each) followed by implementation grants (of \$4–6 million over three to five years) in a subset of these communities—five in 2011 and seven in 2012. A number of other communities across the country are also pursuing this model without federal support. Many of these receive technical assistance and other resources from the Promise Neighborhoods Institute at PolicyLink, an initiative designed to help communities reach their vision by creating a learning community of Promise Neighborhoods and a hub for resources, training, and tools.

The federal **HOPE VI** program was enthusiastically adopted and extended by civic and political leaders in several cities, including Atlanta, Chicago, San Francisco, and Washington, DC. These cities concluded that the basic HOPE VI model—replacing severely distressed public housing developments with mixed-income housing, while simultaneously investing in the physical and social infrastructure of the surrounding community—was an effective tool for their larger city revitalization goals. They created locally funded initiatives to apply the model to more neighborhoods. Atlanta moved very aggressively and has now replaced almost all its traditional public housing developments; Chicago has also made substantial progress on a citywide plan for the transformation of its huge inventory of public housing. Washington, DC is moving more slowly, struggling to meet community’s “one for one” replacement standard before subsidized housing units are demolished.

**HOPE SF**, initiated by the Mayor’s Office and the San Francisco Housing Authority, is the largest and most comprehensive application of the HOPE VI model. HOPE SF is organized around housing construction and rebuilding at eight distressed public housing sites. By staggering construction, HOPE SF plans to avoid displacing families from their neighborhood during revitalization. This innovation, combined with new mixed-income units and support for residents in need of training and employment services, aims to create attractive, stable neighborhoods for current residents. HOPE SF’s leadership has committed to continuous evaluation of its programs and is working with Enterprise, among other partners, to do so.

Community Solutions’ **Brownsville Partnership** is a collective of organizations and residents working to transform Brownsville, Brooklyn—one of New York City’s (and the nation’s) poorest and least healthy communities. Brownsville has almost 90,000 residents and the country’s largest concentration of public housing: 10,000 units. It has lagged behind the gains made in other once-impoverished New York City neighborhoods. In 2008, Community Solutions brought together local leaders, business organizations, government agencies, and high-performing nonprofits to work together to change the conditions that trap Brownsville and many of its residents in long-term poverty—and to do so without displacing local residents. The initiative focuses on six large public housing developments in the neighborhood where some of the most extreme social conditions in New York City are concentrated.

Community Solutions anchors the effort and coordinates the work of the partner organizations, convening and facilitating regular communication, managing data collection and analysis to track neighborhood progress, and articulating and tracking common success metrics. The Brownsville Partnership targets areas of critical importance to the neighborhood for collective action, including reducing violence and increasing public safety; improving public spaces and housing options; assisting high-need families who are involved in multiple government systems; improving the local food system; and, beginning in 2014, connecting 5,000 neighborhood residents to work by the end of 2017.

The **Jobs-Plus** demonstration generated important lessons about the implications of both *scale* and *mobility* for interventions working in distressed neighborhoods. Jobs-Plus was launched in the mid-1990s by HUD, the Rockefeller Foundation, and MDRC. Based on the assumption that a community where more adults work is safer, more vibrant, and provides a better environment for families, the demonstration targeted public housing developments where unemployment was particularly high and tried to dramatically increase employment among residents. Jobs-Plus delivered a three-part intervention: high-quality job training and placement services, rent incentives to reward work, and community-level support and encouragement for residents to find and keep jobs. The theory was that this combination of incentives and supports would increase the share of residents working, thereby transforming the neighborhood across multiple dimensions.

Jobs-Plus was implemented in severely distressed public housing developments in five cities. It was rigorously evaluated, using an innovative methodology that compared outcomes for the original residents with those of residents of comparable, nonparticipating developments in the same cities (see Riccio 2010). In three of the five sites (Dayton, Los Angeles, and St. Paul), all three components of the intervention were fully and effectively implemented, providing an effective test of the underlying theory of change. Employment and earnings rose significantly for residents of these three sites, and the gains were sustained over time. However, the communities changed very little, primarily because so many residents moved over the course of the demonstration. In other words, this place-based intervention generated important gains for individuals and their families, launching them on a path toward greater economic stability and success, but it did not catalyze a measurable transformation of community-wide conditions (Turner and Rawlings 2005).

A handful of efforts have tried to replicate the impressive success of the Jobs-Plus model for raising employment and earnings among very low income adults. MDRC and the Rockefeller Foundation tried to broaden the model to larger neighborhoods, with privately owned as well as public housing. This ambitious effort never really got off the ground, partly because organizing the much larger array of stakeholders to fully implement all three components of the intervention proved too difficult. Other replication efforts have maintained the original focus on public housing developments. Most notably among these, the New York City Housing Authority recently expanded its local Jobs-Plus program to 23 sites across the city after implementing four successful pilot programs.

The Annie E. Casey Foundation recently launched two new community change initiatives, building on lessons from its 10-year **Making Connections** initiative (Annie E. Casey 2013a). Making Connections was rooted in the premise that strengthening communities—by providing economic opportunity, services, and social networks—leads to stronger, healthier, and more secure families, thereby improving future outcomes for children. In 2000, Casey launched the planning phase of Making Connections in 22 cities nationwide, focusing on neighborhoods with populations ranging from 15,000 to 30,000. The goal of the first phase was to build coalitions and engage local entities in the Foundation’s family-strengthening agenda as well as to identify local needs and priorities. In 2002, 10 sites were selected to fully implement Making Connections.

Findings and lessons from Making Connections have served as guideposts for a new generation of Casey-funded place-based community development initiatives (see Annie E. Casey 2012 and 2013b). One such lesson is the need for a two-generational approach to community-based services and supports, in which parents play a strong role in helping to define what services children. For example, Casey’s Atlanta Civic Site incorporates an early childhood program in its Center for Working Families.

The **Family Centered Community Change** (FCCC) initiative and **Family Economic Success—Early Childhood** (FES-EC) demonstration build on this lesson. Both these new initiatives simultaneously target children and their parents with integrated services. Finding the right links between early education services for children and economic-focused interventions for parents has become a primary goal for Casey and is the framework for the FES-EC demonstration. The foundation is currently working with sites in Oklahoma, Georgia, Maryland, and Connecticut to implement this model.

The FCCC initiative supports the community development work of local initiatives in Buffalo, Columbus, and San Antonio.<sup>14</sup> The foundation seeks to make these sites leaders in the two-generational

approach to community development by building on strong existing services serving both children and adults. Among these activities are cradle-to-career educational pathways for children and youth surrounded by parenting programs, initiatives designed to build work skills and financial security for adults, and community engagement projects.

## Creating Community Platforms

In contrast to efforts aimed at fundamentally transforming neighborhoods, several organizations across the country are focused on transforming outcomes for families. These initiatives are place-conscious in the sense that they assemble and integrate multiple services and supports in neighborhoods (or housing developments) in response to community priorities and needs. But they tend to view place as a platform for their work, not the target of the change effort. Here we describe four such initiatives that highlight both the vision and the potential for this approach. Appendix table A2 provides a more comprehensive inventory of initiatives from which these examples were drawn.

**CASA de Maryland** is a national leader in exploring innovations for immigrant-focused services, and perhaps the best example of engaging both horizontally and vertically. Founded in a church basement in suburban Maryland nearly 30 years ago to address the needs of Central American refugees, CASA now provides a range of direct services in sites across the state. Its place-conscious approach focuses on economic empowerment, financial independence, and social, linguistic and political integration, coupled with a community organizing and advocacy program that empowers low-income immigrants to challenge the systems that prevent them from achieving economic and social well-being. CASA has over 40,000 members who benefit from the services it delivers in six welcome centers that serve Baltimore City and Montgomery and Prince George's counties.

In 2012, building on a long-standing partnership with the Prince George's County Public School system, CASA received a Promise Neighborhoods planning grant for the Langley Park neighborhood. With this opportunity, CASA has focused on other critical challenges facing low-income families in Langley Park. It has launched a multiyear advocacy campaign to ensure that the substantial resources generated in Langley Park by construction of a \$2.2 billion proposed 16-mile light rail transit system will benefit existing residents. This campaign will focus on preservation and creation of safe, quality, and affordable housing; protections for small businesses; and economic opportunities for local residents.

**Neighborhood Centers, Inc.**, is the direct descendant of Houston's early 20th-century settlement houses. Its work is intensely place-conscious, building the assets families need both from within their home communities and through connections to opportunities elsewhere in the region. Like the settlement houses, Neighborhood Centers' core mission is helping immigrants and other low-income families get a foothold in the region's booming economy. Its community centers in low-income neighborhoods throughout the city and suburbs provide English classes, early childhood education, health care, a credit union, a charter school, and employment services along with recreational and cultural activities. But Neighborhood Centers does not limit its work to tightly defined neighborhood boundaries, nor does it aspire to transform poor neighborhoods into mixed-income communities. The communities in which Neighborhood Centers works are more loosely defined and dynamic, and it aspires for these communities to serve as launch pads for low-income families.

Staff in each community center continuously listen to the people they serve and analyze program data to better understand families' aspirations and needs. For example, the Neighborhood Centers credit union offers loans equal to a member's deposits, so he or she can establish a good credit record. It recently began offering unsecured loans to help cover the legal costs of becoming a US citizen. When outreach to employers revealed that entry-level job-seekers needed basic customer relations skills in addition to understandable English, Neighborhood Centers began to offer sessions on customer relations in its advanced English language classes.

Regional in scope, Neighborhood Centers is now the biggest nonprofit service provider in Texas. It operates a network of 75 service sites and is the state's primary provider of social services and housing assistance during natural disasters. While its staff number over 1,000, in every community where it

works, Neighborhood Centers partners with other respected organizations—both public and private—to deliver the programs and services families need. In the suburb of Pasadena, for example, the Neighborhood Centers facility hosts the school district’s English language classes, provides a distribution site for the local food bank, and offers child care for the mothers participating in other organizations’ classes and activities. In this way, Neighborhood Centers plays the role of “orchestra conductor,” marshaling resources from multiple sources and combining public and private funding streams to create a web of services and supports for families in the places where they live.

The **Community Action Project of Tulsa County** (CAP Tulsa) has adopted an approach similar to that of Neighborhood Centers, Inc. A nationally recognized antipoverty agency, CAP Tulsa operates throughout Tulsa County as a direct service provider and coordinates more intensive work that targets pockets of poverty within in the county. Predicated on the belief that efforts to improve outcomes for children are inseparably tied to the economic and physical health of their parents, CAP’s direct services couple high-quality early education for children from birth through age 4 with parent support services as part of a two-generation approach to breaking the cycle of poverty. The agency’s Early Childhood Program, which enrolls over 2,400 children into either Head Start/Early Head Start centers or a range of home-visiting program options, serves as the entry point; from there, income-qualified parents can access programs that promote nurturing family structures, economic potential, and physical health of low-income parents.

Driven by the mission to improve the economic prospects of poor families, CAP is also working to build and sustain networks of housing, education, medical care, occupational training, and financial asset-building services focused on the county’s poorest neighborhoods. This neighborhood-focused work is rooted in the theory that significant progress requires the participation of many highly specialized agencies, each with particular expertise in meeting children’s’ needs during different stages of childhood. Consequently, CAP has planned and implemented a number of initiatives and built the management capacity and expertise necessary to function as a network “weaver,” bringing together and coordinating varied community providers.

Mercy Housing is the nation’s largest nonprofit housing developer and a leader in assembling the support services its residents need in conjunction with low-cost housing. Based in Denver and operating in 21 states, Mercy has participated in the development, preservation, or financing of more than 45,000 affordable homes for families, seniors, and people with special needs. On any given day, the organization serves 151,000 people. Mercy pioneered an approach that uses **housing as a platform** to help low-income individuals and families access services that increase educational opportunities and promote better health and financial well-being. Whether these services are provided on site or through a service connector, Mercy staff helps residents navigate the complicated maze of services they may need to stabilize their housing, employment, or finances. Mercy’s approach borrows from evidence that housing can be an important platform to increase the take-up of services and to help individuals and families gain footing in a community. With support from the Kresge Foundation, Mercy (as well as other nonprofit housing providers) is tracking the impact of their services on resident outcomes.

The principle of housing as a platform for connecting low-income families with needed services and supports also undergirds the Urban Institute’s Housing Opportunities and Services Together (HOST) initiative. HOST works in distressed public housing developments to test strategies for delivering intensive services to improve the life chances of vulnerable youth and adults. HOST was launched with funding from the Open Society Foundations’ Special Fund for Poverty Alleviation and subsequently supported by the Paul G. Allen Family Foundation, Kresge Foundation, William K. Kellogg Foundation, and Annie E. Casey Foundation, in addition to the National Institutes for Health and the Department of Housing and Urban Development. The initiative is currently being implemented in distressed public housing developments in Chicago, Portland, and Washington, DC; discussions are under way for additional sites in New York, Pittsburgh, Baltimore, and San Francisco.

HOST builds on a pilot demonstration conducted with the Chicago Housing Authority from 2007 to 2010. The pilot found that parents living in public housing (or in the private market with vouchers) strongly improved their health, education, and employment when provided with intensive, wraparound

case management services. The success of the wraparound service model did not extend to children, however, who continued to struggle in school, engage in risky behavior, and have pregnancy and parenting rates far above average. In response, HOST is testing a two-generation strategy, seeking to address parents' key barriers to self-sufficiency—such as poor health, addictions, lack of a high school diploma, and historically weak connection to the labor force—while integrating services and supports for children and youth.

## Expanding Choice

While most place-based antipoverty initiatives focus on enriching or transforming conditions *within* the boundaries of a target neighborhood, an increasing number are experimenting with strategies for increasing access to citywide or regional opportunities. These initiatives recognize the importance of place in the lives of families and children and try to address the damaging effects of neighborhood distress and disinvestment by expanding poor people's choices about where to live, attend school, or work. Here we describe on-the-ground experience and lessons learned from choice-expanding initiatives in housing, public education, and transportation.

Historically, publicly funded programs aimed at providing decent and affordable housing for low-income families have subsidized the construction or renovation of rental properties in poor neighborhoods. In contrast, **assisted housing mobility** initiatives offer low-income families the option of moving to more desirable neighborhoods that offer safety, effective schools, and decent services and amenities. These initiatives (which have been the focus of considerable federal attention and experimentation over the past two decades) typically provide families with a portable housing voucher funded through the federal Section 8 program, along with help searching for and moving to a better neighborhood (Scott et al. 2013). But some communities also use inclusionary zoning regulations or Low Income Housing Tax Credits to locate affordable housing units in nonpoor neighborhoods, earmarking these units for low-income families.

The best-known assisted housing mobility program is the **Moving to Opportunity (MTO)** demonstration, conducted by HUD in five metropolitan areas to evaluate the impact of relocation for poor families and their children (Briggs, Popkin, and Goering 2010).<sup>15</sup> The evaluation concluded that, as a group, the MTO experimental families enjoyed significantly lower crime rates, improved housing, and better mental health than the control group but not higher employment, incomes, or educational attainment (Sanbonmatsu et al. 2011). The health gains enjoyed by MTO's experimental families are hugely important. High rates of obesity, anxiety, and depression severely degrade a person's quality of life, employability, and parenting abilities. One reason that MTO gains were limited to health outcomes, however, is that the demonstration's special mobility assistance did not enable the experimental families to gain and sustain access to high-opportunity neighborhoods. Experimental families moved to better-quality housing and safer neighborhoods, but few spent more than a year or two in low-poverty neighborhoods. New analysis finds that the MTO families that lived for longer periods in neighborhoods with lower poverty did achieve better outcomes in work and school, as well as in health (Turner, Nichols, and Comey 2012). These findings argue for investments in programs that help low-income families find and afford housing in high-opportunity neighborhoods, including housing vouchers, mobility assistance and incentives, and targeted housing acquisition and construction programs.

In many low-income neighborhoods, the public schools perform very poorly, with undermaintained facilities, inadequate supplies, ineffective teachers, chaotic classrooms, and high truancy and dropout rates. Local, state, and federal efforts to improve the schools that serve low-income neighborhoods are under way, and these initiatives merit attention and support. However, some children may benefit from strategies that offer **access to high-performing schools** outside their immediate neighborhoods (as a complement to strategies aimed at strengthening the schools in poor neighborhoods). Research evidence strongly suggests that teaching and learning effectively are substantially more challenging when a large share of students in a classroom is poor (Kahlenberg 2001); a recent study found that low-income students in Montgomery County, MD, who were randomly assigned to attend low-poverty schools scored higher on math and reading exams than those assigned to higher-poverty schools, despite the school

district's policy to direct extra resources to higher-poverty schools for full-day kindergarten, smaller class sizes, teachers' professional development, and special instruction for students with special needs (Schwartz 2010). Interventions that can give poor children access to nonpoor schools include public school choice programs, charter schools, and school vouchers (Greene et al. 2010). These approaches typically assume that children's residential locations will remain unchanged and focus on school assignments. A number of urban school districts are currently implementing one or more programs of this type.

Although it may appear that the way to boost employment in poor neighborhoods is for more employers to locate within these neighborhoods, few Americans today actually work in the same neighborhoods where they live. Helping residents of low-income neighborhoods gain access to decent-paying jobs elsewhere in their city or metropolitan region offers greater promise. But this means **overcoming barriers to access, including transportation barriers**. Over the past several decades, jobs have become increasingly dispersed across the metropolitan landscape. And for people who rely on public transportation, commuting from inner-city neighborhoods to suburban jobs can be tremendously time consuming and costly. Transit reliance is an especially significant barrier for poor single mothers.

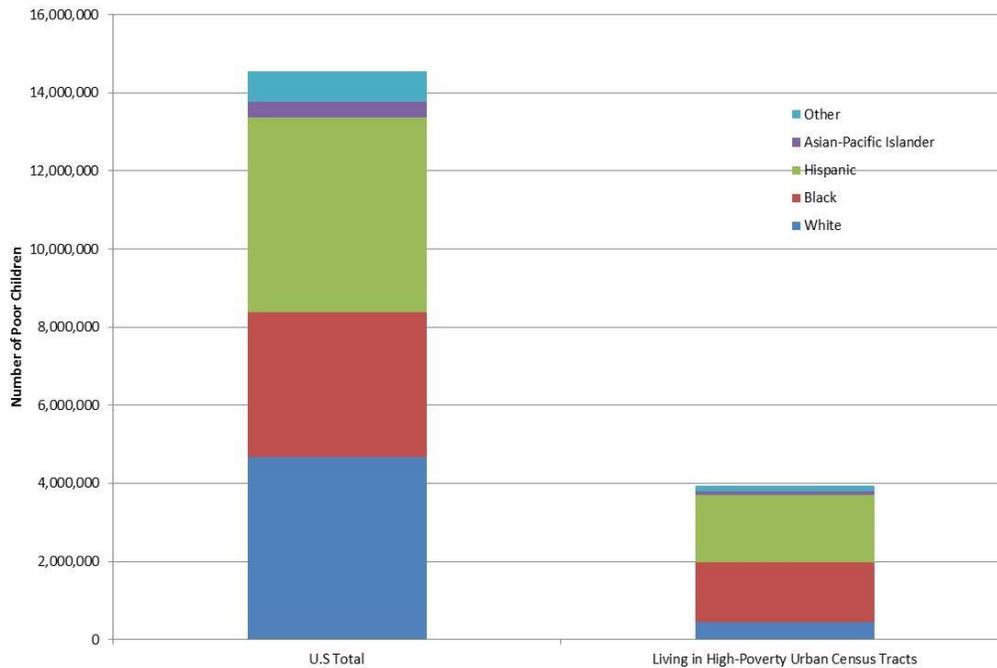
One strategy for tackling this problem is to provide special-purpose vans or buses that drive workers from low-income neighborhoods to outlying employment centers. This approach has generally produced disappointing results, because job locations are widely dispersed and work schedules vary, making the services costly for providers and inconvenient for riders. Many participants who are able to get and keep jobs use their increased income to buy cars or move closer to their employment. A demonstration of this approach, called the Bridges to Work initiative, found no evidence of higher employment or earnings among participants than for a control group (Palubinsky and Watson 1997).

An alternative approach is to help low-income people buy (and maintain) cars. A growing body of research finds a positive relationship between automobile access and employment rates among the poor. Studies that directly compare the relative benefits of cars and public transit find that automobiles are far more powerful determinants of job acquisition and job retention than is public transit (Pendall et al. 2014). Nonprofit organizations in cities across the country operate programs that distribute cars directly to families, make low-interest loans for car purchases, or facilitate matched savings for car down payments and purchases.<sup>16</sup>

## Key Ingredients for a Place-Conscious, Child-Focused Strategy

Almost 4 million poor children—more than a quarter of all poor children nationwide—are growing up in high-poverty urban neighborhoods.<sup>17</sup> Poor children of color are much more likely to live in these neighborhoods than are poor white children. Almost 90 percent of children living in high-poverty urban neighborhoods are children of color, compared with about 66 percent of all poor children nationwide. Most place-based (and emerging place-conscious) initiatives give at least some attention to the well-being and life-chances of neighborhood children, but an enormous opportunity for strategic innovation remains at the intersection of place-conscious and child-focused antipoverty work. This section reviews the research evidence on the foundational needs of children and the damage caused by living in distressed neighborhoods to highlight essential priorities for a place-conscious initiative focused on enabling poor children and youth to escape poverty as adults.

**Figure 1. High-Poverty Urban Neighborhoods Are Home to a Substantial Share of the Nation’s Poor Children, Particularly Children of Color**



## Children’s Foundational Needs and Family Capacities

The last several decades have yielded tremendous insights into the conditions that support or impede healthy human development, especially child development. Findings from research spanning the biomedical, behavioral, and social sciences fields all point to the importance of a strong and healthy start in the early years (and even in utero) for optimal, lifelong health and development (Halfon and Hochstein 2002; Hertzman 2012; Hertzman and Bertrand 2007; Shonkoff and Phillips 2000). This work has shown how environment and biology jointly influence health and well-being over the life course, how early childhood experiences are especially important in setting lifelong health and social development trajectories, and how biological and environmental factors become increasingly intertwined as children grow. Early childhood experiences influence lifelong development through structural and functional aspects of specific brain and nervous system circuits, including executive function and responses to stress (Hertzman 2012).

The essential and foundational needs of children have been identified as responsive caregiving, safe and secure environments, adequate and appropriate nutrition, and health-promoting behaviors and habits (for example, sleep, diet, physical activity, and television viewing).<sup>18</sup> Parents play the central role in meeting these fundamental needs; to do so, they must harness capacity in four areas: financial resources, time investments, psychological resources, and human capital. Any strategy aimed at improving outcomes for children must focus on supporting and enhancing these family capacities so parents can meet their children's foundational needs.

Sufficient financial resources allow families to buy the goods and services that children need to survive and thrive. The basics include housing, food, health care and child care, but higher-order needs—such as enrichment activities, college savings, and financial asset building—are also important. The primary source of financial resources for most families is employment, but public subsidies and safety-net benefits also play an important role for many. In the end, however, goods and services must be available, accessible, and affordable in order to be of use to families.

Children also require time from their parents and other primary caregivers: time to form deep attachments, to be read to regularly, and to share new learning experiences. The quality of this time is as important as the quantity, and is also affected by parents' psychological health and psychosocial skills. Parents' mental health is particularly important to the development of children, as is their ability to show patience, to teach by example, and to manage stress. Children also benefit from parents who can sustain and model healthy marriages and other adult relationships.

Finally, families need human capital capacities: language proficiency and literacy, education, and work skills. The human capital of parents affects their employment and income-generating potential as well as their ability to parent, advocate for their children, and support them throughout their schooling and development. This capacity also allows families to navigate civic and community-based institutions they need to raise healthy well-adjusted children, including faith-based organizations; arts and cultural institutions; preschool, summer, and after-school programs; and youth development and recreational programs).

## How Neighborhood Distress Undermines Family Capacities

All children—regardless of their social, economic, or cultural circumstances—have the same fundamental needs, but meeting them can be especially challenging when a family is poor. And families do not live or raise their children in a vacuum. They are embedded in nested social networks—of extended family, neighbors and playgroups, friends and acquaintances—and in neighborhoods that either support or undermine their essential capacities. Children in persistently poor families and those living in distressed communities are much more likely to face deficits and negative exposures, not just within their immediate families, but also through their neighbors and extended families, and into larger community groups and settings. Poverty also undermines the ability of individuals and communities to buffer or mitigate the negative effects of adversity on children. And although children's developmental trajectories are set early in life, they are subsequently reinforced through a cascade of differential exposures to social contexts—family, neighborhood, and school—that are either positive and protective or negative and damaging (Hertzman 2012, 127).

Research points to four causal mechanisms through which conditions in distressed neighborhoods undermine outcomes for poor children and reduce the likelihood that they will escape poverty as adults. These are poor-quality services—from both public and private-sector institutions; crime and violence; peer influences and social networks that undermine rather than supporting child and family well-being; and a lack of access to jobs (for both parents and teens). Each of these is described below, drawing from more extensive literature reviews in Ellen and Turner 1997 and Turner and Rawlings 2005.

Children's well-being can be significantly affected by the **availability and quality of services available in the neighborhood**. The most obvious example is public schools, especially elementary schools, since these are most likely to be in children's immediate neighborhoods. Public schools serving poor neighborhoods are often ineffective, their performance undermined by intersecting problems, including inadequate funding, outdated or undermaintained facilities, difficulty attracting and retaining qualified teachers and principals, and the challenge of educating large numbers of poor children. When local public schools are weak, children are unlikely to receive the solid educational foundation they need to succeed in today's skill-intensive economy. The deficits are exacerbated if their parents are unable to support or supplement their formal education.

Other services and institutions—the availability and quality of which vary across neighborhoods—can also have a significant impact on children's well-being and on parents' capacities to meet their children's needs. A majority of children in the United States now attend some form of preschool by age 5, but many distressed neighborhoods offer few, if any, quality options for child care and preschool. Access to good medical care and mental health services is also important throughout childhood and adolescence, and for parents as well. People who get routine illnesses in communities with fewer health care resources may have longer absences from school or work. Those with chronic illnesses, such as asthma or diabetes, may go without treatment or be unable to manage their conditions effectively. Parents struggling with untreated physical or mental health issues are less able to maintain healthy relationships and to support

and nurture their children. Other important services and amenities include food markets, recreational activities, and transportation.

Living in a high-crime environment increases risks for children and their parents. While the risk of being a victim of a burglary or assault may be the most obvious, research increasingly suggests that exposure to **crime and violence** also has far-reaching consequences. The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study found that trauma and abuse in childhood has a strong, relationship with a wide range of mental and physical health problems in adulthood, including alcoholism, cancer, cardiovascular disease, chronic lung disease, depression, obesity, smoking and substance abuse, and suicide risk (Boivin and Hertzman 2012). High levels of neighborhood crime and violence also make it harder for parents to find safe places for outdoor play, disrupt learning environments in neighborhood schools, and undermine opportunities for healthy after-school and summer activities. As children get older, living in a neighborhood where crime and violence are commonplace may lead them to believe that these are acceptable or even “normal,” increasing the risk of delinquent or criminal behavior.

Young people are profoundly influenced by their **peer groups**. While peer pressure can challenge some to reach new levels of athletic or academic achievement, it can also lure young people into dangerous or criminal behavior. Although youths’ peer groups are not determined solely by where they live, neighborhood has a significant impact on the choice of peer group. If many teenagers in a community are uninterested in school, engaging in crime, using drugs or alcohol, and having unprotected sex and babies out of wedlock, teenagers will be more apt to view these as acceptable, even desirable, behaviors.

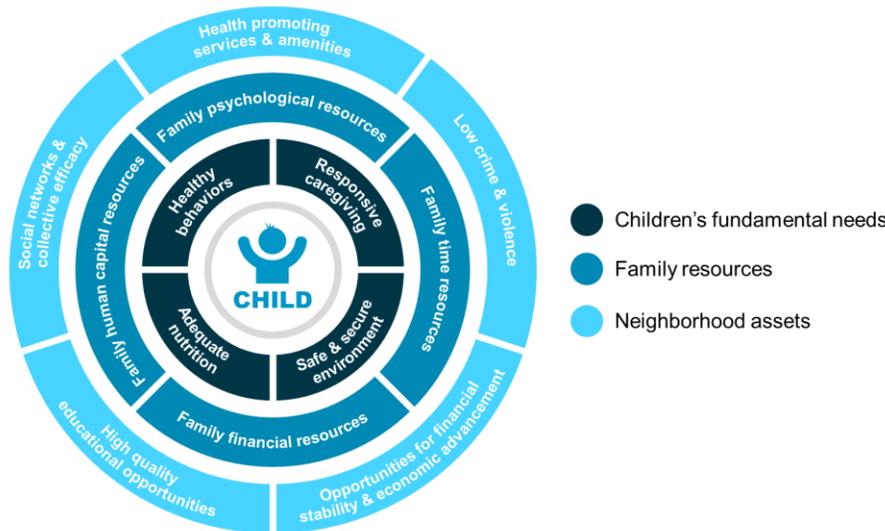
Peers and **social networks** also play critical roles for parents, supporting (or undermining) their capacities to meet their children’s developmental needs. These networks can facilitate reciprocated exchange—of information, in-kind services, and other supports; provide informal social controls and mutual support; and mobilize resources families and children need (Boivin and Hertzman 2012). A person’s knowledge about, and access to, social supports and economic opportunities often depends on his or her networks of friends, colleagues, and acquaintances, many of whom live nearby. Thus, parents living in a neighborhood in which few people have decent-paying jobs are less likely to hear about available job openings; they are also less likely to know employed people who can vouch for their reliability and character to a potential employer. Research has found that poor people’s social ties are more localized than those of middle- and high-income people, making them even more dependent on networks within the neighborhood.

Among the most obvious effects of a neighborhood on an adult’s circumstances is its physical proximity and accessibility to **employment opportunities**. Many of today’s distressed communities were once located near manufacturing centers with large numbers of well-paying jobs. The long-term decline in manufacturing employment and the simultaneous suburbanization of jobs in many metropolitan areas have left some inner-city neighborhoods physically isolated from economic opportunities. The high cost of buying and maintaining a car, as well as poor service by public transit systems, exacerbate this geographic mismatch and may pose enormous barriers to employment for parents. In addition to diminishing the amount of money parents may be able to earn in order to support their families, lengthy work commutes cut into valuable family time.

## **Essential Elements of a Child-Focused, Place-Conscious Strategy**

Breaking the cycle of persistent, intergenerational poverty requires sustained interventions at many levels, including nationwide efforts that expand employment opportunities, boost wages, strengthen systems of work supports, and bolster the social safety-net. But while these types of national reforms are necessary, they are insufficient for children living in severely distressed neighborhood environments. Place-conscious interventions that target the neighborhood conditions most damaging to children’s healthy development will also be necessary to “move the needle” on persistent, intergenerational poverty—especially for families of color.

**Figure 2. Meeting Children’s Fundamental Needs in the Context of Family Resources and Neighborhood Assets**



To be effective, a child-focused, place-conscious antipoverty effort must build or strengthen those community assets and links that enable families to meet their children's foundational needs. And it must remedy the community conditions that threaten or undermine that ability—addressing the needs of *both* children *and* their parents (a dual-generation approach). While the specific assets and deficits requiring attention will differ from one community to another (and even in a single community over time), a place-conscious strategy must address the following five priorities to improve the life-chances of poor children:

- **Increasing high-quality educational opportunities**, from early childhood through high school, and including before- and after-school care, summertime activities, and enrichment.
- **Reducing crime and violence**, so children and their parents feel physically safe and psychologically secure and are not subjected to repeated traumas.
- **Providing health-promoting services and amenities**, including affordable sources of healthy food; physical and mental health services for children and parents; safe places for children to play and exercise; and homes, schools, and community spaces free of environmental toxins and hazards.
- **Supporting social networks and collective efficacy** by strengthening the capacities of neighborhood residents to work toward shared goals, mutually support one another and each other’s children, and advocate effectively for resources that come from outside the neighborhood.
- **Expanding access to opportunities for financial stability and economic advancement**, including supportive services that strengthen families generally, summer job programs and apprenticeship opportunities for youth, alternative and adult basic education, training opportunities for all ages, and transportation links to regional employment opportunities.

These priorities can and should be addressed through place-conscious strategies that work at multiple scales, both improving conditions and opportunities within a target neighborhood and providing meaningful links to opportunities and resources in the larger city or region.<sup>19</sup> They should aim to transform neighborhoods that now trap children in poverty into neighborhoods that launch them toward a better future. The strategy should also cultivate and integrate these priorities in ways that reflect our latest understanding of child and adolescent development, family dynamics, and developmental assets and community resilience (Benson et al 1998; Longstaff et al. 2010; Theokas and Lerner 2006; Urban et al. 2009). These include understanding the various ecologies that surround children and youth (including

the individuals, the institutions, the opportunities, and access to these) and aligning them with developmental assets known to bolster positive child and youth development. These efforts should also be organized in ways that are known to boost community resilience: the community's resources should be robust (meaning they should perform well, and be diverse and redundant) and adaptive (drawing on institutional memory, innovative learning, and connectedness). Promoting these types of child- and youth-serving adaptive systems effectively in place is what holds promise for breaking cycles of chronic and persistent poverty in places where they are concentrated.

## Roles for Philanthropy

Philanthropy has played a central role in the evolution of strategies for tackling persistent poverty in distressed urban neighborhoods. Foundations have provided essential support for initiatives in particular places (like the Brownsville Partnership in New York City), for work in multiple neighborhoods within the same city (like Chicago's New Communities Program that covered 16 different neighborhoods), and for tests of promising approaches in several different cities (like the Annie E. Casey Foundation's Family-Centered Community Change and Family Economic Success-Early Childhood demonstrations). In addition to financial support (most often as grants but also as program-related investments), foundations possess other essential forms of capital that can help sustain and strengthen on-the-ground initiatives. Foundations can exert convening power that brings key local, state, or national stakeholders to the table in support of the horizontal and vertical networks required by place-conscious initiatives. Foundations can offer access to knowledge including best practices, peer networks, and hands-on technical assistance. And they can exert influence through thought leadership, public education, and policy advocacy.

Here we offer five recommendations for deploying these forms of philanthropic capital in support of a next generation of child-focused, place-conscious initiatives aimed at moving the needle on persistent, intergenerational poverty. These recommendations reflect lessons learned from past philanthropic and public-sector experience. The most effective philanthropic partners exhibit

- **flexibility** to tailor investments to local needs and priorities;
- **respect for local leadership** and the importance of strengthening local organizational capabilities;
- **courage** to acknowledge and address contentious issues of race and ethnicity;
- **perseverance** to stick with local stakeholders long enough to have an impact; and
- **commitment to knowledge-building** both within and across communities and initiatives.

## Flexibility to Tailor Investments to Local Needs and Priorities

The circumstances of neighborhoods, the opportunities and barriers they face within their regions, and the legacy of prior interventions differ dramatically across the United States. These differences must be fully understood in order to craft effective strategies going forward. Past philanthropic experience has shown that to gain traction in addressing persistent poverty, genuine engagement with local stakeholders (including poor people themselves, grassroots organizations, and local funding partners) is critical. Local actors should be invited to describe their opportunities and challenges and to identify the barriers they see to broadening or expanding current activities. This approach is often complemented by technical assistance that can support local communities in both defining and advancing their visions and plans.

Although this kind of bottom-up approach to grantmaking is inherently messy and complex, history demonstrates that when national efforts roll out without local contexts in mind, they often fail to take root. The Annie E. Casey Foundation learned that lesson through its Making Connections Initiative and, increasingly, the federal government is applying this principle as well. Today, the White House Council for Strong Cities, Strong Communities and Promise Zones emphasizes listening to local communities, understanding their vision, and then aligning federal resources and technical assistance to help local leaders achieve that vision. Engaging in a bottom-up grantmaking approach requires considerable staff capacity, either in-house or through an intermediary organization. Staff must spend time in communities

in order to build trusting relationships and learn about the needs first-hand. This requires a team that is inclined to be responsive and has a sufficiently broad skill set to be able to respond to a wide set of needs. The team will spend much of its time “busting silos” between systems in order to help communities serve people better and leverage resources.

## **Respect for Local Leadership and the Importance of Strengthening Local Organizational Capabilities**

A bottom-up approach to grantmaking also requires that funders use their resources to help build the capacities of local stakeholders and invest in strengthening their capacities to collaborate, plan, and act effectively. This includes identifying and cultivating natural leaders within the community, some of whom may not be included among the established or recognized institutions that claim to speak for a community. In particular, young people in the community do not always have channels to actively participate in community decisionmaking, but engaging them can create more cohesion and a sense of local identity. Foundations collaborating on investments to support boys and young men of color have highlighted youth organizing and voice as essential mechanisms to improve community outcomes (Executives Alliance 2014).

Philanthropy should also expect to pay for activities that do not typically get funded—like leadership development, organizational skill-building, and the time required for the convening and coordinating work of the “orchestra conductors.” Other forms of capital can also help strengthen local organizational capacities. Foundations can provide new technologies—for connecting and empowering people, for conducting outreach, and for collecting and analyzing data. They can provide hands-on technical assistance and training to help local institutions and individuals work more effectively. And they can connect on-the-ground practitioners with policy expertise and advocacy (both locally and nationally) to help them translate community needs and lessons learned into policy and systems reforms.

## **Courage to Acknowledge and Address Contentious Issues of Race and Ethnicity**

The challenges facing distressed urban neighborhoods and their residents reflect the legacy of discrimination and segregation, and the persistence of racial and ethnic inequality in our economy and our society. These challenges cannot be effectively tackled without acknowledging—and airing—the systemic disparities, prejudices, and discriminatory practices that undermine the well-being and life chances of people of color and the neighborhoods in which they live. Bringing these issues to light—talking explicitly about race and ethnicity, prejudice and discrimination, and the persistence of structural barriers—generates controversy and is sometimes considered too risky.

But experience has shown that when funders try to sidestep issues of race and ethnicity, interventions fall short of their goals because they do not explicitly address critical barriers. Instead of avoiding these contentious issues, foundations should draw upon the latest evidence about embedded and institutionalized racism to help communities better define the challenges they face and advocate effectively for race-conscious remedies. They should work to empower and give voice to poor people of color. And they must be prepared to tolerate and patiently work through the conflict and controversy that is bound to arise—within a community and in its interactions with the broader civic and public systems that ultimately have to change.

The new foundation initiative on boys and young men of color is a bold example of this courage. A group of philanthropic partners recently announced an effort to tackle issues of race, ethnicity, and gender head on and holistically by combining strategies to address the destructive narrative and cultural assumptions about boys and young men of color and to reform systems and policies that impede their progress (Executives Alliance 2014).

## **Perseverance to Stick with Local Stakeholders Long Enough to Have an Impact**

Achieving meaningful changes in severely distressed communities requires a long-term time horizon. The complexity of persistent, intergenerational poverty means that “moving the needle” will require substantial resources and effort sustained over at least a decade. Short-term funding horizons create serious operational challenges. They leave practitioners without the flexibility to engage residents and other stakeholders in thoughtful planning. They limit an initiative’s ability to test new models carefully before scaling-up. They constrain strategic adaptation when initial efforts fail to bear fruit. And, perhaps above all, short-term funding requires grantees to devote time and money to chasing the resources they need to continue their work, rather than staying focused on programmatic objectives. While a long-term funding commitment is vital, it should not reduce the urgency to make meaningful progress in the near term or the accountability for achieving interim goals.

Foundations should help the initiatives they fund to establish both ambitious long-term outcome goals and meaningful interim indicators of progress to achieve the necessary balance between urgency and patience. Also, these indicators should align with the scale of activities and investments being implemented and reflect a realistic theory of change about their impact. For example, it is not practical to assume that a philanthropic investment, by itself, will transform market dynamics and neighborhood conditions. However, it may catalyze other public and private investments or policy reforms that advance these larger objectives.

In multisite efforts, tensions often arise between the funder and local practitioners around identifying measures for monitoring and evaluating the progress of work on the ground. The funder has a legitimate role to play in setting high-level outcome goals for the initiative as a whole, as well as some interim indicators of progress toward those goals. But—consistent with the bottom-up philosophy discussed earlier—the funder should also listen to what community stakeholders want to accomplish and incorporate their priorities in measures designed for monitoring and evaluation.

## **Commitment to Build Knowledge Both within and across Communities and Initiatives**

As discussed earlier, many of today’s most promising place-conscious initiatives today adopt a culture of continuous learning and improvement, building measurement and evaluation into their work from the outset. Foundations can and should encourage and support continuous learning within the organizations and initiatives they fund. This means investing the financial, technological, and intellectual resources required to support the hard work of defining meaningful outcome goals and indicators, collecting needed data, and analyzing progress in real time.

In addition, foundations should be prepared to leverage their place-conscious investments by informing policymakers, practitioners, and thought leaders across the country about lessons learned and new approaches that work. A first step is to encourage local practitioners to engage with one another in a peer learning community. This will not only accelerate their own progress, but it will also reveal key insights that can be shared more broadly across the field. Although it can be difficult to generalize across places that have different politics, governance systems, market conditions, and demographics, it is essential that practitioners identify solutions to persistent intergenerational poverty that can work in different contexts. Newsletters, blogs, and websites can help local practitioners stay informed about ongoing changes in their midst. Many foundations have invested in documentarians who can be embedded in the local organization or team to capture the stories that will inspire action in other places. And the most successful peer learning communities also reach out to share emerging insights with policymakers and other funders when they see an opportunity, such as the development of a new program or initiative.

## Conclusion

Persistent intergenerational poverty is a complex and daunting problem that requires sustained effort at multiple levels. Strategies that focus on the places where poor children live have an important role to play because conditions in severely distressed urban neighborhoods undermine families' capacities to meet their children's developmental needs and effectively trap too many children—especially children of color—in poverty. A century of experimentation and learning has led to an evolving set of findings and principles for neighborhood-focused antipoverty efforts going forward. Today, philanthropies have the opportunity to advance this field further, with a particular focus on strategies that are place-conscious rather than narrowly place-based and aim toward breaking the intergenerational cycle of poverty in distressed urban communities.

**Appendix Table AI. Initiatives Seeking to Transform Places**

Lead funder		Description	Babies and children	Multigenerational	Transition to adulthood	Housing and economic development	Community empowerment	Safety	Family stability	Health	Education	Jobs and employment	Wealth and asset-building
<b>Federally funded initiatives</b>													
Choice Neighborhoods	Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)	Choice Neighborhoods is a competitive grant program designed to revitalize high-poverty neighborhoods by replacing distressed public or HUD-assisted housing with high-quality mixed-income developments. Using public housing as a platform for comprehensive community revitalization, Choice Neighborhoods also aims to connect children to high-quality schools and other educational opportunities as well as stimulate local economic activity. For more information, visit <a href="http://www.hud.gov/cn">www.hud.gov/cn</a> .			✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		
Promise Neighborhoods	Department of Education	Promise Neighborhoods is a competitive grant program designed to transform distressed neighborhoods by providing a continuum of services to improve children’s outcomes from early childhood through college. These initiatives seek to integrate a high-quality educational “pipeline” with comprehensive services to improve health, family engagement, and community well-being. For more information, visit <a href="http://www2.ed.gov/programs/promiseneighborhoods/index.html">http://www2.ed.gov/programs/promiseneighborhoods/index.html</a> .	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Promise Zones	Department of Housing and Urban Development	Promise Zones seeks to revitalize 20 high-poverty communities by working with local entities to improve public housing, support strong educational institutions for children, and provide tax incentives for businesses to invest and create jobs in Promise Zones. The federal government will also work with local leaders to “navigate federal programs and cut red tape” and to support initiatives to improve safety in high-crime areas. President Obama announced the first five Promise Zones in January 2014. For more information, visit <a href="http://www.hud.gov/promisezones">www.hud.gov/promisezones</a> .			✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	
<b>Multicity foundation initiatives</b>													
Family Centered Community Change (FCCC)	Annie E. Casey Foundation (AECF)	Building on AECF’s previous place-based antipoverty efforts focused on families, the FCCC initiative supports local two-generational community development efforts in Buffalo, Columbus, and San Antonio. These sites are defined by services that improve educational and developmental outcomes for children while incorporating parenting, educational, and asset development programs for parents. For more information, visit <a href="http://www.aecf.org/MajorInitiatives/FamilyCenteredChange.aspx">http://www.aecf.org/MajorInitiatives/FamilyCenteredChange.aspx</a> .	✓	✓	✓		✓			✓	✓	✓	✓

	Lead funder	Description	Babies and children	Multigenerational	Transition to adulthood	Housing and economic development	Community empowerment	Safety	Family stability	Health	Education	Jobs and employment	Wealth and asset-building
Family Economic Success— Early Childhood (FES-EC) demonstration	Annie E. Casey Foundation	The FES-EC demonstration seeks to identify and promote promising local efforts that integrate strategies designed to improve financial security for families with services that improve education and developmental outcomes for children. AECF is working with sites in four states to implement this model of simultaneous services for children and parents. For more information, visit <a href="http://www.aecf.org/MajorInitiatives/CenterforFamilyEconomicSuccess.aspx">http://www.aecf.org/MajorInitiatives/CenterforFamilyEconomicSuccess.aspx</a> .	✓	✓						✓	✓	✓	✓
Purpose Built Communities	Multiple streams	The Purpose Built model for comprehensive redevelopment, modeled from the success of the East Lake Atlanta initiative in the 1990s, now operates in eight cities across the country. Purpose Built Communities incorporate mixed-income housing, a cradle-to-college education pipeline, and community wellness initiatives, all led by a single, nonprofit lead organization. For more information, visit <a href="http://purposebuiltcommunities.org/">http://purposebuiltcommunities.org/</a> .	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Building Sustainable Communities	Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC)	The Building Sustainable Communities approach to community revitalization is defined by investing in housing and physical space, providing supports to increase family income and wealth, stimulating economic development, improving educational outcomes for children and adults, and supporting neighborhood health and safety initiatives. LISC has implemented this strategy and supports the community development work of 30 local programs across the United States. For more information, visit <a href="http://www.lisc.org/section/ourwork/sc">http://www.lisc.org/section/ourwork/sc</a> .	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Single-city foundation initiatives (multisite)</b>													
Best Start LA	First 5 LA	Best Start LA is a community-driven initiative in 14 neighborhoods in Los Angeles County whose primary goals are to ensure that children are born a healthy weight, maintain a healthy weight, are safe from abuse and neglect, and are prepared for kindergarten. To accomplish these goals, Best Start LA supports an array of redevelopment projects and community-led initiatives ranging from prenatal and parenting services, school-readiness programs, and local projects to promote healthy eating and physical activity for children and families. For more information, visit <a href="http://beststartla.org/">http://beststartla.org/</a> .	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓		
Building Healthy Communities	California Endowment	The Building Healthy Communities initiative seeks to improve health, safety, and educational outcomes for children and youth in 14 communities across California by integrating neighborhood-level programs to expand employment opportunities and improve education, safety, and neighborhood health. Specific goals include reducing childhood obesity and youth violence while increasing school attendance and access to health care and healthy food. For more information, visit <a href="http://www.calendow.org/healthycommunities/">http://www.calendow.org/healthycommunities/</a> .	✓	✓	✓		✓			✓	✓	✓	

	Lead funder	Description	Babies and children	Multigenerational	Transition to adulthood	Housing and economic development	Community empowerment	Safety	Family stability	Health	Education	Jobs and employment	Wealth and asset-building
HOPE SF Initiative	Public-private partnership (The San Francisco Foundation, Enterprise Community Partners, and the City and County of San Francisco)	HOPE SF's vision is to transform eight public housing sites across San Francisco into thriving communities by replacing distressed public housing units with high-quality homes, building new affordable housing for rental and ownership, increasing business investments and job opportunities for residents, and engaging the local community throughout this process. One site, the Alice Griffith Public Housing Development, is also a Choice Neighborhoods implementation grantee. For more information, visit <a href="http://hope-sf.org/">http://hope-sf.org/</a> .	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					✓	
New Communities Program (NCP)	John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation	LISC/Chicago's New Communities Program is a 10-year, comprehensive community development initiative in 16 high-poverty neighborhoods in Chicago. Guided by each community's Quality of Life Plan, the NCP seeks to partner with local and citywide agencies to address a wide range of issues, including education and health care quality, unemployment and family economic security, neighborhood violence, and distressed housing and physical space. For more information, visit <a href="http://www.newcommunities.org/">http://www.newcommunities.org/</a> .	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓			✓	✓
<b>Single-city foundation initiatives (single-site)</b>													
Bedford-Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation	Multiple streams	By focusing on economic self-sufficiency, family stability, community redevelopment, and local arts and culture, Bedford-Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation seeks to transform central Brooklyn into a neighborhood that is safe, vibrant, and full of opportunity for children and families. Specific areas of emphasis include the development of Restoration Plaza, a hub for local commerce and sharing of culture, employment and education services for youth and adults, and housing services to preserve affordable rental housing and promote homeownership. For more information, visit <a href="http://www.restorationplaza.org/">http://www.restorationplaza.org/</a> .			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Community Solutions and the Brownsville Partnership (BP)	Community Solutions	The Brownsville Partnership seeks to combat poverty and improve the quality of life in Brownsville, Brooklyn, by focusing on providing services to address housing, health, and public safety issues. BP has recently focused on the underlying economic instability in the neighborhood and has developed a workforce investment project that aims to connect 5,000 residents to jobs by 2017. For more information, visit <a href="http://cmtysolutions.org/projects/brownsville-partnership">http://cmtysolutions.org/projects/brownsville-partnership</a> .				✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	
City Heights Initiative	Price Charities	The City Heights urban revitalization project focuses on "improving housing, retail, health care, education, social services, public safety, job opportunities, and other quality of life issues" for families in downtown San Diego. Specific projects include the Urban Village office and retail space redevelopment, early childhood education initiatives and scholarship programs, and school-based health centers, among others. City Heights also includes a neighborhoods safety initiative and a graffiti abatement project. For more information, visit <a href="http://www.pricecharities.com/City-Heights-Initiative/">www.pricecharities.com/City-Heights-Initiative/</a> .	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

	Lead funder	Description	Babies and children	Multigenerational	Transition to adulthood	Housing and economic development	Community empowerment	Safety	Family stability	Health	Education	Jobs and employment	Wealth and asset-building
East Bay Asian Local Development Corporation (EBALDC)	Multiple streams	Located in Oakland and the greater East Bay area, EBALDC is a community development organization that focuses on building and managing affordable housing and commercial space while providing services to enhance economic opportunity for low-income families. On-site programs include financial education and counseling, employment support, benefits assistance, youth programs, and services to enhance community engagement. EBALDC has recently adopted a Healthy Neighborhoods approach, which emphasizes the fusion of residents' physical well-being with social and economic opportunity.		✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓
East Baltimore Revitalization Initiative	Annie E. Casey Foundation	The East Baltimore Revitalization Initiative is a place-based redevelopment program that aims to improve living conditions and life outcomes for low-income residents in the Middle East neighborhood in Baltimore. The vision for the revitalized community includes over 2,000 mixed-income housing units (able to accommodate all past residents who wish to return), 2 million square feet of new commercial space, state-of-the-art community schools and early learning centers, and new green space and parks. For more information, visit <a href="http://www.eastbaltimorerevitalization.org/">http://www.eastbaltimorerevitalization.org/</a> .	✓	✓		✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	
Harlem Children's Zone (HCZ)	Multiple streams	The goal of the Harlem Children's Zone is to break the cycle of intergenerational poverty in Harlem by surrounding children with high-quality, coordinated health, social, community, and educational supports beginning at birth. HCZ's cradle-to-career education pipeline includes early childhood services for infants, toddlers, and their parents; pre-kindergarten programs; public charter schools; after-school programs; college counseling and preparation; and support services for HCZ graduates who enroll in college. This pipeline is surrounded by services aimed at supporting healthy and stable families and building community. For more information, visit <a href="http://www.hcz.org">www.hcz.org</a> .	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	
Higher Ground Boston (HGB)	United Way of Massachusetts	Higher Ground Boston is a data-driven community development initiative focused on improving health and education outcomes in census tract 817 in Boston. HGB collaborates with various local entities to provide services for children and families, focusing in particular on early childhood development, education, community health, and youth leadership and employment. Outcome measures include kindergarten readiness, high-school options for graduating 8th graders, and use of neighborhood health centers. For more information, visit <a href="http://www.higherground-boston.org/web/">http://www.higherground-boston.org/web/</a> .	✓	✓	✓		✓			✓	✓	✓	

	Lead funder	Description	Babies and children	Multigenerational	Transition to adulthood	Housing and economic development	Community empowerment	Safety	Family stability	Health	Education	Jobs and employment	Wealth and asset-building
Jacobs Center for Neighborhood Innovation (JCNI)	Jacobs Family Foundation	Jacobs Center for Neighborhood Innovation seeks to build strong, vibrant communities in southeastern San Diego through community-led revitalization programs designed to increase civic engagement, promote local economic development, and provide a platform for sharing art and culture. JCNI's anchor redevelopment project, the Village at Market Creek, is designed to build individual, family, and community wealth by attracting public and private investment and social enterprise. For more information, visit <a href="http://www.jacobscenter.org/">http://www.jacobscenter.org/</a> .				✓	✓					✓	✓
Magnolia Place Community Initiative (MCPI)	Casey Family Programs	The Magnolia Place Community Initiative emphasizes state, city, and community collaboration to increase social connectedness, community mobilization, and access to needed supports and services within the five-mile Magnolia Catchment Area of Los Angeles. MPCPI's specific long-term goals are to improve the ability for families to provide safe and nurturing environments for children; improve the health, education, and economic well-being of children and families; and integrate systems of care and services to more effectively meet the needs of the community. For more information, visit <a href="http://www.magnoliaplacela.org/">http://www.magnoliaplacela.org/</a> .	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓		
Neighborhood Planning Unit-V	Annie E. Casey Foundation	The Annie E. Casey Foundation designated Atlanta a Civic Site in 2001, focusing primarily on development efforts in Neighborhood Planning Unit-V, located in the Pittsburgh neighborhood. AECF collaborates with various community partners to achieve outcomes in educational achievement, family economic success, and neighborhood transformation. Specific goals include increasing parent engagement in children's education and helping providing work supports and wealth development initiatives through the Center for Working Families, Inc. For more information, visit <a href="http://www.aecf.org/Home/MajorInitiatives/CivicSites/Atlanta.aspx">http://www.aecf.org/Home/MajorInitiatives/CivicSites/Atlanta.aspx</a> .	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
New Community Corporation (NCC)	Multiple streams	New Community Corporation is a comprehensive community development initiative in Newark, New Jersey, emphasizing education and youth services, transitional living and family services, workforce and economic development, and health services including behavioral and mental health. NCC's Department of Development also works to develop and manage affordable housing units as well as to lead other real estate redevelopment initiatives that promote economic activity in the community. For more information, visit <a href="http://www.newcommunity.org/">http://www.newcommunity.org/</a> .	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

	Lead funder	Description	Babies and children	Multigenerational	Transition to adulthood	Housing and economic development	Community empowerment	Safety	Family stability	Health	Education	Jobs and employment	Wealth and asset-building
Step Up Savannah, Inc.	Public-private partnership	Step Up Savannah, Inc., is an antipoverty program whose primary goal is to create and bring together the necessary supports, services, and resources to help low-income families achieve economic self-sufficiency. The initiative focuses on adult education and workforce development as well as wealth-building and financial literacy. Step Up board members also serve as advocates for change on behalf of the community on the local, regional and state level in all of these issue areas. For more information, visit <a href="http://stepupsavannah.org/">http://stepupsavannah.org/</a> .					✓				✓	✓	✓
Youth Policy Institute (YPI)	Public-private partnership	As the lead entity behind the Los Angeles Promise Neighborhood, YPI aims to promote academic success and reduce poverty in Los Angeles neighborhoods by establishing a high-quality cradle-to-career education pipeline and wrap-around services for children and families. YPI emphasizes the role of education technology and supplements high-quality schools and educational services with workforce and adult education initiatives, financial literacy programs, referrals for health and housing services, and after-school programs to reduce crime and violence. For more information, visit <a href="http://www.ypiusa.org">www.ypiusa.org</a> .	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓

**Appendix Table A2. Initiatives Using Place as a Platform for Individuals and Families**

	Lead funder	Description	Babies and children	Multi-generational	Transition to adulthood	Housing and economic development	Community empowerment	Safety	Family stability	Health	Education	Jobs and employment	Wealth and asset building
CASA de Maryland	Multiple streams	CASA provides various integrated programs and services focused on immigrant-related issues including education, employment, language proficiency, financial stability, legal assistance, and political integration. A major component the organization is its focus on community organization and helping residents become leaders to affect social change. CASA has also helped form the Citizenship Maryland Project, an initiative to advocate for and provide services to assist eligible residents through the naturalization process. For more information, visit <a href="http://www.casademaryland.org">http://www.casademaryland.org</a> .					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation (CHLDC)	Multiple streams (public-private mix)	Located in Cypress Hills/East New York, CHLDC focuses on providing services to help strengthen families and help them achieve economic self-sufficiency and secure affordable housing. Educational services range from preschool to college preparation and success to GED programs for youth and adults. CHLDC also includes various housing redevelopment projects and an emphasis on community empowerment.	✓		✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	
Denver Children's Corridor	The Piton Foundation	The primary goals of the Denver Children's Corridor initiative are to ensure that every child within the target 40-mile area has access to a medical home, is kindergarten-ready, and graduates from high school. The initiative seeks to develop strong pipelines and "feeder systems" for children while also focusing on parent education and strengthening community engagement. For more information, visit <a href="http://www.denverchildrenscorridor.org">http://www.denverchildrenscorridor.org</a> .	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓		
East River Development Alliance (ERDA, now Urban Upbound)	Multiple lead funding streams (public-private mix)	ERDA seeks to transform New York City public housing neighborhoods into communities of opportunity by providing integrated workforce development, college access, and financial empowerment services to local residents. Another key focus of the Alliance is to revitalize the community by improving the safety and quality of housing and provide access for residents to local goods and services, including healthy food and financial institutions. For more information, visit <a href="http://www.erdalliance.org">http://www.erdalliance.org</a> .				✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓
Housing Opportunities and Services Together (HOST) demonstration	Multiple lead funding streams (public-private mix)	The Urban Institute's HOST demonstration is a multisite demonstration project designed to test strategies that improve outcomes for low-income families in public housing. Using two public housing developments in Chicago and Portland, Oregon, as platforms for service delivery, Urban and its site partners seek to provide case management and wraparound, two-generational services for vulnerable children, youth, and families. Among others, services at the two sites aim to improve employment, educational, health, financial literacy, and parenting outcomes. For more information, visit <a href="http://www.urban.org/projects/host/index.cfm">http://www.urban.org/projects/host/index.cfm</a> .	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

	Lead funder	Description	Babies and children	Multi-generational	Transition to adulthood	Housing and economic development	Community empowerment	Safety	Family stability	Health	Education	Jobs and employment	Wealth and asset building
Jordan Downs Redevelopment	Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles	BRIDGE Housing is a California-based development and management organization dedicated to creating high quality, affordable housing while providing services to improve the well-being of its residents. BRIDGE has collaborated with local partners to transform Jordan Downs, a 700-unit public housing in Watts, Los Angeles, into a thriving mixed-income community defined by education services for children and adults, job training and workforce development programs, and various health initiatives. For more information, visit <a href="http://www.jordandowns.org">http://www.jordandowns.org</a> .	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	
Jubilee Life Initiative (JLI)	Jubilee Housing	The mission of JLI is to combat intergenerational poverty and improve life outcomes for families in the Ward One neighborhood of Washington, DC. JLI focuses on providing safe and healthy low-income housing combined with services to promote family and youth development and access to economic opportunity. JLI has recently launched a reentry housing program to provide housing and other service for individuals transitioning from correctional facilities. For more information, see <a href="http://www.jubileehousing.org/residents/index.cfm">http://www.jubileehousing.org/residents/index.cfm</a> .			✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓
Neighborhood Centers, Inc.	Gulf Coast Workforce Development Board	Operating as the largest nonprofit service provider in Texas, Neighborhood Community Centers, Inc., advocates for a strength- and asset-based approach to community development, offering a network of services to low-income individuals and families. Most services, ranging from early childhood education to immigration services to fitness and nutrition classes, are offered in six centrally located centers across Houston. Neighborhood Centers, Inc., is also the recipient of a Promise Neighborhood planning grant to transform the Gulfton neighborhood in southwest Houston. For more information, visit <a href="http://www.neighborhood-centers.org">http://www.neighborhood-centers.org</a> .	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
P.T. Barnum Partnership	Fairfield County Community Foundation	Inspired by the successes of the Foundation's Stable Families Program—a case management and family services initiative for public housing residents in Bridgeport, Connecticut—the P.T. Barnum Partnership seeks to improve the neighborhood surrounding the P.T. Barnum Apartments by improving physical space and linking residents to various health, educational, and economic development services. The Partnership also emphasizes the role of community leadership and is rooted in the conviction that “public housing residents can be the drivers of positive, sustainable change.” For more information, visit <a href="http://www.fccfoundation.org">http://www.fccfoundation.org</a> .		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

	Lead funder	Description	Babies and children	Multi-generational	Transition to adulthood	Housing and economic development	Community empowerment	Safety	Family stability	Health	Education	Jobs and employment	Wealth and asset building
Tulsa Community Action Project	Public-private partnership	In addition to CAP Tulsa's 13 high-quality early education centers and programs designed to improve family economic success, CAP Tulsa operates two comprehensive, place-based antipoverty initiatives aimed at educating the "whole child academically, emotionally, physically, and socially." To do so, CAP Tulsa's Neighborhood Revitalization Initiative seeks to align partners providing two-generational services in the Kendall-Whittier and Eugene Field neighborhoods, emphasizing educational attainment for children and adults, career development, financial security, and community engagement. For more information, visit <a href="http://captulsa.org/">http://captulsa.org/</a> .					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
The Strive Partnership	Multiple streams	The vision of the Strive Partnership relies on a cradle-to-career network of educational services for children and youth in Cincinnati and northern Kentucky. The Partnership relies on collaboration among education, business, nonprofit, civic, philanthropic, and community leaders who share the goal that every 3rd grader in the region will be reading at grade level by the year 2020. StriveTogether, inspired by the vision of the Partnership, is now an extensive network of communities and community partners who share this vision. For more information, visit <a href="http://www.strivetgether.org/">http://www.strivetgether.org/</a> .	✓	✓							✓	✓	✓

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## Notes

1. For a discussion of the problem of deep and persistent poverty and strategies for addressing it, see Aron, Jacobson, and Turner (2013).
2. High-poverty neighborhoods are defined here as census tracts with poverty rates above 30 percent. As discussed below, this is a widely-used proxy for serious neighborhood disinvestment and distress.
3. This paper was commissioned by the JPB Foundation to support its knowledge-building and strategic thinking.
4. See Martinez-Cosio and Bussell (2013) for a further exploration of the philanthropic and foundation role in early 20th-century antipoverty efforts.
5. For more on comprehensive community initiatives, see Kubisch et al. (2010a, 2010b).
6. See Popkin et al. (2004) for more on the origins and achievements of HOPE VI.
7. See Tach, Pendall, and Derian (2014) for a much more extensive discussion of the evidence regarding income-mixing at differing geographic scales.
8. The Clinton administration also established the Empowerment Zones program, a reboot of Model Cities that focused primarily on job creation in inner-city locations. Empowerment Zones achieved only spotty success and have not received much attention or follow-up. Clinton's Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs), however, have proven more durable and play a useful role providing credit and technical sophistication to fuel investment in underserved communities.
9. A similar federal initiative, called Strong Cities, Strong Communities, works at the city level, helping local government agencies use federal funding streams more effectively to tackle critical local priorities.
10. For example, see Pendall and Turner (2014), which presents analysis that groups metros into clusters based on regional economic, demographic, and equity indicators.
11. In the New Communities Program, LISC essentially plays this role across multiple sites in Chicago, but a "lead agency" is also designated for each site. This raises the possibility that for multisite initiatives, this mobilizer or coordinator function has to be performed at both levels.
12. See Austin Nichols, "Evaluating Place-based Programs," *MetroTrends* (blog), Urban Institute, July 3, 2013, <http://blog.metrotrends.org/2013/07/evaluating-place-based-programs/>.
13. "Promise Neighborhoods," US Department of Education, last modified August 9, 2013, accessed June 24, 2014, <https://www2.ed.gov/programs/promiseneighborhoods/index.html?exp=0>.
14. The Buffalo site also received federal Promise Neighborhoods funding, and the San Antonio site received both Promise Neighborhoods and Choice Neighborhoods funding.
15. MTO was launched in response to very promising findings from an earlier initiative, the Chicago Gautreaux program, which was implemented as part of the court-ordered settlement of a major desegregation lawsuit. Gautreaux helped low-income black families relocate to predominantly white neighborhoods and retrospective studies found that families that moved to well-resourced suburban neighborhoods experienced dramatic improvements in employment, income, and education (Rosenbaum 1995).
16. "Find a Program," Working Cars for Working Families, 2010, accessed June 24, 2014, <http://www.workingcarsforworkingfamilies.org/find/find-a-program.html>.
17. Urban Institute analysis of data from the 2007–11 American Community Survey. High-poverty neighborhoods are defined here as census tracts with poverty rates above 30 percent. As discussed earlier, this proxy is widely used for serious neighborhood disinvestment and distress.
18. The remainder of this subsection draws on a recent paper by Mistry et al. (2012) on children's needs and family resources.

19. In fact, two of these priorities—crime and violence and social networks—apply at the most intimate scale of apartment development courtyards, block-fronts, and street corners. The other three operate above that level, at social seams between neighborhoods and even at the city and regional level.