

- IN THIS ISSUE -

Creating Neighborhoods of Opportunity: Year One, by CCF Board Chair **Steven Flax**, Administrative VP, M&T Bank; Community Reinvestment Group, Regional CRA Manager | MDRC report on CCF: *The Promise of a Community-Based Approach to Economic Opportunity* | **Kate Dempsey**, NYC Center for Economic Opportunity Director of Strategy and Operations, on Working with CCF | Grantee Updates: Advancing the Fight Against Poverty

A Letter from Our Board Chair, Steven Flax

Creating Neighborhoods of Opportunity: Year One

A year ago we launched an ambitious endeavor that supports the work of five sophisticated community organizations to identify new solutions to persistent poverty.



These organizations work in chronically low-income and underserved communities, but are surrounded by the abundant resources and opportunities available in one of the wealthiest cities in the world.

We supported five grantees - Fifth Avenue Committee, St. Nicks Alliance, Community Solutions/Brownsville Partnership, Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation, and New Settlement Apartments - with vision to expand their capacity and to more effectively connect low-income people to New York City's rich economic opportunities.

In their first grant year, grantees have formed new successful partnerships with government agencies, with private businesses, and with other nonprofit organizations that provide complementary services. And, the groups started or expanded programs to ensure that the people being served seamlessly access the comprehensive services they need to move up the economic ladder.

Grantees have championed and embraced the idea that better data can demonstrate their successes. Several organizations have hired staff to lead internal evaluation and develop systems that connect goals and programs to data tracking.

In the next year, our grantees, city partners and donors, will continue to build on and refine our collective efforts. We have to. After all, it has never been more clear that we must address inequality, find better ways to alleviate poverty, and create a city where all neighborhoods are neighborhoods of opportunity.

The Promise of a Community-Based Approach to Economic Opportunity

[MDRC](#), the nation's preeminent social policy research organization dedicated to learning what works to improve programs and policies that affect the poor, is evaluating the CCF initiative. MDRC recently issued the first of five briefs they will create over the next four years.

This brief describes the grantees' neighborhoods and their strategies to fight poverty and highlights some of the early lessons from the initiative. The brief illustrates how community organizations are uniquely positioned to undertake economic opportunity initiatives by reaching underserved populations and mobilizing high-quality services for them. The brief also identifies what sets CCF apart from other place-based initiatives. Read the full brief [here](#).

Kate Dempsey

NYC Center for Economic Opportunity Director of Strategy & Operations

Working with Change Capital Fund

The Center for Economic Opportunity (CEO) works to reduce poverty and advance evidence-based policy in New York City through innovation, research, program design, monitoring and evaluation. Located in the Mayor's Office of Operations, CEO collaborates with City agencies and fosters public/private partnerships to advance our anti-poverty efforts.

As CEO's representative to CCF I advise on program performance measurement and evaluation, help coordinate with City agencies, and work to identify linkages to administrative data.

CCF is an exciting partner for CEO because it has a similar approach of promoting innovation and building evidence through evaluation. Its grantees are building new service capabilities and exploring data integration strategies that could produce lessons for city systems. And we applaud the donors' investment in evaluation so that the process and measurable outcomes of the program are transparent, replicable, and - if successful - scalable.

The mayoral administration is very interested, and has already invested significant resources, in neighborhood-level strategies to address inequality. Community based organizations, like CCF's grantees, have an important role in coordinating strategies on the ground and providing critical services to communities in need. CEO is especially interested in evidence-based programs that have an impact beyond the individual served - that is CCF's entire agenda: to, as CCF says it, create communities of opportunity.

Having worked with CCF and its grantees over the past year, I believe we'll not only see the grantees efforts literally pay off by moving individuals and communities up the economic ladder, but we'll also see the kinds of evidence-based solutions that the administration can promote in other places. What else can we ask for in a partnership!

Grantee Updates

Advancing the Fight Against Poverty

Following are updates on the work of CCF grantees.

Community Solutions/Brownsville Partnership has rallied partners including the New York City Department of Small Business Services around the improvement of workforce development in Brownsville, Brooklyn. Through iterative prototyping projects using the Rapid Results Institute's model



30-, 60-, and 90-day reviews have been established to track key metrics as well as identify and implement best practices across partners. Learnings from their prototyping work will be used to expand efforts and establish a robust collective impact model that will place 5,000 neighborhood residents into jobs.

Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation (CHLDC)'s CCF-funded initiative is expanding and integrating programs for affordable housing and job development, and expanding the continuity of youth services from kindergarten through college. Two key programs include: the CHAMPION Network, which works closely with businesses in the transportation and logistics sector to train, place, and support young adults; and College Success Programs, which provide counseling and support services starting in high school and continuing throughout college to boost graduation rates.



Fifth Avenue Committee, Inc. (FAC), in partnership with

Brooklyn Workforce Innovations (BWI), Red Hook Initiative (RHI), and Southwest Brooklyn Industrial Development Corporation (SBIDC), successfully launched Stronger Together, an initiative that is assisting low-income public housing residents in Red Hook and Gowanus to access well-paying jobs, quality adult education programs, and individual supports. The four Stronger Together partners now share intake, referral, and data-tracking systems to increase access to the partner organizations workforce programs, adult education, college access, financial literacy, income supports and employer connections.



New Settlement Apartments (NSA) is expanding continuity and increasing intensity of services offered to youth and families living in the Mount Eden section of the South Bronx. The organization's goal is to improve educational outcomes at local public schools and job prospects for 17- to 24-year-olds, and to preserve housing affordability for families. During the first year, NSA focused on building internal capacity to strengthen and expand the Young Adult Opportunity Initiative for disconnected youth, the Community Action for Safe Apartments (CASA) housing organizing initiative, and their Community School for students pre-K to 12th grade.



St. Nicks Alliance launched NABE 3.0, an initiative that integrates the organization's outcomes-driven strategies in housing, employment and education through one-on-one transformational coaching for residents of North Brooklyn, in an effort to reduce homelessness and poverty. In its first year, St. Nicks Alliance utilized its partnerships with schools, CBOs, government agencies and local providers to coordinate services, create service plans, and develop policies for consistently capturing data, resulting in first year impacts in employment, improved education levels, and homelessness prevention. Transformational coaches work collaboratively to review client service plans, troubleshoot bottlenecks and inspire/motivate clients to reach their goals and outcomes.



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