Building Partnerships

for

Neighborhood Change

Promising Practices of the
University-Community Partnership Initiative

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FOREWORD

Since its creation, the Fannie Mae Foundation has partnered with both practitioners and scholars to advance the affordable housing and community development field. In the Foundation's experience, the combination of these distinctive perspectives often yields important insights as they represent two sides of the same coin. As a result, the university-community partnership model is a natural fit for the Foundation.

In 1998, the Foundation launched the University-Community Partnership Initiative to promote the development of successful partnerships between universities and community organizations to expand affordable housing opportunities and revitalize distressed communities. The Foundation devoted $5 million through this pilot initiative to support the work of 14 partnerships to implement innovative programs and community-based research.

In 2000, the Foundation contracted with Abt Associates to conduct an independent midcourse assessment of each partnership. Abt's charge was to document specific practices and programs, as identified by both university and community partners, that contributed to the success of the partnership and could be replicated elsewhere. This effort is a part of the Foundation's commitment to sharing knowledge about the affordable housing and community development field. The centerpiece of this initiative is the recently launched Housing and Community Development Knowledgeplex (www.knowledgeplex.org)—the first comprehensive source of information for community development practitioners, policy makers, scholars, and the news media.

I am pleased to release the following report, which presents 13 "promising practices" identified through the midcourse assessment. These practices represent organizational mechanisms that facilitate program development and implementation as well as specific program approaches that could be utilized in other communities. In addition, the report provides a cross-site analysis that highlights common themes and issues that arose in multiple partnerships.

Through this pilot initiative, the Foundation has learned that university-community partnerships can leverage the resources of both participants to generate innovative programs and solve complex problems. These efforts require strategic planning at the front end and strong communication between partners throughout implementation to overcome the inevitable bumps in the road. Like all ambitious initiatives, we learn as much from the challenges as we do from the successes.

What comes through most of all in this assessment is the incredible commitment of both the university faculty and staff and community development practitioners to the families and neighborhoods they serve. While this report provides a snapshot of their activities carried out with Foundation support, I am pleased to say that many of these partnerships have grown stronger and will sustain themselves over time.

Stacey H. Davis
President and CEO
Fannie Mae Foundation

Building Partnerships for Neighborhood Change:
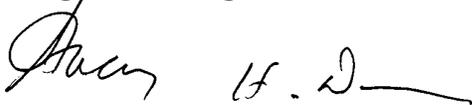## Promising Practices of the University-Community Partnership Initiative

Executive Summary

In 1998, Fannie Mae Foundation launched the University-Community Partnership Initiative (UCPI) to promote successful partnerships between universities and community organizations to increase affordable housing opportunities. This pilot initiative sought to mobilize the combined resources of universities and community organizations to achieve three broad objectives: expand the capacity of nonprofit housing providers; implement innovative programs to grow affordable housing and homeownership opportunities; and address complex localized issues that impact the provision of affordable housing. Fourteen universities were selected to participate in the initiative and each partnership received a multiyear grant ranging from $50,000 to $1 million. These grants supported an unusually diverse set of activities that often involved multiple partners from the private, public, and nonprofit sectors.

Fannie Mae Foundation tracked the progress of these partnerships over time to identify specific innovative practices and to develop a better overall understanding of university-community partnerships. This report, prepared by Abt Associates, provides detailed analyses of "promising practices" implemented by specific partnerships as well as systematic findings identified by looking across the partnerships. Both the promising practices and the overall findings were designed to inform the work of both universities and community organizations that are seeking to develop new university-community partnerships or expand existing ones. It is important to note this report contains early findings gleaned through a midcourse assessment of the program. A final report on the initiative will be released in 2003.

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To identify "promising practices," Fannie Mae Foundation and Abt Associates created two sets of criteria. First, the promising practice must meet a test of internal validity in that each one is *effective, significant,* and *sustainable* as determined by the university and community partners. Second, when compared with the larger community development field and with each other, each practice must be *innovative, instructive,* and *replicable* as judged by Abt Associates and Foundation staff.

This process resulted in the identification of 13 promising practices. Two promising practices exemplify the importance of substantive and well-developed *strategic planning processes* in the partnership formation stage. The next six practices demonstrate the wide variety of ways to *build and maintain effective relationships* between and among partners. These selected practices highlight ways to successfully channel partner expertise, balance partner roles, and position the university as a neutral facilitator. The final five practices profile *specific programs* that have served the target communities well and have the potential to be replicated in other places. Some are highly innovative, such as development of a home-buyer assistance consortium among local financial institutions, while others identify exemplary ways to implement a typical program such as internships or technical assistance.

KEY OBSERVATIONS FROM THE CROSS-PARTNERSHIP ANALYSIS

Although there is great diversity among the partnerships, many common themes emerged from the assessment. In some cases these overall findings speak only to this particular group of partnerships, while others hold implications for the entire community development field.

The strength of strategic planning processes conducted prior to implementation had a significant impact on program success.
Community partners and university representatives alike mentioned that they found the planning sessions valuable, particularly because the sessions gave academics and community representatives the opportunity to educate one another about their work. This is particularly important when establishing new relationships. Not surprisingly, partnerships that invested extensive time and effort during the strategic planning process to develop a shared vision for their efforts reaped the benefits.

> *Some [promising practices] are highly innovative, such as development of a home-buyer assistance consortium among local financial institutions, while others identify exemplary ways to implement a typical program such as internships or technical assistance.*

As "anchoring institutions," generally universities took the lead role in the partnership.
UCPI was structured to create a fundamentally university-centered initiative in which universities are the grant administrators and are expected to build an inclusive partnership with community organizations. In almost all partnerships, grants were viewed by all parties as internal to the universities, and their preeminence in the partnerships was largely unquestioned. Thus, the structure of UCPI has fostered a dynamic that promotes productive and substantive forms of partnership with universities taking the role of lead partner.

"Partnerships" take many shapes and forms and there is no one optimal model.
The UCPI participants demonstrate that effective partnerships can take many forms. Most frequently, community organizations are the recipients of technical assistance or services from the university. In turn, faculty and students learn a great deal about the realities of community development work. A second model was one in which community organizations serve as advisors or consultants to a project, for example by providing input in the development of a homeownership education curriculum. Finally, the least common—and in many ways the most difficult—model was one in which the university and community organization were "co-owners" of a project. This model requires significant capacity as well as commitment of both the university and community partner.

Very few initiatives succeeded in establishing inclusive mechanisms for governance and strategic decision making for the overall initiative.
Community partners generally had little input in governance or in *strategic* decisions related to grant management, such as resource allocation. While they were not involved in strategic decisions that affected the overall UCPI grant, community partners frequently had a significant voice in *programmatic* decisions about project activities.

Some partnerships experienced a tension between achieving tangible outcomes and maintaining strong relationships.
At times these two types of objectives—meeting target outcomes and fostering partnerships—were in conflict, and universities were uncertain which should take the higher priority. Sometimes the desire to be responsive to a partner, or to increase its capacity for the long-term good, meant compromising the planned outcome.

Most universities' commitment to their partners was very strong.
Nearly all the grantees saw the relationships as long-term ones that in many cases existed prior to UCPI and would continue after the conclusion of the grant period. This commitment was made manifest in different ways. In one partnership, the university promised to support key aspects of their proposed activities with or without Fannie Mae Foundation support. Another funded a staff position for a community organization when UCPI funding could not be used for that purpose.

There was great variation in how community organizations approached collaborations with universities.
All community partners believed they could gain access to valuable financial and human resources through UCPI, but each approached and interacted with their university partners in very different ways. In some cases, community partners viewed the "the University" as a monolithic organization rather than a collection of departments, research centers, and schools. Those community partners who could differentiate between the university administration, centers, and departments were better able to calibrate their expectations over the course of the partnership.

Institutionalizing partnerships is difficult, but the presence of a dedicated community outreach center can help.
Partnerships often boiled down to personal relationships between a community organization "champion" and individual faculty members. This was especially true in academic

departments but less so in university community outreach centers, which have an institutional commitment to working in the community.

Not surprisingly, the capacity of the university partner as well as the community partner had significant implications for the success of the partnership.

The issue of organizational capacity surfaced in various ways throughout the planning and implementation periods. In the planning phase, many university and community partners had trouble estimating their own capacity as well as their partner's capacity to carry out programs and activities. The community partners and university partners who had well-defined priorities and a knowledge base about what the other partner could offer were more likely to experience success in program implementation. Last, more mature community organizations were better able to balance the partnership power dynamics as they also offered valuable expertise and resources.

Intrauniversity collaboration can be challenging.

Projects that required different university entities to integrate their activities, rather than to work independently on different aspects of the project, faced the challenges of incorporating different—often competing—philosophies, priorities, and agendas. As a result, truly "comprehensive" initiatives in which components were seamlessly combined were rare. Most of the time, project components progressed on independent tracks (well enough), conducted by different entities within the university.

No partnership has had everything go according to plan.

This simply reflects the real-world nature of partnerships. Both universities and community partners face constraints that impact their performance, including constraints related to staffing, technical capacity, financial resources, and institutional commitment. Similarly, collaborations with public sector partners, such as public housing authorities and city governments, are subject to broader political and financial considerations that are often out of either partner's control. Factors such as these required partnerships to adjust their projects and plans during the course of the grant period.

Pockets of excellence exist throughout the partnerships.

There are a number of outstanding practices and programs in UCPI, which are highlighted in the remainder of this report. In addition, there are many other noteworthy activities that build upon universities' traditional strengths in research and provision of student labor as well as community partners' expertise in local development issues.

In summation, UCPI experience fostered the development of strong local partnerships between universities and local partner organizations dedicated to a variety of community development efforts. Although the initiative is still in progress, many partnerships have achieved tangible outcomes in addition to building partnerships. The initiative's promising practices illustrate that the collaborative process is a critical element in partnership efforts. It contributes to their ability to create strong partnerships, deliver effective programs, and increase community impact. As demonstrated by the promising practices featured in this report, UCPI is a rich learning resource for similar university-community partnerships and others involved in the field.

Chapter 1

Introduction

Developed by the Fannie Mae Foundation in 1998, the University-Community Partnership Initiative (UCPI) is intended to increase effective and efficient delivery of housing-related activities and services in targeted communities. A major focus of the initiative is to help forge mutually beneficial relationships among academic, nonprofit, public, and private institutions for the benefit of distressed communities. With universities leading a broad coalition of local nonprofit, public, and private partners, the Foundation intends the initiative to achieve overall results of building strong partnerships, delivering tangible results as defined by grantee objectives, and sharing partnership learning through applied research.

The Foundation looks to universities to lead its initiative for two main reasons. First, universities have considerable resources, from research to funding, which can benefit local communities. At the same time, universities are often located in these very neighborhoods, so their desire to keep the neighborhoods strong stems as much from self-interest as from altruism. In the past, some universities had paternalistic relationships with their neighbors, trying to resolve matters *for* their neighbors rather than *with* their neighbors. Recent years, however, have seen universities championing more collaborative approaches and listening to what their neighbors want. The UCPI program is part of this change in spirit.

> *A major focus of the initiative is to help forge mutually beneficial relationships among academic, nonprofit, public, and private institutions for the benefit of distressed communities.*

Since the UCPI launch in 1998, the 14 UCPI partnerships have built their relationships and achieved tangible results as defined by grant objectives. Given the diversity in partnerships, partners, and program activities, the initiative has engendered a wealth of experiences in, and knowledge of, university-community partnerships.

In an effort to share the lessons learned from the UCPI experiences, this report discusses some "promising practices" that to date have proven effective and served their partnerships well.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In 1999, the Fannie Mae Foundation commissioned Abt Associates to conduct a descriptive and analytical assessment of the 11 largest UCPI projects. The Foundation felt that a midcourse assessment by a third party would be valuable in providing:

- A snapshot of each partnership's *progress to date* against its original grant objectives

- A neutral assessment of the *qualitative partnership and process issues* at each partnership

- Insight into *why* these issues are being encountered

- Insight about *what* might be done to enhance the performance of the universities and their community partners, where it is warranted

A review by an objective third party was intended to generate candid feedback from partnerships and achieve the Foundation's objective of soliciting direct input from nonuniversity partners. The assessment experiences demonstrated that respondents from universities and their community partners were quite forthcoming and candid and that respondents appreciated the opportunity to provide confidential input to the Foundation.[1]

The assessment was driven by a *formative evaluation* approach—one oriented toward practical use and focused on the ongoing design and operational issues salient to each study partnership. Such assessments occur while programs are developing and are designed to provide timely, constructive feedback to assist local program operators in making midcourse adjustments. Abt Associates visited each UCPI partnership and thoroughly reviewed project documentation. During the site visits, Abt Associates conducted in-depth interviews with a wide range of representatives from both universities and community organizations, including stakeholders not formally identified as partners. In some cases, the assessment team interviewed partners no longer formally involved with the projects. Each assessment addressed partnership issues as well as outcome-related issues.

DEFINING A PROMISING PRACTICE

Throughout the assessment process, the Abt Associates team identified a variety of promising practices. The term *promising practices* was selected to denote that the practices have been in place for a relatively short time (at the time of assessment, the UCPI partnerships had been in place for, at most, two years) and are headed in the right direction but not fully tested. Based on interactions with participants, however, the team believes these practices will serve the partnerships well over the long term.

Promising practices had one or more of the following characteristics:

- ***Effective in achieving the initiative's goals***
  The practice played a critical role in the partnership's ability to achieve both its program goals and its partnership-building goals.

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[1]Respondents were interviewed individually or with colleagues from their organizations. On occasion, representatives from two different community partner organizations were interviewed at once. Representatives of community partners were not interviewed in the presence of university staff or representatives. Comments included in the site assessment report are not attributed to specific individuals or organizations.

- ***Significant in terms of impact, based on partner consensus***
  The practice was cited by most stakeholders as a significant factor in building a strong partnership, achieving program impact, or both.

- ***Sustainable during the grant period and beyond***
  The practice can continue for some time and contributes significantly to the long-term sustainability of the partnership, the project, or a specific program activity.

- ***Useful in instructing others about how to build strong partnerships***
  The practice can be used by peer UCPI partnerships or other university-community collaborations to help them build strong collaborative partnership programs.

- ***Replicable in other places and similar partnerships***
  The practice is universal enough to be applied to other partnerships with similar goals and objectives.

> *The term promising practices was selected to denote that the practices have been in place for a relatively short time (at the time of assessment, the UCPI partnerships had been in place for, at most, two years) and are headed in the right direction but not fully tested.*

- ***Innovative relative to similar projects and partnerships***
  The practice is unique and expands the current understanding of the approaches, policies, or programs that might be effective in similar partnership efforts.

Of the 11 partnerships visited, Abt Associates identified 8 that currently have one or more promising practices. While these 8 partnerships have created promising practices, it is important to note that the partnerships may face challenges in other aspects of their UCPI projects. For example, while a partnership may be achieving significant program results, it may be experiencing difficulty in partner relationships. Abt Associates also found that grant size and project scope do not appear to affect project success. UCPI grants ranged in size from $50,000 to $1 million, and promising practices were chosen from partnerships receiving awards of $200,000 as well as partnerships receiving larger awards.

> *Abt Associates . . . found that grant size and project scope do not appear to affect project success.*

In selecting promising practices, the Abt Associates team examined numerous other approaches, policies, and activities that served multiple partnerships well but did not deem these promising practices. Although useful, these practices were fairly common (e.g., steering committees) and of a standard quality, and they often involved traditional university activities (e.g., intern programs, supportive research). Moreover, according to participants, these practices were not critical to the partnership or its project activities.

REPORT STRUCTURE

The next chapter—Background on the University-Community Partnership Initiative—discusses the catalyst for the initiative, the partnership selection and planning process, and partnership activities in brief. In subsequent chapters, the promising practices are presented. While some of the practices are unique and presented separately, others are grouped together under the topics of strategic planning, balancing partner roles, expanding homeownership resources, and building community capacity. The report concludes with an overview of cross-site observations—a summary of key findings from the UCPI experience and how they fit into the broader field of university-community collaborative efforts.

Chapter 2

Background on the University-Community Partnership Initiative

MOTIVATION FOR THE INITIATIVE

To help targeted communities develop model partnerships that would improve the delivery of housing-related activities and services, the Fannie Mae Foundation created UCPI. Ultimately, the Foundation hopes to enhance the communities' quality of life through these housing-based strategies carried out by the partnerships. A major focus of the initiative is to help forge mutually beneficial relationships among academic, nonprofit, public, and private institutions for the benefit of distressed communities. In fostering these partnerships, the Foundation expects universities to serve as anchor institutions while they implement formal arrangements with partner organizations.

The Foundation selected universities as anchor institutions because of the important role they can play in community development efforts. Universities are frequently located in disadvantaged urban neighborhoods and have a vested interest—maintaining their ability to attract faculty, students, and funding—in helping their neighborhoods stay healthy and vibrant. In addition, universities often have critical resources—training, research, technical assistance, and human and financial capital—to assist local organizations in community development efforts.

Thus, with universities leading a broad coalition of local nonprofit, public, and private partners, the Foundation hopes the initiative will achieve overall results of building strong partnerships, fulfilling tangible objectives, and sharing partnership learning through applied research.

PARTNERSHIP SELECTION AND PLANNING PROCESS

Before awarding partnership grants, the Foundation undertook an extensive selection and grant planning process. In early 1997, it solicited preliminary proposals from potential partnerships with the intention of awarding planning grants to selected semifinalists for development of in-depth strategic proposals. Proposals were evaluated based in equal measure on four criteria: (1) intrinsic merit of the proposed collaborative program, (2) ability of institutions to achieve their proposed objectives, (3) community impact, and (4) potential for becoming a national model. With the assistance of an extensive review panel, the Foundation evaluated 45 preliminary proposals and, in late 1997, selected 15 semifinalists.

Each semifinalist for the UCPI grant awards received a $15,000 planning grant intended to assist in development of a full-length strategic proposal detailing the partnership's approach, participating organizations, program activities, and expected results. The Foundation expected universities to engage their partners and key constituencies in the planning process and also encouraged them to use a facilitator to conduct the planning sessions.

The Foundation provided concrete guidelines for semifinalists to develop their strategic proposals. In evaluating proposals, the Foundation looked for:

- An affordable housing and homeownership focus

- Promotion of comprehensive housing-based neighborhood strategies

- A multidisciplinary approach within the university

- Comprehensive community-based partnerships with community leaders and nonprofit, private, and public institutions

- Sustainable outcomes

- Community-based research and evaluation

- Transferability

- A realistic program budget

As initially conceptualized by the Foundation, the initiative was to provide up to five partnerships with grants ranging from $500,000 to $1 million. After evaluating all semifinalist proposals, however, the Foundation elected to award 14 grants ranging from $50,000 to $1 million (table 1). This included the $1 million grant to the pilot partnership, University of Maryland, which the Foundation awarded in early 1998; the other grant awards were made in the fall of 1998. Most partnerships commenced program activities in January 1999.

Spanning two- to four-year periods, the grants support a wide range of partnerships. The partnerships fall into three categories based on scope of activities. The first category included three universities that each received a $50,000 grant to focus on a single activity in applied research over a two-year period. The second group consisted of five universities that each received a $200,000 grant to deliver a set of programs to address one or two local issues during a two-year period. The third category includes six universities that each received between $350,000 and $1 million to implement programs to address multiple community development issues over three to four years.

The UCPI university partners are generally large research institutions with graduate degree programs in relevant disciplines such as architecture, urban planning, or law.

Often a graduate school, urban research center, or community outreach center serves as the administrative and programmatic home of the grant. Each university typically has engaged a variety of university representatives, including faculty, administrators, and other professional staff as well as graduate and undergraduate students.

The universities collaborated with a wide variety of organizations, including community development corporations, community service organizations, churches, city agencies, financial institutions, private developers, and public agencies. While some partnerships have a limited number of members, others involve many different organizations.

Table 1. **UCPI Original Grant Awards**

Grant Recipients	Grant Amount	Grant Period
Case Western Reserve University	$200,000	2 years
Georgia State University	$50,000	2 years
Michigan State University	$50,000	2 years
Pratt Institute	$750,000	3.5 years
University of Alabama at Birmingham	$750,000	3.5 years
University of California, Los Angeles	$200,000	2 years
University of Florida/University of South Florida	$200,000	2 years
University of Illinois at Chicago	$500,000	3.5 years
University of Maryland	$1,000,000	3 years
University of Michigan	$200,000	2 years
University of Pennsylvania	$50,000	2 years
University of Texas–Pan American	$500,000	4 years
University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee	$200,000	2 years
Yale University	$350,000	3 years

Most partnerships focus their efforts on urban neighborhoods of medium to large cities. These communities frequently are disadvantaged areas dominated by low- to moderate-income populations and distressed housing stock. Some neighborhoods are located in cities that have high housing costs and gentrifying areas, while others are dealing with blighted housing and abandoned properties.

OVERVIEW OF PARTNERSHIP ACTIVITIES

Although the UCPI partnerships are highly diverse in many aspects, the variety of activities each has undertaken generally can be categorized into the following six areas (table 2 contains a matrix of each partnership's program activities):

- *Homeownership outreach, assistance, and counseling*, such as home-buyer education and one-on-one counseling

- *Organizational capacity building and education*, such as a one-year certificate program and an apprenticeship program for the staff of partner organizations

> *Case Western Reserve University['s] . . . [partnership developed the HomeToday system, which] spans the home-buying continuum and comprises several modules designed to build local residents' capacity to obtain credit, understand the home-buying process, and become successful homeowners.*

- *Housing development and rehabilitation*, including new construction of multifamily properties and rehabilitation of single-family homes

- *Technology innovations*, such as use of an extensive database in community development efforts and design of a comprehensive Internet-based homeownership curriculum

- *Planning and design technical assistance* in regard to property acquisition, predevelopment finance, and neighborhood revitalization plans

- *Applied research and evaluation* focused on city procedures for site acquisition and neighborhood housing studies

At *Case Western Reserve University*, the partnership focuses its activities on development of a comprehensive Internet-based technology tool for homeownership support. Known as HomeToday, the system spans the home-buying continuum and comprises several modules designed to build local residents' capacity to obtain credit, understand the home-buying process, and become successful homeowners.

Georgia State University's partnership is targeted at increasing the capacity of the City of Atlanta–Fulton County Land Bank Authority and the ability of community development corporations to use land bank resources, as well as improving the administration of tax foreclosure laws. Through policy and procedure recommendations, creation of an operating policy manual, and direct training, the program works with the land bank, community organizations, the tax commissioner, attorneys, and judges to implement its activities.

The partnership at *Michigan State University* concentrates on research of affordable housing issues and policies. By awarding research grants, the partnership analyzes and addresses issues related to community organizations' capacity, state and local policy that affects affordable housing development, and opportunities for increasing housing development capacity.

Table 2. **Overview of UCPI Activities**

	Homeownership Outreach, Assistance, and Counseling	Organizational Capacity Building and Education	Housing Development and Rehabilitation	Technology Innovations	Planning and Design Technical Assistance	Applied Research and Evaluation
Case Western Reserve University	Identified key entry points to home-buying process in targeted neighborhoods			Comprehensive Internet-based homeownership education curriculum, supplemented by case management		
Georgia State University		Development of a manual for community development corporations on effective use of local land bank resources			Technical assistance through training of stakeholders on judicial tax foreclosure	Applied research in implementation of tax foreclosure laws
Michigan State University						Research grants to study community development organizations' capacity and obstacles to affordable housing
Pratt Institute		Organizational capacity building through geographic information systems training, community development forums, and a predevelopment fund	Housing development assistance through land parcel identification, construction cost estimates, and financial analysis and packaging		Site planning and technical schematics to assist community organizations with housing and mixed-use development	Applied research in demographic analysis and community needs assessments
University of Alabama at Birmingham	Financial assistance for home purchase (second mortgage pool and employer-assisted housing program) and home-buyer counseling		Housing development for new construction and rehabilitation through construction job training program for community residents			Research grants for community-related research topics
University of California, Los Angeles	Foreclosure prevention counseling used in conjunction with a property information system		Identification of infill housing development sites and tax-foreclosed properties through database	Database to map community assets, identify distressed homeowners, and identify tax-foreclosed properties		
University of Florida/ University of South Florida	Planning for a homeownership center to provide integrated housing services		Development of a construction training program for public housing residents		Technical assistance to community organizations on neighborhood revitalization plan and infill housing project	Case study of demonstration project

Table 2. **Overview of UCPI Activities** *(continued)*

	Homeownership Outreach, Assistance, and Counseling	Organizational Capacity Building and Education	Housing Development and Rehabilitation	Technology Innovations	Planning and Design Technical Assistance	Applied Research and Evaluation
University of Illinois at Chicago	Employer-assisted housing program with large employers in target neighborhoods	Graduate-level education program based on a one-year curriculum for staff of community organizations	Housing program to move public housing residents to homeownership	Internet-based affordable housing design catalog		Supportive research to partner organizations to examine lending patterns, home sale volumes, and housing prices
University of Maryland		Interdisciplinary program for development and implementation of educational programming for community organizations			Technical assistance to community organizations with planning and design issues such as streetscape design	Applied research, including impact analysis of the state's affordable homeownership loan program
University of Michigan		Housing development apprenticeship program for community organizations			Technical assistance to community organizations to create comprehensive neighborhood plans for target communities	Applied research to support streamlining city procedures for site acquisition
University of Pennsylvania				Development of a neighborhood information system to support redevelopment efforts		Research on impacts of community development initiatives on local neighborhoods
University of Texas–Pan American	Homeownership outreach, education, and counseling for *colonia* residents	Training and technical assistance in computer skills, management, and grant writing for community organizations	Housing development for new construction and rehabilitation			
University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee	Home-buyer counseling through centralized referral center	Internship program for undergraduate and graduate students to expand community partner capacity in affordable housing			Technical assistance to community organizations through streetscape renderings and development of housing design plans	Research by faculty to develop neighborhood indicators and assess neighborhood change
Yale University	Homeownership training and counseling in target neighborhood		Housing development for rehabilitation		Technical assistance to community organizations in property acquisition and predevelopment financing	

The ***Pratt Institute*** has an extensive partnership that focuses on affordable housing development and the provision of technical assistance to community development organizations in five target neighborhoods. In addition to directly assisting with construction and rehabilitation projects, the partnership provides training on geographic information systems, conducts forums on community development topics, and provides a limited amount of seed money for predevelopment expenses.

At the ***University of Alabama at Birmingham***, the partnership has a comprehensive program that includes housing production, a loan pool to provide home-buyer assistance, a construction training program, small business development, employer-assisted housing efforts, homeownership education and training, and research grants. The programs are designed to involve private institutions, public agencies, and nonprofit organizations in the partnership.

The ***University of California, Los Angeles's*** activities center on extensive use of an Internet-based neighborhood information system designed to support housing efforts. Known as Neighborhood Knowledge Los Angeles, the system is the centerpiece and primary vehicle for the partnership to develop community technology centers, assist in redevelopment of tax-delinquent properties, and increase the capacity of youth organizations involved in community development.

In the joint partnership operated by the ***University of Florida*** and the ***University of South Florida***, the program has a housing focus, with activities comprising development of a construction and apprenticeship training program, integration of housing services in one center, technical assistance, and housing program evaluation research.

At the ***University of Illinois at Chicago***, the partnership consists of a variety of activities centered on affordable housing and capacity building. The program includes an Internet-based affordable housing design compendium, a certificate training program for community development practitioners, a homeownership program for public housing residents, and supportive research for community organizations.

Throughout five communities, the ***University of Maryland's*** partnership focuses on capacity building through education and technical assistance for community-based organizations. The key elements of the program are an interdisciplinary educational program for practitioners and provision of technical assistance for organizational and housing development.

The partnership at the ***University of Michigan*** concentrates on building the capacity of community-based organizations to develop affordable housing. Through an apprenticeship program for practitioners, the partnership provides training in strategic planning, site planning, project

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development, and housing design. It also uses
applied research to analyze ways to streamline
procedures for disposition of city-owned properties.

At the ***University of Pennsylvania***, the partner-
ship centers on development of a prototype neigh-
borhood information system. The system is
designed to support comprehensive neighborhood
redevelopment efforts through storing property
sales data and developing a methodology for ana-
lyzing urban initiatives' impacts on local
communities.

The partnership at the University of Michigan concentrates on building the capacity of community-based organizations to develop affordable housing. Through an apprenticeship program for practitioners, the partnership provides training in strategic planning, site planning, project development, and housing design.

Focused on rural communities, the partnership at
the ***University of Texas–Pan American*** is dedicated to comprehensive affordable hous-
ing services and development. Activities include an extensive homeownership outreach,
education, and counseling program; capacity building through organizational and manage-
ment training; expanded capacity for housing development; and financial assistance for
homeownership.

In the ***University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee's*** partnership, activities focus on an intern-
ship program that supports capacity building for community organizations, development of
a centralized home-buyer referral center, technical assistance in planning design and
housing development for partners, and supportive research on neighborhood development.

Yale University's partnership centers on housing activities, including housing production
assisted by a predevelopment loan fund, technical assistance in design and planning,
capacity building through increased staffing for its primary community partner, and home-
ownership counseling for the target neighborhood's residents.

Based on research conducted during the formative assessment, the promising practices
were selected from the 11 partnerships visited during the spring of 2000. The partnerships
include Case Western Reserve University; Pratt Institute; University of Alabama at Birm-
ingham; University of California, Los Angeles; University of Florida/University of South
Florida; University of Illinois at Chicago; University of Maryland; University of Michigan;
University of Texas–Pan American; University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee; and Yale
University.

Chapter 3

Strategic Planning for University-Community Collaborations

Effective planning is integral to university-community collaborative efforts. Good planning assists in appropriately applying university resources to community needs, ensuring that all partners participate actively, and building a shared vision for the partnership and its activities. Moreover, when partnerships involve organizations without previously established working relationships, the planning phase introduces partners to each other and sets the tone for future relationships. Outside UCPI, other university-community partnership efforts have succeeded by creating a shared vision and implementing a collaborative process.

The UCPI partnerships that followed that example are having the best results. Strategic planning for the project primarily occurred before the awarding of the UCPI grant. While typically led by universities, planning was intended to be a collaborative process in which partners helped to define local needs and appropriate program activities. The nature of the planning process at the partnerships frequently affected relationships once the grant was awarded. Partnerships that clearly defined roles, responded to identified needs, and had a truly participatory planning process were able to establish trust among partners early on and benefited from good partner relationships—even in cases where progress in achieving results was slow. At two partnerships in particular, the planning process was less inclusionary and transparent, resulting in tension between partners and programs not responsive to local needs. For example, one university neglected to include its key partner in the program's design stage; consequently, its partner did not buy into the university's vision for the program.

Two UCPI participants invested extensive time and resources in their planning process, which strengthened the partnership (those two partnerships were also found to each have a promising practice in another category). The depth of their upfront work was exceptional. Case Western Reserve University developed a project that included a diverse set of partners and managed partners' expectations well during the planning process. This required the university to undertake a thorough process to identify the "right" stakeholders and implement a planning process that kept diverse stakeholders united around a common vision.

The University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee used an outside facilitator to lead an effective planning process that ultimately resulted in a project responsive to partner needs. At this partnership, the planning process enabled all partners to set expectations, articulate their organizational and community needs, and define program activities. As a result, the planning effort engendered trust among partners previously unfamiliar with one another and set a tone of inclusiveness and active partner participation.

Forging a Strategy with Diverse Stakeholders and Managing Partner Expectations: Case Western Reserve University

This partnership undertook a rigorous strategic planning process, managed by a facilitator, that included a diverse set of partners involved in various aspects of the home-buying continuum. The university focused partners on a common vision and managed expectations by making the grant negotiations transparent and providing institutional commitment to the program regardless of the outcome of that process.

PARTNERSHIP OVERVIEW

Case Western Reserve University's UCPI activity consists of one program: the design and development of a Web site to provide online home-buying assistance. An integral part of the program, known as HomeToday, is a coaching component designed to supplement online assistance.

The partnership involves one university entity, the Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences, and 15 partner organizations, including the City of Cleveland and a diverse set of local banks, nonprofit organizations, churches, and private developers. The initiative is focused not on a specific neighborhood or community but more broadly on Cleveland, which has strong, experienced community organizations to draw upon.

PROMISING PRACTICE

In the program's design stage, Case Western ran a strategic planning process that defined participants' roles clearly and to the satisfaction of all parties, and managed expectations well despite changing circumstances. With these approaches, the HomeToday project has achieved a unique balance of strong university leadership and robust community partner participation. Like other successful university-community partnerships, this partnership has founded its work on a shared vision and a truly collaborative process, but it is still too early to determine how successful it will be in achieving tangible results, such as complete development of the prototype Web site.

To assemble the partnership, the university leveraged the relationships and knowledge of the local scene that it had developed through previous initiatives. It realized that to keep a diverse set of housing partners engaged, it had to accomplish several objectives: to unify them behind a clearly defined vision, to have a vision that spoke to everyone's interest in some way, and to obtain participation of a mix of for-profit and nonprofit partners to reflect the entire home-buying continuum. These considerations governed the university's management of the strategic planning process.

At the beginning of the process, invitations were issued to a range of local organizations, each representing some portion of the "home-buying continuum." They included not only nonprofit organizations but also all relevant stakeholders—such as lenders, public agencies, churches, and developers—that provide services, products, financial assistance, and

technical resources to target home-buying populations. Case Western had some initial ideas, including the preliminary concept for the Home-Today Web site, which served as the starting point for discussions. Strategic planning sessions were facilitated by the program director or a university faculty member and an outside consultant (now one of the project coordinators). Partners spoke favorably of the planning sessions and felt the university had invited the "right" organizations to participate. Because partners helped define the project, its intended impact, and its structure and components, partners felt that they had real input into the definition of the proposal and that the university was receptive to their perspectives. What emerged from the strategic planning process was buy-in to a common vision by a diverse set of stakeholders. Many community representatives noted that although the partners are a diverse group, all have a common interest: increasing the pool of qualified home buyers in the Cleveland area.

> *[The university] realized that to keep a diverse set of housing partners engaged, it had to . . . unify them behind a clearly defined vision, . . . have a vision that spoke to everyone's interest in some way, and . . . obtain participation of a mix of for-profit and nonprofit partners to reflect the entire home-buying continuum.*

The strategic planning process resulted in a broad programmatic design, of which the HomeToday Web site component was a small part. Ultimately, it was the only portion of the proposal to obtain grant funding through UCPI. In other partnerships, partial funding compromised some relationships with partners. At Case Western, where Foundation funding was ultimately one-fifth the amount initially requested, the partial award did not hurt the partnership. Several factors account for this: the university's management of expectations, the university's transparent management of the grant negotiations process, and the personal commitment of a high-level university administrator to the project. To demonstrate commitment during the planning process, the dean communicated two key messages to partner organizations: that the $1 million grant requested was not guaranteed, and that the university was committed to implementing the "gemstones" of the proposal regardless of the final grant amount. By disclosing information about grant negotiations to partners and demonstrating its institutional commitment, Case Western established its credibility, managed partners' expectations, and assured partners that their efforts would not be in vain.

This approach worked well because the university was effective in partnership building. It had a broad vision of the appropriate stakeholders, rather than a narrow one focusing on only one type of stakeholder (e.g., nonprofit housing organizations). It also consistently focused discussions on common goals—such as increasing access to home-buyer education, widening the pool of qualified home buyers, and expanding home-buyer services—rather than letting discussions get bogged down in topics on which there was disagreement. Knowing from prior experience that proposals often are not fully funded, the university was careful to keep partners' expectations grounded. To prevent community representatives from feeling that they were committing time to a process that might not bear fruit, the university committed to obtaining support for key projects through other means, if necessary. While other UCPI participants expressed such commitment to partners at the

level of individual faculty members or departments, this degree of high-level *institutional* commitment was rare.

There are some challenges inherent to this approach as well. Primary among them is that difficult and contentious design issues largely have been deferred in the interests of keeping the partnership focused on the common vision. The result is that a number of key aspects of HomeToday remain undecided. They include operational issues (such as the specific configuration of one component) as well as larger strategic issues (such as the scope and mission of the final product). In addition, the program has been hampered by significant delays in producing the final product: a prototype Web site. It seems Case Western underestimated the technical complexity and time required to develop content.

> *To prevent community representatives from feeling that they were committing time to a process that might not bear fruit, the university committed to obtaining support for key projects through other means, if necessary.*

IMPACT AND REPLICATION

Case Western has built a robust partnership with its participating community organizations that appears sustainable beyond the grant period and is a good example for others who are building partnerships. The partnership effectively uses the expertise of partner organizations without absorbing their staff's capacity. The diversity of the stakeholders assembled by the university has ensured that the one completed module is rich in content. While the partnership still faces challenges in regard to achieving hard outcomes (i.e., full development of a prototype Web site), it has created a strong relationship with a commitment to long-term results that will help overcome this challenge.

This partnership dynamic—strong leadership from the university—is replicable under certain conditions. The HomeToday project's objective is singularly focused and conceptually straightforward, and partners' roles are clearly defined. To replicate this model, partners must invest time during the planning process to ensure that mutual interests and roles are identified and to define the project objective. This dynamic could be effective at a partnership involving more complex projects, but more time would be needed for the planning process.

Designing Programs Responsive to Partner Needs through an Effective Planning Process and Use of a Facilitator: University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee

This partnership used a neutral facilitator to lead a thorough strategic planning process in which university and partner representatives actively participated in defining program activities. This process built trust among all partners, most of whom did not have previous relationships with the university, and ensured that programs were responsive to local needs.

PARTNERSHIP OVERVIEW

The University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee's (UWM's) UCPI program has several components: a housing internship program for undergraduate and graduate students, research assistance to community partner organizations, housing and neighborhood design assistance to community partners, and a citywide homeownership center to centralize marketing and referral of housing counseling services.

The university's Building Capacity project is managed under the auspices of the Center for Urban Initiatives and Research. Faculty and students from departments such as Architecture and Urban Planning, Sociology, Urban Studies, and Economics participate in the project. The seven community partners—nonprofit housing developers, public agencies, and community service agencies—have varying levels of expertise in community development. The partnership focuses on two target neighborhoods to the north and south of downtown Milwaukee: Lindsay Heights and Walker's Point, respectively. Both are urban communities with old housing stock that have suffered from disinvestment, although Walker's Point is experiencing some gentrification.

PROMISING PRACTICE

Using a thorough and well-facilitated planning process, UWM worked with its partners to design programs in response to specific community partner needs. Partners had a strong and equal voice in laying out the programmatic agenda through extensive participation in the planning process. The process included faculty members who were able to match their expertise and research interests to partner needs. The result was a set of programs in which partners and university participants have vested interests. All partners find the programs mutually beneficial. This partnership exemplifies several characteristics of effective university-community partnerships, including appropriately applying university resources to local needs, working with communities rather than simply working in or on them, and implementing a collaborative process that engenders trust.

When UWM initially considered submitting a UCPI funding proposal, it invited numerous community organizations to participate in proposal discussions. The university wanted strong input from potential partners as to what programs would be most useful to their organizations and communities. Given that the university did not have well-established

relationships with most of the organizations, the initial meetings were a critical first step in getting to know one another and building trust.

After initial UCPI proposals were submitted, the Foundation provided universities with planning grants to refine their proposals. UWM was one of only two universities that elected to use proceeds from the planning grant to hire a facilitator to conduct a series of strategic planning sessions. The facilitator, an independent consultant not affiliated with the university or any partner organization, led the sessions. The full planning team that participated in the sessions consisted of approximately 25 people from the university and partnership organizations. Prior to the first meeting of the full planning team, the facilitator worked with a five-member "design team" to plan the sessions and guide discussion. Comprising university, nonprofit housing organization, and City of Milwaukee representatives, the design team developed a set of questions to help all team members understand each other's perspective and expectations for the partnership.

The questions primarily centered on expectations from the collaboration, areas of concern, organizational capacity to support the effort, and anticipated results. Once the planning team formulated these questions, it met in small working groups to discuss and answer them. The facilitator then led each group in reporting its findings to the full planning team for discussion. The conclusions from these sessions were the basis for the preliminary funding proposal, which was reviewed and modified by the entire planning team prior to submission to the Foundation.

> *[A design team] [c]omprising university, nonprofit housing organization, and City of Milwaukee representatives . . . developed a set of questions to help all team members understand each other's perspective and expectations for the partnership.*

According to university and partner representatives, the team-building sessions were critical to forming the partnership. Community organizations were uncertain about what to expect because they were initially unfamiliar with most of the university participants. From their perspectives, the planning sessions enabled them to build a rapport with key UWM staff, understand the university's motivations for the partnership, and play a valuable role in designing the partnership's programs.

UWM's team accomplished several objectives by conducting facilitated planning sessions. First, they helped establish goodwill with their new partners who were not familiar with the university or its resources. Second, they gave faculty members the opportunity to understand where their expertise overlapped with partners' needs—an element critical to creating responsive and valuable programs. Most important, they demonstrated that the university was committed to an equal and participatory partnership as opposed to one in which it would dictate terms. This was clearly evident in UWM's decision to relinquish control of the sessions by using a neutral facilitator and having a representative planning team define key aspects of the initiative.

The strength of the groundwork laid during the planning sessions was further evidenced when the partnership faced an important challenge: reduction of the grant to one-fifth of

the amount requested. Although a few partners abandoned the effort, most remained involved because they believed the partnership would still prove beneficial. For example, two partners involved in the Lindsay Heights community stayed active in the planning sessions and, thus, their community was a focal point of the initiative in the first year. In addition, the partner-

> *According to university and partner representatives, the team-building sessions were critical to forming the partnership.*

ship managed to preserve most program elements by narrowing its geographic focus.

IMPACT AND REPLICATION

UWM's planning process set a positive and balanced tone for the partnership. It established trust among partners, built respect for other partners' perspectives and needs, and set the precedent of participatory decision making that remains with the partnership today. The result has been strong relationships, mutually beneficial programs, and commitment by all parties to sustain the partnership over the long term. The partnership's planning process can be used as a model by other partnerships trying to build strong collaborations that can effectively achieve results.

There are elements of this process that can be replicated at other partnerships: commitment from the university (lead partner) to be inclusive and make other partners true participants; all partners' willingness to use a neutral facilitator in strategic planning sessions; and all partners' willingness to commit the time and energy required to develop programs and participate on a continuing basis. These elements will perhaps be most useful at partnerships where partners do not have preexisting relationships with one another.

Chapter 4

Channeling Community Partner Expertise

Channeling community partner expertise requires universities to find effective means of using this resource without placing undue burdens on partner organizations—many of which frequently face capacity constraints. UCPI and other university-community partnerships typically focus on enabling community organizations to access a wide array of resources that exist within higher education institutions. Community organizations have expertise in community development issues, however, and are expected to make important contributions to the partnerships. While partner organizations often possess in-depth knowledge of community needs and a clear vision for their communities, they may lack the information, technical skills, and organizational capacity and resources necessary for their contributions to have impact.

The challenge for partnerships is identifying each partner's area of expertise and then channeling that expertise for maximum impact. This includes finding an effective means or forum to obtain such contributions. In addition, partnerships with numerous participants must balance how all partners provide expertise on common programs or activities.

The promising practice highlighted in this chapter illustrates how Case Western Reserve University has effectively used its partners' expertise while not overburdening these capacity-constrained organizations. This partnership demonstrates that significant contributions can be made by community partners despite challenging obstacles, such as resource constraints. In this case, the university created a mechanism to access expertise from a diverse body of partners in housing issues, needs of the target populations, and knowledge of existing services and programs, then channeled that expertise into the development of its project.

Using Partner Expertise Efficiently to Incorporate Practice-Oriented Knowledge: Case Western Reserve University

This partnership used partner expertise by first examining each partner's focus area and then using a formal application process for partners to contribute to Web site content. The university created a role for partners as advisors, interacted with partners on a professional and paid basis, and gained participation of the most qualified experts.

PARTNERSHIP OVERVIEW

Case Western Reserve University's UCPI activity consists of one program: the design and development of a Web site to provide online home-buying assistance. An integral part of the program, known as HomeToday, is a coaching component designed to supplement online assistance.

The partnership involves one university entity, the Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences, and approximately 15 partner organizations, including the City of Cleveland and a diverse set of local banks, nonprofit organizations, churches, and private developers. The initiative is focused not on a specific neighborhood or community but more broadly on Cleveland, which has strong, experienced community organizations to draw upon.

PROMISING PRACTICE

Case Western used a formalized, systematic approach to develop the content of the Establish Credit Homeownership Education module of HomeToday (it was the only module developed at the time of this assessment). Community partners serve primarily as advisors on the content of various parts of the HomeToday Web site, which is a home-buying education tool, and the coaching model that accompanies it. This Web product consists of (1) a self-paced homeownership education curriculum, (2) a database to track participants' progress through the home-buying system, and (3) a clearinghouse of available home-buying resources. In managing this partnership, the university wanted to develop an efficient system that would draw upon the insights of the best-qualified organizations but not overburden them. Thus, the partnership was able to strike a balance between collaborating to create a common vision and using university resources to meet identified community needs—two key elements of successful university-community partnerships.

As a first step, Case Western educated itself about each partner's expertise and role in the home-buying continuum. Project coordinators "shadowed" certain partner organizations. This involved spending approximately a half-day at specific partner organizations to learn about their role in home buying, their observations about the process, and their way of conducting business.

Later in the process, the university sponsored a series of "expert consultation sessions" in which partner organizations allowed staff members to consult for a day on specific topics. During these sessions, the education module's content was developed. Partner organizations, which were compensated for their time, were required to formally apply by responding to a "mini–request for proposals" specifying what they could contribute and detailing the qualifications of the consulting staff member. The results of these consultation sessions were incorporated by Case Western's in-house producer/writer, who wrote each page of the Web site module with the project coordinators. This approach is noteworthy for several reasons. It encouraged partner organizations to take the process seriously, it ensured that the most qualified organizations provided consultants, it specified the degree of effort required from organizations, and it remunerated organizations for their staff members' time.

This formal approach resulted in an effective and efficient mechanism for obtaining input. The formality and rigor also communicated to partners the message that their input was valued and acknowledged the constraints on their time. The process established clearly defined and mutually accepted roles—the university took the lead on product development while the partners served as advisors. Over the long term, the partners anticipate that the Web site will be a valuable resource to their organizations and clientele.

IMPACT AND REPLICATION

Case Western efficiently obtained expert knowledge and information to create the programmatic content for this Web site module. Partner organizations were satisfied with their role but not overburdened by the requirements of participation.

This approach, which proved effective and efficient at obtaining partner participation, should be replicable at almost any partnership where there is a strong need to obtain substantive and technical input on a common issue. One key element in replication is clearly defining the role of partners and specifying the time commitment associated with participation. In addition, the process was effective because the university (lead partner) did most of the work in creating the module, thus reducing the time required of other partners.

> *The process established clearly defined and mutually accepted roles—the university took the lead on product development while the partners served as advisors.*

Chapter 5

Using the University as a Facilitator

University-community partnership efforts frequently require some degree of facilitation to help partners overcome political, ideological, and strategic differences. This is particularly true in partnerships in which there is an imbalance in influence, expertise, or resources. Some university-community collaborations have employed an intermediary—involved in the partnership but viewed as a neutral party—to facilitate dialogue. A facilitator may be useful not only when starting a partnership but also when building a collaborative working relationship or trying to overcome "turf" issues over service delivery or development projects. In such cases, the university can serve as facilitator if it is viewed as a credible, impartial intermediary.

The experience of some UCPI participants illustrates the need for the university to intervene as facilitator between community partners experiencing difficulty with one another. One partnership university in particular—the Pratt Institute—has been able to serve as facilitator while maintaining strong relationships with all relevant partners. Pratt's community advocacy center has leveraged its organizational reputation and its staff's technical credibility to act as a facilitator to partners experiencing significant turf issues over target neighborhoods and housing project development sites. Because the parties involved respect the Pratt organization and staff—and view them as a neutral party—staff have been able to initiate dialogue between partners, implement collaborative development projects, and obtain partners' input on agreed-upon priorities for neighborhood development plans. Thus, this practice demonstrates that universities can leverage their technical expertise to do more than simply provide technical assistance.

Leveraging University Credibility to Serve as Facilitator and Manage Relationships between Partners: Pratt Institute

This partnership has effectively leveraged the university staff's credibility with partners to develop a role for itself as facilitator between partner organizations experiencing turf issues. With their extensive technical expertise and long-established relationships, university staff have gained the trust of partners and used the grant program to initiate collaborative relationships between competing partners.

PARTNERSHIP OVERVIEW

Pratt Institute's UCPI project is centered primarily on the provision of technical assistance in planning, urban design, financing, and other aspects of housing development. The project also focuses on capacity building for community-based organizations through the provision of geographic information systems training, community development forums, and a predevelopment fund.

Pratt Institute's Center for Community and Environmental Development manages the project, which targets five neighborhoods in Brooklyn, New York: Bedford-Stuyvesant, East New York, Fort Greene, South Brooklyn, and Williamsburg. These neighborhoods have sophisticated, mature community development organizations and are facing significant gentrification following decades of disinvestment. To carry out the project, the center works with several partners in each neighborhood. There is a designated center staff person for each neighborhood who manages partner relationships.

PROMISING PRACTICE

Pratt's Center for Community and Environmental Development has a long-established reputation of technical expertise in community development, as well as sustained involvement with community-based development organizations through provision of technical assistance. Staff have extensive practical experience in community development, frequently serving as consultants. While most staff are not tenured faculty, they frequently teach courses at Pratt in addition to their role as center staff. With more than 35 years of experience, center staff are currently leveraging their credibility to serve as facilitators or mediators between community organizations experiencing turf issues. Staff of community organizations often have established relationships—and a high degree of trust—with center staff because many have been trained through the center's well-known development program. While facilitating is difficult, center staff have done it well and improved relationships between partners in the process.

In the five Brooklyn neighborhoods that the project targets, several important factors have led to recent crises in housing. Skyrocketing property values, gentrification of previously affordable neighborhoods, and overcrowding in already dense communities have created a variety of housing issues and unprecedented housing demand, particularly for affordable

housing. In addition, these factors have increased competition for sites, technical assistance, and financial resources available for housing development projects among community development organizations.

The center's work with its partners often focuses on collaborative development projects, which are now more necessary due to the dearth of available land and financial resources for community development. In this environment, the center's staff often play a mediating role between community partners in target neighborhoods. They not only provide expert technical assistance but also act as facilitators—initiating dialogue between competing organizations, creating mutually agreed-upon strategies for neighborhood development through planning sessions and needs assessments, and brokering collaboration between organizations on joint development projects. Partners request assistance from the center through an informal process, which consists of contacting the designated staff member for their neighborhood and describing the type of assistance needed.

In Bedford-Stuyvesant, center staff have facilitated a strategic planning process with a group of five local organizations, each of which has differing development priorities. This effort entails facilitating leading dialogue between the groups as well as creating a neighborhood needs assessment to guide development in the community. In East New York, center staff are working with a coalition of community organizations to design and develop an urban farmers market. To get this project underway, center staff worked with each organization to ensure that its objectives would be met and that it would play an important role in the project. This process was necessary due to a prior history of tense relationships and poor communication between the organizations. Ongoing work on the project requires staff to facilitate dialogue and lead the organizations through the decision-making and development process.

In the Red Hook section of South Brooklyn, center staff have helped broker a relationship between a nonprofit housing developer, a public housing tenant group, and a local private developer in an effort to identify affordable housing development opportunities. In the Gowanus area of South Brooklyn, center staff have facilitated dialogue and meetings of the boards of the three primary community organizations to overcome long-standing turf issues and identify opportunities for collaborative development projects.

> *In Bedford-Stuyvesant, center staff have facilitated a strategic planning process with a group of five local organizations, each of which has differing development priorities. This effort entails facilitating leading dialogue between the groups as well as creating a neighborhood needs assessment to guide development in the community.*

Perhaps the center's most challenging environment is the Williamsburg neighborhood. Demand for housing there has exploded recently due to growing Latino and Hasidic populations in the area as well as spillover demand from the Manhattan housing market. However, territorial tensions between the two dominant communities have hindered neighborhoodwide collaboration on housing issues. Center staff continue to work on development projects with both communities and are attempting to broker an alliance between them. The two key partner organizations

acknowledge that the center is the only institution capable of brokering such an alliance and both are hopeful that—through the center's interventions—relationships will improve.

IMPACT AND REPLICATION

In some target neighborhoods, the Pratt center staff have eased contentious relationships between several different community organizations. Through their established credibility and role as a neutral party, staff have facilitated dialogue between partner organizations, identified opportunities for collaborative development projects, and begun to create neighborhoodwide development strategies. In one instance, staff convened a meeting between boards of three community organizations to discuss collaborative opportunities. The result has been improved relationships between organizations and greater potential for housing development projects. Pratt's long-standing credibility bodes well for the sustainability of this practice, which is innovative in how it leverages technical expertise.

Replicating this approach at other partnerships will be challenging because it requires relationships predicated on trust and credibility, which are more often present at partnerships with established relationships. At other partnerships, the university may be able to serve as a facilitator if all partners invest time in an effective planning process that establishes trust and, more important, the credibility of university staff. Obviously, this approach will be easier to implement for partnerships that do not require vast technical expertise.

Chapter 6

Balancing Partner Roles

At their core, university-community partnerships are designed to be collaborative efforts that require mutual participation and bring mutual benefits to all partners. Such collaboration necessitates a balancing of roles so all partners participate in crafting the partnership's vision, goals, and programs. Different types of projects require different partner relationships and responsibilities. In university-community partnerships, balancing partner roles may entail sharing decision-making powers regarding program activity as well as grant authority. It may also mean providing equal access to grant funding or requiring partner responsibilities that are in proportion to grant funding received. Successful partnerships have found a means of balancing partner roles—in a manner that is mutually acceptable—despite differences of opinions, resources, or responsibilities within the partnership.

UCPI's structure places universities in the role of anchor institution in the partnership—universities have full responsibility over grant administration and expenditures. Within this structure, the Foundation's expectation was that universities would actively engage partners in an inclusive collaboration. Most partnerships have identified means of achieving some degree of balance through active participation by all, agreed-upon roles, mutually defined programmatic agendas, and commitment to long-term relationships.

The practices of three partnerships in particular embody the concept of balancing partner roles. At the University of Illinois at Chicago, the partnership has delivered an effective education program for community development practitioners by jointly managing the program with its community partner. While acknowledging their differences, the university and the partner have demonstrated a strong commitment to the program as well as to joint decision making. Importantly, the university and community partner derive mutual benefit from the program and are deeply invested in its sustainability.

The University of Michigan partners with a consortium of community organizations and shares decision making in all of the partnership's activities. This inclusive form of partnership requires commitment to true collaboration and active participation by all parties. As with other partnerships, although the collaborative effort has created a strong partnership—in this case through a concerted effort to achieve joint decision making—this partnership is still facing the challenge of achieving hard program outcomes.

Finally, the University of California, Los Angeles has created a governing and communication mechanism—partner summits—to balance partner roles and input on partnership programs, priorities, and pending decisions. While some partnerships have struggled to implement effective and inclusive governing mechanisms, this partnership has developed one that is well regarded by partners.

Structuring a Partnership of Equals to Deliver an Effective Program: University of Illinois at Chicago

This partnership has created a strong partnership between the university and one of its key partners by jointly running an education program. Through joint committees that govern and manage the program, the university and its partner share equally in decision making as well as the benefits produced by the well-respected and highly praised program.

PARTNERSHIP OVERVIEW

The University of Illinois at Chicago's (UIC's) UCPI project has five components: an education program for staff of community-based development organizations, an employer-assisted housing program, a homeownership program for residents displaced by a HOPE VI public housing redevelopment project, research for neighborhood impact studies, and a Web-based compendium of affordable housing designs.

The project, known as Building Sustainable Communities, involves three primary university entities: the City Design Center, the Voorhees Center, and the School of Urban Planning and Public Affairs' Great Cities Institute. It has six primary community partner organizations that operate throughout the city and have extensive community development experience. Some program activities have a citywide focus, while others target specific disadvantaged communities such as Lawndale.

PROMISING PRACTICE

UIC's Urban Developers Program, the education component of the UCPI, uses a partnership of equals. It is run jointly by the university and its community partner, the Chicago Rehab Network (CRN), a citywide coalition of affordable housing development organizations. Both play an essential role in implementing the program, which is highly praised and mutually beneficial.

The Urban Developers Program is a one-year education program for community development corporation staff. It was developed in the early 1990s by CRN and a local college. The program was initially housed at that college, but when that relationship was discontinued in the mid-1990s, CRN sought another institutional home for its program. Negotiations with UIC were conducted throughout 1997, and the first program cohort began at the university in August 1998. UCPI funding provides scholarships to partner organizations in target communities. In short, the community partner organization, CRN, is a cofounder of the program. A seven-member coordinating committee governs the program, while a three-member core committee oversees day-to-day operations. Both committees have equal representation from UIC and CRN. In addition, joint program administrators hold retreats to discuss and assess the program's progress, any issues, and overall direction.

This partnership is robust because both partners are deeply vested in the program and bring resources to the effort. One respondent felt that the sheer strength of the education program itself motivates both entities. Another advantage is that participants are eligible to apply program credit toward a graduate degree in urban planning at the university. CRN clearly has an interest in seeing the program succeed; however, it is not organizationally equipped to operate such a program on its own. The fact that CRN is a well-established, respected organization and a cofounder of the program gives it leverage in the relationship as well. CRN brings to the partnership important resources, such as an extensive network of development practitioners and expertise in local community issues. CRN's resources complement the university's resources—academic rigor and a link to other university programs, staff, and financial resources.

UIC benefits from the program as well. The program provides UIC graduate students with internship and potential employment opportunities and UIC faculty with research opportunities. Operating the program also increases the university's name recognition, helping to attract students to the university (e.g., via the "bridge" of applied credits from the education program to UIC's Urban Planning Program). Finally, the program creates and strengthens the university's linkages to local community organizations. For the Voorhees Center, these connections translate to potential future partners in proposal efforts as well as potential future clients—benefits that dovetail with its mission as a community outreach center. All these benefits would not be possible were it not for the partnership structure built into the program. In addition, the program achieves another important goal of university-community partnerships: to have broad, long-lasting community impact. By educating and expanding the capacity of community development practitioners, the partnership improves the possibility of permanent change in local communities.

Joint management of the program is challenging. Issues have arisen about key program aspects, such as admissions criteria and the job description of the project coordinator. Often these challenges stem from the inherently different priorities and orientations of UIC and CRN, and necessitate balancing partner roles and needs. For example, with regard to admissions, both partners agree that candidates must be involved in community development, have the ability to complete the program and do graduate work, and have an identified development project. Within this framework, however, the university's interest is to select the most academically qualified students, while CRN aims to select the most promising future housing practitioners. Each partner evaluates candidates independently, but the final decision must be agreeable to both the university and CRN and thus requires ongoing negotiation and cooperation.

> *CRN brings to the partnership important resources, such as an extensive network of development practitioners and expertise in local community issues. CRN's resources complement the university's resources—academic rigor and a link to other university programs, staff, and financial resources.*

The challenges to this kind of partnership relate to the level of effort and commitment required to resolve the difficult issues that may arise. Both the university and CRN claim this partnership is complex and involves "a lot of hard work." But both sides also

unequivocally feel the relationship is well worth the effort. They noted that this is the inherent nature of any partnership that is robust and equal. Each side feels the relationship is working well and is committed to continuing it over the long term.

IMPACT AND REPLICATION

At UIC, joint management of the Urban Developers Program is the cornerstone of this strong partnership. It appears that the solid collaboration will be sustained over the long term. Both the university and the community partner have benefited from the professional skills development and the well-recognized practitioner program. The program has been effective in helping the partnership achieve one of its primary goals of expanding practitioner capacity. It is an excellent example of how strong partnerships can be developed through mutual commitment to joint decision making.

This dynamic would be replicable under certain conditions. Making the partnership work requires that both sides be committed to, and tolerant of, the demands of having an equal partnership. They must also be willing to work through the inevitable disagreements that may arise and be equally vested in continuing the activity. To ensure that these conditions exist, partnerships must invest time in identifying the common interests of all partners and designing programs to achieve mutually beneficial results.

Sharing Strategic Decision Making between University and Community Partners: University of Michigan

This partnership has built a strong, substantive partnership through shared decision making with the community partner, a consortium of community organizations. From the initial planning stages, the university included its partner in strategic decisions and governance of the grant, which provided a foundation of mutual trust and benefit for the partnership.

PARTNERSHIP OVERVIEW

The University of Michigan's (UM's) UCPI is known as the Detroit Eastside Housing Initiative and has three components: a housing development apprenticeship program for partner organization staff, policy reform efforts to streamline public site acquisition procedures, and project-specific technical assistance for community partner organizations.

The project involves two primary university entities: the Urban and Regional Planning Program and the Legal Assistance for Urban Communities Program, a law clinic operated by UM's law school. The university works with one umbrella group, the Detroit Eastside Community Collaborative (DECC), an organization of 13 members of which most are focused on housing in communities throughout the city's east side. Detroit's community development organizations are often smaller and less mature than those in other urban centers, which is reflected in the relatively low capacity levels of many DECC members.

PROMISING PRACTICE

UM is notable for the way it has established an inclusive, robust relationship with its community partner, the umbrella organization DECC. The DECC member organizations have had significant input into substantive matters. They have been regularly consulted about their technical assistance needs, and they were invited to provide input into, then review, a manual describing current site acquisition procedures. This is laudable but not necessarily unusual in UCPI. What is particularly noteworthy is that DECC members have had input into *strategic* decisions and governance of the grant. Thus, this partnership demonstrates that collaboration can be achieved in some of the most important partnership areas. This is instructive for all university-community partnerships.

DECC has had an integral role in most strategic decisions throughout the life of the partnership. Early strategic planning sessions were cofacilitated by a UM staff member and a prominent staff person of a DECC member organization. The process was described as one of fruitful "give and take" in which community partners had a strong voice. When the grant award was lowered from the requested amount, the university made the negotiation process transparent to partners by circulating the Foundation's comments on the proposal to DECC members. More than that, it gave DECC a voice in the decision of whether to proceed with the smaller grant or decline it.

As the project has progressed, DECC members have continued to have input into strategic decisions. They were given a voice in the selection of the project coordinator to be hired by UM. Most recently, when it appeared that community interest in the apprenticeship program might be waning, a meeting was convened between the university and DECC to discuss whether to continue that activity. The decision to move forward would be made jointly rather than by only the university.

> *[It] is particularly noteworthy . . . that DECC members have had input into strategic decisions and governance of the grant. Thus, this partnership demonstrates that collaboration can be achieved in some of the most important partnership areas.*

This dynamic is possible because of several factors: the trust established between DECC and UM in previous working relationships, the credibility of the university principals involved, and the fact that DECC member organizations generally agree about the key issues—divisiveness within DECC has not been a problem.

This is a cohesive partnership in which there clearly is a long-term commitment by both sides. Strong collaboration has enabled the partnership to survive disruptions that might have shaken more fragile partnerships. Examples include the departure of a respected project coordinator and the challenges presented by shifts in DECC member priorities that have rendered one objective of the initiative (the apprenticeship program) possibly unattainable.

IMPACT AND REPLICATION

By sharing decision-making responsibilities in key areas, UM has built a strong partnership that is likely to be sustained over the long term. Partner organizations like being equal partners, and the university has experienced almost no challenges in its relationships with partners.

This model is replicable but requires several important elements. First and most important is the preexistence of strong working relationships. The trust in this partnership was established during collaboration on earlier projects. Second is the credibility of the principals involved. The community organizations respect and trust the key university participants. Likewise, the key community "champions" are well known to and respected by university members. Finally, the university must nurture the partnership. UM made specific efforts to be inclusive, keeping DECC informed of developments at each step in the process and inviting it to participate in decisions.

Creating a Formal Mechanism for Periodic Partner Feedback: University of California, Los Angeles

This partnership has instituted semiannual summits with its partners to obtain feedback on the overall initiative as well as specific issues facing the partnership. This structure encourages direct communication with the university and active participation of all partners. The summits have also provided an opportunity for self-assessment by reviewing goals, objectives, and accomplishments.

PARTNERSHIP OVERVIEW

The University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) UCPI project is based on the expansion and use of a preexisting information system known as Neighborhood Knowledge Los Angeles (NKLA). This system is at the center of the university's initiative: through its use, the project develops strategies for homeownership preservation, creates site acquisition strategies for infill housing development, and links local youth to community development activities and processes through the use of applied technology.

The university manages and implements the project through the Advanced Policy Institute in the School of Public Policy and Social Research. Included in the partnership are four community-based organizations focused on housing and economic development as well as services provision. These organizations generally have years of community development experience in Los Angeles's disadvantaged communities. Two neighborhoods, Boyle Heights and Vernon Central, respectively located in the eastern and southern parts of Los Angeles, are the focal points of the project.

PROMISING PRACTICE

As part of its grant activities, UCLA initiated partner summits as a formal mechanism for dialogue and feedback with its partners. This process began in the early stages of the initiative and has continued throughout the grant period. Key partners attend the summits, which are held semiannually in the community. They provide the opportunity for interaction and collective discussion on issues facing the partnership, and they enable participants to prioritize activities. Additionally, through the partner summits, the university facilitates a self-assessment process that compares accomplishments with the previous year's goals and sets goals and objectives for the upcoming year. In some cases, the summits have produced lists of activities that are outside the immediate scope of the UCPI but that the partners feel are crucial to the overall well-being of the community at large and partner organizations' missions. The university's approach is noteworthy given that many other partnerships have not developed a concrete mechanism for feedback or governance or have implemented structures (i.e., steering committees) that have not proven effective.

A crucial benefit of the partner summits is that they provide a forum for collective decision making. While community partners recognize that UCLA is the grant recipient and is responsible for its implementation and oversight, they have expressed satisfaction that,

while they individually have access to the university, they are able to formally participate in a process that affects their collective futures.

While an individual partner may disagree about a particular goal or objective, the partner summits are effective in reaching broad consensus about the direction of the initiative for the upcoming year. Furthermore, differences of opinion have been encouraged. In situations in which the university and a partner disagree, the summit has usually been followed by individual partner negotiations.

Examples of changes or enhancements to partnership activities include conducting planning sessions with each individual partner and working with area youth to design and plan Dunbar Pocket Park. Although not in the partners' original scope of work, this activity was deemed crucial to community building. The university organized a series of workshops to train youth on site surveying and design. The city ultimately built the park using the young adults' design. Other activities from the partner summit include conducting discrete research projects for individual partners as well as identifying funding resources for partners.

Community partners believe that they have benefited from the summit process. On the one hand, it allows for buy-in by all the stakeholders on the broader goals, although some stakeholders may disagree on an individual objective. On the other hand, it allows each partner to articulate its "wish list." Because this initiative is geared in part toward building or expanding the internal capacity of the partner agencies, the wish lists are seen as one opportunity for partners to articulate what they need. Furthermore, the summits have allowed the initiative to be flexible and adapt to changing priorities at the partner level, as these shifting priorities are often aired at summits. While this has been an enormous challenge for the initiative, it has succeeded by being inclusive and responsive.

IMPACT AND REPLICATION

The partner summits help UCLA ensure that the partnership's programs are responsive to partner organizations and community needs. This has made the programs more effective and demonstrated the university's commitment to true partnership. Partner summits have also established clear lines of communication between the university and its partner organizations. Finally, the summits provide a vehicle for self-assessment and reflection.

A formal governance structure like the partner summits can be readily replicated at most other partnerships. Clearly, they are most effective in projects where all partners participate in one or more common programs. For partnerships that have several independent programs, it may be more effective to meet periodically with groups of partners involved in the same programs. Furthermore, implementing the summit structure requires commitment from partners to participate and from the university to act on the partner feedback obtained.

Chapter 7

Expanding Homeownership Resources

Increasing homeownership is essential to community development efforts. Homeowners have a strong financial investment in their communities and are more likely than renters to actively promote local development. In contrast to absentee owners, owner-occupants usually invest more resources and time in maintaining properties. Moreover, homeowners typically have a long-term perspective about their neighborhoods and thus add to community stability.

While homeownership resources are often present in disadvantaged communities, rarely are they available at the levels required to fulfill the needs of local residents. Consequently, it is important to improve homeownership resources, whether by expanding existing ones or by creating new ones. As other partnerships have demonstrated, universities and community partners alike can contribute to the expansion of neighborhood resources through offering technical assistance, increasing organizational capacity, leveraging participation of private sector institutions, and broadening housing services. Given the program activities of several UCPI participants, the initiative seems to be predicated on the strong belief that universities have significant resources to contribute to homeownership programs and that such resources can be leveraged to increase the impact of partner homeownership resources.

With a strong housing focus, two UCPI participants have created programs that expand the current resources available for homeownership in their local communities. Through the involvement of a consortium of banks in the partnership, the University of Alabama at Birmingham's initiative has created a second mortgage pool for target home buyers. This program not only has increased the amount of capital available for lower-income home buyers but also has made the financing available at below-market-rate terms. While the consortium was the driving force in developing the pool, the university played an important role in gaining initial bank participation in the partnership.

At the University of Texas–Pan American, the UCPI partnership has expanded homeownership outreach services and counseling for rural Latino residents. The partnership created a highly targeted program that spans the continuum of the home-buying process. Although the local community already had several important homeownership programs, the partnership successfully coordinated these efforts and expanded the capacity of existing organizations while also making available new resources. Consequently, current homeownership resources are having a greater impact on potential home buyers and the target community.

Creating New Financial Resources for Home-Buyer Assistance: University of Alabama at Birmingham

This partnership successfully gained the participation of several local financial institutions that then took the lead in creating a loan consortium to provide financial assistance to lower-income home buyers. Transcending previously competitive relationships, member banks worked collaboratively to design a second mortgage product and an institutional structure that could be sustained over the long term.

PARTNERSHIP OVERVIEW

The University of Alabama at Birmingham's (UAB's) UCPI program includes six primary components: housing development for new construction and rehabilitation, homeownership assistance through financial and home-buyer counseling, a construction job training program, a loan consortium of private institutions, employer-assisted housing, and research grants.

Known as HousingPlus, the project is managed and implemented by one university entity, the Center for Urban Affairs. To operate the project's various programs, the center has hired new staff members and recruited a few faculty members from other departments who assist in a limited way. HousingPlus focuses on two lower-income, predominantly minority neighborhoods known as West End and Titusville. Seven community partners, including public agencies, community-based organizations, and a group of financial institutions, participate in the project. There are few community development organizations in Birmingham, and most are nascent groups with minimal experience in housing development.

PROMISING PRACTICE

Under UAB's HousingPlus program, local lenders were recruited to develop a program to provide financial assistance to home buyers. Through a lengthy development process that lasted over a year and was led by the involved banks, lenders met to design and launch the Lenders Affordable Mortgage Program—a loan consortium for second mortgages. While the university initiated the program, financial institutions really drove its development. However, the university's influence was key in ensuring bank participation at the onset of the partnership.

As part of its UCPI proposal, the university stated that it would work with financial institutions to create a second mortgage program for targeted home buyers. Once the proposal was funded, the university was successful in getting a group of local banks to the table to discuss the potential program. The banks, which often viewed one another from a competitive perspective, embraced the concept and led the program. As lenders who were committed to the concept, they believed they were in the best position to understand such challenging issues as capitalization, underwriting requirements, corporate structure, and program guidelines.

Creating the program was not without challenges. First, working together collaboratively was new to the banks, and it took them several months to establish trust and good working relationships. Second, lenders were uncertain as to how closely aligned with HousingPlus the new program should be. They were concerned about linking the program to another new endeavor that relied completely on grant funding. Finally, none of the lenders involved had experience in creating a nonprofit lending institution capitalized by banks. Thus, the process of resolving technical questions regarding corporate structure and legal requirements was lengthy. In the end, commitment by the lenders and their perseverance took the effort a long way, and the group managed to overcome the challenges.

> *While the university initiated the program, financial institutions really drove its development. However, the university's influence was key in ensuring bank participation at the onset of the partnership.*

The loan program was officially launched in summer 2000. The eight participating banks—which capitalized the program with $200,000—are AmSouth Bank, Colonial Bank, Compass Bank, First Commercial Bank, National Bank of Commerce, New South Federal Savings Bank, Regions Bank, and SouthTrust Bank. The program is targeted at home buyers earning 80 percent or less of area median income and purchasing homes in one of the two neighborhoods targeted by HousingPlus. Home buyers participating in the program are eligible for a second mortgage at 5 percent interest for a maximum of 20 percent of the home's value. Currently, the loan program is working with HousingPlus, which will refer potential borrowers to the program and service the loans.

Throughout the planning process, lenders were very thoughtful about the program and worked diligently to create a sustainable structure. Because the HousingPlus program is fairly new and based on donor funding, lenders wanted to ensure that the loan consortium could stand as an independent entity. Thus, they have incorporated as a nonprofit organization and have the structure in place to grow into a community development financial institution, should they so desire. Moreover, participating lenders are prepared to contribute another $200,000 to recapitalize the mortgage pool if the program becomes oversubscribed.

At many other partnerships, universities developed a program and also took the lead in creating and implementing the program. In this case, while the university proposed the concept for a loan consortium, the effort was actually led by the partners, with the university playing a relatively minor role. This required the university to support the banks in their work and connect the consortium to the target neighborhoods and other programs in HousingPlus (i.e., home-buyer counseling, loan servicing, employer-assisted housing).

> *[W]hile the university proposed the concept for a loan consortium, the effort was actually led by the partners, with the university playing a relatively minor role.*

IMPACT AND REPLICATION

The second mortgage pool is a model program—the first consortium for single-family lending in Alabama. By offering below-market-rate second mortgages, the consortium decreases the affordability gap faced by many potential homeowners who lack sufficient down

payment/closing cost resources and who have lower incomes. The program's impact is expected to continue because of two important sustainability factors: (1) the program is not dependent on grant funding and (2) the lenders are prepared to recapitalize the pool when the initial funds have been depleted.

The loan consortium model could be readily replicated at other partnerships; it could be modified based on local needs and resources. By far, the most important factor in replicating the effort is commitment by financial institutions. Without their strong participation and commitment of financial resources, a similar program would not work. Moreover, the ability to research technical issues (i.e., corporate structure, legal restrictions, capitalization restrictions, program guidelines) is essential. These issues are time consuming and may derail program development if resources are not in place to address them.

Developing a Comprehensive Homeownership Counseling Program Specifically Designed for Target Communities: University of Texas–Pan American

This partnership created a thorough and targeted homeownership counseling program based on specific needs of local residents and with extensive input from partner organizations. The program has implemented an expansive curriculum that is bilingual, includes home maintenance components, and is marketed through broad outreach campaigns. The program, which has been well received by partners and residents, is now the primary center for counseling in the area.

PARTNERSHIP OVERVIEW

The University of Texas–Pan American (UTPA) UCPI program has several components, all related to housing. Titled Project HOPE, the effort includes housing development for new construction and rehabilitation, homeownership training and individual counseling, community outreach programs to increase awareness of housing programs, and technical assistance and training for nonprofit housing organizations.

Project HOPE is housed in the Office of Center Operations and Community Services (CoSERVE), which is UTPA's public service arm. It provides services to residents throughout Hidalgo County but focuses especially on the Latino population in remote rural *colonias*. Project components draw upon CoSERVE's Community Outreach Partnership Center and the university's Southwest Border Nonprofit Resource Center. The project involves 10 partners, including nonprofit housing development organizations, municipal and county community development departments, and private lending institutions. With a relatively small number of community-based organizations in the area, community partners have limited capacity and experience in community development activities.

PROMISING PRACTICE

Recognizing its role in the community and its available resources (i.e., research capacity, student interns, influence with stakeholders), the university has used CoSERVE to implement Project HOPE. UTPA worked in consultation with its community partners to design an extensive homeownership education and counseling program that would meet the needs of the target population, residents of colonias. Project HOPE staff consulted with nonprofit housing organizations that were familiar with local housing issues to shape the curriculum and received training on mortgage financing from leaders in the financial community. Through extensive and multipronged outreach campaigns, a bilingual curriculum, inclusion of home-buying and home maintenance curriculum components, and group education and one-on-one counseling sessions, Project HOPE has implemented a program that partner organizations praise and community residents find beneficial.

Colonias are rural settlements located along the Mexican border in South Texas and other border regions. These communities are characterized by substandard homes that lack

basic amenities such as running water and indoor toilets. In designing a curriculum for the university's homeownership education program, Project HOPE's staff addressed issues that are unique to these rural areas. For example, rather than purchase existing homes in established neighborhoods, families in South Texas are more likely to build new homes, which requires separate loans for construction and permanent financing. In addition, families who live in colonias tend to build houses incrementally, which makes it difficult to get financing to complete a home.

The home-buyer education and counseling component is a bilingual homeownership education program for families with low levels of literacy and limited access to and knowledge of the conventional financing system. Two levels of classes are offered: (1) classes for families beginning the home-buying process, and (2) more intensive classes for families ready to buy. Most families starting the home-buying process are recruited from the project target area. They are introduced

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to the complete home-buying process in general at the first class (the home-buyer orientation). As families continue their classes, Project HOPE staff follow up with participants through one-on-one counseling, which includes interviews with the head of household. An extensive questionnaire is completed to assess each family's housing and financial situation. For a number of reasons—from credit problems to insufficient income—most families are not ready to apply for a mortgage and are provided with a family action plan tailored to their circumstances. Designed to get families ready for homeownership, family action plans provide suggestions and recommendations and may include referrals to social services such as education or job training to enhance a family's ability to afford a home. Getting through the full process may take a year or longer, depending on the family's situation.

Families participating in the more intensive course are closer to buying their home and applying for partners' programs. The project partners have already screened these families and introduced them to their program requirements, which may include completion of home-buyer education classes. The vast majority of these families finish the course and earn a certificate of completion.

Project staff take photographs of the dwelling before and after approval for funding and once the house is completed. Information on all participants is kept in the project's database to monitor their progress. Participants are encouraged to contact project staff should they need additional counseling.

IMPACT AND REPLICATION

UTPA's homeownership counseling program has become the centerpiece of Project HOPE, providing a key link between outreach and housing development activities. The program has provided training for 117 families to date. Community partners praised the quality

and content of the university's classes. As a result of the program's success, Project HOPE has become the central provider of counseling services in the county, with many community partners that previously conducted their own homeownership counseling programs now sending their clients to the university.

This program is highly targeted to a specific population with unique needs. Therefore, replication should focus on the universal elements that contribute to the program's success. Specifically, partnerships replicating the model should ensure that the program comprehensively covers the home-buying and homeownership spectrum. Partners must also tailor such a program to the unique needs of the target population; otherwise, the program may suffer from lack of participants. Moreover, the program must include participation of key counseling and housing services organizations to most effectively create broad outreach strategies to build awareness of services.

Chapter 8

Building Community Capacity through Program Excellence

Building community capacity is an important goal of university-community partnerships. Through capacity building, such partnerships can have a measurable impact on partner organizations and, just as important, on their target communities. Capacity building is most often achieved through implementation of partnership programs. While many UCPI partnerships designed programs to build community capacity, several partnerships achieved this goal by delivering program excellence. As other university-community partnership programs show, the delivery of excellence must be measured in terms of the contributions and benefits the program provides to partners, program participants, and community organizations and residents. The partnerships featured in this chapter accomplished this goal through a variety of programs. In some instances, partnerships increased community capacity by delivering a fairly standard program—such as an internship program—through uncommonly high quality, effective management, and strong partner participation. Other partnerships built capacity through outstanding implementation of innovative approaches, such as the use of technology to address community development issues and engage youth in community development.

The University of Illinois at Chicago has worked with a primary partner to conduct an exceptional and highly praised educational program for community development practitioners. This certificate program delivers high-quality education that meets the university's educational standards while offering the practitioner-based curriculum sought by community partners. At the University of California, Los Angeles, the partnership has used an excellent information database system to address local community development issues and engage youth in community efforts. This is an innovative application of technology to address community needs and build a cadre of future community development practitioners.

While internship programs are fairly standard for university-community partnership efforts, the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee has created one that is quite formalized, includes strong participation of community partners, increases partner capacity, provides a rich learning experience, and is well managed and received by all stakeholders. It is an outstanding example of how greater impact can be achieved using a relatively common programmatic approach. Similarly, technical assistance is frequently provided by universities to their partner organizations. In the case of the Pratt Institute, partners have greatly benefited from the high quality of assistance, the responsiveness to partner requests and needs, and the commitment to working with partner organizations. The success of the effort is demonstrated in concrete terms by the number of housing units developed under the UCPI partnership.

Conducting a Mini–Business School Program for Community Development Professionals: University of Illinois at Chicago

This partnership conducts a well-developed educational program for staff of community development organizations. The program has developed the skills of individual professionals as well as increased organizational capacity to conduct community development projects. It also helps maintain strong relationships between community partners and the university.

OVERVIEW

The University of Illinois at Chicago's (UIC's) UCPI project has five components: a training program for staff of community-based development organizations, an employer-assisted housing program, a homeownership program for residents displaced by a HOPE VI public housing redevelopment project, research for neighborhood impact studies, and a Web-based compendium of affordable housing designs.

The project, known as Building Sustainable Communities, involves three primary university entities: the City Design Center, the Voorhees Center, and the School of Urban Planning and Public Affairs' Great Cities Institute. It has six primary community partner organizations that operate throughout the city and have extensive community development experience. Some program activities have a citywide focus, while others target specific disadvantaged communities, such as Lawndale.

PROMISING PRACTICE

UIC's Urban Developers Program—a one-year certificate training program for staff of community development corporations (CDCs)—is universally acknowledged to provide much-needed high-quality substantive skills that greatly help to build CDCs' capacity. It is very well received by community organizations. Alumni called the curriculum intense and demanding and said the program was well worth the effort, both organizationally and professionally. One alumna, for example, noted that the skills she gained in the program allowed her to apply for, and attain, a higher-level position in her organization. It is also seen to fill a crucial gap in the capacities of local community organizations. Several respondents spoke of it as "mini business school" for CDC staff and noted that the rigorous training greatly improves organizational capacity.

The program is jointly sponsored by the university and the Chicago Rehab Network, its partner organization. The program consists of six modules offered over the course of a year:

One alumna . . . noted that the skills she gained in the program allowed her to apply for, and attain, a higher-level position in her organization.

1. Urban Developers Program Cohort Seminar

2. Housing and Community Development Policy

3. Development Finance

4. Organizational Essentials for Community-Based Development

5. The Development Process

6. Sustaining Housing: Property Management

Admission is open to anyone, not only to staff of Rehab Network member organizations or university students. Admission criteria include:

• Employment or involvement in the field of community development

• Likelihood of completing the certificate program

• Ability to do graduate work successfully

• Identification of an appropriate community development project

Graduates receive a certificate in urban development. They may also apply for course credit toward a master's degree in urban planning from the university. Courses are taught by UIC professors in the Voorhees Center, the Great Cities Institute, and the Urban Planning and Policy Program. The program consists of classroom instruction as well as work on a specific development project that students are expected to bring with them into the program. Students, who are practitioners in the field of community-based development, typically have full-time jobs as well. Classes have traditionally been held in the evenings, but to better accommodate students' needs, an intensive weekend schedule was recently adopted instead.

UCPI funding supports the program's operation as well as technical assistance with students' specific development projects. Five students have received such assistance thus far. The technical assistance has gone toward, for instance, conducting a market study, providing assistance to identify and develop applications for city funding, and developing a strategic plan.

This program works well primarily because it is responsive to local CDCs' needs. It addresses issues of organizational capacity as well as individuals' own professional development. An added advantage is that there is the possibility of transferring credits to a graduate degree in urban planning. Cosponsorship works well because both UIC and the Rehab Network are deeply vested in the program's success—but the commitment that this rigorous partnership demands is also one of its greatest challenges.

IMPACT AND REPLICATION

UIC's Urban Developers Program has enhanced the professional skills of staff from local CDCs. With UCPI funding, 18 practitioners have graduated from the program, including 3 from organizations in target neighborhoods. As a result, those organizations now have

greater staff capacity and practitioners are better able to help their communities. In addition, the program has provided technical assistance for partners' specific development projects.

The program model may well be replicable, but careful attention must be paid to the specific needs of CDCs in other locations. The program is by all accounts quite demanding; the curriculum is rigorous and the time commitment substantial. It would be essential to explore whether potential students—and their employers—can sustain the high level of commitment such a program requires. Also essential is an appropriate institutional home such as UIC. Sustaining a program of this nature requires qualified instructors and institutional commitment to the program. Previously, housing the program at another local college allegedly did not work in part because of shortcomings in the institution's commitment to the partnership.

> *This program works well primarily because it is responsive to local CDCs' needs. It addresses issues of organizational capacity as well as individuals' own professional development.*

Using Technology to Expand Community Development Efforts and Engage Youth: University of California, Los Angeles

This partnership has applied a technology tool—an extensive information system—as an innovative means of expanding the capacity of community development organizations and engaging target youth in technology and community-based development activities. The program, which is well regarded, has garnered substantial additional funding and established two technology centers.

PARTNERSHIP OVERVIEW

The University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) UCPI project is based on the expansion and use of a preexisting information system known as Neighborhood Knowledge Los Angeles (NKLA). This system is at the center of the university's initiative: through its use, the project develops strategies for homeownership preservation, creates site acquisition strategies for infill housing development, and links local youth to community development activities and processes through the use of applied technology.

The university manages and implements the project through the Advanced Policy Institute at the School of Public Policy and Social Research. The partnership includes four community-based organizations focused on housing and economic development as well as services provision. These organizations generally have years of community development experience in Los Angeles's disadvantaged communities. Two neighborhoods, Boyle Heights and Vernon Central, respectively located in the eastern and southern parts of Los Angeles, are the focal points of the project.

PROMISING PRACTICE

The use of technology is central to UCLA's initiative. The university has taken an innovative approach to address important housing and community development issues by using technology to engage community partners and youth. In fact, community partners have indicated that, absent this project, they would be neither as successful in their activities nor as technologically savvy. Moreover, by engaging youth, the program assists in creating a pool of future community development practitioners—a common goal of university-community partnerships.

The project's concept is to knit together data from a variety of local and municipal sources to form a single information system—the NKLA database—that tracks housing-related information. This system—the cornerstone of UCLA's project—serves as the single point of entry for community partners and the wider community. By collecting, prescreening, and mining the data, the initiative provides an enormous service for the community because partner agencies are usually understaffed and underfunded and would not, on their own, be able to access data of this kind and quality. Moreover, the system is a tool that community partners use in their development activities.

UCLA staff, faculty, and students deliver such services as mapping community assets and resources, training youth on technology programs, providing assistance in organizational development, and designing a neighborhood park. Recognizing that partner organizations and community youth (1) may not always be proficient in the use of technology, and (2) may lack access to technology, UCLA representatives provide training on how to access, use, and maximize the database to carry out local housing development and services programs. Furthermore, the university has established neighborhood network centers with computers and relevant technology.

The most immediate benefits that partners have cited include ready access to information in a way that is easily understood, training that allows youths to undertake projects that benefit partners, and technology centers that make accessing information possible for community members.

An example of how the partnership has maximized the technology is its youth technology initiative. As a part of this activity, area youth are trained to establish an electronic asset map of their community. This asset map, known as I AM LA (Interactive Asset Mapping in Los Angeles), is a Web-based tool that can be used by community partners and is directly linked to NKLA. Another example of the innovative use of technology is what one partner referred to as "skills set transfer," in which community partners receive in-house training on how to make the most of the most relevant Internet technology.

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IMPACT AND REPLICATION

UCLA's program has established technology centers at two partner organizations. The two centers have a total of 20 computers plus the software required to run the database and other programs. Youth that are trained as part of the youth technology initiative work at partner organizations and are paid through a UCPI-funded stipend. This arrangement—along with grant-funded college interns—has increased partners' staff capacity. Moreover, the university's innovative approach and extensive work with the database have attracted more than $600,000 in additional funding from public and private sources.

This model program may be replicable but requires several key elements. Most important, the university must possess the technological capacity to deliver training and implement a database. Second, it must have partners who are interested in and willing to apply technology in innovative ways (i.e., for community development activities). Finally, partners must ensure that they have adequate financial resources for implementation. At this partnership, that meant the university had to obtain additional funding to build and equip the technology centers.

Delivering a Formalized Internship Program Beneficial to the University, Students, and Community Partners: University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee

This partnership has developed a highly structured internship program in which partner organizations are integrally involved and students are well matched to their host organizations. The matching process, evaluation, and joint management have contributed to the program's success and increased partner capacity. The university, partners, and students have mutually benefited from the program, and enrollment has exceeded projections.

PARTNERSHIP OVERVIEW

The University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee's (UWM's) UCPI program has several program components: a housing internship program for undergraduate and graduate students, research assistance to community partner organizations, housing and neighborhood design assistance to community partners, and a citywide homeownership center to centralize marketing and referral of housing counseling services.

The university's Building Capacity project is managed under the auspices of the Center for Urban Initiatives and Research. Faculty and students from departments such as Architecture and Urban Planning, Sociology, Urban Studies, and Economics participate in the project. The partnership involves seven community partners—nonprofit housing developers, public agencies, and community service agencies—with varying levels of expertise in community development. It focuses on two target neighborhoods to the north and south of downtown Milwaukee, Lindsay Heights and Walker's Point, respectively. Both are urban communities with old housing stock that has suffered from disinvestment, although Walker's Point is experiencing some gentrification.

PROMISING PRACTICE

One key component of UWM's project is an internship program. While such programs are relatively standard fare for universities, UWM's program is outstanding in several ways: the university involves community partners in structuring and managing the program, staff evaluate the program by surveying hosts and interns, the university has committed a staff person to coordinate the program, the program is widely marketed to key faculty and all students, and internships are supplemented by monthly seminars conducted by community development professionals. Testament to the program's benefits is the fact that enrollment has exceeded projections, a few students have been offered full-time employment with their host organizations, and hosts and students alike would like to increase the total hours of internships. A further testament to the program's success is its profound impact on students, who believe the internship has greatly enriched their learning experience.

Students in UWM's yearlong internship work for a nonprofit or government agency focused on housing and community development. The objective of the program is not only

to increase the host organizations' capacity but also to afford students the opportunity to gain experience with community development professionals and an understanding of disadvantaged communities.

As with its approach to other UCPI program components, the university wanted to ensure integral involvement of partner organizations in the internship program. In fact, the program came about from initial planning sessions in which partners stated how valuable interns would be to their understaffed organizations. To achieve true partner involvement, UWM created a small advisory committee of university and community partner representatives. The committee oversees management of the program, while day-to-day operations are handled by a dedicated university staff member. Marketing of the program to students, faculty, and host organizations is also overseen by the committee.

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Partner organizations that serve as hosts must provide a job description for the internship and agree to provide professional supervision and management to the intern. Based on the job descriptions and the intern's application, students are matched to host organizations according to their interests and the host's organizational needs. Interns perform a wide variety of work activities, including surveying resident needs through focus groups and door-to-door surveys, producing maps of housing development activities and needs, assisting local schools with computer training and Web site design, providing home-buyer counseling services to local residents, and using digital photography to create streetscape designs.

To date, the only difficulty the program has faced is in scheduling seminars. The logistics of organizing them on a monthly basis—given student work schedules, exams, and speaker availability—have proved challenging. In addition, to continue the internship program beyond the grant period, the university will have to raise additional funds or contribute its own funding. Currently, funding from UCPI enables the program to provide interns with an hourly wage throughout the internship.

IMPACT AND REPLICATION

UWM has implemented a well-designed and effectively managed program that demonstrates the university's commitment to programs beneficial to its partners. Interns have gained professional skills and an understanding of communities to which they otherwise would have little or no exposure. This accomplishes one of the primary purposes of university-community partnerships: to provide a richer learning experience for students. Partner

organizations have increased the capacity of their understaffed organizations and gained a better understanding of valuable resources available from UWM.

The university's program contrasts sharply with internship programs at other partnerships. Generally, other internship programs are managed solely by the university without any input from partner organizations. Frequently, such programs have no dedicated staff and are loosely managed by busy faculty members with numerous other responsibilities. Students are usually placed at host organizations without a matching process and rarely are student or host experiences evaluated. Thus, UWM offers a model of

To replicate the [internship] program, universities would have to dedicate staff, create a formal management structure, and work closely with partners to ensure their involvement in hosting interns and managing the program.

an effective and well-managed internship program. To replicate the program, universities would have to dedicate staff, create a formal management structure, and work closely with partners to ensure their involvement in hosting interns and managing the program.

Providing High-Quality Technical Assistance to Community Development Organizations: Pratt Institute

This partnership has used the exceptional academic and practical community development expertise of university staff to assist partner organizations in project development activities and neighborhood revitalization efforts. The grant enables the university to provide these services on a pro bono basis, which helps maintain project affordability in target neighborhoods that currently face extreme gentrification pressure.

PARTNERSHIP OVERVIEW

Pratt Institute's UCPI project is centered primarily on the provision of technical assistance in planning, urban design, financing, and other housing development activities. The project also focuses on capacity building for community-based organizations through the provision of geographic information systems training, community development forums, and a predevelopment fund.

Pratt Institute's Center for Community and Environmental Development is responsible for operating the project, which targets five neighborhoods in Brooklyn, NY: Bedford-Stuyvesant, East New York, Fort Greene, South Brooklyn, and Williamsburg. These neighborhoods have sophisticated, mature community development organizations and are facing significant gentrification following decades of disinvestment. To carry out the project, the center works with several partners in each neighborhood. There is a designated center staff person for each neighborhood who manages partner relationships.

PROMISING PRACTICE

An independent department of Pratt Institute, the Center for Community and Environmental Development provides education and training, technical assistance, and policy analysis to support disadvantaged communities. In addition, the center connects the institute's faculty and resources to local community development practitioners. In supporting the center, the institute has recognized its vested interest in local community revitalization and building capacity for community development efforts. The center has established strong relationships with numerous mature community development organizations in Brooklyn. Over the course of 35 years, center staff have provided high-quality technical assistance to these developers. The request for assistance is initiated by the partner organization, and the technical assistance is specifically tailored to each development project and includes a wide array of services. While services are provided in a "client/consultant" type of relationship, partner organizations benefit tremendously because grant funding makes it possible for them to get this sophisticated technical assistance at no cost.

Center staff have experience as community development practitioners and are primarily responsible for providing technical assistance to partner organizations. This is in contrast

to other university programs where students do most of the work while faculty supervise the students' efforts. A few tasks (i.e., planning studies) are performed by center students in the form of semester-long, faculty-supervised projects. However, the vast majority of assistance is provided by staff and includes services such as preparing site design options, researching zoning regulations, preparing financial applications for projects, and advising on other development issues (e.g., air rights, waste disposal options). Currently, center staff are working on a diverse set of projects, including a senior housing building, a day care facility, an urban farmers market, and a charter school. Partner organizations commented that they found the center's assistance to be of consistently high quality, that staff are very responsive in delivering services, and that staff frequently provide services beyond those they committed to provide. Thus, the center's partners felt that staff are committed to community development and are deeply invested in their projects.

The center's technical assistance program under the UCPI grant essentially just continues the work that the center has done for more than three decades. While relationships with partner organizations were well established, the grant provided the resources to maintain the center's level of assistance. As several staff members noted, they would be able to do much less pro bono work without the Foundation's funding.

While the center's program has demonstrated its success over three decades, a unique blend of factors has facilitated that success. First, the center views itself as an advocacy planning organization based at a university. Thus, its mission focuses on community development efforts and linking the institute's resources to those efforts. Second, the more than 20 staff members are skilled practitioners in community development, and it is their practical experience that makes the program valuable. Third, Brooklyn boasts highly sophisticated community development organizations, many with substantial track records in project development. Thus, the partners' need for development assistance is matched well to the practical development expertise center staff can provide. Finally, the center has attracted sustained funding over the years to ensure that its services are provided at no cost to partner organizations.

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IMPACT AND REPLICATION

The Center for Community and Environmental Development's vast technical expertise has enabled community development organizations to readily access technical expertise without increasing project development costs. The result is that projects—whether for housing or economic development—are more affordable for organizations to complete, for residents to purchase or rent, and for business owners to lease. Moreover, production of housing units has

been notable, with nearly 70 units complete, 147 in construction, and 128 in the pipeline. In relation to other UCPI participants, Pratt's achievements are laudable given that so many others have struggled to accomplish hard outcomes in their partnership efforts.

Due to the sophisticated expertise of both center faculty and community partners, it would be difficult to replicate this program at other partnerships. However, the project's principles can be modeled when developing similar technical assistance programs.

Due to the sophisticated expertise of both center faculty and community partners, it would be difficult to replicate this program at other partnerships. However, the project's principles can be modeled when developing similar technical assistance programs. First, it is necessary to provide high-quality technical assistance matched to the needs of partners. Second, identifying funding sources to eliminate or greatly reduce the cost of assistance ensures sustainability. Otherwise, funding-constrained organizations would find it difficult to pay for such assistance.

Chapter 9

Key Observations from the UCPI Experience

Although there is great diversity in the UCPI grantees' activities and experiences, there are important common themes across partnerships. Many of these themes are resonant with similar university-community collaborations, such as partnership efforts funded through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Office of University Partnerships. Such collaborative efforts encourage institutions of higher education to use their resources in partnership with community leaders and organizations. Overall, the goal of these collaborations is not only to build long-term partnerships but also to have a positive impact on the communities—often disadvantaged, urban neighborhoods—that both universities and local organizations call home. Moreover, university-community partnerships emphasize the collaborative process necessary to create a common vision for local communities. In other words, they focus on developing partnerships in which all participants work together. This collaborative approach is a departure from the more paternalistic or distant approach taken by some universities in the past.

While this report focuses on promising practices of the UCPI experience, many of the observations will be instructive for similar partnership programs. Below are major cross-partnership observations gathered during the midcourse assessment of 11 UCPI participants. These key observations highlight areas where partnerships achieved success as well as faced challenges. As the promising practices illustrate, several partnerships found effective strategies for avoiding or overcoming obstacles.

The strength of the strategic planning process conducted prior to implementation had a significant impact on program success. Most of the original proposals were developed as some combination of preexisting projects or relationships (between specific faculty members and specific community organizations) and new initiatives. To develop the latter, most partnerships took advantage of the opportunity to engage their community partners in sustained dialogue about their needs. Community partners and university representatives alike mentioned that they found the planning sessions valuable, particularly because the sessions gave academics and community representatives the opportunity to educate one another about their work. Not surprisingly, partnerships that invested extensive time and effort during the strategic planning process reaped the benefits. Through use of a neutral facilitator, detailed planning sessions, and inclusion of all relevant stakeholders, partnerships such as the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee and Case Western Reserve University were more successful in creating a shared vision for their partnerships. A shared vision has been a strong component of university-community partnership success so far and will probably remain so.

***At times, the universities were unclear as to whether achieving outcomes or build-
ing partnerships had greater priority under UCPI.*** UCPI strives to attain concrete
outcomes and, less tangibly, to foster robust partnerships between universities and commu-
nity organizations. Sometimes these goals are compatible, but sometimes they are not. For
example, what should a university do if external events render a project infeasible (e.g., a
funding source fails to deliver funds or a project gets stalled because of local politics)? If the
primary UCPI mission is to achieve concrete outcomes, the university should select another
partner or a different strategy—and the grant should allow it the flexibility to do so. How-
ever, if partnership building (i.e., forging long-term working relationships intended to
achieve results) is the primary UCPI mission, the university should "weather the storm"
with its partner, even at the risk of not attaining the target outcome. Similarly, what if a
community partner's priorities change? Should the university persist in trying to attain the
original target outcome (at the expense of failing to be responsive to its partner) or adapt to
its partner's new priorities (at the expense of compromising the target outcome)?

At a couple of partnerships, the imperatives of outcome attainment and partnership build-
ing were not fully compatible and grantees were uncertain which had higher priority. At
several partnerships, universities were overly optimistic in setting goals for outcomes—a
problem exacerbated by the fact that they often overestimated the capacity of their pri-
mary community partners. In these cases, the universities have been able to establish
strong partnerships but have had very limited concrete results. This is in contrast to part-
nerships such as the University of Alabama at Birmingham, which is included in this
report for a highly tangible outcome—a loan consortium. However, that partnership has
experienced challenges in implementing a truly collaborative partnership with community
organizations. Thus, as other researchers of university-community partnerships have
noted, it is imperative to strike a balance between quantitative outcomes and real partner-
ship building when evaluating success.

Many partnerships built their proposals on preexisting relationships. In several
cases, community organizations were chosen to participate because of preexisting relation-
ships with specific faculty members—either direct partnerships or networking relation-
ships. In some cases, however, community organizations were chosen after a formal
request for proposals process or after a general invitation to many community organiza-
tions and leaders. The sturdiest, most institutionalized and effective partnerships appear
to be the long-standing ones that predate the Foundation grant—relationships viewed as
long term by both sides, regardless of Foundation
funding. Because these long-standing relationships
are well established, they can generally weather
setbacks and may have a stronger chance of
achieving target outcomes. While achieving out-
comes is a requirement for all partnerships, in rel-
atively nascent partnerships, relationship building
requires more time and thus results will take
longer to achieve. Partnerships with relatively new
relationships will benefit from the experience of
other university-community partnerships, which

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have found that success is more readily achieved when there is a strong commitment to the long-term relationship and a truly collaborative process.

When establishing new relationships, universities often found it difficult to assess their partners' capacities. This proved troublesome, particularly when assessing partners' technical abilities (e.g., housing development capacity). Because many universities lack a wide array of in-house technical expertise, they may inaccurately assess their partners' capacity, setting overly ambitious outcome goals. Likewise, partners also were sometimes unsure of what the university could offer and what the relationship would be like. Thus, establishing a new relationship requires an initial "get to know you" period; it is unrealistic to expect such partnerships to "hit the ground running." Condensing this initial period—for example, through a concentrated effort at strategic planning such as the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee used—can benefit the effort greatly and start the project off with a commitment to collaboration.

> *Partnerships with relatively new relationships will benefit from the experience of other university-community partnerships, which have found that success is more readily achieved when there is a strong commitment to the long-term relationship and a truly collaborative process.*

The most effective partnerships are with more mature community-based organizations. The reasons for this are obvious: such organizations are more likely to have well-defined priorities, a sophisticated understanding about what universities can and cannot offer, expertise, and staff capacity. Thus, they enter the partnership with valuable resources and expertise to contribute. Such collaborations have a higher chance of achieving hard *outcomes*. In addition, organizations such as these—as demonstrated at the University of Illinois at Chicago and Pratt Institute—are more equipped to have a balanced partnership with universities, given the typical influence, resources, and technical expertise possessed by higher education institutions. The experience of other university-community partnerships illustrates that balancing partners and their roles is another essential element of achieving success.

"Partnership" is a complex concept; there is no single model for an optimal partnership. One UCPI goal is to support model partnerships that build collaborative capacity. While the Foundation intends universities to be the "anchoring institutions," it wants the partnerships to include "formal, long-term and substantive involvement by all partnering institutions." The UCPI participants demonstrate that satisfactory relationships can take various forms. For example, some partners desired a strong role in the program or partnership, while others were satisfied with a more minor role as long as they believed positive benefits would accrue to their communities and organizations. Similarly, some universities played a lesser role in program planning and implementation, while others managed the program or partnership jointly with their partners, and still others aggressively led the project. Partnership dynamics among the participants generally took one of the following two forms:

- ***Community partners as "clients/beneficiaries" of university services.*** In this model, the community "partner" receives technical assistance, supportive research, or staffing assistance (in the form of student interns). In some cases, these relationships were literally client ones, with Foundation funding having replaced previous fee-for-service activities. Sometimes the partner defined the initial project; thus, the assistance was inherently "responsive" to the partner's needs. One example of this is the Pratt Institute and its practice of providing high-quality services to a fairly sophisticated clientele, its community development corporation partners. In other cases, project activities were jointly defined, as in the practices highlighted at the University of Michigan and the University of Illinois at Chicago in its Urban Developers Program.

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- ***Community partners as "advisors/consultants."*** In some partnerships, partners act as advisors to projects, which may be primarily university led. In such instances, partners' involvement is clearly and narrowly defined. These relationships were usually one-on-one between the university and the community organization. In such relationships, issues related to sharing in governance, strategic decision making, or long-term sustainability were largely moot because the flow of services was primarily in one direction. This was the most common type of partnership observed during the site assessments. These types of arrangements seemed to suit community partners, which often lacked the time, interest, or staff capacity to be more involved in the details of a project. This was evident at Case Western Reserve University, where, after the initial planning period, partners played a more limited role as advisors on the project.

In these models, community partners and universities are not necessarily equals in the sense of making strategic decisions jointly, but the relationships are nonetheless satisfactory to all parties primarily because all partners found the collaboration to be mutually beneficial. Power sharing in this context may have little to do with strategic issues such as community organizations' involvement in resource allocation or plans for sustainability. It may have more to do with issues of communication and attitude—for example, ensuring that the university really "listens," attempts to be responsive to the partner's real needs, and treats it respectfully. In some instances, the university has played the role of a neutral facilitator—taking neither a leadership nor a power-sharing role—to bring together community organizations that may be experiencing "turf" issues.

As "anchoring institutions," universities generally take the lead role in the partnership. UCPI is a fundamentally university-centered initiative. All funding accrues to the universities. There are no requirements for pass-through funding to community organizations. There are no "penalties" if a university fails to work well with its partner

organizations. Community organizations have limited mechanisms for providing feedback directly to the Foundation. In short, community organizations have very few "rights" under UCPI. Equally important, community organizations do not have responsibilities to the Foundation. They are not bound to accomplish the activities to which they committed. They are not accountable to either the universities or the Foundation. It is the universities that are accountable for keeping activities on track and for the administrative requirements of the grants. Most Foundation communications are, naturally enough, via the university grantees.

It is not surprising, then, that at almost all partnerships, the grants were seen by all parties as internal to the universities, and their preeminence in the partnerships was largely unquestioned. At most partnerships, universities made decisions internally about initiative-wide strategies, resource allocation, and sustainability. These processes were typically opaque to the community partners. As the grantees, most universities did not feel obliged to share these matters with their partners, nor did most partners seem to question this exclusion—as long as they were satisfied with the services or benefits their organizations or communities received. Partnerships such as the University of Michigan and the University of Illinois at Chicago are noteworthy for their efforts to share decision making despite the UCPI's university-centered approach. Although some partners expressed the wish that UCPI grants could have included them formally, both sides accept that because the universities are the UCPI grantees, how they manage the grant is an internal matter.

Thus, the structure of UCPI has fostered a dynamic that promotes productive and substantive forms of partnership, with universities taking the role of lead partner. Over time, the partnerships may lead to greater capacity of partner organizations, which could enable them to take on a stronger leadership role within the partnerships.

Most universities' commitment to their partners was very strong. Nearly all grantees saw the relationships as long-term ones that would transcend the Foundation funding (in fact, as noted elsewhere, many partnerships predated UCPI). For example, Yale University funded the salary of its partner's staff member when it realized Foundation funding could not be used for this purpose. Similarly, prior to final grant funding, Case Western Reserve University's dean made a commitment to its UCPI partners to fund the key aspects of the proposal regardless of the final grant amount. This long-term commitment, demonstrated in other successful university-community partnerships, is a critical element for UCPI participants already achieving concrete outcomes, particularly for those struggling with the relationship-building aspects of partnership. It should be noted that while the universities demonstrated strong commitment to their partners, they most often did not include their partners in such important areas as conversations with funders or decision making.

Very few initiatives succeeded in establishing inclusive mechanisms for governance and strategic decision making. As discussed above, both sides tended to view the grants as internal to the universities. Thus, community partners generally had little input in governance or in *strategic* decisions related to grant management, such as resource allocation or sustainability. Although the partnership dynamic (i.e., the university-centered nature of the grants) is perhaps the core issue here, there were other important obstacles to

establishing effective mechanisms. Sporadic or low attendance by community partners at meetings was a frequent problem. Community organizations often lacked the time, manpower, or interest to regularly attend UCPI-related meetings, especially those that covered issues not directly related to them. This was compounded by the fact that their attendance would be unpaid and by the common perception that important strategic decisions would be made internally by the university anyway because it was the recipient of funding. Community partners frequently commented that steering committee meetings were status updates rather than forums for debate and strategic decision making.

It is important to distinguish between *strategic* decision making and *programmatic* decision making, however. While community partners were little involved in strategic decisions that affected the overall UCPI grant, they frequently had a voice in *programmatic* decisions about project activities. They were almost always integrally involved in determining the types of assistance their organization would receive (e.g., interns' job descriptions, or types of technical or capacity-building assistance). They also were consulted on the overall agenda for the project as well as the content of specific project components, such as Web site content and outreach approaches. Community representatives often spoke favorably of the university's sensitivity to their needs and expertise in these types of dialogues.

Institutionalizing partnerships is difficult, but the presence of a dedicated community outreach center can help. Partnerships often boiled down to personal relationships between a community organization "champion" and individual faculty members. This was especially true in academic departments. It was less true in universities' community outreach centers, which have an institutional commitment to working in the community and have institutionalized relationships. This is perhaps best exemplified by the Pratt Institute's UCPI program, which is an independent entity for advocacy and planning. Other partnerships such as the University of Texas–Pan American, University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee, and University of Illinois at Chicago have also used such centers effectively.

There was great variation in how community organizations approached collaborations with universities. By definition, those involved in UCPI felt they had something to gain—typically, access to resources and expertise that they could not develop on their own. However, less sophisticated organizations were more likely to view universities monolithically. Their views about "The University"—often created by a history of hostile town-gown relationships—made them wary about collaborating with anyone affiliated with the university. They also complained that university members did not seem to "understand" their world and could not "speak" their language. Some partnerships were burdened by these unspoken factors. In other cases, partner organizations felt that the full potential of the partnership went untapped, as relationships were limited to the UCPI project and funding.

On the other hand, more sophisticated, experienced community organizations realized that universities are not monolithic entities but rather a diverse collection of entities. They recognized that departments differ in their approaches, priorities, and sensitivity to the local community. Even within one department, faculty members differ, sometimes dramatically,

in their approach to (and reception by) community organizations. Realizing this, community organizations often spoke of the need to treat collaborations on a case-by-case basis. They may view their collaboration with some part of the university as a long-term relationship yet may expect to collaborate with different parts of the university at different times. Community organizations also frequently spoke of the need to "educate" university members about the realities of their world. The more sophisticated organizations accepted this as part of the partnership.

Intrauniversity collaboration can be challenging. Projects that require different university entities to integrate their activities, rather than work independently on different project aspects, faced the challenges of integrating different—often competing—philosophies, priorities, and agendas. On the plus side, they gave community organizations greater access to a wider range of university resources. For some partners, this was a disappointment. A model that seems to work well is the provision of essentially independent tracks of assistance by various departments—but the tradeoff is that this results in a less integrated initiative.

Many project components operated on independent tracks. Truly comprehensive initiatives in which components were integrated were rare. In most cases, project components progressed on independent tracks led by different entities within the university. Two factors account for this. First, grant activities were often developed from a combination of new and preexisting activities that did not always relate to each other. Second, most partnerships had only portions of their original proposals funded. This did not seem to cause particular problems. It does, however, raise questions about the feasibility of expecting universities to present well-integrated, comprehensive initiatives, especially given the difficulties of intrauniversity coordination and of marrying disparate approaches to community development.

Pockets of excellence exist throughout the partnerships. This report has highlighted a number of outstanding UCPI programs. Many other noteworthy activities have built on the universities' traditional strengths in research and provision of student labor. While not particularly innovative or unusual, they are nonetheless valuable and very well received by community partner organizations. For example, the University of Maryland has implemented a memorandum of understanding with some of its community partners. This tool has assisted both the university and its partners to define their goals, identify the resources necessary to carry out the project, and launch a discussion and negotiation process regarding responsibilities and target results.

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No partnership has had everything go according to plan. This simply reflects the real-world nature of partnerships. Both universities and community partners face constraints that affect their performance. University staff and faculty have other responsibilities and may not have adequate time to devote to the effort. Typically, funding is available

to support only a limited number of staff to work on the project. Nonprofit community organizations often have a short time horizon. Expertise at such organizations is often not institutionalized, so much depends on the skill and commitment of a champion for a particular project. Similarly, collaborations with public sector partners, such as public housing authorities and city governments, are subject to broader political and financial considerations that are often out of either partner's control.

In summary, projects that tended to proceed most smoothly and effectively in terms of meeting target outcomes were those in which:

- The collaboration *activity is one-on-one* with a community partner organization—for example, provision of interns, technical assistance, or capacity-building assistance. Ambitious projects involving external factors over which the participants have little control (such as local politics or large public housing revitalization projects) faced greater difficulty. More discrete, limited activities were more readily implemented, produced benefits to universities and partners more quickly, and still contributed to broader community impact over the long term. Examples of such activities include the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee's intern program, Pratt Institute's technical assistance program, and the University of Illinois at Chicago's Urban Developers Program.

- The partnership is based on a *preexisting* relationship in which the parties know each other fairly well and have already established a level of trust. If the purpose of UCPI is to catalyze new relationships, the time frame for the grant should accommodate the longer period required to establish working relationships. If partnership building is the objective, grant objectives should reflect the fact that hard outcomes are less likely to be accomplished in a shorter time frame.

- The university entity involved was a *community outreach center* rather than a traditional academic department. Excellent activities can and do occur within academic departments, but the chances of this occurring depend on the individuals involved. Community outreach centers, in contrast, have more institutionalized experience with community work and an inherently multidisciplinary approach. Because community work is their raison d'être (unlike academic departments), they also tend to be more vested in working successfully with communities.

- Partnerships that were led by *dedicated and respected project directors* frequently both achieved concrete outcomes and built strong partnerships. These directors were better able to overcome obstacles the partnership encountered and bring together diverse groups of partners, often with competing agendas.

The UCPI experience has helped foster strong local partnerships between universities and local partner organizations dedicated to a variety of community development efforts. Although the initiative is still in progress at several partnerships, many UCPI projects have achieved important target outcomes in addition to building partnerships—the two primary objectives of the initiative. As illustrated by the promising practices featured in this report, the UCPI experience offers a rich learning resource for similar university-community partnerships and others involved in the field.