RESEARCH REPORT

Revitalizing Neighborhoods

The Federal Role

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Revitalizing Neighborhoods: The Federal Role

Distressed neighborhoods in US cities are a product of centuries of systemic inequalities that have benefitted whites and harmed blacks and Hispanics (Briggs 2005; Massey and Denton 1993).[1] With high levels of crime, violence, residential instability, and poverty; poor-quality public services; and limited access to jobs and amenities, these neighborhoods have become distressed through concerted, long-lasting, and often deliberate private and public action.

In recent decades, however, momentum has grown to improve these neighborhoods. Philanthropy led the way toward neighborhood revitalization in the 1960s and 1970s (Turner et al. 2014); federal responses followed soon thereafter in the 1980s and 1990s. In the wake of the financial and housing crisis, and with a change of federal administration, neighborhood revitalization became a much higher priority in the late 2000s. Thanks to a renewed commitment by the White House and the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and new energy at several other federal agencies, new programs were invented and old ones evolved.

This recent period of expansion and discovery offers great potential for insight about how the federal government can improve the impact of its neighborhood programs, working with local and state government, philanthropy, community organizations, and the private sector. The purpose of this paper is to distill some of that insight into recommendations for future federal work to revitalize neighborhoods, with the objectives of building local community development capacity, building collaboration among federal, state, local, and philanthropic stakeholders, and advancing practice and policy through evaluation and research (box 1). We arrive at these recommendations after describing the importance and magnitude of the challenge of revitalizing distressed neighborhoods and providing a history of community development and place-based initiatives of the past several decades, focusing especially on recent federally supported efforts. We then present a more a detailed discussion of recommended actions.

BOX 1

Key Recommendations for the Federal Government to Improve Place-Based Initiatives

Equip: Build local community development capacity

- Evaluate, reform as necessary, and fund adequately the main US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) programs for building community development capacity: Community Development Block Grants and technical assistance.

- Build local governments' capacity and commitment to use data to guide their community development activities.

- Build citywide and regional infrastructure for data-driven community development.

- Use graduated competitive grants to boost capacity.

Engage: Build collaboration among federal, state, local, and philanthropic stakeholders

- Commit to collaboration among federal agencies.

  » Learn from recent federal place-based collaborations and continue and expand efforts to coordinate and align agency actions.
  » Identify and work to remove regulatory and legislative impediments to neighborhood revitalization.
  » Expand federal agencies' use of administrative data to support place-based initiatives.
  » Track federal spending in counties, municipalities, and neighborhoods to identify opportunities for synergy and close gaps.

- Reinforce and build new federal partnerships with state and local government.

  » Design programs to promote collaboration and learning with local governments, and encourage agency personnel to interact with grantees accordingly.
  » Collaborate as partners with state governments in supporting the revitalization of distressed neighborhoods. Engage Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) as partners.

- Refresh federal agency staff practice to support place-based approaches.

  » Train agency staff at all levels about how to think more holistically about neighborhoods, how systems interact, and how to coordinate action
  » Write job descriptions and institute evaluation procedures that encourage place-based work, intra- and interagency coordination, and alignment.

- Work with philanthropy.

> » Seek and facilitate partnerships with philanthropy that will help build local capacity, design initiatives, evaluate programs, and drive system change.

Learn: Advance practice and policy

- Design programs with evaluation in mind, including the use of strong logic models and Notices of Funding Availability (NOFAs) that clarify evaluation requirements.

- Assure evaluation of every initiative, including both process and outcome evaluations.

- Provide for comparative evaluations of place-based initiatives among federal agencies.

The Need for Addressing Neighborhood Distress

One of the most urgent reasons to address neighborhood distress is that growing up in distressed neighborhoods harms children. Recent studies show that those who move out of such neighborhoods early have better life chances than those who spend more time there (Chetty, Hendren, and Katz 2016; Clampet-Lundquist and Massey 2008; Crowder and South 2011; Katz, Leibman, and King 2001; Kling, Liebman, and Katz 2007; Ludwig et al. 2013; Wodtke, Harding, and Elwert 2011). Children who grow up with safe, healthy homes, streets, and parks; access to high-quality early childhood and K–12 opportunities; and options for meeting and interacting with one another enter adulthood with brighter prospects for healthy and productive lives.

These studies often generate enthusiasm for residential mobility programs that help families move to high-opportunity areas, but they also justify redoubling initiatives to improve distressed neighborhoods. Such efforts make sense as part of a balanced approach to building high-opportunity metropolitan areas. It is unrealistic to assume that mobility strategies can work for every household in a distressed neighborhood. Those who cannot move out are likely to be the most vulnerable and poor residents who require more supports than the out-movers. Low-income seniors, for example, often prefer not to move or cannot afford to do so; like children, they may also have worse outcomes when living in moderately to severely distressed neighborhoods (see, for example, Buys et al. 2015).

Investment in distressed neighborhoods also makes sense because they often sit amid the most intensively developed infrastructure in the country. As the nation's population ages, we will be better off if as many of our older neighborhoods as possible provide a wide range of opportunities for living, recreation, social interaction, and work. When we build distressed central-city neighborhoods into higher-density, mixed-income, mixed-use hubs of activity, we also provide new opportunities to reduce

greenhouse gas impacts while creating options for a population that is becoming more diverse in many ways (National Research Council, Transportation Research Board, and National Research Council Board on Energy and Environmental Systems 2009).

Many researchers use a neighborhood poverty threshold of 30 or 40 percent to identify a neighborhood as distressed, but this level of poverty is often just a proxy for many other hazards and deficits that place-based initiatives seek to address (Turner et al. 2014). High levels of crime and violence drive families away from neighborhoods when they have the opportunity to leave. Deteriorating and vacant housing threaten health and safety of inhabitants and neighbors. Isolation from good schools, opportunities for financial stability and economic advancement, and health-promoting services and amenities reduce the reasons for families to move in or stay if they have other choices. All these conditions of distress can undermine positive social ties and erode trust and collective action. High poverty rates result from these processes because such places are "neighborhoods of last resort."

Many distressed neighborhoods have high concentrations of blacks or Latinos, a legacy of decades of federal, state, and local policy and private actions to build "American Apartheid" (Massey and Denton 1993). Some cities adopted explicit racial zoning ordinances in the early 1900s. Though overturned by the US Supreme Court in 1917, such restrictions remained on the books in many cities until the 1940s. Many varieties of zoning were used subsequently, in conjunction with racially restrictive covenants and conventional practice by licensed real estate agents, to concentrate blacks and Mexican Americans in ghettos and barrios. Public housing developments were built as bulwarks against racial mixing. Subsequent federal housing programs to the present day give priority to development of subsidized housing in high-poverty minority neighborhoods, which solves housing affordability problems but reinforces the concentration of poverty. Similar constellations of actions and policies in public education, criminal justice, infrastructure development, economic development, and finance also reinforce racially concentrated high-poverty neighborhoods.

If we use 30 percent as the threshold for high neighborhood poverty, the United States had 10,263 high-poverty census tracts in 2009–13,[2] with a population of nearly 38 million: about one out of every seven census tracts, and one of every eight people in the nation's population. Distressed neighborhoods occur all over the United States. Every state and the District of Columbia has at least one high-poverty tract.

As figure 1 shows, blacks, American Indians and Alaska Natives, and Hispanics of all races are between three and five times more likely to live in high-poverty neighborhoods than white non-

Hispanics. People born abroad and people living in single-parent households also are at relatively high risk of living in a high-poverty neighborhood. And nearly 20 percent of the housing units in high-poverty neighborhoods were vacant in 2011, compared with less than 11 percent of those in tracts with poverty rates below 10 percent (low-poverty tracts).

Distressed neighborhoods are a challenge for local government: they may require more expenditures and a different mix of services than those of other neighborhoods, but they generate less revenue from taxes. If distressed neighborhoods were mainly located in large, economically diverse cities and counties, then this challenge could be manageable, but they are not. About one-third are in cities with fewer than 100,000 residents, and 13 percent of them lie outside municipal boundaries entirely. Another 27 percent each of high-poverty tracts are in cities of over a half million residents and between 100,000 and a half-million residents.

FIGURE 1

Percent of US Population by Subgroup Living in High-Poverty Census Tracts
2009–13 average
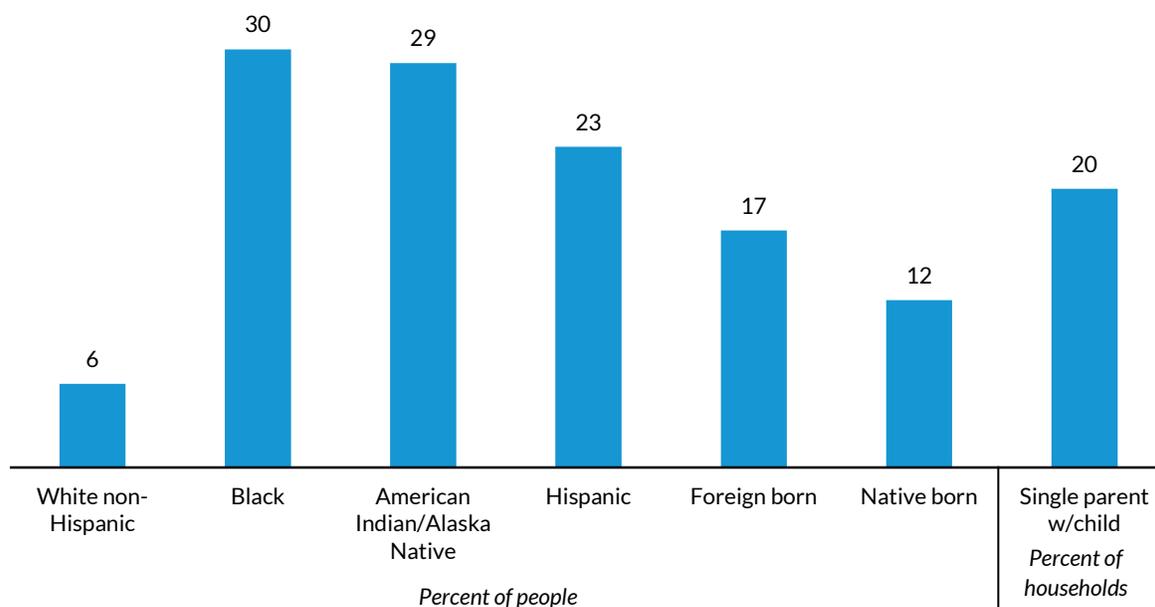
Source: 2009–13 American Community Survey.
Note: High-poverty tracts have poverty rates over 30 percent.

How Has Community Development Evolved?

Community development consists of a broad set of activities to improve low-income neighborhoods in ways that benefit their established residents Distressed neighborhoods, the focus of this paper, are one subset of these neighborhoods; community development initiatives help not only in revitalizing distressed neighborhoods but in improving and sustaining quality of life and vitality in other low-income neighborhoods. It arose in the 1950s and 1960s in reaction to top-down urban renewal initiatives that erased and replaced low-income neighborhoods rather than rebuilding them based on their residents' preferences and demands (Klemek 2011). Starting in the early 1960s, the Ford Foundation's Gray Areas Program funded the creation of neighborhood organizations in six cities to improve and coordinate services for youth. At the same time, community organizers, epitomized by Saul Alinsky's Industrial Areas Foundation and organizations it fostered, such as The Woodlawn Organization, demanded power from City Hall in Chicago and other cities.

Much of the attention to federal involvement in community development focuses on HUD. But over time, a number of federal initiatives from dozens of departments, agencies, and administrations have aimed at some aspect of neighborhood revitalization. Beyond HUD, just to name some, these include the Departments of Education (Office of Innovation and Improvement), Justice (Bureau of Justice Assistance), Treasury (Community Development Financial Institutions Fund), Health and Human Services (Office of Community Services), and Commerce (Economic Development Administration) and the Environmental Protection Agency (Brownfields Program).

Federal involvement in community development began with the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, which created local Community Action Programs (CAPs), fashioned in part on the community organizations the Gray Areas Program established. Community Action Programs sometimes challenged city governments, however, leading the Johnson administration to initiate the city government–controlled Model Cities Program and to establish mayoral control over allocations to CAPs (Carman 2001; Mossberger 2010, Moynihan 1969; Weir 1999).[3] In the 1970s, however, the direct relationship between the federal government and Community Action Programs ended as Model Cities was terminated and Community Development Block Grants (CDBGs) began as part of a wave of devolution that continues today (Finegold et al. 2004; Keyes et al. 1996). States and entitlement jurisdictions[4] receive annual formula allocations of CDBG funds, which have broadly prescribed uses by law but may include a wide range of activities. State and local government decisionmakers have broad discretion in their use of CDBG funds; local community development organizations have flourished in large part because city governments have provided them with CDBG funds to conduct their work. In 1978, as part

of the federal response to the urban fiscal crisis, the Carter administration developed the Urban Development Action Grant (UDAG) as a complement to CDBG, which cities used mainly for relatively small-scale projects (Rich 1992). UDAGs, by contrast, aimed toward larger commercial, industrial, and mixed-use projects more typical of the urban renewal era. The largest single UDAG grant, for example, was a $40 million award made to Jersey City for one of the first mixed-use projects on its then-defunct, now-prosperous waterfront (Rich 1992).

Philanthropic organizations and national nonprofit organizations have contributed to devolution and the strength of community-based development organizations by creating national and local intermediaries. In 1978, the federal government chartered the Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation, now known as NeighborWorks America, to promote affordable homeownership through purchase and rehabilitation.[5] Two years later, the Ford Foundation and six major corporations established the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) to give loans, grants, and technical assistance to community-based development organizations in a select group of cities. In 1982, James Rouse, the developer of the Columbia, MD, a new town, and the redeveloper of Baltimore's Inner Harbor, founded the Enterprise Foundation,[6] whose model broadly resembles LISC's (Forsyth 2005). These organizations led the way in increasing the professionalism, efficiency, and budgets of community-based development organizations (von Hoffman 2013).

Over time, housing dominated community development activity. Nonprofits had already been drawn into affordable housing construction in the 1960s and early 1970s by a series of federal housing programs, a trend that intensified with the creation of the low-income housing tax credit in 1986 and the HOME Investment Partnerships Program, part of the 1990 National Affordable Housing Act. Even as community development organizations undertook gradual infill and housing rehabilitation in low-income neighborhoods, more ambitious and disruptive efforts continued. Some of these projects and programs might be defined by their sponsors as community development, but critics and disrupted residents and businesses refer to them as urban renewal (Hyra 2008; Keating 2000). The federal HOPE VI program has generated many such debates; invented to tear down all and replace some of the nation's worst public housing projects, HOPE VI awarded 648 grants amounting to $6.7 billion between 1992 and 2010.[7]

HOPE VI has transformed both the context and the practice of local community development (Cisneros and Engdahl 2009). It changed the built environment and ownership structure of former public housing blocks, replacing agency-owned structures and land into smaller parcels with more diverse ownership and management structures (Abravanel, Levy, and McFarland 2009). HOPE VI projects also often created new streets, reinstating smaller blocks that were combined into superblocks

in an effort to provide open space when the public housing projects were built between the 1940s and 1970s. HOPE VI has sometimes spurred the improvement of nearby residential neighborhoods (Castells 2010; Turbov and Piper 2005; Zielenbach 2003; Zielenbach and Voith 2010). Along with other reforms to public housing, HOPE VI has helped many public housing agencies become more adept at engagement with residents in and around their public housing developments (Popkin 2016). It has led agencies to build their own capacity, and to build capacity in local nonprofits for case management and supportive services. Some HOPE VI projects have involved community-based organizations as development partners.

HOPE VI has also had important effects on public housing tenants (Popkin, Levy, and Buron 2009). Most households did not move back to the redeveloped projects but instead were either provided a tenant-based housing voucher, moved to another assisted project (in some cases, a non–housing authority project), or lost their housing assistance altogether. The enhanced scrutiny and tenant screening that accompanies public housing redevelopment denied many families the ability to return to, or even to remain in, public housing (Hanlon 2010). These families often move into the homes and blocks that community developers are working to improve. Mobility of public housing tenants into low-income neighborhoods will likely continue indefinitely, given the limited resources available to maintain existing public housing.

While community development concentrated on housing in the 1980s and 1990s, other initiatives began using place-based approaches to address economic development. From 1978 to 1989, over $4.6 billion (current dollars) were awarded under the UDAG program, providing resources supporting nearly 3,000 projects in over 1,200 cities (Rich 1992, table 2). HUD records claim $6.52 in private leverage for every $1.00 of UDAG funding, over 135,000 retained jobs and 600,000 new jobs, and over 108,000 new and rehabilitated housing units (Rich 1992). But the Reagan administration opposed the program, cutting annual appropriations through the 1980s. Congress ended UDAG in 1990 (Rich 1992). Then HUD secretary Jack Kemp supported the use of tax reduction and deregulation to spur economic development in distressed neighborhoods, citing England's Enterprise Zones as a model, but the rest of the George H.W. Bush administration did not embrace the idea. Ultimately the Clinton administration adopted some of the ideas in its Empowerment Zone and Renewal Community (EZ/RC) program, which promoted economic development through tax breaks to businesses and block grants to local governments (Hyra 2008; Rich 2014; Schlossberg 1994). EZ/RC grants were awarded competitively in three rounds (1994, 1998, and 2001), with the last of the tax credits for these designated zones expiring in 2014.[8] Unlike UDAG, EZ/RC meant to engage local residents in planning and involve private, public, and civic representatives in carrying out the plan, principles known as "collaborative governance" (Rich

2014). The program had mixed results. A study of four of the first six designated zones (Baltimore, Chicago, Detroit, and New York) showed no difference in poverty or unemployment in EZ/RC neighborhoods (Oakley and Tsao 2006). A more recent study, which does not dispute the Oakley and Tsao work, explains that the program had the strongest impacts on revitalization in Baltimore and Philadelphia because the grantees in those two cities embraced collaborative governance, whereas those in New York, Chicago, Detroit, and (especially) Atlanta did not (Rich 2014).

A shortage of credit also has long hindered housing and economic development in distressed neighborhoods. Responding to this need, in 1994, Congress passed and President Clinton signed legislation to create the Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFI) Fund within the US Department of Treasury.[9] The CDFI Fund's programs now include an array of measures to provide capital and offer technical support to CDFIs, whose mission is to provide loans, investments, financial services and technical assistance to underserved populations and communities. The CDFI Fund also administers the New Markets Tax Credit Program, created in 2000 to allocate tax credits to Community Development Entities; these entities, in turn, sell the tax credits to attract investment from the private sector and reinvest these amounts in low-income communities. By the end of 2015, the New Market Tax Credit program supported nearly 5,000 office, retail, manufacturing/industrial, mixed-use, and other projects in all 50 states, Washington, DC, and Puerto Rico (Abravanel et al. 2013).

Place-based approaches also appealed to those interested in improving educational outcomes and reducing crime. The Harlem Children's Zone, begun in 1997 as a one-block pilot, expanded by 2007 to encompass 97 blocks in which children and their families would receive "cradle-to-career" supports to "break the cycle of generational poverty and give our kids a real shot at the American dream."[10] Operation Weed and Seed, which the US Department of Justice launched in 1991, linked community-focused human services programs and neighborhood improvement initiatives with geographically targeted law enforcement efforts by police and prosecutors (Dunworth and Mills 1999).

Understanding the limitations of approaches aiming to achieve results mainly in a single set of outcomes (e.g., education, economic development, jobs, health, or housing), foundations and intermediaries began, in the late 1980s and 1990s, to support and often to initiate comprehensive community initiatives (Turner et al. 2014). These initiatives seek to improve disadvantaged neighborhoods through a range of activities meant to address safety, education, housing, social services, employment, and collective actions. They use neighborhoods as platforms of success (Kubisch et al. 2011; Mossberger 2010; von Hoffman 2013). Some examples include the following:

- The Annie E. Casey Foundation's Making Connections initiative, launched in 1999. The foundation invested in 10 neighborhoods to increase employment and earnings, develop family assets, ensure that children are healthy and ready to succeed in school, increase community engagement and civic participation, and connect communities and residents with the services and networks they need to become stronger.

- The New Communities Program, which "supported community organizations in 14 neighborhood areas to convene local partners to define a 'quality-of-life plan' for each neighborhood. It then provided grants to carry out these plans, which addressed a variety of local challenges, including unemployment, struggling schools, and gang violence" (Greenberg et al. 2014, iii).

- HOPE SF, launched in San Francisco in 2006. Responding to some of the points of controversy over HOPE VI, HOPE SF focuses on redevelopment on and around distressed public housing sites as well as service provision to tenants, building on and extending HOPE VI and helping set the course for the new Choice Neighborhoods program. (Cytron 2009).[11]

Place-Based Initiatives during the Obama Administration

When the Obama administration began in 2009, the promise and limitations of place-based initiatives had become clear. Philanthropic support can help generate and test new ideas, but replication requires government commitment—and that commitment had not materialized. Local governments had played roles in the initiatives (and were at times the targets for the initiatives' reform agendas), but generally had not yet attempted to bring the initiatives to scale in their cities and replicate the efforts across other neighborhoods. Nor had place-based initiatives led to the level of system change that proponents hoped for. System reform is challenging for neighborhood initiatives. Change agents need to harness political will so that they can bring together stakeholders across entrenched systems, change regulations, and combine funding streams in new or innovative ways.

Early on, the Obama administration focused on place, urban places in particular, creating an urban policy office in the White House. For the first time, the Office of Management and Budget exhorted agencies to think more broadly about the implications of place in their programs and think about where investments could be targeted and coordinated in a place to better effect change (Orszag et al. 2009; US Department of Education 2012). This aim to reorient thinking was likely more difficult to take on for

agencies that focused on serving populations or subpopulations rather than how those populations were concentrated in places.

With this focus on place and the recognition of the progress and shortfalls of previous place-based initiatives, the Obama administration launched an array of place-based initiatives with considerable variation in their origins, leadership, potential longevity, supports deployed, geography of focus, and extent of coordination. The impact of many of these programs on the distressed communities and vulnerable residents they serve may not be known for a number of years as many of the implementation grants are still in process. Already, however, the new initiatives provide insights about how the federal government can make progress in relating to local governments and philanthropy and in coordinating its own activities to advance place-based initiatives.

The first iteration of the administration's place-based strategy came from the White House Domestic Policy Council–led interagency Neighborhood Revitalization Initiative (NRI) (White House n.d.). The NRI established goals and a theory of change to transform neighborhoods of concentrated poverty into high-opportunity neighborhoods. The federal agencies involved included HUD, the US Department of Education (ED), US Department of Justice (DOJ), US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), and US Department of Treasury (Treasury). In principle, NRI would allow local governments and other lead organizations to combine funding streams from these agencies to carry out a comprehensive program in a distressed neighborhood, with a community receiving multiple NRI grants to address housing, education, and public safety issues simultaneously and leverage the federal investments with other public and private resources.

Staff working on NRI studied existing place-based initiatives (White House 2011) and sought to incorporate best practices (including many of those highlighted in Turner et al. 2014) to design initiatives that were geographically targeted, interdisciplinary, coordinated, data- and results-driven and flexible enough to adapt to local context. NRI had an ambitious interagency agenda to braid the resources for the agency-specific initiatives, coordinate review of grant applications, align program goals and requirements, enable collaborative planning locally, and integrate technical assistance. The initial grant programs initiated under the NRI umbrella included Choice Neighborhoods (HUD), Promise Neighborhoods (ED), Byrne Criminal Justice Innovation (DOJ) (box 2). (HHS did not have a new initiative that was part of NRI. Instead it included some of its place-based programs, such as community health centers and behavioral health services, under NRI.) The Building Neighborhood Capacity Program (funded by an interagency agreement among DOJ, ED, HHS, Treasury, and HUD) was added in 2012 to focus on capacity building in four cities not yet ready to implement the other NRI initiatives.

Major Grant Programs of the Neighborhood Revitalization Initiative

HUD launched the **Choice Neighborhoods** program in 2010 to expand HOPE VI into a neighborhood-wide program.[a] Like HOPE VI, Choice replaces obsolete or distressed federally subsidized housing in high-poverty neighborhoods, seeking to create a mixed-income neighborhood by attracting and retaining middle-and upper-income residents without displacing low-income ones. Choice also funds supportive services for assisted tenants and the broader neighborhood and investments in community facilities in the neighborhood. Congress has generally provided less funding than requested by the administration for Choice, limiting rollout to 17 implementation grantees receiving awards up to $30.5 million each and 63 planning grants of up to a half-million dollars. A report on the first two years of implementation in the first five Choice implementation grants was completed by the Urban Institute in 2015 and is available on HUD's website (Pendall et al. 2015).

In 2009, the DOJ made its final Weed and Seed grants, replacing them in 2012 with the **Byrne Criminal Justice Innovation** initiative, which targets crime hot spots; builds active roles for residents in identifying problems, selecting strategies, and creating safe environments; engages researchers in examining problems, assessing possible solutions, and monitoring progress; and addresses broader challenges of poverty, social isolation, and distrust through community building and revitalization.[b] In the first three years of operation, 46 grants were awarded.

Inspired by the Harlem Children's Zone, ED began the **Promise Neighborhoods**[c] initiative to improve outcomes "from cradle to career" for the children who live in a neighborhood and who attend its schools through interventions in early childhood, health, housing, and other systems offering important pathways for reaching those outcomes.

[a] "Choice Neighborhoods," US Department of Housing and Urban Development, accessed September 22, 2016, http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/public_indian_housing/programs/ph/cn.
[b] "Find Answers to Frequently Asked Questions Regarding the Status of the Community Capacity Development Office," US Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, accessed September 22, 2016, http://ojp.gov/ccdo/faqs.html.
[c] "Promise Neighborhoods," US Department of Education, accessed September 22, 2016, http://www2.ed.gov/programs/promiseneighborhoods/index.html?exp=0.

NRI achieved some successes. The collaborative enabled a shared framework and theory of change across agencies. It allowed agencies to pull in expertise from other agencies to review applications. It increased staff awareness of other agencies' programs and capacities. Finally, it improved the alignment of eligibility criteria and definitions in NOFAs across initiatives. In some cases, it also allowed agencies to coordinate their investments, as was done with the Building Neighborhood Capacity Program. DOJ also executed interagency agreements that transferred a portion of fiscal year (FY) 2011 Byrne funding to HUD for their FY 2010/11 Choice Neighborhoods implementation grantees and to ED for their FY 2011 Promise Neighborhoods implementation grantees. DOJ worked with both agencies to administer

the funds and provide technical assistance to the grantees. Colocation of the NRI grants also occurred in a few places. Usually, however, this colocation occurred with planning grants or at most an implementation grant from one agency and a planning grant from another. The notable exception was San Antonio's EastPoint community, which eventually won implementation grants for Promise, Choice, and Byrne (in addition to philanthropic investments by Bloomberg and the Annie E. Casey Foundation).

For the most part, though, NRI did not result in greater integration of resources and initiatives in the same neighborhoods. Congressional inaction played some part in the lack of progress on integrating resources. Senator Menendez introduced the "Choice Neighborhoods Initiative Act" (S.4059, S.624, and S.437) in three consecutive Congressional sessions (2010–11, 2011–12, 2012–13) calling for HUD to work with other agencies to identify additional funding opportunities for these neighborhoods and report to Congress on the barriers to coordinating federal funds. But none of these bills emerged from committee. Developing the authorization to combine funds across agencies was also limited by the siloed structure of Congressional committees. Each of the three primary agencies involved in NRI with major implementation grants fell under separate appropriations subcommittees, and separate authorizing committees oversee the agencies. Integrating resources across NRI agencies would have required collaboration across committees; shifting resources and potential program oversight is challenging in any political environment, as it may be viewed as ceding territory and authority.

Unlike the White House–led NRI, the Partnership for Sustainable Communities, announced in 2009, was driven by the leadership of the secretaries of HUD, US Department of Transportation (DOT) and the administrator of the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The major goal of the Partnership was to break down barriers to federal agency coordination related to investments and delivery of services that are reflected at the local level (Pendall et al. 2013). The Partnership had a strong shared vision and articulated six livability principles to guide their programs and grant decisions. There is evidence that the Partnership did promote de-siloing at the federal and regional levels despite not being able to blend funding streams (Pendall et al. 2013). Even with strong leadership from the agencies, the majority of the House of Representatives became hostile toward HUD's signature grants under the Partnership (Regional Planning Grants), and ultimately the planning grant program ended.

Strong Cities, Strong Communities (SC2), first launched as a pilot in 2011 and then formalized under an Executive Order in March 2012, is an interagency effort focused on struggling cities not ready to take on grant programs that require substantial grantee capacity in both the application and implementation phases. SC2 aims to improve the capacity of cities to take economic development and revitalization activities. It is governed by the White House Council on Strong Cities, Strong Communities and had the participation of 17 agencies as of 2013 (Abt Associates 2014). One aspect of

SC2 involved creating interagency "community solutions" teams where at least one staff member (the team lead) was embedded in City Hall. The community solutions teams played several roles, including providing technical assistance, temporarily increasing staff capacity, connecting local and regional stakeholders, and navigating federal bureaucracy and red tape. This approach generated a number of successful efforts and a second round of cities was chosen in 2014.[12]

The unique feature of SC2 was not the practice of using community solutions teams but that local governments were given the opportunity to prioritize what they needed assistance on and the federal agencies coordinated to design flexible, custom responses to the issues raised (Abt Associates 2014). However, SC2 was solely supported by the federal agencies' existing resources, resulting in variation in how much staff agencies could contribute and limiting the time federal staff could engage with cities, particularly for those who were only assigned to be part time on SC2 and retained some (if not all) of their previous workload. Cities with stronger mayoral involvement made more progress in implementation than those where mayors were less involved. And even though SC2 was designed in part to improve local administrative capacity in distressed cities, SC2 teams made little progress in cities where capacity was practically nonexistent.

As the political climate in Congress did not support expanding the funding to scale implementation grants for initiatives under NRI to reach more communities and there were some successes under the SC2 model, the White House Domestic Policy Council shifted strategies to concentrate on "ladders of opportunity" programs that leveraged existing initiatives and resources and focused on building capacity for a larger set of cities. Promise Zones, another collaborative effort of 13 agencies, aims to help cities and neighborhoods revitalize. Promise Zone designees are assisted through a combination of leveraging additional federal resources by granting preference points, technical assistance, and direct support through a HUD/US Department of Agriculture staff member operating as a community liaison and AmeriCorps VISTA volunteers. The administration's FY 2015, FY 2016, and FY 2017 budgets also included proposals for a tax credit to spur economic investment. The initial places eligible for the first Promise Zones, selected in January 2014, had to have an implementation grant from one of the NRI initiatives. As with SC2, participating agencies make use of existing resources to support their involvement in Promise Zones.

Though the administration was not successful at combining funding streams for the NRI Initiatives, one promising example of interagency coordination and alignment of resources to benefit specific communities is the Performance Partnership Pilots for Disconnected Youth (P3) program, launched in 2015.[13] The "community-driven, evidence-based" pilots give participating states, localities, or tribes flexibility to blend existing discretionary funding from federal agencies in exchange for commitment to

improve outcomes for disconnected youth (US Department of Education et al. 2014).[14] This means funds can actually be merged together and are only subject to one set of reporting requirements. Participating federal agencies will need to grant program waivers to the participants to make this possible. With the extra flexibility of funding and streamline of reporting for P3, there are requirements for data infrastructure "that can provide reliable data to measure progress and inform decision-making [and], a record of managing for improved performance" (US Department of Education et al. 2014, 11). This cross-agency effort was likely achieved where efforts under NRI failed because the initial agencies involved all fell under the jurisdiction of the same Congressional appropriations committee. However, there has been success in broadening agency participation in P3, with DOJ's Office of Justice Programs added in FY2015 and HUD in FY 2016.[15]

Lessons for Future Federal Involvement in Neighborhood Revitalization

Recent experience with federal place-based initiatives suggests important principles for policy and program design to maximize success. In the next three sections, we gather observations about how federal agencies interact with local governments and with one another. The overarching idea of these recommendations is that federal agencies can and should build more comprehensive, integrated, dynamic, and performance-based place-based initiatives by equipping local governments to conduct community development, engaging local governments and one another more collaboratively, and learning to advance the design, implementation and evaluation of initiatives.

Equip: Build Local Community Development Capacity

The first set of recommendations concerns the basic capacity of local government to do *any* kind of work in distressed neighborhoods, not to mention comprehensive community initiatives. Recent experience suggests that place-based initiatives require that city or county government have *technical, management, leadership, reflective, and political* capacity (box 3) as a precondition to undertaking comprehensive initiatives. Applicants for Choice Neighborhoods and Promise grants often failed to win funding because they did not demonstrate sufficient capacity even for planning grants, not to mention for implementation. Horsford and Sampson (2014) describe one such unsuccessful application by Las Vegas for a Promise Neighborhoods planning grant. Even the SC2 program, which selected cities in part

because of their low level of capacity, faltered in cities with almost no capacity, particularly if there was a lack of leadership capacity (Abt Associates 2014).

Further, the political need to secure funding for the federal place-based initiatives means that results need to be demonstrated quickly; there is little tolerance for failure or the need to make program adjustments. Thus though community revitalization initiatives should, in principle, assist the highest-need places, they often bypass cities and neighborhoods that lack sufficient capacity to take on the work. This dissatisfies some allies of community development. Rep. Maxine Waters (D-CA), the ranking Democrat on the House Committee on Financial Services, which oversees federal housing programs, has criticized the Promise Zone initiative for being "skewed towards neighborhoods that already have resources and strong partnerships in place, leaving little to no chance for many of our country's highest-need communities to successfully compete."[16]

BOX 3

Types of Community Development Capacity Local Governments Need to Begin Neighborhood Initiatives

Technical: Ability to perform the work of the organization or agency, including having the legal, accounting, and technology infrastructure necessary to operate.

Management: Ability to use and effectively manipulate resources (human and financial).

Leadership: Ability to provide direction, vision, and strategy to the organization and its staff.

Reflective: Ability to plan, monitor, assess, and respond to change.

Political: Ability to relate to and partner with other organizations and agencies, constituencies, and funders.

Source: Authors' adaptation of Connolly and York (2003).

Building greater local capacity for place-based initiatives will require more funding and more accountability. We need to expand upon what we know about established mechanisms for building capacity, but we also need a much more systematic and rigorous evidence base for identifying the conditions that lead to successful capacity building. An explicit emphasis on capacity building on the part of the federal government is needed to support and scale revitalization of distressed neighborhoods. If programs like P3 are intended to grant more flexibility to localities in exchange for

improvement performance management and evaluation, then one focus area of capacity building must be on reflective capacity.

We have the following recommendations for federal government actions to build local community development capacity.

Evaluate, reform as necessary, and fund adequately the main HUD programs for building community development capacity. Community Development Block Grants and technical assistance, HUD's two principal programs that build local community development capacity, deserve renewed attention. Annual CDBG appropriations allow 20 percent of the local allocation to be spent on administration, which often supports city staffers whose institutional memory and relationships are essential for a city's community development infrastructure. But cuts to the CDBG budget and increases in the number of cities who have access to it have greatly reduced its potential to bolster local governments' community development capacity since its inception. Between 2001 and 2012 alone, total CDBG funds available for administrative costs fell 47 percent after inflation (GAO 2013). CDBG has not been the focus of a recent comprehensive evaluation, and Congress and the administration have disagreed about the direction the program should take (Theodos et al. forthcoming). Given the likelihood that the program will remain in force and that there is a strong need for federal support for these activities, the time is ripe for a full evaluation of CDBG and reform that builds on that evaluation. Reforms and increased resources for CDBG should explicitly aim for measurable improvement in capacity in the distressed neighborhoods of entitlement communities, small cities, and tribal areas that currently cannot win competitive grants.

HUD has transformed its technical assistance (TA) in recent years, consolidating a series of subject-specific programs into an umbrella program: OneCPD. The effectiveness of this unified approach has not yet been evaluated, but it should be. Another recent example of TA—the Promise Neighborhoods data TA effort—relates especially to support for data collection and performance management. Some distressed cities have so little capacity that they cannot even use existing resources effectively. To submit a winning application for a competitive award is even more challenging. SC2 and Promise Zones both aim to reinforce capacity in such cities, counties, and tribal governments through more intensive technical assistance. But both programs have been obliged by political necessity and pragmatism to choose communities with at least a modicum of capacity. Continued efforts to improve TA should evaluate OneCPD and look across federal agencies, including DOJ, USDA, and ED, for lessons about how to conduct effective TA. Based on the findings from such an evaluation, HUD should continue to adjust or reform OneCPD as warranted. One focus for evaluation should be a comparison of the TA provided by OneCPD and that provided under more intensive programs like SC2; lessons from each

should be applied to the other, if both are continued. HUD should also build a stronger connection between HUD staff in charge of TA and those in the Office of Policy Development and Research to speed the reflection in TA of new research findings and to assure that ongoing research carried out and funded by this office is responsive to issues that surface in the field for TA professionals.

TA may have greater impact if it is supplemented by the formation of "communities of practice." For example, ED and HUD convened the Promise Neighborhoods and Choice Neighborhoods grantees to share lessons, deliver training and technical assistance, and create connections between cities. Turner and colleagues (2014) also recognize that encouraging and supporting the development of peer learning is a role for philanthropy to play that leverages investments from both the public and private sectors and can hasten and inspire change.

Build local governments' capacity and commitment to use data to guide their community development activities. TA is often directed toward program implementation activities, but to support basic local community development capacity, federal TA should focus centrally on how grantees can use data to improve the impact of community development investments, including those made using CDBG funds. Unless the federal government requires them to, local governments and grantees seldom track their community development investments. Even then, data collection often does not make the leap from performance measurement for compliance to performance management, in which grantees make decisions based on data.[17]

Performance management in community development involves at least the following steps, all of which will require the full development of local capacity, preferably with state government collaboration:

- Grantees should develop strong logic models with proven solutions and plausible new approaches. The logic models should connect resources and actions with outputs and outcomes, and the proven solutions and new approaches should be documented as steps from the beginning to the end of the logic model.

- Grantees should collect the right data. These data include the measures of the desired outcomes and actions and outputs, but they should parsimoniously reflect the logic model. Importantly, this means that federal agencies should allow some local flexibility to select performance measures so that tracking and measurement are aligned with program activities (Galvez et al., forthcoming).

- Grantees should open their program and performance data to public view. Grant agreements and amendments, self-evaluations, and federal analysis of performance should be opened to researchers via data-sharing agreements to build the field. Any publications coming from these data should be available in open-access format under the least restrictive available licensing agreement (e.g., CC-BY-4.0).

- Grantees should evaluate their own progress more rigorously. The federal government cannot afford to evaluate every program. Instead, they should clarify and standardize mandates that grantees conduct self-evaluations that document process and outcomes. The results should be reported back to federal agencies and made publicly available.

Build citywide and regional infrastructure for data-driven community development. Since many agencies and organizations work on aspects of community revitalization, local grantees (both government and nonprofit) need increased capacity to collaborate about issues directly related to acquiring, sharing, and using data. Such collaboration requires understanding each stakeholder's goals about their desired outcomes; how they measure baseline conditions; and their targets for improvement. If grantees aim for comprehensive community development, the collaboration needs to move beyond mutual information to strategies about how to align programs and tactics for sharing sensitive data across organizations. Evaluation of interim or long-term community development outcomes also requires technical knowledge about how to measure individual- and community-level change by collecting, organizing, and using administrative, program, and survey data.

Collaboration of this sort requires institutional support, making it critical for the federal government to invest in local community information infrastructure. Such systematic infrastructure is necessary for scaling the ability of local government and nonprofits to use data in place-based initiatives (Auspos 2012). Rather than a wide array of grantees with operational missions taking on intensive data-sharing efforts, it can be more efficient and effective to strengthen and build organizations that can organize and transform data and whose mission is building stakeholder capacity to use data. Such organizations include local data intermediaries like members of the National Neighborhood Indicators Partnership, community-focused research centers at universities and colleges, and state or local agencies hosting integrated data systems.[18] Such an intermediary is well positioned not only to figure out, for example, how crime in multiple neighborhoods has changed over time or where housing prices are rising rapidly, but also to relate these trends to one another and to such trends as lead poisoning and school absences. An intermediary may also have already established important relationships and data-use agreements with data providers, such as school districts, that may save grantees considerable time and expense.

Use graduated competitive grants to boost capacity, providing smaller and shorter-term planning grants for applicants to build consensus on neighborhood revitalization and larger, longer-term grants for applicants who are ready to carry out their plans. The Choice Neighborhoods, Promise Neighborhoods, and Sustainable Communities Planning Grants all have used smaller planning-only grants available for applicants who were less prepared to compete for larger but less numerous implementation grants. Planning grants have provided resources for grantees that need time to negotiate the structure of projects and programs, engage the public, and build relationships among partners. Systematic evidence has not yet been gathered about whether planning grants have enhanced local capacity to compete successfully for implementation grants, in part because so few implementation grants have been awarded for these programs. Though evidence is still fragmentary, it appears that an application process can be designed to yield greater learning among larger numbers of local stakeholders, build partnerships that bust silos to address problems more comprehensively, and generate commitment to implement solutions. In some cases, competitive processes build lasting capacity even among applicants that do not win (Pendall et al. 2013).

Engage: Build Collaboration among Federal, State, Local, and Philanthropic Stakeholders

The second set of recommendations is directed specifically at improving the operations and outcomes of federally supported place-based initiatives. To achieve change at a systems level in communities across the country, the federal government will need to increase collaboration across its own agencies, improve its ability to partner with other levels of government, refresh federal agency staff practice to better support place-based initiatives and work more closely with philanthropy.

COMMIT TO COLLABORATION AMONG FEDERAL AGENCIES ON PLACE-BASED INITIATIVES
Learn from recent federal place-based collaborations and continue and expand efforts to coordinate and align agency actions. Collaboration across federal agencies is difficult for deep institutional reasons. Agencies and congressional committees are organized by subject matter rather than by geography, complicating the ability of federal designers and administrators to build and run truly comprehensive programs. Each agency has a central commitment, expertise, access to regulatory and funding levers, and a congressional "license to operate" that inheres in its subject-specific mission to improve housing, education, safety, or health. States mimic the federal subject-specific agency structure, and so do cities. Ongoing initiatives like SC2 and Promise Zones present opportunities to gather lessons on federal collaboration and how it can support local community and economic development. The lessons of these

programs as well as the long experience of agencies with a stronger culture of local collaboration should be gathered, communicated to agencies with lower capacity to collaborate with local partners, and used to inform less experienced agencies about approaches that could increase the impact of their programs.

To support place-based initiatives, the federal government needs to build upon the momentum established recently and continue and expand efforts to coordinate and align agency actions. Federal agencies should remain committed to working together to improve the alignment of definitions, eligibility requirements, and outcome measures for place-based initiatives and grant programs. NRI helped coordinate actions between DOJ, HUD, and ED; the Partnership for Sustainable Communities also promoted desiloing and alignment of programs and grant decisions by HUD, EPA, and USDOT. But in both cases, the agencies could not issue joint NOFAs, nor were they able to align the release of the program guidance and NOFAs, impeding collaboration and alignment among prospective applicants (Fine 2011).

Identify and work to remove regulatory and legislative impediments to neighborhood revitalization. Under the SC2 pilots, one of the most common accomplishments was to provide "transactional" assistance, such as helping remove regulatory barriers, connecting city staff with the appropriate federal staff or resources. In some cases this meant helping a city resolve conflicting requirements from two separate agencies or to explore whether there was any flexibility of federal requirements or ways to repurpose funds (Abt Associates 2014). This assistance was valuable for the pilot cities, but federal agencies could more systematically review the regulatory and legislative impediments to investing in and revitalizing neighborhoods and facilitating policy and system change for all cities. For example, commingling of funds in a project may be explicitly prohibited, data-sharing across sectors may be limited by federal privacy regulations, and savings and innovation discouraged by policies to recapture resources (Fine 2011).

Expand federal agencies' use of administrative data to support place-based initiatives In addition to place-based initiatives, a wealth of federal programs serve individuals and families living in distressed communities. The administrative data from these programs could be used to inform program management in place-based initiatives or to help evaluate the initiatives. Barriers to using federal administrative data for these purposes could be addressed as programs are reauthorized (Galvez et al., forthcoming). First, data reporting to the federal government varies considerably across programs. For example, many block-grant programs, like TANF and subsidized child care, are administered at the local level with data reported to states. But states are not required to report (and in some cases are explicitly prohibited from revealing) individual level data, with or without any geographic identification, to the federal government. Second, other potentially high-value data sets, like the National Directory of New

Hires or the individual data on tax filers from the Internal Revenue Service, have limits spelled out in legislation as to who can access the data, even for research purposes. Finally, data sharing is also challenging at the federal level; standards for memoranda of understanding, data security, and confidentiality protections all vary, and negotiating data-sharing agreements can be time-consuming for agency staff.

The recently passed Evidence-Based Policymaking Commission Act of 2016 creates a commission that will study such issues as reviewing regulatory barriers to expanding the use of and access to administrative data for statistical purposes and standardizing procedures around data sharing and agreements. The commission also will outline a vision for a clearinghouse integrate federal data and make it more accessible.[19] The commission could also take the opportunity to explore the collection of data on place in programs.

Track federal spending in counties, municipalities, and neighborhoods to identify opportunities for synergy and close gaps. To improve support for place-based initiatives and distressed cities and neighborhoods, the federal government needs to build the capacity to track federal spending in municipalities and counties when possible and consider how investments directed toward specific neighborhoods could be tracked. As this capacity to track federal spending is developed, the information should be made available to facilitate coordination and alignment of efforts across federal government agencies and within localities. As it stands, federal agencies usually do not have a comprehensive view of what resources they or other agencies spend in a given neighborhood or city, which activities these funds support, and what agencies expect to achieve with these expenditures. The proliferation of place-based planning and implementation grants has only increased the importance of identifying and capitalizing on overlapping programs.[20]

Developing and establishing the expectation to report on place-based performance measures for agencies and their grantees would help facilitate the collection of information like GIS coordinates, census tract, or other geographic identifiers. The US Department of Education, in their progress report on implementing a place-based strategy (2012), described working on the "Place-Based Grants Data Tool," which would create a database of federally funded programs and track service locations. The tool would allow grants to be filtered by neighborhood or topic, among other features. Development of this tool should resume, and it should be kept up-to-date as one of the tasks of the body coordinating place-based work across agencies.

REINFORCE AND BUILD NEW FEDERAL PARTNERSHIPS WITH STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Design programs to promote collaboration and learning with local governments, and encourage agency personnel to interact with grantees accordingly. The federal government needs to interact with other levels of government and across sectors differently than it has in the past. Often, federal programs are set up with either of two relationships to local grantees. Some (like CDBG) are distributed with few conditions and limited monitoring, giving federal personnel no reason (and perhaps even no permission) to interact with grantees about the nature and direction of their community development programs. Others (especially competitive grants) are parceled out with conditions that cannot be met without the involvement of an army of accountants and attorneys, placing federal staff in the role of watchdogs or auditors. Experience from federally supported community initiatives suggests that programs need to be designed to promote collaboration and learning with state and local governments, and agency personnel need to be encouraged to interact with grantees accordingly.

The Choice Neighborhoods implementation grants offer an instructive example of how federal agencies might develop a more collaborative relationship with local grantees. Choice implementation awards occurred only after a lengthy application process that included site visits and interviews by HUD staff to explore community capacity, residents' commitment, and site conditions. These interactions began the learning process and set the tone for further interactions between HUD and grantees. After HUD made its awards to the first five implementation grantees, however, conditions changed—especially in Woodlawn in Chicago, where the economic crisis lingered and the housing market failed to recover. Because HUD was actively involved through staff in the field and at headquarters, it understood the root of those changing conditions. HUD staff could allow the grantee to deviate from the plans in the grant application, scaling back on building new homes for homeowners and shifting to acquisition and rehabilitation. Furthermore, Chicago's city government, who was the colead on the application, did not collaborate effectively with the lead grantee (a nonprofit developer) early on, leading HUD to exert pressure on the city to make good on its commitments (Pendall et al. 2015). This example and abundant others illustrate that federal agencies are already engaging more collaboratively with grantees, but more deliberate and concerted actions could make collaboration the rule rather than the exception.

Collaborate as partners with state governments in supporting the revitalization of distressed neighborhoods. Federal agencies should also more deliberately collaborate as partners with state governments in supporting the revitalization of distressed neighborhoods. The collaboration could begin with local capacity building that HUD already conducts. Since HUD will never have enough funds to provide TA to all the local governments that need it, HUD should coordinate with state agencies

about how to maximize the joint impact of federal and state capacity-building investments. State housing and community development agencies, including state housing finance agencies, now have access to funding from the National Housing Trust Fund, which is designed to boost investment in housing for extremely low income households. At the same time, the new Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing rule requires these same agencies to develop statewide programs and actions to build more inclusive neighborhoods and cities, counties, and housing authorities to do the same at the local level. These resources and mandates should be linked with new investments and support for local governments to plan more inclusive neighborhoods, solve problems, and use data to drive decisionmaking.

Federal resources for states go well beyond housing and community development, of course. HUD is unusual among federal agencies in its direct relationship with local governments. Many other federal agencies operate through state agencies as intermediaries, offering potential lessons about mechanisms by which federal programs and dollars help build local capacity via state-agency intermediaries.

Further insights about federal-state collaboration could be gained through competitive grant programs. Past competitions that seek to increase state involvement while respecting variations in states' local governance arrangements and capacity (e.g., "Race to the Top") should be studied for their lessons. The Center for American Progress has proposed a state-level Promise Zone initiative in which state governments would sponsor their own grant competitions for local governments that commit to develop revitalization plans, in exchange for which states would commit intensive support for implementation (Ross and Boteach 2014). No federal action would be required to launch these state versions of the federal Promise Zone initiative, but federal agencies could spark states' interest. Evidence from SC2 also suggests that collaborating more with state agencies might improve federal-local partnerships as some state agencies have a strong culture of support for and collaboration with local government already.

Engage Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) as partners. Over 400 MPOs conduct transportation planning in metropolitan areas across the United States, and in many metropolitan areas their work extends into other areas of regional concern, including land-use planning, air quality, and water quality. Their participation was a precondition for receiving Sustainable Communities Planning Grants in any metropolitan area, opening fruitful new relationships in many regions between public housing agencies, community organizations, and officials and planners working on regional transportation and land-use planning, visioning, and scenario building. Some MPOs also already play a role in regional neighborhood indicators partnerships that integrate, analyze, and democratize federal,

state, local, and private-sector data (Kingsley 2015). These MPOs' support for land-use and transportation planning has embedded expertise and created capacity for data management that make them potentially valuable community development partners. They also sometimes cross state boundaries.

REFRESH FEDERAL AGENCY STAFF PRACTICE TO SUPPORT PLACE-BASED APPROACHES

Train agency staff at all levels about how to think more holistically about neighborhoods, how systems interact, and how to coordinate action. To support innovation in program design, the federal government needs to commit to and invest in training for staff at all levels and in all locations about how to think more holistically about neighborhoods and how systems interact and coordinated action. The US Department of Education summed it up as follows:

> There is a need for cross training federal staff and other practitioners on the whole set of issues that communities face. Due to federal silos, staff tend to be experts at solutions to one particular problem and aren't able to meet communities where they are, tackling a suite of integrated issues and looking for integrated solutions. Interdisciplinary expertise is a crucial element of capacity; creating more opportunities like SC2, Promise and Choice Neighborhoods, and the Neighborhood Revitalization Initiative will help federal staff break out of their silos, focusing less on their own particular agency or program, and more on a set of results for people and places. (2012, 22)

Federal agencies should also identify and carry out mechanisms to build collaboration locally or regionally between agencies with field staff. Under the Partnership for Sustainable Communities and SC2, field staff had formal structures for collaboration. Without such structure and incentive, these working relationships may be difficult to sustain, particularly if their job requirements or evaluation criteria do not support them. Field staff may also have a better sense of the environment on the ground in cities and can be important touch points for headquarters staff in grant making and program planning. Some agencies, such as the Economic Development Administration within the US Department of Commerce, have even given regional offices the authority to award grants (HUD, 2015).[21]

   Write job descriptions and institute evaluation procedures that encourage place-based work, intra- and interagency coordination, and alignment. Federal SC2 staff reflected that one of the benefits of participating in this interagency effort was that they gained a more nuanced understanding of cities' challenges and how cities operate; SC2 also gave them opportunities to collaborate with and learn from other agencies (Abt Associates 2014). Interviews with several current and former agency staff conducted for this paper recommended the use of staff rotations (both within and across agencies) to build up staff expertise and professional development. However, constrained budgets make it difficult for managers to accommodate staff rotation. Adding performance evaluation criteria (for staff at all

levels) and making place-based work, intra- and interagency coordination, and alignment explicit in job descriptions would also help institutionalize and promulgate this culture shift.

WORK WITH PHILANTHROPY

The philanthropic sector has been an important partner as federal agencies have expanded the portfolio of community initiatives. A few examples of areas for potential future collaboration include building local capacity, co-designing initiatives, evaluating programs, and driving system change.

Building local capacity. Philanthropic investments in technical assistance and promotion of place-based initiatives have played key roles in strengthening capacity. For example, the SC2 Fellowship Program, primarily supported by the Rockefeller Foundation, placed experienced professionals in seven SC2 cities for two years.[22] These individuals helped build capacity by brokering and improving relationships locally, improving systems, and facilitating strategic projects (Gardner and Yates 2015). The Promise Neighborhoods Institute at PolicyLink is supported by a number of national foundations and provides technical assistance not only to the federal Promise Neighborhood grantees but also to other cradle-to-career initiatives that have not received federal funding. The Promise Neighborhoods Institute also is an advocate for additional federal funding for children and families and broadly communicating the Promise Neighborhoods vision and model.

Co-designing initiatives. Another federal-philanthropic partnership would be co-design of initiatives. One past example is the Jobs-Plus demonstration (an initiative to improve employment outcomes for public housing residents) was designed collaboratively by HUD, the Rockefeller Foundation, and MDRC in the mid-90s (MDRC 2014). Rockefeller matched funding, and HUD provided waivers for the housing authorities to give them the necessary flexibility to take on this innovation. MDRC participated in the selection of the housing authorities who had the capacity to participate in a rigorous evaluation. Jobs-Plus succeeded both because process and product innovations occurred and because it exemplified how collaborative design and implementation could achieve something beyond what any one of those institutions could have done independently.

Evaluating programs. Many of the lessons from HOPE VI that were used to design Choice Neighborhoods would have not have been written up or discovered without the philanthropic support for surveys and other research. The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation supported the evaluation of the NCP, enriching the community development field with support for broad publication of results. The Annie E. Casey Foundation supplemented HUD's process evaluation and baseline data collection effort for Choice Neighborhoods by funding a portion of the baseline household survey to ensure that data on residents in the neighborhoods surround the housing redevelopment was captured.

These investments extend the ability to learn from initiatives beyond the political lifetime of support in congress or the agencies for particular initiatives.

Driving system change. Partnerships and collaboration can drive systems change and innovation in community development institutional infrastructure. The insights that arise from more systematic study of neighborhood initiatives will include many observations about citywide capacity for community development. City government as well as state agencies, for- and non-profit businesses and organizations, community development networks, philanthropy, and universities articulate into a local community development infrastructure. Though investment in city government capacity will likely help improve part of that infrastructure, federal support for place-based initiatives can also aim to improve the governance of the entire community development system. This is a key place where national, regional, and local philanthropy could play a productive and sustained role, given the growing demand from philanthropy for evidence of results. The philanthropic sector can leverage federal investments by using their convening power to organize local and national stakeholders and support advocacy efforts to change policy and support neighborhood revitalization at local, state, and national levels.

Learn: Advance Practice and Policy

The final set of recommendations also pertains specifically to place-based initiatives as laboratories. Federal government involvement in place-based initiatives provides an outstanding opportunity for fostering learning about how to design, carry out, and evaluate place-based initiatives. Even the most ambitious philanthropically funded initiatives of the past have lacked the scale to provide evidence about how the nation's diverse low-income neighborhoods work and how to address their distress. Federal programs, by contrast, can be designed to ensure that interventions across diverse places have similar enough goals, requirements, and timelines to provide a basis for new generalizations about how community development works. Federal program designers can accommodate diversity in local contexts without rendering comparisons among places impossible.

Competitive grant programs offer a rare opportunity for the federal government to learn about what works in revitalization of distressed neighborhoods and to ensure that practitioners and policymakers benefit from the always-limited federal expenditures for programs like Choice and Promise Neighborhoods. More than formula-driven block grant programs like CDBG, competitive awards provide federal agencies the leverage to require grantees to collect data, evaluate and report their own progress, and participate fully in external evaluations. These evaluations, both internal and external, should not try to ask whether an entire program works—with such diverse contexts, plans, and

implementation strategies, trying to answer this question is nearly as much a fool's errand as asking whether government works. Rather, evaluations should identify what it takes for grantees to conduct successful neighborhood revitalization. Such evaluations will yield greater insight for the field than blanket assessments of whether a given program succeeded or failed.

The federal government can do more to encourage innovation and improvement in practice by improving the logic of program design and supporting continuous learning within agencies and in grant programs to achieve better results.

Design programs with evaluation in mind, including the use of strong logic models and NOFAs that clarify evaluation requirements. Federal agencies can advance learning if they design initiatives with evaluation in mind. Evaluation-driven design relies on logic models that establish expectations about the causal pathways between inputs and outcomes. What can a local initiative accomplish? How long will it take to assemble inputs, use them to implement a program, yield outputs, and achieve medium- and long-term outcomes? Typically, neighborhood initiatives have aspirations that far exceed the budgets or time frames of the period of performance. Hence federal program designers need their logic models to account for which outcomes they can reasonably expect during the grant period and identify interim outcomes—and even outputs—that could signal progress toward lofty goals. Agencies then need to design their NOFAs in ways that communicate their understanding about how local programs should link their strategies with results. NOFAs and grant agreements should also make clear that grantees are expected and permitted to use funds on evaluations and performance management. Designs for evaluation can also allow external evaluators to be selected before grants are awarded, which enables evaluators to establish working relationships with agencies, grantees, and nonsuccessful applicants from the start and can help ensure a record of critical decisions and actions in the early weeks of start-up.

As mentioned earlier, the Department of Education funded a TA program expressly designed to increase data consistency across Promise Neighborhood grantees and raise grantee capacity for data-driven decisionmaking. (A national research data file will be produced.) This targeted TA could provide valuable lessons for HUD's general-purpose TA (OneCPD). Promise grantees are required to create an individual-level longitudinal data system to track program participation and outcomes, track data necessary for the 15 Government Performance and Results Act indicators specified in the NOFA, and use the data to manage program performance (Comey et al. 2013). Urban Institute colleagues and the Promise Neighborhoods Institute provide TA through webinars, regular site visits, one-on-one interactions with grantees, and written guidance on topics ranging from writing a data-sharing agreement to setting appropriate targets for each Government Performance and Results Act indicator.

The federal government should also continue to signal the importance of using data in place-based initiatives by setting expectations for data-driven decisionmaking in planning and implementation, measuring performance, and conducting evaluation in the NOFAs. Preference points could be awarded for demonstrated capacity to use data. P3 program applicants score extra points if they proposed and showed the capacity to evaluate their pilot.

Ensure the evaluation of every initiative, including process and outcome evaluations. To maximize learning, agencies should ensure the evaluation of every initiative both internally and externally. NOFAs and grant agreements should communicate federal agencies' expectations that grantees will follow standard procedures for self-evaluation (internal evaluations) and provide broad access to the agencies or their contracted evaluators for external evaluations of process and outcomes. Process evaluations explore what agencies and grantees did and why they did it; outcome evaluations link the grantees' and agencies' actions to outputs and outcomes. Outcome evaluations usually compare pre- and post-program conditions, comparing a target neighborhood or its residents with "control" neighborhoods and residents, and judge program outcomes based on differences in the two neighborhoods' trajectories.

Place-based initiatives combine a wide array of efforts to improve neighborhoods, adapting the "treatments" over time based on their effectiveness. Consequently, outcome evaluations usually reveal little if they are not preceded by process evaluations providing a complete record of what agencies and grantees did over time. Such a record allows agencies, grantees, and external evaluators to learn which of the many practices and actions undertaken over the course of the grant associate with which outcomes. Evaluations by Rich and Stoker (2010 and 2014) and Galster, Tatian, and Accordino (2006) support the idea that broader organizational factors considered in process evaluations also matter for outcomes of individual sites or grantees in revitalization initiatives. In particular, coordinated governance that overcomes siloing and sustains an initiative over several years improves success by encouraging learning and replication of successful innovations. A series of studies and working papers by MDRC on Chicago's NCP has already made important contributions to community development practice, demonstrating that process evaluations also provide benefits because their results can be released while an initiative is still in progress (Greenberg et al. 2014).

Provide for comparative evaluations of place-based initiatives among federal agencies. A final contribution that only the federal government can make to community development practice is to provide for evaluations of the complementarities and conflicts among federal place-based initiatives. Individual neighborhood initiatives will continue to be carried out in parallel with one another by individual agencies and by agencies working in concert; meanwhile, philanthropic investments are

under way in some of the same distressed neighborhoods. Though some philanthropies have an interest in cross-program evaluation, they cannot and should not be expected to bear the entire burden of learning. Instead, federal agencies should establish a process for learning from one another that is at least as deliberate and well-designed as their process for learning from their own grantees. An interagency innovation group, possibly with participation by philanthropy, could be established to further such institutionalization.

Conclusion

Over recent years, federal agencies have gained significant experience and momentum in initiatives to revitalize neighborhoods with high rates of poverty and crime, poor-quality and expensive housing, struggling schools, and limited economic opportunity. Continued federal efforts can capitalize on these investments by building and sustaining basic community revitalization capacity in all communities, learning about what works and why and designing programs to ensure better results and working in authentic partnership with grantees, local and state governments, and philanthropy.

Notes

1. Ta-Nehisi Coates, "The Case for Reparations." *Atlantic,* June 2014, http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2014/06/the-case-for-reparations/361631/.

2. Data are an average from 2009–13 American Community Survey.

3. Community Action Programs and Community Action Agencies continue today primarily as institutions that deliver such services as Head Start, Low-Income Home Energy Assistance, and weatherization assistance, often with funds from federal Community Service Block Grants (CSBGs). These grants were created in 1981 as a formula allocation to states, tribes, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the territories, consolidating dozens of separate antipoverty grants into nine program areas.

4. These include principal cities of metropolitan statistical areas, other metropolitan cities with populations of at least 50,000, and "urban counties" with populations outside entitlement cities over 200,000.

5. Some NeighborWorks affiliates also build and rehabilitate rental housing.

6. The Enterprise Foundation is now known as Enterprise Community Partners, Inc.

7. "About HOPE VI," US Department of Housing and Urban Development, accessed September 22, 2016, http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/public_indian_housing/programs/ph/hope6/about.

8. "Welcome to the Community Renewal Initiative," US Department of Housing and Urban Development, accessed September 22, 2016, http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/comm_planning/economicdevelopment/programs/rc.

9. "What Does the CDFI Fund Do?" US Department of Treasury, Community Development Financial Institutions Fund, accessed October 19, 2016, https://www.cdfifund.gov/Pages/default.aspx.

10. "History: The Beginning of the Children's Zone," Harlem's Children's Zone, accessed September 22, 2016, http://hcz.org/about-us/history/.

11. See http://hope-sf.org/ for more about HOPE SF.

12. Forty significant accomplishments of the pilot SC2 engagements in Chester, PA; Cleveland, OH; Detroit, MI; Fresno, CA; Memphis, TN; New Orleans, LA, are documented in detail in Abt Associates 2014.

13. "Performance Partnership Pilots for Disconnected Youth," Youth.gov, accessed September 22, 2016, http://youth.gov/youth-topics/reconnecting-youth/performance-partnership-pilots.

14. For the P3, disconnected youth are those ages 14–24 who are typically involved multiple systems (homeless, juvenile justice, foster care) or are otherwise at risk of dropping out of school and not becoming connected to the labor force (US Department of Education et al. 2014).

15. The Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2014 specified the involvement of the Departments of Education, Labor, and Health and Human Services, the Corporation for National and Community Service, and the Institute of Museum and Library Services in P3. The Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act of 2015 add the DOJ's Office of Justice Programs, and the FY 2016 appropriations bill authorized the participation of HUD (through the homeless assistance grants program).

16. US House Committee on Financial Services, "Waters Expresses 'Deep Concerns' over Promise Zones Program," news release, June 25, 2014, http://democrats.financialservices.house.gov/news/documentsingle.aspx?DocumentID=388831.

17. The scope of performance management is too broad to cover in this document alone but has been recently extensively described in Hatry (2014).

18. See Pettit, Kingsley, and Hendey (2015) for more detail on how local data intermediaries in the National Neighborhood Indicators Partnership make contributions to place-based initiatives. Integrated data systems are those that link administrative data across multiple government agencies at the individual level. Visit the Actionable Intelligence for Social Policy website (www.aisp.upenn.edu) for more information on integrated data systems.

19. Evidence-Based Policymaking Commission Act of 2016, H.R. 1831, 114th Congress. (2015), https://www.congress.gov/114/bills/hr1831/BILLS-114hr1831eas.pdf.

20. "Map of Administration Community-based Initiatives," White House, last modified August 18, 2015, https://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/place.

21. Matt Erskine, "On the Ground: Economic Development Administration Meets Communities Where They Are," blog, US Department of Commerce, July 7, 2016,. https://www.commerce.gov/news/blog/2016/07/ground-economic-development-administration-meets-communities-where-they-are.

22. For more details, see "Strong Cities, Strong Communities Fellowship," The German Marshall Fund of the United States, accessed September 26, 2015, http://www.gmfus.org/initiatives/strong-cities-strong-communities-fellowship.

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