

Engaging Resources in  
**HIGHER EDUCATION**

A GUIDE TO KEY IDEAS, EFFECTIVE APPROACHES,  
AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE RESOURCES FOR  
MAKING CONNECTIONS CITIES AND SITE TEAMS

*Part of a Series from the Technical Assistance Resource Center of the Annie E. Casey Foundation*

### *Acknowledgments*

Dr. David J. Maurrasse, consultant to the Foundation and President & CEO of Marga Incorporated, wrote the original draft of this guide. He was assisted in many dimensions of the research in preparation for the guide by Erin Kelly. The Casey Foundation's Susan Batten, who oversaw this project, was instrumental in establishing the vision and shaping the content of this guide. Numerous individuals and organizations in the burgeoning field of higher education/community partnerships allowed for smooth access to information about the wealth of existing and new initiatives designed to combine the resources and strengths of institutions of higher education with those of communities. David Cox and the Association for Community and Higher Education Partnerships, and Armand Carriere, and HUD's Office of University Partnerships are worth noting as critical references on this work. So many others are mentioned in the text of these pages.

©2005, The Annie E. Casey Foundation, Baltimore, Maryland

### *About the Annie E. Casey Foundation*

*The Annie E. Casey Foundation is a private charitable organization dedicated to helping build better futures for disadvantaged children in the United States. It was established in 1948 by Jim Casey, one of the founders of United Parcel Service, and his siblings, who named the Foundation in honor of their mother. The primary mission of the Foundation is to foster public policies, human-service reforms, and community supports that more effectively meet the needs of today's vulnerable children and families. In pursuit of this goal, the Foundation makes grants that help states, cities, and neighborhoods fashion more innovative, cost-effective responses to these needs. For more information and a copy of this report, visit the Foundation's website at [www.aecf.org](http://www.aecf.org).*

# contents

Preface to Family Strengthening Resource Guides	<i>p. 2</i>
Introduction	<i>p. 8</i>
Potential Requests, Opportunities, Challenges, and Questions	<i>p. 10</i>
Children, Families, and Higher Education	<i>p. 10</i>
Trends and Opportunities	<i>p. 11</i>
Challenges and Barriers to Facilitating Higher Education/Community Partnerships	<i>p. 12</i>
Key Questions and Answers About Building Higher Education/Community Partnerships	<i>p. 14</i>
Promising Approaches	<i>p. 17</i>
Types of Partnerships	<i>p. 17</i>
Connecting Communities to Economic Opportunity	<i>p. 17</i>
Supporting Strong Social Networks	<i>p. 20</i>
Building Responsive Services That Work for Families	<i>p. 21</i>
Leveraging Data, Information, and Technology	<i>p. 24</i>
Considerations for the Future	<i>p. 27</i>
Resources	<i>p. 28</i>

# preface to family strengthening resource guides

*Children do well when their families do well, and families do better when they live in supportive neighborhoods.*

This simple premise underlies *Making Connections*, the centerpiece of a 10- to 15-year commitment by the Annie E. Casey Foundation to improving the life chances of vulnerable children by strengthening their families and neighborhoods. The Foundation is working in U.S. cities to promote neighborhood-scale programs, policies, and activities that contribute to stable, capable families.

*Making Connections* seeks to improve outcomes for children, families, and communities by tapping the skills, strengths, leadership, and resilience that exist in even the toughest neighborhoods. The initiative is founded on the belief that families and their children can succeed if the people who live, work, and hold positions of influence in tough neighborhoods make family success a priority—and if there are deliberate and sustained efforts within the broader community and at the state level not only to connect isolated families to essential resources, opportunities, and supports, but also to improve the material conditions of the neighborhood.

The Foundation is dedicated to helping communities engage residents, civic groups, public- and private-sector leadership, and faith-based organizations in efforts to transform the toughest neighborhoods into family supportive environments. *Making Connections* works to enable residents to earn decent wages; interact with family, friends, neighbors, and social institutions; and live, work, and play in a safe, congenial, and enriching environment.

To improve the health, safety, educational success, and overall well-being of children and families, *Making Connections* is a long-term campaign aimed

at helping selected cities build alliances and mobilize constituencies at the neighborhood level.

*Making Connections* has identified three kinds of connections that we believe are essential:

- + **Economic Opportunities** that help families succeed economically by securing good jobs, accumulating savings, and accessing adequate goods, services, and community facilities that provide them with the basic necessities of food, clothing, shelter, and health care. To meet this need, communities must address workforce issues, such as job development, employment and training, as well as wage supplements, asset-building strategies, and community investments. All of these help ensure predictable incomes, which in turn bolster healthy child development and help revitalize communities.
- + **Social networks in the community**, including friends, neighbors, relatives, mentors, community organizations, and faith-based institutions that provide neighbor-to-neighbor support and help connect families and residents to each other.



## MAKING CONNECTIONS CITIES

Atlanta	New Haven
Baltimore	New Orleans
Boston	Oakland
Camden	Philadelphia
Denver	Providence
Detroit	San Antonio
Des Moines	San Diego
Hartford	Savannah
Indianapolis	Seattle
Louisville	St. Louis
Miami	Washington, D.C.
Milwaukee	

the *MAKING CONNECTIONS* network

In 1999, the Foundation began to develop a set of ideas about strengthening families with sites in 22 cities across the country. We did not seek to work in only the most stressed and disinvested places, but rather in communities where existing efforts and the policy climate appeared receptive to a long-term family strengthening effort through neighborhood transformation. The initial phase of *Making Connections* was thus exploratory and focused on alliance and capacity building. In mid-2002, *Making Connections* transitioned to a second phase focused squarely on results—meaning measurable improvements in the well-being of children and families and in neighborhood conditions.

Currently ten sites have entered Phase II of the initiative: Denver, Des Moines, Hartford, Indianapolis, Louisville, Milwaukee, Oakland, Providence, San Antonio, and Seattle. Each is engaged in comprehensive family strengthening and neighborhood transformation efforts that are guided by a set of core results used to measure progress, invest resources, deploy technical assistance, and make sure work is consistent with local priorities and the goals of *Making Connections*.

Boston, Camden, Detroit, Miami, New Orleans, Philadelphia, San Diego, Savannah, and St. Louis are Family Strengthening Investment sites focused on specific strategies, such as increasing family economic success and helping children enter school ready to learn. The Family Strengthening sites also contribute to cross-site learning exchanges and the Foundation’s efforts to improve access among working families to the Earned Income Tax Credit.

The civic sites of Atlanta, Baltimore, New Haven, and Washington, D.C., are important to *Making Connections* because of their special relationship to the Foundation. Baltimore has been our headquarters since 1994. Atlanta is home to United Parcel Service, which was cofounded by Jim Casey, and New Haven is the new home for the Foundation’s direct service arm, Casey Family Services. Washington, D.C., is included as a civic site because it is the nation’s capital. Although not bound by the formal parameters of the initiative, these sites allow us to partner with local officials, community organizations, and residents on a range of flexible investments that strengthen families and neighborhoods.

All of the sites are part of the *Making Connections* Network, which is convened regularly around different issues and topics to share lessons, strategies, and effective approaches to strengthening families.

- + **Services and supports**, both formal and informal, public and private, which provide preventive as well as ongoing assistance, and which work for families because they are accessible, affordable, neighborhood based, and culturally appropriate. These include high-quality schools, health care, housing assistance, and affordable child care.

**MAKING A DIFFERENCE: CORE RESULTS**

*Making Connections* must demonstrate to residents, communities, policymakers, elected and government officials, other foundations, and the general public that strengthening families and neighborhoods offers a compelling solution to the social isolation, economic disinvestments, and fragmented systems that have ensnared too many lives for too long.

The Foundation is thus using a set of core results to help evaluate progress, gather data, guide investments, and hold itself accountable for producing the evidence that shows how *Making Connections* makes a lasting difference in the lives and life chances of children, families, and neighborhoods.

The following six result areas, and the indicators used to quantify them, were distilled from the broad range of research, assessments of the Foundation's previous investments in multisite community change initiatives, and data gathered to build the evaluation framework for *Making Connections*.

### 1. Families have increased earnings and income

*We'll know we're making a difference when:*

- + More parents and young adults are employed
- + More parents are employed in jobs that provide family supporting wages and benefits, as well as opportunities for career advancement
- + Levels of family income and earnings increase
- + Stable labor force attachment increases

### 2. Families have increased levels of assets

*We'll know we're making a difference when:*

- + The number of families who save and the level of family savings increase
- + More families own homes, cars, and other assets
- + More eligible families file for the Earned Income Tax Credit and the Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit
- + Access to reasonably priced housing, consumer goods, and financial services increases
- + Fewer families have payment-related disruptions in housing status and living conditions, such as utility shut-offs, repossessions, and foreclosures

### 3. Families and youth increase their civic participation

*We'll know we're making a difference when:*

- + More families have adults members that register and vote
- + More residents are prepared for and take up formal and informal leadership roles
- + More families take civic action through formal activities and associations, such as tenant and other civic organizations

### 4. Families have strong supports and networks

*We'll know we're making a difference when:*

- + More families are connected to informal helping networks and natural helpers
- + More families are connected to formal networks, such as resource exchange and mutual aid associations

### 5. Families have access to services that work for them

*We'll know we're making a difference when:*

- + More services and supports that strengthen families meet standards for quality and effectiveness
- + More families are satisfied with agencies, organizations, and institutions and the services they provide

### 6. Children are healthy and ready to succeed in school

*We'll know we're making a difference when:*

- + Pregnant women receive prenatal care in the first trimester
- + All children have access to health insurance
- + More children enter school with the strengths, skills, and good health that enable them to learn
- + More children have developmentally appropriate preschool experience
- + More parents are involved in their children's schools

During Phase I of *Making Connections*, the Foundation encouraged local priorities to shape the work in the sites. Within the Phase II sites, however,





the focus on the core results is explicit and resources and time are spent on deliberate and sustained efforts to pursue this set of outcomes.

### CORE CAPACITIES

No single investment, intervention, or entity alone can create and sustain durable change that strengthens families in tough neighborhoods, especially on a large scale. *Making Connections* must help catalyze a mobilized community that can drive and sustain change over the long term. In Phase I of the initiative, we introduced a set of milestones and markers that keyed on building the relationships, alliances, and capacity needed to underpin a broad-based family strengthening agenda.

Given the focus on results in Phase II of *Making Connections*, our proposed theory of change looks to develop certain core capacities within the sites that leverage alliances and capacity in the sites to propel change and achieve results. The Foundation and site teams thus work to support, invigorate, and nurture the development of these core capacities, which include:

- + Develop, achieve, and sustain a **collective vision** for results among residents, institutions, and other stakeholders
- + Develop, promote, and sustain **resident leadership** within the **collective change process** to achieve results
- + **Develop and sustain relationships and partnerships** among residents, institutions, and others in support of a collective change process to achieve results
- + Implement **powerful strategies** to achieve results
- + Promote, lead and sustain the **successful transformation of public systems**

- + Support **collaborative learning and accountability** for results
- + Build capacity to **communicate core messages, ideas, and beliefs** to engage and influence public will and a wide audience

### What do we mean by “family strengthening”?

Family strengthening policies, practices, and activities recognize the family as the fundamental influence in children’s lives. They reinforce parental roles and messages and reflect, represent, and accommodate families’ interests. Family strengthening means parents have the opportunities, relationships, networks, and supports to succeed, which include involving parents as decision-makers in how their communities meet family needs.

A family’s major responsibility is to provide an optimal environment for the care and healthy development of loved ones. Although basic physical needs—housing, food, clothing, safety, and health—are essential, children also need a warm emotional climate, a stimulating intellectual environment, and reliable adult relationships to thrive.

Threats to a family’s ability to manage its responsibilities come from many sources: externally generated crises, such as a job or housing loss, or internal crises, such as child abuse or estrangement among family members. Unexpected events, such as the birth of a child with a disability or a teen’s substance abuse problems, as well as everyday stresses such as new jobs, marriages, deaths, and household moves, can cause destabilizing changes. The family’s ongoing stability hinges on its ability to sustain itself through these disruptions.

To help families cope effectively with crises and normal life events, communities need a variety of resources. These include adequate and accessible services for children at all stages of their development,

effective family supports, and cohesive social networks.

Family strengthening policies and practices consider the whole family, not just individual family members. Often, formal system and agency programs inadvertently create tensions when their focus excludes family needs. A striking example is a well-intentioned nutrition program, which arranged to ensure that homeless children received breakfast, lunch, and dinner at school. The children’s parents and other siblings had no source of food, however, and the program participants had no opportunity to share meals with the rest of their families. Once the program leaders recognized the problem, they learned to reconsider their strategies and included parents and siblings in the school mealtimes.

Similarly, many welfare-to-work programs report difficulties in job retention because of stresses often resulting from the jobs themselves. When a family finds better employment, its rituals, daily logistics, roles, and responsibilities often change. More successful programs consider these disruptions ahead of time and develop ways to help families adjust and adapt.

#### **What do we mean by “strengthening neighborhoods”?**

Families must be helped to thrive within the context of their neighborhoods and broader communities and regions. Workforce strategies, for example, should connect neighborhood residents to specific local or regional businesses and industries that offer family supporting wages. Community investment strategies should connect the assets and resources of each unique neighborhood to the larger regional economy and encourage new investments, new business development, and access to high-quality, affordable goods and services.

*Making Connections* recognizes that the informal social networks most important to people (their

friends, neighbors, faith communities, and clubs) almost always exist at the neighborhood level. Time and again, these natural helping networks strengthen families’ ability to raise their children successfully. One key component of strengthening neighborhoods is thus to nurture and sustain social capital.

At the same time, *Making Connections* seeks to link families to broader networks both within and outside their own neighborhoods in ways that open up new possibilities for children and parents alike.

Finally, strengthening neighborhoods means placing formal public services in neighborhoods, and making sure those services work for families, not against them. This requires redefining the jobs of public workers so that professionals from separate mainline systems—as well as natural helpers or informal caregivers—work together in teams and are deployed to specific neighborhoods to take the necessary steps to help families succeed.

#### **The Technical Assistance Resource Center**

The Foundation’s Technical Assistance Resource Center (TARC) helps the *Making Connections* Network access powerful ideas, skillful peers, proven practices, and opportunities to increase the leadership skills of local residents. TARC provides assistance to the *Making Connections* cities on a range of topics, from building alliances that lead to stronger families in healthier, more stable communities, to diverse strategies that community leaders may pursue in terms of jobs, housing, safety, schools, and health care. TARC responds to the sites’ priorities through a “help desk” approach that works to meet site requests for assistance with real time “peer consultations,” in which colleagues who have addressed a particular problem successfully share their learnings. In this way, *Making Connections* cities are building a wealth of practical know-how that’s emerging from on-the-ground innovators.





Another component of the Foundation's technical assistance strategy is a set of Resource Guides, including this one. These guides summarize trends in the field, highlight effective examples, and point to the people, organizations, and materials that can provide additional help. Resource Guides allow Foundation staff to create a common fund of knowledge across a broad range of issues, and also support community leaders, residents, and other local partners who want to learn more about specific subjects.

The number of Resource Guides will fluctuate as demand changes, but approximately 12 to 15 will be produced (*see the inside back cover for a list*). All guides address topics aimed at both supporting individual families and strengthening neighborhoods. They fall into four categories:

- + Family Economic Success;
- + Enhancing Social Networks;
- + Building High-Quality Services and Supports; and
- + Techniques for Advancing a Family Strengthening Agenda in Neighborhoods.

The guides in the first three categories address substantive areas in which activities can lead directly to better outcomes for children and families, while also strengthening neighborhoods. For example, the first Family Economic Success Resource Guide focuses on jobs. It offers strategies that can help connect low-income, working families to local and regional labor markets, and thus secure better wages and benefits. The guide also shows how family supporting jobs fortify tough neighborhoods, making them more attractive as places to live and providing strong incentives for younger residents to participate in the labor force.

The Resource Guides in the second and third categories similarly affect both individual families and their neighborhoods. The guide on child care can help communities develop plans for increasing the supply of this critical family support, especially the notoriously hard-to-find care for infants and school-age children and care during nontraditional work hours. Achieving this goal not only would improve the developmental preparation of young children, it also would help stabilize parental employment, enhance the viability of neighborhood enterprises, and promote safer, better-connected communities.

The guides in the fourth category address techniques for advancing neighborhood-based family strengthening work, such as how to develop a communications strategy and how to use data and maintain accountability for specific outcomes.

Additional guides will be developed as our learning and experience in the sites deepens. By the same token, this and other guides are works in progress; they will be updated periodically as we continue to share effective strategies and practice. We view these guides thus not as an end unto themselves but as a first step in posing and answering some of the most difficult questions about how to strengthen families in tough neighborhoods. We encourage you to share your thoughts with us about what works, and point us to additional sources of expertise. And we thank you, again, for your commitment to securing a better future for children and families most in need of better connections to opportunity, support, and help.

# introduction

Recent years have witnessed significant movement to bridge the space that has historically existed between institutions of higher education and the communities beyond their campuses. Across the country, partnerships between communities and colleges and universities have worked to improve outcomes for disadvantaged children, increase family access to economic opportunity, and revitalize tough neighborhoods.

National efforts to promote and learn from these partnerships, as well as the emergence of identifiable funding streams to sustain them, signal an expansion of campus-community collaboration in coming years. There is both ample opportunity and need to build upon those trends, especially given the resources and networks that institutions of higher education can use to help residents further their

educations, provide technical assistance to community development efforts, and improve delivery of social services. Moreover, colleges and universities can be vital partners in the gathering, analysis, and dissemination of data about child, family, and community conditions that help build public will for social change. Yet a host of challenges complicate the powerful potential of these partnerships, and much more time, effort, and patience is required among communities, colleges, and universities to ensure their success. One key aspect of effective partnerships is a focus on mutual gain on both sides. But in some instances, faculty, students, and staff have benefited more significantly than the residents, families, and communities with which they work.

Work to develop higher education/community partnerships has emerged as a field unto itself. As a

## common cause: reasons for INVESTING in COMMUNITY/HIGHER EDUCATION partnerships

- + **Colleges and universities provide valuable resources of technical assistance and data.** They can help residents and local leaders define priorities and analyze and develop strategies to meet challenges related to affordable housing, employment, education, health, and much more.
- + **Work to strengthen families and transform neighborhoods is aligned with higher education's social mission of teaching, research, and service.** While the community outreach component of many colleges and universities traditionally is underemphasized, higher education has the capacity and potential to more effectively take on and enhance the service dimension of its mission.
- + **Strong partnerships with higher education can meet specific needs of community-based organizations and residents.** When communities need to map assets, screen residents' health, improve public schools, or increase access to jobs, nearby institutions of higher education are able—and, in varying degrees, willing—to help make a difference. Institutions of higher education are designed to provide an array of advice, experience, and assistance across domains key to community building—including health sciences, business, social work, and economic development. In many communities, they are also major employers and have purchasing power that can positively impact neighborhood businesses.



Colleges and universities must work harder to transcend their existing culture if they are to partner productively with communities. Without an institutional commitment to community improvement, such partnerships are not likely to produce the durable and broad-scale results that **Making Connections** seeks.

effective implementation has faced numerous obstacles. Still, the potential benefits of higher education/community partnerships are so powerful that they far outweigh the struggle to create and sustain them.

result, a growing national dialogue on this issue has caused institutions to reflect on their missions and values, and has raised community expectations for productive, respectful partnerships with nearby colleges and universities.

Indeed, institutions of higher education are well positioned to play a significant role in the social and economic fabric of every city in the *Making Connections* Network. Our work, and that of other initiatives around the country, has begun to demonstrate that colleges and universities have resources that extend well beyond the provision of higher learning. They are often hidden assets in urban neighborhoods—anchor institutions that can contribute economic opportunities, data, volunteer time, and technical assistance to communities. In addition, institutions of higher education can use their influence to help align a range of community stakeholders to the work of social change.

Many urban neighborhoods have experienced significant disinvestments in recent decades, this is usually accompanied by businesses and corporations relocating out of lower-income neighborhoods. However, institutions of higher education tend to stay in their original locations. Until very recently, their potential to help catalyze community revitalization and family strengthening efforts has been relatively untapped. And, while a movement to make higher educational resources more broadly available and useful to urban families has rapidly expanded,

# potential requests, opportunities, challenges, and questions

## CHILDREN, FAMILIES, AND HIGHER EDUCATION

Until recently, the extent to which institutions of higher education impact children and families has not been made explicit beyond the benefits of a college degree. The movement to increase partnership between the academy and communities, however, has made potential linkages more distinct.

For example, in most urban areas, simple space is an obvious commodity colleges and universities can share, whether by providing child care, hosting cultural performances and town meetings, and supporting other activities and events that support families and build community. Yet many institutions of higher education have a tendency to close off the use of their grounds and facilities to local residents, even though this is one of the easiest ways to build relationships with the communities they serve. In addition, disadvantaged children who live near colleges and universities can be made aware of a direct avenue for fulfilling their aspirations. Preparatory programs that provide nearby high school students access to college-level course work early can make a significant difference in their academic persistence and success, as well as help reduce antagonism that too often festers between campuses and local youth.

Through community-based continuing education programs, colleges and universities also can provide adults with the training and retraining they need to prosper in a global, high-tech economy. We are also witnessing a proliferation of higher education-sponsored programs to help residents lead and/or work directly with community development efforts.

Although higher education has made legitimate efforts to advance learning through community service, we have not reached the point where families in urban neighborhoods expect colleges and universities

to do much more than the obvious. Although student bodies on campuses throughout the country are becoming more diverse, admission to colleges and universities is more competitive than ever. And while interaction with higher education is commonplace in wealthier communities, disinvested urban neighborhoods remain on the outside despite their proximity to major campuses. For this reason, we still have some very prestigious colleges and universities resting on immaculate grounds while tough neighborhoods just beyond the campus continue to deteriorate.

All of this represents a set of substantial challenges and barriers to successful partnerships between communities and higher education. Thus a great deal of commitment is required to make what is now an emerging national trend a consistent force in efforts to improve outcomes for children, families, and communities.

These challenges place a premium on the effective dialogue and sheer creativity needed to get partnerships started and working well. Yet when communities see tangible benefits that make a difference in their lives, and when institutions realize partnerships as an extension of their missions, the chances for success become far greater.

**Making Connections** can help leverage community partnerships across the spectrum of colleges and universities in the sites. The right approaches should not only connect families to the multiple benefits and resources of higher education, but also help ensure that these partnerships work for — not simply with — communities.



## TRENDS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Site teams and local partners should view the following trends and opportunities as building blocks on which to launch partnerships with institutions of higher education, or to deepen existing collaboration with the colleges and universities that are located in *Making Connections* sites. They can also be used to help flesh out strategies and/or rationales that make the case for partnerships in presentations to funders, administrators and faculty, and community officials. For example, site teams can build upon one of the most important trends in higher education today: ***Significant public demand that colleges and universities act in a socially responsive manner.***

Whether institutions of higher education work to be good community partners, the overwhelming majority of them want to be perceived as such. This is driven in part by increased public attention on, and expectations for, socially responsible behavior among large institutions. For example, with so many colleges and universities acting as the largest employers in many urban areas, attention has turned to how they can and should maximize their economic impact in nearby communities. Many colleges and universities have responded to this pressure by highlighting campus-community partnerships in their recruitment, fundraising, and public relations efforts.

In addition, ***“Best Practices” now exist to guide higher education/community partnerships.*** A movement to extend the mission of higher education into community service and partnership has deepened during the past decade and a half. The national higher education associations, as well as Campus Compact, the Department of Housing and Urban Development’s Office of University Partnerships, and many others work to advance and expand community engagement among institutions nationwide. As the field grows, evaluations of partnerships are producing a better sense of best practices needed to

guide and inform these efforts. Given the increase in higher education/community partnerships since the late 1980s, there are a number of relatively successful models we can draw lessons from (both positive and negative) to help shape more effective and mutually beneficial partnerships.

HUD’s Office of University Partnerships, Seedco, and Community-Campus Partnerships for Health are among the leading organizations facilitating peer learning and a cadre of advocates for higher ed/community partnerships through regular conferences. Most recently, the Association for Community/Higher Education Partnerships (ACHEP) formed to provide a forum for higher education and community representatives to promote, enhance, and sustain their collaborations. (Note: See the Resources section at the end of this guide for contact information and website addresses.)

Supplementing the emergence of best practices is another important trend: ***An increase in the number of funding streams for higher education/community partnerships.*** Government and philanthropic support have increased the number of incentives for, and amount of funds available to, colleges and universities for partnerships with the communities in which they are located. For example, the grant program run by the Community Outreach Partnership Center—an arm of HUD—has been used to facilitate a number of partnerships and much greater national cohesion around higher education’s investments in community change. Additionally, various national foundations that invest in social change efforts are actively exploring the potential of these partnerships to support their initiatives.

Other trends and opportunities include:

- + **Expansion of experiential or service learning offerings at colleges and universities that can serve as the basis for partnership.** Hands-on opportunities to serve and participate in community

change efforts have become increasingly popular on campus. They offer students a way to learn real-world organizing and project management skills, and help them gain an appreciation of responsible citizenship. Many students who would never have imagined pursuing a life in social service or other social enterprises are sometimes transformed by their service learning experiences. But students should not be the only ones who benefit. The service learning movement has been making a greater effort to ensure that students help communities address concrete needs. Some campuses have even established a separate department for service or experiential learning, and others help faculty integrate hands-on community service into their courses and curriculums.

- + **Growing awareness of the benefits to and relevance of community partnerships to higher education.** An increasing number of colleges and universities now realize the advantages of community partnerships. For some institutions, the primary benefits are more positive relationships with their neighbors. For others, the incentives may be better student recruitment or retaining faculty. For most institutions of higher education, however, it's clear that the conditions of their local community impact the academic and professional experiences of their students, faculty, and administrators—few want to work or learn in communities isolated from the social and economic mainstreams.
- + **New ways to build capacity for higher education/ community partnerships have emerged.** The community-building field also has been looking at the dynamics and impacts of higher education/ community partnerships nationwide. Technical assistance, workshops, conferences, and peer learning are helping residents and community

organizations initiate partnerships that advance their interests and place them on equal footing with college and university administrators, faculty, and staff.

- + **Increased demand for adult learning and professional development can encourage new collaboration between community and campus.** A global economy and rapid technological advances make continuing education more important than ever before. Colleges and universities have responded to this demand with a variety of degree and course offerings aimed at older students and mid-career professionals. Communities can leverage expansion of these programs to their benefit, working with local colleges and universities to offer career development and degree programs at places and times convenient to working adults, as well as provide academic counseling and financial aid to residents.

#### CHALLENGES AND BARRIERS TO FACILITATING HIGHER EDUCATION/ COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

While the above represent multiple entry points, trends, and opportunities on which to build, tapping the resources of colleges and universities to strengthen families and neighborhoods can be a difficult process. Among the key challenges:


- + **Distrust between institutions and communities.** For a variety of reasons—some valid and some not—institutions of higher education have made their share of enemies in the neighborhoods that surround their campuses. For example, as the urban areas around them began to decline, a number of colleges and universities, both literally and figuratively, built walls around themselves. In addition, campus construction projects and real estate purchases that displace local residents have caused some communities to view a local college





or university as an elitist force for gentrification. And university-based research projects that fail to authentically engage local leaders and organizations are seen as opportunistic at best and exploitive at worst.

Bolstered campus police forces have been seen as another sign that community residents are not welcomed at institutions of higher education, and that colleges and universities are more concerned with defending themselves from communities rather than working with them. Given this swirl of dynamics, even the best, most well-funded partnerships can have difficulties getting started and progressing.

- 
- + **Lack of flexible, identifiable, and long-term funding.** Despite an increase in identifiable funding sources for higher education/community partnerships, resources remain limited in general. Flexible, long-term funds are particularly elusive even though they are most likely to produce concrete results. Within colleges and universities, few resources are dedicated to the development and sustenance of higher education/community partnerships. And, many community-based organizations, which play important roles in these collaboratives, are generally cash-strapped.
  - + **Power imbalances between universities and communities.** Colleges and universities usually have greater resources and influence than their community partners, thus institutions of higher education too often drive the terms of partnerships. Faculty have been treated as “experts” who can bring answers. The lack of discussion regarding issues of power, race, class, and culture breeds anger and resentment on both sides, diminishing the potential of long-term positive outcomes.
  - + **Service learning can overburden communities.** Service learning activities are at the heart of many partnerships that place students in the

community to earn credit. However, working with student volunteers can be a time consuming process for community-based organizations. Indeed, service learning is sometimes more of a burden than a benefit for communities. Community groups often spend as much time attending to students as they do actually benefiting from their involvement in such projects and initiatives.

- + **Lack of university-wide support for community-based projects and activities.** In many institutions of higher education, the commitment to—and energy for—partnerships resides with a few people. In some cases, a single faculty member or administrator may serve as the internal champion for partnerships, which means collaboration could collapse upon his or her departure or retirement. The inability to institutionalize partnerships into colleges and universities remains one of the most significant obstacles facing the field. One or two people, no matter how passionate, will likely fail to produce long-term institutional commitment to community partnerships.
- + **It’s hard for partners to understand each other’s complexities.** Decentralized decision-making, the academic calendar, flexible faculty schedules, and other characteristics all challenge authentic higher education/community partnerships. Most collaborations are affected by these factors, too often to the detriment of their goals. Many within and outside the academy are mystified by how institutions manage to function with so many seemingly independent units. Navigating the maze of these institutions can be a challenge for community partners.

In the same regard, communities have leaders, cycles, existing collaboratives, and agreements. These factors are often not understood by colleges and universities interested in facilitating partnerships.

## KEY QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT BUILDING HIGHER EDUCATION/COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Strategies that help communities leverage resources and information from local colleges and universities are fundamental to productive, mutually beneficial partnerships. This section includes general questions about accessing these resources to strengthen neighborhoods and communities and general guidance about how to answer them in ways that build relationships that advance mutual goals.

**Q: How can we make it easier for communities to gain access to higher education?**

**A: Identify visible points of entry within institutions of higher learning.**

Colleges and universities may appear—and often are—a maze of departments, schools, and divisions, which can complicate initial community efforts to identify partnership opportunities. In response, some institutions have created central offices that coordinate community outreach. Others use an office of “community and government affairs” or “external relations” as their point of contact with communities. When well advertised, these offices are a good way to connect university resources to community concerns. In addition, committed cadres of faculty, administrators, and student groups representative of various divisions within a university who are strategically attached to such centralized points of entry are needed to raise the importance and profile of partnerships internally.

Residents and local organizations should also seek out individual faculty or student groups committed to improving conditions in nearby neighborhoods. Asking community groups, local businesses, and nonprofit organizations to help identify entry points at a local college or university often generates a relatively accurate list of potential partners.

**Q: How do we begin new partnerships that increase the chances that higher education will focus its resources on community priorities?**

**A: Help communities be proactive with colleges and universities.**

Too often, community/higher education partnerships are driven by the institution’s needs. Local organizations and residents should thus seek opportunities to be proactive—seeking out community affairs officers, faculty, and administrators to propose mutually beneficial partnerships that address common priorities. This results in both community and institutional representatives designing the parameters, goals, and results of a partnership at the outset—which helps establish trust and clear channels of communication.

Forming a coalition of community organizations first, then approaching a university collectively can be a powerful way to start discussions. Such groups can make higher education aware of its interdependency with neighborhoods that surround the campus. Community groups should also remember that colleges and universities receive significant tax breaks and are institutional citizens—for example, they are required to seek community approvals for building projects. Since poor relationships with community leaders can negatively impact student and faculty recruitment and morale, fundraising, and public image, communities are able to strategically leverage this interdependency and make it work in their interests.

**Q: How do we start the long task of building trust and finding common ground between the community and higher education?**

**A: Invest in neutral facilitation to identify self- and mutual interests early on.**



Chances of achieving mutual benefit are increased through honest and consistent communication between communities and institutions of higher education. It is important to recognize that both partners will maintain specific self-interests, and seek to gain tangible benefits. Hiding self-interests can only hurt the relationship in the long run, since they will ultimately surface as partnerships mature and take action. Thus each side must work to build a healthy, trustful, and respectful dialogue at the outset that identifies self-interest as well as effective, mutually beneficial outcomes.

This is no doubt easier said than done, particularly during initial interactions between an institution of higher education and communities. Oftentimes, communities may wish to place demands on institutions, and college and university officials may see local leaders and residents as roadblocks to their own efforts. These antagonisms may need to be reconciled with the help of a neutral facilitator who can help both parties engage in candid conversations early on. Each must be open to learning that their initial assumptions about the other are faulty, and that an honest exchange of ideas and views may surface additional issues and priorities that must be considered.

Through early conversations, partners may find the time and space to build a better understanding of, and respect for, different ways of reaching a mutually beneficial collaboration. It is important for partners to know each other well—how and why they operate, what aspirations drive them, and what they want to accomplish. All of this information helps manage expectations, improve cooperation, and enhance the likelihood of setting a common vision and destination for the partnership.

**Q: How do we structure partnerships that continue to respond to the needs of families in the communities in which they are located over time?**

**A: Establish shared governance bodies that give communities power.**

Many have seen partnerships that don't work: faculty who conduct research and don't share results or make them useful to communities; groups of students who cannot meet actual needs in the neighborhood; or business decisions by the college or university that ignore or undermine community needs. Shared governance structures can provide communities assurance that the partnerships will work to meet their priorities. Resident presence on leadership boards or advisory groups who work along side university officials gives communities significant voice, veto power, and can help balance disparities in power and resources. (See examples of Jointly Managed Community Development Corporations on page 19.)

**Q: How should we think about investments that help build partnerships to better conditions for communities and families?**

**A: Provide appropriate resources that build community capacity.**

Community organizations and residents should also be wary of dependency on institutions of higher education in partnerships. While colleges and universities tend to have valuable resources, partnerships should seek to build the capacity of local groups and leaders to advocate on their own behalf. Community organizations or associations are in a better position to negotiate with institutions of higher education or other major institutions when they are knowledgeable about and experienced in a variety of change efforts and initiatives. As such, funds targeted to these collaboratives should provide



resources (both money and technical assistance) directly to community groups to help them partner with colleges and universities in meaningful ways.

**Q: How do we sustain higher education/community partnerships and keep them moving toward their goals?**

**A: Visibility and transparency through good research and widely disseminated information about their progress and results.**

Given the growth of campus-community partnerships during the past 15 years, we might expect to know more about such efforts—which ones have been successful and why, and what they have in common. Too many partnerships, however, still work in relative obscurity. Residents have no knowledge of what a university or college is doing in their neighborhood, and the likelihood of expanded or deepened collaboration is thus less likely. The field of community/higher education partnerships is in need of an extensive national and local promotional campaign to help communities, higher education, and the general public learn more about existing partnerships and their mutually beneficial impacts.

Partnership efforts should include learning and assessment activities. Residents, as well as university officials should have active roles in such efforts, both participating in identifying successes and challenges that lead to strengthening these activities over time. Widespread dissemination of lessons learned via community forums, media strategies, etc., can be used to share information and to ensure that community interests are kept at the forefront of such collaboratives.

Partnerships can have implications that go far beyond the immediate benefits to a single community or campus. They symbolize a commitment to: social responsibility; the wise use of resources to improve neighborhood conditions, and child and family well-being; and working across traditional barriers. Through greater exposure of this work, and by connecting it to broader efforts for social change, more community residents and organizations will see partnerships as compelling options.



## Types of Partnerships

A number of recent initiatives have demonstrated powerful potential to revitalize communities and connect families to economic opportunity, social networks, and responsive services. Thus the following strategies could be useful to *Making Connections* sites as they try to determine the most effective ways to benefit from these kinds of partnerships. With the wide range of skills and resources housed in institutions of higher education, the number of potentially useful strategies are accordingly diverse.

### CONNECTING COMMUNITIES TO ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

#### College or University Employment, Training, and Procurement as Economic Development

Institutions of higher education are economic engines. While community partnerships that engage students and faculty have more of a track record, an increasing number leverage the college or university as a local developer and employer.

Many campuses now outsource their food and hospitality, printing, building and grounds maintenance, and other services to outside vendors. In most cases, institutions of higher education have not done enough to use outsourcing as a way to help improve local economies. External contractors tend to lack a tie to local neighborhoods, and more institutions of higher education must challenge them to hire from the neighborhoods that border their campuses.

To simply assume that low-income communities lack businesses large enough to take on contracts from nearby colleges or universities ignores some significant possibilities for partnership. Local contractors hired by institutions of higher education are

more likely to create jobs than businesses from outside the community. Moreover, college and university investments can help expand local businesses and/or help create new ones. Some partnerships are beginning to hold workshops for local businesses on how to contract with higher education. Business schools also can play a significant role by helping build the expertise and capacity of nearby businesses to bid for, secure, and keep university contracts.

Institutions of higher education also need to look harder at the rich, diverse, and often hidden talents of local residents who are qualified for many of the jobs that colleges and universities subcontract for— from small-scale construction and maintenance projects to information management and student services. Many local businesses and individual job seekers can be intimidated dealing with institutions of higher education as a potential employer or tool for community development. Additionally, contract application procedures and requirements at institutions of higher education are sometimes well beyond what small local businesses can handle.

Finally, the effort needed to truly make procurement an extension of a college's or university's commitment to connecting local communities to economic opportunities often may exceed the will of administrators. A handful of institutions have begun to seriously address this need, however, and their efforts should help demonstrate the possibility of this approach.

#### + University of California at San Francisco/

##### Bayview-Hunter's Point Neighborhood Initiative

The University of California at San Francisco's Office of Community and Governmental Relations and the Bayview-Hunter's Point Neighborhood Initiative have developed a comprehensive strategy to increase jobs, employment training, and business

opportunities for residents living in the city’s southwest side. UCSF expanded an intensive internship program to place local residents in temporary, entry-level jobs that are likely to result in permanent, full-time employment. The university also began an extensive outreach program to local businesses that encouraged them to bid on university contracts. A key element of this partnership has been leveraging the knowledge of community leaders and residents about the local labor pool and economy to help set the initiative’s priorities.

For more information, go to: [www.ucsf.edu](http://www.ucsf.edu).

#### + **Johns Hopkins University/East Baltimore and Health Care Workforce Development Programs**

Johns Hopkins University has been developing strategies to expand employment opportunities and training for East Baltimore residents. Around economic development, Hopkins is working to build more technology partnerships, linking the University and private industry in East Baltimore. As an indication of its commitment, Hopkins has promised to lease 100,000 square feet of space in the first 275,000-square-foot Life Sciences and Technology Park building. Around workforce development, Hopkins is connecting East Baltimore residents to jobs and training in specific sectors, with the assumption that this sector-specific approach has the greatest long-term likelihood of establishing residents in careers that provide sustainable living wages and benefits. Given the existing employment opportunities at the University and the projected jobs at the Life Sciences and Technology Park, the targeted employment sectors will be health care and construction, with biotechnology offering some limited long-range prospects.

In both the health care and construction sectors, regional, multi-institutional initiatives have already been started. Johns Hopkins Hospital, the

University of Maryland Medical System, and four other hospitals in Baltimore have been working with the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the Open Society Institute, the Abell Foundation, education and workforce training organizations, and the Mayor’s Office of Employment Development as part of the newly formed Baltimore Healthcare Coalition. The Coalition investigates the demand for workers in health care, analyzes the supply of workers and associated training, and then implements a variety of strategies to link Baltimore residents to appropriate job openings. The coalition discovered that among just five hospitals in Baltimore (representing 25 percent of the demand in the region), there is an annual need for over 300 skilled workers to fill turnover in seven different positions that have exhibited major employee shortfalls: nursing assistants, nurse extenders, medical lab technicians, surgical technicians, pharmacy technicians, respiratory therapists, and radiology technicians. Some of the coalition’s achievements to date include:

- + Helped redirect state training funds allocated to Baltimore so that they would be used to focus on training for these identified workforce shortages;
- + Submitted a Department of Labor grant to create a basic-skills institute for underserved populations, including immigrants, exoffenders, youth, and the disabled;
- + Secured start-up funding from local foundations to institutionalize this work in a new, nonprofit intermediary.

#### **Building Affordable and Accessible Housing**

Housing has historically been one of the most contentious aspects of urban higher education/community relations. Many urban campuses are seen—often with good reason—as having too little concern for the residents that their expansive real estate projects may displace.





Since institutions of higher education are already in the business of building, various strategies are being developed to ensure that community residents have access to the economic opportunities that campus construction efforts produce, such as set-asides for local job seekers.

A number of colleges and universities are also creating homeownership programs for their employees, many of whom live in nearby communities. This strategy helps low-to-moderate income employees build assets for their families, and helps strengthen tough neighborhoods by increasing homeownership rates.

There is no doubt that increasing the supply of affordable housing in the areas that border a major urban college or university can run counter to market forces. In such instances, a commitment to affordability takes a great deal of will on the part of local developers and institutions of higher education. Few elements of authentic campus-community partnerships, however, have more potential to build good will than efforts to address the affordable housing crisis in the nation's central cities and elsewhere.

Partnerships between communities and institutions of higher education that seek to increase economic opportunities for local residents and neighborhoods require much more thought and study. Some early efforts, such as campus employment set-asides, have been criticized for their limited scope. On the other hand, affordable housing programs for university and college employees of moderate income and who live in nearby communities have already shown a great deal of potential.

+ **Jackson State University/West Jackson Homeownership Opportunities Program**

Jackson State University and West Jackson CDC (WJCDC) have several initiatives that promote economic opportunity for neighborhood residents and

families. Their Homeownership Opportunities Program, funded by a HUD grant program that supports historically black colleges and universities, helps low- and moderate-income working families and the homeless find and/or purchase affordable housing in five local neighborhoods. The program also enables students and faculty to work with community development efforts and provides leadership development training for neighborhood residents. A revolving loan fund run by the program provides low interest loans to rehabilitate existing homes. Through a partnership with HUD and the city's housing authority, the WJCDC operates a first-time homebuyers program to acquire, restore, and resell government-owned housing in disinvested neighborhoods.

For more information, go to: [www.jsums.edu/research/cbder.htm](http://www.jsums.edu/research/cbder.htm).

**Jointly Managed Community Development Corporations**

Joint governance can address a number of the imbalances in power, decision-making, and benefit that hinder campus-community partnerships. Thanks to the innovative work of Seedco with a number of historically black colleges and universities, several jointly governed community development corporations (CDCs) have been created. A separate entity with its own incorporation status, governed by representatives of both the community and the institution of higher education, is a powerful new idea that could address the challenges implicit in joining an influential, well-resourced institution with community groups that are often underfinanced and overwhelmed. A jointly governed CDC can formalize a partnership that solidifies a college's or university's role as a local institutional citizen.

It is important that such independent entities not displace existing higher education/community partnerships, given that this kind of CDC, while an

extension of a higher education/community partnership, will take on a life of its own.

#### + **Xavier Triangle Neighborhood Development Corporation**

Seedco funded efforts by several historically black colleges and universities to create jointly governed community development corporations. The Xavier Triangle Neighborhood Development Corporation in New Orleans, for example, is based at Xavier University of Louisiana. It is an independent non-profit organization run by representatives of the university and a local neighborhood. The Triangle Corporation convened a community-wide process to develop a strategic plan for the neighborhood, which identified lack of affordable housing as a critical community concern. In response, the Triangle helped create the Zion City Housing Cooperative, which is the first limited-equity cooperative developed in the state of Louisiana. The partnership also helps rehabilitate homes for first-time homebuyers and coordinates community organizing activities through a Resident Advisory Committee, which creates opportunities for dialogue between neighborhood residents and public officials.

For more information, go to: [www.seedco.org](http://www.seedco.org).

#### + **National Center for Urban Community at Tulane and Xavier Universities**

Aggressive community outreach, student volunteer recruitment, and coalition building by the National Center for Urban Community at Tulane and Xavier Universities in New Orleans has significantly increased community access to the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and Individual Development Accounts (IDAs). The center helped form the Central City Asset Building Coalition, which works with local churches, foundations, banks, advocate groups, the Internal Revenue Service, and others to

connect residents, particularly those transitioning from public assistance, to the EITC as well as financial education courses, mainstream banks, homeownership, and consumer credit counseling. Students at Tulane's A.B. Freeman School of Business provide a steady volunteer base for the city's annual EITC campaign, which has returned millions of dollars to the city's low-income residents and communities. In addition to receiving credit for service learning, students get a better understanding of the challenges and aspirations of families who struggle to make it financially, says Neill Goslin, who heads the center's EITC campaign. "We had concerns that volunteers would have negative judgments about folks using (the free income tax preparation) sites, that they were taking advantage of it," Goslin said at an Annie E. Casey Foundation consultative session on EITC volunteer recruitment. "It was interesting to see that they were more likely to help folks, not judging them but identifying with them."

The center and Tulane's Levy-Rosenblum Institute for Entrepreneurship also work with a local IDA collaborative to help provide a 4-to-1 match for low-income residents who participate in the savings account initiative. They can use the accounts to continue their educations, start a small business, or make a down payment on a home. Like the EITC effort, the IDA program also links participants to financial education and consumer credit counseling services.

For more information, see *Colleges and Universities as Economic Anchors: Profiles of Promising Practices* by Andrew Hahn, Casey Coonerty, and Lili Peaslee of the Brandeis University Heller Graduate School of Management, [www.brandeis.edu](http://www.brandeis.edu).

#### **SUPPORTING STRONG SOCIAL NETWORKS**

Colleges and universities can offer critical resources to further build and strengthen social networks for children and families in tough neighborhoods. Two



specific resources—service learning and the facilities and space of college/university campuses—are particularly important to building formal and informal networks for families.

In terms of service learning, these efforts can promote civic responsibility in the classroom and provide students with hands-on experience in community change. By involving college students in the concerns and aspirations of tough neighborhoods, service learning pushes students to see the world beyond their own attitudes and to accept their responsibility to people and places beyond the campus. In essence, service learning programs can be viewed as efforts to create new leaders who, upon graduation, may locate in the neighborhood and become resources to help build social networks for families who reside there.

In many neighborhoods, safe, accessible spaces for community gatherings are at a premium. As such, college/university facilities can serve as venues for neighborhood meetings, festivals, etc., which aim to strengthen the social fabric of these communities.

+ **University of Maryland School of Social Work/  
Community Outreach Service That Builds Social  
Networks**

The Community Outreach Service, an arm of the University of Maryland's School of Social Work, helps connect its students to community-based organizations in the Baltimore area. Field placements range from the East Baltimore Community-University Partnership and the Center for Poverty Solutions to the South and West Baltimore School Clusters and West Baltimore Empowerment Initiative. Student interns help these organizations organize communities, counsel residents, tutor youth, raise money, and lobby for social change. Recently, interns organized a town hall meeting of 300 residents to discuss a referendum that would directly affect their neighborhood.

They also helped create successful grant proposals that raised money for a new community playground, organized successful book and clothing drives, and helped some 400 residents secure jobs. All told during the 2000–2001 academic year, more than 60 graduate social work students worked with and in nearly 30 Baltimore neighborhoods.

For more information, go to: [www.ssw.umaryland.edu/community-outreach/swcos/index.htm](http://www.ssw.umaryland.edu/community-outreach/swcos/index.htm).

**BUILDING RESPONSIVE SERVICES THAT  
WORK FOR FAMILIES**

Efforts to strengthen families focus intensively on building accessible, neighborhood-based, and culturally appropriate services. These may include high-quality schools, health care, and affordable child care. Colleges and universities can in fact contribute to these goals via service learning in which students volunteer at family-serving agencies and/or providing space for access to services for families living in the vicinity.

+ **Trinity College of Hartford, Connecticut/  
Accessible Day Care**

Trinity College's Community Child Center provides day care for faculty, staff, and students, as well as local residents. The center uses two college spaces—a dormitory and the Life Sciences Building for the service, and employs mostly work-study students. The center is open from 7:30 to 5:30 on weekdays for children ages 6 weeks to 5 years. The diversity of children in the program is one of the center's goals. The initiative also includes services targeted for the parents themselves. The center's Parent Power program provides support groups, workshops, and various connections to community involvement.

For more information, go to: [www.tc4.org](http://www.tc4.org).

+ **California State University at Northridge/  
Children and Parents Learning Together**

The Family Math and Literacy Project serves predominantly Hispanic neighborhoods in Sylmar, California. The program enables young people and their parents to learn together through lively workshops. California State University at Northridge, categorized as a Hispanic Serving Institution, collaborated with local public schools to organize parents to teach other parents reading, writing, and arithmetic in this innovative program. This enables parents to take what they have learned, and, in turn, tutor their children and their communities. Workshops are housed in, what they call, “neighborhood centers,” which were purchased and equipped by the university. More than 200 parents have enrolled in this program and some are collaborating on an autobiographical book that captures their experiences as Mexican and Central American immigrants. They are organizing a literacy conference as well.

For more information, go to: [www.oup.org/pubs/minority-report.pdf](http://www.oup.org/pubs/minority-report.pdf).

+ **Cleveland State University/  
Neighborhood Leadership Cleveland**

Neighborhood Leadership Cleveland, a partnership between Cleveland State University and the Greater Cleveland Neighborhood Centers Association, recruits local leaders into a 12-week leadership development program, which addresses conflict resolution, neighborhood goal setting, and decision-making analysis, among other topics. Offered free of charge, the program enables residents to realize their leadership capacity and roles, and provides resources to help them plan for their neighborhoods’ future. Hundreds of grassroots leaders have participated in this program to gain skills and build networks.

For more information, go to: [www.nhlink.net/neighborhoodleader/description.htm](http://www.nhlink.net/neighborhoodleader/description.htm).

**Improving Public Schools**

In many urban areas, ties between higher education and public school systems have diminished. Indeed, many of the more selective institutions of higher education often fail to recruit from nearby public high schools. And, increasingly, schools of education are participating in programs that seek to improve public schools through enhanced teacher training. Additionally, some institutions of higher education have even begun formal partnerships with school districts to improve student performance.

+ **Coppin State College**

Coppin State College Department of Education entered into a five-year initiative with the Baltimore Public Schools to manage Rosemont Elementary School, the public school in the target area. Through the project, called the “New School Initiative,” college faculty, staff, and students provide an array of assistance and enrichment programming to students and their parents. In addition, the college is creating a new center being developed in partnership with Johns Hopkins, Baltimore Public Schools, and the Maryland State Board of Education. This initiative will bring students from schools throughout Baltimore to the new center for remedial and enrichment programming.

+ **The University of Indianapolis/  
Learning Research**

For the past several years, the University of Indianapolis has engaged in a strategic process with the *Making Connections* Local Learning Partnership to extend its model for a community learning and community-building collaborative with neighborhood leaders. The planning process has identified arts and culture, health and human services, and education as priority



areas for partnership between the university and the surrounding Southeast community.

One of the most visible products of this partnership is the Wheeler Arts Building. Working together, the university and a local CDC—Southeast Neighborhood Development have turned an abandoned carburetor factory into a dynamic neighborhood hub that advances both higher education and efforts by the community to develop cultural assets. The center includes nearly 40 artist studio/apartments and is home to the university’s Community Arts and Education Center, which hosts a community theater used both by students and neighborhood groups, a painting studio, art gallery, classroom, and office space for the university’s community-based programs. This facility supports a range of community-based education programs and also provides space for neighborhood celebrations and meetings.

Fountain Square Center joins the university with health and social services agencies in the heart of the Southeast neighborhood. Students and faculty from the university schools of Sociology, Nursing, Occupational Therapy, Psychology, and Social Work take classes and teach at the center. They have a number of opportunities for community-based learning and service, including providing counseling and other health services to neighborhood residents. In addition, the community has access to university classrooms, computer labs, and conference rooms. The school’s Center for Aging and Community and a local senior center have partnered to provide the elderly with space for exercise and other wellness activities.

+ **University of Pennsylvania/  
West Philadelphia Improvement Corps**

The University of Pennsylvania is a major partner in the West Philadelphia Improvement Corps, which is creating university-assisted public schools that serve as hubs for community-based services and supports.

The effort seeks to develop schools that are open around the clock, provide social and educational programs, and help catalyze community-building efforts. In partnership with the Philadelphia Board of Education, the university also has been developing a new kindergarten through eighth grade public school that will help ease overcrowding and combine quality educational offerings with training opportunities for aspiring teachers. Additionally, numerous Penn service learning initiatives are connected to community efforts that seek to improve West Philadelphia’s public schools.

For more information, go to: <http://dolphins.upenn.edu/~wepic>.

**Improving Public Health**

Many institutions of higher education are equipped with state-of-the-art medical equipment and facilities. Some of the greatest advances in health research are produced at university medical schools, which can also serve as major drivers of local and regional economic development.

Medical schools and health-related departments are creating and expanding local clinics that provide health promotion and disease prevention services. While progress has been made, medical research has probably created more conflict and controversy than any other part of higher education’s research agenda—in part because local residents are rightly concerned about being unwitting subjects of clinical trials. Nevertheless, improving community access to health care and medical treatment has emerged as fertile ground for collaborations between institutions of higher education and communities.

+ **Center for Healthy Communities**

Winner of Community-Campus Partnerships for Health’s 2003 Award, the Center for Healthy Communities (CHC) has been improving access to and use of health care in Dayton, Ohio, for the past





several years. Multiple local health institutions have been coordinated to integrate existing health services and create new ones. In July 1991, Wright State University, Sinclair Community College, the city of Dayton (Ohio), and local health and human service organizations and community members created Partners for Community Health Development, which developed into CHC in 1994, expanding the work, adding partners, and broadening the scope of community participation. CHC trains Community Health Advocates—local residents who educate others in the community. The advocate program has served over 10,000 people. CHC has also promoted service learning in health professions training, facilitating six state regional programs. This service learning approach has led to clinical training that has served 75,000 community residents.

For more information, go to: <http://futurehealth.ucsf.edu/ccph/awards2003CHC.html>.

#### + **Community-Campus Partnerships for Health**

Community-Campus Partnerships for Health (CCPH) fosters partnerships between communities and higher education that develop the role of each as an agent for change in the health professions. CCPH's programs include an annual conference, service learning institutes, an annual awards program recognizing exemplary partnerships between communities and higher education, a mentor network, and research and evaluation projects. Its online resources include tools and resources for service learning and community-campus partnerships, including syllabi and course materials for service learning courses in health-related fields.

For more information, go to: [www.futurehealth.ucsf.edu/ccph.html](http://www.futurehealth.ucsf.edu/ccph.html). Also see the Resources section for contact names and numbers.

#### **LEVERAGING DATA, INFORMATION, AND TECHNOLOGY**

The mission of higher education centers is on producing and transmitting knowledge. How to apply such knowledge toward the benefit of society, however, has been an age-old debate within the academy. Recent efforts to create, enhance, and sustain higher education/community partnerships have spawned innovative ways to directly apply faculty and student research to issues facing communities. They have also shown how higher education and communities can work together to create research projects that gather the data and information needed to develop and implement local efforts.

Effective uses of data and information gathered on behalf of communities tend to focus on issues that residents and community organizations identify as priorities. But it is also critical to recognize that communities contain knowledge. The combination of the skills and experiences of faculty, students, residents, and local leaders uniquely position higher education/community partnerships to create new knowledge and innovative research methods. In addition, the power of a college or university extends beyond its knowledge and research. Institutions of higher education are usually well respected by key decision-makers. This can leverage credibility and attention among influential groups who might otherwise ignore many issues facing low-income communities. If a community has difficulty getting policymakers to respond to its priorities and concerns, the addition of a university study can help spur government action and/or investment.

Among the information tools that neighborhoods can leverage from colleges and universities include:

- + Geographical Information Systems (GIS) and other electronic database systems that can help communities visually outline the state of their neighborhoods, cities, and regions;





- + protocols and strategies for mapping neighborhood assets, which help communities to see themselves first and foremost through a lens that emphasizes their inherent strengths, which can be leveraged to address various challenges;
- + survey research capacity (often by students) that can help gather critical information about an issue (homelessness) or a population (immigrant/refugees) that does not exist in traditional data sets;
- + program evaluation expertise that can help neighborhoods determine the effectiveness of services in their communities; and
- + training and technical assistance on research methods and data analysis to help transfer these skills to key community leaders.

The need for timely, accurate data to inform strategy development and determine progress on community goals and outcomes is critical. Hence, partnerships that extend the research capacity of colleges and universities to the community can be invaluable.

+ **Urban Technical Assistance Project at Columbia University**

Founded in 1995, the Urban Technical Assistance Program (UTAP) at Columbia University is housed in the Graduate Program in Urban Planning at the Graduate School of Architecture, Planning, and Preservation. As part of the university-wide Strategic Initiatives Program, UTAP focuses its efforts on helping mobilize and sustain resident-driven community development. Project staff work with local groups and leaders to analyze community conditions and craft strategies for urban revitalization.

The technical resources available at UTAP allow staff to create visual displays of current and projected building environments in a given community or neighborhood. The program's Geographic Information Systems facilities can create area maps that detail current land uses. Digital rendering, in turn, displays vivid depictions of how proposed improvements may appear. These graphical displays provide an easy-to-use medium in which conversations between staff, community members, and policy-makers may take place.

For more information, go to: [www.arch.columbia.edu/UTAP](http://www.arch.columbia.edu/UTAP). Also see the Resources section for contact names and numbers.

+ **Passaic County Community College/  
Community Technology Centers**

Passaic County Community Colleges has been gradually setting up Community Technology Centers (CTCs) throughout Patterson, New Jersey. Branches of the city's library, a public school, and a Boys and Girls Club have housed the college's CTCs. Americorps volunteers have served as technology mentors to train community residents, and community leaders have been trained to educate their constituents. They recently developed an initiative to provide extensive technology education to 30 public school teachers and nonprofit trainers, so that they can incorporate technology into their classrooms. The college is taking its desire to increase access to technology to new heights with its redevelopment of a 15,000-square-foot building. The city-owned building is being equipped to house a computing center, along with a television production studio, and classrooms. With assistance from a \$400,000 HUD grant for Hispanic Serving Institutions, this effort is leveraging multiple sources.



For more information, go to: [www.oup.org/pubs/minority-report.pdf](http://www.oup.org/pubs/minority-report.pdf).

+ **University of Minnesota, et al./**  
**Research Assistance to CBOs**

Neighborhood Planning for Community Revitalization, an initiative including the University of Minnesota and eight other institutions of higher education (Augsburg College, College of St. Catherine, Concordia University, Hamline University, Macalester College, Metropolitan State University, Minneapolis Community and Technical College, and the University of St. Thomas), assists Minnesota-based community-based organizations with applied research, providing them access to the resources at the nine colleges and universities in the collaboration. Various statewide organizations can request up to three research projects per year. Housing, land use, economic development, and local history are among the many topics around which this initiative has conducted research. The effort's entire thrust is driven by community needs. If a request is accepted, the community-based organization hires a research assistant, paid by the program, to oversee the research project. A few hundred organizations have benefited from the services of this effort.

For more information, go to: [www.npcr.org](http://www.npcr.org).



## Considerations for the Future

Examples of “engaged institutions of higher education” exist around the country; they take on the characteristics and nature of the issues relevant to the communities in which they are located. The potential of these efforts could be greatly enhanced by focusing on key considerations in the future, for example:

### Using Endowments and Other Funds

Few institutions have used their endowments to support partnerships. Others are discussing how alumni fundraising efforts can promote specific partnerships. A cultural shift in higher education that redistributes internal resources will likely be required for the long-term sustainability of partnerships. For example, the once-sacred pool of funds set aside for scholarships could be put toward partnerships that complement student recruitment efforts and advance an institution’s overall mission and growth.

#### + **Trinity College of Hartford, Connecticut/ Leveraging Endowment Resources Toward Community Development**

Millions of dollars in endowment funds were contributed to Trinity College’s extensive neighborhood development initiative. Since 1996, Trinity has been involved in an extensive \$175 million initiative, along with other local institutions, designed to improve local education, affordable homeownership, and jobs. They created a 16-acre “Learning Corridor” in a large neighborhood adjacent to the campus. The initiative raised millions of dollars from numerous foundations, including Kellogg, Fannie Mae, and several others. However, Trinity also made use of some of its existing resource base to sustain the effort.

For more information, go to: [www.trincoll.edu/pub/city/index.html](http://www.trincoll.edu/pub/city/index.html).

### Rewarding Faculty Involvement

Whether the powerful potential of campus-community partnerships is fully realized rests largely in higher education’s willingness to create institutional cultures that support them. Faculty rewards are among the most elusive aspects of institutionalization, and the field so far has witnessed few examples of faculty who have received tenure or other rewards based on their contributions to community partnerships.

#### + **Michigan State University/ Faculty Rewards for Community Partnerships**

At Michigan State University, faculty are evaluated on teaching, research, service, and outreach. Notably, the university defines outreach as “... generating, transmitting, applying, and preserving knowledge for the direct benefit of external audiences in ways that are consistent with university and unit missions.” Thus, research, teaching, and service that leads to community improvement are acknowledged and rewarded in this system. A guidebook developed by the university’s Office of the Vice Provost for University Outreach helps faculty figure out how to make their work both beneficial to the community and consistent with the institution’s expectations.

For more information, go to: <http://ntweb4.ais.msu.edu/default.asp>.

For more on rewards systems in general, contact the American Association for Higher Education’s Forum on Faculty Roles and Research, [www.aahe.org](http://www.aahe.org).

## resources

*The following is a list of national resources that address aspects of community and higher education partnerships:*

In 1998, the **American Association of Community Colleges** (AACC) joined America's Promise, which seeks commitments from individual citizens, schools, organizations, agencies, corporations, and communities to ensure that young people have access to five fundamental resources necessary to become successful adults. Those resources are: an ongoing relationship with a caring adult; safe places and structured activities during non-school hours; a healthy start; a marketable skill through effective education; and an opportunity to give back through community service.

AACC also sponsors programs in community building, focusing on providing students opportunities to forge relationships with people in their surrounding communities.

Relying on input from the field and critical analysis of trends, the New Expeditions project at AACC published *The Knowledge Net: Connecting Communities, Learners, and Colleges* to challenge colleges through a series of recommendations for community building.

AACC's Community Colleges Broadening Horizons through Service Learning project seeks to integrate service learning across the curriculum through model programs, workshops, publications, and technical assistance.

**Contact:**

*Ellen Hause (America's Promise) ehause@aacc.nche.edu*

*Lynn Barnett (Community Building, Knowledge Net)*

*lbarnett@aacc.nche.edu*

*Gail Robinson (Horizons Service Learning Project)*

*grobenson@aacc.nche.edu*

*American Association of Community Colleges*

*One Dupont Circle, NW, Suite 410*

*Washington, DC 20036*

*202.728.0200*

*Fax: 202.833.2467*

*www.aacc.nche.edu*

The **American Association for Higher Education** (AAHE) **Service Learning Project** aims to strengthen the educational infrastructure supporting service learning in higher education through its 18-volume monograph series entitled *AAHE's Series on Service Learning in the Disciplines*, through the AAHE-Campus Compact Consulting Corps, and through various AAHE-sponsored coalition-building meetings.

**Contact:**

*Edward Zlotkowski, Senior Associate*

*American Association for Higher Education*

*Service Learning Project*

*One Dupont Circle, Suite 360*

*Washington, DC 20036-1110*

*202.203.6440*

*Fax: 202.293.0073*

*aabes-l@aabe.org*

*www.aabe.org/service*

The **Association for Community/Higher Education Partnerships** (ACHEP) is a network of representatives from higher education and communities that exists to enhance, promote, and sustain community/higher education partnerships. ACHEP grew out of the Department of Housing and Urban Development's Community Outreach Partnerships Centers grantmaking initiative. Grantees of these programs—various institutions of higher education and their community partners—convened in order to assess the state of partnerships and engage in dialogue and knowledge development that will lead to improved partnerships.

**Contact:**

*David Cox*

*University of Memphis*

*Davidcox@memphis.edu*



**Campus Compact** is a national coalition of more than 740 college and university presidents committed to the civic purposes of higher education. To support this civic mission, Campus Compact promotes community service that develops students' *citizenship* skills and values, encourages *partnerships* between campuses and communities, and assists faculty who seek to integrate public and *community engagement* into their teaching and research. To this end, Campus Compact creates supportive academic environments for community service; assists in federal and national legislation promoting public and community service; forms partnerships with business, community, and government leaders; provides information to its members via publications and model service programs; awards grants to member schools and state affiliates; provides funding and awards for outstanding service work; and organizes conferences, forums, and meetings.

**Contact:**

*Campus Compact*  
*Brown University, Box 1975*  
*Providence, RI 02912*  
*401.863.1119*  
*campus@compact.org*  
*www.compact.org/aboutcc*

The **Campus Outreach Opportunity League** (COOL) is a national nonprofit organization dedicated to the education and empowerment of college students to strengthen the nation through community service. Its vision is to mobilize and connect students of all backgrounds to lead a movement that increases participation in our communities, promotes activism, and fosters the civic and social responsibility necessary to build a just society. COOL hosts an annual National Conference on Community Service designed to encourage and strengthen student involvement within the community. The organization also offers online and print resources targeted at helping students expand and

strengthen campus community service programs.

**Contact:**

*Ariane Hoy, Executive Director*  
*Campus Outreach Opportunity League*  
*37 Temple Place, Suite 401*  
*Boston, MA 02111*  
*617.695.COOL*  
*Fax: 617.695.0022*  
*ahoy@cool2serve.org*  
*www.cool2serve.org*

**Community-Campus Partnerships for Health** (CCPH) promotes health through partnerships between communities and higher educational institutions in a growing network of over 1,000 communities and campuses. CCPH members collaborate to promote health through service learning, community-based research, community service, and other partnership strategies. These partnerships are tools for improving health professional education, civic responsibility, and the overall health of communities. Community-Campus Partnerships for Health

**Contact:**

*Sarena D. Seifer, Executive Director*  
*Community-Campus Partnerships for Health*  
*3333 California Street, Suite 410*  
*San Francisco, CA 94118*  
*415.476.7081*  
*Fax: 888.267.9183*  
*ccph@itsa.ucsf.edu*  
*http://futurehealth.ucsf.edu/ccph.html*

The **Loka Institute** is a research and advocacy organization concerned with the social, political, and environmental repercussions of science and technology. By expanding opportunities for community organizations and residents to be involved in decision-making around the direction of science and technology research, Loka seeks to make science and technology more responsive to social and environmental concerns. The institute sponsors an interna-

tional network of research and grassroots organizations conducting community-based research for social change.

**Contact:**

*Loka Institute*  
 PO Box 355  
 Amherst, MA 01004-0355  
 413.559.5860  
 loka@loka.org

The **National Review Board for the Scholarship of Engagement** reviews and evaluates the portfolios of faculty who devote the bulk of their work to community partnerships. Due to limited reward systems for these efforts, the National Review Board provides an important support system to help community-conscious faculty prepare for annual review, promotion, and tenure. The board is composed of national leaders in community partnerships and service learning initiatives.

**Contact:**

*Amy Driscoll*  
 Amy\_driscoll@monterey.edu

**New Directions Community-Based Research Institute, Inc.** attracts and assembles multidisciplinary teams of university researchers and their students from the Long Island, New York, area and brings them to work with civic groups, which have demonstrated a willingness and a desire to become active stewards of their neighborhoods or communities.

New Directions designs and facilitates customized leadership training sessions that allow the civic groups to profitably initiate community-based research with, by, and for the mutual benefit of the researchers, their students, and the community.

**Contact:**

*O. Andrew Collver, Research Director*  
 New Directions Community-Based Research Institute  
 68 Aspen Lane  
 Stony Brook, NY 11790  
 Tel./Fax: 631.751.5320  
 ACollver@PeoplePC.com  
 www.newdirectionscbr.org

**Seedco's Institutional and Leadership Development Capacity Building Program**

exists to develop the human capital necessary to ensure success in a wide range of community-building efforts. Its *Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) Community Development Initiative*, started in 1990, has grown from five to 29 partnerships. In this program, Seedco provides various types and levels of technical assistance and capacity building to selected HBCU partnerships. The *Community Development Leadership Program* focuses on three HBCUs that receive funding and technical assistance to develop and offer education focused on the complex skills associated with operating CDCs. Seedco plans to produce a guide to establishing community development education as a means of gathering and disseminating its lessons. The *Peer-to-Peer Development Training Program* pairs 15 new or less-experienced HBCU-CDC executive directors with successful established HBCU-CDCs and other nonprofit developers to learn more about: real estate development, organizational development, administrative staffing, and the financial aspects of project development. Participants receive on-site, hands-on training experiences and participate in training workshops that are focused on enhancing real estate development skills.

**Contact:**

*Seedco and the*  
 Non-Profit Assistance Corporation  
 Institutional and Leadership Development  
 915 Broadway, 17th Floor





New York, NY 10010  
212.473.0255  
Fax: 212.473.0357  
[info@seedco.org](mailto:info@seedco.org)

The **Service-Learning Research and Development Center** advances the service learning field by furthering the understanding of service learning through the development, implementation, facilitation, and evaluation of community service programs that are an integral part of the academic curriculum.

**Contact:**

Andrew Furco, Director  
Service-Learning Research and Development Center  
615 University Hall #1040  
Berkeley, CA 94720-1040  
[afurco@uclink4.berkeley.edu](mailto:afurco@uclink4.berkeley.edu)  
<http://gse.berkeley.edu/research/slc>



The goals of the **Office of University Partnerships (OUP)** are to recognize, reward, and build upon successful examples of universities' activities in local revitalization projects; to create the next generation of urban scholars and encourage them to focus their work on housing and community development policy; and to create partnerships with other federal agencies to support innovative teaching, research, and service partnerships. OUP serves institutions of higher education, researchers, and students through grant programs, interactive conferences, and related research.

**Contact:**

United States Department of Housing and Urban  
Development  
Office of University Partnerships  
[www.oup.org](http://www.oup.org)



## resource GUIDES

The following Resource Guides are available from the *Making Connections* Technical Assistance Resource Center. Copies can be printed or ordered by visiting the Casey Foundation TARC website at [www.aecf.org/tarc](http://www.aecf.org/tarc). In addition, the TARC Resource Bank provides an online database for all information contained in the printed Resource Guides. Updated regularly, the Resource Bank allows easy searching across all guides simultaneously.

### **Economic Opportunities for Families**

- + Connecting Families to Jobs
- + Building Family Assets
- + Community Investments for Family Economic Success

### **Enhancing Social Networks**

- + Residents Engaged in Strengthening Families and Neighborhoods

### **Building High-Quality Services and Supports**

- + Building More Effective Community Schools
- + Community Safety and Justice
- + Child Care for Communities
- + Meeting the Housing Needs of Families
- + Improving Health Care for Children and Families
- + Developing Community Responses to Domestic Violence
- + Engaging Higher Education Resources
- + Promoting Responsible Fatherhood

### **Techniques for Advancing a Family Strengthening Agenda in Neighborhoods**

- + Using Strategic Communication to Support Families and Neighborhoods
- + Connecting Families to Computers and On-Line Networks



**The Annie E. Casey Foundation**

701 St. Paul Street  
Baltimore, MD 21202  
410.547.6600  
410.547.6624 fax  
[www.aecf.org](http://www.aecf.org)