



Empowering Neighborhoods through Comprehensive Community Development

Our Approach

NeighborWorks America supports comprehensive, resident-driven efforts to build vibrant, healthy local communities that provide equitable opportunities for people to thrive. NeighborWorks' approach centers strong partnerships, trust with residents and a deep commitment to place, enabling communities to respond more nimbly and productively to challenges. To support this work, NeighborWorks provides a range of resources including grant funding, technical assistance, training and peer-to-peer learning to assist organizations that are interested in deepening and expanding their comprehensive approaches to maximize community impact. NeighborWorks' flexible funding supports efforts including:

In FY 2024, 201 network organizations implemented multifaceted and cross-sector approaches to improve lives and strengthen and revitalize communities.

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- Place-based stabilization strategies aimed at restoring physical conditions, redeveloping abandoned or distressed properties, improving infrastructure, supporting economic vitality and lifting the image of communities to attract residents and investment.
- Engagement strategies that celebrate the diversity and strengths of communities and ensure that investments reflect the priorities of residents, neighborhood businesses and other key stakeholders.
- Investments in housing and community assets that improve the health, safety and general well-being of residents.
- Systems-level strategies that bring together community stakeholders to address complex challenges.
- Targeted focus to meet the needs of rural and underserved communities, including a growing focus on Native lands and rural areas confronting persistent poverty.

Measuring Impact

To create transformative impact, NeighborWorks emphasizes education in addition to project funding, expanding the skills of grantees in core comprehensive community development competencies. In addition to funding projects, NeighborWorks also supports communities' efforts to measure and assess long-term change and elevate stories of positive impact.

80% of Community Impact Measurement participants identified positive change in resident satisfaction, social capital and/or physical conditions.

Through the long-term Community Impact Measurement (CIM) project, network organizations capture, document and share data to demonstrate the impact of their community work and refine their programmatic strategies in partnership with residents and other stakeholders. NeighborWorks has also invested in its training curriculum to equip organizational leaders with tools to make critical cultural shifts to center place-based outcomes in their work.

Our Work in Action

A freshly painted porch. A new mailbox. Fresh mulch. A neighborhood flag. These efforts, all part of a coordinated "block makeover," are bringing curb appeal to communities in Chattanooga. But the beauty goes far beyond the surface.

"It slowly builds ownership pride, neighborhood pride and a sense of 'What I can do to make things better in my community?'" shares Justin Tirsun, vice president of Neighborhood Investment and Community Engagement for Chattanooga Neighborhood Enterprise (CNE), a NeighborWorks network organization. "We've learned that the people who take the first step are more likely to take additional steps."

As part of their comprehensive community development strategy, CNE began evaluating neighborhoods block by block, working with residents and making sure people in the neighborhood got to know each other. They tracked data and improvements and observed a transformation taking place: When the porches are clean and neat, families sit outside and talk to neighbors. That means more people looking out for neighborhood safety. And as neighborhoods improved, businesses returned.



"There's a saying: How do you eat an elephant? One bite at a time. This is that," Tirsun says. "Little by little, over time, we make big strides. People can see the changes."

Resident Leadership

NeighborWorks America's Community Building and Engagement (CB&E) program helps network organizations systematically develop the potential of local resident leaders and support community-led initiatives. The CB&E program supports the efforts of residents and resident associations to engage in planning processes and take action to improve the vitality and safety of the communities they call home. The Community Leadership Institute (CLI) is the cornerstone of NeighborWorks America's work to cultivate resident leaders by developing their knowledge, skills, confidence, and collective ability. As a result of 15 national CLIs, as well as many similar events at the local and regional level, over 15,000 community leaders have come together to work with their neighbors to bring about positive change through collaborative planning and decision

