



Recruiting and Developing Leadership in Community Development: Key Ingredients for Success

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September 2021

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

The community development sector has evolved greatly over the years to encompass such activities as community engagement, affordable health and housing development, and small business development. Organizations have grown and questions have emerged about who is or should be doing the work and what skills are needed. As the field has grown more complex, and as equity issues have been raised more broadly, NeighborWorks organizations, community development corporations (CDCs), and others in the nonprofit sector are expressing deep concern about the barriers to finding and retaining skilled people to do the work. Further complicating the challenge is competition from the private sector and larger nonprofits and the historic shortcomings in hiring and retaining people of color and people from the communities in which NeighborWorks organizations and CDCs are located. This has become even more prevalent as we continue in the age of COVID-19. This report responds to those concerns with a review of some of the efforts across the country to address recruitment, retention, and leadership development in community development, and related work including lessons learned. This report also includes recommended next steps.

It appears there are more programs at the entry level and more comprehensive programs at the senior level than in the middle. We believe there are opportunities to do more to retain and build the leadership and skills of people at the mid-career level in community development. There are also opportunities to attract people more consciously from other fields to community development based on the programs and strategies identified in this report.

BACKGROUND

In July 2019, NeighborWorks® America Northeast Region put out a request for proposals for a consultant “to research and identify programs that focus on recruitment and/or leadership and skills development in addition to strategies and opportunities currently in place to recruit and develop individuals, specifically to the community development field.” Following initial data gathering by Bob Van Meter, Ann L Silverman Consulting conducted an inventory of programs in place as of mid-2020 and spoke to key NeighborWorks America leaders.

We identified 50 programs across the country. We sorted our database of 50 programs into categories by level of positions they serve, including entry-level (25), mid-level (9), or senior-level (7), and identified programs that worked across levels in one organization (4) and organizations that offered programs for more than one level (entry, mid, senior) (5). We looked at programs addressing challenges to entry (recruitment and preliminary skill development) and programs focused on leadership development, skills development, and organizational growth as well as retention in the field. We selected 11 programs for case studies.

We deliberately focused on programs that are primarily addressing recruitment, retention, and leadership development in community development, although some have a broader reach.

We completed a detailed assessment of the eleven programs including identification of successes, challenges, and potential for replication. We prepared recommendations for NeighborWorks America, including what else could be done to build on these programs, and we identified gaps. We sought to add an equity lens to our review and attempted to capture some of the changes that were taking place while our analysis was being conducted (e.g. the pandemic, George Floyd murder, political shifts). As our research was completed, we saw more programs and strategies emerging and more focus on attracting and retaining people of color at all levels in community development and in other fields. We believe there are now even more emerging programs and strategies, and there has been continued re-examining and pivoting in several of the programs and examples we cite (*See Appendix 1 for the list of 50 programs identified*).

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND LESSONS LEARNED

In our interviews with program managers and key community development leaders, we asked why it is difficult to attract, retain, and develop people in nonprofit community development.

Among the core challenges identified, the following were key:

- **Access to information, education, and professional networks**—Opportunities for community development careers still “fly under the radar screen” among college-age students and at the high school level, particularly in immigrant communities and communities of color.
- **Complexity**—NeighborWorks organizations and CDCs have become complex organizations with multiple lines of business.
- **Skill definition**—In addition to mission driven advocates, organizers, and leaders, CDCs look for people with the specialized financial, real estate development, and other skills required to develop and operate affordable housing development, lending, and other programs.
- **Biases related to skills and networks**—Hiring managers, particularly those with master’s level training, may perceive that getting a master’s degree is the only way to acquire skills needed and hire accordingly, or may be more likely to look at candidates in their professional networks than those from other backgrounds.
- **Organizational culture and systemic racism**—Not all NeighborWorks organizations and CDCs have tackled their internal biases towards hiring people who look like them or went to the same schools. Many have not started reflecting on or building organizational cultures that are welcoming to all.
- **Competition for people with skills**—National nonprofit and for-profit developers, intermediaries, and government agencies compete with NeighborWorks organizations and CDCs for talent in some markets. While salaries and benefits at NeighborWorks organizations and CDCs have improved over time, they are not always sufficient to attract or retain people when others are also competing for them.

- **Sense of urgency**—When staff transition out of an organization, especially longer-tenured staff; leaders, boards, and/or hiring managers may be reluctant to take the time to seek the outside expertise needed, before conducting a search, to reflect on where they are and what type of leader or staff member they need. Given concerns with immediate priorities, there also might be reluctance to hire someone who may need to grow into the position.

The good news—there are programs and efforts across the country that aim to address these barriers and prepare people for positions in community development and related endeavors. A number of these programs have been quite successful and have been replicated or expanded. This seems to be particularly true at the entry level, and to a lesser extent at the mid to senior leadership level and organization-wide. The “Great Resignation” has also forced employers to re-think retention opportunities. Some best practices are cited in this report as well.

UPDATE: As a result of this study, NeighborWorks America is starting a pilot—the Strong Leaders Program—in Massachusetts to begin January, 2022. The nine-month pilot is focused on a cohort of 20 mid-level managers and includes courses from the NeighborWorks Training Institute, along with one-on-one mentoring.

KEY INGREDIENTS FOR PARTICIPANT SUCCESS IN THE VARIOUS PROGRAMS INCLUDE:

- Engagement with experienced coaches and mentors;
- Learning with a cohort of peers;
- Ongoing networking with colleagues and program alumni;
- A focus on individual growth and development;
- Implementation of strategic action and organizational change; and
- Access to sufficient resources, including time and money, to participate in the more extensive programs.

We heard from more than one program manager or community development leader that comprehensive programs require considerable time and money (they are expensive) and may not be accessible to all because of those barriers. Timing is also an issue for people coming out of programs and looking to grow. The jobs may not be there when someone is looking, at least in their local or regional market. We believe that connecting various programs and strategies may address some of these issues.

It appears there are more programs at the entry level and more comprehensive programs at the senior level than in the middle. We believe there are opportunities in community development to do more to retain and build the leadership and skills of people at the mid-career level. There are also opportunities to attract people more consciously from other fields to community development based on the programs and strategies identified in this report.

Following are summaries of each of the levels we explored and the programs we focused on for each level. The details for each of the programs listed in the charts are in Appendix 1.

REVIEW OF THE CASE STUDIES

ENTRY-LEVEL

Of the 25 programs designed to introduce and recruit people into the field of community development early in their careers, and begin to build their skills, we focused on three programs in three different locations across the country.

One in California engages rising college seniors with an intensive introduction to the financial and technical side of affordable housing development and a full-time summer internship that continues part-time during the senior year. Begun in 1998, California Coalition for Rural Housing (CCRH) has expanded geographically into the Pacific Northwest and serves as a model for introducing college students to the field of community development and engaging them with organizations in their own communities (mainly Latinx and Asian/Pacific Islanders).

On the east coast, the Kuehn Fellowship in Boston is geared toward those finishing their graduate education and serves as an entree into project management in affordable housing. In recent years, diversity has been added to the criteria for acceptance into the program, and people of color participation has increased to approximately 30%.

In the Midwest, the Milwaukee-based Associates in Commercial Real Estate (ACRE) program explicitly focuses on increasing the number of people of color in real estate development, construction, and property management. The challenge, put to a university professor and his observation that there were few people of color in commercial real estate in the region and nationally, led to a joint effort by local universities that is now operated by LISC Milwaukee and is being promoted nationally by LISC as a model.

CDCs and NeighborWorks organizations need to build a culture of inclusion at all levels. Salaries and benefits including flexibility to address family issues (hours, in-office time) are worth a lot to many people. Ongoing staff development plans, training benefits, and freeing people up to take training courses can demonstrate the organization's commitment to individual growth.

Program	California Coalition for Rural Housing	Kuehn Fellows	ACRE Program Milwaukee
What is this program and who does it serve?	Regional Pacific Coast—recruitment and training of diverse, entry-level community development staff	Regional Metro Boston—entry-level community development recruitment and retention of recent master's grads to become project managers— seeks to build the bench of younger affordable housing talent in Greater Boston	Regional Wisconsin—commercial real estate training program to increase the number of people of color in real estate development, construction, property management— serves people of color looking to grow in the field
When started/ended	1998—ongoing	2014—ongoing	First cohort in 2004—not every year, but has continued; ongoing
Length of program	1 year	2 years	1 year
Number of participants per cohort	12 to 17	6	20 to 26
Key elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Placed in community-based organizations (CBOs) for full-time, paid internship summer before senior year of college; part-time during senior year Rigorous real estate development curriculum and other training Focused on rural communities of color in Pacific West Cost distributed across CBOs, NeighborWorks America, and other funders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Placed at strong host nonprofits as entry-level project managers Cohort for idea sharing and monthly meetings Stipend for course work Need graduate school degree no more than five years out Foundation funded Modeled on Skadden Fellowship (legal) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 26 weekly real estate training sessions Access to mentors in the field and alumni mentors Project completion Started by professor as joint program at three universities

MID-LEVEL

Of the nine programs designed to retain mid-career people in community development and develop leadership skills, we focused on two national organizations that for more than a decade have offered programs based on cultural/affinity groups and one relatively new program based in one metro area.

National Association for Community Asset Builders (NALCAB)'s Pete Garcia Fellowship started in 2010. NALCAB recruits potential leaders from its 120 member organizations for its fellowship program. The program is deeply rooted in and focused on Latinx culture. Part of the fellowship experience is traveling, as a cohort, to site visits in communities with one or more NALCAB member organizations.

National Coalition for Asian Pacific American Community Development (CAPACD) Community in the Capital (CITC) draws its cohort from mid-level staff members in nonprofits in Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) communities. They bring participants to Washington, D.C. for immersion in policy making, legislative and advocacy skills, and activities that can be brought back to home communities. Some graduates have been promoted to executive directorships and other leadership roles in their organizations; others have moved into public sector policy-making roles, working on issues affecting low-income AAPIs.

In New York City, Enterprise Community Partners launched a program in 2018 for high-potential, mid-career people to get them ready to lead in the community development field.

UPDATE: As a result of this study, NeighborWorks America is starting a pilot—the Strong Leaders Program—in Massachusetts to begin January, 2022. The nine-month pilot is focused on a cohort of 20 mid-level managers and includes courses from the NeighborWorks Training Institute, along with one-on-one mentoring.

Program	NALCAB Pete Garcia Fellowship	National CAPACD CITC	Enterprise NYC Leadership Institute
What is this program and who does it serve?	National nonprofit leadership development program— serves mid-career/potential leaders in cultural/affinity group	National nonprofit leadership development and peer support program—now serves mid-career/potential leaders in cultural/affinity group	Regional NY area leadership development program for people looking to grow in the community development field— serves mid-career/potential leaders preparing them to be ready to lead
When started/ended	2010—ongoing	2009—ongoing	First cohort began in 2018, then paused due to COVID-19 and desire for deeper reflection
Length of program	Nine months	Originally one year; now six months	18 months
Number of participants per cohort	16 in 2020 cohort	10 fellows	18 mid- to senior-level leaders in first group; 85% people of color
Key elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coaching • National cohort • Group travel • Personal assessment • Latinx culture and history • Community development project relevant to fellow's organization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy and communications training • Project presentation • Coaching by program manager • Beginning and end in-person peer learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual development plan • Coaching • Funds to take courses • Six group trainings and six networking events • Mentors

SENIOR-LEVEL

Of the seven programs designed to retain senior leadership and build organizational capacity, we looked closely at two programs that are national, with one based in Boston.

For two decades, the NeighborWorks Achieving Excellence Program has been widely viewed as a model for individual leadership growth and organizational transformation. Through three, one-week sessions at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government, paired with peer learning groups and individual plus group coaching, participants build their skills and design and implement a performance challenge to increase the effectiveness of their organizations.

Beginning in 2005, with a pilot program for leaders of 14 grantee organizations, the California-based Haas Jr. Foundation has offered Flexible Leadership Awards (FLAs) that support coaching, training, and consulting to develop and implement leadership plans among a select group of their strongest grantees. Other funders have joined the program since 2010.

The Boston-based Barr Foundation launched its fellowship program in 2005. Each cohort of fellows traveled together on a learning journey in order to build trust and respect among a diverse group of leaders of Boston area nonprofits who did not necessarily previously know each other. Each fellow takes a three-month sabbatical. The foundation provides significant operating grants to the fellow's organization to facilitate distributed leadership development during the sabbatical. Evaluations of the program point to individual, organizational, and community-wide outcomes based on new relationships and networks.

Mentors and coaches who are or have been CDC or intermediary leaders (including some who may be retiring and/or who came to community development from other fields) can help to train potential new leaders coming from boards or other fields.

Program	NeighborWorks Achieving Excellence	Haas Jr. Flexible Leadership Awards	Barr Fellowship
What is this program and who does it serve?	National community development organizational transformation and leadership development program— serves senior leaders (initially executive directors, broadened to include others) of nonprofits who are ready to grow further	National nonprofit leadership development and organizational development program— serves high performing organizational grantees who are ready for change	Regional metro Boston organizational support, leadership development, and networking program— serves successful nonprofit leaders and organizations
When started/ended	2002—ongoing	2005 to 2010 pilot; then expanded and is ongoing	2005—ongoing
Length of program	16 months	Three, five-year grants; sometimes more than one	Two years
Number of participants per cohort	Up to 60 executive directors or senior leaders	Initially 14 of Haas grantees; now 30 plus other funders joining and funding some of their grantees	10 to 12 executive directors of nonprofits and their organizations in each cohort
Key elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance challenge project • Peer learning groups and meetings • Individual and group coaching • Classes at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grants for coaching, training, and consulting • Consultant support to develop leadership plan, implementation strategy • Peer learning network 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cohort learning journey • Three-month sabbatical • Two retreats per year • Coaches support interim leadership during fellow sabbatical • Operating budget support provided by the foundation • Networks develop among leaders

ACROSS LEVELS WITHIN AN ORGANIZATION

Of the four programs identified as internal to one organization to develop staff management and leadership capacity, we focused on one that modeled its program after and in consultation with the NeighborWorks Achieving Excellence Program. It is part of its Culture of Excellence pilot and is focused on attracting and retaining more people of color.

New Jersey Community Capital and its Culture of Excellence program utilizes the performance challenge as a focal point so that participants' work in the program is closely tied to the organization's strategic plan and is action oriented. The cohort of participants were selected from across the organization's staff in order to strengthen internal relationships as well as develop leadership skills and a tangible outcome.

Common Bond Communities, based in St. Paul and serving Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Iowa communities, seeks to address core areas of attracting and retaining staff through a series of action steps, including an organization culture assessment, incentives for staff at all levels, and a comprehensive shift to advance equity within the organization.

Skills assessments could be combined with short courses to train people.

Program	New Jersey Community Capital Culture of Excellence	Common Bond Communities (no program name)
What is this program and who does it serve?	Internal to one organization— leadership development program servicing staff of one organization ; built on Achieving Excellence/Culture of Excellence model	Internal to one community development organization— attracting and retaining staff, building leadership, and seeking to attract and retain more people of color
When started/ ended	2020—ongoing	2019—ongoing
Length of program	Nine months	Ongoing series of activities
Number of participants per cohort	Ideally 12; first cohort started with 12 and ended with 10	Not cohorts; a range of participants in different aspects of the program
Key elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal program, applicants chosen from within organization • Each participant chooses a challenge that fits within organizational strategic plan • Worked with NeighborWorks America to design program modeled on NeighborWorks Achieving Excellence Program • Uses coaches recommended by NeighborWorks America (former NeighborWorks Achieving Excellence coaches) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moving from being an antiracist organization to advancing equity • Conducted assessment, came out with equity framework • Evolved from inclusion council to equity working group with senior leaders and non-senior members • Seeking to retain and attract people with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workforce training • Mentoring • Bonus compensation program • Leadership forum

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES IN THE MIDDLE

In our interviews, people noted that NeighborWorks organizations and CDCs lose people who they have invested in, particularly real estate staff who may be drawn to higher salaries, better working conditions, or other factors at national nonprofits, for profits, and intermediaries. We continue to see a steady demand for senior project managers from CDCs and NeighborWorks organizations with a particular interest in people of color with high level skills. A number of longtime CDC and NeighborWorks organization leaders have been retiring. At the same time, some people with real estate and management skills from government and the private sector express an interest in transitioning into community development but, in some cases, are finding barriers to entry.

Leaders at NeighborWorks America and at Enterprise Community Partners point to examples of CDC board leaders and people coming from other careers into community development who they have informally paired with executives of other CDCs for mentoring and supporting. Massachusetts Association of Community Development Corporation's (MACDC) Mel King Institute's latest mentoring program attracted people of color with financial management and construction management skills, among others, who expressed an interest in affordable housing project management. We believe there are opportunities to build on these efforts and develop more. Following are some recommendations for and responses to the concerns we heard.

Where can we find people?

We believe that organizations may need to think more broadly in order to find people and to promote community development positions, including in some of the following places:

- Property management companies that serve communities where CDCs/NeighborWorks organizations are located
- Private development firms
- Real estate sales companies in communities that CDCs/NeighborWorks organizations serve
- Financial institutions/CDFIs/syndicators
- Law schools (e.g. Skadden Fellowship) and law offices
- Business schools
- HBCUs, community colleges, and other types of degree programs

- Philanthropy
- Government agencies
- CDC boards

Candidates don't have the skills we need.

But do they have the aptitude? Skills assessments could be combined with short courses to train people. Some real estate development consultants, possibly with some coaching, could serve as coaches and mentors to those who have some real estate related skills but whose skills are not at the level sought or specific enough to affordable housing. Mentors and coaches who are, or have been, CDC or intermediary leaders (including some who may be retiring and/or who came to community development from other fields) can help to train potential new leaders coming from boards or other fields.

We can't pay staff and consultants or coaches.

A part-time, short-term coach and a project manager may not be more expensive than a senior project manager. Perhaps intermediaries including NeighborWorks America can fund part of these costs or offer specific training for development consultants to become coaches. Some of the nonprofits that are able have been raising their salaries and benefits to compete or retain people. Bonuses have been introduced by some as well as signing bonuses.

How do we keep people?

As noted above, CDCs and NeighborWorks organizations need to build a culture of inclusion at all levels. Salaries and benefits, including flexibility to address family issues (hours, in-office time), are worth a lot to many people. Ongoing staff development plans, training benefits, and freeing people up to take training courses can demonstrate the organization's commitment to individual growth.

Some folks will leave anyway.

CDCs and NeighborWorks organizations won't always be able to keep people in their organizations, particularly if they don't have that much turnover or have limited opportunities for growth. Timing is not always a match relative to when someone is ready to go. But combining some of these strategies with increased communication among potential candidates and CDCs and NeighborWorks organizations may keep people in community development related work, if not at specific organizations.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDED NEXT STEPS

What needs to happen?

- **Recruit a diverse group of entry-level candidates into community development (CD).**
- **Retain mid-level people and develop their capabilities to advance in their organizations or in community development.**
- **Recruit a more diverse group of mid- to senior-level candidates to community development and support their success.**

What can NeighborWorks organizations and CDCs do?

- **Recruit a diverse group of entry-level candidates into community development:**
 - Introduce young people to community development careers at an early age.
 - Complete organizational culture assessment; address barriers to entry.
 - Participate in/recruit for entry-level programs like AmeriCorps VISTA.
 - Bring in and support new people of color.
 - Build teams that include entry-level, mid-career, and senior-level staff.
- **Retain mid-level people and develop their capabilities to advance in their organizations or in the field:**
 - Do organizational culture assessments; provide a welcoming environment.
 - Build individual leadership development/growth plans into employee evaluations.
 - Fund and support skills and leadership training for staff (e.g. NeighborWorks Achieving Excellence; other regional offerings).
 - Review salary and benefit structure to ensure they are competitive.
 - Recognize and encourage generational shifts in leadership/leadership style.
 - In changing times, bring in and support new people of color.
 - Build teams that include entry-, mid-, and senior-level staff.

- **Recruit a more diverse group of mid- to senior-level candidates to community development and support their success:**
 - Build and maintain a welcoming culture.
 - Ensure that new leaders including people of color are introduced to support structures, networks, and mentors.
 - Review salary and benefits structures to ensure they are competitive.
 - Recognize and encourage generational shifts in leadership/leadership style.

What can NeighborWorks America do?

- **Recruit a diverse group of entry-level candidates into community development:**
 - Introduce young people to community development careers at an early age.
 - Participate in/recruit for entry-level programs like AmeriCorps VISTA.
 - Better publicize openings at NeighborWorks organizations/in community development.
 - Help define competencies needed for positions and how to recruit based on identified competencies.
 - Help identify diverse set of coaches and mentors (possibly train new ones).
 - Continue support for regional programs that introduce people to community development (e.g. CCRH Diversity Internship program).
- **Retain mid-level people and develop their capabilities to advance in their organizations or community development:**
 - Better publicize vacancies at NeighborWorks organizations/in community development.
 - Build on the Strong Leaders pilot model currently focused in Massachusetts.
 - Fund Achieving Excellence and target mid-level candidates with potential to lead.
 - Support other programs that target mid-level candidates with potential to lead (e.g. NALCAB).
 - Publicize NeighborWorks Achieving Excellence Program success stories, stories of organizational impact, and leadership success.
 - Further develop regional/less costly/more accessible versions of NeighborWorks Achieving Excellence Program.
 - Capture lessons and share guidance on how to be a good coach from experienced NeighborWorks Achieving Excellence Program coaches before they retire, and from those already retired.

- Fund/encourage other coaching/mentoring efforts, particularly for people of color and mid-career job changers.
- Recruit/train more coaches and mentors of color.
- Continue to provide operating support to NeighborWorks organizations.
- Formalize a database of NeighborWorks Achieving Excellence graduates and set up a LinkedIn group.
- Use NeighborWorks Achieving Excellence network and other program networks to publicize jobs; allow job recruiters access to NeighborWorks Achieving Excellence graduate database.
- Continue NeighborWorks America salary survey, but review categories and update regularly (maybe expand to non-NeighborWorks organizations); add benefits and bonuses.
- **Recruit a more diverse group of mid- to senior-level candidates to community development and support their success:**
 - Ensure that new leaders including people of color are introduced to support structures, networks, and mentors.
 - Convene NeighborWorks organization chief executive officers and boards to discuss what makes a great leader, and share guidance with boards conducting chief executive officer searches.
 - Help boards understand the need to sometimes pay more for a new chief executive officer, and hire a search firm.
 - Continue the NeighborWorks America salary survey but review categories and update regularly to make it more useful for searches (maybe expand to non-NeighborWorks organizations); add a section on benefits and bonuses.
 - Fund/encourage organizational assessments including culture and racial equity plans before conducting chief executive officer searches.
 - Formalize a support structure for new leaders, particularly people of color leaders in NeighborWorks organizations.
 - Model mentoring and support for second level leaders to move up (e.g. demonstrate/publicize what NeighborWorks America is doing to support leadership growth and succession).
 - Support sharing of lessons learned from successful searches, particularly transitions from long-time leaders to next-gen leaders.
 - Publicize NeighborWorks Achieving Excellence Program success stories, stories of organizational impact, and leadership success.

- Further develop regional, less costly, more accessible versions of NeighborWorks Achieving Excellence Program.
- Capture lessons learned (e.g. how to be a good coach) from experienced NeighborWorks Achieving Excellence Program coaches before they retire/from retired ones.
- Fund/encourage other coaching, mentoring, and peer learning efforts, particularly for new people of color and mid-career job changers.
- Recruit/train more coaches and mentors of color.

What can NeighborWorks America and other national intermediaries do together?

- **Recruit a diverse group of entry-level candidates into community development:**
 - Introduce young people to community development careers at an early age.
 - Participate in and recruit for entry-level programs like AmeriCorps VISTA.
- **Recruit a more diverse group of mid- to senior-level candidates to community development and support their success:**
 - Fund a serious effort to support people of color leaders.
 - Collaborate to explore how to develop a larger database of ready leaders for leadership positions.
 - Conduct a campaign to introduce community development careers and opportunities to transitional and career changers, particularly people of color in banking, law, and related careers.

UPDATE—RESPONSE TO THE “GREAT RESIGNATION”

This report was written in the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic. Since then, the country and community development are experiencing the “Great Resignation”—people leaving their jobs or people reluctant to return to work the way it was pre-pandemic. Here are some tips from Michelle Coussens of Plan B Consulting to retain the staff you have:

Move from a “people management” mindset to one of “people enablement”

- Check to see if job descriptions are clear and motivating
- Adopt a people-first approach
- Provide the tools to allow people to do more themselves
- People (and companies) are focusing less on careers and more on experiences
- Shift from set job titles and descriptions to skill-based, continuously evolving roles
- Empower and support employees in evolving their skills

Expose employees to different responsibilities and opportunities

- Engage them in cross-functional teams, job shadowing, and cross-training
- Provide technical training and professional development
- Broaden capabilities through new opportunities
- Give them more control over how and when they work
- Help them advance in their careers
- Sponsor their involvement in associations and other industry or professional groups
- Evaluate their skills periodically, and benchmark them against their career interests and your future needs
- Also, use such information to fill replacements and fuel succession planning
- Heighten awareness of transparency and employee opportunities
- Increase agility in shorter time frames

- Accommodate more fluid job responsibilities
- Shift focus from specific job positions to talent pools
- Cluster capabilities

What does supportive behavior look like?

- Listen to employees' personal and professional problems
- But, also respect their right to privacy
- Enable empowered problem-solving
- Encourage, reassure, and acknowledge employee efforts in an appreciative way
- Realize that there may be more than one right way to do something
- Explain not just what we need but why we need it
- Share needed information at the right times
- Make ourselves personable and vulnerable
- Provide needed resources and remove obstacles
 - Tools: physical, technological, financial, and interpersonal

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thank you to the many people who provided input and gave generously of their time to be interviewed for this project over the course of 2019-2020, and to those who provided valuable feedback to our presentations in 2021.

NeighborWorks America Northeast Region Project Sponsors

Joanie Straussman Brandon
Eileen Anderson

NeighborWorks America

Christie Cade, Christine Deady, Randy Gordon, Lisa Hasegawa, Don Phoenix, Elizabeth Hollins, John Santner, Lynne Wallace, Kathryn Watts, Debbie Wise

Other Interviewees

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Project Consultant

Bob Van Meter

Funding Support

New York Community Bancorp.

Editing and Graphic Design

GO! Creative, LLC

APPENDIX 1

APPENDIX 1A: Entry-level/Regional

California Coalition of Rural Housing Internship for Diversity in Nonprofits (CCRH)

Who for/why: Since 1998, the CCRH Internship for Diversity in Nonprofits has recruited college students during their junior year for a full-time, summer internship that continues part-time throughout their senior year. Participants come from Latinx, Indigenous, and southeast Asian communities and are placed in nonprofit organizations in ten rural California communities as well as Roseburg, Oregon and Spokane, Washington.

What: Each year, 12 to 17 students join the program, which begins with intensive training in real estate development skills (pre-COVID-19 was one week program through University of California, Davis; currently one month virtual). While most students are already studying urban planning, business, finance, or architecture, they may also come from other majors, such as ethnic studies or sociology—the internship program is open to all majors. Along with the early emphasis on technical skills, the program blends learning with doing. Students have learning competency goals and plans built into their internship.

Hosting nonprofits pay 65% of the \$15-16 per hour intern stipend, and the CCRH program has raised funds from banks, foundations, and individuals for the remainder of the stipends and other program costs. In addition, NeighborWorks America has paid 50% of non-stipend program costs since 2007 and is heavily involved in offering access to training.

Changes over time: The emphasis on real estate development skills was an early pivot for the program, based on observation that retention in community development was low, and then followed by survey feedback from host agencies. CCRH learned that an important piece of what makes a successful entry-level project manager is hard skills, and this remains an important component for creating a pipeline of leaders in communities of color.

“We also know that in order to be competitive for many upper management and executive level positions within these organizations, candidates generally must have sound knowledge of the real estate development process and financing of affordable housing/commercial development. Thus, the program serves as a critical pipeline not only for people of color to enter the field, but to be competitive for positions of increasing responsibility and leadership in the field (*Internship Program Executive Summary 2019 pdf*).”

Program staff observed that, over the years, internship host agencies have also changed how they engage younger new talent. One example is focusing on inclusion in the workplace and forming teams with senior-, mid-level, and entry-level members working together on projects.

Outcomes/successes: Two hundred people have graduated from the program including its current director. More than half of the program graduates continue to work in community development. The program notes on its website that they engage students who reflect the diversity of the rural West who would not otherwise know about community development, and they create a pipeline of highly qualified candidates.

The program is designed for students to gain particular skills through an individual work plan. Student progress is monitored using onsite assessments, and all participants have the opportunity to shadow leaders in their organization to gain exposure to leadership positions. At the end of the year, students present their final projects to a “mock city council” for approval. Some interns are offered full-time positions at their host agencies following graduation from the program. Participants not offered positions are referred by CCRH to NeighborWorks America programs including AmeriCorps VISTA, Community Scholars Summer Internship program, and other similar programs. CCRH alumni lead the graduation program and are a key resource for mentoring and networking opportunities.

Interview with Gisela Salgado, director of leadership development programs, CCRH, September 4, 2020

Entry-level/Regional

Khuen Fellows

Who for/why: Begun in 2015 by a Boston-area private foundation, the Khuen Foundation’s original purpose was to 1) build the bench of younger affordable housing talent in Massachusetts and 2) add capacity to housing nonprofits. The first goal has taken more precedence over time.

Fellows must have a graduate degree and be within five years of finishing graduate school. Many have come from local city planning and related graduate programs (Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Harvard University, Northeastern University, Wentworth Institute of Technology) .

What: The focus is on delivering a work experience that will build direct project management and real estate skills with an emphasis on affordable housing development. Fellows are placed at local CDCs and national affordable housing developers based in the Boston area. They earn a salary (currently around \$70,000 per year) for the two years of their fellowship. The program offers augmentation of that experience with monthly meetings, a cohort for idea sharing, and a stipend (\$2,000) for coursework of the fellow’s choice.

There have been six fellows per cohort. Host organizations pay benefits. The Khuen Foundation pays the remainder of the costs and provides oversight by its executive director. The program is modeled after the Skadden Fellowship for public interest law.

Changes over time: After the first year, the program emphasis was intentionally narrowed to focus on project manager positions and was more flexible. According to the executive director, this approach worked poorly, especially in terms of supervision and building the cohort. With the second cohort, the program became focused, and improved significantly, by conveying what the fellowship would deliver in terms of placement and connection of the fellows.

The executive director and foundation trustees aggressively reached out to graduate schools, leveraged personal connections, and intentionally added diversity to the criteria in the fellow application to increase the diversity of the pool of fellows. These measures have resulted in 30% of the fellows being people of color in the last two cohorts.

In 2020, the program anticipated fewer hosts for 2021 and, consequentially, selected a smaller cohort. They anticipated that many hosts might not be ready or willing to engage in remote onboarding and supervising a fellow. A professional recruiter also was retained to help attract candidates for the 2021 pool— there were five fellows in 2021.

Outcomes/successes: According to the Khuen Foundation, the program has resulted in (broadly) a 100% retention rate in community development of the fellows. Many were hired by the organizations for which they worked. Some moved to other aspects of the work (e.g. city and state government, lending, etc.); most have stayed in the region.

According to the former executive director, the selection of strong host organizations is a significant factor in attracting fellows. They also report that the cohort and network are very important. It is now a brand and a distinction in the Boston area to be or have been a Kuehn Fellow.

Interview with Jen Gilbert, former executive director, Khuen Foundation, September, 2020

Entry- to mid-level/Local to regional Associates in Commercial Real Estate (ACRE)

Who for/why: The Associates in Commercial Real Estate (ACRE) program has provided graduate-level training in real estate investment, development, and management to men and women of color in southeast Wisconsin. The original idea for starting ACRE was to achieve greater representation by people of color in the commercial real estate (CRE) industry in Milwaukee. In early 2004, a colleague emailed Professor Mark Eppli after a commercial real estate development conference and inquired why there weren't any people of color present. Eppli began to investigate the rates of participation by people of color in CRE development. He was shocked and disappointed by the figures he unearthed.

One statistic, in particular, unnerved him: according to the Wall Street Journal, in 2003 less than 1% of the 100,000 professionals who worked in CRE development were black. Professor Eppli designed a program to help people of color access careers in commercial real estate in Milwaukee, and he sought funding support from local philanthropies and developers to bring the idea to fruition.

What: The inaugural class began in fall 2004 and finished in May 2005. The ACRE model was developed on the premise that access to careers in the CRE industry is often achieved through informal networks of family, friends, and colleagues. Without such connections, entry into the field is difficult. People of color face challenges due to a scarcity of role models in Milwaukee's real estate field. ACRE extends these networks to promising students through 24 to 26 weeks of classroom education, networking opportunities, applied project-based training, and mentorship. The once-a-week cycle of ACRE classes combines instruction in real estate development, property management, and construction management with case studies, team presentations, industry networking events, and tours of active commercial projects.

Changes over time: The program began as a partnership between Marquette University, the Milwaukee School of Engineering, and the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. The program was originally focused on commercial real estate development and consisted of 26 classes, plus a final group project. LISC Milwaukee became program administrator in 2014, and the focus expanded to development, construction management, and property management.

In the first two years, paid internships were provided to ACRE graduates. These internships did not continue due to a number of overarching concerns. First, the initial selection process required all students to be employed full time. Students who wanted to take on an internship would have to quit their current job. Second, according to the LISC program administrator, year-long internships would not be considered internships from a legal/human resources perspective, but rather paid employment. Finally, after the first two years of running the internships, it became apparent that many small-to-mid-sized firms could not commit to an internship each year prior to taking on a student.

There is now a mentorship program. The mentee learns and works with a mentor to create or work on a development project. ACRE has experienced moderate success with a number of active local developers together with other ACRE graduates being employed in the real estate/construction communities and in local government.

Mentors invest for the long term including some providing equity investment for projects. Alumni come back to work with the program as trainers, greatly increasing its diversity.

Local real estate developer Barry Mandel pledged to match up to \$100,000 to support the ACRE program. LISC Milwaukee raised the additional funding for the match through a fundraising event and an appeal. LISC also has submitted grant applications to support the ACRE program.

The cohort size has varied. LISC tries to keep the class size to around 20 students. Generally, they try to do a cohort each year, however, they took one year off to gain more interest, reevaluate the program, and make improvements.

LISC Milwaukee has also instituted an annual alumni gathering. In 2020, the program was virtual with four participants in Madison, Wisconsin. National LISC also was encouraging other cities to adopt this type of program.

Outcomes/successes: An independent third-party evaluation of the program found that ACRE increases the confidence and competence of professionals who complete the program.

According to the (now former) program administrator, the ACRE Program has 280 alumni including three aldermen, two government bid managers, three construction company owners, and four developers. At least six alumni work in various capacities throughout the City of Milwaukee Department of Development and other areas. Many alumni work in community development. Still other alumni are quietly changing their own neighborhoods through ownership of a duplex or four units, building wealth and community. The program has achieved prestige, locally and nationally. National LISC has held ACRE up as a model to other cities.

Interview with Patricia Goeman, former deputy director, LISC Milwaukee, October 2020

APPENDIX 1B: Mid- to senior-level/National

National Association for Latino Community Asset Builders (NALCAB) Pete Garcia (previously Colegio) Community Economic Development Fellowship

Who for/why: The fellowship program targets mid-level, high-potential Latinx applicants with three to eight years of experience in the nonprofit sector and/or financial institutions and develops their skills to prepare them to take on higher level leadership positions (current executive directors are not eligible to apply). It provides in-person and virtual training and combines personal assessment and development of competencies and practical skills to help fellows grow in the field. But, most importantly, it is deeply rooted in and focused on Latinx culture. Fellows explore their own Latinx ancestry and culture and how that can be an asset in meeting their communities' needs. The fellowship began in 2010 as the Colegio Community Economic Development Fellowship and was renamed to honor the late Pete Garcia, former CEO of Arizona Chicanos por la Causa and a founding board member of NALCAB.

What: Each class of fellows travels as a group to three locations to conduct site visits to some of NALCAB's 120 member organizations. Rather than reinventing the wheel in their own communities, fellows share best practices and benefit from peer-to-peer learning in relationships that cross the country and go beyond the fellowship class year. When surveyed about their individual leadership project, 89% felt the fellowship prepared them to implement their project, and 63% said they had implemented their leadership project.

Changes over time: The COVID-19 pandemic necessitated a pivot in the program for the 2020 class. The fellows were not able to travel to site visits and participate in in-person training. They were, instead, encouraged to utilize coaching provided by the former director of the program who had worked with the program since its second cohort.

Outcomes/successes: NALCAB published a report, "A Reflection: 10 Years of NALCAB's Peter Garcia Community Economic Development Fellowship." Over that period of time, 153 fellows graduated from its program, representing 90 nonprofits in 24 states plus Washington, D.C. and Puerto Rico. A survey of the participants revealed that 60% of them had been promoted within one year of completing the fellowship. Significantly, 58% were already in a leadership position in their organization during the fellowship and 78% had been in the community and economic development field for more than five years (based on a sample size of 43 respondents).

Interview with Irene Chavez, director of training and leadership development, September 29, 2020

Interview with Carol Rodriguez, fellowship program coach and former director of training and leadership development, October 7, 2020

Mid- to senior-level/National

National Coalition for Asian Pacific American Community Development (CAPACD) Community in the Capital (CITC)

Who for/why: The CITC Program began in 2009 to convene mainly executive directors of member organizations of the National Coalition for Asian Pacific American Community Development (CAPACD) for a week-long leadership development program in Washington, D.C. The goal of the program is to build up advocacy efforts in low-income Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) communities and also address leadership development and retention in community development organizations serving AAPI communities.

What: National CAPACD member organizations are in 21 states and the Pacific Islands. Each year, a cohort of 10 fellows travels to Washington, D.C. for a week-long intensive program of leadership development and advocacy. The current program director describes it as “come to D.C. and then go to the Hill.” The program aims to: support the development of emerging leadership from its base; provide opportunities to build strategic relationships with other community leaders; deepen perspectives on critical issues and concerns impacting AAPI communities at the federal level; develop a coordinated national and local advocacy strategy around an identified AAPI policy agenda; study the legislative process including experiential learning on conducting education and advocacy with congressional representatives, policymakers from federal agencies, and the administration; and build coalitions with allies and partners.

Changes over time: CITC began as a year-long program, but it was difficult for participants to commit to a program of that length. The program was shortened, first to nine months, then to six months. Initially, the program kickoff was at CAPACD’s national convention in September but was changed in 2019 to begin in January and end in June. Due to COVID-19, there was consideration to extend the program for the 2020 cohort into the 2021 program year along with the new cohort. The program was originally designed for executive directors of member organizations. It has shifted over time to include other mid- to senior-level staff, in addition to executive directors.

Outcomes/successes: There are now nearly 100 alumni of this program. Some have become board members or joined the staff of CAPACD. Graduates are often promoted to executive director or other leadership roles in their organizations. Some become policymakers and work for federal agencies. According to the current director, for some, success may be staying at their organization and moving up to the executive director position, while for others it may be moving to another position but staying in public service.

Interview with Kelley Lou, director of member empowerment, National CAPACD, September 22, 2020

APPENDIX 1C: Mid- to senior-level/Regional

Enterprise Leadership Institute, Enterprise New York City

Who for/why: This program was intended to support mid- to senior-level managers in New York City area community development nonprofits and help prepare them to become executive directors. The program statement set the following goal for participants: “to equip the next generation of CDC leaders with the multiple skills necessary to lead a complex community organization.”

What: Enterprise contracted with the Support Center in New York City to complete 360 evaluations and design individual development plans for participants. The program offered one-on-one coaching (10 to 20 hours), funds to take courses, six group trainings, six networking events, plus mentors. Training sessions were customized to community development, and Enterprise brought in community development specialists to supplement. They felt it was important that there be a separation between Enterprise as funders and the training and support structure.

While not focused exclusively on leaders of color, there was a clear emphasis on increasing the diversity of organizational leadership and developing leaders whose demographics or backgrounds align with the communities they are working in.

Changes over time: Enterprise paused the program after one year, in part due to COVID-19. They wanted to rethink some aspects of the program before restarting. They saw challenges in timing between getting people ready to lead and executive job availability. They also recognized issues of time and availability. People had trouble taking advantage of all elements of the program given their busy jobs.

Outcomes/successes: Peer learning, coaching, and mentors were greatly valued by participants. The program increased participants’ confidence to lead and skills needed to be ready to lead. The program also started building networks for potential leaders, many of whom are people of color. According to Jenny Yang, Enterprise Foundation has used lessons learned from the program to support new executive directors in the region with mentors and support networks.

Interview with Jenny Yang, program director, Enterprise Community Partners, Enterprise New York City, September 2020

APPENDIX 1D: Senior-level/National NeighborWorks Achieving Excellence Program

Who for/why: The program was started in 2002 by Sally Digges of NeighborWorks America in response to people telling her, “I’ve been an executive director for 20 years and speak at conferences. There are no new challenges for me, but I’d rather stay with this organization than move on.” The first cohort included 45 seasoned executive directors from community development organizations. The ultimate goal of the program is to support leaders to design and implement transformational change in their organizations and have greater impact.

What: Achieving Excellence is based on four Cs: curriculum (from Harvard University’s Kennedy School of Government), coaching, cohort (peer group), and challenge (a performance challenge that is a vehicle for individual leadership development and organizational transformation).

Pre-COVID-19, the academic portion of the program included three, one-week sessions in residence at Harvard University’s Kennedy School of Government, with 10-person peer groups meeting in person, three times a year, and one-on-one coaching sessions in between in-person meetings. The current cohort of 50 began virtually in February 2021 with the location of subsequent gatherings to be determined.

Changes over time: When it began in 2002, NeighborWorks Achieving Excellence Program focused on executive directors of NeighborWorks charter member organizations, but it is now open to other senior leaders and community-serving organizations. Some recent cohorts have had more non-chief executive officers than chief executive officers and more non-network member organizations than member groups.

Recently, there has been more attention on diversity of faculty and coaches and more integration of NeighborWorks America’s REDI (Race, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion) framework into the program. Program staff report that close to 50% of participants are people of color.

Outcomes/successes: There are now more than 500 alumni of the program. NeighborWorks America evaluates the success of its Achieving Excellence cohorts two to three years after the end of the 16-month program and asks graduates to quantify the percentage of results attributable to their participation in NeighborWorks Achieving Excellence. In a recent evaluation of Cohort VI (September 2012 to February 2014), 93% of graduate survey respondents reported that one year after the end of the program they had achieved, or would soon achieve, success completing their performance challenge. Networks have been established among participants and in some cases coaching groups continued beyond the formal program.

Interview with Chris Deady, senior director, Leadership & Workforce Development Programs, NeighborWorks America, September 8, 2020

Interview with Margo Kelly, lead coach, NeighborWorks Achieving Excellence Program, September 11, 2020

Senior-level/Local (Boston area)

Barr Fellowship

Who for/why: Since 2005, the Barr Fellowship has brought together a cohort of individuals from a diverse group of organizations to support the continued growth of seasoned leaders, while also helping their organizations increase their effectiveness and build networks among groups and leaders. In 2017, the program was extended beyond nonprofits to include faith-based groups, public sector leaders, and social entrepreneurs. Since then, the program has aimed for a mix of younger (under 40) and more senior leaders, as well as organizational and cultural diversity. Some of the participants have been community development leaders.

What: The two-year program begins with a group learning journey, often an international trip to meet leaders in other environments, and build bonds among cohort members. During the fellowship period, each fellow takes a three month sabbatical from their organization. Fellows also convene for a series of facilitated retreats. The fellowship provides \$125,000 in financial support to be used flexibly, including coaching for the leader and capacity-building within the organization, often leading to a distributed leadership structure. So far, the program has graduated six cohorts, totaling 68 alumni. The current cohort of 12 began in 2019.

Changes over time: The program was reduced from three years to two and operating grants were increased significantly from \$30,000: first to \$40,000, then to \$100,000, and now at \$125,000. The grants give organizations flexibility to try new things. Since 2017, organizations have used some of their grant funds to hire an organizational coach for the leader and the team in the organization.

The Barr Foundation also created a formal alumni network fostering connections among alumni and to the program. Also starting in 2017, the program engaged a new team of evaluators with a specific focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion. The 2019 cohort was about to leave for their learning journey in Jordan in March 2020 when COVID-19 interrupted their plans. A Barr partner, Interaction Institute for Social Change, facilitates monthly virtual programming until it is safe for the cohort to take their learning journey and sabbaticals. The Barr Foundation recently announced that it will select its next cohort in 2023.

Outcomes/successes: Several Barr Fellowship evaluations and case studies have been published in the program's 15-year history. Well-documented outcomes include sabbaticals for senior leaders that have led to rejuvenation and retention while their organizations have developed stronger distributive leadership pathways and capabilities. Much has also been written about the social capital created by bringing together leaders who are diverse in age, race, gender, and sector and providing them with the learning journey and other activities that lead to deep trust and respect. The focus on relationships and networks, bringing together leaders from different areas, and giving them access to a network of leaders who didn't necessarily know each other before allows fellows to lean in personally and professionally. According to the program's director, partnerships have increased where previously there was competition. Alumni become part of a fellowship network which connects them to alumni of other cohorts and enhances their networks.

Interview with Kim Haskins, senior program officer, Sector Effectiveness, Barr Foundation, September 15, 2020

APPENDIX 1E: Senior-level and organizational/National Evelyn and Walter Haas Junior Fund Flexible Leadership Development Awards

Who for/why: The Haas, Jr. Fund is a national foundation based in the San Francisco Bay Area. The fund developed this program to focus on their anchor grantees and other high performing groups. This was not a community development-focused program. Haas, Jr. Fund wanted to invest in leadership and in organizational development and extend their work beyond their operating grants. They targeted executive directors and organizations, particularly senior teams, but sometimes also boards. Grants focused on organizational outcomes. There was a pilot program from 2005 to 2010, then there were changes over time. Initially, there were 30 active groups in the program for one-and-a-half- to two-year cycles.

What: Haas, Jr.'s program offers flexible and comprehensive grants. A strategic plan consultant, a kind of “organizational development thought partner” (according to Bill Ryan, evaluator of the pilot program), was key for each executive director in the pilot allowing them to figure out how much to do and which choices to make. It was immersive—they convened people a lot and were constantly refocusing people, according to Bill Ryan. Each group had three leadership and three mission related goals. Many things happened during each group's initial grant.

Initially grants were an average of \$46,500 per year, up to five years, plus \$6,500 for coaching/training and \$1,500 to attend convenings. More recent grants were \$57,500 for the organization, plus more for the executive director. The current program director notes the program is both expensive and powerful.

Changes over time: The original staff person left approximately six years ago, then there were two years with an interim staff person before the current staff was hired. The program evaluator and evaluation style changed over time with more focus on “stories of the investments.”

There has been some shift in the way the program has been delivered. The program is described by the current director as ambitious and demanding with current efforts to create an order of priority and not flood people. The program was sometimes too much of a good thing according to the executive director. Some participants were too stretched to take advantage of all the program had to offer.

There is now increased peer learning and integration of racial equity concepts. Haas, Jr. Fund will give groups three to five awards over time. Haas, Jr. also brought the program to other foundations, including the Packard and Irvine Foundations. Those groups don't have the peer learning component and only fund for two years. Strategic plan consultants are being renamed as “capacity coaches.” Consultants are now more diverse in age, race, and ethnicity.

The current program director says that the key is offering this program on top of general operating support. She sees the program as centered on the executive director's voice. From her perspective, there is now less paperwork, leadership plans are shorter, and there is more focus on diversity at all levels, organizational culture, and power dynamics. Other core elements of the program—work on strategy, strengthening boards, fundraising, and financial management—are the same.

COVID-19 forced program leaders who were teaching the capacity coaches to conduct their work virtually.

Outcomes/successes: In the pilot, the program evaluator was a learning partner. He facilitated conversation of plan consultants, brought together grantees on the ground for learning, plus stepped back and asked, “how did this go.” There were interviews with executive directors early and midway.

Lots of data was collected. Participants were asked what they were trying to do and how they succeeded over time. Subsequently, there were extensive interviews with executive directors and consultants. The evaluator did rough ratings against goals and relied on self-reporting of success. Executive directors felt heard.

One group used the program for a founder transition. They put the organization in order and got the senior team in place. There were new and long-term leaders in the program. At least one group was shaky and too stretched to take advantage of the program.

The current program director describes success as when groups say: “We got resources to do more; we achieved our mission goals; our plans were supported; and/or the funds allowed changes to happen.” She believes that general operating support is fundamental and this program is on top of that. Groups feel supported when they know they have the resources for more than one year.

Interview with Bill Ryan, program evaluator, September 2020

Interview with Holly Cole, director, Flexible Leadership Awards, The Haas Leadership Initiatives, a project of the Tides Center, September 2020

APPENDIX 1F: Internal to the organization/Mid- to senior-levels New Jersey Community Capital Culture of Excellence

Who for/why: Previous positive experiences with the NeighborWorks Achieving Excellence Program by an organizational leader and an eye to future leadership succession planning led New Jersey Community Capital to implement an internal Culture of Excellence program. The now retired chief executive officer completed NeighborWorks Achieving Excellence Program while with another organization, and the chief operating officer had recently completed the program while at NJCC. The goal was to encourage rising leaders from its staff of 84 and to set goals and learn the skills to achieve them.

What: The program drew people from senior management and coordinator levels with an eye toward encouraging collaboration to address challenges and move the entire organization forward. The initial cohort included 12 people, which allowed them to deliver a high-quality program with experienced coaches at a ratio of no more than six to eight people per coach, and stay within the budget. Ten people completed the nine-month program, from January to September 2020. The expectation is for a one-year implementation phase and another year to see the results.

Changes over time: The program was designed to have four group meetings in the initial nine months, but only two were held in person due to COVID-19.

Diversity and inclusion were not early stated goals of the program, but the topic came up organically and participants embraced it. The board and senior staff are diverse, and the head of human resources is an African American woman. As interviews for this report were being conducted, leadership of the organization was planning to announce the start of a three-month process to define a framework to focus on diversity and inclusion in the next fiscal year.

Outcomes/successes: The chief operating officer was the executive sponsor who worked closely with the head of human resources and NeighborWorks America staff to craft a program modeled after NeighborWorks Achieving Excellence Program. Having an executive sponsor so closely involved (with occasional input from the chief executive officer) ensured that all the challenges selected by participants would fit into the organization's strategic plan. The application mirrored the NeighborWorks Achieving Excellence Program with its director involved in the selection process of participants. A key factor for success was that participants worked for the same organization and could understand each other's chosen challenges. They were able to strengthen internal bonds through tools and language that they now have in common.

Participants met or talked with their coaches every three weeks. Coaches got to know the cohort and, through their support of participants, helped keep them accountable and built a partnership with NJCC. NJCC attributes this success to the fact that they selected two coaches recommended by NeighborWorks America. The two coaches previously worked together and "vibe off of each other." The level, quality, and commitment of the coaches was an important factor.

One immediate outcome of the cohort was that members felt a sense of connectivity with each other and planned to continue meeting beyond the formal program. One 20-year employee felt that the program

woke her up to challenge herself to a new level. When members of the cohort shared their challenges within the organization, co-workers were cheering them on. An unplanned benefit was that as issues of diversity and inclusion arose they were addressed in a positive way.

The head of human resources was also a member of the cohort. She reported that one part of her seven-part program performance challenge was to create a 70-20-10 staff development model, in which 70% of how people learn is on the job, 20% is through peer-to-peer mentoring or coaching interactions, and 10% is through webinars or other training. She encourages people to have a complete plan before sending staff out for training.

Interview with Sholonda Chipepo, director of human resources, New Jersey Community Capital, October 6, 2020

Interview with Marie Mascherin, COO, New Jersey Community Capital, October 19, 2020

Internal to one organization/All levels

Common Bond Communities


Who for/why: Deidre Schmidt, CEO of Common Bond Communities, notes that hiring is an ongoing issue. It is difficult to find people, especially property management and real estate development staff. Also, the organization wanted to increase people of color at all levels. There was the sense that the organization had not been working comprehensively, and that more could be done to attract and retain a skilled and more diverse workforce at all levels.

What: An outside group conducted an assessment followed by a workshop in 2019. Subsequently, the organization developed an equity framework, established a committee, and committed to being an antiracist organization and advancing equity. In February 2020, they hired a human resources leader with significant experience in diversity work. They engaged staff members from different departments and at different levels in a task force. They had a mentoring program and have added a training program for maintenance technicians. They engaged all staff in hiring and provided incentives, including a \$500 bonus if staff members marketed positions and people they suggested were hired, or if they mentored someone.

Changes over time: Deidre Schmidt and Karen Law, executive vice president, note this is still a work in progress. However, they describe a shift to an organizational culture emphasis, and an effort to get people to see beyond their own lane.

The original committee was strengthened by adding executive committee members and tying the work to the budget and hiring practices. The equity working group evolved to become an inclusion council, adding more of a support system and a stated commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). There was a conscious shift to reach out to different levels of staff and engage more of the organization in the work.

Outcomes/successes: As noted above, success at Common Bond is getting people to see beyond their own lane and building a culture of appreciation. They are seeking to “lose the word ‘qualified’” and create more talent rather than compete for it. They reorganized the mid-level leaders and are working to distinguish subject matter experts from leaders. They started a bonus pool and reviewed equity issues



relative to who receives bonuses. Ultimately, they plan to create more leaders, although they note, not everyone is a leader. They are working to attract and retain more people and more of a diverse workforce across the organization.

Interview with Deidre Schmidt, CEO, and Karen Law, executive vice president of talent, equity and culture, CommonBond Communities, September, 2020

A note on programs that serve people at multiple levels and in more than one organization: While we didn't do detailed reviews, it's important to note that there are programs that aim to serve people across multiple organizations on multiple levels. For example, Opportunity Finance Network Partnership with the University of Alabama School of Business is designed to train more people for careers in community development finance institutions (CDFIs) across the country including in communities with great income inequality. The Partnership offers support networks and training, across multiple levels, to people of color in a range of careers in Boston.

APPENDIX 2

PROGRAMS IDENTIFIED—50

Entry-level—25

ACRE	Housing Seattle
ACSP Planners of Color Interest Group	Kuehn Fellowship
AGM Proteus Fund	LISC AmeriCorps
ANHD Center for Community Leadership	LISC Boston Henry Joseph Real Estate Training
Cashin Community Development Fellowship	LISC Ohio Housing Development Professional Institute
CCRH Internship Program for Diversity in Nonprofit Housing and Community Development	MACDC/Mel King Institute Community Development Certificate Program
CHAPA Young Professionals Network	MACDC/MKI Mentoring Program
Codman Square Health Center Internship/Codman Academy	Morgan Stanley ANHD Fellowship
Commercial Real Estate Success Training (CREST)	NeighborWorks Americorps VISTA
Enterprise Rose Fellowship	Texas Association of CDCs Lone Star Internship
FHLB Affordable Housing Competition	ULI Young Leaders Group
Future of Construction Pilot	University of South Florida Community Real Estate Development program
Gen2Gen/B'nai B'rith Housing	

Mid-level—9

NALCAB Pete Garcia Fellowship	National CAPACD Community in the Capital
Housing Development Corporation Leadership Development Initiative	NeighborWorks certificate program in Nonprofit Management & Leadership
Institute for Nonprofit Practice	NeighborWorks America REDI Leadership Program
LISC Rubinger Community Fellowship	UMass Boston Center for Collaborative Leadership Emerging Leaders Program
MCCD Emerging Leaders in Community Development	

Senior-level—7

American Express Nonprofit Leadership Academy

Barr Fellowship

Haas, Jr Fund Flexible Development Award

LeadBoston/YWCA

Leading for Impact/Bridgespan

NeighborWorks Achieving Excellence Program

Women of Color Leadership Circle/Boston
Foundation

Organization-wide—4

Common Bond Communities

LEaDER Initiative (Way Finders)

Mercy Housing

NJCC Culture of Excellence (NeighborWorks
Cultures of Excellence)

Multi-level Multiple Organizations—5

Amplify Latinx

Association of Latino Professionals for America
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