

PolicyLink

Community Based Initiatives Promoting Regional Equity:

Profiles of Innovative Programs from Across the Country

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Introduction

Community-based organizations involved in revitalizing urban neighborhoods and increasing the welfare of urban and minority populations are faced with several inter-related economic and social forces that are affecting their communities. One of the most significant forces is the dramatic restructuring of the American economy that has resulted in the emergence of the region — rather than cities or states — as the dominant economic unit. A second related factor affecting urban neighborhoods is the decentralization of urban growth — or “sprawl.” Finally, racial discrimination and segregation, both causes and effects of sprawl, continue to have egregious effects on inner-city residents.

These factors have increased the challenges confronted by practitioners. As jobs, resources and people spread further away from inner-cities, low-income neighborhoods and residents are left with limited access to mainstream opportunities and with fewer resources to address community concerns. In response to the changing context for promoting equity, more practitioners have begun to think and act regionally — a practice that some observers call community-based regionalism (CBR). These efforts emerge from a common understanding that the future of low-income communities is tied to broader regional social, political and economic factors; and that improving the well-being of low-income neighborhoods requires understanding the regional context and taking action beyond a neighborhood or community level.

Community Based Regionalism (CBR) in Practice

In June 1999, PolicyLink interviewed community-based organizations (CBOs) from around the country to document promising examples of community-based regionalism. The profiles were meant to highlight a sampling of ideas and contacts for people engaged in CBR work and use this information to inform practitioners and policymakers. The initiatives described in this document meet the following criteria. They:

- Include community residents and leaders as primary actors;
- Approach neighborhood challenges and opportunities from a regional perspective;
- Emphasize regional equity as a primary goal; and
- Involve coalitions of community and regional actors.

This document is intended to constitute the beginning of an inventory of innovative strategies, employed by communities, to address the economic and social inequities experienced by urban and minority residents in metropolitan regions. This inventory should be seen as part of an ongoing effort to define what constitutes community-based regionalism (CBR) and to draw lessons for developing effective strategies for promoting regional equity.

Highlights of the CBR Summaries

The initiatives profiled in this document highlight strategies that are representative of CBR. CBR strategies are characterized by pragmatism in pursuit of improving lives and conditions in local communities. There is no cookie-cutter approach to this work. Community-based organizations (CBOs) developed their strategies based on local circumstances and available tools. Consequently, the chosen interventions worked at various levels — from a neighborhood to a city to the regional level — in response to problems that affected their constituents. Additionally, CBOs developed regional approaches both for strategic and opportunistic reasons: some efforts were initiated to deliberately attack a regional problem with whatever tools were available, while others were developed in response to opportunities created by new or expanded regional policies and resource distribution processes (e.g. the recently approved TEA-21 federal transportation plan).

This review of CBR highlights three distinct but related strategies: neighborhood linkage/investment, regional organizing/advocacy and regional economic reform. The definitions provided below are meant to provide the reader with a preliminary framework with which to view the various initiatives and the methods that practitioners use to make change. It is anticipated that this framework will be continuously refined as CBR analysis and practices evolve. It should be noted that most of the community-based initiatives profiled here use a combination of these strategies in promoting regional equity.

Neighborhood Investment/Linkage Strategy

Neighborhood investment/linkage efforts recognize that improving the well-being of isolated low-income neighborhoods requires connecting these places directly to regional opportunities and financial and technical resources. Two common examples of this strategy include: (1) addressing spatial mismatches by linking neighborhood residents to jobs in the regional economy; and (2) reversing disinvestment by targeting capital investment to low-income neighborhoods. Because of social and economic isolation in neighborhoods, linkage efforts typically require building strategic institutional relationships between community-based institutions and intermediaries and private, public and other civic investors outside the community.

Regional Organizing/Advocacy

This strategy is based on the same insight as the neighborhood linkage strategy — that the relevant geographic context for improving community well-being is no longer exclusively the neighborhood or individual cities, but rather the region. It is distinct from the linkage approach in that it focuses on organizing constituents with common interests across political boundaries for explicit policy goals. The goal of regional organizing/advocacy is to foster civic and political engagement and to build regional political coalitions capable of exercising power in local and regional debates. Regional organizing/advocacy efforts typically focus on inserting equity into debates about critical policy issues — such as living wage, affordable housing, tax equity — that are common across the region, or those that are inherently regional in scope, like transportation or environmental concerns.

Regional Economic Reform

Of the three strategies, regional economic reform provides the most direct intervention into the structure and functioning of the regional economy. It is distinguished from the linkage strategy by its emphasis on changing, rather than responding to, the economic environment. This strategy focuses on workforce and economic development interventions designed to foster development of a “high road” economy — an economy associated with higher productivity, higher paying jobs and better labor relations, reduced environmental damage and greater commitment to the health and stability of communities.

Workforce development interventions within this strategy involve performing sectoral economic analyses, identifying growth sectors with high road characteristics and developing systemic workforce development strategies that serve labor, employer and community goals. Economic development approaches aim to address local unemployment, job flight and deindustrialization. These programs encourage the retention and development of local economic niche markets and the improvement of the regional competitiveness of local industries. Both reform approaches attempt to institutionalize reforms and require strategic partnerships between firms, workers and public institutions.

Conclusion

While this survey is not meant to be an exhaustive profile of promising CBR strategies, nationwide, it points to some general conclusions. First, while there are a number of common issues that CBR efforts address, specific interventions are developed out of each region's particular needs and opportunities. Second, examples like the CBO efforts in Portland and Milwaukee suggest that in the medium- to long-term, CBR strategies are as much a process as a specific strategy. In other words, successful regionalism requires, and is the result of, the development of a new form of social or institutional capital, or "regional social capital." Third, CBR is a learning process whereby actors develop the skills to succeed only by doing. Finally, because CBR is a process-oriented strategy that emerges from the specific needs of communities and regions, CBOs are constantly working to identify changing conditions and developing new strategies.

Atlanta Neighborhood Development Partnership, Inc. (ANDP)

Location: Atlanta, Georgia
 Service Area: Atlanta Region
 Target Population: Low-income Residents
 CBR Approach: Regional Organizing/Advocacy,
 Neighborhood Linkage/Investment
 Regional Issues Addressed: Disinvestment, Political Fragmentation,
 Lack of Responsiveness by Political Representatives
 Contact Information: Hattie Dorsey, President & CEO
 Carole Ware, Director of External Affairs
 Phone 404.522.2637
www.andpi.org

Description

The Atlanta Neighborhood Development Partnership, Inc. (ANDP) is a community-based intermediary organization with a vision to “rebuild neighborhoods where people can sustain full, safe and secure lives.” Through its holistic approaches to community development, ANDP provides quality, innovative products and services to create economically viable, mixed-income communities by building the capacity of community-based organizations; providing access to capital for lending and investment purposes in neighborhood revitalization activities; developing mixed-income communities that include very low, low-to-moderate, and market-rate housing; establishing appropriate partnerships that are in alignment with the vision; and advocating public policies that support the community economic development industry. Using a variety of strategies, ANDP promotes and contributes to the equitable distribution of resources throughout the metropolitan Atlanta area. More specifically, ANDP is committed to ensuring equal access to affordable housing, whether it is for homes or rentals. On a broader basis, ANDP advocates for the equitable distribution of public and private investments such as the allocation of federal transportation funds and credit provided by private financial institutions.

Programs

Housing Development

ANDP uses its resources and expertise in the production of safe, clean and decent single and multi-family housing for Atlanta’s low to moderate-income residents who live in neighborhoods perceived to be areas of higher risk. Through this work, ANDP has served as a catalyst for increasing economic and social opportunities in target neighborhoods and in establishing environments where families can live safe, full lives.

Housing Finance

Through its affiliate organization, the Community Redevelopment Loan and Investment Fund, Inc. (CRLIF), ANDP engages in community development lending and technical assistance aimed at improving the social and economic conditions of metro Atlanta's underserved communities. This fund promotes community development through its development financial services division that provides loans in areas such as predevelopment, construction and land acquisition.

Neighborhood Investment

Through its Leadership Development and Training, and Technical Assistance divisions, ANDP works to build the capacity of community development corporations in support of their neighborhood development efforts. It manages a variety of educational initiatives through its Leadership Development and Training Division including: the Community Development Institute (CDI), a joint venture partnership with Clark Atlanta University that provides training courses on community economic development and neighborhood revitalization to its participants; the Professional Development Institute (PDI), in partnership with Clark Atlanta University, Morris Brown College and Spelman College that provides a variety of training courses on housing and neighborhood issues to staff of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD); and the Home Buyers Education program that takes participants from pre-ownership to ownership to "Good Neighbor" in a three-series format. It provides technical assistance to help build community consensus; assists in project structuring; and designs and implements organizational, business and strategic plans.

External Affairs

ANDP manages the grantmaking activities of the Atlanta Neighborhood Investment Fund (ANIF), as well as reviews and monitors its existing grant agreements. This department works to develop, support and implement external and internal communication strategies and overall marketing initiatives.

Regional Advocacy

ANDP works to influence key policy initiatives with government and other related agencies that have direct impact on housing and community economic development practices. ANDP continues to participate in a dialogue on strategies and policies that encourage community and business leaders to work together to address complex economic and social issues, such as housing and economic development, infrastructure, smart growth, urbanism and environmental justice required to build sustainable communities.

Bethel New Life

Location: Chicago, Illinois
Service Area: Inner City, Minority Neighborhoods
Target Population: Inner city, primarily African American residents
CBR Approach: Neighborhood Linkage/Investment
Regional Issue Addressed: Concentrated Poverty, Deindustrialization, Disinvestment
Contact Information: Mary Nelson, Executive Director
Phone 773.473.7870
www.bethelnewlife.org

Description

Bethel New Life is a faith-based community development corporation (CDC) serving a predominantly low-income, African American community on the west side of Chicago. Originally started in 1979 as a community-based housing development corporation, Bethel has evolved into a holistic CDC committed to a healthier, sustainable community. It now has over 325 employees, is a major developer of affordable housing, and works on industrial and commercial development, welfare-to-work and employment services and the array of support services necessary to assist residents to achieve an improved quality of life. It has been creative in turning its community's environmental liabilities into opportunities for sustainable development with lead and asbestos job training, contractor assistance and innovative transit-oriented housing and commercial development. Its new motto is "Smart Growth in an Urban Community Context." Bethel defines smart growth in an urban context as:

- Participatory planning;
- Transit-oriented housing and commercial development around a transit stop;
- Focused area development of energy- and space-efficient housing with greening and safety-oriented spaces;
- Energy efficiency;
- Traffic-calming strategies; and
- Brownfields redevelopment.

Programs

Environmental Initiatives

Bethel's environmental initiatives cover a range of activities. The organization trains welfare-to-work participants for living-wage jobs in the environmental field, including lead and asbestos removal, hazardous waste handling, site characterization, organic landscaping, toxic waste removal and demolition and salvaging. It also partners with the Argonne National Laboratory on technology transfer efforts and works with local contractors to upgrade their skills. In return, the contractors hire the training graduates. Bethel has developed a career ladder for workers who apply their skills to 30 community brownfield sites, thus transforming liabilities into opportunities.

Transit-oriented Development

Bethel has worked on the development of a commercial building at a transit stop (Lake and Pulaski) with child care facilities, a health center and commercial spaces. It is an environmentally-oriented building with solar energy, recycled materials and enhanced indoor air quality. It is also pedestrian friendly. Bethel is planning additional development of commercial/industrial/housing around the transit stop.

Focused Area Development

In walking distance of the transit stop, Bethel has developed, through a participatory process, small two to three block areas with mixed types of housing primarily for home ownership. These areas have traffic calming circles, safety-oriented spaces, pocket parks and energy efficient homes (heating bills are guaranteed not to exceed \$200 a year).

Youth Initiatives

Bethel developed the Youth Enterprise Network (YEN) in three local high schools which resulted in youth enterprises where youth are able to experience all aspects of an industry. Enterprises include a café, construction and boutique. Partnering with the Argonne National Laboratory on an Urban Engineering Program, Bethel offers disadvantaged students opportunities to explore engineering as a career. Students are placed in summer internships and interact with Argonne scientists who participate in teaching, lectures and science-based events for youth.

Advocacy

In accord with its "Smart Growth in an Urban Community Context" motto, Bethel believes that smart growth requires a justice agenda and that critical reinvestment in sustainable development in the inner city is the flip side of the regional planning issue. Bethel believes that the communities it serves need to be at the table in planning and reinvestment discussions. Bethel is actively involved in these discussions and these issues.

Building Responsibility, Equality, and Dignity (BREAD)

Location:	Columbus, Ohio
Service Area:	Metropolitan Columbus
Population Served:	Residents of Metropolitan Area, with a Focus on Inner-City Residents
CBR Approach:	Regional Organizing/Advocacy
Regional Issues Addressed:	Concentrated Poverty, Access to Jobs, Lack of Responsiveness by Political Representatives
Contact Information:	Carl Gray, Chair, Poverty and Jobs Committee Phone 614.258.8748

Description

Building Responsibility, Equality and Dignity (BREAD) is a congregation-based community organization composed of 35 member congregations and affiliated with the Direct Action and Research Training Center (DART). BREAD is also a part of the Gamaliel Foundation Network. BREAD's strategy primarily focuses on organizing its members and their constituents and engaging in direct action campaigns on local issues of justice and fairness. BREAD was formed in 1996.

Program

Transportation

BREAD's campaign to redirect federal transportation funds to serve inner-city residents illustrates how community institutions can be effective participants in regional planning activities. The organization's first major campaign was a grassroots effort targeting the City of Columbus, the Central Ohio Transit Authority (COTA) and the federal Transit Authority regarding the allocation of federal transportation funds. Their goal was to force COTA to redirect these funds to areas or projects that provide better transportation linkages between inner-city and suburban job centers.

The year-long campaign, beginning in 1997, started with the goal of winning a meeting with the mayor regarding the transportation needs of inner-city workers. When the Mayor hesitated, BREAD turned up the heat publicizing the Mayor's lack of responsiveness. The campaigns worked. Soon afterwards, in February 1997, the Mayor addressed a community meeting, attended by 1,500 community members, and agreed to support BREAD's proposal. As a result, the regional transportation agency granted a pilot program developing a bus route between the inner city and several suburban job centers. Several months later four more bus routes were established.

In a separate but related action, BREAD also lobbied for the relocation of proposed transit station hubs from suburban communities to the inner city. Again, BREAD succeeded and one of the region's new transit centers, which includes day care and job training services, opened in October 1999. In 1998, BREAD leaders had a series of meetings with top officials in the federal Transit Administration which helped to secure a \$684,000 "Access to Jobs" grant for COTA to further develop inner city to suburban transportation linkage programs.

More recently, BREAD campaigned in support of two transportation measures that faced Columbus voters at the ballot box in November 1999. One measure was to create a permanent funding stream for COTA (until the measure passed, Columbus was the largest city in the U.S. without permanent funding for its transportation system) and the other was to expand the transit system through both inner-city bus service and commuter rail. BREAD was able to assemble a more diverse coalition than previously, getting the support of the business community, for example. In the end, the measure to create a permanent funding stream passed, but the initiative to expand the transit system failed.

BREAD generated an unprecedented amount of grassroots support, but the underfunded campaign was not able to get the measure for additional transit funding passed. Involvement in a levy initiative was new for the organization which is continuing to evaluate the campaign. Clearly, Columbus needs to expand funding for public transportation which is an important issue of regional justice and fairness; BREAD continues to push COTA and the cross-section of political leaders to pursue that increased funding.

Campaign for Sustainable Milwaukee (CSM)

Location: Milwaukee, Wisconsin
Service Area: Milwaukee Metropolitan Region
Target Population: Minority, Inner-city Workers
CBR Approach: Neighborhood Linkage/Investment, Regional Organizing/Advocacy, Regional Economic Reform
Regional Issues Addressed: Concentrated Poverty, Deindustrialization, Political Fragmentation, Spatial Mismatch, Lack of Responsiveness by Political Representatives
Contact Information: William Johnson, Executive Director
Phone 414.344.5627
www.cows.org/projects/csm.html

Description

The Campaign for Sustainable Milwaukee (CSM) is a long-term, broad-based community advocacy coalition composed of over 200 community, religious, labor and business organizations. The Coalition was formed to address a number of inter-related issues impacting the city and region that were beyond the capacity of any one organization's ability to address. CSM's goal was to develop a community-based regional plan, and through the process, build a social change movement. Specific issues identified included: job flight, deteriorating wages, environmental degradation and public policies that directly or indirectly contributed to these issues.

The Campaign's success stems from its strategy of campaigning for specific issues that were identified by members as meaningful to a broad base of people. The issues also had to address the quality of life of the region, especially Milwaukee's inner city. Since 1996, Sustainable Milwaukee has focused on two priorities: workforce development and transit for employment access.

Programs

Regional Plan

The Campaign began in 1994 by developing and adopting a community-based regional plan founded on the principles of social justice. The ultimate goal of the planning process was to create a catalyst for a regional organizing effort. The plan, entitled “Rebuilding Milwaukee from the Ground Up,” called for the development of local family-supporting jobs accessible to inner-city residents, and improvements in the region’s mass transit system. The effort is a continuous process of regional coalition building. The Campaign successfully built support and momentum by adopting a results-oriented strategy of achieving small, but concrete, victories on issues that garnered broad community support.

Sustainable Milwaukee was instrumental in pressing for the passage of the Living Wage Ordinance. During the effort, the Living Wage Campaign Task Force found that just over 50% of the local jobs paid less than \$20,000 annually. The Ordinance passed both the City and County of Milwaukee as well as the school district and stipulates a minimum wage of \$7.70 per hour plus benefits. The Task Force also organized the Workers’ Rights Board that includes religious, community, labor and elected public officials. The Board is designed to assist workers on issues related to unfair treatment and discrimination.

Workforce Development

CSM was chosen by the Annie E. Casey Foundation as the regional intermediary for the Milwaukee Jobs Initiative (MJl), one of the eight workforce development demonstration programs in cities across the country. The Milwaukee Jobs Initiative includes three programs: the Central City Workers’ Center, the Manufacturing Jobs Connection and the Printing Jobs Connection.

Central City Transit Task Force

The Central City Transit Task Force has led the efforts to redirect federal transportation funds (ISTEA/TEA-21) to better serve the needs of Milwaukee’s central-city workers to access suburban employment opportunities. The Task Force advocates for the construction of light rail to link central-city neighborhoods to suburban employment centers. Recent activities include documenting discriminatory funding for transportation services in central Milwaukee.

The Task Force developed an alternate bus and light rail proposal that won the support of the Milwaukee and Waukesha County Boards. Unfortunately, the plan was shot down by the state, which decided to cut the light rail and extra bus and car pool lanes from the state transportation plan. In response, CSM filed a civil rights lawsuit against the transportation department on the basis that the allocation of transportation funding violates the civil rights of inner-city minority communities.

Center for Community Change (CCC)

Location: Los Angeles, California
Service Area: Alameda Corridor
Target Population: Low-income residents of Alameda Corridor
CBR Approach: Grassroots Organizing; Capacity-Building; Policy Development, Jobs and Economic Development
Regional Issues Addressed: Concentrated Poverty
Contact Information: Mary Ochs, Organizational Development Specialist
Phone 213.250.4045
www.communitychange.org

Description

The Center for Community Change (CCC) has been an enduring presence in the field of social change. Established almost 30 years ago, the organization works nationally to help build the assets of low-income communities. Using a variety of approaches, including grassroots organizing, capacity-building, leadership development, and jobs development, CCC has achieved an impressive list of accomplishments across the country. It has helped groups tackle issues such as hiring preferences, recruitment, training, living wages, access to child care and transportation. At the local, state and national levels, it has helped community groups campaign for policies to ensure that community benefits are maximized when public funds are spent on public works projects. CCC's 57-person staff includes many of the nation's leading experts on community development, community organizing, leadership training, coalition-building, housing, welfare reform, jobs, economic development, and banking and reinvestment. The Center has offices in Washington, D.C., San Francisco and Los Angeles.

Programs

Alameda Corridor Jobs Coalition

In Los Angeles, CCC helped bring together about 40 community-based groups to form the Alameda Corridor Jobs Coalition. The Coalition's goal was to guarantee that the \$1.8 billion being spent on construction of the 20-mile Corridor would benefit those most affected by the effort. The Corridor runs through neighborhoods with unemployment and under-employment levels as high as 34 percent. In the spring of 1998, the Coalition successfully lobbied the Alameda Corridor Project for a record number of construction jobs for residents of the Corridor. The achievement was called "the largest local hiring plan of any public works project in the history of the United States." Specifically, the Coalition won a commitment that 30% of the jobs on a mammoth construction project as well as 1,000 pre-apprenticeship training slots would go to local low-income residents. The Alameda Corridor Project is expected to generate about 3,500 jobs a year paying from \$9 to \$27 an hour plus benefits.

CCC is now working with the Coalition, run by local residents, to train residents for new positions. While Corridor jobs have not come on line yet, residents are being trained for other jobs. One of the key issues the Coalition is currently grappling with is transportation — getting trainees to and from their jobs.

Coalition for a Livable Future (CLF)

Location: Portland, Oregon
Service Area: Metropolitan Portland (24 Cities and 3 Counties)
Target Population: Low and Moderate-Income Residents
CBR Approach: Regional Organizing/Advocacy, Education
Regional Issues Addressed: Housing Affordability, Environmental Protection, Economic Vitality, Transportation, Urban Design, Food Security
Contact Information: Jill Fuglister, Program Coordinator
Phone 503.294.2889
www.clfuture.org

Description

The Coalition for a Livable Future (CLF) is a network of 52 community and environmental organizations. A core tenet of the Coalition is the belief that it is possible to develop a comprehensive regional planning program that includes environmental protection and social equity components.

CLF efforts have been concentrated on advocating for a comprehensive equity-based plan that incorporates the issues of land use, transportation, housing, economic equity and environmental preservation. CLF's success illustrates that both environmental and community-based organizations can increase their ability to advocate regionally by developing a broad multi-issue political agenda.

Programs

Regional Advocacy

CLF concentrated their campaign efforts on addressing the inequities in the area's regional development plan. The regional plan is the product of the area's publicly elected regional government, Metro. The coalition supported the generally progressive goals adopted in the regional plan that were aimed at creating a dense, compact urban environment composed of urban centers and higher density housing built around transit corridors. But the Coalition recognized that, without the inclusion of specific policies promoting regional equity, the plan would ultimately lead to urban gentrification and displacement of low-income inner city residents.

In response, CLF organized its members and developed a number of amendments it believed was needed to protect inner-city workers and neighborhoods from gentrification, loss of affordable housing and displacement.

The Coalition proposed several amendments to the regional plan that have been incorporated into Metro's regional plan. These amendments include:

- A formal recognition that affordable housing is an issue of regional concern;
- Fair-share housing mandates for each local jurisdiction;
- Policies that support inclusionary zoning;
- Provisions to address affordable housing needs when reviewing the region's urban growth boundary;
- Creation of the Affordable Housing Technical Advisory Group as a formalized process of addressing affordable housing issues over the medium to long term; and
- A commitment by Metro to monitor the region's economic vitality.

The Reinvestment Fund (TRF)

Location: Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Service Area: Twenty-One County Delaware Valley Region
Target Population: Small Businesses, Unemployed Workers
CBR Approach: Neighborhood Linkage/Investment, Regional Organizing/Advocacy, Regional Economic Reform
Regional Issues Addressed: Concentrated Poverty, Deindustrialization, Disinvestment, Spatial Mismatch
Contact Information: Jeremy Nowak, Chief Executive Officer
Phone 215.925.1130
www.trfund.com

Description

The Reinvestment Fund (TRF), formerly known as the Delaware Valley Community Reinvestment Fund, is a community development financial intermediary that provides financing for community development and community economic development projects. Since its founding in 1985, TRF has used its equity base to support the development of mixed-use, mixed-income affordable housing. About five years ago, however, the organization began to shift more of its efforts toward financing local economic development projects. Since then, its efforts have continued toward economic development, but at the regional scale. TRF is now recognized as one of the leading proponents and participants in regionally-focused economic development.

TRF's regional approach recognizes that industries and labor markets operate at the regional level. They employ a sector-based development strategy to identify growing industries and occupations. Based on their findings, TRF has developed a three-pronged approach to economic development: (1) financing of new or expanding small businesses in the region, (2) implementing the Philadelphia Jobs Initiative, a part of the Annie E. Casey Foundation's "Job Initiative," to help train workers and match them to jobs with wages that can support a family, and (3) policy advocacy through the Jobs Policy Network, a regional organizing effort designed to transform the information and knowledge gained from their first two programs into regional economic development policy.

Programs

DVCRF Ventures

DVCRF Ventures is a venture capital firm that invests in companies in high-growth sectors with the potential to create well-paying entry-level jobs. Ventures began with an eight million-dollar equity base collected from banks, insurance companies and foundations. The program provides venture capital and matching grants to small and minority-owned businesses that otherwise lack the fiscal capacity to gain financing from mainstream investment institutions.

Ventures targets firms in growing economic sectors with the potential for growth in production and employment. Firms targeted usually have annual sales of about a million dollars. The goal of the program is to have companies increase their sales by several hundred percent. Once a firm is chosen, DVCRF Ventures develops a voluntary agreement with the firm to hire disadvantaged workers in family-supporting entry-level jobs.

Philadelphia Jobs Initiative

TRF is also involved in the Philadelphia Jobs Initiative (PJI), another workforce development program that is part of the Annie E. Casey Foundation's "Jobs Initiative." The Initiative's primary goal is to link inner-city areas and residents to regional employment centers. The program's targeted population is young, minority men residing in the inner city.

PJI has divided its program into the Rapid Attachment Strategy and the Jobs Investment Strategy. The Rapid Attachment Strategy aims to place inner-city workers in jobs that pay \$6–10 per hour after only 1–4 months. Although the program includes job readiness and soft-skill training, it is primarily designed for more skilled participants with prior employment experience. The Jobs Investment Strategy provides longer-term training to meet the expansion needs of participating businesses. In this program, employers actively participate in developing the job training program and hire graduates at a minimum of \$10 per hour.

Jobs Policy Network

The Jobs Policy Network is a collaborative effort between TRF and the 21st Century League. Its purpose is to utilize ideas, relationships and data in advocating for improved public and private sector development and employment policies.

Hartford Areas Rally Together (HART)

Location: Hartford, Connecticut
Service Area: Inner-City Hartford
Target Population: Disadvantaged, Minority Residents
CBR Approach: Neighborhood Linkage/Investment, Regional Organizing/Advocacy
Regional Issues Addressed: Spatial Mismatch, Concentrated Poverty,
Lack of Responsiveness by Political Representatives
Contact Information: Ann Pratt, Executive Director
Phone 860.525.3449
www.trincoll.edu/depts/tcn/hart.htm

Description

Hartford Area Rally Together (HART) is a coalition of residents and community-based organizations formed in 1975 to represent Hartford communities and residents. HART is primarily an organizing and advocacy organization, concentrating its efforts on educating and mobilizing local communities to effectively act in the public arena. Recognizing that their constituents often lack the political power or voice in regional political arenas, HART has engaged in a number of direct-action campaigns to ensure that local communities voices are heard by political leaders.

While HART's constituency is primarily neighborhood based, the success of its local campaigns has helped them to extend their campaigns beyond the Hartford city limits. Their efforts illustrate how a community-based organization can better serve its constituents by linking inner-city communities to regional economic growth and development policy.

Programs

Workforce Development

The organization is involved in a variety of campaigns that link local residents to regional growth and employment opportunities. The first program grew out of the El Centro de Trabajos, the primary job training resource in its service area. Though they had no prior job training experience, HART assumed the responsibility of establishing the Center after the state closed the existing job centers in the area. HART used this opportunity to develop a one-stop job training and referral center, making it the focal point for employment services in the area. Once established, the Center expanded its geographic service area, making it both a local and regional clearinghouse for employment listings.

As part of its workforce development efforts, HART enlisted the help of the Center for Community Change to conduct a detailed sectoral analysis of the region, which ultimately led the organization to focus its workforce development efforts on the region's health care industry. The organization then worked aggressively to develop linkages with industry employers including a first-source hiring agreement with Southside Institutional Neighborhood Alliance (SINA). SINA members include Trinity College, Hartford Hospital, Connecticut public television and Children's Medical Center.

Transportation/Public Infrastructure

HART recognized that the regional transportation plan outlining the expenditure of federal ISTEA (and later TEA-21) funding failed to serve the needs of their constituents. After their efforts to meet with the Mayor of Hartford were continually thwarted, HART embarked on a series of direct-action campaigns designed to bring public attention and pressure to their issue.

Local efforts included a high-profile public campaign targeting the Mayor that resulted in his support to use regional transportation funding to finance a regional job fair for inner-city workers. HART advocacy efforts have since been extended to the national level through their membership in the Transportation Equity Network (TEN), a national network of community-based organizations that lobbies the federal government on behalf of inner-city communities.

Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy (LAANE)

Location: Los Angeles, California
Service Area: Los Angeles Region
Target Population: Low-wage Service Workers
CBR Approach: Living Wage Campaign; Union Organizing; Policy Development; Research
Regional Issues Addressed: Concentrated Poverty; Connecting Workers To The New Economy
Contact Information: Madeline Janis-Aparicio, Executive Director
Phone 213.486.9880
www.laane.org

Description

Founded by Hotel and Restaurant Employees Union, Local 11 President Maria Elena Durazo and now Executive Director Madeline Janis-Aparicio, LAANE works to foster broad-based community support for improving the incomes of low-wage workers in the Los Angeles region. It draws its inspiration from Cesar Chavez's United Farm Workers and the public support that brought increased gains for those workers. Originally set up in 1993 as the Tourism Industry Development Council with the goal of raising the wages of workers in Los Angeles' tourism industry, LAANE has broadened its reach to other industries and to the wider Los Angeles region. LAANE advocates for living wages as a tool to both improve incomes and support unionization of low-wage workers in the region. It believes that living wage legislation raises the bar above minimum wage standards, and that unionization provides the path to sustained, lasting improvements. The organization works with a wide range of community groups — including faith-based, service sector unions, and civil rights based organizing groups — to achieve its goals.

Over the last four years, LAANE has won living wage ordinances in multiple jurisdictions, including the city of Los Angeles, Los Angeles County, Pasadena, West Hollywood, LAX airport and the city redevelopment agency. It is currently targeting the Santa Monica "Coastal Zone" for living wages — an area that has been the beneficiary of substantial public infrastructure dollars in the development of a tourist mecca. This multi-jurisdictional approach to living wages is beginning to wrest regional wage accountability for public investment.

LAANE has built its research capacity in collaboration with local universities, thereby greatly enhancing its ability to direct proactive policy development, explore labor issues in the new economy and monitor government and industry practices involving public subsidies and quality of jobs and services to the community. LAANE is called on extensively by other regional coalitions to provide technical assistance to long-term living wage campaigns.

Programs

The Los Angeles Living Wage Coalition

The Los Angeles Living Wage Coalition, convened by LAANE, unites the membership of over 100 labor, religious, worker and community-based organizations to implement and expand the Living Wage Ordinance in greater Los Angeles. This group began its efforts with the LA City Council in 1997, winning unanimous adoption of a Living Wage Ordinance. The Ordinance raises the standard of living for 10,000 workers — the largest number of affected workers of any ordinance passed thus far in the country — and applies to those employed by businesses that contract with the city, lease city property or receive significant financial assistance from the city. The wage law requires employers to pay their workers a minimum of \$8.76 an hour; by comparison, the national minimum wage is \$5.15 an hour. Workers affected include janitors, cleaning people, restaurant and health care workers, security guards, hotel workers and airport workers. They have since expanded to other jurisdictions, including the County, the airport and the redevelopment agency.

Respect at LAX

LAANE helped to create a large-scale unionization drive that would implement the living wage ordinance for thousands of workers at Los Angeles International Airport, working in partnership with the AFL-CIO, Hotel (HERE) and Service Employees (SEIU) locals. They have achieved Living Wage Compliance and major union victories.

Subsidy Accountability Project

LAANE conducted an unprecedented study of city subsidies to private businesses. Their report¹ is the basis of a policy initiative to establish standards of accountability for the beneficiaries of public funds. A regional coalition of community organizations and unions will mobilize to get accountability policies.

Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice (CLUE)

CLUE outreaches to and organizes members of diverse congregations to support the justice-organizing efforts of other LAANE-affiliated coalitions. Religious support has played a pivotal role in winning favorable ordinance votes in all the jurisdictions.

¹ "Who Benefits from Redevelopment in Los Angeles? An Evaluation of Commercial Redevelopment Activities in the 1990s." To receive a copy of the study, contact Paul More, LAANE, 213.486.9880, ext 104 or check www.laane.org.

Merrimack Valley Project (MVP)

Location: Lawrence, Massachusetts
Service Area: Northern Massachusetts (Merrimack River Valley)
Target Population: Unemployed and Contingent Workers
CBR Approach: Regional Organizing/Advocacy
Regional Issues Addressed: Deindustrialization, Disinvestment,
Lack of Responsiveness by Political Representatives
Contact Information: Danny Leblanc, Executive Director
Janet Groat, Assistant Director
Phone 978.686.0650

Description

The Merrimack Valley Project (MVP) is a membership organization comprised of 48 religious, union and tenant groups located in the Merrimack River Valley region of northern Massachusetts. Since its inception, MVP has campaigned for a variety of issues including affordable housing, tenant organizing and unemployment and low-wage/contingent employment. As a regional network, MVP acts as an intermediary institution working on behalf of its members to provide research and technical support.

MVP is one of four members of the InterValley Project, a network that works to organize labor, religious organizations and other institutions to campaign on issues of social justice. The organization has spun-off independent non-profits, including the Merrimack Valley Manufacturing Partnership (MVMP), a coalition between labor, local industrial firms and a tenant association.

Programs

Contingent Work

MVP is currently engaged in a regional organizing and leadership development effort to build a region-wide grassroots political campaign focused on the issue of contingent or temporary employment. MVP recognized that the deindustrialization of the region's traditional manufacturing base has resulted in a restructuring of the labor market. Low-paying, non-unionized and temporary employment is now the norm in a regional industrial base that was once composed of relatively well-paying, unionized jobs. MVP's approach recognizes that the labor market is regional and transcends individual city and/or county political boundaries.

MVP's efforts began by educating local communities and community leaders on the problems associated with contingent work, including the lack of family supporting wages, job insecurity and a lack of health benefits. Through these efforts, MVP has hoped to mobilize local communities and institutions to advocate for labor market policies aimed at both the public and private sector.

Working within existing institutions, MVP targets individual firms and jurisdictions, while at the same time moving beyond individual firms and local jurisdictional boundaries. For instance, MVP is working to develop local hiring agreements with the region's firms, and to win the adoption of local ordinances linking public contracts to job quality standards. Besides these more traditional strategies, MVP is also working to create its own temporary employment agency. This new institution differs from traditional temporary agencies by the fact that it will be operated as a non-profit, and will provide workers a variety of social services including job training and health benefits. Finally, MVP has joined forces with four other regional community-based intermediaries to organize a statewide political campaign on this issue.

Metropolitan Alliance

Location: Los Angeles, California
Service Area: Los Angeles Region
Target Population: Low-income Communities
CBR Approach: Community Organizing
Regional Issues Addressed: Concentrated Poverty
Contact Information: Anthony Thigpenn, Action for Grassroots Empowerment and
Neighborhood Development Alternatives (AGENDA)
Metropolitan Alliance Chair
Phone 323.789.7920

Description

The Metropolitan Alliance is a regional collaboration of community-based organizations, labor unions, religious institutions and service providers anchored by the community organization AGENDA (Action for Grassroots Empowerment and Neighborhood Development Alternatives). The vision behind the Metropolitan Alliance, formed in 1996, was to help unify diverse constituencies and develop a vehicle for community residents to build their own power and participate in policymaking. The Alliance is a uniquely multi-cultural collaboration, bringing the African American, Latino and other new immigrant communities together on issues of common concern.

The first organized activity of the Alliance was a campaign to help defeat Proposition 209, the anti-affirmative action initiative. Although the statewide initiative passed, the precincts targeted by the Alliance defeated the initiative by large majorities. After an extensive process of research, polling in neighborhoods, and strategic planning, the Alliance now focuses on linking the public subsidies offered to private corporations to community benefits.

Programs

Making Our Dreams Work: Regional Economic Development Collaborations

The DreamWorks project emerged as the vehicle for the Alliance to raise awareness about the inequity of public subsidies. In 1998, the largest proposed subsidy ever offered to a corporation was going to DreamWorks Inc., a new motion picture studio founded by Steven Spielberg, Jeffrey Katzenberg, and David Geffen. The Alliance's research identified the motion picture industry as one of the largest growth industries in Los Angeles—but communities of color, working-class and poor communities did not have access to the benefits of this growth. The Alliance developed a proposal that would link the subsidies proposed for DreamWorks' development to public benefits for Los Angeles' inner-city communities, creating job training and career development opportunities.

Working with the Los Angeles Community College District, the Alliance developed a set of proposals aimed at 1) opening up the multimedia/entertainment industry to people of color and low-income residents; and 2) establishing a precedent for the use of public subsidies to address regional economic inequities.

Through a campaign of direct action with both DreamWorks Inc. and the city of Los Angeles, the Alliance convinced DreamWorks to create and provide resources for a Workforce Development Fund that would support multimedia/entertainment training at community college programs for residents of poor, inner-city communities. In addition, DreamWorks and the developers committed to placing participants from training programs in at least 10% of the jobs created through the development project. The Alliance was written into the City development agreement as a partner with DreamWorks and the City to develop and monitor these programs. In an example of the power of the campaign, DreamWorks recently decided not to locate on the proposed site, but nevertheless agreed to honor its commitment to the Workforce Development Fund and job access agreements, including providing an initial \$5 million to get the programs started.

Lifting People Out of Poverty Campaign

Metropolitan Alliance surveys of community members found that the "Work First" implementation of welfare reform was placing workers in poverty-wage jobs. With this information, the Alliance developed and won adoption from the City of Los Angeles and the Private Industry Council to utilize welfare-to-work funds to create jobs and training programs. These programs will help place people on welfare in livable wage jobs within growth industries.

Metropolitan Alliance of Congregations (MAC)

Location: Chicago, Illinois
 Service Area: Chicago Metropolitan Area (Chicagoland)
 Population Served: Lower Income, Primarily Minority Residents
 CBR Approach: Regional Organizing/Advocacy
 Regional Issues Addressed: Disinvestment, Political Fragmentation,
 Lack of Responsiveness by Political Representatives
 Contact Information: Mary Gonzales, Executive Director
 Phone 312.666.2666
www.newcities.org

Description

The Metropolitan Alliance of Congregations (MAC) is a community-based coalition of over 100 religious organizations representing a diverse constituency that crosses race, ethnic and class interests. The congregations are bound by the common value of supporting local communities and families. The organization was formed by six Gamaliel Foundation organizations in the metropolitan Chicago area (Chicagoland) to better address community and equity issues through regional organizing.

Programs

Housing Finance

MAC has worked to address a number of regional equity issues including housing, transportation and fiscal revenue. The Alliance's recent regional initiatives include a collaborative project with the New Cities organization to form the Rebuilding American Communities Campaign. The initiative seeks to build a regional faith-based home mortgage program to offer financing to Alliance's Chicagoland congregations and the communities they serve.

The Family Home Mortgage Initiative is designed to partner with area banks to lend one billion dollars in home mortgages to under-served markets in the Chicagoland region. To implement the program, MAC and New Cities created a new community-based lending institution named the Neighborhood and Family Investment Fund (NFIF). In May of 1999, MAC held a conference with several of the region's banks to encourage them to participate in the program. Besides local MAC congregational leaders, participants included the leaders of a number of banks including: Bank One, First Midwest Bank, Marquette National Bank, and LaSalle National Bank. By July 1999, they had almost reached their one billion dollar target.

Transportation/Infrastructure

MAC recognized that the region's federally-funded transportation plan failed to include representatives of local communities and, consequently, failed to address their needs. They responded by developing a regional organizing and advocacy campaign demanding that the regional transportation organization make their planning process more inclusive of minority neighborhoods and develop a plan that addresses the needs of these communities. MAC expanded their advocacy efforts by becoming a member of the Transportation Equity Network (TEN), a national network of community-based organizations that advocate for a more equitable distribution of transportation funds. Based on these efforts, MAC recently won an "Access to Jobs" grant from the federal government to develop additional transportation options linking inner-city workers to regional job centers.

Milwaukee Jobs Initiative (MJI)

Location: Milwaukee, Wisconsin
Service Area: Milwaukee Inner City Neighborhoods
Target Population: Disadvantaged, Minority Inner City Residents
CBR Approach: Neighborhood Linkage/Investment, Regional Economic Reform
Regional Issue Addressed: Spatial Mismatch, Concentrated Poverty
Contact Information: Steve Holt, Executive Director
Phone 414.372.7387
www.cows.org/projects/mji.html

Description

The Milwaukee Jobs Initiative (MJI) is one of the Annie E. Casey Foundation (AECF) “Jobs Initiative” sites, an eight-year workforce development demonstration project. MJI was established by the Campaign for a Sustainable Milwaukee, a grassroots coalition of religious, labor and community leaders in conjunction with the Milwaukee County Labor Council and the Greater Milwaukee Committee (described earlier). Regional economic research and analysis was led by the Center on Wisconsin Strategy (COWS), a policy research center based at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. The initiative was incorporated as an independent non-profit in 1996. MJI’s success illustrates how regional organizing efforts can build the skills and capacity of regional actors and institutions that are required to address workforce equity issues at a regional level.

Programs

Workforce Development

MJI is a workforce development program designed to develop a high-road labor market strategy of regional economic reform. The program aims to link inner-city minority workers to family-supporting, career-oriented jobs throughout the region. MJI’s approach uses a sectoral-based workforce development program called the Community-Employer Linked Training (CELT). CELT is a “demand side” job training strategy, designed to train participants for specific occupations. The program organizes regional industries by sector to help specify industry-wide job entry and training requirements. Linkages are then developed with local training services to recruit and train inner-city workers.

MJI’s regional sectoral analysis led the organization to focus its job-training programs on three economic sectors: construction, manufacturing and printing. Participants are provided with a holistic job-training program that includes support services both during enrollment and after placement. By focusing on the needs of employers and participants, MJI has succeeded in developing lasting partnerships between the region’s industry, labor and communities.

Construction Industry

The Central City Workers' Center (CCWC) is a job-training program aimed at the construction sector. The CCWC was created through the joint effort of the Campaign for Sustainable Milwaukee and local trade unions. The Center operates as a one-stop job training and placement service center and, like a union hiring hall, requires users to become members. Each member is assigned a mentor who provides information, support and post-employment support services. The job-training program focuses both on specific employment skills required to gain employment and training in interpersonal or 'soft' skills.

Manufacturing Industry

MJI has also developed the Manufacturing Jobs Connection (MJC), a customized training program operated by the Wisconsin Regional Training Partnership (WRTP), a regional coalition of manufacturers and labor unions. Employers willing to guarantee jobs to graduates of the program are invited to participate with the Milwaukee Technical College in developing customized job training programs. In return, MJC screens job applicants, administers the training program and provides soft-skills training and mentorship.

Printing Industry

The final program is MJI's Printing Jobs Connection (PJC). Although, the PJC is the smallest of the three initiatives, it has the advantage of linking to one of the region's largest, fastest-growing, and highest-paying industries. The program is operated by the Milwaukee Graphics Art Institute (MGAI), an industry consortium comprised of employers and unions.

Sacramento Valley Organizing Community (SVOC)

Location: Sacramento, California
Service Area: Solano, Yolo, Sacramento and Placer Counties, expanding into Yuba, Sutter, Butte, Tehama and Shasta Counties
Target Population: Low-income communities of color in the Multi-county project Area
CBR Approach: Regional Job Placement
Regional Issues Addressed: Concentrated Poverty; Spatial Mismatch of Jobs
Contact Information: Larry Ferlazzo, Executive Director
Phone 916.457.0245

Description

Founded in 1994, Sacramento Valley Organizing Community (SVOC) is a multi-ethnic group of over 40 religious congregations in Northern California, representing the largest faith-based community organization in the four-county area of Solano, Yolo, Sacramento, and Placer counties. SVOC utilizes a democratic process pioneered by the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF) that involves hundreds of individual house meetings and larger, broad-based community assemblies where specific action plans are discussed and mobilization, implementation and monitoring plans are developed. The goal of SVOC member congregations is to become the focal points of their low-income neighborhoods for job placement, housing support, access to health care, citizenship and economic development opportunities. Its leaders have immediate access to local elected officials and government agencies as a result of SVOC's demonstrated track record in mobilizing thousands of people into successful public actions.

SVOC's regional approach is evident in its job placement strategy, which helps link job-seekers to growth sector jobs in the region.

Programs

Job Placement

To bring economic development to low-income neighborhoods in an era of welfare reform, SVOC, in partnership with local city and county governments, redevelopment agencies, Sacramento Employment and Training Agency and the Department of Human Assistance, has placed recipient-designed “one stop” centers in neighborhoods with highest numbers of families on welfare. Using these hubs, SVOC developed a regional sector project to link job seekers to jobs in the growing health care industry. In a community-labor partnership with Sutter Hospital, Mercy Hospital, UC Davis Medical Center and Kaiser Permanente, SVOC secured 300 jobs for residents in Placer, Sacramento and Yolo counties.

SVOC is in the late stages of developing a regional program to provide 200 high-tech jobs to the North Highlands neighborhood. Upon implementation, high tech companies Intel and Hewlett Packard will outsource 100 entry-level jobs to a shared facility at the decommissioned McClelland Air Force Base. This will bring high-technology jobs to low-income residents living next to the former base who would otherwise have no access to the jobs.

SVOC leaders are planning another jobs initiative at McClellan AFB a designated “Superfund Site” by the Federal Environmental Protection Agency. SVOC will leverage funds from local job training programs and community colleges to train low-income families and displaced base employees to work on the high-paying environmental clean-up jobs on the base. These jobs are projected to last through the end of the decade.

Quality Employment Through Skills Training (QUEST)

Location: San Antonio, Texas
Service Area: San Antonio Metropolitan Region
Population Served: Unemployed Disadvantaged & Primarily Latino Workers
CBR Approach: Neighborhood Linkage/Investment, Regional Economic Reform
Regional Issues Addressed: Deindustrialization, Concentrated Poverty,
Lack of Responsiveness by Political Representatives
Contact Information: Mary Pena, Executive Director
Phone 210.270.4690
www.questsa.com

Description

Project QUEST was established in response to the deindustrialization of the San Antonio region's manufacturing economy. The program began in 1992 to provide long-term job training services for disadvantaged workers in the region; from the beginning, the program was also designed to change the regional labor market. Toward this end, the Project has worked with regional employers and local community colleges to develop industry-specific job training and placement programs that have redefined the relationships between employers, community colleges and local communities.

Project QUEST emerged from a collaboration between two local organizing community-based organizations affiliated with the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF), San Antonio's Communities Organized for Public Service (COPS) and Metro Alliance. Since its inception, Project QUEST has attracted additional partners (and funding) including regional employers, the City of San Antonio and the Texas Workforce Commission.

Programs

Workforce Development

Project QUEST is a sectorally-based job training program that targets the region's projected growth industries and occupations. The program's success is credited, to a large degree, to their institutionalization of employer participation in developing customized job training programs. The program includes the formation of Occupational Advisory Committees (OAC) staffed by members of the local business community. OAC's primary role is to identify regional industrial sectors and occupations for QUEST to target their job-training efforts.

QUEST's program also includes developing collaborations with the area's community colleges, which provide most of the training for QUEST participants. These collaborations have led to improvements in existing training programs, to the development of new programs and to institutional reforms. One notable impact of these efforts has been the significant restructuring of courses and course offerings. When QUEST realized its participants required more remedial training than was offered by local community college programs, it developed the Basic Skills Academy, a remedial program that expands the curriculum in remedial math and English.

QUEST's success is illustrated by the creation of a new job-training program at the St. Phillips College's southwest campus. QUEST's occupational advisory committee had identified a lack of skilled diesel equipment mechanics in the region. Using this information, QUEST collaborated with the college to develop and implement a new nine-month, certified diesel mechanic training program. Another regional opportunity identified in its sectoral analysis was tremendous growth of employment in "back office"—general administrative services—positions. In response, the organization collaborated with local banking and finance companies to develop training programs that teach the necessary service and general office skills required to access employment in these fields.

Westside Industrial Retention and Expansion Network (WIRE-Net)

Location:	Cleveland, Ohio
Service Area:	Westside Industrial Neighborhoods
Target Population:	Unemployed Minority Inner-city Residents
CBR Approach:	Regional Economic Reform
Regional Issues Addressed:	Deindustrialization, Disinvestment, Lack of Responsiveness by Political Representatives
Contact Information:	John Colm, Executive Director Phone 216.631.7330 x105 www.wirenet.nhlink.net

Description

The Westside Industrial Retention and Expansion Network (WIRE-Net) is a membership organization of local industrial firms that serves as an intermediary organization between firms, workers and the public sector. The organization was established by three local CDCs — Cudell Improvement Inc., Detroit Shoreway Community Development Organization and Stockyard Area Development Association — that serve the westside industrial neighborhoods of Cleveland. In 1998, WIRE-Net expanded, adding the Bellaire Puritas Development Corporation and the Westtown CDC as neighborhood sponsors. WIRE-Net serves a residential community of 120,000 and a manufacturing base of 700 firms employing 30,000 people. Over the past 11 years, the organization has built its membership to over 170 corporate members.

WIRE-Net's regional economic reform strategy includes an industrial retention and expansion (IRE) program to redress social impacts that resulted from the deindustrialization of the local economy. This place-based strategy seeks to strengthen inner-city neighborhoods by building upon their economic competitive advantages.

WIRE-Net's IRE programs are designed to strengthen industrial linkages between firms, workers and communities. They recognize that the westside communities possess a number of local advantages or "assets" in the form of an existing infrastructure, an industrial base and an available labor force. The goal of their industrial strategies is to build upon these assets to create a regional economic niche in their industries.

Programs

Networking

WIRE-Net's IRE program rejects the traditional industrial strategy that tries to gain market share by increasing economies of scale and lower prices. In its place, WIRE-Net has developed a number of networking programs to build the capacity of local industries to develop effective inter-firm linkages and networks. These networks link the area's institutions, manufacturers and residents and provide technical assistance to small firms. They also facilitate the building of networks between small firms to encourage cooperation, facilitate knowledge transfer and reach markets that would be otherwise inaccessible to participating firms.

Employee Training, Referral and Placement

Another part of WIRE-Nets IRE strategy focuses on building a skilled labor force and encouraging local employment. The "Hire Locally" program links job seekers to employment in local manufacturing firms. This program includes skills matching — matching participant skills with available jobs — and provides basic jobs training services, such as resume writing, interviewing and job retention skills, for prospective employees. The network also offers an employee training program for local employers. This program enables employees to update the skills that are required by new technology or for job advancement.

Real Estate Development

WIRE-Net maintains an inventory of industrial sites for lease or sale on Cleveland's west side. As a partner in the Cleveland Industrial Retention Initiative (CIRI), WIRE-Net works to connect businesses with financial assistance through the Cleveland Department of Economic Development, the Cleveland Area Development Corporation and the Ohio Department of Development.

Working Partnerships USA

Location:	San Jose, California
Service Area:	Silicon Valley region; State of California
Target Population:	Ethnic and Cultural Groups; Low-income Community Members; Working Families; Rank and File Union Members; Elected Officials
CBR Approach:	Research; Policy Development; Grassroots Education; Leadership Development
Regional Issues Addressed:	Closing The Growing Inequality Gap
Contact Information:	Amy Dean, Executive Director Phone 408.269.7872 www.atwork.org/wp/index.html

Description

Founded in 1995 as a nonprofit to support a collaboration among the South Bay AFL-CIO Labor Council and community-based organizations, Working Partnerships has brought a wide range of voices to the table in discussions around regional economic development, and state and national employment policy. Amy Dean, head of the AFL-CIO's Silicon Valley regional office, also serves as founder and Director of Working Partnerships. Through grassroots campaigns, popular economics education, research and advocacy, Working Partnerships is developing systemic reforms to the economic problems confronting working families, and advancing viable strategies to address concerns about the health of communities. Working Partnerships realizes its goals through the use of the following programmatic elements:

Organizing for Living Wage and Community-Centered Development

A worker- and community-centered economic development agenda for the Silicon Valley region prioritizes economic, social and environmental justice and creates a regional model for other communities around the country.

Leadership Training and Community Building

Popular economic education and leadership training to community leaders and union members—particularly women and people of color—gives a broad spectrum of their coalition the tools to counter the corporate-focused agenda of temporary employment, privatization and the weakening of the public sector. WPUSA specifically helps to position trained leaders to serve on local boards, commissions and in elected office.

Research and Reporting

Research on the community well-being of Silicon Valley and the state of California tracks changing employment patterns and informs WPUSA's strategies for equity-intervention. The group has developed comprehensive economic indicators that value job quality and community services.

WPUSA has developed a new model for employee organizations to improve workplace conditions and shoulder the impacts and risks of non-standard, flexible employment.

Programs

Community Economic Blueprint

Working Partnerships has been involved in a multi-year process both to analyze the most critical economic problems that are confronting the Silicon Valley community and to construct a set of proposed institutional responses. Initially, roundtable discussions were held with over 300 organizers, planners, environmentalists and social service providers to identify issues in healthcare, economic development, neighborhood revitalization and job training within the region. Practical solutions appropriate for local and regional action are incorporated in a Community Economic Blueprint. The Blueprint engages decision-makers on behalf of community organizations throughout Silicon Valley to guide the direction of public policy.

Labor/Community Leadership Institute

Working Partnerships' long-term strategic vision includes helping low-income communities and communities of color define how issues are debated and build an agenda that offers proactive solutions to socio-economic problems. To achieve these objectives, in 1997, Working Partnerships initiated the Labor/Community Leadership Institute. Based on a cooperative agreement with San Jose State University, the Labor/Community Leadership Institute is an eight-week course that trains activists in the tools of economic analysis and the leadership skills needed to put them to use. Leaders from neighborhood groups, unions, clergy and elected officials and/or their staffs are recruited to participate in a curriculum that empowers participants to implement a community-centered economic development agenda. Working Partnerships insures that Institute participants reflect the diversity of the region. In 1999, WPUSA expanded the Institute to target residents of neighborhood associations to begin developing a second tier of leadership in the communities.

Living Wage Campaign

In 1998, Working Partnerships initiated an educational campaign targeted at educating residents of San Jose about the positive effects of a Living Wage policy. The organization set the stage with an in-depth study of the growing income divide in Silicon Valley. The report received substantial attention in the media and helped to begin to shift the terms of debate about economic development in the region. With overwhelming public support, the San Jose City Council passed a living wage policy that set a living wage at \$9.50 with benefits, the highest living-wage law in the country.

Temporary Workers' Employment Project

This project addresses the conditions of employment for temporary workers, a growing segment of the workforce in the new economy. These workers are often paid less than their salaried counterparts and do not receive company benefits. Working Partnerships founded a non-profit temp agency to compete with for-profit temp agencies rates while offering its workers health benefits. It is also organizing a temporary workers' association which functions like a union in representing workers, while providing them with portable health and other benefits. Working Partnerships ultimately hopes to require the temp industry to adopt a code of conduct mandating health insurance and a livable wage.

