outside the purview of most area-wide organizations.

These characteristics position area-wide developers as outside actors when it comes to planning and designing community-development projects. However, the Winnipeg is an example of how the community relationships, political capital, and entrepreneurial capabilities of CDCs can be paired with the organizational and financial resources of an area-wide developer to move a locally conceived project forward. These two types of organizations are niche players within a mature, sophisticated industry that is engaged in work that can be particularly challenging. Both bring to the table critical strengths that are required for successful community-development efforts. In an environment where funding for community development has become significantly constrained, it is essential that foundations and other financial partners support community-based CDCs for the invaluable long-range planning, integrated development, and community engagement they provide.

Noel Nix is a graduate student in the Master of Urban and Regional Planning program at the Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs.

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The 2010 U.S. Census: Ensuring Everyone Counts in Minneapolis

by Margaret Kaplan

Since April of 2009, the Minnesota Center for Neighborhood Organizing, a program of CURA, has been partnering with the City of Minneapolis to coordinate outreach efforts for the 2010 U.S. Census. In 2000, the Census mail-in participation rate for Minneapolis was 68%. A number of events in the intervening 10 years will make the city’s population even harder to count this year. These include demographic shifts such as the growth of immigrant populations and non–English speaking residents, as well as the foreclosure crisis, which has produced more vacant properties and large numbers of families doubling up. In addition, there are many reasons why individuals may choose not to return their census form, including confusion about how the census works, fear of the government, and apathy. Unfortunately, if these barriers to participation are not addressed, people in undercounted communities will be denied their fair share of resources and representation for the next 10 years.

MCNO’s approach is to build relationships with key community leadership, and use the existing assets, knowledge, and expertise in these communities to support a campaign organized around the common goal of increasing Minneapolis’ participation in the U.S. Census. The primary vehicle for outreach is the Minneapolis Complete Count Committee (CCC), which is made up of a diverse group of community leaders. The philosophy behind the Minneapolis CCC is that people need to hear about the importance of the census not from the government, but from trusted community members, who have unique wisdom about what messages will speak to their community. This is particularly important for communities of color and immigrant communities, which make up an increasingly large percentage of the population in Minneapolis. The broad membership of the committee includes representatives from organizations such as the Minneapolis High Rise Council, MAD Dads, Somali Confederation of Minnesota, St. Stephens Homeless Shelter, Shiloh Temple, Archdiocese Hispanic Ministries, Asian Media Access, and La Asamblea de Derechos Civiles. Unlike some complete count committees that are resource focused and government driven, the Minneapolis CCC is action focused. Each member is expected to make commitments to doing census outreach work, and there is a process of accountability to ensure that commitments are honored.

Although the Minneapolis CCC represents some of the hardest-to-count areas of the city, MCNO also has worked to actively build community partnerships outside of the CCC structure. In January, MCNO, in partnership with the Main Street Project, organized a Census Leadership and Training Conference, bringing together more than 100 community leaders to develop strategies for outreach to hard-to-reach communities. Additionally, MCNO created partnerships with campus-based organizations, neighborhoods, communities of faith, and schools. Other activities have included census promotion at key community celebrations such as Somali Eid Festivals, count-a-thons in hard-to-reach communities, a census salsa event, media coverage in both mainstream and ethnic media, and door-to-door census outreach. Together, these efforts will help to ensure that everyone counts in Minneapolis.

Margaret Kaplan is operations director for the Minnesota Center for Neighborhood Organizing, a program of CURA.