Housing Careers of Very Low Income Persons

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- Measuring Sustainability in the Twin Cities Region
- Local Policy Responses to Immigration in the United States
- The Neighborhood Partnership Initiative Program
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Photo on cover: A public housing resident who is being evicted from her apartment cries while preparing to pack her belongings. Photo © AP/Evan Vucci.
Vicki Lewis’s “housing career” started when she moved out of her mother’s apartment at the age of 17. During the first 15 years of her career, Vicki bounced from place to place, living at 14 different addresses, mostly in St. Paul. The longest she has ever stayed at a single address is three-and-a-half years, and she didn’t do that until her 19th accommodation, when she was 38 years old. For the most part, she has liked the places where she has lived; she reports that most were in good physical shape and, with a couple of exceptions, were in decent-enough neighborhoods. But she was forced to move out of one because of relationship problems. Another time the rent was too expensive for her. She moved a couple of times to get a bigger or better place. Any improvements she was able to make in her housing, however, were short-lived. Of the 25 times she has moved in her 30-year housing career, only 8 of the moves were voluntary or unforced by the circumstances of her personal life, income, or the housing market. The extreme instability of Vicki’s housing career has been largely outside of her control.

A “housing career” can be thought of in much the same way as an employment career. In an employment career, as a person accumulates knowledge and skills, he or she will leave behind shorter term and lower paying jobs for ever-more stable and rewarding positions. In a housing career, it is similarly expected that early instability and perhaps lower quality accommodations will give way over time to longer term and more secure tenancies. For very low income people, however, both employment and housing careers take on a different look. Moves are frequent, and they remain frequent throughout a career. Moves are less likely to result in improved conditions, and they are frequently forced. Although studies of employment careers of the poor are fairly common, relatively little research has been conducted on the housing careers of low-income individuals. In an effort to learn more about how to assist low-income families in achieving residential stability and security, we undertook a research project to examine the housing careers of very low income households in the Twin Cities. This article describes the results.

1 All of the names used in this article are pseudonyms.
of our interviews about the housing patterns and experiences of a sample of very low income residents of the Twin Cities, and provides perspective on the social-services policy implications of our findings. The research upon which this article is based was supported by a grant from the McKnight Foundation.

**Methodology**

In the summer of 2009, we interviewed 47 persons living in subsidized housing or on the waiting list for such housing, collecting information on the entire range of housing accommodations that they have had as independent adults. For each accommodation identified, we asked participants a series of follow-up questions about the characteristics of the housing unit, neighborhood, and the household makeup at the time. In this way, we were able to reconstruct the housing careers of these 47 people. We chose 15 members of the sample for a series of five follow-up interviews that we conducted between September 2009 and June 2010. These follow-up interviews went into more detail about the housing choices made by the participants, the strategies they have used to get by on below-poverty-level incomes, and on their housing experiences as children. We asked participants to provide the address or nearest cross-street for each accommodation in their housing careers. We then geo-coded these addresses and added to our data set U.S. Census data at the block-group level for each accommodation.\(^2\) This step allowed us to collect data on the neighborhoods inhabited by the study participants.

Participants in the study were recruited with the assistance of Project for Pride in Living (PPL), a nonprofit organization that manages more than 900 units of subsidized rental housing. The participants on the waiting list were recruited from the Metro Housing and Redevelopment Authority (Metro HRA) Section 8 waiting list. Participants for the follow-up interview were chosen on the basis of the length of their housing careers and the diversity of experiences represented. The initial interviews ranged in length from 45 to 90 minutes. Interviews took place in a variety of community settings, including meeting rooms at neighborhood libraries and community centers. The interviews were taped and transcribed.

### Results

Participants in our study established their own households (“launched”) at an average age of 18 or 19. Of the 47 participants, 4 reported that they launched before the age of 17, and 5 launched after the age of 21. The men in our sample tended to leave home later than the women, and though the difference was small (a mean of 20 years of age rather than 18), it was statistically significant. The mean length of the housing careers for participants in the study was 22 years; 7 participants had careers that were less than 10 years in length, whereas 14 (30%) had careers that exceeded 30 years. In their housing careers, our participants made frequent moves; the mean number of housing accommodations for participants in the study was 15. Two participants we initially interviewed had only two accommodations and had had very short housing careers at the time of our interview (leading us to interview substitute participants), whereas the most accommodations for a single participant was 29. The (weighted) mean accommodation duration for our participants was 20 months. Fourteen participants (30%) showed extreme instability over the course of their housing careers, having mean housing durations of less than one year. At the other end of the spectrum, 11 participants (23%) had mean durations of more than two years during the course of their careers.

**Types of Accommodations.** The most common form of accommodation for the study participants was rental housing: 48% of all accommodations were rentals (Table 1). Most of the rental accommodations were in private, unsubsidized units. Conversely, only 1% (a total of seven) of the accommodations reported by participants involved homeownership. Because two participants owned homes at two points in time, only 5 of the 47 participants were ever homeowners.

The second most common type of accommodation was to live with family or friends, or to move in with parents in situations in which the participant

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accommodation Type</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Pct.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rental</td>
<td>330</td>
<td>48.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private unsubsidized rental</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>28.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subsidized rental</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>10.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transitional rental</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared rental</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment/school housing</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doubled up or living (off-lease) with others</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>30.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With family/friends</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>22.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With parents</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>7.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>17.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homeless shelter</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>6.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemical/mental health facility</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jail</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other institutional</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic abuse shelter</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homeless</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homeownership</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>682</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^2\) Because housing careers stretched as far back as the late 1970s, data from the 1980 U.S. Census were used for all accommodations through 1985. For accommodations from 1986 to 1995, the 1990 U.S. Census was used, and the 2000 U.S. Census was used for all accommodations since 1996.
had only partial or no responsibility for paying rent. These accommodations accounted for 30% of all the settings reported by participants, and indicated that informal housing arrangements are a regular and important element of the housing careers of very low income people. Forty-two of the participants (89%) reported “doubling up” at least once in their housing careers, and most had used the strategy repeatedly. Two participants reported having doubled up with family or friends 10 or more times in their careers.

A substantial percentage (18%) of the accommodations reported by participants were in institutional settings, including shelters and jail. Most of the participants (38, or 81%) reported that they had lived in institutional accommodations at least once. Twelve participants (25%) reported having been jailed at least once. Finally, participants reported being without any home for 3% of the accommodation instances. In these cases, participants reported that they stayed in their car, on the streets, in motels, or were “couch hopping” from night to night.

**Housing Finances.** For the participants in this study, it was quite common to have joint responsibility for meeting housing costs or to live with a subsidy of some sort (which we expected, given the way in which the sample was chosen). As noted above, the study participants relied heavily on informal means of housing accommodations, including doubling up, homelessness, and shelter use. A formal lease was in force in less than half of the accommodations reported by participants. When a lease existed, the participant was named on it less than two-thirds of the time.

Participants contributed to the payment of rent in only 63% of the accommodations listed. For the remaining 37%, the participants were either not responsible for payment of rent (as is often the case with institutional forms of housing) or they were able to secure housing arrangements where they were not required to pay rent. When the participants were making payments, they reported receiving help or a formal subsidy two-thirds of the time. The most common source of assistance came from family or friends (31%), whereas rentals using formal rent subsidies such as Section 8 or public housing made up only 29% of the accommodations in which participants received assistance, and only 15% of all accommodations reported.

**Residential Instability.** One of the ways in which these very low income persons differ from a middle-class norm in housing careers is that they tend not to experience greater stability over time. Although it is common for young people to move relatively frequently, for most middle-class households, the frequency of moves declines over time. We did not observe this pattern for the participants in this study. The mean duration for the first five accommodations was 19 months, only one month shy of the overall (weighted) mean length of stay over their entire housing careers. When we compared the mean length of stay for the first five accommodations with the mean length of stay for all accommodations, we found that the difference in these means was not statistically significant, indicating that participants were unable to increase their housing stability over time.

The duration of individual accommodations for the six participants shown in Figure 1 illustrates a pattern of greater residential instability over the course of a housing career. Although each graph in Figure 1 uses a different scale, the overall pattern shown in the figure is one of frequent and short-term moves, with no trend toward greater stability over time. This pattern was quite common among the participants in this study. The mean duration of the last five accommodations reported by all participants was 18 months—that is, more than a month shorter than the mean for their first five accommodations—but the difference in the two means was not statistically significant. Many participants (55%) had shorter mean duration accommodations over the last five than they reported for their first five. To explore the duration of accommodations as housing careers progressed, we first numbered accommodations from 1 to n for each participant, identifying the order in which his or her housing career had progressed (meaning that the higher the number, the later in the housing career that accommodation took place). When we then analyzed the correlation between accommodation number and duration, we found a negative correlation, indicating that for participants as a whole...
accommodations were generally slightly shorter as careers progressed.

Indeed, as Figure 1 demonstrates, some of the participants had patterns of extreme instability. This instability was the pattern for more than half (26) of the study participants, for whom more than half of their housing accommodations were less than one year in duration. For five participants, 75% or more of their accommodations were for less than one year. In our study, we found some evidence that securing formal rent subsidies helped to stabilize occupancies. The mean duration of subsidized accommodations was 24 months, compared with 18 months for unsubsidized housing; the difference in these two means was statistically significant.

Reasons for Moving. We asked participants why they moved out of each of the accommodations that they listed in the interview. The reasons varied from problems with personal relationships to physical damage to the unit caused by fire or water (Table 2). The reason for moving that participants mentioned most frequently was “got a place of my own.” This reason reflected the high percentage of accommodations that were shared with family and friends, and speaks to the motivation of participants to become more independent in their living arrangements. The second most common reason for moving was the completion of a treatment program, jail

Note: Accommodations were numbered 1 to n for each participant to identify the order in which a housing career progressed. The higher the number, the later in the housing career that accommodation took place. Vertical bars represent the duration (in months) of each accommodation in a participant’s housing career. Increasingly taller bars along the graph from left to right indicate a pattern of greater stability over time. Graphs are not at the same scale.
sentence, or transitional housing term, reflecting the relative frequency with which these participants were housed in institutional settings during their housing careers. Third on the list of reasons for moving was wanting a better place to live, fourth was relationship problems, and fifth was eviction. These reasons for moving are indicative of the problems faced by very low income persons in the housing market. Their limited purchasing power puts them into living situations in which the housing accommodation is often not good, safe, or affordable. Thus, they move to improve their conditions, or because they are unable to meet the conditions of occupancy.

What is striking about the list is the number of difficulties that motivate the mobility of very low income persons. When we categorized the reasons given by participants into positive and negative, 59% of the circumstances that led to a move were negative. Even some of the “positive” circumstances such as “completed a program of treatment” provided evidence of problems faced by participants. We further examined the reasons provided to determine whether they reflected a discretionary decision on the part of the participant to move or whether the move was forced. We coded wanting a better place, lifestyle moves, and poor neighborhood conditions, for example, as discretionary moves; we categorized evictions, entering jail or treatment, and lack of affordability as forced moves. The data demonstrate that 49% of the moves could be regarded as forced, indicating that much of the mobility of the very low income persons in this sample was not a result of making a choice to move, but rather was imposed on them by their circumstances.

**Neighborhoods.** We also asked participants a series of questions about the neighborhoods in which they had lived, and they largely said positive things about them. When asked to describe the neighborhoods, 65% of the descriptions offered by participants were positive. Most commonly, participants noted when they lived in “quiet” (11%) or safe (3.5%) neighborhoods, or they described the neighborhood by mentioning the presence of family (2%), of good relationships (6%), or of a mix of people more generally (5%). Some of our participants said:

'It was quiet. Everybody got along with each other.'  —Jermaine

'It was a good neighborhood, nice neighborhood. I wish I could raise my kids up in that neighborhood now. It was a neighborhood for families bringing up small children.'  —Alice

'It was just more people around doing drugs and whatever—liquor store on the corner, the local hangout or whatever. Oh, and there was a bar next door... A lot of people hung out at the bar and it was loud and stuff... I didn’t feel as safe as the other neighborhoods I’ve been in.'  —Cynthia

On the negative side, 9% of the responses indicated an “unsafe” neighborhood, 7% a loud or boisterous environment, and 8% the presence of drugs. Overwhelmingly (69% to 31%), the descriptions (both positive and negative) offered by participants made reference to the social environment rather than the physical characteristics of the neighborhood. Physical characteristics, such as location (9.2%), density (3%), or residential character (5.4%), were as prevalent as some of the social descriptions, but overall participants employed many fewer physical descriptions than social ones. Two of our participants noted:

'It was a drug neighborhood.... It wasn’t very clean. I mean the streets and stuff. People would just litter all over the place.'  —Gayle

'It was just more people around—gang related. The guy next to us didn’t like black people so he would call my kids other names, but overall, from all the places that I look at now, it was not bad.'  —Ray

When participants had something negative to say about their neighborhoods, they most frequently referred to the social environment; 82% of the negative descriptors were about the social environment (compared with 69% of all descriptions offered by participants). As Ray explained:

'It had its good people and bad people. But for the most part they were nice. I mean everybody has their issues. There was a couple of people across the street that were gang related. The guy next to us didn’t like black people so he would call my kids other names, but overall, from all the places that I look at now, it was not bad.'  —Ray

**Table 2. Top 15 Reasons Cited by Study Participants for Moving from Accommodations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Pct.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>83</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65</td>
<td>10.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>521</td>
<td>82.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: The table includes reasons for moving both positively and negatively. The percentages reflect the number of participants who mentioned each reason.*
meaning that these participants did not remain in neighborhoods that they rated favorably any longer than they stayed in what they considered lower quality neighborhoods.

Persons with very low income are frequently faced with the need to make trade-offs in their housing choices—in other words, to sacrifice some qualities in the housing unit or the neighborhood to achieve others. Overall, in 31% of the accommodations, participants reported making a trade-off between neighborhood quality and housing quality. Trade-offs were made with equal frequency in both directions. Of those who described their housing in positive terms, 26% described the neighborhood negatively. An example of this is Elise, who described her neighborhood as “real icky,” “drug-infested,” and dirty, but when asked how she felt about living there, replied,

It was all right. I had my own place and it was big. It was all right; I made a couple of friends over there.

Similarly, 26% of those who described their neighborhood in positive terms gave negative descriptions of their housing.

Because we were interested in how trade-off decisions were made, we examined the influence of a number of variables on the likelihood that participants would trade off housing and neighborhood quality. We found that the tendency to trade off housing and neighborhood quality did not vary over the progression of housing careers; that is, participants were not less likely to be making these trade-offs later in their careers. In addition, we found that the tendency to make trade-offs did not differ whether or not the participant was living in subsidized housing, living with their children, was employed, or had help paying for housing. However, we found a statistically significant higher rate of trade-off of housing and neighborhood quality by participants when they made no monetary contribution to the monthly housing costs (39% of the time) compared with participants when they were contributing to rent (28% of the time). This finding suggests that being able to live rent-free made the participants more willing to accept lower quality neighborhoods.

The normative trajectory of housing careers includes both improvements in housing conditions and status as well as improvements in neighborhood poverty, we graphically illustrated the poverty of the neighborhoods in which four participants in our study lived across their housing careers (Figure 2). Janet actually moved to higher poverty neighborhoods over time. Her first 6 accommodations were in neighborhoods with 20% or less poverty, but 7 of her last 10 accommodations were in neighborhoods with poverty in excess of 25%. Ernesto’s accommodations exhibited a similar pattern, with his most recent moves all being to neighborhoods with poverty rates of more than 20%. Other participants demonstrated a pattern of moving in and out of high-poverty neighborhoods with no overall trend. For example, Denise and Patricia’s

Study participants relied heavily on informal means of housing accommodations, including doubling up with family or friends and homelessness.
accommodation patterns indicated that they were able to periodically escape high-poverty neighborhoods, but were unable to maintain themselves in more advantaged locales.

In fact, residence in a low-poverty neighborhood was a rare event for the participants in this study. Only 21% of the accommodations that could be geocoded (111 out of 534) were located in neighborhoods with poverty rates below 10%; another 26% were in neighborhoods with poverty rates between 10 and 20%. More than half of the accommodations were in neighborhoods with poverty rates above 20%, and 29% were in areas where more than 30% of the population was below the poverty line (Table 3).

We found that prolonged residence in a low-poverty neighborhood was also rare for our study participants. Only 14 of the participants (30%) reported that they lived in two or more low-poverty neighborhoods consecutively. The rest (33, or 70%) reported that they would move into such a neighborhood occasionally, but their next move would be out again to a higher poverty destination. Conversely, 74% of the participants had consecutive accommodations in high- or very high poverty neighborhoods. Out of our 47 participants, more than half (26) reported being stuck in high-poverty neighborhoods.

Table 3. Neighborhood Poverty Rates for Accommodations where Study Participants Had Lived during Their Housing Careers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Neighborhood Poverty Rate</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Pct.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low (&lt;10%)</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>20.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium (10–19.9%)</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>25.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High (20–29.9%)</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>24.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very high (30%&gt;)</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>28.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>534</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Poverty rates are from U.S. Census data, based on geocoding of each accommodation listed by respondents. Precise locational information could not be obtained from respondents for 148 accommodations, leaving a total of 534 for analysis.
neighborhoods for most of their housing careers. Nine of those participants were rarely out of high-poverty environments. For example, Danielle lived in high-poverty suburbs on Chicago’s south side before moving to Minneapolis and living in the Near North and Phillips neighborhoods; 10 of her 11 neighborhoods were high poverty. Patricia spent 19 years on the south side of Chicago before moving to the north side of Minneapolis, where she has lived for the past 15 years; 12 of her 15 neighborhoods have been high-poverty areas. Nick has spent his entire housing career on the south side of Minneapolis; from 1983 to 2009 he had 17 different accommodations, 13 of which were in high- or very high poverty areas. More than a quarter of the participants (28%) had never lived in a low-poverty neighborhood as an adult, and 38% had lived in such neighborhoods less than once out of every 10 living situations.

This pattern, however, was not true of all participants. A substantial portion had largely avoided high-poverty neighborhoods, with 20% of the participants living in high-poverty neighborhoods less than one-third of the time.

When we evaluated our participants’ patterns of living in poverty, we identified differences between those who have had housing careers almost exclusively within high-poverty neighborhoods and the rest of the participants. The participants with a history of accommodations in high-poverty neighborhoods tended to have a later launch date—by a mean of two years—than the rest of the sample. This suggests that a later launch date might be an indirect measure of either the capability of negotiating housing markets or of an earnings potential sufficient to exit high-poverty neighborhoods. They also had lower education levels; only 10% had any postsecondary education compared with 43% for the rest of the participants. Participants who had the most accommodations in low-poverty neighborhoods were also different than the rest of participants: all were female; they had fewer children on average, and had more education (two-thirds had postsecondary educational experience compared with only 32% of the rest of the sample). Subsidized housing did not have any correlation with the kind of neighborhoods in which our participants had lived. The neighborhoods that contained the subsidized housing that our participants reported having lived in were statistically identical to the neighborhoods for all other accommodations.

Mobility Trajectory. Our assumptions about how people are faring in the housing market are often based on knowledge of the housing units they occupy or the neighborhoods in which they live. However, for the residents we interviewed, their social and interpersonal circumstances (including substance abuse or mental health and their relationships with roommates, significant others, or family) were the criteria that they most frequently cited when judging whether a move was good or bad, with participants most commonly referencing relationships with people as a factor for categorizing a housing move as either positive or negative. Participants also often mentioned other life circumstances, not related to relationships, such as substance abuse or child custody. Because participants gave a number of reasons for why they characterized a move in a certain way, we concluded that they typically saw the trajectory of their housing careers as a reflection of a much wider set of circumstances than merely their housing or neighborhood conditions. Interestingly, the single most common reference for categorizing a housing move as either positive or negative was the respondent’s relationships.

Summary and Policy Implications
The interviews we conducted with study participants revealed a great deal about the experiences of very low income people in the housing market. We have reported only a small portion of our findings here. Follow-up interviews with a subgroup of participants yielded information about childhood experiences, coping mechanisms used, trade-offs made, and the self-perceived trajectories of their individual housing careers.

In general, our research demonstrated the extreme instability of housing for the very poor, reinforcing the notion that perhaps the most direct benefit of subsidized housing is in creating greater residential stability. The importance of informal housing accommodations suggests that the scope of housing needs is far greater than currently estimated by techniques that focus only on formal tenant-landlord accommodations. Finally, the central role of personal relationships in determining the housing outcomes of the individuals studied here suggests a more holistic policy approach that supplements housing assistance with social services aimed at enhancing self-sufficiency. Such service-rich housing needs to be a central component of strategies aimed at stabilizing the housing of very low income persons.

A continuum of supportive housing options is necessary so that very low income people can transition out of institutional and supportive housing environments into stable affordable housing. The relatively minor role that neighborhood conditions played in the mobility decisions and patterns of the study participants suggests that the creation and provision of more subsidized housing for very low income families should be given priority over efforts to achieve a broader spatial distribution of such assistance. The study also suggests that helping very low income families achieve stability requires a strong system of non-profit organizations that can address basic needs that go well beyond housing.

In general, our findings support the following policy recommendations regarding housing provision and housing support for the very poor.

Expand the stock of affordable units, through either vouchers or the provision of more subsidized units. The need for housing for very low income families in all likelihood outstrips our available estimates because of the prevalence of doubling up. Close to one-half of the housing accommodations for participants in this study were off-lease arrangements. This reflects the significant number of times that these very low income families were unable to find any housing and the number of times they were unable to pay more than a token amount toward their housing. Deep-subsidy housing assistance is needed to relieve the housing problems that these participants routinely exhibited throughout their housing careers.

Subsidies should be enduring, something that families can count on until they are ready to move on. Subsidized housing provided short-term stability for families in those cases where they could secure such housing. Participants remained in subsidized units longer than they stayed in other accommodations. For a significant number of participants, subsidized housing was associated with longer term stability in that their accommodations after
first gaining access to housing assistance were of longer duration than what they had been able to achieve previously.

- **Options for service-enriched housing need to be expanded.** Service-enriched housing has been very important for the participants in our study. Much of the forced mobility of these families was related to nonhousing issues such as drug and alcohol use, mental illnesses, and interpersonal relationships. Thus, prospects for longer term stability for these participants depends on their ability to address these challenges. Service-enriched and community settings work well to mediate these issues and help families achieve greater stability.

- **A continuum of supportive housing options is necessary so that very low income people can transition out of institutional and transitional/supportive housing into stable, affordable housing.** Many participants showed a pattern of recurrent substance abuse after moving out of treatment facilities and into environments that were not supportive of or conducive to continued sobriety.

- **The creation and provision of more subsidized housing for very low income families should be given priority over efforts to achieve a broader spatial distribution of such assistance.** Neighborhood environment is a secondary concern for this group. The provision of housing subsidies should not be contingent on neighborhood quality and the expansion of housing assistance should not await the achievement of greater spatial equity in the distribution of subsidized units and families. Neighborhood conditions rarely played a role in the pattern of mobility shown by study participants.

- **Housing assistance should be offered in forms and in locations that support the coping strategies of very low income families.** What is most important about neighborhoods for these participants is the proximity of family and friends and the establishment of a support network to meet basic needs. Participants depend on informal work, reciprocal arrangements within their social network, and financial support of nearby kin, each of which are frequently location-sensitive. Being able to maintain proximity to these sources of support and to access housing subsidies is critical for these families.

- **Helping very low income families achieve stability requires a strong system of nonprofit organizations that address basic needs that go well beyond housing.** Meeting basic needs goes beyond stable, affordable housing. Many of the follow-up participants relied on nonprofit organizations for help with food, energy assistance, and referrals—even those who were living in subsidized housing.

- **Housing assistance must be provided in ways that address intergenerational influences.** Housing instability, poverty, and family trauma have been an intergenerational problem for many participants. Helping these families achieve housing stability as well as chemical, mental, and physical health may help to break the cycle of instability for the next generation. For most, the hypermobility of their own housing careers is part of an unbroken pattern that began when they were children.

**Edward G. Goetz** is director of the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs. He is also professor of urban and regional planning at the Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota. His research focuses on affordable housing. **Kim Skobba** is a private consultant with expertise in affordable housing issues. She received her Ph.D. in housing studies from the University of Minnesota in 2008. **Cynthia Yuen** is a graduate student in the Master of Urban and Regional Planning Program at the Humphrey Institute of public affairs.

The research upon which this article is based was supported by a grant from the McKnight Foundation. A full report of findings from this research is available from Edward G. Goetz, egoetz@umn.edu, 612-624-8737.
American society generally views prostitution as a transaction between two individuals. When sex trading occurs outside on the streets—and adults and children find condoms and witness sex acts taking place in alleys, in automobiles, at bus stops, and in parks—a broader community impact may be perceived, as it was in north Minneapolis earlier this decade. In 2005, a group of north Minneapolis stakeholders became fed up with the sex trade taking place on the streets of their community and were determined to see these transactions stop, or at least to happen somewhere else.

At the time, the voices and experiences of those who trade sex were not yet part of the community discussion about how to stop prostitution. In 2005, I was hired to conduct The Prostitution Project, a large-scale, community-based research project on prostitution focused on developing solutions to the problem. By working with residents, businesses, law enforcement, as well as people who trade sex, this research found that sex trading is not simply a transaction between two individuals; it deeply impacts the broader community and is intertwined in complex ways with the systemic exploitation of those who are poor and vulnerable. Sex trading in north Minneapolis harms not only those who sell sex, but also the social fabric of families, neighborhoods, and the community.

This article focuses mainly on research I conducted during the fall and winter of 2006 and 2007 with adults who traded sex in North Minneapolis. More than 150 adults who traded sex in North Minneapolis responded to our research recruitment flyer and came to my office in the community to complete a survey about their lives. Findings from this research were startling. People who trade sex in North Minneapolis experience extreme poverty, high rates of violence (including child sexual abuse, rape,
and assault), homelessness, chemical dependency, exploitation by pimps and traffickers, unmet health needs, societal stigma, exclusion, and victimization. We also found that these individuals were strong and resilient mothers, sisters, wives, aunts, and members of the community. Most said they wanted to give back and do something positive.

Between 2005 and 2008, we also conducted research with more than 400 other community stakeholders on the Northside about their views of and experiences with prostitution. We worked with residents, businesses, police and probation officers, activists, advocates, health professionals, and others. We developed the overall project goals, aims, and methods in concert with community stakeholders, including people who trade sex, using an approach called participatory action research. The research process itself catalyzed untapped common ground among stakeholders, including people who trade sex. We successfully recruited diverse research participants, generated new knowledge, and launched numerous prevention, intervention, and policy initiatives to meet needs and address issues raised through our research. The Prostitution Project has built a foundation for working together to solve the myriad and complex problems related to prostitution.

CURA-funded students have been a critical component of this work, helping to conduct research and bringing fresh interdisciplinary perspectives to the project. More than 14 student research assistants have been part of the Prostitution Project during the last five years. CURA has supported six of these students, who have been involved with seven smaller projects within the larger research effort.

In this article, I describe our research and three of the initiatives that have grown from our community-based knowledge production about trading sex in North Minneapolis: the Northside Women’s Space, Gaining Independence for Females in Transition, and Safety on the Streets. These projects show how our community-based participatory research has set in motion an organic process of inquiry leading to action, the outcomes of which could not have been designed in advance. As we documented needs, we designed and launched programs and interventions to meet those needs. This, in turn, spurred more research and evaluation, which led to the documentation and identification of deeper needs, and so on. This work is a model for how organic and sustained research, conducted in partnership with the community, can help develop solutions for some of our most-pressing urban challenges, such as prostitution. The research upon which this article is based was supported by several grants from CURA’s Neighborhood Partnerships for Community Research, Northside Seed Grant, and Communiuniversity programs, as well as the Otto Bremer Foundation, the World Childhood Foundation, Folwell Center for Urban Initiatives, and individual donors.

Methodology

Our research team used participatory action research methods to develop research methodologies, gather information, and translate our findings into positive social change. Participatory action research involves actionable research directed at problems identified by communities, and includes stakeholders and potential research participants in all phases of the research as experts and co-equal partners.

The research team conducted a pilot phase to test our recruitment methods...
and survey instrument from March 2005 to January 2006. We then designed and implemented the full research project from February 2006 to January 2007. We transcribed, coded, and entered the data into an SPSS statistical database from February to June 2007. Since then we have conducted several related follow-up projects. Although a detailed description of the methods used for each project is beyond the scope of this article, below I describe some of our core methods and approaches.

The research we conducted in 2006 and 2007 with people who trade sex is the foundation for all of our work. For research about illegal or stigmatized behavior such as sex trading, sampling is always an issue. The characteristics of the population are not well known outside of those arrested for prostitution, and people are generally reluctant to self-identify for the purposes of research. Our study recruited a community-based sample of people involved in prostitution in North Minneapolis. This sample is rather unique in the prostitution literature. The majority of prostitution research is conducted either with “captive” groups of women—for example, those in prison, probation programs, or chemical dependency treatment—or with women who are easy to “see,” such as those who work in street-based prostitution. These samples are potentially skewed, however, as the sampling approach misses people who have not been arrested or those who work less frequently or in off-street venues such as online services, crack houses, or bars. Community-based samples that include representatives from all of these groups are rare. In our sample, fewer than one-third of research participants had ever been arrested for prostitution, and only two-thirds had ever worked on the streets. We also surveyed people who work in a variety of sex-trading venues and who work infrequently. Therefore, our study provides a solid and representative informational basis for prevention, intervention, and additional research.

**Project Beginnings (2005–2007)**

The project began in the summer of 2005 with an identified community need about prostitution, a research question, and help from CURA. The previous year, Northside community members had become increasingly vocal about the rise of street-based prostitution in their neighborhoods and the seemingly deleterious impact of prostitution on the women they saw on the streets and in mug shots. According to one stakeholder at that time:

These women were viewed as the scourge of the neighborhood. In community meetings, I could hear that these women and their actions were despised. Not even the drug dealers drew that much wrath.

My work as a community-based researcher began while I was working at the Jordan Area Community Council in North Minneapolis, shortly after I completed my Ph.D. in anthropology. A task force administered by the Folwell Neighborhood Association had expressed concerns about prostitution in the neighborhoods, and asked for my help with the issue. A month later, I came back to the group with a two-year research plan that encompassed four primary data threads:

- the needs and experiences of people who trade sex
- the perspectives of residents and businesses in North Minneapolis
- law enforcement knowledge
- community-based ethnography

Soon after, Folwell Neighborhood Association hired me to conduct the research and follow the data through to intervention, prevention, and policy implications. I did not have previous experience in prostitution research, but I knew it was a sensitive topic with many pitfalls. The research itself had the potential to harm participants, particularly people who trade sex. I operated my research on the principle of “do no harm,” and used participatory-research methodologies to incorporate a wide variety of perspectives into the design and conduct of the research. I convened a community advisory panel that included advocates, law enforcement officials, academics, and Northside pastors, as well as people with experience trading sex (Table 1). Together we developed a research question that sought to understand the

### Table 1. Community Advisory Panel (CAP) Members, 2005–2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Artika Roller</td>
<td>PRIDE Program, Family and Children’s Services</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alex Nelson</td>
<td>District 202</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April Foster</td>
<td>PRIDE Program, Family and Children’s Services</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bettye Howell (Pastor)</td>
<td>Shiloh Temple</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Hayhoe (Lt.)</td>
<td>Minneapolis Police Department</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Johnson</td>
<td>Health and Family Support, City of Minneapolis</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Valentine</td>
<td>U of M Anthropology Department</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doris Johnson</td>
<td>U of M Physicians Clinic</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kimberly Lund (Lt.)</td>
<td>Minneapolis Police Department</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Laufelle Murphy</td>
<td>Minneapolis City Attorney</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linda Koelman (Rev.)</td>
<td>North United Methodist Church</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marya Anderson</td>
<td>PRIDE Program, Family and Children’s Services</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary Jo Meuleners</td>
<td>Red Door Clinic</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monica Nilsson</td>
<td>The Bridge</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trudee Able-Peterson</td>
<td>Street Works Collaborative</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vickey Smiley</td>
<td>Volunteers of America—Women’s Recovery Center</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

* Affiliations were accurate at the time of the last group meeting.
impact of prostitution on people who trade sex and on the community as a whole. We also applied for and received a grant from CURA’s Neighborhood Partnerships for Community Research program that enabled us to hire graduate research assistant Liddy Hope, a Ph.D. student in family social science at the University of Minnesota.

Pilot and Full Implementation (2005–2007). Although the Northside residents’ complaints about prostitution on their streets grew louder, we had no information from those who traded sex in the community. In effect, their voices were silent. Mary Jo Meuleners, a member of the advisory panel who now runs a sexual-health program at Hennepin County’s NorthPoint Health and Wellness Center, summed up the research this way:

What is so critically important about the value of prostitution research is that it gives voice to an unheard and misunderstood group that at the same time is so frequently and harmfully judged. By listening carefully to their responses, we can begin to understand their needs. This understanding can guide policy makers, community leaders, and service providers in creating sensitive, effective, and compassionate strategies to address the complexity of prostitution and its related issues.

With help from the advisory panel, we designed a pilot project to test the waters and refine our research methods. In the summer of 2005, the NPCR graduate research assistant, Liddy Hope, helped me conduct interviews. We refined the pilot study design, developed a needs-assessment survey, and received approval from University of Minnesota and federal research ethics review boards. That fall, we conducted four very good interviews, but it was clear that our standard recruitment methods and project design had not worked very well.

In January 2006, we took a new approach and went directly to those who traded sex to ask them for input on recruitment, methodology, and survey instruments. After a total project revamp, we posted flyers that asked: “Have you traded or sold sex in the last five years? Do you live or work in North Minneapolis? 18 or older? If you answered YES, we would like you to do a survey about your life to help build community resources and a prostitution prevention plan for youth.” The expertise of people who have traded sex helped us create a project that worked—one that was street-based and used word-of-mouth recruitment, where no names were asked for, with drop-in hours, and a flexible and supportive approach.

Between September 2006 and January 2007, after posting the flyers, 155 people came to my office at Folwell Neighborhood Association in North Minneapolis to participate in our research. All research was conducted in English. We conducted 33 open-ended verbal interviews and 154 surveys. After review of the surveys, 135 were deemed valid and entered into an SPSS database. The survey contained more than 100 closed- and open-ended questions in six areas: housing, relationships, and family; work and money; medical/health; substance use; violence; and closing questions.

Findings
Our findings were both enlightening and troubling. The majority of respondents were African American (82%) women (87%) with children (76%). Poverty was a major concern: 90% were unemployed at the time of the survey, and most had experienced food scarcity and hunger along with homelessness. Participants experienced violence in all areas of their lives, including childhood abuse, domestic violence, and attacks from clients and pimps; 84% had been victims of a major violent incident. We also found that about half first traded sex as a minor. For those who started as a minor, their average age of first sex trade was 13 years old; the earliest first sex trade was reported by a woman who had been sold at the age of five.

We heard from women firsthand about their struggles. One woman, talking about her reputation in the community, said:

I wish people would view me as a “normal” woman.

Another woman, talking about why she is involved in trading sex, said:

Do you think I like sucking a stranger’s dick? My refrigerator’s empty and my kids gotta eat.

Our society usually views women who trade sex as criminals, “part of the problem,” or throw-away people, but our research found that they are survivors and an untapped source of community strength. Several women said they want to help others on the street and prevent kids from being exploited in prostitution. One woman said:

I’m too far gone, no one can help me, but I hope my survey can help someone else.
Our research and intervention efforts proceeded from our findings that women who trade sex are an asset.

After I analyzed the data and made presentations about our findings, a variety of separate but interconnected projects evolved out of this core research with people who trade sex (Table 2). During the same timeframe as the sex-trading study, we conducted three additional research projects as part of the original research design. With support from CURA, we hired Wynfred Russell and Jenny Gustavson to survey businesses and residents, respectively. We learned that businesses feel prostitution harms their establishments by scaring away customers, increasing criminal activity in their establishments, and harming the reputation of the neighborhood. From residents, we documented that street-based sex trading occurs in alleys, streets, garages, and bus stops, and that it damages property values and safety. We also learned that it not only exposes children to prostitution, but also contributes to the exploitation of youth in the neighborhood. Many residents blamed the women who sell sex as the cause of the problem and viewed them very negatively. However, residents also recognized that “johns” (the men who purchase sex) may be the root of the problem and that women who sell sex are also victims. In addition to student-supported research, we also conducted an ethnographic study of the impact of prostitution in the community that entailed participant-observation and interviews with police officers, probation staff, residents, and advocates. The ethnography, the business and residents studies, and the sex-trading study pointed to common ground among very diverse stakeholders—we all wanted to reduce harm. Prostitution is a difficult topic laden with ideology and stereotypes. People who trade sex are stigmatized, and prostitution is harmful and dangerous both to them and the communities where it takes place. All of the stakeholders were fed up and angry. In our research we asked questions, valued the input of all, and avoided judgment of their responses. The context of “research” provided people the space to reflect on their views of prostitution rather than simply acting on knee-jerk opinions and stereotypes. The community partnerships that were formed through the research process (as well as additional ones over the years) are the backbone of our ongoing work. Research reports and public presentations also provided valuable new information about prostitution in the community.

### Outcomes of Prostitution Research in North Minneapolis

This section describes three key initiatives that grew from the sex-trading study and that also received support from CURA through the provision of graduate research assistants: the Northside Women’s Space, Gaining Independence for Females in Transition, and Safety on the Streets.

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**Table 2. Prostitution Research Projects and Student Researchers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prostitution Research Projects</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
<th>Research Assistants</th>
<th>Degree Pursued During Project</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sex Trading, Pilot Study</td>
<td>May–December 2005</td>
<td>Liddy Hope</td>
<td>University of Minnesota, Ph.D.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Liddy Hope</td>
<td>University of Minnesota, Ph.D.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lacy Weishalla</td>
<td>St. Cloud State University, B.A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Katherine Downing</td>
<td>University of Minnesota, M.P.H.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex Trading, Implementation Study</td>
<td>January 2006–February 2007</td>
<td>Anne Cullen</td>
<td>Macalester College, B.A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Johnelle Lane</td>
<td>Minneapolis Community and Technical College, credit courses</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Garret Dahlh</td>
<td>St. Cloud State University, B.A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Emily Martin</td>
<td>Willamette University, B.A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex-Trading Study, Analysis</td>
<td>March 2007–Present</td>
<td>Wynfred Russell</td>
<td>University of Minnesota, Ph.D.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Yeamah Brewer</td>
<td>Hamline University, B.A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Study</td>
<td>Summer 2006</td>
<td>Jenny Gustavson</td>
<td>University of Minnesota, B.A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residents Study</td>
<td>Fall 2006</td>
<td>Katherine Downing</td>
<td>University of Minnesota, M.P.H.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NWS Best Practices</td>
<td>Spring/Summer 2007</td>
<td>Yael Gunn</td>
<td>University of Minnesota, M.S.W.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lauren Stark</td>
<td>University of Minnesota, B.A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GIFT Research</td>
<td>2007–present</td>
<td>Garret Dahlh</td>
<td>University of Minnesota, M.S.W.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOS Evaluation</td>
<td>2008–Present</td>
<td>Yael Gunn</td>
<td>University of Minnesota, M.S.W.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NWS Implementation</td>
<td>2009–Present</td>
<td>Megan Alama</td>
<td>University of Minnesota, M.S.W.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Note: CURA-supported students are in boldface type.

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The Northside Women’s Space: A Drop-in Place of Respite and Connection. As a direct result of the sex-trading study, we started developing a drop-in space for women who trade sex in North Minneapolis that would be a point of connection to resources and support. Two clear findings from our research with women who trade sex strongly articulated the need for a drop-in space. First, many of the women reported that they appreciated the research project because it gave them a safe and welcoming place to sit down, rest, and tell their story. They said they did not have anywhere to go for respite and safety where they felt supported and were not judged. Second, data from our survey showed that the majority of participants do not have adequate access to healthcare, food, social services, or positive support systems (friends, family, and community). Two findings in particular highlight the dire situation of participants with respect to basic needs: 64% said they needed access to a food shelf and 63% required emergency temporary housing. In addition, our research also identified many barriers that prevented participants from seeking help, including stigma (and internalized stigma), feeling judged, lack of insurance, fear of arrest, the chaos of life on the streets, and unreliable transportation, to name a few. Through our research, we learned that the best and most respectful way to make contact with people who trade sex is through flexible drop-in hours, and the idea for the Northside Women’s Space was born.

In the spring of 2007, the drop-in space project was awarded a Northside Seed Grant from CURA to assist with developing a plan and identifying best practices. Katherine Downing, the graduate research assistant hired through the grant, interviewed service providers locally, nationally, and internationally to compile best practices for operating the drop-in space. This work ultimately culminated in a master’s thesis for her degree program in public health.

In 2008, the drop-in space concept found a home and a community champion in Kwanzaa Community Church when the church’s co-pastor, Reverend Alika Galloway, saw the data from the sex-trading study. As she explained:

As a North Minneapolis community member and pastor I was saddened by the statistics… I was spurred into action because the research included the voices of those long silenced by oppression and injustice. The research had guts, integrity, and held the truth of the women’s lives in a sacred way. It was lived research that the community could use to seek justice and constructive change for ourselves. We were not the object but the subject. This is very rare in oppressed communities. As subjects we tell our truth, share it with ourselves, teach others, and transform lives.

Through the research connection, Reverend Alika and I recognized a common cause and began working together to open the Northside Women’s Space in Kwanzaa Community Church’s building. We jointly hosted an open house for the space in January 2010 that was attended by more than 100 people. During the summer of 2010, Kwanzaa Community Church embarked on a major fund drive and I reconvened a new advisory panel with both some original and some new members. Kwanzaa Community Church was awarded a Northside Seed Grant from CURA for summer 2010. We hired

Reverend Alika Galloway is co-pastor of Kwanzaa Community Church in north Minneapolis and the co-leader of the Northside Women’s Space.
that they responded best to services and people who treated them with respect, understanding, and dignity—what is often called an empowerment approach. Women also derived strength and support from prostitution-specific programming built around undoing internalized stigma and shame using a trauma-informed perspective.

From 2007 to 2009, the GIFT planning team designed its approach based on this evidence, along with newly emerging gender-responsive corrections practices and research that Julie Rud, who works in Adult Field Services for Hennepin County Community Corrections, had conducted at the county. We designed the GIFT logic model as part of a comprehensive research and evaluation project to test whether the emerging best practices of the model led to a decrease in recidivism for prostitution offenses.

In 2008, the GIFT probation officers began piloting the new probation approach in preparation for an official launch. With support from CURA’s Communiversity program, we hired Yael Gunn, who had been working as an intern for P.J. Bensen. Gunn used participant-observation to document how the pilot program functioned so that we could evaluate whether program practice followed our project design. We used Gunn’s findings to fine-tune and fully implement the project. After more than two years of planning, GIFT was launched in January 2009. Preliminary corrections data analyzed by the GIFT research team suggests that GIFT is a promising practice for reducing recidivism among women on probation for prostitution.

Using our data and their own experiences, a group of advocates and stakeholders began discussions with the Minneapolis Police Department’s Third Precinct about prostitution violence. Our goal was to highlight this issue and see if we could find a way to facilitate reports of this violence to increase the numbers of arrests, charges, and convictions of these perpetrators. My interviews with police officers and a secondary literature search on the topic revealed that the men who perpetrate these assaults tend to be violent serial offenders. We found common ground among all participants to identify ways to arrest and convict these perpetrators.

From these initial meetings, a collaboration called Safety on the Streets (SOS) was formed as a pilot project in the Third Precinct. The goal of SOS is to facilitate reporting of physical and sexual assaults committed against women who trade sex. To do this, we first had to know what barriers women
faced. The collaborative brought together police officers from the Third Precinct, advocates, and women who had traded sex to work together to identify potential barriers. The barriers included fear of arrest, negative prior interactions with police, lack of knowledge of rights, use of alcohol or drugs, desensitization to violence among women who trade sex, and internalized stigma. As a result of this work, we have jointly developed reporting protocols to overcome these barriers. In the process, we established a functional, adaptive, and working collaborative of diverse stakeholders. With support from CURA, Yael Gunn and I interviewed police officers, women who have traded sex, advocates, and others to understand the issues, help fine-tune our protocols, and write an evaluation plan that the collaborative can use.

SOS has already seen results. The Minneapolis Police Department has charged several perpetrators of sexual assault with felony-level crimes against women in prostitution, and they are conducting several other ongoing investigations. In addition, SOS has implemented other safety strategies based on our research, including a “bad date list,” which is a tool developed by and for women who trade sex to inform each other about clients who are violent so that they can avoid them. The PRIDE Program of Family and Children’s Services, which works with women trying to escape prostitution, is the lead agency for this effort on behalf of SOS.

Members of our team have conducted training sessions with police officers and others in the community on this issue. Talking about the role of our research in SOS, Joy Friedman from Breaking Free said:

Due to the work you do, our women now can report rape and something will be done about it; we are no longer silenced when it comes to rape. Your work played a big part in this fight for a voice for our women.

The work of SOS is carried out among the collaborators, but our research provided a base of evidence from which to start.

Conclusions: Research, Public Policy, and Lasting Social Change

Many of us do our work differently as a result of the Prostitution Project research. CURA supported an influx of interdisciplinary research assistance through the students who worked on these projects. We were able to incorporate multiple disciplines depending on the specific needs of the project, including social work, anthropology, family social science, gender studies, sociology, and public health. Tempered by humility and participatory methodologies, our research has helped build capacity for individual and collective work around the myriad issues related to prostitution, including exploitation, oppression, violence, stigma, profound health disparities, and inequality. As a result of our research, we have shifted opinions, increased knowledge, seeded program development, fostered functional collaboration, and spurred action among stakeholders in north Minneapolis, the Twin Cities and the State of Minnesota. We have described three of these efforts here.

Locally, in north Minneapolis our work has raised the profile of sex trading as a critical issue facing the community and led to greater understanding. Community perception and understanding are not easy to measure and impacts take time to accrue. When we first began this work in 2005, it was hard to move a community discussion beyond the impulse to get women who trade sex off of street corners, and more vigorous policing was the main strategy on the table. In contrast, in February 2010, more than 100 people attended Kwanzaa Community Church’s open house in support of Northside Women’s Space, demonstrating an understanding of the lives of women who trade sex and a desire for deeper, more lasting community healing around prostitution. We hope that the work developed out of the Prostitution Project research will lead to lasting social justice for people exploited in prostitution, as well as safer and healthier families and communities.

Lauren Martin, Ph.D., is a research associate in the University of Minnesota’s Center for Early Education and Development at the Urban Research and Outreach/Engagement Center (UROC) in north Minneapolis. She is also a Children, Youth and Families Consortium Scholar and a founding member of the National Research Consortium on Commercial Sexual Exploitation. Her current research interests include sex trading, prostitution and trafficking; research and evaluation with the Northside Achievement Zone; and community-based research methodologies.

This project was supported in part through grants from CURA’s Neighborhood Partnerships for Community Research (NPCR), Northside Seed Grant (NSG), and CommuniUniversity programs. NPCR provides student research assistance to community organizations in Minneapolis, St. Paul, and Twin Cities suburbs that are involved in community revitalization. NSG provides student research assistance and faculty researchers to community and neighborhood organizations in North Minneapolis. CommuniUniversity provides student research assistance to community-based nonprofit organizations or government agencies that serve diverse communities in Minnesota. Additional support was provided by the Otto Bremer Foundation, World Childhood Foundation, Folwell Center for Urban Initiatives, and individual donors.
The Center for Urban and Regional Affairs is pleased to announce the recipients of faculty research awards for 2010–2011 provided through its Faculty Interactive Research Program (FIRP), Community Growth Planning Assistance Center (CGPAC), and New Initiatives program. FIRP was created to encourage University faculty to carry out research projects that involve significant issues of public policy for the state and that include interaction with community groups, agencies, or organizations in Minnesota. Grants are available to regular faculty members at the University of Minnesota and are awarded annually on a competitive basis. CGPAC supports applied research to help growing communities in the Twin Cities metropolitan area manage growth and development effectively. CURA New Initiatives grants support projects that are initiated by faculty, community organizations, or government agencies and that fall outside CURA’s existing program areas.

■ Eating Is an Agri-cultural Act: Understanding Food Systems from the Perspective of Citizens Who Eat and Exploring Policy Possibilities for Local Units of Government. We consume food to physiologically reproduce our bodies, but in the process we also create cultural and political realities; food is at the core of health, illness, prosperity, and poverty. As a policy arena, food has been relegated for decades through national decision making and farm bill subsidies that favor large-scale production of commodity products. However, the past few decades have also seen the rise of a grassroots movement to create robust local and regional food systems. David Syring (Sociology and Anthropology, U of M—Duluth) will build on previous research and intensive regional activism that has led to nascent regional food possibilities in northeast Minnesota. In collaboration with businesses, nonprofits, and local units of government, Syring will use quantitative and qualitative methods to assess the understandings of citizens regarding the value of local food, as well as collect best and future practices for local governments to enhance local food options and economic opportunities for producers, processors, distributors, and eaters. Program: FIRP

■ Effectiveness of State Policy to Promote Bioenergy Innovation Description. Minnesota is in the midst of a rapid proliferation of policies aimed at creating sustainable energy systems that simultaneously address complex issues of national security, climate change, and economic development. Adding to the challenge is the lack of knowledge about the effectiveness of our policy efforts. Dennis R. Becker (Forest Resources) will investigate the development of renewable energy in Minnesota by analyzing innovations and accomplishments resulting from a sample of existing state bioenergy policies, and their interaction with state agency programs and research initiatives. The research will analyze the implementation of state policies and relate them to policy-specific drivers, types of innovation sought, projected utilization and economic impacts, and cost effectiveness. This comparative analysis will be conducted using a case-study approach with cross-case analyses. Results of this analysis can inform state energy planning by evaluating the effectiveness of different policy tools for advancing bioenergy production, illustrating the role of policy in facilitating innovation, and revealing unintended consequences of policy incentives. The research will also test evaluation protocols, which will be employed in subsequent research investigating the effectiveness of state policies and programs across the country. Program: FIRP

■ Financial Counseling among Foreclosure Victims: Predictors of Help-Seeking Behaviors and Outcomes of Counseling. Since 2005, foreclosures have displaced more than 90,000 Minnesotans from their homes, with more people still likely to go through foreclosure. For these homeowners, financial counseling may prevent actual foreclosure. Seeking counseling, of course, is voluntary; research has shown individuals of certain demographic backgrounds are more likely to seek help than others. Partnering with LSS Financial Counseling Service, the largest provider of foreclosure prevention counseling in Minnesota and whose mission is to “help people achieve financial peace of mind,” Alexandra Luong (Psychology, U of M–Duluth) will use telephone-based interviews and surveys to differentiate characteristics of potential foreclosure victims who seek financial counseling from those who do not. Such information will help financial agencies reach out to individuals who normally would not seek help. Luong will also evaluate the outcomes of financial counseling by comparing the financial situations of clients versus nonclients. Program: FIRP

■ Worker Earnings, Commuting, and Labor Force Participation in Minnesota Counties. Jobs are key to the success of individuals, families, and communities. When new jobs are created in a specific location, they can be filled by residents who were not working, workers who commute from elsewhere, residents who previously commuted to another location, or new residents. Who fills the new jobs has important implications for local government services and revenue. However, the labor supply response is likely to differ depending on the earnings potential of the new jobs, as well as whether the location is rural or metropolitan. Elizabeth E. Davis (Applied Economics) will analyze county-level data on commuting linkages and labor supply responses, disaggregated by earnings categories, to understand variations across Minnesota counties. Increasing our knowledge of these linkages and the differential impacts of labor market changes on lower income workers will contribute to a deeper understanding of economic challenges across the state and help inform local economic development policy. Program: FIRP

■ Planned Unit Development: Examining Approaches and Outcomes of Flexible Development in the Twin Cities. Typically codified in local
zoning regulations, the planned unit development (PUD) tool provides a means to master plan at the project scale to respond to unique site or market conditions, promote a mix of uses or densities, coordinate infrastructure development, and accomplish specific planning goals such as conservation and affordable housing. However, anecdotal evidence suggests these outcomes are not always achieved, and little research has been conducted to determine how successfully PUD approaches are used. Carissa Schively Sloterback (Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs) will investigate the use of PUDs in 65 municipalities in the 11-county Twin Cities metropolitan area by conducting a content analysis of these communities’ PUD ordinances, interviewing practitioners involved in PUD implementation, and assessing the outcomes of completed PUD projects on the ground. For practitioners in the Twin Cities region and nationwide, this research has potential to increase awareness and understanding of PUD tools, how they are used, whether they achieve their intended goals, and best practices for improving their use to encourage positive development outcomes. 

**Programs:** CGPAC and FIRP

Where Do They Go? Foreclosure and Residential Mobility Patterns in the Twin Cities. The foreclosure crisis continues to weave a destructive path through the communities of Minnesota. At the neighborhood level, some of the impacts of foreclosure are self-evident; abandoned and boarded structures abound in highly impacted neighborhoods, and maps of foreclosures have given us an understanding of the spatial distribution of the crisis in the Twin Cities metropolitan area. Yet, the individuals and households caught up in foreclosure remain nearly invisible, and very little is known about the mobility patterns of those who have lost their shelter due to foreclosure. Jeff Crump (Design, Housing, and Apparel) will undertake a study to determine the mobility patterns of households in Hennepin and Dakota Counties that have gone through foreclosure. Using housing mobility data available from Excensus LLC, the study will examine and analyze, at the census tract level, patterns of residential mobility that are linked to the foreclosure process and compare them with the predominant movement patterns of nonforeclosure households. This research has the potential to suggest appropriate regional policy, investment, and development recommendations to address foreclosures. 

**Programs:** CGPAC and New Initiatives

CURA Grant-Writing Workshop Draws a Crowd

On September 28, 2010, CURA hosted a Grant Writing for Neighborhoods workshop at the offices of the Wilder Foundation that attracted nearly 100 attendees representing 76 organizations. The turnout was a welcome surprise for CURA staff who organized the workshop. “This overwhelming response shows the pressing need among place-based organizations for funding and grant writing assistance,” said CURA community programs assistant Jeff Corn. “We had planned for a few dozen, but soon discovered that we had underestimated the interest for a workshop of this kind.”

CURA designed the grant-writing workshop with the specific needs of neighborhood organizations in mind. Fundraising for neighborhood organizations is an increasing challenge and city financial support is on the wane because of the end of the Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP).

The overall goal of the workshop was to give neighborhood organizations concrete ways to write successful grants to support their unique work. The workshop included brainstorming sessions, presentations from neighborhood organizations that have written successful grants, a panel of local funders, and breakout groups. The brainstorming sessions, facilitated by CURA community organizer Jay Clark, helped attendees focus on both the challenges they face in securing funding and the unique value of neighborhood organizations that groups can highlight in grant applications. These included the ability to catalyze community strengths and maintain relationships; the fact that they are democratically elected; their geographic focus; their strong legacy of community engagement; and their ability to organize residents around self-identified issues to solve problems.

The panel of local funders included Sarah Hernandez from the McKnight Foundation and Monica Bryand from Headwaters Foundation. Hernandez and Bryand stressed the importance of using both data and personal stories to communicate impact and produce compelling grant applications. Funders also are interested in knowing how neighborhood organizations engage underrepresented residents, and how this work helps to identify neighborhood problems, produce solutions, and result in action. Other suggestions included making sure to respond to all questions that are asked, counting the value of volunteer time, preparing a thorough and thoughtful budget, expecting occasional rejections and learning from them, and never being afraid to contact program officers with questions or to solicit feedback if your application is rejected.

The workshop concluded with breakout sessions that helped attendees discuss their unique situations, gather feedback from CURA staff and other attendees, and further focus their techniques for writing successful applications. Ishmael Israel, chairperson of the Northside Residents Redevelopment Council (NRRC), attended the workshop and gave the sessions high marks: “This was a great workshop. I got a grasp of the ins and outs of seeking out grants and [writing] grant applications.”

CURA also announced a special mini-grant competition sponsored by the Neighborhood Partnership Initiative (see article on page 35) and open to all workshop attendees. The purpose of the grant is to fund a partnership between a neighborhood organization and a nonprofit group that works with youth, immigrants, people of color, or the arts, with the goal of organizing underrepresented constituencies around an issue. At press time applications were still under review, but an announcement will be made soon on the CURA website at www.cura.umn.edu/NPI.php.
For some, sustainability is merely a buzzword; for others, it is an essential driver of policy and personal decision making. Regardless of where one falls on this spectrum, sustainability has become central in many discussions of how to plan cities and regions, design housing and transportation systems, promote economic development, and foster an engaged community. Sustainable development was described initially by the United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development in 1987 as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” Elaborating on this definition, sustainability is often depicted as a three-legged stool or triangle, emphasizing that environmental, economic, and social impacts are to be considered simultaneously. Beyond general definitions and visual images, one approach taken by communities, policy makers, and advocates to operationalize and communicate about sustainability is the use of sustainability indicator systems.

Sustainability indicators have been widely used in the United States and around the world to measure sustainability performance in a wide range of areas, such as transportation, education, crime, health, and natural resource protection. Early adopters in the United States include Santa Monica, California, and Olympia, Washington, both of which have been tracking indicators since the early 1990s. More recent indicator programs have been established in Boston, Seattle, and the Twin Cities. Two local indicator programs include the Minneapolis Sustainability Indicators, published annually in the Minneapolis Sustainability Report, and Twin Cities Compass, developed by the Wilder Foundation. The first includes indicators related to a wide range of topics such as infant mortality, renewable-energy use, recycling, tree canopy, and affordable housing. Twin Cities Compass reports on indicators at the scale of the seven-county metropolitan region, addressing topics such as volunteerism, early-childhood screening, water quality, fear of crime, and household income spent on transportation.

Indicator systems such as these allow communities and organizations the
opportunity to break down the broad sustainability concept into measurable outcomes that can be tracked over time. Typically, indicators are measured on an annual basis or periodically as relevant data become available, such as with U.S. Census data, housing-price figures, or traffic-congestion estimates. Indicators allow for performance tracking in key sustainability areas, as well as providing an overall measure of progress toward meeting sustainability goals. Based on indicator-performance data, communities and organizations can make decisions about future planning, policy, and funding priorities. Indicators, which often use simple accessible measures, also help local governments communicate about sustainability to the general public.

In this article, I describe a recent effort undertaken jointly by the McKnight Foundation and the University of Minnesota to develop a sustainability-indicator system that would be meaningful for the Twin Cities region. This work was informed by ongoing efforts at the federal level and in other communities to translate sustainability into useful principles and indicators to guide policy and investments. Funding for the project was provided by a grant from the McKnight Foundation to the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (CURA) and the Center for Transportation Studies (CTS).

### Promoting Sustainability in the Twin Cities Region

Building on the broad base of practice around indicators and useful local, regional, and national examples described above, the McKnight Foundation engaged researchers at the University of Minnesota to develop a Framework for Measuring Sustainable Regional Development for the Twin Cities Region. Coordinated by CURA and CTS, the nine-member research team from CURA, CTS, and the Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs worked with regional leaders and stakeholders to develop a draft set of regional sustainability principles, indicators, measures, and data sources. This information was intended to serve as a framework for the McKnight Foundation to use in informing funding decisions. Indicators could facilitate tracking of the sustainability impact of the foundation and assist funded organizations in measuring and communicating the impacts of their work.

Beyond providing information for internal use within the McKnight Foundation, the effort to develop a set of regional sustainability indicators applicable to the Twin Cities was further motivated by external factors, notably the Obama administration’s effort to better align various policy areas, including housing, transportation, and the environment. The interagency Partnership for Sustainable Communities³ brought together the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT), and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Guided by a set of livability principles (Table 1), this partnership is intended to coordinate federal investments in housing, transportation, and infrastructure to provide a vision for sustainable growth; redevelop underutilized sites; develop livability measures and tools; and foster joint research, data collection, and outreach.

A key initial outcome of the Partnership for Sustainable Communities was the development of a federal grant program related to regional sustainability planning, the Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant Program. To better position the Twin Cities region to compete for these funds and foster stakeholder engagement around regional sustainability, the McKnight Foundation initiated a process to further explore the HUD-DOT-EPA principles and begin to develop measures that could be used to track them in the Twin Cities region.

### Methodology

Based on the interrelated goals of integrating sustainability into the McKnight Foundation organization and initiating a discussion about sustainability principles and indicators for the Twin Cities region, the research team organized an analysis and outreach effort. The team surveyed the sustainability indicators and measures used by other cities and regions and identified 11 major categories of indicators: public health, education, culture, social capital, economy, safety net, energy, environment, land use, transportation, and housing. After identifying and evaluating these indicator systems, the researchers determined best practices in terms of both the content and organization of sustainability-indicator systems. In terms of outreach, the researchers worked closely with an advisory committee of regional leaders

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³ See [www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/partnership/index.html](http://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/partnership/index.html) for more information.

### Table 1. HUD-DOT-EPA Livability Principles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Provide more transportation choices. Develop safe, reliable, and economical transportation choices to decrease household transportation costs, reduce our nation’s dependence on foreign oil, improve air quality, reduce greenhouse-gas emissions, and promote public health.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Promote equitable, affordable housing. Expand location- and energy-efficient housing choices for people of all ages, incomes, races, and ethnicities to increase mobility and lower the combined cost of housing and transportation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Enhance economic competitiveness. Improve economic competitiveness through reliable and timely access to employment centers, educational opportunities, services, and other basic needs by workers, as well as expanded business access to markets.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Support existing communities. Target federal funding toward existing communities—through strategies like transit-oriented, mixed-use development and land recycling—to increase community revitalization and the efficiency of public-works investments and safeguard rural landscapes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Coordinate and leverage federal policies and investment. Align federal policies and funding to remove barriers to collaboration, leverage funding, and increase the accountability and effectiveness of all levels of government to plan for future growth, including making smart energy choices, such as locally generated renewable energy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Value communities and neighborhoods. Enhance the unique characteristics of all communities by investing in healthy, safe, and walkable neighborhoods— rural, urban, or suburban.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

and experts. Broader outreach was also accomplished through a stakeholder focus group that brought together practitioners from a wide range of areas, including housing, transportation, design, health, private development, and the environment.

Because the goal was to develop a framework for measuring regional sustainability, rather than providing a specific set of indicators and measures, the research effort focused on producing three specific outcomes:

- principles for sustainable regional development in the Twin Cities;
- indicators to provide ongoing measurement of progress toward sustainable regional development; and
- potential measures and data sources for tracking indicator performance.

A Framework for Measuring Sustainable Regional Development in the Twin Cities

After identifying the outcomes described above, the research team worked to integrate them into a Framework for Measuring Sustainable Regional Development for the Twin Cities Region. First, the research team modified the HUD-DOT-EPA principles to develop a set of principles for sustainable regional development specific to the Twin Cities (Table 2). Modifications were significantly informed by the stakeholder-outreach effort, as well as by the review of sustainability-indicator systems used in other communities and regions.

The Twin Cities principles differed from those established by the HUD-DOT-EPA partnership in their more explicit emphasis on natural resources (through the addition of a specific principle related to resource protection) and the addition of language related to promoting positive fiscal impacts through economic development. The research team also expanded some of the principles for the Twin Cities region through the inclusion of additional details to better respond to issues of local and regional concern.

Next, the research team developed the indicators, measures, and data sources through the same process that they used to refine the sustainability principles specific to the Twin Cities region. The broad base of the researchers’ expertise allowed for consideration of detailed measures, informed by the most current research related to assessing key sustainability impacts. In addition to the availability of evidence to support the indicators, additional criteria used in selecting indicators included appropriateness for measurement at the regional scale, ability to provide a holistic view of the region’s sustainability, and a focus on outcomes rather than actions. In particular, the researchers sought indicators that bridged one or more principles, thus demonstrating integration across key sustainability principles.

For each indicator, research team members identified potential measures and data sources, then evaluated each measure and data source’s quality, reliability, and validity before agreeing to include them in the framework. Considerations included data source, data availability, software needed to display/report data (e.g., spreadsheet, geographic information systems, database), date and frequency of data collection, and scale of data (e.g., neighborhood, municipal, regional).

The final framework included 38 indicators, with each related to at least one of the six principles listed in Table 2, and with many of the indicators associated with multiple principles. Table 3 provides a sample of the indicators included in the framework.

Next Steps

Following completion of the Framework for Measuring Sustainable Regional Development for the Twin Cities Region, the McKnight Foundation is continuing to review and refine the principles, indicators, measures, and data sources. The foundation is currently working with organizations that they fund and consultants from Smart Growth America to develop a final indicators program that can be used to guide future funding decisions and track the sustainability impacts of their work.

The McKnight Foundation was also a key collaborator and convener on the development of a proposal from the Twin Cities region for a Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant from the new federal HUD-DOT-EPA partnership. On October 14, HUD

### Table 2. Twin Cities Regional Livability Principles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principle</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Provide more transportation choices.</td>
<td>Address carbon-reduction, air-quality, oil dependency, and public-health issues by developing safe, equitable, reliable, and economical transportation choices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Protect natural resources.</td>
<td>Protect land, water, atmosphere, and the interrelationships across the many natural resources they contain. Protect intact ecological and hydrological systems and ensure that our natural capital provides the energy, food, raw materials, waste absorption/filtering, and enjoyment critical to a vital economy and quality of life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Promote equitable, affordable housing.</td>
<td>Promote a full range of housing choices that accommodates changing conditions. Meet diverse needs by providing location and energy efficient housing choices for people of all ages, incomes, races, and ethnicities, thereby increasing accessibility and mobility and lowering the combined cost of housing and transportation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Value communities and neighborhoods.</td>
<td>Target government funding toward existing communities—through strategies such as transit oriented, mixed use development and land recycling—to increase community revitalization, promote walkable areas, increase public health, and improve the efficiency of public-works investments. Safeguard intact relationships between communities and neighborhoods and the natural resources, open space, and agricultural landscapes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Enhance economic competitiveness and create positive fiscal impacts.</td>
<td>Improve economic competitiveness and create net positive fiscal impacts through reliable and timely access to employment centers, educational opportunities, services, and other basic needs by workers, as well as expanded business access to markets.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Coordinate and leverage government policies and investment.</td>
<td>Align government policies and funding to remove barriers to collaboration, to leverage funding, and to increase the accountability and effectiveness of all levels of government—local, regional, state, and federal—to plan for future growth.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3. Sample Indicators, Measures, and Data Sources in the Framework for Measuring Sustainable Regional Development for the Twin Cities Region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Data Source(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Access to Transit | Percentage of housing units within 0.25 (and 0.5) miles of transit stop/station (including local bus, express bus, and rail) | MetroGIS<sup>a</sup>  
U.S. Census Bureau  
Metropolitan Council |
| | Percentage of housing units within 0.25 (and 0.5) miles of high-frequency transit stop/station (including local bus, express bus, and rail) | Maps for Twin Cities provided by htindex.cnt.org/  
Brooking Institution Metropolitan Policy Program<sup>b</sup>  
U.S. Census Bureau |
| Housing and Transportation Affordability Index | Percentage of annual household income spent on housing and transportation costs (by income, poverty status, etc.) | Office of the State Auditor<sup>c</sup>  
Minnesota Department of Transportation<sup>d</sup> |
| | Affordability index provided by Brooking Institute Report | |
| Infrastructure Preservation | Percent of funding spent on maintenance of existing infrastructure versus construction of new infrastructure (e.g., highways, bridges) | |
| Walkability | A composite measure based on residential density, land-use mix, intersection density, and retail floor area ratio<sup>e</sup> | MetroGIS<sup>a</sup> |
| Carbon Footprint | Amount of carbon dioxide produced by electricity use, agriculture, waste management, fossil-fuel industry, and industrial nonfuel use processes, presented as regional total and by source | U.S. Energy Information Administration  
Minnesota Pollution Control Agency  
U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service  
Center for Climate Strategies<sup>f</sup> |
| Protection of Significant Ecological Areas | Percentage and location of regionally significant ecological area (RSEA) acres under permanent protection (e.g., permanent easement, park) | RSEA: Minnesota Department of Natural Resources<sup>g</sup>  
Parks: Metropolitan Council, cities, counties  
Easements: Minnesota Land Trust, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources,<sup>g</sup> Minnesota Board of Soil and Water Resources<sup>h</sup> |
| Groundwater | Percentage of groundwater pollutants for which health-risk limits are exceeded annually (including, but not limited to, phosphorus, ammonia nitrogen, organic carbon, manganese, sulfate, bromide, chloride, boron, calcium, iron, magnesium, potassium, sodium, nitrate nitrogen, chloride, and volatile organic compounds) | Pollutants: Minnesota Pollution Control Agency  
Health-risk limits: Minnesota Department of Health |
| Exposure to Pollutants from Major Roadways | Percentage of households (by income and tenure) and uses occupied by children (e.g., schools, daycare centers, parks) within 500 meters of a major roadway | Roadway classifications: Minnesota Department of Transportation, Metropolitan Council  
Household income and tenure: U.S. Census Bureau  
Parks: Metropolitan Council, cities, counties  
School location: Admin Minnesota |
| Civic Engagement | Community Vitality Index: Measurement of social capital, economic potential, and community amenities to quantify relative potential of neighborhoods and geographic communities in a metropolitan region<sup>i</sup> | Metro Chicago Information Center<sup>l</sup>  
U.S. Census Bureau  
Office of the Minnesota Secretary of State  
MetroGIS<sup>a</sup>  
Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development  
Federal Financial Institutions Examination Council  
Commercial Business Database |

<sup>a</sup> MetroGIS, “MetroGIS Datafinder,” www.datafinder.org  
<sup>d</sup> Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT), Mn/DOT Metro District 20-Year Highway Investment Plan, 2009–2028 (St. Paul: MnDOT, 2009).  
<sup>g</sup> Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR), DNR Data Deli, deli.dnr.state.mn.us/.  
<sup>h</sup> Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR), “Easements,” www.bwsr.state.mn.us/easements/rim/index.html.  
<sup>j</sup> Metro Chicago Information Center, mcic3.mcfol.org/.
announced that the Twin Cities region had been awarded a 3-year, $5 million grant from the program. The goal of the grant is to help the Metropolitan Council and other regional stakeholders build on existing regional planning efforts to advance multimodal transportation choices with access to jobs and housing, transit- and pedestrian-friendly development, environmental preservation, and energy efficiency (see announcement below).

Carissa Schively Slotterback is assistant professor of urban and regional planning at the Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs, and served on the research team for this project. Her research examines stakeholder involvement and the use of information in planning decision-making processes, with a particular focus on collaborative planning and impact assessment. Among her current research projects is a study of regional sustainability planning processes.

The research team for this study included study co-chairs Edward Goetz, director of the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs, and Laurie McGinnis, director of the Center for Transportation Studies; researchers Jason Cao, Yingling Fan, and Carissa Schively Slotterback, assistant professors in the Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs; research manager Kaydee Kirk, Center for Urban and Regional Affairs; and graduate research assistants Jody Tableporter, Andrew Senn, and Jennifer Day, Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs. Funding for the project was provided by a grant from the McKnight Foundation to CURA and the Center for Transportation Studies.

To download a copy of the final report from this project, visit www.cura.umn.edu/publications/L2010-1.pdf.

Community Engagement and Evaluation for the Twin Cities Sustainable Communities Program

The Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (CURA) has been tapped to provide community engagement and evaluation for a $5 million federal grant that supports planning along the Twin Cities region’s growing network of transit corridors. The grant will help the Metropolitan Council and other stakeholders build on existing regional planning efforts to advance transit- and pedestrian-friendly development, provide access to jobs and housing, and promote environmental preservation and energy efficiency.

The Minnesota Center for Neighborhood Organizing (MCNO), a program of CURA, will provide leadership on engagement efforts. MCNO staff will work with the Alliance for Metropolitan Stability and Nexus Community Partners to lead a team that will collaborate with organizations, individuals, and government agencies to increase participation in regional planning by immigrant communities, communities of color, and low-income communities. Project partners will develop guidelines and recommendations designed to support the work of community members that will ensure access to the information and resources needed to become meaningfully involved in decision making about their own communities.

Edward Goetz, CURA director, and Laurie McGinnis, Center for Transportation Studies (CTS) director, will also form a data and evaluation team for the project that will work with the policy board and staff at the Metropolitan Council to devise measures of sustainable development, identify data sources, and conduct baseline studies that demonstrate the impact of sustainability planning in regional transit corridors.

Funding for the project, to be implemented in 2011–2013, was awarded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and U.S. Department of Transportation intended to coordinate federal housing, transportation, and other infrastructure investments to protect the environment, promote equitable development, and help to address the challenges of climate change. For more information about the initiative, visit www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/partnership/index.html.
Local Policy Responses to Immigration in the United States

by Kyle Walker

New immigrant populations are growing rapidly across the United States, not only in established urban areas, but also in newly emerging urban gateways, suburbs, exurbs, and rural areas that previously have not experienced large numbers of recent immigrants. Local responses to new immigrants have varied across the country as hundreds of localities have considered or enacted local policies to address immigration issues in their communities. Some local governments, including the Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul, have responded in inclusive ways to both documented and undocumented immigrants—by granting local rights to immigrant populations or by limiting the role of local officials in immigration enforcement. Other localities have responded much more unfavorably—by considering or enacting policies designed to drive out undocumented immigrants or enforce immigration law at the local level.

This article provides an overview of the different local policy responses to immigration and the motivations behind these policy responses. I also consider the impacts of these policies, and discuss how communities in the Twin Cities metropolitan area fit within the national context. The research upon which this article is based was supported in part through a New Initiatives grant from CURA. Additional funding was provided by a Doctoral Dissertation Research Improvement Grant from the National Science Foundation and a Thesis Research Grant from the University of Minnesota Graduate School.

Methodology


1 Chicago is representative of a “continuous” immigrant gateway, in which immigration levels remained consistently high throughout the twentieth century; Washington is an “emerging” immigrant gateway, in which most immigration to the region took place during the last 20–30 years; and Phoenix is a “re-emerging” gateway, in which immigration levels were high at the beginning of the twentieth century, leveled off, and increased again rapidly after 1980.
enacted immigration policies at the local level—one community characterized by an inclusive immigration policy and one by an exclusionary policy. Field sites were: Evanston, Illinois, and Carpentersville, Illinois (Chicago area); Takoma Park, Maryland, and Manassas, Virginia (Washington, D.C. area); and Chandler, Arizona, and Cave Creek, Arizona (Phoenix area) (Figure 1). In each suburb, I conducted a series of interviews with local government officials, city employees, immigration advocates, and activists who had mobilized on either side of the local immigration debate. During the interviews, I asked questions designed to elicit responses about the motivations that undergirded these local policy responses in an effort to understand why each locality responded as it did. For each community, I also collected archival materials such as ordinances, policy documents, and city-council minutes that summarized the immigration debates. Finally, to situate the Twin Cities metropolitan area within this national context, I conducted a series of interviews with Twin Cities metropolitan area immigration advocates and policy experts, as well as local officials in various Twin Cities communities, to understand how this area’s municipalities have responded to immigration.

**Exclusionary Immigration Policies**

Dozens of U.S. localities have attracted headlines in recent years for their efforts to drive away undocumented immigrants through the implementation of local ordinances or policies. So-called Illegal Immigration Relief Act ordinances, which generally include a slate of policies designed to deter the settlement of undocumented immigrants, have garnered considerable attention. In 2006, Village Trustee Paul Humpfer introduced such a policy in Carpentersville, Illinois, modeled after an ordinance approved by Hazleton, Pennsylvania. The proposed ordinance would have made it illegal for local businesses to employ undocumented immigrants, barred the “harboring” of undocumented immigrants by fining landlords who enter into lease agreements with individuals who do not have proof of legal status, and directed local police to inquire into the immigration status of all detained individuals. After considerable debate, the Board of Village Trustees tabled the ordinance indefinitely in 2007, and has since expressed a lack of desire to revisit the issue. To date, no Illegal Immigration Relief Act ordinance has been enforced; similar ordinances in Hazleton and in Fremont, Nebraska, remain tied up in the courts.

The effort in Carpentersville to direct local police to check immigration status has been mirrored in dozens of other localities that have sought to involve local law enforcement in immigration matters. Often this reaction has taken the form of the 287(g) program, a federal-local partnership that trains local law enforcement officials to check immigration status and begin deportation proceedings in some instances. As of August 2008, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement had reported 63 signed 287(g) agreements, most of which were with cities or counties. One such city is Manassas, Virginia, which in addition to its 287(g) agreement has specified its own immigration-enforcement policy to be followed by the Manassas Police Department. Among other stipulations, this policy includes the following directives: “Police officers will inquire into the immigration status of all persons who are under physical custodial arrest for a violation of state law ... Police officers retain discretion to inquire into immigration status prior to a physical custodial arrest.”

Prior to directing police to engage in immigration enforcement, the Manassas City Council employed a different type of strategy to address immigration issues. In late 2005, the council approved an ordinance that modified the definition of “family” in the city code to include only immediate family members (grandparents, parents, and children). Local officials stated that the ordinance was originally proposed to address overcrowding of housing units in Manassas, which they attributed in part to the presence of illegal residents.

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2 In April 2010, Arizona Governor Jan Brewer signed into law Senate Bill 1070, which included a number of measures targeting undocumented immigrants. The most contentious part of the bill directs local police to inquire into immigration status of individuals “where reasonable suspicion exists that the person is an alien who is unlawfully present in the United States.” This law passed after I had conducted my research in Arizona. I address the impact of the law on Chandler, Arizona, later in this article.

3 U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement is the largest branch of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

immigrants. Enforcement of the ordinance disproportionately impacted the local Latino population, and Manassas ultimately withdrew the ordinance. After a Washington-area human-rights firm sued the City on behalf of several affected Manassas residents, all legal residents or native-born U.S. citizens.

Manassas’s actions are representative of another type of policy response that localities have used to target undocumented immigrants. Such ordinances regulate activities that undocumented immigrants are perceived to be involved in, without naming immigrants directly as their target. However, in debates around these policies, illegal immigration—rather than the specific behavior itself—frequently emerges as the key issue. In Cave Creek, Arizona, the town council approved two ordinances in 2007 designed to limit the ability of day laborers—many of whom were congregating along Cave Creek Road, the main commercial strip in the town—to seek work. The town council passed an anti-loitering ordinance and an anti-solicitation ordinance, yet framed the debate on these policies in terms of the immigration issue. For example, in a public forum on day laborers at the June 18, 2007, town council meeting, residents’ concerns about day laborers were framed not in terms of safety, but rather in terms of the undesirability of illegal immigrants in Cave Creek. After the ordinances were passed in September 2007, they prompted a successful lawsuit to overturn them, brought by the American Civil Liberties Union of Arizona. Nonetheless, these policies demonstrate how communities have used local policy to target undocumented immigrants without directly engaging in immigration enforcement.

**Inclusive Immigration Policies**

In contrast to the communities described above, other localities have pursued entirely different policy responses to immigration, acting instead to incorporate immigrants into their communities regardless of legal status. An example is the “sanctuary” policy in place in Takoma Park, Maryland. In the 1980s, cities enacted sanctuary policies to protect refugees who, at the time, could not obtain official refugee status from the U.S. government. Takoma Park originally approved such a policy in 1985 to respond to an influx of refugees from El Salvador and Guatemala. Currently, sanctuary policies refer more broadly to the status of undocumented immigrants rather than just refugees, as cities like Takoma Park have updated their policies to more accurately reflect the current political and immigration climate. The updated Takoma Park policy, passed in 2007, declares that no city official may inquire into, or discriminate based upon, the legal status of individuals within the city.

Many other localities with similar policies eschew the “sanctuary” label, preferring instead to call their policies “separation ordinances” or to simply reference them as policies that limit the role of local officials in immigration enforcement. The City of Chandler, Arizona, had such a policy in place from 1999 to early 2010. This policy, summarized in the Chandler Police Department’s General Order E-17, stipulated that “Officers … shall not do any of the following: Stop, detain, or interrogate persons for the purpose of determining immigration status; arrest a person when the only violation is an infraction of immigration law; contact U.S. Borders and Customs Protection [USBCP] for the sole purpose of interpreting; transport USBCP prisoners, except in life-threatening situations.” The intent of Chandler’s policy was to provide a clear distinction between the roles of local police officers and federal immigration officials. Instead of using a separation ordinance, a general order issued by the police department may serve as a more politically palatable way to accomplish the goals of a sanctuary ordinance. For example, after the city council of Evanston, Illinois, failed to pass a sanctuary policy in early 2008, the police department issued a general order clarifying that Evanston police would not engage in immigration policing.

Other localities have taken steps to integrate immigrants, regardless of legal status, by granting them local rights. For example, Evanston accepts the Mexican *matrícula consular* card as a valid form of identification, allowing immigrants to access local services such as libraries and banking. Takoma Park has also sought to incorporate undocumented immigrants politically by allowing all city residents to register to vote in local elections, regardless of legal status.

The policy, which went into effect in 1992, established a separate voter roll for noncitizens managed by the city clerk, allowing them to vote in Takoma Park elections. To date, this type of integrative policy is very rare; five other Maryland localities and three in Massachusetts have approved similar policies, and Chicago allows noncitizens to vote in school board elections.

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5 The *matrícula consular* card is an identification card that expatriate Mexicans can obtain from the Mexican government. Locally, Minneapolis and St. Paul also accept the card as a valid form of identification.
Factors Driving the Implementation of Local Immigration Policies

In this section, I present possible reasons why policy responses to immigration at the local level vary so widely, even among communities in the same metropolitan area.

**Demographic Changes.** Other research has found a strong link between the size of the foreign-born population and the type of local immigration-policy response. Localities with larger immigrant populations are more likely to pursue immigration policies; within this group, localities with fast-growing immigrant populations tend to react with exclusionary measures. At their most extreme, local activists have used inflammatory rhetoric to explain the demographic changes that have prompted policy responses to immigration. In a 2007 newsletter of the activist organization Help Save Manassas, president Greg Letiecq wrote:

> “Our county [Prince William County, Virginia, which surrounds Manassas] has been under assault from the tens, if not hundreds of thousands of illegal aliens who have taken advantage of our lax enforcement of the law at the federal, state, and local levels.” Although the statistics Letiecq cites are clearly exaggerated, Manassas has experienced significant demographic changes during the past two decades. The city has experienced a net population growth of approximately 8,000 residents since 1990; during the same period, the Hispanic population grew from approximately 1,600 residents to 9,400, and the immigrant population grew from approximately 2,100 to 8,400. Local officials I interviewed frequently cited how the rapid demographic changes led to a response from the city as they began to hear complaints from residents about overcrowding and crime, which these residents attributed to an influx of undocumented immigrants. During the period prior to the introduction of its exclusionary immigration ordinance, Carpentersville experienced similar demographic changes. In 1990, Carpentersville’s population was approximately 10% foreign-born and 16% Hispanic. However, by the time Carpentersville considered its ordinance, these figures had risen to 35% and 49%, respectively.

Exclusionary policies, however, are not the inevitable result of demographic change. In Takoma Park, the influx of Central Americans from El Salvador and Guatemala during the 1980s prompted the passage of the city’s original sanctuary policy. The 1985 resolution reads, “approximately 20,000 Salvadoran and Guatemalan refugees have sought refuge in Takoma Park and neighboring Maryland communities and are actively contributing to the well-being of our city.” In 1988, Evanston, Illinois, passed
a similar sanctuary resolution, and also began considering ways to incorporate its immigrant population as immigrants from Latin America and the Caribbean began to arrive in the city during the 1990s. Former alderman Edmund Moran spoke about his proposal for the creation of a Latino-outreach worker position in the city of Evanston to engage with the growing immigrant population. Likewise, Evanston's proposed 2008 immigration policy was motivated in part by activists' observations of the challenges immigrants faced in the city.

**Local Political Culture.** A common theme that emerged from my interviews was the role of local political context in determining immigration-policy responses. In Manassas, nearly all of the interviewees I spoke with mentioned the role that the area's conservative political identity has played in influencing its response to immigration. One interviewee remarked that Manassas “is still fighting the Civil War.” At the time that Manassas approved its immigration policies, one Independent sat on the Manassas City Council; the rest of the council, as well as the mayor, were Republican. Thus, both the political identity and power structure of Manassas are conservative, which in part helps explain the types of exclusionary immigration policies Manassas has adopted. Although interviewees drew the strongest link in Manassas, in both Carpentersville and Cave Creek (the other suburbs I studied that pursued exclusionary policies), interviewees also attributed the nature of local responses to immigration in part to the conservatism of these areas.

Similarly, residents and officials in Takoma Park and Evanston linked their local inclusive immigration-policy responses with the suburbs' progressive political identities. One Takoma Park official called the city “one of the most liberal cities in the nation,” and others spoke of the central role that political progressivism plays in Takoma Park's identity. This identity has had a significant impact on local policy toward immigrants. For example, when considering the introduction of its resolution to allow noncitizen voting, the Takoma Park Elections Task Force concluded, “Based upon ... the general sense that it would be consistent with Takoma Park's historic commitment to activist democracy and its status as a sanctuary city, the Task Force supports the concept of allowing all residents of Takoma Park, regardless of citizenship, to vote in city elections.” In Evanston, the decision to propose a sanctuary policy in early 2008 was made on similar grounds. Local activist Rachel Heuman, an Evanston resident with whom I spoke and one of the principal architects of the policy, commented during a Human Services Committee meeting on the issue:

> Although it is unlikely for things like ordinances which were passed in Waukegan, Carpentersville, [or] Hazleton, Pennsylvania to be passed here, nonetheless a growing number of communities like ours that have long been reputed to be more open communities are feeling that they need to respond to some of these anti-immigrant ordinances with something more positive and are feeling a necessity to take a leadership role. We would like to join other communities like Evanston to say that this is not our point of view and in so doing to encourage other communities to take actions as we have.

Heuman viewed Evanston's policy proposal as consistent with the political character of the city, and as a response to other communities like Carpentersville that had taken a different stance on immigration.

In Chandler, Arizona, the political context that informed the city's stance on immigration matters was entirely different. In 1997, the Chandler Police Department, in collaboration with the Immigration and Naturalization Service (as U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was known then), conducted a five-day immigration-enforcement operation. Although the stated intent of the operation was to arrest individuals illegally residing in the United States, there were numerous accounts of racial profiling, with some Chandler residents alleging that they were targeted simply because of their outward appearance. As part of the raids, many U.S. citizens and legal U.S. residents were detained by police. These events produced a substantial backlash from the local Latino community, which referred to the enforcement action as the “Chandler Roundup” to reflect how the Latino community was treated. Political pressure from Latino activists led Chandler to pursue a variety of measures to ensure that the events of 1997 would not be repeated. Soon afterward, the mayor established a Human Relations Commission and the police department issued its general order stipulating that local police are not to engage in immigration policing.

**Individual Activists.** Chandler's response following the 1997 immigration-enforcement actions demonstrates how both local political events and the concerted efforts of local activists can influence local immigration-policy responses. In fact, numerous interviewees attributed their community's local immigration policies to efforts from local activists or politicians, sometimes pointing to specific individuals as the catalysts for the policies. Such was the case in Cave Creek, Arizona, which in 2007 passed the two ordinances targeting day laborers that were described above. Several interviewees in Cave Creek cited the influence of Don Sorchych, the editor of the local newspaper *The Sonoran News,* in pushing the town council to take action against day laborers who congregated in the town.

Before the ordinances were passed, the Good Shepherd of the Hills Episcopal Church ran a day-labor center out of its parking lot, which assisted laborers in finding employment and helped keep them off Cave Creek Road, the sidewalk-free main commercial strip in the town. Sorchych, frustrated by what he saw as the church’s facilitation of illegal activity, spent three hours per day taking photos of the automobiles of those who hired day laborers, then published the photos in his newspaper. Tensions in the town were further inflamed when a local motorcycle club called the American Freedom Riders arrived in Cave Creek and harassed individuals at the Good Shepherd day-labor center. According to Cave Creek Mayor Vincent Francia, the political climate around day laborers and immigration became so charged that he felt he and the town council had to take action. Although Sorchych did not orchestrate the anti-loitering and antisolicitation ordinances that the city ultimately passed, his actions helped to create an environment that facilitated their passage. The central role of individual activists is not limited to Cave Creek; in Manassas, Help Save Manassas president Greg Letiecq exerted considerable influence through both his organization and his popular blog. In turn, some of my contacts in Manassas pointed to Letiecq as the catalyst for the backlash against undocumented immigration that took place in the area.
Impacts of Local Policy Responses to Immigration

Local policy responses to immigration have had considerable impact in some municipalities. In Manassas and Prince William County (which surrounds Manassas and which has implemented similar exclusionary policies), members of the local immigrant community and their allies organized a boycott of local businesses. The reaction of the Manassas immigrant community is exemplified by the Liberty Wall, which sat at an intersection between Manassas’s historic Old Town district and the Georgetown South neighborhood where a large proportion of the local immigrant population lives.

Both advocates of Manassas’s exclusionary immigration policies and those who opposed the policies acknowledge that many immigrants have departed the city since the policies were debated. A video on the Help Save Manassas website proclaims, “Take ownership of your government ... Get involved, get organized. We did, and saved our community from many of the effects of illegal immigration.” Manassas city officials I interviewed observed that immigrants have been leaving the city, although they were unsure whether the decline in the immigrant population was due to Manassas’s policies or to the current economic recession, which has hit Manassas and Prince William County particularly hard. However, immigration advocates in Manassas who I interviewed explained that they felt that a climate of fear perpetuated by local policy responses has certainly led immigrants to leave the area.

Local officials in Manassas, Carpentersville, and Cave Creek who I interviewed made similar observations about the impact of their local policy responses to immigration. Both are outer-ring suburbs that have been impacted by the recession, and many immigrants have departed these cities even though exclusionary policies were never enforced in either community. Reverend Antonio Cabello, rector at the Iglesia San Esteban Martir in Carpentersville, observed that large numbers of both documented and undocumented immigrants have left the village, which heavily impacted attendance at his parish. Similarly, the day-labor center at Good Shepherd of the Hills in Cave Creek is now defunct, and day laborers no longer line Cave Creek Road.

In Takoma Park, local officials shared a recent anecdote to demonstrate the positive impacts of the city’s open immigration policy on the greater community. During the summer of 2009, a day laborer in Takoma Park observed two individuals committing an armed robbery of a dry cleaner in the city. The day laborer took down the robbers’ license plate number and contacted the police, who promptly arrested the offenders. Takoma Park police and city officials cited this as an example of how the positive relationship between the city and its immigrant community can have tangible public-safety benefits for the entire community. Similarly, Alberto Esparza, a Chandler resident who originally was one of the leaders of the organized response to the 1997 Chandler Roundup and who is now a key figure in the Chandler Latino community, commented that the city’s efforts to reach out to the immigrant population post-1997 have dramatically improved relationships between the city of Chandler, the Chandler Police Department, and the local immigrant community.

Although to a certain extent anti-immigration policies succeeded in driving away immigrants regardless of whether or not the policies were actually enforced, these types of policy responses may ultimately have more lasting effects. Manassas and Cave Creek were each sued as a result of their immigration-related policies, leading in both cases to a repeal of the policy and substantial settlement costs and legal fees. Furthermore, residents of Manassas and Carpentersville spoke about the damage that the local immigration debate has inflicted on their cities’ reputations. According to former Carpentersville Trustee Linda Ramirez Slivinski, “[The ordinance proposal] has hurt us in talking to businesses ... [T]hey don’t want to come to Carpentersville” because businesses perceive the community as an unwelcoming place. Officials in Manassas made similar statements; for example, members of the Ku Klux Klan arrived in the city to distribute flyers after the policies were debated, contributing to negative perceptions of the community and further dampening future economic development.

In Chandler, Arizona, local officials and residents commented on how the city is still actively working to rebuild its reputation and bolster relationships with its immigrant community, both of which were damaged by the 1997 Chandler Roundup immigration-enforcement actions. However, the inclusive immigration-policy stance that Chandler adopted in the wake of the Roundup has proven to be politically untenable. Chandler’s policy was a frequent target of criticism from Arizona state legislators who favored immigration restrictions, and Chandler city officials commonly received calls from residents upset about the presence of perceived undocumented day laborers in the city. In February 2010, the Chandler City Council passed a resolution rescinding its immigration policy. Remarks by Chandler’s mayor at the city council meeting suggest that this action was in part prompted by the sustained...
criticism Chandler had received from the state legislature. Two months later, Arizona Governor Jan Brewer signed the omnibus immigration bill SB 1070 into law, which among other stipulations directed local police to make inquiries into individuals’ immigration status, and prohibited cities in Arizona from enacting policies like the one that Chandler formerly had in place.

The Minnesota Context
In the Twin Cities metropolitan area, both Minneapolis and St. Paul have passed ordinances regarding the city’s stance on immigration matters. In 2003, Minneapolis passed a separation ordinance, originally sponsored by Councilmember Gary Schiff. The policy stipulates, “The city works cooperatively with Homeland Security, as it does with all state and federal agencies, but the city does not operate its programs for the purpose of enforcing federal immigration laws.” The ordinance further clarifies that city employees may only ask about immigration status when specifically required by law to do so, and that city police “shall not take any law enforcement action for the purpose of detecting undocumented persons, or to verify immigration status, including but not limited to questioning any person or persons about immigration status.” Councilmember Schiff also authored an ordinance, which was passed in 2003, allowing the Mexican matrícula consular card to be accepted as a valid form of identification for immigrants to obtain city services. In 2004, St. Paul passed its own policy directing city employees and law enforcement officials to refrain from inquiring into immigration status under most circumstances.

Local officials and immigration advocates in Minneapolis and St. Paul described these policies as providing immigrants the opportunity to engage more fully in their communities. Heidi Quezada, legislative aide to Councilmember Schiff in Minneapolis, stated that the ordinances emerged out of a concern that undocumented immigrants were not reporting crime, and did not have opportunities to start businesses and fully participate in the local economy. As a result of the ordinances, she observed, immigrant businesses along Lake Street in the Ninth Ward have continued to thrive, and the relationship between the local immigrant community and the Minneapolis police has continued to improve. Similarly, former public relations officer Paul Schnell from the St. Paul Police Department observed that the city’s separation ordinance, which codified the department’s prior practices, has made it more likely for undocumented immigrants to contact the police. He noted that the ordinance also allows the police to focus on public safety specifically, rather than taking on additional responsibilities such as enforcing immigration law.

The immigration-policy stances of Minneapolis and St. Paul have been met with some resistance by state politicians. In 2004, Governor Tim Pawlenty wrote letters to the city council presidents of each city asking them to repeal their separation ordinances. In 2005, this issue came before the state legislature, as Representative Jim Knoblach (R–St. Cloud) authored a bill directing the two cities to repeal their ordinances. The bill passed in the House, 94–37, but did not pass in the Senate and thus did not become law. In early 2008, Governor Pawlenty issued an executive order directing Minnesota public-safety officials to enter into a cooperative agreement with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, including training some law enforcement officers through the 287(g) agreement. He also signed an executive order requiring employers who do business with the State of Minnesota to conduct immigration-status checks for their employees.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, Governor Pawlenty’s policy proposals have not gained traction in Minneapolis and St. Paul. In both cities, inclusive immigration ordinances passed with little difficulty, and city officials cited few complaints from local residents about the policies. In part, the local situation reflects the national context discussed earlier in this article. Politically, the residents of Minneapolis and St. Paul are among the most left-leaning in the metropolitan area, so inclusive policies similar to those enacted in Takoma Park and Evanston reflect the local political character.

More fertile ground for the adoption of Governor Pawlenty’s proposals might be found in Twin Cities suburbs, where—much like Manassas and Carpentersville—conservative politics are more common and the immigrant population is growing much more rapidly. However, to date, no Twin Cities municipality has proposed or enforced an exclusionary immigration ordinance at the local level. In Brooklyn Park—which, according to the U.S. Census, had a net gain of more than 5,000 immigrants since 2000, the most of any city in Minnesota—the public officials I interviewed had little interest in pursuing local enforcement policies like those in Manassas, Carpentersville, or Cave Creek. Brooklyn Park Mayor Steve Lampi stated that he would not support an effort to involve Brooklyn Park police

Day laborers who seek employment wait in a 7-Eleven parking lot in Takoma Park, Maryland. Immigration advocates have praised Takoma Park for its welcoming stance toward immigrants, regardless of their legal status.
more closely in immigration enforcement. Similarly, Brooklyn Park Police Captain Jeff Ankerfelt told me that department policy is not to actively seek out undocumented immigrants, and explained that, although Brooklyn Park is not considered an official “shelter city,” the police department conducts itself accordingly. As with the public-safety officials in Chandler, Evanston, and Takoma Park, Ankerfelt spoke about the importance of trust and building relationships between local police and the immigrant community. In Blaine, where the immigrant population has grown more than 210% since 2000, Police Chief Chris Olson stated that immigration status is not something the department checks if the crime committed does not warrant it; rather, immigration status is best handled by federal authorities. In Chaska, where the immigrant population has more than doubled since 2000, Police Chief Scott Knight was quoted in a 2006 Star Tribune article as stating that Governor Pawlenty’s immigration-enforcement proposals amounted to a “politics of fear” and linked such practices with racial profiling.

Some recent events in the metropolitan area, however, resemble the kinds of local debates around immigration that have taken place elsewhere in the nation. In July 2010, the Twin Cities suburb of Lino Lakes passed a resolution declaring English the city’s official language. The resolution itself says nothing about immigration, and city leaders claim that their motivation for passing the policy was simply to cut costs associated with producing city documents in multiple languages. However, in several other U.S. jurisdictions, including Carpenterisville, similar English-only resolutions accompanied other exclusionary policy proposals, and the arguments in favor of these policies directly engaged with the immigration issue. Furthermore, a Minnesota Public Radio report found that Lino Lakes officials had assistance in writing the resolution from a Virginia-based organization with ties to the Federation for American Immigration Reform, an organization that provided support for the exclusionary policies considered in Manassas and Carpenterisville.8

**Conclusion**

In metropolitan areas across the United States, various localities have proposed or enacted local policies that either grant local rights to, or make their communities less hospitable for, undocumented immigrants. Such policies may engage directly with the immigration issue by directing police or other local officials to make or not make checking immigration status a matter of priority, or may target undocumented immigrants indirectly through city ordinances or code enforcement. The types of policies that have been proposed or enacted are strongly influenced by the character and political dynamics of the communities in which they are introduced; in Takoma Park, Evanston, and Chandler, inclusive policy responses were grounded in the distinct political identities and political histories of these communities, whereas in Manassas, Carpenterisville, and Cave Creek, activists or politicians were able to pursue political agendas that culminated in exclusionary policies. In the Twin Cities metropolitan area, Minneapolis and St. Paul have separation ordinances in place that dictate that immigration status should not be a matter of city business, to the chagrin of Governor Pawlenty and some in the state legislature. Although officials in some high-immigration Twin Cities suburbs also indicated little interest in enforcing immigration law at the local level, recent events in Lino Lakes suggest that this debate could potentially accelerate in Minnesota. Further, at the state level, representative Steve Drazkowski (R–Mazeppa) introduced an immigration bill in May 2010 very similar to the one passed in Arizona in April.

Although interviews with activists and policy makers can reveal insights into the motivation behind particular policies, interview data on the impacts of these policies tend to be highly subjective. Regardless, in all localities with inclusive immigration policies, interviewees spoke about the ability of inclusive local policies to improve relationships between the city and its immigrant community, and thereby contribute to public-safety goals. In the suburbs with exclusionary policies, interviewees in all three localities had observed a decline in the local immigrant population in the wake of exclusionary immigration policy debates. However, the interviewees could not be certain about whether this decline was due to the local crackdown on the economic recession, which heavily impacted all three communities.

Perceptions of the policies’ impacts varied depending on the interviewees’ political position on the issue; advocates of the policies generally lauded them for reducing the undocumented immigrant population, whereas immigration advocates spoke of the “chilling effect” that the policies had on immigrants, making them less likely to report crimes and engage in public life.

These experiences provide lessons for other communities, such as those in the Twin Cities, that are currently experiencing demographic changes as a result of immigration. Demographic trends indicate that immigrant populations in the United States are growing the fastest not in central cities, which might be more welcoming of immigrants, but rather in suburbs and rapidly growing communities on the metropolitan fringe. Although exclusionary immigration policies may in fact be able to achieve their intent of reducing the local immigrant population to a certain extent, they also may result in long-lasting deleterious effects such as damaging the city’s reputation, which ultimately hinders economic development, or creating a climate of fear among the local immigrant population (both documented and undocumented), which can negatively impact public safety. Although communities transitioning from a primarily homogenous demographic to a multicultural population face distinct challenges in addressing these changes, lessons from Illinois, Washington, D.C., and Arizona suggest the importance of forward-thinking policies that seek to build bridges between established residents and new immigrant populations.

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Twin Cities neighborhood organizations are struggling to involve diverse residents, while at the same time dealing with shrinking resources. CURA initiated the Neighborhood Partnership Initiative (NPI) program in 2007 to support collaborations between neighborhood organizations and other local nonprofits. The NPI program, which is funded by the McKnight Foundation, provides grants up to $10,000 to innovative partnerships between neighborhood organizations and organizations that focus on the arts, immigrants/people of color, and youth.

The program seeks to increase and strengthen the involvement of underrepresented community members in Twin Cities neighborhood organizations and revitalization. During the last three years, CURA has funded 35 NPI projects (Figure 1). The success that NPI has had underscores the value of seeding partnerships between community organizations to broaden community involvement and leverage the resources and experience of the community. As one Minneapolis neighborhood association community organizer recently observed, by funding projects with specific objectives, NPI contributes to creating organizational collaborations.

Figure 1. Neighborhood Locations of Northside Partnership Initiative Projects, 2008–2010
that can continue to serve the neighborhood:

We weren’t doing anything together before... [W]e weren’t taking advantage [of our relationship]. It seemed like there were ways we could work together that would be more beneficial to both of us. [Since collaborating on a Neighborhood Partnership Initiative project] we are continually creating new ways of doing things with what we have, and collaborating together. It’s hard to stay in touch when you don’t have specific objectives, and collaborative projects aren’t possible without the funding and the focus.
—Sarah Scott, Lyndale Neighborhood Association

The NPI program builds on the Bridging Communities program that CURA administered with funding from the City of Minneapolis Community Planning and Economic Development to increase the capacity of neighborhood groups for outreach to and the involvement of new immigrants and non-English-speaking residents. The Bridging Communities program, which operated in 2007, demonstrated the value of providing funding to support neighborhood organizations to reach out to new community residents and engage them. Seven community projects were funded for up to $5,000 each. Neighborhood organizations developed stronger connections and understanding of issues important to “New American” residents. One result was greater participation of immigrant residents in identifying issues, serving on committees, and—in one case—serving on the neighborhood board of directors.

For more than 30 years, the cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul have contracted with neighborhood citizen-participation organizations (called district councils in St. Paul) to gather resident and business input for city plans and projects affecting their communities. With the inception of the Minneapolis Neighborhood Revitalization Program in the early 1990s, every Minneapolis neighborhood receives long-term funding from the city to implement neighborhood-created revitalization plans.

The outreach and issue-organizing activities of neighborhood organizations have declined in recent years, due to both the organizations’ increased citizen-review and revitalization-program administrative responsibilities and declining local-government and private-foundation funding. However, the ability of neighborhood-based organizations to engage and mobilize community members around issues important to the community is an indication of their strength and purpose. Many neighborhood organizations were formed as a result of successful issue campaigns. Broad engagement of the community demonstrates the legitimacy and influence of neighborhood organizations.

The need for neighborhood organizations to broaden outreach and resident involvement is underscored by the growing diversity of residents in many neighborhoods. Minneapolis and St. Paul’s foreign-born population increased by 127% during the 1990s. According to the American Community Survey, a total of 210,344 foreign-born residents lived in the Twin Cities metropolitan area in 2000, representing 7.1% of the total population. The foreign-born population had increased 41% by 2009, when it represented 9.1% of the metro area population. The population of the Twin Cities is expected to become increasingly diverse during the next 25 years. According to a report from the Minnesota State Demographic Center, the nonwhite and Latino population in the Twin Cities metropolitan area is projected to grow from 19% in 2005 to nearly 33% in 2035.

To support neighborhood organizations in efforts to increase their outreach to and the involvement of underrepresented residents, CURA designed the NPI program to fund innovative partnerships to leverage assets among organizations. In addition to providing grants for innovative projects, CURA provides technical assistance and workshops to help organizations learn from other NPI partners. This article describes the principles of the NPI program and presents examples of several successful NPI projects.

How NPI Works

The Neighborhood Partnership Initiative provides financial support for neighborhood organizations to collaborate with other organizations to build connections with underrepresented constituencies and work together on shared objectives. The organizations must decide on a project and submit an application jointly to ensure that projects are not one-sided.

When applying, the organizations include a description of the collaborative project and how the partner organizations will involve the underrepresented constituency—youth, immigrants, and/or people of color. It is important that the project address an issue that is significant both to the community and to the underrepresented constituency to whom the organizations have chosen to reach out. Partner organizations are expected to identify innovative project ideas that will achieve something they could not do alone, without a partner organization. In addition, projects are expected to be not only innovative and relevant to the community, but also sustainable, so that the work can extend beyond the initial round of funding.

A committee consisting of CURA staff and representatives from neighborhood groups reviews applications three times a year and awards successful applicants $10,000 for full NPI grants and $2,500 for summer “mini-NPI” grants. The committee looks for projects that: organize constituencies around issues important to them; clearly define the collaboration and the respective roles of the partners; lead to the engagement of underrepresented community members in the life and leadership of the neighborhood; and contribute to the achievement of goals for the betterment of the neighborhood.

Both before applications are submitted and after grants are awarded, CURA plays an active role in supporting community organizations who apply to the NPI program. Staff members are available to consult with community organizations to discuss project ideas, help identify potential partner organizations, brainstorm about community-outreach best practices, and whatever else applicants require to submit an application. CURA also hosts occasional NPI events. These gatherings help to educate community organizations about the purpose of NPI, highlight NPI projects that have been funded in the past, and provide workshops and

networking time. Staff from community organizations can get ideas about what may be possible with an NPI grant and gain feedback about potential projects and appropriate partner agencies. After NPI grants are awarded, CURA provides support through preproject work-plan meetings, periodic check-ins during the project, and a formal consultation after projects are completed.

**Why NPI Works: Examples of NPI Projects**

Since 2008, NPI has received 96 applications involving 166 organizations, and has awarded almost $289,000 to support 35 projects (Table 1). Although the projects are all unique, some common themes have emerged, including empowering and organizing youth to become more involved with and tied to their communities (25 of the 35 funded NPI projects involve youth); working with immigrant groups and their unique interests and skills to build community; and using art as a way to attract and organize various community members (Table 2). The following three examples of successful NPI projects illustrate what can result when community organizations partner to work with underrepresented populations toward a common goal.

**Lyndale Neighborhood Association and the Youth Farm and Market Project.** The Lyndale Neighborhood Association and the Youth Farm and Market Project partnered to empower and organize youth as well as immigrant groups. The Lyndale Neighborhood Association (LNA), located in south Minneapolis, is a resident-run organization that builds community by improving neighborhood safety and stability, and increasing residents’ and institutions’ ownership and investment in the neighborhood. The Lyndale Neighborhood Association applied for NPI grant money with the Youth Farm and Market Project (hereafter referred to as Youth Farm), another organization located in south Minneapolis that supports relationships between urban youth and their families, communities, and the earth by growing, cooking, eating, and selling healthy food.

LNA and Youth Farm partnered to address public-safety issues in their target area—Lake Street to 33rd Street and Blaisdell Avenue to Pleasant Avenue. This area is home to large populations of Spanish- and Somali-speaking people, and was chosen because of LNA’s struggle to connect with neighbors there. Youth Farm has a strong presence and deep connection to the youth and their families in the target area and had heard about some of their gardens being used for illegal activities.

**Table 1. Summary of Northside Partnership Initiative Project Proposals, 2008–2010**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>No. of NPI proposals received</th>
<th>No. of organizations applying</th>
<th>No. of NPI-funded projects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mini 1</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mini 2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In addition, one of their youth staff had been attacked close to the gardens.

Working together, LNA and Youth Farm identified two community gardens run by Youth Farm as sites to address the safety issues. These sites would serve as spaces to hold events and volunteer opportunities, as well as visible areas for neighbors to gather. They hoped that by connecting neighbors to LNA, the Minneapolis Police Department, and each other by building on Youth Farm’s connections to the neighborhood, trust would increase and the target area would be safer due to increased reporting to police and greater neighborhood vigilance.

The events in the gardens, as well as some events held at large apartment buildings, allowed LNA and Youth Farm to speak with neighbors they had never reached out to before. As one LNA staff person said:

One of the most difficult things is bringing people together with different backgrounds. There is a very divided sense of place and space. [Providing] multiple opportunities for people to get together to break down barriers is important.

Along with getting residents to meet each other, the events in the gardens and at apartment buildings also provided a way to educate them about the Minneapolis Police and their role as community partners, rather than law enforcers who should be feared. The neighbors came away with better impressions of the police and were not as afraid to contact them. More frequent neighborhood reporting of criminal activity to police has been invaluable to Youth Farm and LNA, and has helped alleviate some of the violence and illegal activity around the Youth Farm sites.

Another important outcome from this project is that a woman who worked at a local group home in the Lake Street and Pillsbury Avenue area and who came to every LNA/Youth Farm outreach event was nominated for a position on the LNA board by a Youth Farm staff person. LNA had been trying unsuccessfully to get more involvement from neighbors in that area. She was ultimately elected and now participates actively in LNA activities. LNA and Youth Farm staff reported that this woman had been looking for her niche in neighborhood activities and had not found it until she attended the events at the gardens. In addition, LNA recruited a block-club leader through an event in a community garden, and a group of Latino women and Somali residents was recruited to work on cultural celebrations facilitated by LNA.

Staff members from LNA and Youth Farm were enthusiastic about the project and felt that their efforts had several positive outcomes: a strong bond was developed between the two organizations, which continues to serve them well in better addressing the surrounding neighborhood’s issues and needs; and they were able to leverage each organization’s attributes—LNA’s ability to organize and hold events, and Youth Farm’s connection to youth and their families in the target population. They joined forces to address community safety in areas that are central to the neighbors—the community gardens.

Hawthorne Area Community Council, Juxtaposition Arts, Kwanzaa Community Church, Northside Arts Collective, Avenues for Homeless Youth, and Homewood Studios. This project involved several community partners and is an example of an NPI project that empowered and organized youth, and used art as a way to attract and organize community members. The project idea was developed through the Great Idea Exchange, an event organized by Juxtaposition Arts, the University of Minnesota’s College of Design, and CURA to showcase “great ideas” developed by North Minneapolis community organizations for improving life in the neighborhood through community art. Community youth and arts organizations collaborated on project ideas. Ten collaborations presented their “great ideas” to the community through posters displayed at a local coffee shop. The public was invited to view the proposals and vote for the idea they felt would make a difference in the community, and CURA agreed to fund the winning project through the NPI program. Kwanzaa Community Church’s Sidewalks Saving Lives project received the

### Table 2. Organizations Involved in Northside Partnership Initiative Projects, 2008–2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of organization</th>
<th>Number of funded projects that included this type of organization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Immigrant organizations</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth organizations</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Some organizations were counted twice because they serve multiple constituencies.

A Sidewalks Saving Lives team paints a mural at 2007 Emerson Avenue North.

Photo by Satoko Muratake
She explained:

The Sidewalks Saving Lives project brought together a multifaceted collaboration of organizations that had not previously worked together: Hawthorne Area Community Council, Juxtaposition Arts, Kwanzaa Community Church, Northside Arts Collective, Avenues for Homeless Youth, and Homewood Studios. Each organization brought its constituency and expertise to the project.

Juxtaposition Arts is a nonprofit visual arts and cultural center that hosts year-round youth programs. The programs are free and support urban expression, independent livelihood, community development, and social justice through the arts. Kwanzaa Community Church (Kwanzaa) is the first and only African American Presbyterian church in Minnesota. The congregation works toward community, justice, social change, and empowerment for the families in its area and practices community engagement ministry. Hawthorne Area Community Council (HACC) is a nonprofit neighborhood organization for the area bounded by the Mississippi River to the east, Emerson Avenue to the west, Broadway Avenue to the south and Lowry Avenue to the north. HACC addresses social and economic needs of residents of the Hawthorne neighborhood. These three organizations were the lead partners in this project. Other partners were the Northside Arts Collective, which enriches and advances the Northside community through the arts; Avenues for Homeless Youth, which provides emergency shelter, short-term housing, and support services for homeless youth in a safe and nurturing environment; and Homewood Studios, an artists’ workspace and gallery/meeting space in North Minneapolis.

The goal of the Sidewalks Saving Lives project was to use art to create an intergenerational public-health campaign designed to reduce the HIV/AIDS epidemic in North Minneapolis, with an emphasis on the African American community. North Minneapolis has one of the highest rates of HIV/AIDS in the country, and the rate of HIV/AIDS infections among its youth is increasing.

Reverend Alika Galloway with Kwanzaa Community Church said the idea for the sidewalk art about HIV/AIDS awareness came to her in the shower. She explained:

I have a calling to HIV/AIDS ministry. The charter for our church was intentionally designed for community engagement. I had been doing a lot of research on how to engage the community in the issues around HIV/AIDS. And then in my mind it all came together and I saw sidewalks painted with HIV/AIDS messages.

The project was a one-day community event held in September 2008. Project staff organized teams of youth, assisted by professional artists, to create 10 sidewalk murals with HIV/AIDS prevention messages in the Northside neighborhoods. A total of 90 youth painters showed up, along with others from the community who wanted to join in the activity. The active involvement of youth in the creation and execution of the murals helped ensure that the sidewalk murals communicated to youth.

A kick-off event started the day, and then the artists dispersed to their sidewalk sites to paint the murals. Community members visited the artists as they worked. A lunch was held midday with food donated by local businesses. To complement the murals, project staff made HIV/AIDS education information available. By the end of the day, all 10 sidewalk murals were completed. The day concluded with a block party, with food and performances. “We wanted to do public art and do it with regular people and do it in just one day,” said Satoko Muratake, Juxtaposition Arts’ managing director (who, as a University graduate student, worked with the organization during an earlier grant from CURA), “That way the community would see the results right away.”

Although the six community organizations struggled with this project at times—mostly because of the large number of partners and the various roles of each individual organization—it was a successful project. The community organizations trained 100 people as HIV/AIDS educators and installed 10 different murals in 10 different Northside neighborhoods. The project brought together many different types of people and community organizations, and they all worked toward a common goal of eliminating HIV/AIDS in their community.

Kwanzaa Community Church and Juxtaposition Arts have continued to work together on other projects. Kwanzaa initiated further research, with support from CURA, to investigate factors that contribute to the disproportionate rate of HIV/AIDS among African American residents in North Minneapolis. In addition, by the end of 2010, Kwanzaa plans to open Northside Women’s Space at the church, a drop-in center providing services and support for prostituted women, who are especially vulnerable to HIV/AIDS (see Lauren Martin’s article on page 12 of this issue). The drop-in space will involve numerous partnerships and collaborations, including PRIDE and Breaking Free (two nationally recognized organizations working with prostituted women), the University of Minnesota Physicians’ Clinic on Broadway, the Minnesota Department of Health, NorthPoint Health and Wellness Center, and African American Family Services.

Summit-University Planning Council and Lao Family Community of Minnesota, Inc. Two organizations, the Summit-University Planning Council and the Lao Family Community of Minnesota, Inc., came together to partner on a project that involved working with an immigrant group to build community. The Summit-University Planning Council (SUPC) is the district planning council for District 8, which covers the Summit-University neighborhood. It acts as a liaison between the community and the City of St. Paul, providing a way for residents to voice concerns about the community. The council also forms block clubs and organizes crime-prevention activities. Lao Family Community of Minnesota, Inc. (Lao Family) is a nonprofit mutual-assistance association founded in 1977 by Hmong refugees. Located on University Avenue in St. Paul, Lao Family works to empower Hmong families to be successful in American society while preserving their traditions, values, and heritage. Its services include English education, employment assistance, chemical-health support, and youth and family programs.

Lao Family staff attended a CURA NPI event at the University of Minnesota, where they heard about the NPI grant. The director of Lao Family wanted to apply for the grant money to expand its network into the area surrounding its building and thought that SUPC would be a good partner because of its close ties to the Summit-University area. More specifically, Lao Family was increasingly aware of tensions between Hmong...
neighbors and non-Hmong neighbors, and wanted the non-Hmong neighbors in District 8 to know actual Hmong people, not just what the media reports.

The NPI project proposal was for a Hmong youth outreach/organizing project that would help Hmong families get involved in and integrated with their neighborhood through their children. Initially, SUPC and Lao Family had planned to hire and share a part-time Hmong community organizer to recruit and develop Hmong youth leaders to serve on SUPC committees, hold monthly community forums at Lao Family, and create an “organizing toolkit” for working with Hmong communities. Ultimately, the project became less youth-focused, and SUPC and Lao Family reconfigured their project through a collaboration with Minnesota state representative Cy Thao, who lived close to the Lao Family building.

Representative Thao, who is Hmong, had come to SUPC for assistance in organizing the blocks in his neighborhood. Hmong neighbors had been contacting him about their concerns with neighborhood crime and wanted help with addressing the problems. Upon Thao’s contact with SUPC, SUPC staff contacted Lao Family to reconfigure their NPI project.

The partners’ first step was holding a series of meetings at Thao’s home and the Lao Family building. Over the course of these meetings with Thao, the number of Hmong households attending increased. Eventually six households within a two-block span were attending meetings and discussing their concerns with SUPC, Lao Family, and Thao. Police officers came to speak to neighbors about safety and to demonstrate their commitment to working with the Hmong community. This interaction was a breakthrough for both SUPC and Lao Family, because SUPC had struggled to involve the Hmong community in its neighborhood-safety efforts, and Lao Family had been hearing Hmong families’ concerns about neighborhood safety. The police were able to convince the families that their purpose is to work with the community, and that if they had concerns to report, their identity would be kept anonymous.

After several meetings held by SUPC and Lao Family, residents formed a block club. Previously, SUPC had not been successful in developing a block club in the neighborhood around Lao Family, but with the involvement from Lao Family and the support of Thao, neighbors saw the value in organizing together. They have held cookouts and meetings, and now have open communication with both the police and local government. The SUPC staff reported that their organization never understood that, traditionally, Hmong people are not used to interacting with their government. Lao Family clarified that it is not commonly understood among Hmong families that they can make a difference in their neighborhood by working with police and government. The Summit-University Planning Council expects more block clubs to develop in this neighborhood, because another Hmong man a few blocks over has expressed interest in leading a similar effort, and Lao Family is ready to support him and duplicate what was accomplished with the first block club.

Lao Family reported that, after working with SUPC, it is easier to network with other community organizations. As the director put it, “This grant had us open our door and go out into the community.” Another side benefit to this project was that Lao Family was placed on the ballot for membership on the SUPC board. Although it was not chosen as one of five organizations on the board, it lost by a very narrow margin. Lao Family had never even been on the ballot.
before, and the SUPC director expects that it would most likely be elected next year. In addition to Lao Family being considered for a membership on the SUPC board, Lao Family invited SUPC to be on its board. Both organizations and their staff found themselves stepping out of their usual work for this project, and were rewarded with increased involvement from Hmong families in District 8, particularly around the Lao Family building. As the Lao Family director said, “With partnering, ten hands are better than one. With even just one partner you can go much further [in your work as an organization].”

**Lessons Learned and Best Practices**

The projects above illustrate how many of the NPI projects were developed and implemented. Most NPI projects were a catalyst that led to a sustained partnership between community organizations. This is the ultimate goal of NPI—to support community organizations to work together and engage underrepresented constituents in a meaningful and sustainable way. Each project may achieve this goal or at least make steps toward this goal, but funding alone is not enough to be successful. The NPI projects also require substantial dedication and hard work from each community partner.

The CURA staff who have been involved with the NPI program have identified several lessons to be learned from the hard work of NPI grantees:

- **Be strategic.** Perhaps the most important step when beginning a collaborative project is the prework of planning and relationship building. Because many NPI projects involved organizations that had not previously worked together, it was necessary to spend time clarifying what each organization brought to the project and defining the role it would play. This groundwork leads to more successful and sustainable partnerships. Projects can be initiated in many ways—by one of the partners, by the partners identifying their project together, or by constituent groups who bring issues to the neighborhood organizations. No matter how a partnership begins, partner organizations should have a clearly defined and achievable goal. Ideally, each partner has equal stake in the project. The responsibilities should be complementary to ensure effective project implementation. Developing a written work plan with realistic timelines and goals ensures clarity of roles and responsibilities. The work plan should be used throughout the project and amended as needed to ensure the commitment of all partners.

- **Be flexible.** Sometimes a project hits an obstacle or dead end and, if partner organizations are flexible, they can revisit their work plan and original goals to change gears and work toward a different or modified end goal.

- **Be in constant contact.** Regular face-to-face meetings ensure open and ongoing communication. It is helpful to designate representatives from each of the partner organizations to facilitate communication.

- **Be open.** Although some issues will inevitably arise during the project, organizations that respect each other’s strengths and shortcomings are able to address issues and change gears when necessary.

- **Be consultative.** CURA is a great resource for community organizations during implementation. Staff at CURA can consult with organizations on projects and help examine or re-evaluate goals with partners. They can also provide a neutral, third-party perspective, which can be helpful.

- **Be sustainable.** A formal debriefing between the partner organizations at the conclusion of the project provides an opportunity to reflect on the experience of the partners, the project’s effectiveness, and how the organizations can capitalize on their relationship and experience to work together in the future. In addition, CURA NPI events provide an opportunity for NPI participants to share their experiences and learn from one another.

**Conclusion**

With ongoing funding challenges for community initiatives, collaborative projects are an effective way to leverage organizational strengths and constituencies to increase participation in neighborhood-revitalization efforts, especially to increase the involvement of underrepresented residents. The NPI projects have produced some great results for community organizations—both short-term and long-term. Many grantees reported success with reaching out to underrepresented constituencies, something that many had struggled with in the past. Many saw immediate results with these communities in their willingness to engage with the organizations and their work. The organizations also found great value in the long-term benefit of the social capital formed with their partner organizations.

CURA plans to continue the NPI program in 2011 and 2012, contingent on funding. To better ensure the increased involvement of youth, immigrants, and people of color, some program guidelines will be changed. These changes include a focus on effective partnerships that use place-based organizing and broadening eligible project partners to include any resident-driven organization focused on a neighborhood-level geography. A letter of inquiry may also be instituted to give organizations an opportunity to develop a greater relationship before submitting a project proposal. More information about the NPI program, application guidelines, and deadlines for future awards can be found at www.cura.umn.edu/NPI.php.

*Kris Nelson* is director of neighborhood programs at CURA. *Sara Bielawski* is engagement coordinator at CURA.
The Center for Urban and Regional Affairs supports research and technical assistance through a number of individual programs, each with their own deadlines and application procedures. If you represent a community organization and are unsure which program listed below is most suitable for your project proposal, simply complete a general Community-Based Research Program Application Form at www.cura.umn.edu/Programs /curappform.html and we will route your request to the appropriate program.

■ The Community Assistantship Program (CAP) matches community-based nonprofit organizations, citizen groups, and government agencies in Greater Minnesota with students who can provide research assistance. Eligible organizations define a research project, submit an application, and, if accepted, are matched with a qualified student to carry out the research. The application deadline for summer semester 2011 assistantships (early June to August) is March 15, 2011. For more information, contact CAP coordinator Will Craig at 612-625-3321 or wcraig@umn.edu, or visit www.cura.umn.edu/cap.php.

■ Northside Seed Grants support community organizations that operate programs serving residents of Minneapolis’ Northside community by providing student research assistants and faculty researchers to carry out neighborhood-initiated and neighborhood-guided projects. The application deadline for summer semester 2011 assistantships (early June through August) is March 15, 2011. For more information, visit www.cura.umn.edu/NSG.php or contact program director Kris Nelson at 612-625-1020 or ksn@umn.edu.

■ The Community Geographic Information Systems (CGIS) program provides technical assistance in mapping, data analysis, and GIS to community-based organizations and nonprofits in the Twin Cities metropolitan area. CGIS staff specialize in parcel-level mapping, demographic analysis, and Internet-based GIS technologies. There is no formal application process or deadline to apply. Project requests are taken by phone or e-mail, and generally can be turned around within two weeks. For more information, to discuss potential projects, or for assistance with data needs, contact CGIS program coordinator Jeff Matson at 612-625-0801 or jmatson@umn.edu, or visit www.cura.umn.edu/CGIS.php.

■ The Minnesota Center for Neighborhood Organizing trains people to work effectively in organizing and staffing neighborhood organizations. It trains new organizers and increases the skills of existing neighborhood staff through internships, workshops, and other programs. For more information about the program and the training opportunities available, visit www.mcno.umn.edu or contact Jay Clark at 612-625-2513 or clark037@umn.edu, or Margaret Kaplan at 612-624-2300 or mkaplan@umn.edu.

■ The Faculty Interactive Research Program is designed to encourage University of Minnesota faculty to carry out research projects that involve a significant issue of public policy for the state or its communities, and that include interaction with groups, agencies, or organizations in Minnesota involved with the issue. Ideal projects will have an applied orientation, as well as serve the research interests of the faculty member. Awards cover the faculty member’s salary for one month during the summer, and support a halftime graduate research assistant for one year. Application materials for the 2011–2012 academic year competition will be sent to eligible faculty in early spring semester. For more information, visit www.cura.umn.edu/FIRP.php or contact CURA director Ed Goetz at 612-624-8737 or egoetz@umn.edu.

■ The CURA Dissertation Research Grant provides one year of support to a Ph.D. candidate in good academic standing at the University of Minnesota for the purpose of completing dissertation research on a significant issue or topic related to urban areas in the upper Midwest region of the United States. Recipients must have passed the preliminary exam stage and have approved dissertation proposals by March 1 of the year in which they apply for the award. Deadline for the 2011–2012 award competition is February 10, 2011. For application guidelines or more information, visit www.cura.umn.edu/Dissertation.php or contact CURA director Ed Goetz at 612-624-8737 or egoetz@umn.edu.
Increasing Participation in the 2010 U.S. Census in Minneapolis

Minneapolis is a diverse community, with more than 80 languages spoken in the homes of Minneapolis school children. However, due to concerns about privacy and safety, apathy, language barriers, and a lack of awareness in hard-to-count communities, a potential risk existed that this diversity would not be reflected in the 2010 U.S Census. History supported this concern. In 2000, a dedicated group of community leaders from across the city were part of the Minneapolis Complete Count Committee, but despite their hard work and dedication, the final U.S. Census mail-in participation rate for the city was 73%, lower than the numbers for the state (81%) and the country (74%). In addition, not all neighborhoods were counted equally in 2000. Whereas the higher income, predominantly white neighborhoods had response rates in excess of 80%, a large number of poorer and more ethnically diverse neighborhoods in north Minneapolis and south Minneapolis had participation rates well below 50%.2

Through a coordinated Census outreach and engagement effort led by CURA and using the Minneapolis Complete Count Committee as the primary vehicle for outreach, the Census mail-in participation rate for the city of Minneapolis rose from 73% in 2000 to 78% in 2010 (Table 1). Among cities with populations of more than 300,000, Minneapolis had the highest response rate, as well as the largest gain in response rate, in the country.

In the next issue of the CURA Reporter, we will explore the historical context within which the Minneapolis 2010 Census outreach efforts were undertaken, the outreach approaches used to achieve the gains in Census participation in the city, and the lessons learned from the experience that may have relevance for future Census outreach campaigns.

### Table 1. U.S. Census Mail-in Participation Rates, 2000 and 2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Minneapolis</td>
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<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minnesota</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


2 U.S. Census Bureau, Take 10 Map, available at 2010.census.gov/2010census/take10map/.

CURA Reporter Reader Survey

This fall, CURA randomly selected a sample of CURA Reporter readers to participate in an online reader survey. The survey included questions about the design, content, and delivery of the Reporter, as well as general questions about CURA and our research emphases. As an incentive to participate, those who completed the survey were eligible for a $100 gift card drawing. Congratulations to Karl Batalden of St. Paul, the winner of the drawing.

Our publications staff is considering a number of changes to the Reporter based on the survey results. One important change relates to how the CURA Reporter is delivered. More than 50% of respondents indicated that they would prefer to receive an e-mail announcement when a new issue becomes available on the CURA website rather than continuing to receive a hardcopy of the publication. To request an e-mail notification in lieu of (or in addition to) receiving a hardcopy of each issue, visit www.saa.umn.edu/cura/reporter-preferences.

Another change relates to the number of issues published each year. Beginning in 2011, CURA will publish three issues of the CURA Reporter, in spring, summer, and fall.

Thanks to all of our readers who took the time to complete the survey and share your thoughts about the CURA Reporter.
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