Building and Sustaining Resident and Community Leadership

Deep Dive
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Explore
Explore together how to build resident and community leadership as a core element of neighborhood revitalization

Focus
Focus on what it takes to sustain resident and community leadership over time

Prepare
Prepare a set of action steps to:
• Take back to your community
• Engage others around
• Implement to further strengthen your resident and community leadership
Some Thoughts About Resident and Community Leadership As We Start the Day
Ensures that revitalization plans are informed by the expertise, priorities and experience of community residents – and are thus more effective

- Increases ownership of agreed-upon changes
- Promotes strong ties and relationships among neighbors, building the social networks that are central to a strong community
- Builds neighborhood capacity to sustain change, well beyond the time period of a specific grant or “initiative”
What Qualities Do Effective Community Leaders Share?

**Inspire a Shared Vision**
- Envision the future
- Enlist others

**Enable Others to Act**
- Foster collaboration
- Strengthen others

**Model the Way**
- Set the example
- Plan small wins

**Challenge the Process**
- Search for opportunities
- Experiment and take risks

**Encourage the Heart**
- Recognize individual contributions
- Celebrate accomplishments
You find out that other people have the same views, the same ideas, the same will, the same lover of their community. It means that now I am able to call someone else who lives somewhere else and say, “How are things? Can we collaborate?”

“In the past, resident leaders have been lied to. When somebody comes in to the community, residents shy away because time has told us over and over again that we can’t trust outside individuals to have our best interests at heart.” Marshall’s experience as a resident council member gave her the opportunity to build trust between the community and other stakeholders.
Neighborhood revitalization requires the actions of many people and organizations.

Resident and community leaders must thus act in concert with others:
- Proactively represent the interests of their neighbors, their community and their constituents, while….
- Working with many other stakeholders – government, business, other community groups – to get things done.

When “collective action” is necessary, a shared vision and clear sense of desired results are critical.

With many partners, resident leaders play a unique role: they most truly represent the interests of those whose lives are most affected by change.
Civic Participation
strategies increase the level at which residents participate in the decision in their community

Resident Leadership
strategies train and develop community members to take on leadership roles in their neighborhoods’ revitalization

Community Organizing
strategies mobilize community members to take action to achieve outcomes in their neighborhoods

Social Network
strategies focus on building relationships between and among residents of a community, yielding a variety of personal and community benefits

Multiple Strategies To Build Effective Resident and Community Leadership
How can community residents exercise power, when there are so many competing interests at the table?

What supports are necessary for community leaders, to enable them to participate fully in decision-making processes?

How can communities develop a process for developing and empowering new leaders, so that leadership is spread and shared by many people?

How do you support and sustain leaders when the process of revitalization can be slow, and progress incremental?

What challenges does your community face?
Our Guiding Questions Today

1. Where are you now, and what does your community have to build on?
2. What are your goals for building and sustaining resident and community leadership for the next six months?
3. What are the strategies and steps you will take immediately to start achieving your six month goals?
“Why do I think that resident voices, or community engagement as we often call it, is important? It’s why I got into this work.”

“Community engagement is also good business. Based on decades of experience, I can assure you that including residents as active member of the development team will lead to a smoother process and a better outcomes. Without residents at the table, the process will bog down.”

“Residents have the most at stake. It is their lives, their homes and their neighborhoods. Should residents who want to stay in their community trust that they will ever be welcomed back if they agree to have their homes torn down? It’s the job of the redevelopers and public officials to gain the trust of residents and understand the value they bring to the process.”

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