

# **Maintaining and Expanding the Pipeline:**

Guidance, Strategies,  
and Reflections on  
Sustaining a Promise  
Neighborhood

## Maintaining and Expanding the Pipeline: Guidance, Strategies, and Reflections on Sustaining a Promise Neighborhood

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The Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP) works to secure equal opportunities and better futures for all children and families, especially those most often left behind. Underlying all of the work is a vision of child, family and community well-being which serves as a unifying framework for the many policy, systems reform, and community change activities in which CSSP engages.

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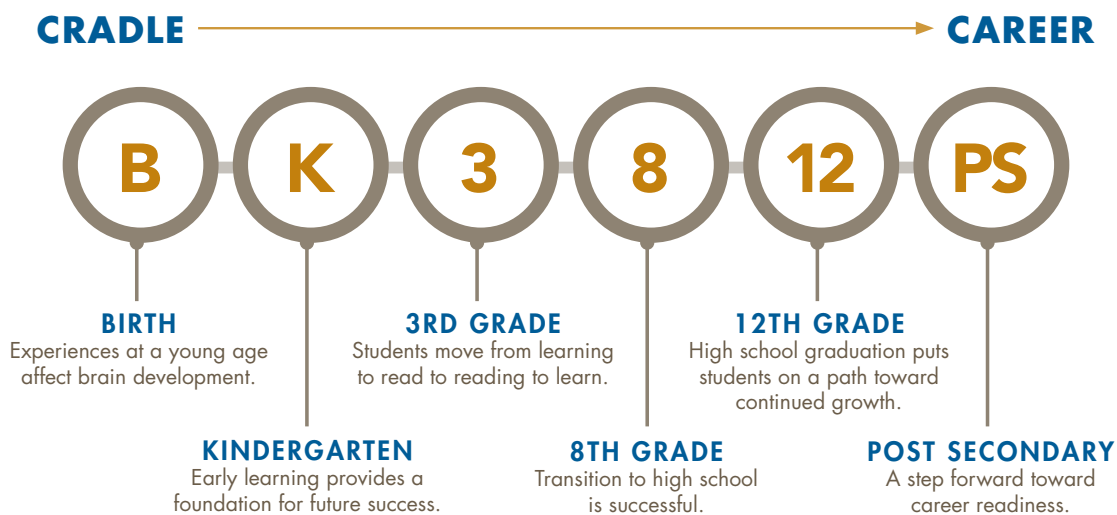
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# About Promise Neighborhoods

**W**ith the success of the Harlem Children's Zone as its inspiration, the federal Promise Neighborhoods program seeks to support community-driven, place-based efforts to improve educational and developmental outcomes for children in distressed communities. The founding vision is that "all children growing up in Promise Neighborhoods have access to effective schools and strong systems of family and community support that will prepare them to attain an excellent education and successfully transition to college and career."



To achieve this vision, Promise Neighborhoods supports the implementation of innovative strategies that improve outcomes for children in the nation's most distressed communities. This is accomplished by building a cradle-to-career continuum of solutions and by increasing the capacity of community leaders and organizations to plan, implement and track progress toward 10 results (including students entering kindergarten ready to succeed in school, graduating from high school, and feeling safe at school and in the community) and 15 indicators (including attendance, graduation, and student mobility rates and participation in daily physical activity).

Grantees focus heavily on collaboration, breaking down silos among agencies, and working with local programs to implement, scale up, and sustain solutions that help students learn, grow, and succeed.

10 RESULTS

15 INDICATORS

EDUCATION OUTCOMES & INDICATORS



1. Children enter kindergarten ready to succeed in school.

1. # and % of children birth to kindergarten entry who have a place where they usually go, other than an emergency room, when they are sick or in need of advice about their health.

2. # and % of 3-year-olds and children in kindergarten who demonstrate at the beginning of the program or school year age-appropriate functioning across multiple domains of early learning as determined using developmentally appropriate early learning measures.

3. # & % of children from birth to kindergarten entry participating in center-based or formal home-based early learning settings or programs, which may include Early Head Start, Head Start, child care or preschool.



2. Students are proficient in core academic subjects.

4. # & % of students at or above grade level according to State mathematics and reading or language arts assessments in at least the grades required by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (third through eighth and once in high school)



3. Students successfully transition from middle school grades to high school.

5. Attendance rate of students in sixth, seventh, eighth and ninth grade.



4. Youth graduate from high school.

6. Graduation rate.



5. High school graduates obtain a postsecondary degree, certification or credential.

7. # & % of Promise Neighborhoods students who graduate with a regular high school diploma and obtain postsecondary degrees, vocational certificates or other industry-recognized certifications or credentials without the need for remediation.

FAMILY & COMMUNITY SUPPORT OUTCOMES & INDICATORS



6. Students are healthy.

8. # & % of children who participate in at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity daily.

9. # & % of children who consume five or more servings of fruits and vegetables daily.



7. Students feel safe at school and in their community.

10. # & % of students who feel safe at school and traveling to and from school, as measured by a school climate needs assessment.



8. Students live in stable communities.

11. Student mobility rate.



9. Families and community members support learning in Promise Neighborhoods schools.

12. # and % of parents or family members for children birth to kindergarten entry who report that they read to their children three or more times per week.

13. # and % of parents or family members for children in kindergarten through eighth grade who report encouraging their children to read books outside of school.

14. # and % of parents or family members for children in the ninth through twelfth grades who report talking with their children about the importance of college and career.



10. Students have access to 21st-century learning tools.

15. # & % of students who have school and home access (and % of the day they have access) to broadband Internet and a connected computing device.

# About this Brief

**T**oo often, the focus of conversations about nonprofit sustainability is on the reliable acquisition of financial resources required to maintain or scale an organization's impact over time. As understandable as that focus may be, it neglects other important dimensions of sustainability, such as the maintenance or strengthening of partnerships and changes in how organizations “do business” that can be just as important to achieving the ultimate end—greater impact, or better results, for the children and families being served. The complexity of this conversation is only increased in the context of cradle-to-career work, with its ambitions for comprehensive scope and scale and the necessary involvement of numerous partners and stakeholders spanning the public, private, and philanthropic sectors. Also, candid discussions about results—both currently achieved and those hoped for in the future—are central to sustainability planning and should inform decisions about how to deploy resources as efficiently and effectively as possible.

This brief first provides a basic framework and guiding questions to assist Promise Neighborhoods in thinking about and planning for sustainability. It argues that viewing sustainability as an aspect of, rather than distinct from, overall strategy development can help to generate continued support and improve performance over time. Then, the brief highlights reflections, lessons, and concrete sustainability strategies from several federal Promise Neighborhoods grantees who are nearing the end of their initial federal investment. The brief concludes with an annotated list of resources developed with Promise Neighborhoods or similar types of comprehensive, collaborative efforts in mind.

## **This brief offers readers the following:**

- A definition of “sustainability” within the context of cradle-to-career work
- General considerations and questions to help guide thinking and planning related to sustainability
- Concrete examples of sustainability issues and strategies for managing them drawn from the work of four federal Promise Neighborhoods grantees
- An annotated appendix of resources that may inform Promise Neighborhoods in their efforts to sustain cradle-to-career work and results

# Unpacking Sustainability

**S**ustainability is often used to describe how a nonprofit will continue the work it began, strengthened, or expanded under a large, non-renewable, multi-year grant, generally from a foundation or government agency. The hope is often that the organization will be able to secure similar resources from other funders or revenue streams.

This view is problematic, particularly when applied to cradle-to-career work, for at least three reasons. First, it can place too much emphasis on the task of replacing time-limited funding and does not pay enough attention to other important aspects of continuing comprehensive, collaborative work. Second, it runs the risk of encouraging lead agencies and their partners to treat sustainability as a unique task to be engaged in as, or shortly before, the initial grant concludes.

Lastly, unlike individual nonprofits that provide one or a small number of programs and are experienced in cobbling together a mix of grants and even individual donations year after year to offer those programs, cradle-to-career initiatives sometimes come into existence in order to secure or be eligible for a large, multi-year grant. Additionally, these initiatives often use those funds for novel purposes, such as creating integrated data systems, which no single organization would likely have undertaken on their own and do not have clear sources of future funding.

For these reasons, we propose that Promise Neighborhoods view sustainability as a process for reviewing and adapting their overall strategy for moving forward as a foundational, or at least catalytic, investment draws to a close. To be more specific, we propose defining sustainability as the ability of Promise Neighborhoods to:

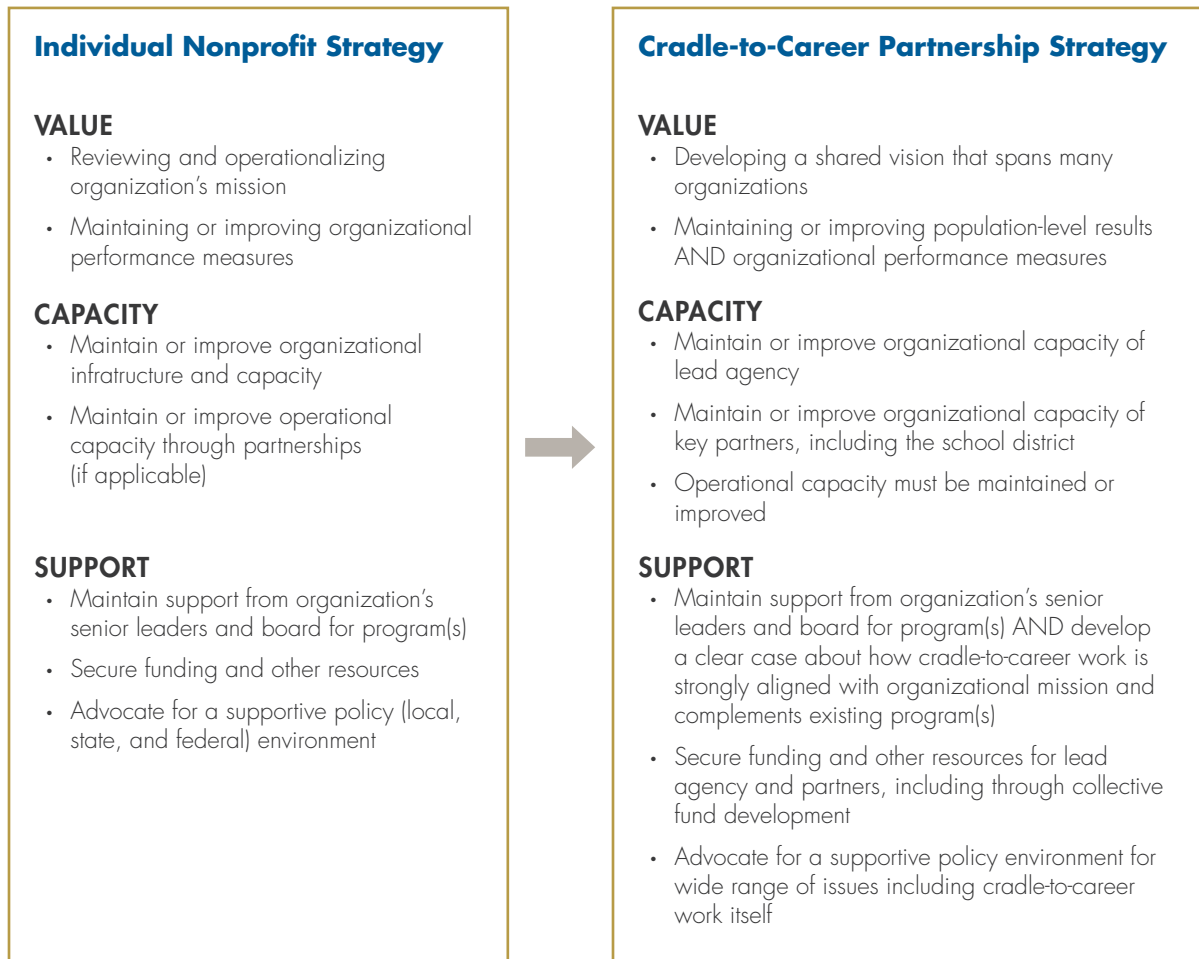
- Maintain or improve the results they are achieving for their target population;
- Maintain or strengthen the infrastructure required for comprehensive, collaborative work; and
- Secure the internal and external support and resources, financial and otherwise, to complete building out the cradle-to-career pipeline to a scope and scale that ensures that all children and young people in their target population who require services, programs, and supports are able to access them.

By viewing and defining sustainability in such a way, funders and practitioners can avoid focusing too narrowly on funding, delaying conversations about sustainability until the end of an initial investment, and viewing sustainability planning as distinct from the normal, ongoing process of strategy development, review, and adaptation that nonprofits and partnerships should already practice.

## Shifting Mindsets Related to Sustainability

To better understand how what is typically called sustainability can be viewed as a part of strategy development, it may help to look at how, at a very high level, strategy considerations can differ between nonprofits and cradle-to-career initiatives. The following figure illustrates how considerations related to three elements of strategy—value, capacity, and support—must be considered differently in these contexts.<sup>1</sup>

*Figure 1. Shifting from Individual Nonprofit Sustainability to Cradle-to-Career Partnership Sustainability at the Neighborhood Level*



<sup>1</sup> The three elements are drawn and adapted from a concept known as the “strategic triangle” developed by Mark H. Moore, the Hauser Professor of Nonprofit Organizations at Harvard University. Moore argues that strategy development in the public and nonprofit sector can be described as the work of increasing alignment and coherence between an organization’s public value, capacity to deliver that value, and support, both internal and external, for conducting its work.



As one can see, thinking about sustainability, or strategy in general, for a cradle-to-career initiative involves some additional considerations and shifts in mindset when compared with strategy development for a single nonprofit organization. A set of general questions to ask might include the following:

## VALUE

- What is the shared vision of your partnership and how will the partnership measure success over time?
- What are you hoping to maintain?
- What are you hoping to expand?
- What, if anything, are you planning to discontinue or delay?

## CAPACITY

- How will core functions be maintained?
- Will any functions be devolved from the lead agency to partners?
- Will the lead agency transfer responsibility to a new lead agency?
- Is there ability to scale in particular areas of the pipeline?

## SUPPORT

- How will each of the core functions be funded?
- What type of funding mix (i.e. combination of public and private resources) is necessary to continue this work over time?
- What is feasible in the short term and what is a reasonable expectation for the future?
- What types of policies or memorandum of understanding can be established to better support the work and institutionalize the partnerships and commitments between agencies?

## Evaluating Your Pipeline

In addition to answering high-level strategic questions related to the partnership and core functions, Promise Neighborhoods must also look closely at their “pipeline”—or seamlessly linked set of programs, services, supports and policies, sometimes referred to as a “continuum of solutions”—to identify areas where strong results have been demonstrated as well as areas for which funding and other necessary resources are readily available. The following matrix offers a simple way to evaluate different segments of the pipeline along these dimensions and begin conversations about priorities for maintenance and expansion over time. When thinking about funding, it is important to keep in mind that funds or a “budget” for such work will most likely include dollars that are not specified for cradle-

to-career work but can help support a part of the pipeline, as well as significant resources, including in-kind contributions from partners, that are not ever held by the lead agency but aligned in support of a partnership's vision.

You can use this tool to start a conversation about sustainability by mapping the segments of your pipeline (e.g. early childhood; post-secondary) and/or the specific results and indicators (e.g. age-appropriate functioning; chronic absenteeism) those segments are targeted at. The following are a few suggestions for evaluating your work:

**1. Identify segments of the pipeline and/or specific results and indicators for which you have **strong funding** and **strong results**:**

- What will it take to maintain the results achieved in this area?
- Are the conditions and resources necessary for expanding or scaling your impact present?
- Are partner contributions aligned in a way to promote continued operations?
- These segments may be worth prioritizing to ensure their maintenance and/or expansion

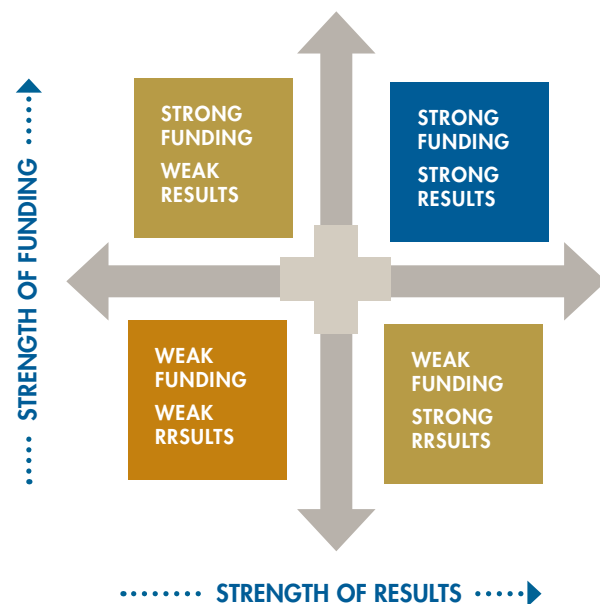
**2. Evaluate areas for which you have **strong funding** and **weak results**:**

- How can performance in this area be improved?
- Are the weak results due to ineffective strategies, weak operational structures, poor implementation, limited time since start of implementation, or some countervailing environmental factors?

**3. Evaluate areas for which you have **weak funding** and **strong results**:**

- How can funding in this area be increased?
- Is the low level of funding due to poor allocation of resources by the lead agency or partnership or is it due to poor alignment with current funder priorities?
- Could you use strong results in this area to make the case that funders should increase their support because it bolsters results in an adjacent part of the pipeline of particular interest to them? (E.g. making the case to a K-12 focused funder for increased early childhood funding based upon strong results and research that positive outcomes during the early years can help set the stage for success in school.)

*Figure 2. Pipeline Segment Maintenance and Expansion Prioritization Matrix*



#### 4. Examine areas for which you have **weak funding** and **weak results**:

- How likely could performance be improved in this area, particularly with limited funding? Is a change in strategy and/or partners required?
- Is the low level of funding a result of the weak results, or is this area also poorly aligned with current funder priorities?
- These segments may be areas where you discontinue or at least delay implementation, particularly under severe funding constraints

## Developing Funding Scenarios

While the discussion of sustainability thus far has emphasized non-financial dimensions of strategy, it is nevertheless true that the availability of financial resources is a key factor in planning for the future. Given that in many cases sustainability planning is undertaken as a result of an impending loss of a significant initial investment, it can be useful to develop several funding scenarios that can help determine which activities might be prioritized for expansion in the case of a windfall or protected in the face of severe budget constraints. The scenarios offered in the figure below are not necessarily the right ones for every context, though it is safe to say that a partnership should be prepared for possibilities related to both the reduction as well as the increase of funding. As noted previously, our use of the term “budget” is meant as shorthand for the universe of available resources, both new and existing but realigned, provided by the lead agency as well as its partner organizations.

*Figure 3. General Scenarios for Sustainability Planning*

<b>Maintain Core Functions</b> (Reduction in Budget)	<b>Maintenance of Pipeline</b> (Steady Budget)	<b>Expansion of Pipeline</b> (Some Increase in Budget)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Promise Neighborhood tries to maintain only the most essential functions required to continue the work of the partnership, such as integrated data system operation and management</li> <li>• Promise Neighborhoods should identify the minimum number of staff required to continue the work</li> <li>• Strategies for maintenance of core functions include devolving responsibilities once held by the lead agency or maintaining their home but requesting partners to help subsidize their costs</li> <li>• The Promise Neighborhood may decide to temporarily reduce the scope (i.e. delay strengthening of existing pipeline segments or building of planned ones) or scale (i.e. reduce number of children served or delay plans for serving more)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Promise Neighborhood is able to secure funding (i.e. replace initial grant funds) that will allow it to maintain the current scope and scale of activities</li> <li>• The maintenance of grant funds may be a result of the lead agency's efforts to replace the funding of the initial grant with new public and philanthropic dollars and/or the alignment of existing partner resources to make up for lost funding</li> <li>• The organization may incorporate cradle-to-career work into a pre-existing structure (e.g. a long standing non-profit social service agency shifts its focus to cradle-to-career work)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Promise Neighborhood is able to replace the lost funding and secure additional funds that allow it to expand its scope and/or scale. This expansion might involve: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Increasing the number and proportion of young people reached in the existing footprint</li> <li>(2) Expanding the footprint to encompass more young people</li> <li>(3) Expanding the scope of services, programs, and supports available to participants in the existing footprint for selected segments of the pipeline</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Priority for expansion might be given to segments of the pipeline that have strong results</li> <li>• If increased funding is a likely possibility, it may help to create 2 or more growth scenarios (e.g. +25% and +50% funding)</li> </ul>


# Sustainability Planning in Promise Neighborhoods

In this section, we turn to the examples of four federal Promise Neighborhoods grantees to learn more about how they have approached planning for sustainability. Their experiences highlight how some of the issues and questions described above have arisen in practice and what Promise Neighborhoods leaders have learned along the way.

While these Promise Neighborhoods are led by different types of agencies and operating in unique local contexts, each of their approaches to sustaining their work illustrates the importance of identifying and addressing with partners a similar set of strategic questions well before the grants that initiated or catalyzed their work have come to an end.

By paying close attention to the results to be maintained or improved, the infrastructure required for a partnership to continue, and the financial and other resources needed, Promise Neighborhoods leaders are working to ensure that the progress made during the initial federal investment can serve as a strong foundation for future work.





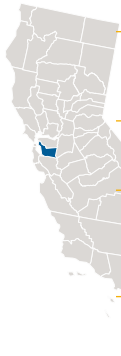
“As a group of partners, do we value the work we are doing? Is the community benefitting from the work and should we continue to scale up so that more people have access to our services and opportunities? Our community has responded, 'Promise Neighborhoods cannot go away. It has changed our lives and it needs to continue to change the lives of others in Hayward.'”




*Melinda Hall, Executive Director*  
HAYWARD PROMISE NEIGHBORHOOD

*Sustainability Planning Profile*

# Hayward Promise Neighborhood

## Hayward, California



AT-A-GLANCE			
Jackson Triangle Demographics	# of Children Living in Footprint	# of Schools Served	# of Partner Agencies
53% Hispanic; 16% African-American; 15% Asian; 10% White	2,811	6	12

**LEAD AGENCY:** CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY EAST BAY

For Hayward Promise Neighborhood (HPN) leaders, the goal of sustainability planning is to institutionalize the cradle-to-career work that began with support from the federal investment. They see this process as iterative, informed by data about what's working and candid feedback from partners and community members. They are also interested in scaling current work to the city of Hayward.

Conversations about sustainability flow out of an increasingly shared sense of what cradle-to-career work is and why it matters. HPN partners with K-16 expertise, for example, have come to understand why robust, effective preschool experiences will contribute to a robust increase in high school graduation rates and transitions to postsecondary experiences, thus creating a Pre-K to 16 pipeline. Partners and the community embrace the idea that children should progress through an education pipeline as a defining feature of our work together. The creation of three networks, organized by segments of the pipeline with some overlap, has helped to facilitate communication, improve alignment of partners' work and most importantly promote shared accountability. Ultimately, this effort has helped to establish a collaborative entity where partners emphasize mutual interest over competition.

Over time, parents and community members have emerged as some of the strongest advocates for Hayward Promise Neighborhood. "They articulate very passionately how HPN has improved the lives of their families and neighbors," said HPN Executive Director Melinda Hall. This kind of community engagement has been instrumental in attracting support from university leaders who see the effort as "changing the face of the university" as well as city officials like the mayor and city manager whose support is critical if HPN is to expand to the entire city of Hayward.

As the federal investment nears its end, HPN is identifying resources from all partners to help broaden the base of support for its work. For example, the university's advancement team is helping to lead a

fund development group made up of representatives from HPN partners. This collaboration is seen as mutually beneficial; it allows HPN to benefit from new relationships and takes advantage of HPN's ability to mobilize community members as spokespersons and advocates. The president of California State University East Bay along with the Principal Investigator and Dean convenes the Hayward Promise Neighborhood Executive Leadership Group that includes the CEO of every funded partner as well as the mayor and city manager. The work of this group has been instrumental in strengthening crucial relationships and building shared accountability and systems of leadership.

HPN is in the process of creating a strategic plan that will outline a number of possible funding scenarios. This plan is intentionally broad to ensure that it is prepared to respond to a range of possibilities and can be both strategic and opportunistic moving forward.



## Q&A with **Melinda Hall**

### **What are you doing to sustain HPN work and results?**

#### **Connecting Program and Service Partners**

As we look to sustain this important work, each partner needs to know what services are being provided across the pipeline. We have developed three networks over the five years of our grant: Early Learning Network, Cradle-to-Career Educational Reform Network, and the Neighborhood Health and Empowerment Network. All partners participate in one or more of the networks that meet once a month. These structures seek to improve communication, ensure accountability, align mutually reinforcing services and activities and keep a sharp focus on who we are serving and why.

#### **Coordinating Fund Development**

HPN has launched a focused and coordinated fund development effort. We are bringing together representatives from each of our partners who do fund development. As a collaborative group we have acknowledged that we are each a little bit more powerful and influential if we act together and leverage each other's work. This group seeks to support individual partners in their fund development efforts with the understanding that as opportunities arise for joint efforts they are brought to the table for the group's consideration.

#### **Developing A Strategic Plan**

Hatchuel Tabernik and Associates wrote the original Hayward Promise Neighborhood planning and implementation grants. Now, with their help, we are developing a 3 to 5 year strategic plan. Over the course of the last year and a half, using the Promise Neighborhoods Institute at PolicyLink's "Developmental Pathway for Achieving Neighborhood Results" as a guide, our HPN



partners have engaged in the strategic planning process launched with a sustainability summit followed by individual work group meetings in the various areas defined in the developmental pathway. Our next step is to present a draft of the plan to our various leadership structures: HPN Community Advisory Board, HPN Executive Leadership Group, HPN Implementation Team, and HPN Networks.

## **What questions should Promise Neighborhoods ask themselves?**

### **Do We Have A Clear Mission & Vision?**

A very clear mission and vision are crucial to this type of work. All partners need to hold it and believe in it because that is what centers the work and keeps everyone focused whenever there is turmoil or upheaval. I remind myself what our mission and vision are and what we're supposed to be doing. Through our strategic planning process we rewrote our mission and vision. Every partner and stakeholder invested in and committed to HPN, said we have to figure out how to scale this community change effort across the City of Hayward. "Whatever it takes, we must figure out how to make it happen."

### **Are Partners on Board?**

Do not assume that everybody has the same commitment to the mission and vision. When you bring on partners, you want to make sure that they clearly understand why you exist and where you are going. As an example, the word "equity" appears in our vision—does everybody have a shared understanding of what "equity" means? And are we all prepared to do whatever it takes to try and achieve equitable outcomes for the community we are serving? People think, "Well, we just have to get down to work, we've just got to get these tasks done," which is important, but when the collaboration is new and you are just bringing everybody together, the process piece is also very important. Have you all communicated clearly and face to face? Are you all committed? Do you all truly believe that you can do this work? Be clear about why partners are coming to the table.

### **Can We Communicate Our Impact?**

People in the community see that the work we are doing in a variety of areas is having an impact. Communication and public relations work has been critical to spreading the messages about the work of HPN. Preparing all partners to share and explain their data takes time. We are becoming more experienced in how to clearly articulate what the data says and how we are going to improve. Now we can begin to leverage the work of HPN. People are taking notice of it and are interested in funding it.



## What have you learned about sustainability?

### Start as Soon As You Can

Part of sustainability is developing trust among all the partners and not every Promise Neighborhood starts out that way. We learned how to trust one another by working together. If you have not all worked together before, you may not be in a place where you can discuss some of the harder issues that come up in a sustainability conversation. Strong and trusting relationships developed over time are critical in the strategic planning process. In the beginning, we did not know each partner's work deeply. If you sense the trust is not there and you cannot have hard conversations right away, then move slowly, take baby steps. Maybe work with one or two partners. Do some behind-the-scenes work to bring people on board. But start as soon as you can.

### Encourage Honest Dialogue

Engage with people and be open to hearing some things you may not want to hear. We can all be protective of our pieces of work, and think, "We just cannot let that go." We have learned to lower our individual defenses and be prepared to hear what others are saying. If your efforts are going to be sustainable, people need to have input. Take a few risks and trust one another. Create a safe place to say what needs to be said.

### Invest in Infrastructure

A complex collaborative effort like Promise Neighborhoods cannot be sustained without a solid infrastructure. High quality collective impact work – which includes ensuring mutual partner accountability, sharing and analyzing data, aligning activities and services and communicating to and through all levels of the collaborative – requires a dedicated staff that can focus on implementation. In order to effectively coordinate, evaluate, and scale programs and services there need to be corresponding investments in people, procedures, and policies.

### Allow the Work to Evolve

I used to think of sustainability as a linear process with lots of charts and diagrams. It is not linear at all. You need to look at it from many different angles and stretch and expand your thinking. In the case of HPN if we are going to stay true to our new mission and vision to scale up to the whole city of Hayward, we have to be open to what the whole city of Hayward looks like and who the whole city of Hayward is. We may need to do some things differently and that requires the input, engagement, and commitment of all partners and the community.

A blue-tinted photograph of two young women in a garden. The woman in the foreground has long braids and is wearing a t-shirt with a logo that includes 'CO GARDEN' and 'ipc'. The woman in the background is holding a plant stem. The background shows a field and some buildings.

“Sustaining the practices that we’ve put in place among ourselves and our partners is a core part of sustainability for us. We talk about sustainability in terms of resources and practices now.”

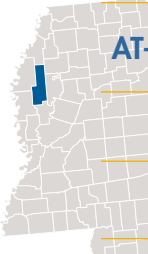



*Josh Davis, Vice President, External Affairs  
Delta Health Alliance*

INDIANOLA PROMISE COMMUNITY

*Sustainability Planning Profile*

# Indianola Promise Community

Indianola, Mississippi

 <b>AT-A-GLANCE</b>			
	# of Children Living in Footprint	# of Schools Served	# of Partner Agencies
	Demographics		
79.4% African-American	3,013	4	22
<b>LEAD AGENCY: DELTA HEALTH ALLIANCE</b>			

Indianola Promise Community (IPC) is approaching sustainability by looking for resources that will allow the nonprofit lead agency, Delta Health Alliance, to function as a backbone organization, aligning partners around shared goals, and advancing work on behalf of children and families across the Delta. This approach represents an intentional shift away from previous models that focused on raising funds to support program and service delivery.

IPC Project Director Josh Davis credits both the Skills to Accelerate Results Leadership Development Program and follow-up support from the Annie E. Casey Foundation focused on scope, scale, and sustainability with helping to establish a cohesive, resilient, and results-focused team. There is now a strong commitment to working collaboratively with partners and using data to hold everyone accountable for high-quality programs and services. IPC leaders recognize that their ability to demonstrate results is key to attracting funding partners. They also believe that, if they want to institutionalize this approach, developing human capital is as important as securing financial resources.

While this way of thinking about sustainability may be new, the lead agency for IPC has a long history in the Delta. As a result, IPC is already well connected to state and philanthropic entities that typically fund work in this region. Given IPC's rural setting, and the relatively short list of resource brokers, these relationships, managed by CEO Karen Matthews, are very important. Josh and Karen work closely together, drawing on the organization's connections and using insights from implementation to inform the development of new revenue streams.



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## Q&A with Josh Davis

### What does it take to sustain new practices?

#### Organizational Transformation

Be prepared for your organization to be challenged about how it views sustainability and what your intentions are for sustaining Promise Neighborhoods work. For example, nonprofits are often driven by the need to sustain jobs and the fact that they need revenue to exist as an entity. However, if your interest is in sustaining outcomes and success, there is going to be a point where you have to share a lot more with your partners. You're going to have to share resources. You have to share donors. And you're probably going to run into a rub between executive or board leaders and those that have invested time and effort in figuring out how to arrive at results through a cross-sector collaboration. For us, it's a new way of doing business that rubs against the traditional project-based approach. Using Promise Neighborhoods to achieve population-level results is a vastly different thing.

#### Staff Leadership Development

One of our early challenges was not knowing how to do this work and having few other communities that we could look to as models. We've benefited from so many fantastic people in the Promise Neighborhoods world who helped us get up to speed and move in this new direction. Now there's a core group of us who have been coached and guided; we understand what it took to get here and how to take this work back to our community. Well, what happens over the next couple years if two of those five people leave? Those critical investments in knowledge and skills are going to be really hard to replace. Succession planning and building the capacity of front-line program staff to align partner contributions and hold that environment together is a priority for us. The resources are absolutely necessary but the more I do this, especially in Indianola, my focus is leaning toward having the right mix of people with the capacity to get the job done—attracting them, retaining them, and supporting their acquisition of knowledge about how to lead this work at the community level.

#### Capacity-Building with Partners

In some cases, we have partners who have stayed the course with us and can disagree without leaving the table. Those are the right people. How do you identify that and set that up before you put money into a community or behind a process? I don't know. I think that's a much longer conversation. But one thing I do know is that having the right partners is a lot more important than having thirty million dollars. While we worked with community partners in other parts of our work, like education or health, we've never worked so intently to build the capacity of partners. We supported them in the past, but now we are more hands-on about the transfer of knowledge to help accelerate their ability to improve program performance.

## What revenue streams are most promising?

### Partner Resources

We're a behemoth of a regional nonprofit so when we work with community partners they often look to us to carry the boat but, in many instances, we don't have to go out and find another million dollars for them to do something differently. What we need them to do is to be more selective with their existing resources and, in some cases, willing to explore where we might have a common interest in acquiring other funding to expand or improve what they're doing. There has been a shift among our partners as they realize that they have resources that they can either reallocate or use in a more effective way to help reach our population-level goals.

### Philanthropic Investments

We just received a grant from the Walton Family Foundation to provide coaching and training to one of their after-school grantees in Coahoma County. They are piloting a project where we will help this grantee improve their ability to collect data in a more consistent manner, utilize it, and figure out the shared performance measures that they should be creating with other partners. We also met with another foundation that focuses on early education. While spending time with us, they saw how we maximized impact by aligning partners' efforts. After eight years of creating a foundation for a pipeline—and working with child care providers, parents, policymakers, community members, school district leaders, and Head Start programs—we're seeing that there is efficacy in those efforts to help everybody understand what their contributions are and establishing processes for shared accountability. There is a real opportunity to take what we've learned about how to do this work and support other communities that already have a body of work but are operating in silos. I'm really excited about being able to assist in this work across the region.


### State Funding

We're relying on the relationships that we have with our Governor's office and state legislature to think about investments in system alignments and investments. So whatever it's called—whether it's Promise Neighborhoods or not—we're thinking about how to share the results that we're seeing in Indianola and make proposals back to our state legislature and our Governor's office about budgetary line items or bills or contracts to support the work. The state folks need to hear our story and understand how it's applicable to their own interests. We can help align the efforts and systems and work that they're already funding.

## Federal Opportunities

It's time for us to diversify and leverage what the federal government has helped us do and advance work in our own backyard. For instance, we have an Early Head Start child care partnership grant through HHS. With this grant, we're aiming to pick up a huge piece of the work that we were doing in Promise Neighborhoods with 0 to 3-year-olds—not just to continue that work but to build on what we were able to accomplish in terms of improving the physical infrastructure, teaching capacity, and business structures of some of our child care partners. We'll be able to find other federal opportunities that support the work we started.





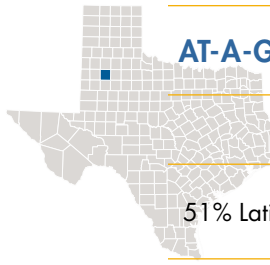



“Our hypothesis is that nobody is going to commit funds unless they have a really precise understanding of what’s going to be done.”

*Scott Ridley, Dean*  
*College of Education, Texas Tech University*  
EAST LUBBOCK PROMISE NEIGHBORHOOD

*Sustainability Planning Profile*

# East Lubbock Promise Neighborhood

**Lubbock, Texas**

	AT-A-GLANCE			
	Demographics	# of Children Living in Footprint	# of Schools Served	# of Partner Agencies
	51% Latino; 29% African-American	9,321	6	17
LEAD AGENCY: TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY				

**E**ast Lubbock Promise Neighborhood (ELPN) leaders believe that they have a responsibility to institutionalize work that is having a positive impact—but acknowledge that it’s not always easy. With this goal in mind, Dean Scott Ridley and Operations Coordinator Sherida Hibbard have instituted a formal process to help ELPN service managers draft customized sustainability plans, develop presentations for potential funders, and follow up with targeted requests for funding. .

## Drafting Sustainability Plans

As a first step, ELPN leaders reached out to service managers—primarily the deans and other leaders of colleges at the lead agency, Texas Tech University—to communicate their expectation that each service manager would develop and submit a sustainability plan. They explicitly tied this request to current funding, letting service managers know that ELPN would begin redirecting resources to areas with a firm, stand-alone plan for continuing services beyond the federal grant. Service managers presented their draft sustainability plans to ELPN leaders, received feedback, and updated their plans. Once all revisions were complete, ELPN asked senior leaders for each service area to sign off on the final plan as a way to ensure that institutional leaders were both knowledgeable about and in support of the sustainability plan.

The sustainability plans point to a common strategy; in many cases service managers hope to anchor Promise Neighborhoods work in local institutions and systems such as Texas Tech and Lubbock Independent School District (ISD). With this in mind, Scott has made sure that university and school district leaders are part of early conversations about sustainability: “I’m preparing people. I’m talking to the provost. I’m talking to the president. I’m talking to Juan Munoz, who leads the Office of Diversity. I’m prepping them all so they know what’s coming up and I’ve done the same thing in Lubbock ISD.” In the process of developing sustainability plans, service managers have also discovered other potential funding sources such as state resources that could be used to support after-school activities. Based on



this research, they may go after funding on their own or partner with Lubbock ISD to submit funding requests. Scott emphasized that ELPN leaders are actively encouraging service managers to do this kind of independent resource development: “If, separate from us, they want to set up their own “ask” or write a grant, we’re telling them that they don’t need to ask us—they can go do that.”

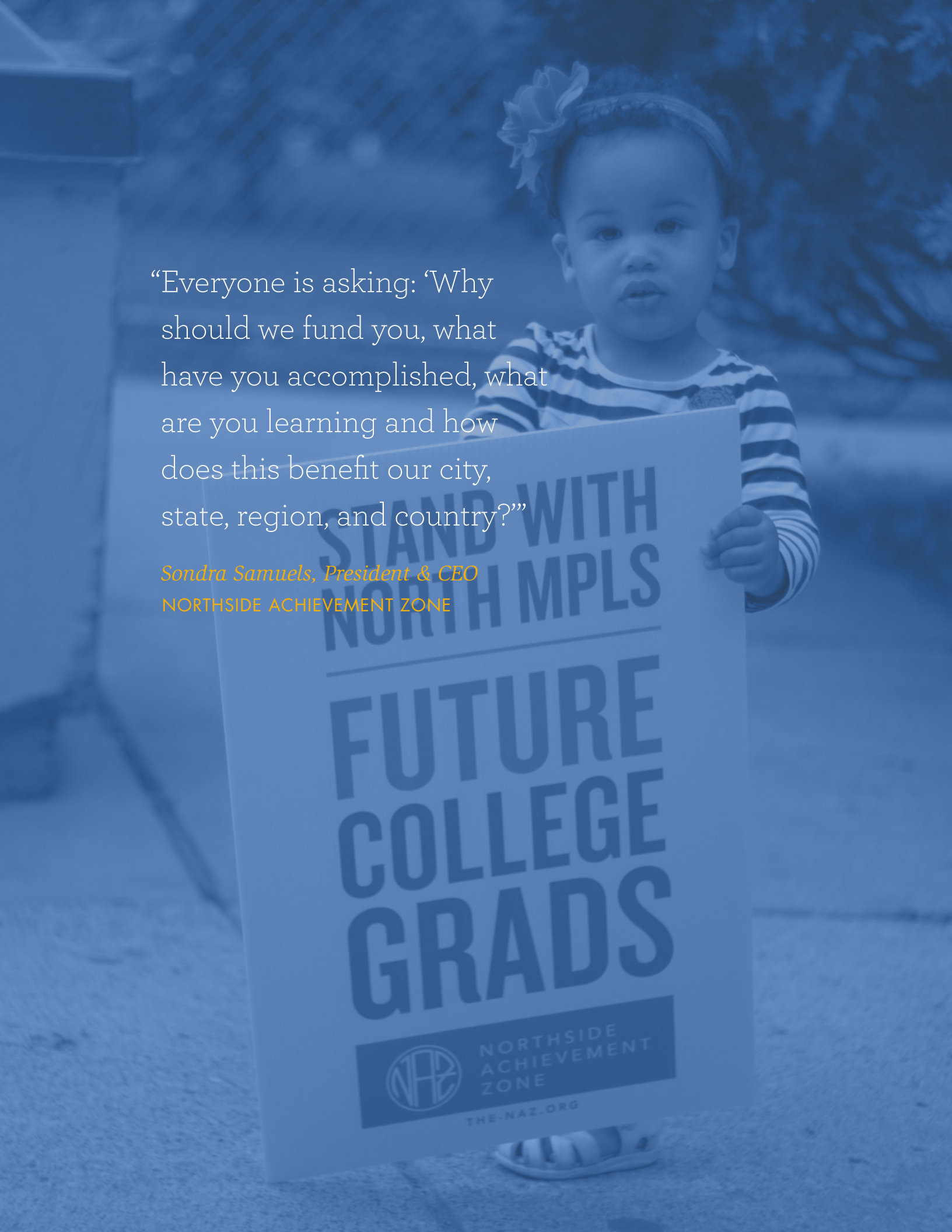
## Refining the Ask

As a next step, ELPN brought service managers back together to prepare for “ask presentations” where they will formally ask for resources to sustain the service that they have been providing. ELPN provided a PowerPoint template to help service managers outline their rationale for ongoing work, identify who they planned to approach, and operationalize what sustainability would look like. According to Scott: “We lay all this out, we ask them a bunch of hard questions. I would say that probably 85-90 percent of the people we’ve been talking to have really been clear. They can answer the questions easily.”

In addition to receiving feedback from ELPN leaders, service managers also use monthly meetings hosted by ELPN to ask each other questions about their sustainability plans. ELPN leaders will attend all of the ask presentations in the spring of 2017 and are helping service managers to schedule these meetings. In the meantime, service managers have been asked to do a test run of their presentations in December 2016. ELPN leaders will continue playing the role of “critical friend” by offering input to help strengthen each presentation.

## Redirecting Resources

ELPN leaders are simultaneously also making tough decisions about what to eliminate: “Since the beginning of this year, we have been looking at the different services. And we’ve been asking ourselves: ‘Do all of these really need to go all five years or six years?’ And for some of them, either because they’re not performing or because they have funds coming from other sources, can we cut their funding?” They are also considering which core costs—such as office space or resources for data collection and analysis—should be part of the infrastructure for ongoing work and how these expenses will be covered. ELPN’s goal is to continue full funding through May 2017, midway through the final year of the federal grant. At that point, it will make significant cuts to current budgets, anticipating that the “ask presentations” will yield new funding as early as the fall of 2017. Savings from these cuts will help sustain operations for at least one additional year beyond the five years of federal funding.

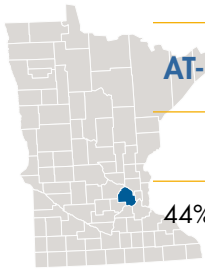
A young girl with a flower in her hair, wearing a striped shirt, holds a large white sign. The sign has the text 'STAND WITH NORTH MPLS' at the top, followed by 'FUTURE COLLEGE GRADS' in large bold letters. At the bottom is the Northside Achievement Zone logo and website. The background is a blue-tinted outdoor scene with trees and a fence.




“Everyone is asking: ‘Why should we fund you, what have you accomplished, what are you learning and how does this benefit our city, state, region, and country?’”

*Sondra Samuels, President & CEO*  
NORTHSIDE ACHIEVEMENT ZONE

*Sustainability Planning Profile*

# Northside Achievement Zone

**Minneapolis, Minnesota****AT-A-GLANCE**

			
Demographics	# of Children Living in Footprint	# of Schools Served	# of Partner Agencies
44% African-American; 27% White; 14% Asian; 7% Latino	4,125	10	30+

**N**orthside Achievement Zone (NAZ) President and CEO Sondra Samuels immediately recognized their federal Promise Neighborhoods award as both an opportunity and a challenge. “Five years will come and go,” she thought “How are we going to sustain this?” While she understood the need to focus on sustainability right away, an early conversation pushed Sondra to think beyond fundraising: “Someone from Harlem Children’s Zone said to me, ‘It’s not just about resources, it’s about your culture which is actually the context for achieving your results.’ Resources are an outgrowth of sustaining results and sustaining culture.”

Heeding this advice, NAZ assembled a task force of local stakeholders—including nonprofit, philanthropic, state and county government, and board leaders who spent over a year getting up to speed on the NAZ model and cost structure and thinking through what it would take to sustain it. At the task force’s recommendation, NAZ hired Wilder Research to conduct a return on investment (ROI) study; this study estimated that every dollar invested in NAZ would provide a six dollar return by increasing lifetime earnings and contributing to savings in the justice, education, and health care systems as well as in public assistance. The task force also suggested that NAZ engage a consulting firm to develop a business plan with five- to ten-year cost and revenue projections.

NAZ’s dual focus on children and their families, plus the inherent complexity of working with multiple partners, pushed everyone involved to think in new, more expansive, ways. For example, in addition to looking at costs per child, the ROI study had to factor in parent and family supports. Similarly, discussions about projected costs and revenue had to take multiple organizational budgets into account. As Sondra emphasized: “You’ll have to explain the nuances of a collaborative strategy to yourselves, your partners, your board, and your consultants. At no time did we hire a consultant and think they would just come in and do the work—educating them was a significant body of work.”

The completed ROI study and business plan helped to solidify the NAZ model and formed the basis for a briefing with funders. “Our outcomes were driving that presentation,” Sondra recalled, “along with information about what we were learning, how we had changed, and places where we needed

to make a shift. That was valuable for our funders who are trying to figure out how to fund better but also for our partners who were trying to figure out how to do better in terms of their programs and services.” NAZ made sure that heads of foundations and corporate executives were included in this briefing, drawing on relationships and connections across its network of partners to get “the right people” to the table and, in some cases, extending invitations to funders through other funders. During the briefing, and in other meetings, NAZ consistently reinforced funders’ role as co-owners of the work. According to Sondra, “We were constantly stopping meetings and saying, ‘You are NAZ.’”

In 2011, NAZ launched “Friends of the Future,” as its large donor strategy; supporters contribute a minimum of \$1K a year and have collectively donated over \$850K to date. Five years later, NAZ introduced a new program encouraging individuals to become “NAZ Allies” by signing up as monthly donors. Its most recent fundraising effort is a three-year campaign to raise \$25M dollars. Behind the scenes, NAZ has built the infrastructure for increasingly ambitious and sophisticated fundraising strategies by “beefing up” its own fundraising department and using consultants to support specific pieces of work like shaping the investment campaign.

NAZ’s clarity about its model and ability to demonstrate results played a key role in attracting individual donors as well as larger public, corporate, and philanthropic investments. Sondra also underscored the importance of building and maintaining relationships: “As you’re developing your work and thinking about sustainability, your relationships become paramount. And that should be the thing you were thinking about five years ago. We’ve had significant growth and you can’t do that without relationships on the front end.”



## *Reflections from* **Sondra Samuels**

### **On Strategic Giving**

We’ve been asking folks to do strategic giving, not just what they typically do. That means working with senior leaders who can influence or make those decisions. We target CEOs and trustees while keeping respectful and collaborative relationships with our program managers. For example, a program manager at one corporation suggested I meet with a trustee to talk about increasing their investment and they went from \$65K to \$100K. Now we’re asking them to invest at the \$500K level. I went into that meeting with the blessing and direction of the program manager, and when she comes forward with the request, she’ll have the trustee’s support. Also, General Mills and Target had each been funding us at about \$150K but after the funder briefing, where we shared the ROI study, business plan, and results, both corporations committed to funding at \$1M a year each for three years. They wanted to be early adopters of a model for addressing egregious opportunity gaps around income, housing, education, and health.

## On NAZ's Investment Campaign

We're in the early stages of a three-year \$25M dollar investment campaign for the corporate and philanthropic sectors. We secured the first \$7M coming out of our first funder briefing, where we mentioned that the campaign was coming. Since then, we've had another briefing with funders where we solidified the campaign. The CEOs of Target and General Mills serve as vice chairs and there's a leading philanthropist in the community whose husband is a CEO—she's also sharing our campaign. The business and foundation communities know that it's happening and we're getting meetings with other CEOs. It's not a capital campaign. We're talking about getting to a "new normal" around our funding structure and achieving results that are real bright spots for the state. You invest in the state by investing in us.

## On State-Level Influence

With the public sector, our strategy is to partner with networks in Greater Minneapolis that are also doing data-driven cradle-to-career work—because the state won't keep funding one neighborhood to do one thing over and over again in one small locale. We have been looking at our direct and collaborative influence through a whole Northside strategy with a focus on changing systems. First, state-level advocacy through the Education Partnerships Coalition led to an appropriation of \$1M. Then, as our strategy matured—to include work with a lobbyist, site visits with legislators, and partnerships with STRIVE efforts in new neighborhoods—we got into the base budget. We're trying to prove in bipartisan fashion that a place-based collective impact strategy is the way to end poverty in our state.

# Resource List

This section contains brief descriptions of selected sustainability tools and resources that Promise Neighborhoods and other cradle-to-career initiatives might find helpful. Some of the tools and resources were developed specifically for or by Promise Neighborhoods, while others were developed to support nonprofit sustainability more generally. Each resource listed includes a web link to access the resource as well as a brief note describing either how the tool has been used or could be applied within the context of Promise Neighborhoods and similar initiatives.

## A Developmental Pathway for Promise Neighborhoods

This tool, developed by the Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP) in partnership with the U.S. Department of Education and the Promise Neighborhoods Institute at PolicyLink (PNI), is intended to highlight key milestones in the development of the infrastructure needed for a Promise Neighborhood and, most importantly, the achievement of better results for children and families. These milestones are organized into seven “conditions” that are necessary for the achievement of results, which span five “stages” of the development of a Promise Neighborhood. The seven conditions are: Data Use, Partnership, Engagement, Financing, Policy & Systems, Communications, and Organization and Leadership Capacity. Each condition shows the progression of milestones across the following stages of Promise Neighborhoods work: Planning, Early Implementation, Full Implementation, Reaching Scale, and Sustaining Results

## East Lubbock Promise Neighborhood PowerPoint Template

As described earlier in this document, as part of its sustainability planning efforts East Lubbock Promise Neighborhood (ELPN) requested that service managers—largely deans and other leaders of colleges at the lead agency, Texas Tech University—prepare and deliver “Ask Presentations” to make the case for continued investment in their segment of the cradle-to-career pipeline. To assist service managers in preparing for those presentations, ELPN developed a PowerPoint slide deck template that included key questions to be addressed related to topics such as quantitative and qualitative data about successes and the intended scope of services to be offered after the initial federal grant comes to a close.





## Creating Local Dedicated Funding Streams for Kids: A Guide to Planning a Local Initiative to Fund Services for Children, Youth and their Families

A mix of public and private grants can help to sustain cradle-to-career work beyond an initial investment, but working to create a dedicated local funding stream is one way to develop a more stable source of revenues. In this guide, Margaret Brodtkin, Founder and Director of Funding the Next Generation, provides guidance to communities seeking to enact local measures that create sustainable funding for a range of services, such as early childhood education, youth development, and family support. Moving from assessing your local landscape to building and making a case and crafting a measure, this guide can help communities to think about potential funding sources, such as new taxes or fees or set-asides of existing local revenue, and the process for creating them.

## StriveTogether Theory of Action: Creating Cradle to Career Proof Points

This tool from StriveTogether was developed to support the work of its Cradle to Career Network of communities. While approaches vary between partnerships, all of these communities are building and growing collective impact partnerships. The Theory of Action is intended to help member communities ensure that the StriveTogether approach remains rigorous. By laying out a continuum of quality benchmarks for building and sustaining civic infrastructure that span four fundamental “Gateways”—Shared Community Vision, Evidence Based Decision Making, Collaborative Action, and Investment and Sustainability—the passage through which corresponds with an increased likelihood of sustained impact and improvement over time.