

**Cooperative Agreement #TR-83276501-0**

**Brownfield's Training, Research, and Technical Assistance Grants and Cooperative  
Agreements Program (BFRES-04-02)**

**Final Report**

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## Executive Summary

This report provides a final summary and evaluation of the activities conducted, outcomes achieved, and lessons learned under the EPA Research Training and Technical Assistance Grants and Cooperative Agreements Program (BFRES-04-02), "Technical assistance innovations to increase the capacity of local community-based organizations to actively participate in addressing environmental and economic aspects of brownfields redevelopment." Awarded to the National Center for Neighborhood and Brownfields Redevelopment (the "Center") in July of 2005, the grant provided funds for the development and implementation of a pilot program combining targeted training activities and individualized technical assistance to improve the capacity of community development corporations (CDCs) to be meaningful participants in the redevelopment of brownfields in their service areas.

In our initial work, we conducted a national assessment of needs and preferences for capacity-building technical assistance. In response, we developed a highly adaptable, yet replicable training program, and delivered customized on-site assistance sessions to four initial pilot CDCs. Three of the four pilot organizations, located in distressed neighborhoods within Philadelphia, PA and Paterson, NJ, completed the program. Those three CDCs provided a formal inventory of their own capacity before and after the program and participated in interviews following the completion of the program. All three organizations showed meaningful improvement in both substantive and organizational capacity for participating in brownfields redevelopment. In addition, each of the three organizations requested the Center's assistance to continue to grow capacity and maximize effectiveness in addressing brownfields issues. Despite organizational challenges like staff changes, the program significantly improved the skills and sophistication with which these organizations handled the issue of remediation in their future planning and redevelopment efforts.

In the final phase, along with supplemental guidance for the pilot organizations, we conducted a one-day conference for over 100 members of the planning and development community from New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania. We created a promotional brochure and bound training manual that was given to conference attendees and is also available on the Center website. We also added two new CDCs, one in Jersey City, NJ and another in Philadelphia, who partially participated in the program. We also pursued strategies for continuation and expansion of the program to reach more communities in the region and nationally. The Center has been proactive in making contact with other potential brownfields training stakeholders and creating an active presence for the technical assistance program in the planning and community development fields.

The organizations currently in discussion or participation with the Center include:

- **The New Jersey Brownfields Task Force**
- **The New Jersey Redevelopment Agency**
- **The New York City Mayor's Office of Environmental Coordination**
- **The Camden Empowerment Zone**
- **New Jersey County Initiative**

- **Michigan State University (MSU) Land Policy Institute**
- **City of Chicago**
- **Philadelphia Association of CDCs (PACDC)**
- **City of Philadelphia**
- **SUNY Buffalo, Center for Urban Studies**

In summary, the project enhanced the Center's understanding about the needs of CDCs and the obstacles that are encountered in capacity-building for brownfields redevelopment. These lessons and the recommendations for moving forward continue to inform the Center's activities as it refines and expands the program.

### **Lessons Learned Related to Capacity-Building**

1. Measuring capacity-building needs to be multi-dimensional.
2. CDCs' varied organizational structures and missions warrant a customized approach
3. CDCs have difficulty prioritizing brownfields.
4. Local political networking is a key component of CDC capacity-building.
5. A relatively small investment can achieve significant benefits.
6. Organizational stability is an important factor that can influence effectiveness.

### **Recommendations for Successful Capacity-Building Programs**

1. Involve multiple people to increase robustness and sustainability.
2. Demonstrate the intersection of brownfields redevelopment with CDC mission Manage expectations and commitments.
3. Plan to be flexible.
4. Foster inter-organizational relationships.
5. Assistance must be action-oriented by identifying specific projects.

## ***INTRODUCTION***

This report provides a final summary and evaluation of the activities conducted, outcomes achieved, and lessons learned under the EPA Research Training and Technical Assistance Grants and Cooperative Agreements Program (BFRES-04-02), "Technical assistance innovations to increase the capacity of local community-based organizations to actively participate in addressing environmental and economic aspects of brownfields redevelopment." Awarded to the National Center for Neighborhood and Brownfields Redevelopment (the "Center") in July of 2005, the grant provided funds for the development and implementation of a pilot program combining targeted training activities and individualized technical assistance to improve the capacity of community development corporations (CDCs) to be meaningful participants in the redevelopment of brownfields in their service areas.

In our initial work, we conducted a national assessment of needs for technical assistance and responded with a highly adaptable, yet replicable training program, and delivery of customized assistance sessions to four initial pilot sites. Three of the four organizations completed the program. Those three CDCs provided a formal inventory of their own capacity both before and after the program and participated in interviews following the completion of the program. All three organizations showed meaningful improvement in both substantive and organizational capacity for participating in brownfields redevelopment. In addition, each of the three organizations requested the Center's assistance to continue to grow capacity and maximize effectiveness in addressing brownfields issue. Center staff developed follow-up plans to address these goals. In the final phase, along with supplemental guidance for the pilot organizations, we conducted a major conference and added two new CDCs who partially participated in the program. We also pursued strategies for continuation and expansion of the program to reach more communities in the region and nationally. Despite organizational challenges like staff changes, the programs significantly improved the skills and sophistication with which these organizations handled the issue of remediation in their future planning and redevelopment efforts.

There are many practical, logical and political reasons for encouraging more involvement of CDCs, particularly in addressing smaller contaminated sites found scattered throughout distressed neighborhoods. CDCs are often located in urban residential areas littered with small brownfields sites that collectively blight their neighborhoods. As organizations, CDCs know the needs and concerns of their communities. They work closely with the community opinion leaders and know the socio-economic dynamics that need to be considered in developing an agenda for brownfields redevelopment and for supporting changes that are positive for the community. Without the involvement of a community-based organization like a CDC, brownfields redevelopment projects may not address local needs and may have difficulty gaining acceptance. CDCs also bring unique resources to redevelopment projects as they may be eligible for funds that are available only to nonprofits. Whether as liaisons, advocates, or redevelopment partners, CDCs bring the base of local knowledge critical to successful brownfields reuse.

CDCs are usually very mission-focused and short on resources, and therefore seldom can take advantage of training opportunities to improve their skills as effective leaders or

participants. This results in a lack of capacity to address complex issues like brownfields. This results in an insufficient understanding of key regulatory and legal issues, the reuse implications of different types of contamination, and the available mechanisms for remediation and real estate financing. Consequently, they may lack knowledge of and/or access to the key players, both public and private.

To be effective, a CDC needs both specific capacity-- the substantive capacity to understand and address the issues specific to brownfields development-- and general capacity-- the organizational capacity to access available funding streams, manage different constituencies, balance competing interests, advocate effectively for community goals, and negotiate the political process. Scholars in the field of community development report that CDCs can successfully expand their capacity by receiving technical assistance and support from support organizations and intermediaries (Stone, 1996, Glickman and Servon, 1999, 2003). Intermediary organizations seek to support and guide CDC activities to meet community development goals. As a University-based Center, we set out to perform support functions similar to an intermediary, focused on brownfields and neighborhood redevelopment, an area not covered by traditional programs.

The three central goals for the project were:

Goal 1: To develop an innovative brownfields technical assistance and training program for community organizations that are seeking to actively participate in the redevelopment of brownfield properties in their low-income/socioeconomically disadvantaged neighborhoods.

Goal 2: To implement a technical assistance program, resulting in an increased number of brownfields sites identified, assessed and redeveloped.

Goal 3: To share the program with other stakeholders to promote widespread, national replicability.

Each of these goals was met. As a result, many of the positive outcomes laid out in the grant application process were also realized.

## ***GOAL I: DEVELOPMENT OF INNOVATIVE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM***

### **Needs Assessment**

The first step in developing the technical assistance program was conducting a national needs assessment that would formally investigate the training and support needs of CDCs. The Center set out to find out what specific and general skills were lacking in the CDC community and the preferred method of delivering those skills to CDCs. The needs assessment methodology consisted of surveys and interviews with over forty CDCs, and focus group meetings with expert advisors

The interview protocol and the survey questions were similar but not identical. The interview was semi-structured and included many open-ended questions, whereas the survey

instrument was structured and used mostly closed-ended questions. Both were designed to collect information about organizational capacity and about training needs and preferences for involvement in brownfields redevelopment. A matrix of future training needs included ten brownfields-related topics and ten more general organizational topics, with respondents indicating if they “definitely would not,” “probably would not,” “probably would” or “definitely would” need that training within the next three years. The survey also contained a matrix for preferences in the delivery of training or assistance programs.

The next step was the identification of organizations with which to conduct the needs assessments surveys and interviews. We sought a sample of groups that had some experience with brownfields, so they could speak from their experience and knowledge about the topic with an understanding of what it takes to be involved with brownfields. Through background knowledge of Center staff, consultation with Advisory Committee members (see list below) and internet searching, over 40 organizations were identified. Although it was a national sample, those interviewed were concentrated in the Northeast. Of the over 40 organizations that were identified, 23 took part in in-depth telephone interviews, while the rest of the organizations completed the survey.

There was great diversity among the group. Most of the organizations were officially CDCs, though some were other forms of community-based organizations. Many of them were established in the 1970’s or 80’s, but some as recently as 1999. Budgets ranged from \$9,000 to \$25 million annually, with most under a million dollars a year and no more than 5% of any organizations’ budget spent on training. All had brownfields located in their service area and all recognized brownfields as part of their overall mission, but their involvement varied widely--some were just aware of the presence of brownfields in their neighborhoods while others had owned and/or developed them. Regardless of degree of involvement, brownfields redevelopment was rarely integrated into the organization’s formal mission statement.

Many of the organizations articulated a desire or need to become more involved in brownfields redevelopment activities, but stated that they lacked the specific brownfields skills as well as the more general capacity to do so. Two-thirds of the organizations had some past training in the area of brownfields, and most had received some sort of general technical assistance or training in the past.

The most common obstacles to obtaining brownfields training were:

- Lack of awareness of opportunities
- Cost
- Inconvenience
- Lack of applicability of training to CDC/CBO needs
- Overall culture of operating on a "need to know" basis

The organizations were asked what they anticipated as their training needs in the 20 topics areas over the next 3 years. As shown in Table 1 below, the greatest demand with respect specifically to brownfields was for technical topics, including regulatory/legal issues, environmental science, economic development and remediation science. With respect to

organizational capacity, grant writing, leadership development, and information technology were ranked highest.

**Table 1**  
**Brownfields-Related Training Needs for CDCs**  
(n = 18)

<b>Training Area</b>	<b>Probably or Definitely Would Need within Next 3 Years</b>
Regulatory and/or Legal Issues	77.8
Environmental Science	66.7
Local Economic Development	66.6
Remediation Science	64.7
Site Assessment	61.1
Neighborhood Planning/Redevelopment	61.1
Community Involvement	61.1
Real Estate Development and Finance	61.1
Public Health Analysis	55.6
Land Use Analysis – GIS	55.5

Table Source: *CDC/CBO Training and Technical Assistance Needs for Building Capacity for Involvement in Brownfields Redevelopments*, National Center for Neighborhood and Brownfields Redevelopment, March 2006

Overall, CDCs were very concerned that the training be tailored to their specific organizational needs, emphasizing the differences between CDC concerns and those of private for-profit developers. CDCs desired training that would enable them to participate in brownfields redevelopment in a way that would not just make it possible and profitable, but would also create projects that are consistent with the CDCs’ overall missions. The major concern expressed by most organizations interviewed was having an influence over the new end use. This suggested that training in planning, land-use, and relationship/coalition building could be especially useful to help the CDCs advocate for end uses that benefit their constituencies.

**Advisory Committee**

In addition to the Center's internal expertise, the project drew on the expertise of a variety of outside practitioners and scholars who were asked to serve on a project advisory committee. The purpose of the committee was to review findings and progress, obtain feedback, and elicit expert opinions on understanding needs and on future directions for the project. Committee members met formally on two occasions during the grant period, and were consulted periodically

via phone or e-mail throughout the project. Four of the committee members attended and all played an active role in the April 4, 2008 workshop that featured the work of this project. (See more below)

The committee consisted of the following members:

**Lavea Brachman, JD, MCP**  
Co-Director, Greater Ohio  
Non-resident Fellow, The Brookings  
Institution

**Valorie Caffee**  
Director of Organizing  
Work Environment Council

**Chris DeSousa, Ph.D.**  
Assistant Professor,  
Department of Geography and Urban  
Studies Program  
University of Wisconsin – Madison

**Fred Ellerbusch, PhD, PE, DEE**  
Director, Manufacturing Services  
Rhodia Inc.

**Norman Glickman, Ph.D.**  
Professor, Center for Urban Policy Research  
Rutgers University

**Michael Hedden, CRE, MAI**  
Director, Real Estate Valuation  
CBIZ Valuation Group

**Frances Hoffman, Ph.D.**  
Director of Development  
Somerset Redevelopment LLC

**Rob Lane, RA**  
Director, Regional Design Programs  
Regional Plan Association

**Paul Larrousse**  
Director, National Transit Institute  
Rutgers University

**Alan Mallach, FAICP**  
Research Director  
National Housing Institute

**Patrick Morrissy**  
Executive Director  
HANDS, Inc.

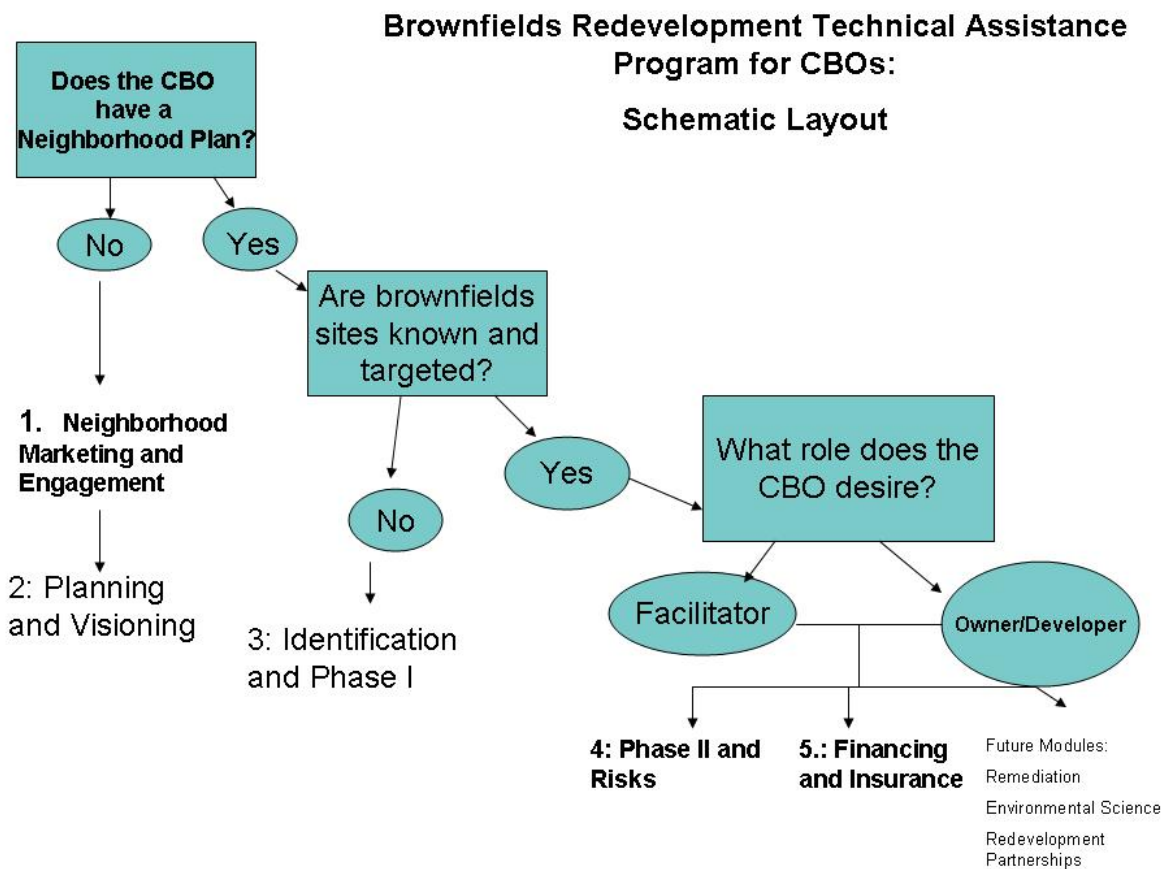
### **Pilot Program Development**

The needs assessment found that the most desirable type of technical assistance program for CDCs was one that would be highly customizable and sufficiently flexible to address content areas identified by participants. In addition, constraints on CDC time and resources meant that it was important for the program to reinforce each lesson through practical application of the concepts taught, so that the organizations were prepared to put their new skills into practice in relatively quickly after completing the training. Thus, the program needed these five important features:

1. **Example-oriented** - uses the neighborhood/site to teach
2. **Customizable** - exact session content will be participant-led (flexible)
3. **Goal-oriented** - objectives clearly stated at the beginning of each session
4. **Interactive** – hands-on exercises, tools and discussions
5. **Action-oriented** - parties leave with “next steps” to take before the following session

This differs from traditional “training” programs that tend to focus on delivery of general technical information in a less interactive, larger group setting.

The Center staff developed five topical modules for the pilot test. These modules were not intended to be exhaustive, but represented what the Center staff and the advisory committee saw as the essential building blocks of a successful brownfields redevelopment program. The order of the module presentation is flexible, but they are presented in this schematic diagram in a sequential order.



The first two modules are broad and relate to capacity-building for neighborhood planning and revitalization. They are important for several reasons. First, they set the context for brownfields redevelopment by reinforcing the relationship between it and the CDCs broader mission and activities. If redevelopment is to be successful, it must be done in a way that is consistent with the CDC's larger goals for neighborhood planning. Even for CDCs which have significant experience with neighborhood visioning and planning, applying these techniques to brownfields is different due to the unusual complexity of the subject matter. Second, the first two modules provide an opportunity for the CDC to develop a relationship with the assistance providers, and for the trainers to gain insight into the CDCs existing capacity, goals and operations. Though a formal baseline capacity inventory is conducted, these early sessions are an important source of additional information for the training organization.

The content of the training modules is as follows:

*Module 1: Neighborhood Marketing, Improvement and Participation through Brownfields Redevelopment*

This module focuses on neighborhood identity and marketing as well as community assessment and participation. It introduces the idea of neighborhood “branding,” or developing a cohesive identity for the neighborhood based on already existing strengths and associations, and also discusses specifically the intersection of neighborhood branding with the objectives of CBOs. It includes techniques for neighborhood assessment and exercises to learn strategies for including the public in decision making.

*Module 2: Planning and Visioning for Brownfields Reuse within a Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy*

The basics of neighborhood planning addressed in this session will vary depending on the level of participant experience with planning and visioning exercises. For CDCs that have already engaged in comprehensive neighborhood planning exercises, this is an opportunity to revisit these strategies, learn about or improve skills surrounding techniques such as group visioning exercises and community charettes, and consider these processes focusing particularly on the role brownfields as goals, opportunities, or obstacles to the overall neighborhood vision. For CDCs that are newer to the neighborhood planning process, this serves as an introduction, with brownfields as an integral focus.

*Module 3: Phase I Site Assessment: Brownfields Identification and Community Engagement*

This module is the first step into understanding the regulatory framework surrounding brownfields redevelopment. Conducting, commissioning, and interpreting Phase I site assessments are all addressed. Phase I site assessments are required by the EPA and state environmental agencies in some circumstances, and this module discusses when a Phase I is appropriate, and what uses it may have beyond regulatory compliance. An outline template for a Phase I report and a checklist of information to request when hiring a qualified environmental professional to conduct an official assessment are also included.

*Module 4: Moving from Phase I to Phase II Site Assessment and Understanding Risks*

Phase II assessments are the next step to address potential contamination identified in the Phase I assessments, and as such this module builds directly on the learning from Module 3 before it. Phase II assessments involve actual sampling of soil and measurement of contamination levels. They require more technical knowledge than Phase I assessments to complete and interpret, but they also reveal much more about specific clean-up needs at the site, and consequently about the future redevelopment process. Module 4 includes a guide to interpreting Phase II reports, including considerations about remediation relating to future site use. In this session CDCs take part in exercises to practice interpreting Phase I reports and write RFPs in preparation for conducting Phase II assessments.

## *Module 5: Financing and Insurance Programs for Brownfields Assessment and Cleanup*

This module deals with issues surrounding financing and insuring brownfields assessments and cleanups. It begins by examining the contractual structures surrounding the remediation and sale of a brownfield site, and generally addresses the conflicting positions that buyers and sellers are in regarding risk and sales price. Site assessment and remediation funding sources, both state and federal, are reviewed; differences between funding sources for government, non-profit, and private sectors are highlighted. This is the module in which the funding application process is addressed. Finally, the different types of insurance necessary and available for brownfields remediation projects are explained.

The printed training manual also includes a user guide that directs trainers on conducting and administering the program, from identifying potential CDC partners to actual training sessions. When participating in the program, it is recommended that CDCs connect not only with the organization who will be participating in the training, but also with the local municipality or other CDC intermediary organizations who might be involved in the process. Initial interviews, including a baseline assessment of capacity (see Evaluation section below) should be used to determine the organizations' current levels of experience and interest in order to effectively customize the sessions.

The assistance sessions are ideally conducted in small groups of no more than six to seven people. The format is conversational with all participants sitting around a table, using the materials as a guide for the conversation. As the trainers cover the material, it is expected that participants' questions and comments will shape the session, and that the providers' knowledge of the topic beyond what is presented in the written materials will be brought to bear. Each session concludes with follow-up tasks; the actions to be completed before the next session varying according to the recipient organizations' needs and resources. Clear communication regarding follow-up availability is very important for both the providers and the recipients. Sessions should take place approximately 6-8 weeks apart in order to provide appropriate time to act on the previous session's lessons and goals.

### **Further Development of the Program**

The Center considers the five modules developed thus far as building blocks of a program which can and should grow to meet community needs. In order to keep the program relevant, ongoing updates will be necessary to keep the material consistent with current policies and programs. Future possible module topics may include:

- *Leveraging resources and relationships*: this module would focus specifically on the integration of resources and partnerships that is required for different types of end-use projects, including affordable housing and open space.
- *Environmental science*: this module would focus on the more technical scientific details surrounding environmental contamination and remediation options. It would be especially helpful for groups working in neighborhoods with heavier levels or unusual types of contamination that pose larger public health challenges.

- *Legal/Regulatory concerns:* This module would provide groups that are working with particularly legally complicated sites, are hoping to engage in acquisition and redevelopment themselves, or are engaging in political or advocacy activities surrounding brownfields redevelopment with a more in-depth understanding of the regulatory framework for brownfields redevelopment in their localities.

Since the conclusion of the pilot phase, the Center is has been looking for new opportunities for collaboration and information sharing between CDCs to provide mutual support for their brownfields redevelopment activities. This work is discussed in more detail later in the report (see Expansion section below).

## ***GOAL II: DELIVERY OF THE PROGRAM TO COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS***

The second goal was the delivery of the pilot technical assistant program. Piloting the program was an opportunity to refine both the form and content of the training program, as well as to identify potential hurdles that other intermediary organizations might face in their training experiences.

### **Pilot CDCs**

The pilot phase began with the selection and recruitment of CDCs. We selected two cities, Philadelphia, PA and Paterson, NJ, based on advice and literature that suggested that these two cities have many economically disadvantaged neighborhoods with numerous brownfields sites, CBOs with capacity-building needs and regional support organizations. Additionally, positive initial contacts and proximity promised us greater convenience and ease in conducting the program. We had meetings with CBOs, regional support organizations and City officials in each city to introduce the program and discuss implementation steps.

In Philadelphia, with the help of experts from academia and government, we selected two neighborhood-based CBOs as our target organizations, Allegheny West Foundation and Southwest CDC. With the help and support of Jon Edelstein, City Brownfields Development Director, Chris Thomas of EPA Region 3's Brownfields and Land Revitalization Branch, and Rick Sauer, Director of Philadelphia Association of Community Development Corporations (PACDC), we contacted the two CBOs and received commitments from each to serve as our pilot organizations in the summer of 2006.

In Paterson, our two pilot CDCs were St. Paul's CDC and the New Jersey CDC. We selected these groups after establishing contact with the Paterson Alliance, Non-Profit Builders Group and Paterson Environmental Revitalization Committee (PERC), three organizations comprised of representatives from the City, County and various nonprofit organizations, including several CBOs. We also met with the Mayor's office and the Passaic County Department of Economic Development, which is the lead brownfields redevelopment agency in the area.

Beginning in the fall of 2006, Center staff and affiliates traveled to the offices of the four

pilot CDCs, where they facilitated training sessions with anywhere from two to seven participants. Core CDC staff, including executive directors, community organizers, and economic development and planning specialists attended, and in some cases board members, city brownfields staff and/or community residents also participated. These sessions often ended with the assignment of “action items” for both trainers and trainees, and phone and email contact between sessions happened periodically to facilitate the completion of these tasks.

Below are profiles and summaries of the program experiences of the four pilot CDCs:

1. Southwest Community Development Corporation, Philadelphia, PA

<b>Organization Profile: Southwest CDC</b>
<p><b>Location:</b> Philadelphia, PA  <b>Established:</b> 1987  <b>Employees:</b> 10  <b>Annual Budget:</b> \$500,000  <b>Service Area &amp; Population:</b> Kingsessing and Elmwood, the northern and central neighborhoods of Philadelphia’s Southwest area; total population is 61,000; 77.5% African American; 30% below poverty line; ~23,000 properties total.  <b>Service Focus:</b> Assistance to first time homebuyers, social service provision, local economic development, and comprehensive neighborhood improvement.  <b>Desired Brownfields Role (at beginning of program):</b> Primarily desire to be involved with reuse planning; also interested in site marketing and facilitation; and possibly acquiring and redeveloping sites for housing and commercial uses that would help to meet their organization’s goals.  <b>Existing Capacity and Strengths:</b> Knowledge of some brownfields locations in neighborhood; good knowledge of property histories within neighborhood; involvement with reuse planning of 2 brownfields in the neighborhood; Director of Economic Development and one board member have experience in related fields; good relationship with Philadelphia’s Manager of Brownfields Redevelopment; clear vision of desired end uses for two sites with which they were already involved.  <b>Areas for Improvement:</b> No complete brownfields inventory; lack of skills and experience for completing Phase I or II assessments; no dedicated brownfields staff.</p>

Of all of the CDCs that participated in the training program, Southwest had the most consistency with the program, with both the Executive Director and the Director of Economic Development participating in every session from start to finish.

Although the CDC had engaged in visioning exercises previously, new visioning exercises were useful in helping the participants see how brownfields redevelopment fit with their larger goals. It also helped them identify the best ways for their CDC to interact with brownfields issues. For example, during the sessions, the participants determined that acquiring, remediating

or managing larger sites would probably not be the best use of their time. Rather, given the importance they place on community, advocacy would probably be a better focus.

Southwest demonstrated a high level of commitment to the program, and because of this it became especially clear that follow-up action steps could be a very effective mechanism to maintain the CDC's engagement with the technical assistance program in between training sessions. This progress made subsequent meetings more productive.

Southwest CDC reported improved capacity in many of the programmatic areas targeted by the Center's capacity-building program, and follow-up interviews with the CDC revealed that the Center had in fact been the key to many of the areas of increased capacity that were reported. One of the important skills that Southwest reported acquiring was the ability to "sit down and talk intelligently with people who know a lot more than we do about this topic." They noted that this is an important part of their becoming successful brownfields redevelopment players in their area.

Since completing the training, Southwest has been talking with developers and property owners in the area about acting as a non-profit partner. In this way, they hope to leverage their access to certain funding pools to give them more input over the private, for-profit development process. For instance, the owner of a former General Electric factory site in their service area has approached them about doing some development on the site, and they are considering partnering with him if he will agree to an end use that meets their mission and vision for the neighborhood. Another abandoned industrial site located behind a shopping strip mall is a possible site for Southwest to work with developers to bring needed mixed uses to the neighborhood. The Center participated in a meeting with a representative from the City Councilwoman's office to obtain the office's assistance in determining the ownership of the site and to discuss community intentions for the site. The Center hopes to engage an expert to assist with this intensive follow-up project, and that it will result in the CDC being able to apply the knowledge and skills that the program provided to an "on the ground" project that will benefit the neighborhood.

One project that has already benefited the neighborhood is the CDC's purchase of its own headquarters building. While working with the Center, the CDC was also in the process of acquiring the building that they currently lease and use for their office space. The building is on a brownfield site, and as a result of their increased awareness of brownfields-related issues, they were able to recognize and investigate the possibility of additional contamination before purchasing the building, a process that enabled them to address the problem and also acquire the building for a substantially lower price.

Perhaps the most significant outcome of the assistance provided by the Center was that in the summer of 2008, Southwest CDC was asked by the City Commerce Department to lead the development of an Industrial Areas Redevelopment Site Inventory and Plan for the Southwest part of Philadelphia. This project would help facilitate greater development on these sites, about which the City often receives inquiries, but is usually unable to provide information or referrals. Before the capacity-building project, the CDC would not have considered this, or likely even have been asked to do this. While a CDC taking the lead on an industrial areas planning project

is very rare, if it is successful, it could serve as a model for bringing CDCs much more actively into brownfields redevelopment in a municipal framework. Staff from Southwest said they feel it will “get them on the development radar.” Beyond representing organizational progress for Southwest, however, the development of this type of collaboration out of the training program demonstrates the ability of this program to lead to the realization of other, larger scale goals. Having an alliance in place to support the development of small industrial parcels is a crucial step towards realizing the Center’s greater mission of promoting increased remediation and reuse of abandoned and underutilized industrial sites.

Going forward, Southwest has said that they hope the Center will continue to partner with them in a supportive capacity. They envision the Center as a resource for them to go to when they are confronted with brownfield issues that are beyond their own technical expertise, and also as a potential source of ideas for future projects and activity.

2. Allegheny West Foundation, Philadelphia, PA

<b>Organization Profile: Allegheny West Foundation</b>
<p><b>Location:</b> Philadelphia, PA</p> <p><b>Established:</b> 1968 (founded and funded by Tastykake, local company)</p> <p><b>Employees:</b> 8-10</p> <p><b>Annual Budget:</b> \$2 million (includes acquisition and development funds)</p> <p><b>Service Area &amp; Population:</b> 400 blocks in upper North Philadelphia (East of Ridge Ave, West of 17th Street, North of Lehigh Ave, and South of the RR lines near Westmoreland Street); 19,000 residents; largest group is African American, growing Asian and Latino populations. 2000 Median Household Income = \$24,640; 17% single women with children; 30% of households have a member age 65 or older.</p> <p><b>Service Focus:</b> Affordable housing, local economic development, youth development and education, senior services, and other community social service &amp; resource provision.</p> <p><b>Desired Brownfields Role (at beginning of program):</b> Facilitation, outreach, marketing (“catalyst”)</p> <p><b>Existing Capacity and Strengths:</b> Existing Neighborhood Strategic Plan and Redevelopment Area Plan; Has had some training from the Pennsylvania Environmental Council; Knowledge of existing brownfields (1/4 of 125 acre industrial area is “open land without any permanent structures;” 50 acres of brownfields, 20-25 contiguous); see existing vacant industrial land as a strength for attracting businesses seeking space to expand; have comprehensive neighborhood vision, including vision for the brownfield sites; have done outreach and facilitation already; city uses AWF as a point of contact for developers; have identified two sites of particular interest, and desired reuse (housing for developmentally disabled).</p> <p><b>Areas for Improvement:</b> Interpretation of Phase I Site Assessment Reports (understanding implications on remediation/reuse decisions); Knowledge of Phase II Issues (Types of contamination and technical issues); Remediation science and engineering issues for clean-up (especially to open space and housing standards); public health analysis/issues related to built environment and industry; improvement of already existing community involvement practices; land use analysis/GIS; evaluation of progress in these areas to-date.</p>

Allegheny West Foundation (AWF) had familiarity with brownfields at the start of the program, which allowed for a higher level of information sharing at some of its sessions. However, the organization also underwent some staffing changes over the course of the pilot test period, which meant that some of the information had to be repeated with new employees. A highly successful session on financing and insurance (Module 5) was conducted with the assistance of the Center's technical consultant, who was able to provide customized information to the CDC about financial resources available to support redevelopment projects, and discussed how to access resources, how to partner with other entities, and how to manage risks and uncertainties.

Through the technical assistance program, Allegheny West identified at least two properties that it is highly interested in developing for community-focused uses. One is a former commercial/light industrial building located adjacent to a playground that the CDC owns. AWF would like to investigate the property to see if expansion of the playground is possible, utilizing this property as a community center to host recreational activities. AWF is also looking at an abandoned school site that could be reused for neighborhood commercial, including an upscale restaurant. Both of these properties are likely to have some contamination, and so AWF is currently in the process of pursuing assessments for these sites. One of the staff members who took part in the program also developed a grand-scale plan for redevelopment of a large abandoned industrial site in the neighborhood, complete with "green" features and a recreational park.

It is important to note that when Center staff first met with the AWF Executive Director in the fall of 2006, he stated that the CDC was definitely not interested in pursuing ownership of any brownfields sites due to liability concerns, but wanted to be a facilitator and liaison between developers, the community and the City. However, while going through the program, the staff began to actively identify sites that could be reused to meet community needs, and by early 2008, was eager to investigate possible ownership of more than one site. Center staff has worked with them outside of the formal sessions to identify partners and possible sources of local and state support for these potential projects.

3. St. Paul's Community Development Corporation, Paterson, NJ

<b>Organization Profile: St. Paul's CDC</b>
<p><b>Location:</b> Paterson, NJ</p> <p><b>Established:</b> 1990</p> <p><b>Employees:</b> 33+ (additional support from members of the federal government's Americorp and Vista programs)</p> <p><b>Annual Budget:</b> \$2 million</p> <p><b>Service Area &amp; Population:</b> City of Paterson (total population -- social service provision); 40 block physical planning area within Paterson.</p> <p><b>Service Focus:</b> Housing; General Social Services; Adult Literacy</p> <p><b>Desired Brownfields Role (at beginning of program):</b> Owner and Developer</p> <p><b>Brownfields Goals:</b> Wants to use properties for affordable and supportive housing, and as space and resources for the provision of social services.</p> <p><b>Existing Capacity and Strengths:</b> Identified and conducted Phase I Assessments on some brownfields as part of neighborhood plan; 2 staff members devoted to brownfields activities part-time; Successful past collaborations with other CBOs and non-profits; good working relationship with city government; Staff involvement with PERC, an organization that has done education and outreach in the area of brownfields.</p> <p><b>Areas for Improvement:</b> No brownfields inventory; no previous experience with brownfields redevelopment; Have been hesitant to develop relationships with agencies which administer most brownfields programs; Inhibited by lack of skill and perception of the risks associated with brownfields.</p>

The Center's experience with St. Paul's underscores one of the major obstacles to capacity-building in CDCs: staff turnover. After participating in four training sessions, the CDC had an abrupt organizational change that resulted in their discontinuing participation in the Center's program. Both of the staff members that had been participating in the training (the Executive Director and Director of Planning) left the organization at the same time, and as a result much of the direct impact of the program on the CDC was lost. However, there are some points that are worth noting.

First, in spite of prior active involvement with a local coalition whose mission is directly related to brownfields redevelopment, one of the participating staff members at St. Paul's expressed that he "finally understood brownfields" after the Center training. This highlights the fact that the program's method of information delivery, in a one-on-one responsive fashion, was successful in imparting brownfields knowledge so that even a "trained" staff member gained increased capacity.

Second, the participation of local government actors was an important feature of the Center's sessions with St. Paul's. The CDC had expressed that one of their frustrations as a CDC was trying to maintain a positive and fruitful relationship with the city of Paterson. They hoped that the technical assistance program might also function as a way of improving their relationship with the local government, and unlike the other pilot sites, St. Paul's invited

representatives from both city and county government to attend. Though the departure of participating staff members was ultimately an obstacle to fully realizing the programs’ impacts, it is worth noting that the inclusion of local officials may have future positive capacity impacts on St. Paul’s, or on other CDCs working in the Paterson area.

4. New Jersey Community Development Corporation, Paterson, NJ

<b>Organization Profile: New Jersey CDC (NJCDC)</b>
<p><b>Location:</b> Paterson, NJ  <b>Established:</b> 1994  <b>Employees:</b> 65+  <b>Annual Budget:</b> \$6.5 million  <b>Service Area &amp; Population:</b> Passaic County, focusing particularly on the city of Paterson and its Great Falls Historic District  <b>Service Focus:</b> Affordable and Supportive Housing; Youth Development; Education  <b>Desired Brownfields Role:</b> Facilitator, Owner/Developer  <b>Existing Capacity and Strengths:</b> Some employee experience with Phase I assessments; aware of an interested in several brownfields sites in the neighborhood; good relationships with all levels of government and other CDCs and training/funding organizations; experience in housing development  <b>Areas for Improvement:</b> No dedicated staff or brownfields inventory; limited in-house brownfields-related skills.</p>

At the start of the program in early 2007, NJCDC possessed the strong general organizational skills that are important building blocks for playing an active role in brownfields redevelopment, but was lacking in brownfields-specific knowledge. As a result, one of the main challenges was how Center staff could bring neighborhood planning and community development best practices to the trainings without making them too basic or repetitive for the NJCDC. These early sessions, however, were essential in building the relationship between the NCNBR staff and NJCDC, and were also useful for generating discussion about the existing brownfields project in which NJCDC was involved (the purchase of a charter school site that had a completed Phase I and was awaiting a certificate of No Further Action).

NJCDC found the later more advanced sessions to be the most beneficial. NJCDC was enthusiastic about the technical consultants who teamed with the Center to help to “trouble-shoot” on project-specific questions. The CDC reported having an improved understanding of brownfields redevelopment, and was especially encouraged by their newfound grasp of the funding process. They felt that they would be able to better plan for future funding opportunities based on a new understanding of the timeline and steps involved in putting together the financial resources to do a brownfields project. They also felt that when the time came for them to get involved with a project, they would feel more comfortable with the technical details than would have been true in the past.

The staff member who participated in all of the sessions believed that it had been an effective use of his time, because of the pervasiveness of brownfield sites in the city of Paterson. He noted in the follow-up interviews that participation in the program not only made the organization more *able* to participate in brownfields redevelopment, but also increased their *desire* to do so. Initially, NJCDC had expressed that one reason that they did not participate in brownfields redevelopment is that they did not need to: they did not see a reason to pursue brownfields when other development opportunities were available. Located in an old industrial city, the NJCDC Director of Economic Development said, after completing the program, that understanding brownfields redevelopment is "critical to our being effective as a non-profit developer."

### **Evaluation of Pilot Program Implementation**

The Center conducted a total of 16 onsite assistance sessions with the four pilot organizations, supplemented by numerous consultations and other less formal meetings throughout the period of the program. To assess the success of this project, we conducted a follow-up survey, asking: How effective was the program in improving the capacity of the CDCs to engage in brownfields redevelopment? Did the program attain its main goal of fostering more meaningful CBO participation in brownfields projects? Did the program help expedite the process of brownfields remediation or redevelopment?

Assessing the success of the pilot phase in terms of actual CDC capacity-building and subsequent brownfields activity is a complex undertaking. Finding good metrics to evaluate the success of community-based training is difficult, as clearly articulated by Stone (1996) in the evaluation of training and technical assistance efforts for community-building in Chicago. Generally, evaluation attempts to measure changes in policy, practice and thinking –and that change is usually slow, not always in a single direction. So while an individual initiative can lay a groundwork for change, it does not always achieve the intended change itself, as there are often many intervening factors whose influence must be sorted out (Stone p. viii).

The underlying model of CDC capacity-building upon which the technical assistance program is based is drawn from a body of academic work that suggests that CDC capacity has multiple dimensions that are closely interrelated. Glickman and Servon (1997) identify five major areas of CDC capacity: organizational, resource, networking, programmatic, and political. Strictly speaking, improving capacity for brownfields redevelopment is a programmatic goal. However, one of the main conclusions that Glickman and Servon and other capacity-building scholars have reached is that it is difficult to isolate individual areas of capacity. All of these areas work together to determine an organization's capacity to do its work effectively, and, importantly, complicate the process of evaluating capacity-building initiatives.

For this reason, the success of the program is measured by looking at programmatic outcomes. An organization's ability to attain and maintain programmatic capacity is highly related to its overall level of organizational capacity, its political connectedness, the relationships that it has with other stakeholders, and the resources that are available to it. Traditional evaluation methods that attempt to isolate a single or small number of quantifiable outcomes to assess a program's impact do not adequately capture improvements in the

functioning of organizations with as complex organizational structures and missions as CDCs.

For example, resource capacity, or the ability to access funding, is often a paramount concern for CDCs. One of the major objectives of the program was to connect CDCs with the funding streams that are made available around brownfields redevelopment. The pilot CDCs reported that the module on finance was very informative and eye-opening for them, and it is hoped that in the future, some of the groups may apply individually or jointly for funding opportunities discussed during the module. Already, during the course of our program, Southwest CDC made a successful application to the City receive a share of EPA Assessment grant funds to conduct a Phase I assessment on their headquarters building. Another, The Partnership CDC, is putting together an EPA Brownfields Job Training application.

Because the traditional focus of CDC training programs has been affordable housing, evaluations of a program's success has often been accomplished by counting the number of affordable housing units created under the program. An analogous way to evaluate the Center's technical assistance program might be to measure the change in the number of brownfields redevelopment projects that are carried out in the subject neighborhoods. However, that method, too, is limited because the more significant measure of success is the level of understanding and the confidence of the organization to incorporate brownfield sites into their plans when needed to achieve their goals. This perspective is reflected in the variety of potential CDC roles that the program was prepared to address: from a CDC being a player a facilitator/advocate to being a redeveloper.

Our evaluation methods reflect these broad and varied goals. Before participating in the technical assistance program, all organizations self-rated their baseline capacity in ten general and ten brownfields specific areas:

*General areas:*

- Board Development
- Budgeting and Finance
- Conflict Management
- Fundraising/Grant Writing
- Human Resources
- Information Technology
- Leadership Development
- Public Relations
- Evaluation/Performance Management
- Strategic Planning

*Brownfields specific areas:*

- Site Assessment
- Neighborhood Planning/Redevelopment
- Land Use Analysis/GIS
- Public Health Analysis
- Community Involvement
- Environmental Science
- Remediation Science/Engineering Issues
- Local Economic Development
- Regulatory/Legal Issues
- Real Estate Development and Finance

After completing the training, the same organizations were again asked to rate their skill in these 20 areas. Reported capacity changes are shown in the charts below. The final column indicates their belief that their capacity in that particular area was lower than when they started. We believe this can be attributed to their enhanced sense of the magnitude of the subject after

learning more about other areas. The indicator value of this section, then, is to suggest the focus for future training sessions

<b>Southwest CDC</b> <b>Self-reported Changes In Capacity Following NCNBR Program</b>		
<b>Improved Capacity</b>	<b>No Change</b>	<b>Revised Estimate of Initial Capacity</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Site Assessment</li> <li>• Environmental Science</li> <li>• Remediation Science/Engineering Issues</li> <li>• Board Development</li> <li>• Conflict Management</li> <li>• Fundraising/Grant Writing</li> <li>• Human Resources</li> <li>• Information Technology</li> <li>• Leadership Development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Land Use Analysis/GIS</li> <li>• Public Health Analysis</li> <li>• Community Involvement</li> <li>• Local Economic Development</li> <li>• Budgeting and Finance (<i>already highly skilled</i>)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Real Estate Development and Finance (from some to very little or no skills)</li> </ul>

<b>Allegheny West Foundation</b> <b>Self-Reported Changes in Capacity Following NCNBR Program</b>		
<b>Improved Capacity</b>	<b>No Change</b>	<b>Revised Estimate of Initial Capacity</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Neighborhood Planning/Redevelopment (from adequate to highly skilled)</li> <li>• Land Use Analysis/GIS (from some to adequate skills)</li> <li>• Public Health Analysis (from some to adequate skills)</li> <li>• Community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Site Assessment</li> <li>• Remediation Science/Engineering Issues</li> <li>• Local Economic Development (<i>already highly skilled</i>)</li> <li>• Regulatory/Legal Issues</li> <li>• Real Estate Development and Finance</li> <li>• Budgeting and Finance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conflict Management</li> <li>• Board Development</li> <li>• Fundraising/Grant Writing</li> <li>• Human Resources</li> <li>• Leadership Development</li> <li>• Strategic Planning</li> </ul>

<p>Involvement (from adequate to highly skilled)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environmental Science (from very little to some skills)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information Technology</li> <li>• Public Relations</li> <li>• Evaluation/Performance Management</li> </ul>	
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<p align="center"><b>NJCDC</b> <b>Self-Reported Changes in Capacity Following NCNBR Program</b></p>		
<p><b>Improved Capacity</b></p>	<p><b>No Change</b></p>	<p><b>Revised Estimate of Initial Capacity</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Site Assessment (some skills to adequate skills)</li> <li>• Neighborhood Planning/Redevelopment (from adequate to highly skilled)</li> <li>• Environmental Science (from very little/no to adequate skills)</li> <li>• Remediation Science – engineering issues (from very little to some skills)</li> <li>• Local Economic Development (from adequate to highly skilled)</li> <li>• Real Estate Development and Finance (from adequate to highly skilled)</li> <li>• Strategic Planning (from little or no to some skills)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Land Use Analysis -- GIS</li> <li>• Public Health Analysis</li> <li>• Regulatory and/or Legal Issues</li> <li>• Board Development</li> <li>• Budgeting &amp; Finance (already highly skilled)</li> <li>• Fundraising/Grant Writing</li> <li>• Human Resources</li> <li>• Leadership Development</li> <li>• Public Relations</li> <li>• Evaluation/Performance Management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Involvement (from highly skilled to adequate; noted that this is an area in which they are continuing to grow)</li> <li>• Conflict Management (from adequate to some skills)</li> <li>• Information Technology (from adequate to some skills)</li> </ul>

Because there was no control mechanism established to account for other training interventions or staff changes in these organizations, follow-up interviews were conducted to identify other factors that may have influenced organizational capacity, and to obtain feedback on the training program. The interviews reflect both personal knowledge gained from the training and the ongoing technical assistance relationship, yielding information on more tangible training outcomes, including plans for future involvement with particular brownfields redevelopment projects.

All the organizations clearly indicated increased knowledge of environmental science overall, and specifically the types of contamination and technical issues encountered in the brownfield remediation process as a result of the training program. In particular, community involvement and local economic development cut across several of the training sessions. Of these two areas, no group reported improvements in both; Allegheny West reported improvements in community involvement with no change in local economic development. Southwest CDC reported no changes in either area and NJCDC reported improvement in the area of local economic development, but a decrease in their perception of their skills in the area of community involvement.

The disparities in their evaluations of their capacity changes reflect different outcomes among the groups, and reveal aspects of capacity-building that make this type of measurement difficult or sometimes misleading. For instance, NJCDC reported a decrease in their skills at community involvement, however noted in their interview that this is an area in which they feel that they are continuing to improve. A reported decrease in capacity may not reflect an actual loss of capabilities, but rather a recognition that they may want to aim to expand their capabilities in this area beyond what they had previously realized.

Similarly, while Southwest CDC reported no changes in ability to do local economic development or engage the community in participation, in a follow-up interview, the Director of Economic Development discussed the way that the brownfields training program has enabled him to sit down at the table and be on even footing when talking to other key actors in the development process. This ability will undoubtedly improve the organization's ability to engage in local economic development, even if the organizational staff did not self-assess an improvement in local economic development capacity.

Encouragingly, where organizations did identify self-assessed skill improvements, they occurred both in areas where the CDC previously had little or no skills, as well as in areas where the CDC felt that they already had adequate capabilities. The fact that the program could provide assistance to move between both beginner and intermediate, and intermediate and advanced levels of capacity points to the effectiveness of the Center's strategy of customizing the program to each individual organization's needs. Also notable is that each of the three pilot groups that completed the program affirmatively requested the opportunity to continue to receive technical assistance and support from the Center.

### **GOAL III: DISSEMINATION OF THE PROGRAM**

The program the Center has developed and piloted is very resource-intensive, in that staff need to devote time to sitting down one-on-one with CDCs for multiple sessions, along with follow-up that could occur over a several year timeframe. Nonetheless, the program meets and addresses capacity needs in ways that are effective for CDCs and that would be difficult to achieve through traditional means, such as large-scale workshops or online courses, etc. The key to replicating the program on a wider scale is to find other organizations that have the resources and mission to assist communities directly with brownfields capacity-building, and to share the program and its lessons learned with them to implement in other geographic areas and with more CDCs. To that end, the Center embarked in several directions in the last year of the project, with the aim to build program sustainability and facilitate program expansion.

#### **Regional Workshop**

On April 4, 2008, the Center hosted a full-day workshop to introduce the technical assistance program to over 100 professionals representing the local New Jersey, Pennsylvania and New York brownfields and planning community. The event took place at the Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy in New Brunswick, New Jersey. The conference was registered with AICP to qualify for certification maintenance credits for practicing planners. It was advertised through local chapters of the American Planning Association, academic planning programs, state and local brownfields and redevelopment organizations and other brownfields stakeholders. The workshop successfully attracted members of the target audience, which included planning and community development practitioners, academics, and intermediaries (such as LISC or regional CDC associations). These groups were identified for their ability to provide the type of capacity-building assistance to community-based organizations to help them to play a meaningful role in brownfields redevelopment.

The purpose of the conference was to provide the results of the pilot to those who might find it useful; both representatives from other community-development organizations and to those professionals who are in a position to work with these organizations. For those practitioners in the field of community development, it was hoped the conference presentations would encourage them to look at brownfields as possible components of their redevelopment visions, and for professional planners, to help them see how they might work more effectively with these grassroots organizations in the future.

The day included two panel discussions. One discussed opportunities for and challenges to CBOs playing a role in brownfields redevelopment, featuring state officials from New Jersey and Pennsylvania, as well as a representative from the National Housing Institute and one from New York City's new brownfields office. The second panel focused on the challenges of capacity-building in CBOs, which included staff from two of the pilot CDCs, as well as officials from New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and New York City. The Honorable Joseph Vas, former mayor of Perth Amboy and Assemblyman for the 19th Legislative District, who was the leading force in Perth Amboy's successful brownfields redevelopment program, gave a lunchtime address.

The heart of the conference was a presentation of the model technical assistance program by the Center staff. This was followed by smaller group sessions in which participants were able to take part in demonstrations of the CDC assistance program modules and methods. Attendees were given copies of the manual with all of the material for the five fully developed modules. The manuals also contained a user guide for the trainers who would be delivering this material to a CDC. The conference evaluations showed the training materials and the presentations by the trainers were very useful to those who attended.

### **Addition of New CDCs**

To capitalize on the remaining time and resources available for the project and to spread the program beyond the initial four groups, the Center selected two additional CDCs to participate in the program in the final year (2007-2008). These organizations included:

- The Partnership CDC, Philadelphia, PA
- Morris Canal Redevelopment Corporation, Jersey City, NJ

The Partnership CDC, located in West Philadelphia, PA, is a neighborhood of about 66,000 residents, a majority African-American with a median household income of about \$25,000. It is largely residential with some abandoned commercial and light industrial facilities that are potential brownfields sites. The CDC is very interested in redeveloping a commercial strip near Market and 60<sup>th</sup> St. that has a former dry cleaner and auto repair shop. The organization has focused on economic revitalization, housing assistance and job creation in the blocks between Market and Baltimore Sts., and between 40<sup>th</sup> and 63<sup>rd</sup> Sts. Although well-staffed and funded, the CDC has not yet embarked on any projects involving contaminated properties and there has been no formal brownfields inventory. Staff enthusiastically participated in four onsite assistance sessions that covered all of the aspects of our topical modules that were relevant to the CDC. The Center provided an EDR report to the CDC to help to build an information base to perform site assessments on some properties of interest for redevelopment. Through the information provided, the CDC is now pursuing an EPA Job Training grant to try to meet joint goals of training and employing more workers and also addressing abandoned sites in the areas.

The Morris Canal Redevelopment and Development Corporation (MCRADC) formed in 1996 in response to plans to institute considerable change into the historic black Lafayette-Greenville neighborhood of Jersey City, NJ. The community continues to work with the municipal agencies, but competing views of best uses make progress difficult. In 2002, MCRADC found a partner with whom to purchase its first real estate in the community. This process continues bringing a need to understand remediation and brownfield redevelopment. The organization was eager to work with the Center and conducted an assessment meeting and two additional consultation sessions in the final months of the contract. The organization is currently working with the Center to identify funds to continue the training.

### **Expansion and Stakeholder Relationships**

The Center has been proactive in making contact with other potential brownfields training

stakeholders and creating an active presence for the technical assistance program in the planning and community development fields. A promotional brochure was developed prior to the April 4th conference, and was distributed there, as well as at other related professional meetings and events throughout the region. The bound manual that was given to conference attendees is also in the process of being made available on the Center website. On a more national scope, the Center conducted an educational panel demonstrating the capacity-building program at the Brownfields 2008 conference held in Detroit in May 2008. It featured the work done under the RTTA project, lessons learned in building capacity in CDCs, and related the direct experiences and success of two of the pilot CDCs.

Beyond making the assistance program available to other organizations, the Center has also established a working relationship with several other organizations interested in partnering on future projects. These relationships will help to ensure that the program has the maximum possible impact on building CBO brownfield capacity, which will help to promote the overall goal of increasing the amount and improving the quality of brownfields redevelopment in disinvested neighborhoods.

The organizations currently in discussion or participation with the Center include:

- **The New Jersey Brownfields Task Force:** The Task Force would like to work with the Center to expand the utility of the modules in remediation efforts in New Jersey.
- **The New Jersey Redevelopment Agency:** The NJRA invited the Center to chair their community training workshop in June and are currently evaluating a proposal to work with 3-5 communities on specific projects involving NJRA funding.
- **The New York City Mayor's Office of Environmental Coordination:** Staff from the Center participated in the opening meeting with those community organizations who have received state brownfield redevelopment funding in an effort to build their capacity to deliver assistance in meeting their PlaNYC 2030 goals of remediation of all brownfield sites in New York City.
- **The Camden Empowerment Zone:** The Center will be presenting an overview of the training at their fall brownfields conference on community involvement in remediation and reuse of sites in Camden.
- **New Jersey County Initiative:** The Center developed a strategy to engage county planning and economic development entities more directly in brownfield remediation and redevelopment. Their central position among the municipalities makes them ideal partners to foster public engagement in remediation and redevelopment. A meeting in late September with **U.S. Senator Robert Menendez** launched the concept. Two counties (Monmouth and Gloucester) are currently meeting with Center staff to develop initial workshops on the topic.
- **Michigan State University (MSU) Land Policy Institute:** As a result of the Brownfield Conference in Detroit, staff from the Center met with colleagues from the MSU Cooperative Extension program and are developing a training proposal that will be delivered to the Michigan Brownfield Redevelopment Advisors in conjunction with training on using brownfield sites as potential sites for renewable energy facilities.

- **City of Chicago:** Staff are currently in negotiations with the City of Chicago to work with their Local Industrial Redevelopment Initiative program to engage community members and potential industry representatives in a joint training program that will build community goals along with job creation and industry attraction to promote the remediation and reuse of area brownfields for commercial and industrial sector jobs.
- **Philadelphia Association of CDCs (PACDC):** PACDC is interested in promoting the program with member CDCs across the Philadelphia region. As a result of these meetings, staff consulted with Philadelphia Habitat for Humanity and is pursuing possible ways to work with other groups in Philadelphia in cooperation with Drexel and Temple University.
- **City of Philadelphia:** Center staff has had ongoing contact with the City's Office of Brownfield Redevelopment. City staff relayed to us that CDCs need to build relationships with their local Council people, and that there are potentially thousands of small brownfields located in neighborhoods that are city-owned and could possibly be redeveloped by CDCs. The Center plans to assist in building some of these bridges to connect CDCs with potential affordable parcels and equip them with the tools and partners that can move some of these properties toward productive reuse.
- **SUNY Buffalo Center for Urban Studies:** The Center at Buffalo is carrying out a community empowerment and education program with residents of distressed neighborhoods in Niagra Falls. We have consulted with the staff at SUNY Buffalo regarding applying our tested program to this effort.

## ***CONCLUSION: LESSONS LEARNED***

To conclude, we ask: What did the Center staff learn during the project? Did those lessons contribute to improving the content and form of the technical assistance program? Did those lessons enable the staff trainers to better convey potential obstacles and winning strategies to other support organizations? The entire project was enhanced the Center's understanding about the needs of CDCs and the obstacles that are encountered in capacity-building. These lessons and the recommendations for moving forward continue to inform the Center's activities as it refines and expands the program.

They are summarized here.

### **Lessons Learned Related to Capacity-Building**

1. **Measuring capacity-building needs to be multi-dimensional:** Documenting increases in capacity can be difficult for a variety of reasons. Using purely quantitative measures such as numbers of brownfields remediated will miss the larger mark of capacity improvements that simply allow the CDC to be a more active and meaningful participant, regardless of whether a project is seen to completion or not. The timeframe of brownfields projects could be many years, though capacity increases could be affecting the quality of those redevelopment decisions during the process itself. So evaluation capacity improvements should rely heavily on self-

reported qualitative measures, but ideally should also look at “on the ground” changes such as projects initiated in the neighborhood or new roles taken by the CDC. Interviews with other local stakeholders that are part of the brownfields redevelopment picture would also be beneficial. Evaluation of long-term impacts such as positive health and environmental outcomes is only possible after many years, and are likely to be influenced by many other proximate factors.

2. **CDCs’ varied organizational structures and missions warrant a customized approach:** Depending on the way that CDCs operate and how they see their role in the community, it may be more or less difficult to engage them in the capacity-building process or to cultivate an interest on their part in taking parting brownfields redevelopment projects. This underscores the importance of getting to know the mission, goals, skills and stability of the CDC before beginning the assistance.
3. **CDCs have difficulty prioritizing brownfields:** Because CDCs have so many competing short-term demands on their time, staff, and resources, it can be difficult for CDCs to prioritize their commitment to a technical assistance program that doesn’t necessarily yield immediate results directly related to its mission. This style of technical assistance works best for organizations that have an existing interest in actively pursuing expansion in the area of brownfields. Providers of assistance need to be sensitive to other competing priorities.
4. **Local political networking is a key component of CDC capacity-building:** The local political climate can play a crucial role in shaping outcomes, so it is important for a support organization to facilitate inroads in building political relationships through the technical assistance program. The CDC’s involvement will only be effective if it is connected to other entities who will need to be part of the decision-making process in any redevelopment project.
5. **A relatively small investment can achieve significant benefits:** In a short amount of one-on-one time (1-2 hours), CDC staff can successfully “learn the language” and learn what questions to ask, greatly increasing their potential ability to become involved in technical, complex brownfields projects. For example, CDCs noted at the outset that the program would teach them about some tasks for which they would always be hiring a consultant anyway. Over the course of the pilot sessions, however, it became apparent that having a good understanding of what a Phase I or Phase II entailed would enable them to better select a consultant, make decisions based on the results of the assessment, and know what questions to ask.
6. **Organizational stability is an important factor that can influence effectiveness:** Four of the five groups which with we engaged in multiple assistance sessions experienced changes in either the Executive Director or the Planning/Development Director during the one to two-year period. Because of this, some of the training had to be repeated and some organizational learning was lost in these organizations. In one case staff changes actually led to the discontinuance of participation in the program. However, capacity that is built in an individual staff member can carry over

to the individual's next position, if it is in the general field of redevelopment and revitalization, so the value of the training in this case would not be completely lost.

### **Recommendations for Successful Capacity-Building Programs**

The Center's experiences in developing and implementing this program show that the multi-dimensional hands-on model of capacity-building is a solid foundation for successfully increasing capacity in CDCs for brownfields redevelopment. The following are specific recommendations for making this type of capacity-building program more effective:

- 1. Involve multiple people in sessions to increase robustness and sustainability:** Bringing in community members, board members or municipal officials can ensure that this training will become internalized and more sustaining to the organization, and buffer the effect of working with only one or two people who may or may not stay in the community to carry it forward. Prior to the start of the program, it is advisable to make sure that a CDC has sufficient energy and resources, and is at a moment of sufficient organizational stability to take on a long term training commitment.
- 2. Demonstrate the intersection of brownfields redevelopment with CDC mission:** For some of the CDCs, the challenge was not just how to do brownfields redevelopment, but to see why they should do so. In some neighborhoods, brownfields are an obvious problem: they are unsightly, dangerous, and represent lost opportunities in terms of economic development. However, for CDCs that are in areas with relatively few brownfields, low-impact brownfields that are not as visually distracting, or residential vacancy rates that are so high that brownfields are just one part of a larger problem, brownfields may not seem like a priority, especially if they do not obviously fit with the organization's mission. By making the connections between brownfields redevelopment and goals such as education, social service provision, and affordable housing, support organizations can help CDCs harness the resources available for brownfields redevelopment to contribute to other public health, economic, social or housing goals.
- 3. Manage expectations and commitments:** It is important that the CDCs have a clear idea of what time and resources that the training organization can offer, and vice versa. Though they were not used in this application of this program, written agreements between the CDC and the training provider may be helpful in assuring the both parties have an understanding of what is expected of them, and may formalize each organization's commitment to the training process. When a CDC is not fully committed to the process, it can lead to unnecessary loss of time and resources for both organizations. It is also important to stress at an early stage and throughout the assistance program that brownfields projects can be complex and are nearly always of long duration. The CDC's ability to influence these realities is limited – but the quality of involvement is still important even if tangible results will not happen overnight.
- 4. Plan to be flexible:** Though it is crucial to have a strong commitment from the

training recipient, it was also important that the assistance provider be cognizant of the skill, resource and leadership levels that impact an organization's ability to participate in the technical assistance program. It is important to be flexible in scheduling sessions and responding positively to and constructively to organizational obstacles that may occur.

5. **Help foster inter-organizational relationships:** A CDC's relationships with municipal officials, development interests, and local intermediary organizations are a crucial aspect of their network capacity and will affect their future success in brownfields redevelopment projects. Using the training as an opportunity to facilitate interactions between the CDC and these other actors not only allows them to build these relationships, but also offers an opportunity for the CDC to demonstrate their commitment and legitimacy regarding brownfields redevelopment efforts to other key financial or planning actors and potential partners.
6. **Assistance must be action-oriented by identifying specific projects.** An important part of the technical assistance process was not just the training sessions but what happened in the time between on-site sessions. By leaving each session with action steps for the both the Center and the participating CDC, both parties involved were able to work to maximize the effectiveness of the TA program.

#### **References:**

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