Wanted: Solutions for America

Research Handbook

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Prepared by

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

SECTION I
INTRODUCTION

The *Research Handbook* is one of several tools that will be used to link local researchers at the nineteen *Wanted* sites with the national research team located at the Center for Urban Policy Research (CUPR) at Rutgers – The State University of New Jersey. The *Handbook* is designed to provide guidelines and direction to local sites and researchers. It does not present marching orders to be blindly followed in every detail at every site. Our goal is to maximize two complementary but sometimes antagonistic objectives: (1) to ensure consistency and uniformity in approach, methodology, and data coverage across the nineteen sites; and (2) to maintain the flexibility needed to capture the richness and distinctiveness of local programs. Negotiating between these two objectives may require judgements over which discerning individuals might disagree. We seek maximum flexibility consistent with the goal of evenness of treatment and coverage.

The *Handbook* identifies the basic building blocks that will structure the local reports. It also includes sample reporting forms, procedural guidelines, timelines, and contact information that will be useful throughout the course of the assessments. The *Handbook* reviews the types of methods that local researchers can employ to collect the necessary data and information. It does not dictate that certain methods *must* be used, nor does it specify the content of local reports. In the end, CUPR will synthesize the nineteen local reports into a single national report. Therefore we need uniformity in coverage to make sure that local sites are equally and equitably represented in the final report.

Finally, the *Research Handbook* is a living document that will be updated as the project progresses to incorporate input from local researchers and *Wanted* sites. The *Handbook* is therefore a starting point, designed to guide local assessments while being continually open to feedback, review, and reconsideration.

November 2000 Revision: This revision has added sections on the Interim Reports (Section VI), the Final Report (Section VII), and CUPR Site Visits (Section VIII). In addition, we have revised information about the project LISTSERV™, Web site, newsletter, and CUPR research team. Please also review the revised project timeline on page 9.

SECTION II
RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The Pew Partnership has identified the following goals and objectives for *Wanted: Solutions for America.*

- To document the processes and strategies used by sites to implement their programs;
- To document and validate the outcomes of the participating Wanted sites over the two-year period;
- To analyze findings across and within the issue areas to identify common themes and lessons;
- To increase awareness and understanding of successful strategies and how they may be replicated in other communities;
- To strengthen capacity among the participating sites to document and disseminate their work and produce research products that are maximally useful to the sites over the course of the project; and
- To design and test a "middle ground" research model that lies between the anecdotal and experimental.

The following elaboration of the research questions was presented by the Pew Partnership in the *Initiative Overview* distributed in June of 2000.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

For each selected *Wanted* site, the research is being guided by four research questions:

Research Question 1: **What are the results of the program?**

This question hones in on documenting and examining outcomes for the selected *Wanted* sites and building the capacity of programs to articulate and capture their own results. To answer this question, program staff and researchers are focusing on identifying outcomes, articulating meaningful indicators and benchmarks for their work, collecting supporting data (both quantitative and qualitative), and measuring their progress toward these goals. Each *Wanted* site has articulated site-specific research questions in this area.

Research Question 2: **How does the program work?**

This question aims at identifying and describing the inputs (strategies, activities, processes, etc.) that make up the program and specifying the characteristics of the intended recipients. Three considerations underscore the importance of gathering this information, particularly for the participating sites. First, describing program processes provides feedback on the quality of the program and stimulates improvement in delivery of services. Second, such data require specification of who is receiving program services and to what degree, allowing program staff to ascertain whether the program is reaching its intended audience. Third, it complements the outcome data by detailing the program's context and implementation process.

Research Question 3: **What role does partnership and collaboration play in the selected programs?**

The participating organizations were selected primarily for their results and secondarily, with an eye toward the degree of collaboration with other community stakeholders. This question explores the ways that the projects are embedded in their larger communities, paying particular attention to the role of collaboration with public agencies, business groups, civic associations, and citizens.

Research Question 4: **What lessons can be extracted for *Wanted*'s audience both within and across issue areas?**

This question focuses on both the clusters of issue areas and the participating programs as a whole. Cross-case analysis will provide *Wanted* researchers with the opportunity to interpret and formulate patterns and themes related to the findings.

SECTION III
RESEARCH PLAN AND TIMELINE

RESEARCH DESIGN

The Center for Urban Policy Research (CUPR) and the Pew Partnership are excited about the use of a "hub-and-spoke" research design for the *Wanted* project (figure IIIA). The hub-and-spoke research model is not hierarchical but collaborative. The national research team at CUPR will serve as the central "hub," coordinating and facilitating research conducted at the local sites. Local scholars will adapt the research methodology's framework as it evolves in discussions with CUPR and local researchers at other sites. The local sites will set the tone for the project by identifying their goals and objectives for the research period. Working together over the next two years, we hope to become a community of scholars focused on analyzing and documenting the achievements of the *Wanted* initiatives.

Research Database

An important objective of the research is to develop a database that includes quantitative and qualitative information from all sites. The database will include information on program structure and goals, community partners, and clients' experiences. As the local researchers provide CUPR with interim reports, we will update the database and share the information with all of the scholars.

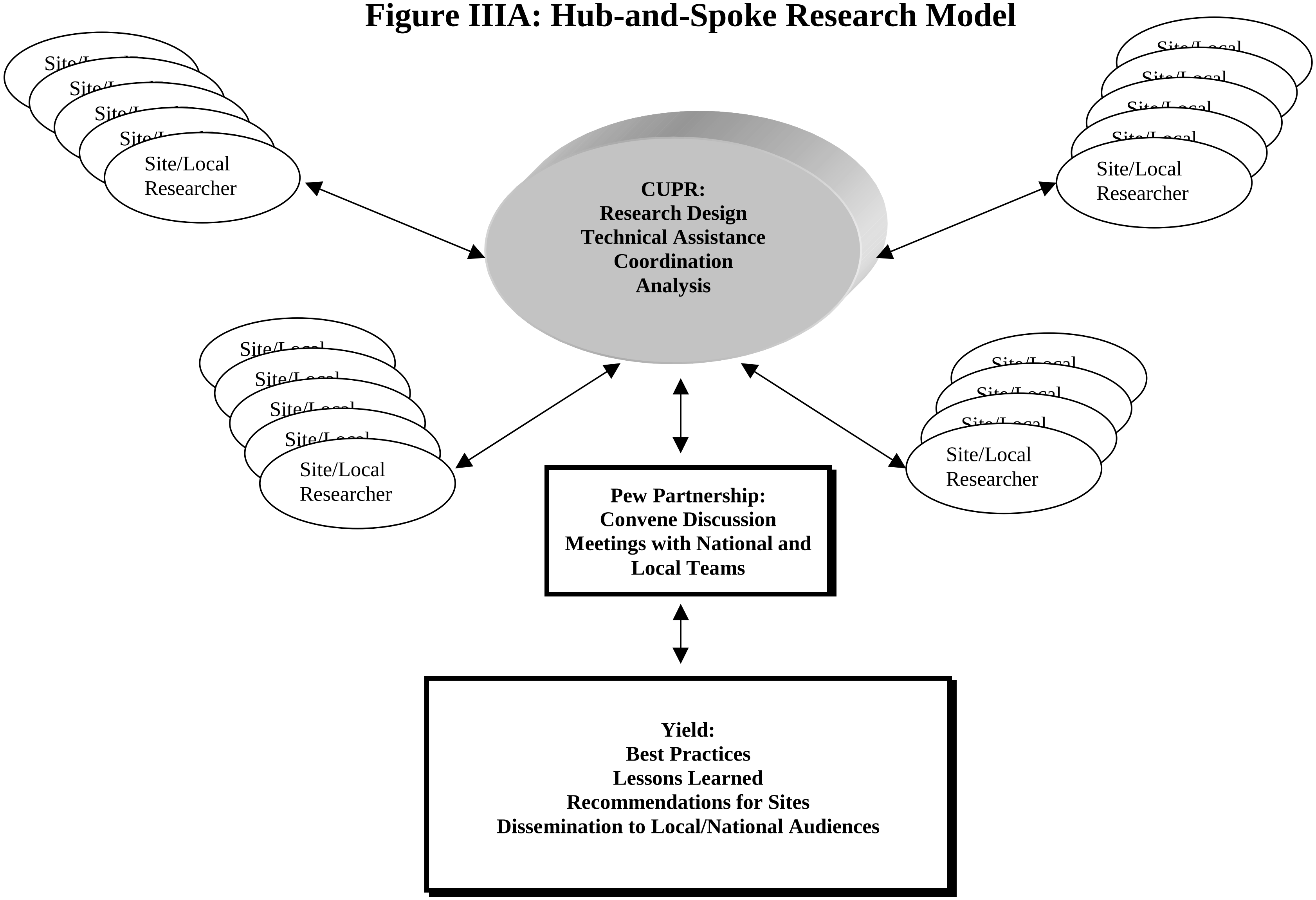
Baseline Report

One of the first goals will be for each local researcher to develop a *Baseline Report* for the program site, providing initial data on budgets, programs, fund-raising, and community partnerships. The date for completion of the *Baseline Report* is set for **January 15, 2000**. Section IV contains more detailed information on the *Baseline Report.* A template for the *Baseline Report* is included at the end of Section IV.

SWOT Analysis

In addition to the baseline report, the local researchers will guide the sites through an extensive self-assessment that will emphasize the identification of SWOTs—Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. This important initial assessment will help sites identify organizational goals and objectives for the research period. The date for completion of the SWOT Analysis is set for **March 15, 2000**. Section V contains more detailed information on the SWOT Analysis.

Figure IIIA: Hub-and-Spoke Research Model



Interim and Final Reports

In addition to the baseline information, local researchers will submit interim reports to CUPR and the Pew Partnership. Interim reports will detail developments and identify potential obstacles to meeting project goals and the strategies that will be employed to overcome them. The information in these reports will be shared with the local researchers and sites in an effort to identify common concerns, strategies, and successes. The dates for these reports correspond to the dates set out in the contracts agreed upon by Pew and the local researchers. Interim report are due on **June 30, 2000**, **December31, 2000, and June 30, 2001.**

At project completion, local researchers will prepare a final report (due **October 31, 2001**) that will summarize the accomplishments, best practices, lessons learned, and relationships strengthened at each site. More detailed information on the interim and final reports is given in Sections VI and VII, respectively.

National Synthesis and Dissemination

After the local researchers complete their final assessments, CUPR will synthesize these findings with the information in the project database to produce a comprehensive analysis of the best practices and lessons learned from the *Wanted* sites. CUPR will elicit feedback from the local researchers and site staff in producing the final report, continuing the process of mutual cooperation and shared knowledge. CUPR will also work closely with the Pew Partnership to develop an effective dissemination strategy for the wealth of knowledge gained from the *Wanted* project.

Our goal in creating this adaptable and responsive research design is two-fold: 1) to ensure consistency in methodology and reporting and 2) to allow enough flexibility for local researchers to capture the unique contexts and issue areas at the sites. The strategy ensures communication and feedback between CUPR, the Pew Partnership, the local researchers, and the sites. The study design is sensitive to unique local situations and will be enriched by the array of talents and experience of the local researchers and site staff, all of whom are integral actors in the development and implementation of the *Wanted* initiative.

TOOLS FOR COORDINATION

To optimize this model of participatory research, it is essential to ensure frequent and constructive interaction between *Wanted* participants. The goal of the research is not simply to document the activities and accomplishments of the nineteen sites but to *institutionalize relationships* among the sites, the researchers, and the national research team. To this end, CUPR has developed the following tools to help ensure that we are using compatible methods and following similar reporting formats. Most important, these tools will facilitate communication so that we can share our ideas, questions, and stories.

Research Handbook

This *Research Handbook* is an important component of the *Wanted* project. The information and protocols presented in this book are intended to provide a resource for local researchers in evaluating the *Wanted* sites. In addition, having a common framework for evaluation and documentation will help to ensure consistency across the sites.

The *Research Handbook* is designed to be a "living document" – it will be updated as the project progresses to incorporate input from the local researchers and the sites. This type of collaboration significantly strengthens the overall process, encourages interaction between the researchers, and opens the door for discussion and resolution of problems as they arise.

Solutions for America Newsletter

CUPR will develop a regular electronic project newsletter that will be accessible by all local researchers and sites. This newsletter will include information on research progress as well as interesting analyses of community development issues and profiles of local sites and researchers. The first project newsletter is scheduled for distribution on **December 15, 1999**. Subsequent issues will appear every four to five months and will be available on the *Wanted* Web site. (See appendix B.)

Wanted Web Site

CUPR will develop a Web site to maintain a constant presence on the Web and give participants a location where they can verify information and access a growing archive of important program materials. The site will be updated regularly with new materials of relevance to program participants. (See appendix B.)

Project LISTSERV

CUPR has created a LISTSERV™ — an electronic mailing list — to facilitate communication between the *Wanted* participants. CUPR will use the LISTSERV to disseminate important news and announcements to all participants through their e-mail accounts. The LISTSERV, however, is not a one-way form of communication. Local researchers, CUPR, Pew staff, and site staff will be able to use the LISTSERV quickly and easily to spread news, request information, and spark discussion. Depending on the user's needs, messages can be sent to all *Wanted* participants, to researchers only, or to site staff only. The LISTSERV is up and running and complete instructions for using it are provided in appendix C.

CUPR Site Visits

CUPR is committed to visiting each of the *Wanted* sites at least once in the two-year evaluation period. These site visits are intended to help familiarize CUPR staff with the various projects. In addition, the site visits provide an opportunity for CUPR, the local researchers, and the site staff to discuss the progress of the evaluation and to consider preliminary results. (See section VIII.) The CUPR site visits will occur in the second year of the evaluation (2001).

National Meetings

The national meetings of the *Wanted* participants provide an excellent venue for further consultation and information sharing. In addition to discussing common topics in plenary sessions, CUPR, local researchers, and site staff can form smaller groups for discussion of particular issue areas (e.g., community health, job training) and strategies (e.g., fund-raising, outreach). CUPR will work closely with the Pew Partnership and will elicit input from local researchers and site staff to make these meetings an interesting and informative experience for all concerned.

PROJECT TIMELINE

Figure IIIB is the proposed timeline for the completion of the *Wanted* project.[1] Please be aware of the target dates for the various reports and activities. If for any reason you might have difficulty meeting these deadlines, please inform CUPR as soon as possible.

[1] The dates for future participant meetings have yet to be scheduled by Pew.

Figure IIIB

Wanted: Solutions for America
Project Timeline

November 12-13, 1999	Participant meeting in Colorado Springs, CO
December 1999	*Solutions for America, Issue 1*
January 15, 2000	*Baseline Reports* due from local researchers
	Action plans submitted to Pew
February 4, 2000	Research meeting in College Park, MD
March 15, 2000	Target date for completion of SWOT Analysis
May, 2000	*Solutions for America, Issue 2*
June 2-3, 2000	Participant Meeting in Washington, DC
June 30, 2000	First interim reports due from local researchers
October, 2000	*Solutions for America, Issue 3*
December 31, 2000	Second interim reports due from local researchers
February, 2001	*Solutions for America, Issue 4*
March 3-4, 2001	Participant meeting in San Diego
March-May, 2001	CUPR site visits
May, 2001	*Solutions for America, Issue 5*
June 30, 2001	Third interim reports due from local researchers
September, 2001	*Solutions for America, Issue 6*
October 31, 2001	Final research reports due from local researchers
December 15, 2001	*Solutions for America, Issue 7*
January 31, 2002	CUPR final report due

SECTION IV
BASELINE REPORT

The *Baseline Report* is an important primary step in the research process as a means for the local researcher to be introduced to the *Wanted* site participants, learn about the program(s) offered and collect initial data. The *Baseline Report* captures data in the following areas:

- Organization and Program Description
- Community Information
- Operating Context
- Budget
- Fundraising
- Networking Partners
- Challenges
- Best practices.

The baseline also includes a set of outcome indicators such as housing produced, people trained for jobs, number of clients receiving health services, etc. The indicators will allow outcome changes to be measured over *Wanted's* two-year cycle.

REPORT STRUCTURE

The *Baseline Report* consists of two components – a narrative report and a completed data form.

Narrative Report

The brief (5-10 page) narrative report profiles the organization and the program(s) covered by the *Wanted* research. It should contain a description of the *Wanted* program or organization and provide context about the environment in which it operates. Consider the following questions when preparing the narrative:

- **Description of the organizational sponsor**: What kind of organization is it? Who is on its board? What is its organizational mission? Where is it located? What is its service area?

- **History of the program's origins**. How did the program begin? Who was responsible for its creation? When did it start? Was there local opposition or support for such a program?
- **Description of the Wanted program(s).** What are the program's short and long-term goals and implementation strategies? How is it staffed? Who are its clients and how do they receive services? How is outreach done? How is the program promoted? Does it provide services alone or in conjunction with others?
- **Context.** What is the political environment like for this program? Is it supportive? Is there a strong community-based sector?
- **Changes in program**. Has the program experienced growth, decline or stability? What factors influenced this change? Has the organization altered the program in response? Were there any significant events in the past two years that affected the program?
- **Funding.** What are the specific main sources of support? Are clients charged a fee for services? Have expenses and revenue been growing or falling over the past two years? How difficult is funding this program? Is the program financially sound? How does fundraising occur?
- **Challenges.** What are the main obstacles this program has faced? How has the organization responded? What is needed to help this program sustain itself?
- **Best Practices.** What works best about this program? Has it achieved recognition at the local or national (not including Pew) levels?

Data Form

The second component of the *Baseline Report* is the completion of the Data Form. The Data Form specifies quantitative and qualitative information about the organization, its budget, fundraising, community partners, etc. It also includes an attachment that lists outcomes achieved by the program(s). In completing the Data Form, the local researcher should try to fill in as much as possible from the organization's printed or electronic materials. This will save time and reduce the burden on program staff.

The *Baseline Report* should be completed and submitted to CUPR by **January 15, 2000.**

BASELINE DATA FORM

A blank copy of the Baseline Data Form can be obtained from CUPR's *Wanted: Solutions for America* Web site. (See appendix B.)

Guidelines for completion:

1. ***Program Name***. Fill in the name of the program that is covered by the *Wanted* research. If the entire organization is covered and not just a single program, insert the organization's name.

2. ***Managing Entity or Parent Organization***. If only a program is listed in item #1, list the name of the organization that sponsors or manages this program.

3. ***Mission Statement.*** Describe briefly the mission of the program or sponsoring organization. Promotional literature may be attached which provides more detail.

4. ***Year Program Started***. List the date the *Wanted* program or organization began.

5. ***Board Composition (%).*** Show the percentage distribution of the sectors listed that make up the board which oversees the *Wanted* program or organization.

6. ***Number of staff***. Insert the full- and part-time professional and support staff members of the *Wanted* program or organization. Support staff are secretaries, receptionists, administrative assistants, other clerical staff and bookkeepers.

7. ***Budget***. List the most recent fiscal year for which information is available. Insert the operating expenses required for that fiscal year for the organization, if the whole organization is covered by the *Wanted* research. (Operating expenses include programmatic and administrative costs.) Specify what percentage of these expenses is for administrative costs. If only a program within the organization is covered by *Wanted*, specify the name of the program and the expenses for it. Also include the administrative expense percentage for that program.

8. ***Revenue and sources***: List the most recent fiscal year for which information is available (It is preferable that this is the same year as the expense information, but another year may suffice). Specify the dollar amounts raised from the sources listed. Data here is for operating funds raised to run the *Wanted*-covered program or organization. Do not list development capital.

Fees for clients should be included if the program charges a fee for the use of its services. List the total amount of revenue received from all sources.

9. ***Development or lending capital***. If the *Wanted*-covered program is engaged in physical development (e.g., housing production) or operates a lending program (e.g., credit union or loan fund) specify those sources from the most recent fiscal year.

10. ***Fundraising***. Describe the challenges faced in raising operating support or development/lending capital.

11. ***Networking.*** List any other entities that you partner with to provide services, or those that refer clients to your program or organization.

12. ***Best Practices***: Describe strategies, organizational structures, philosophies, or unique approaches that have worked for your organization or program.

13. ***Lessons Learned***. What has not worked and what can be learned from this.

14. ***Baseline Outcomes***: List the outcomes your program or organization has achieved for calendar year 1999. Using the attached list, fill in the data for the indicators that are relevant for your organization. If there are other outcome criteria that your program/organization has used, add or attach that information.

SECTION V
SWOT ANALYSIS

WHAT IS SWOT?

The identification of SWOTs – Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats – has proven to be an effective self-assessment tool used by community stakeholders (practitioners, residents, policymakers) engaged in a range of participatory strategic planning activities. This "mapping" exercise will be useful in helping sites distinguish institutional, as well as external assets and challenges (both episodic and systemic) in order to clarify organizational goals and objectives they intend to achieve over the next two years. The SWOT approach provides groups with a relatively flexible framework to highlight gaps or deficiencies, prioritize needs, and build on existing capabilities in order to "grow" organizations that are efficient, accountable to their constituents, and sustainable over the long term. Ideally, the SWOT method can help organizations to create a strategic plan to develop and implement practical strategies that build on an organization's strengths and succeed in redressing specific problems.

MECHANICS

The *Wanted* sites should conduct the SWOT analysis with as much participation as possible from site staff, local researchers and community partners. This requires that sites set aside blocks of time to meet and discuss the SWOT exercise. For some organizations this might mean convening an all-day event in which participants consider all the aspects of SWOT in one meeting. Others might find it preferable to have several smaller meetings of an hour or two – perhaps one for each component of SWOT. The choice is yours. The important thing is that whatever time is set aside is free of distractions and allows participants to focus on these strategic questions.

The person(s) who convenes the meeting should facilitate discussion by asking participants to identify points in each of the four areas – considering each one independently at first. As each participant contributes his or her suggestions, certain common themes will no doubt emerge. As the discussion progresses, many sites will find that certain aspects of their organization may fall into more than one category – e.g., what is considered a weakness in one context might also provide an opportunity in another.

In conducting the SWOT analysis, participants should appoint one or two of the group to take notes on the thoughts and ideas discussed. These notes can then be used to write the SWOT report. One effective method used by groups is to record important points or questions on a flip chart. The appointed note-takers can then use the accumulated sheets of paper to help them write up the results.

FACTORS TO CONSIDER

The SWOT analysis aims to buttress and expand on the set of preliminary questions regarding self-identified goals and the *Statement of Objectives* that *Wanted* sites were asked to prepare for the November, 1999 meeting. Key information distilled from SWOT will no doubt aid the local researcher in evaluating the program and help to focus the research activities over the next two years. In order to get the most of the SWOT experience, *Wanted* participants should consider the positives and negatives of the following factors:

- **Administrative and Support Staff.** How stable is program staff? Do staff members have the capacities necessary to conduct all aspects of the program? How involved and effective is the organization's Board of Directors?
- **Networks**. Does the organization have access to skilled technical-assistance providers within the community? How easy or effective is collaboration with other community groups? Academic institutions? Local government?
- **Funding**. How diversified is the organization's funding base? Is it dependent on one or two sources? What are long-term plans for fundraising?
- **Information**. How effective are the organization's tracking and record-keeping systems? How connected is the organization to the circuits of information operating within the community?
- **Organizing and Advocacy**. How effective is the organization at reaching its constituency and representing its needs through its programs?
- **Internal Evaluation**. How regularly and comprehensively does the organization review its efforts? How does it measure success?
- **Competition**. Does the organization have to compete with other community organizations for clients or funds?

In particular, consider the following questions in each of the four areas. The issues noted below, regarding accessing capital (both human and physical); building capacity; sustaining resources; tapping information technologies; and improving infrastructure, are culled from areas of key concern that have consistently emerged from SWOT analyses of a range of revitalization activities. Please bear in mind that questions asked in one category may lead to the identification of an item for a different category, i.e., discussing the questions in the section on Weaknesses may lead to the discovery of a Strength.

Strengths

- Is the "chain of command" in your organization clearly defined? Are the roles of management and support staff carefully delineated? Is your organization generally perceived to be effective, well managed, agile, and responsive?
- Is your Board of Directors constructively engaged in ensuring institutional stability and promoting the value of the organization to a broad audience?
- Is your organization implementing a long-term development strategy that provides a "cushion" of support to cover unexpected shortfalls?
- Are internal information systems up-to-date and user friendly?
- Have you developed an ongoing form of evaluation that measure the impact of our work in a realistic and useful way?
- Are your constituents and supporters kept informed of your group's progress? Are marketing and outreach activities effective in celebrating successes?

Weaknesses

- Are all staff members assessed on a regular basis? Are assessments completed in an objective, transparent manner?
- Do Board members have limited terms? Do Board Chairs serve on a rotating basis? Are Board meetings held regularly? Are they substantive and productive?
- Does your organization rely on a limited group of funders for support?
- Is information describing your organization, its mission and goals, produced in a lively and compelling style? Is it widely distributed?
- Does your organization make an effort to share "lessons learned" with peers?

Opportunities

- Are you capitalizing on all leveraging possibilities, at the local, state, regional, and federal levels, to build a sturdy, diversified funding base?
- Are you seeking to collaborate with potential partners from the public and private sectors?
- Is your organization aware of, and accessing, a variety of intermediary groups that offer expert technical assistance?
- Does your organization have policies in place that encourage mobility and career advancement?

- Have you identified local "champions" (i.e., elected officials, business leaders, and philanthropists) to serve as advocates for your organization?
- If relevant, have you explored devising innovative, revenue-generating activities, such as cause-related marketing campaigns, to solidify your funding base?

Threats

- Is geographic isolation and/or limited access to electronic information systems preventing your organization from accessing capital, communicating with colleagues, or recruiting capable staff?
- Are groups with similar goals competing for the same, limited, pool of funds?
- Do recent reforms in federal and state policies, with more cumbersome reporting requirements, tax staff capacity?
- Do entrenched issues related to race, culture, and history impede your organization's efforts?
- To what extent does a poorly maintained physical infrastructure, and inadequate public transportation system, hamper revitalization projects?

SWOT REPORT

The final outcome of the SWOT analysis will be a brief (5-10 page) report that describes the SWOT process, details the past and perceived future Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats identified by the group, and discusses some long-term strategic planning objectives for the organization. Most importantly, the SWOT report will indicate the measures by which the local researchers will evaluate the success of the *Wanted* program over the research period.

SWOT REPORT OUTLINE

The SWOT report, due **March 15, 2000**, should contain the following sections:

I. Introduction
   A. Description of Participants
   B. Details of Process

II. Strengths
   A. Historical
   B. Future

III. Weaknesses
   A. Historical
   B. Future

IV. Opportunities
   A. Historical
   B. Future

V. Threats
   A. Historical
   B. Future

VI. Long Term Strategic Planning Objectives

VII. Measures of Success for *Wanted* Evaluation

SECTION VI
INTERIM REPORTS

The Interim Reports to be prepared by each local researcher (or team of researchers) are part of the reporting mechanism built into the *Wanted* program. These reports help coordinate the research activities between the sites, local researchers, CUPR, and Pew — integrating the hub and the spokes. The reports serve two purposes. First, they update the Pew Partnership and CUPR on the activities of the researchers and site staff since the last reporting period. Second, they detail the progress of the evaluation and discuss any preliminary findings. This will enable CUPR to prepare its own interim reports to the Pew Partnership. The reports should generally run between 10 – 20 pages and should follow the outline below.

Researchers should mail one printed copy each to Jacqueline Dugery, Pew Partnership, 5 Boar's Head Lane, Suite 100, Charlottesville, VA 22903 and Sean DiGiovanna, CUPR, 33 Livingston Avenue, Suite 400, New Brunswick, NJ 08901-1982. Please note that both the researcher and site representative should sign the submitted report. (Electronic versions are acceptable provided CUPR and PEW receive e-mail from the site staff indicating the report has been reviewed.)

The interim reports are due by the following dates:

June 30, 2000

December 31, 2000

June 30, 2001

INTERIM REPORT OUTLINE

I. Research Activities

While CUPR is not expecting a detailed breakdown of your time on the *Wanted* project, you should describe the major research activities you and the site staff have been involved with since the previous report. Please include planning and development activities as well as implementation. Identify instances where data collection efforts have met with challenges and how those challenges were overcome. Were there any significant setbacks that have forced a revision to the data collection strategy? In addition, please describe your collaboration with site staff, both in terms of time spent working together and the quality of collaboration.[2]

II. Revisions to Research Plan

Please revisit the research plan and the researcher/site staff roles and responsibilities information. Detail any changes subsequent to the last interim report submitted. This includes any changes/additions/deletions resulting from discussions with CUPR or the Pew Partnership. Summarize the important research questions and evaluation tools. Please prepare a revised timeline for the completion of the evaluation.

III. Report on the Ongoing Experience of the Site

Detail any important events/challenges the site has experienced since the last reporting period. You will need to collaborate with the site on this section.

A. Advances and Challenges — Please detail any achievements or innovations (both organizational and programmatic) that have helped to improve or expand the work of the *Wanted* site. Also, detail any setbacks, obstacles or bad news (if any) and how they were/are being addressed.

B. Collaboration/Networking — How have the site's partnerships developed and changed? Any new partners/collaborators? Has the research process in particular instigated any new relationships? Please go beyond naming names — we want to know about the quality of this collaboration and how important it is to the potential success of the program.

C. Finances – Has the site been successful in obtaining funds? If so, for what purpose? What fundraising plans are on the horizon? In your estimation, does the site have a coherent, long-term, sustainable fundraising strategy?

IV. Lessons Learned

The *Wanted* project seeks to facilitate the sharing of knowledge gained through practice. Most sites have experienced a wide range of results, from hard-earned successes to unexpected setbacks. The goal of this section is to understand the lessons learned from each site's ongoing experience. What is important is how these lessons were learned and how best practices — practices that exemplify a successful organization and that complement or counter other research in the field — were developed.

In this section, please detail the ways in which the program has changed in order to incorporate new information gathered from its advances and challenges. For example,

[2] Please also include copies of any survey instruments, focus group questionnaires, etc.

the loss of a funding source might force the organization to re-evaluate its fundraising strategy — in what new ways will the organization now seek support? A new community partnership might enable the program to reach target populations they might otherwise have missed — does the organization think about recruiting other new partners? A well-planned event might have failed to attract the desired attendance — to what does the organization attribute this result and how might they change strategies in the future?

V. Preliminary Findings

As the *Wanted* project progresses, you will be identifying some interesting issues affecting the success of community organizations. Please briefly discuss any preliminary results you have discovered. (Please include data/figures, if appropriate.) What are you beginning to learn about successful organizations, as you become increasingly involved in the evaluation? As CUPR begins to view the evidence presented in the interim reports, we will start to formulate hypotheses and tease out common themes concerning the development and sustainability of successful community programs. This section is your opportunity to call our attention to the ways in which the experience of your *Wanted* program might influence the final analysis.

VI. Reflections on the Research Process

One of the goals of *Wanted* is to promote networks between researchers and community organizations, and we would like to know how this is going. How do you see your relationship with the site evolving over time? How do you feel your interaction with the site has increased (or will increase) its capacity to achieve success? Likewise, what has this work meant for you? What do you think this research design (hub-and-spoke, participatory) has to contribute to the larger field of evaluation? What have you learned? What challenges do you anticipate? How can the research process be improved? What can CUPR/Pew Partnership specifically do to help things go more smoothly?

VI. Data Outcome Measures

Please discuss and append any data you have collected as part of your ongoing research. We recognize that some of these data still must be collected, but give us what you can to help CUPR prepare its report.

SECTION VII
FINAL REPORT

For each of the *Wanted: Solutions for America* program sites, a final research report is due by **October 31, 2001.** This report will be prepared by the local researcher and will be distributed to CUPR, the Pew Partnership, and the program site. While we recognize that the staffs of the Wanted programs have greatly contributed to the preparation and implementation of the research, the analysis and opinions expressed in the final report will come solely from the local researcher. While the research process has been conducted in a cooperative and cordial spirit in partnership with the selected sites, researchers should conform to scholarly standards of rigor and disinterest. It serves neither the interests of the participating sites nor the interests of other stakeholders and audiences for the documentation to be anything other than rigorous. Program sites will have an opportunity to respond to the report if they wish.

The final report will address the fundamental objectives and research questions of the *Wanted* project, as outlined by the Pew Partnership and as reprinted in Section II and outlined in brief below.

1) What are the results of the program?
2) How does the program work?
3) What role does partnership and collaboration play in the selected programs?
4) What lessons can be extracted for *Wanted*'s audience both within and across issue areas?

CUPR has developed the following outline to guide the local researchers in preparation of the final research report. Please keep two things in mind. First, the page lengths are merely suggestions and indicate the relative importance of the various sections. It is estimated that the average final report will fall between 30 and 40 pages, in addition to appendices. Second, the questions suggested under each section are food for thought and are not intended to be answered directly or in the given order. It is our hope that you are thinking about the questions as you prepare each section, but adhere to your own narrative style.

Section 1: Introduction & Methodology (2-4 Pages)

This section should provide a brief overview and history of the research evaluation, offering a short summary of the program's particularities and discussing whether it addresses previously unacknowledged needs or how it is similar to or different than other programs addressing similar issues. Additionally, this introductory section should provide a brief outline and explanation of the major components of the local research project, including questions asked and methods used in this evaluation process, and a timeline marking major research milestones.

Section 2: Program History — Becoming a Solution for America (2-4 Pages)

The sites participating in *Wanted: Solutions for America* were selected as examples of organizations around the United States that have successfully devised and implemented their own solutions to the challenges they see within their communities. As such, each site has it's own history and development trajectory. The *Wanted* program was conceived as a mechanism for such programs to tell their stories, to examine the relationships, processes, and events that enabled them to address the needs of their communities.

In this section, please detail the history of your site up until participation in the *Wanted* program. Here it is important to emphasize the strategies utilized, decisions made, and relationships forged that have made the program what it is today.

Section 3: Measuring Program Effectiveness (5-10 Pages)

The History section outlined the steps taken to design and implement an effective program. In this section, you will need to provide the documentation that confirms or cast doubt on the extent of program's success. In other words, do you believe the program truly represents a "solution for America"?

At the beginning of the project, each site assembled an Action Plan that presented measurement tools and a research agenda designed specifically for use in the *Wanted* project. Please explain how your site utilized these tools by addressing the following:

Outline the measures for success as identified in the action plan. How are these indicators indicative of program success?

Present the baseline and subsequent data/evidence (can refer to appendices)

Present the arguments for why you are (or are not) convinced that this is an effective program

Section 4: Components of Program Success (5-10 Pages)

In this section, please document the components of program success by analyzing how the program was implemented, managed, and sustained. What actions, strategies, and structures assured program success? Specific attention should be paid to the following areas:

<u>Programmatic Excellence:</u>

One assumption underlying the *Wanted* initiatives is that these programs are successful due to good ideas that work. In this section, please outline what it is about the *Wanted* program's approach that makes it as good or better than other programs trying to address similar issues. Consider the following:

What programmatic activities have proven particularly effective and should be held up as examples of solutions to other communities?

How did the *Wanted* program address the weaknesses that have often caused other programs addressing similar issues to fail?

What is different/unique about the way the program conducts outreach?

<u>Collaboration and Partnership</u>:

Much has been asserted about the role of collaboration and strategic partnerships in the success of community programs. Using the evidence you collected on the experience of the program site, discuss the relative importance of collaboration in assisting the program in achieving its goals. When preparing this section, refer to the following questions.

How important were particular collaborations/partnerships to the program? In what ways was this the case?

Are there instances where particular collaborations were counter-productive or resulted in unintended consequences? Please explain. [3]

Based on the experience of the *Wanted* program, what are the characteristics of effective collaboration? What should community organizations keep in mind when looking to collaborate/partner with other organizations and agencies?

<u>Fundraising:</u>

The ability to develop and sustain programs often hinges on obtaining adequate resources to fund program activities and staff positions. All of the *Wanted* programs have had to work hard to secure operating and programming funds. In the final report, please detail the fundraising efforts of the program and how this has contributed to the overall success of the organization. In doing so, please consider the following:

Did the organization have a coherent strategy for resource development? What were the major components of this strategy?

How diverse was the funding base for the program? Who were the major contributors? Did this change throughout the course of the evaluation?

In your opinion, is program funding sustainable in the long term? Why? Or why not?

<u>Leadership and Organizational Structure:</u>

Effective program leaders and organizational structures can be important determinants of program success. This is particularly evident in instances when directors/staff left the organization and needed to be replaced. In analyzing the *Wanted* program over the

[3] Please bear in mind issues of confidentiality. We have assured the *Wanted* sites that we will respect their need to withhold the identities of some individuals/organizations. Nevertheless, these stories are important. A compromise is to discuss "organization X" or "a local political figure" without mentioning names or revealing details.

evaluation period, what have you observed about how these factors contribute to overall success? Consider the following:

In what ways was the program leader/staff particularly effective in managing the program? Were there any particular skills/backgrounds, in your opinion, that directors/staff needed to achieve this success? In what ways did the leadership lag?

How did the *Wanted* program effectively deal with staff/director turnover (if applicable)?

How did the structure of the program/organization contribute to its success? Was it flexible, open, inclusive, etc.?

Section 4: Lessons Learned (5-10 Pages)

No organization is successful in every endeavor or in every situation. By studying and working with these organizations over two years, we have heard numerous stories about the challenges, setbacks, and crises the *Wanted* programs have had to face and learn from. If other organizations are to follow the leads of the *Wanted* programs, they will no doubt face similar hurdles. Based on what you have learned about the program you are studying, detail and discuss the important lessons learned. Consider such things as:

Did the program abandon any strategies/activities? Why? How/when was the decision made?

Did the organization attempt to replicate the program in other locations? If so, what were the challenges/opportunities involved?

In your opinion, what might the programs have done better/differently in order to improve their record of success?

What factors must be present in other sites for them to replicate the successes of your site?

Section 5: Reflections on the Research Process (2-4 Pages)

The research model developed for *Wanted* tried to achieve some objectives beyond traditional program evaluation. Particularly, the research design encouraged the formation of networks between researchers and community organizations, and also sought to develop a community of scholars. In addition, *Wanted* represented a "middle ground" between arms-length evaluation and self-reporting, offering technical assistance as well as program assessment. After two years of working with the program site, with CUPR, and with the Pew Partnership, detail your thoughts of the effectiveness/validity of the research model.

How did your relationship with the site evolve over time? Was there a tension between being an evaluator and an enthusiast of the program? If so, how did you resolve this tension?

How do you feel your interaction with the site has increased its capacity to achieve success? Likewise, how has your interaction with the site enhanced your abilities as a scholar?

What do you think this research design (hub-and-spoke, participatory) has to contribute to the larger field of evaluation? What have you learned?

How could the research process have been improved? How effective was the participation of CUPR? Of the Pew Partnership?

Section 6: Conclusion (2-4 Pages)

This, in a sense, is your final opportunity to ensure you are leaving CUPR and the Pew partnership with the message you want to convey. In wrapping up, please ask yourself:

Have I given the appropriate impression of the level of success the *Wanted* program has achieved?

In discussing the program piece by piece, have I missed something less tangible that's important to convey?

If I could reduce my report to a few sentences, what would be the most important observations I could make about the program?

As we get closer to the final reporting period, the above outline might be modified to reflect our discussions at meetings, site visits, and over the LISTSERV™. As always, questions or comments about the report and the outline should be directed to Sean DiGiovanna at CUPR.

SECTION VIII
CUPR SITE VISITS

As a component of national research initiative, CUPR researchers will visit each of the *Wanted* programs in the spring of 2001. As mentioned previously in this document, the site visits are intended to help familiarize CUPR staff with the various projects. Additionally, it is expected that these visits will allow CUPR researchers and site staff to discuss the details of the local program, consider the progress made by the site toward the objectives identified in the action plans, and discuss preliminary results of the evaluation. The CUPR visits will take place sometime between March and July of 2001, according to an appropriate schedule established by CUPR researchers and local site staff.

CUPR's goals for the *Wanted* site visits are:

- To gain familiarity with the program by moving beyond the words and descriptions put into program proposals and reports and experiencing the site first hand.
- To discuss with site staff and local researchers the preliminary results of the evaluations as they near completion.
- To discuss the major themes and lessons learned. As the end of the project nears, it will be essential for the site staff, local researchers, and CUPR researchers to be in agreement on the final outcome and reporting goals. The site visits will be the time to clarify the most important programmatic aspects to be highlighted in the final reports.
- To offer technical assistance to site staff and/or local researchers.
- To meet with any interested community members at the discretion of the local site staff, such as program Board members, local press, community partners, etc.

Site visit planning will commence in December of 2000. It is hoped that site visit dates and itineraries will be completed (at least in draft form) by the March 2001 participant meeting in San Diego. CUPR team members will contact *Wanted* program staff to start the planning process.

APPENDIX A

CONTACT INFORMATION FOR CUPR STAFF

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APPENDIX B

Web Site and Newsletter

CUPR's *Wanted: Solutions for America* Web site and *Solutions for America* newsletter serve as tools for representing the *Wanted* project, for introducing program resources and reference materials for current and potential members of the *Wanted* community, and for increasing the visibility of *Wanted* both among participants and to the wider community.

The Web site maintains a constant presence on the Web, provides a location where participants can verify information and access a growing archive of important program materials, and enables non-participants to learn about *Wanted* and the various parties involved. The site is updated regularly with new materials of relevance to program participants.

The *Solutions for America* newsletter connects the *Wanted* community and reports on new issues, accomplishments, opportunities, and events of interest. Every issue of *Solutions for America* will highlight two or three of the *Wanted* program sites in a "solution" box that summarizes program history, focus, and development trajectory. This ensures that all programs get a chance to learn about the other programs participating in the project. The newsletter also typically includes several stories pertinent to the range of issues being addressed by the *Wanted* program sites, as well as other pieces focused more directly on specific issue areas. Yet, the bulk of the newsletter has no set form or content but rather grows and evolves in accordance with the level of participation of *Wanted* participants. As such, it is specifically designed to reflect and incorporate the needs and interests of the *Wanted* community as determined by participant feedback and submissions.

To access the *Wanted* Web site, and the *Solutions for America* newsletter, visit the CUPR Web site at **http://www.policy.rutgers.edu/cupr/index1.htm**. On the lower left-hand side of the CUPR site will be either a list of program links or a drop down menu containing the same list, depending on your browser type and version. Selecting the "*Wanted: Solutions*" option from this list will connect you to the *Wanted* Web site. Current and previous copies of the newsletter can be found in the "Program Materials" section. While it is possible in special circumstances to have a hard copy of the newsletter printed and mailed to program participants, the newsletter is primarily published to the Web site in Acrobat .pdf format. From there it can either be read from the monitor or printed out and read in hard copy. (Acrobat Reader can be downloaded for free at **http://www.adobe.com**.)

Submission deadlines will be announced and are generally two weeks prior to issue publication. Send all submissions to: Sean DiGiovanna, CUPR, 33 Livingston Avenue, Suite 400, New Brunswick, NJ 08901-1982. 732.932.3133 x762, *digiovan@rci.rutgers.edu*

APPENDIX C
THE *WANTED* LISTSERV

Central to the *Wanted: Solutions for America* mission is the creation of a "community of scholars." CUPR recognizes that for such a community to evolve there must be a mechanism in place to facilitate the exchange of ideas and the free flow of communication between the program participants. To facilitate that communication and to encourage discussion of interesting topics among all the *Wanted* participants, CUPR has created a project LISTSERV™. Those of you who have used LISTSERVs in the past know that it is an easy and effective way to communicate with a large number of people. For those of you that are new to LISTSERVs, we have outlined some basic information below.

- **WANTED_PARTICIPANTS**

  This LISTSERV connects the *Wanted* program participants to one another and serves as the forum for discussing relevant *Wanted* program issues. This mailing list will deliver a message to all *Wanted* participants – local researchers, site staff, CUPR staff and Pew staff. This list is appropriate if you have an important announcement or information that you think would be of interest to the entire *Wanted* community. CUPR also encourages *Wanted* participants to post and respond to discussion topics on this list so as to facilitate general discussion and the free exchange of ideas.

  Anyone can post to this list at any time by sending a message to the following address:

  WANTED_PARTICIPANTS@email.rutgers.edu

- **CUPR_PEW_LOCAL**

  As local researchers share a particular position within the *Wanted* program and are expected to perform similar tasks, this LISTSERV acts as a tool for connecting local researchers to one another as well as to Pew staff and CUPR researchers. This list is appropriate if you have a question or discussion topic that concerns research methods or coordination.

  Local researchers, Pew staff, and CUPR researchers can post to this list by sending a message to the following address:

  CUPR_PEW_LOCAL@EMAIL.RUTGERS.EDU

DISCUSSION TOPICS

Discussion message threads occurring around specific topics will be archived and posted to the *Wanted: Solutions for America* Web site in the "Program Materials" section.

RESPONDING TO THE LISTSERV

It is important to remember that when you reply to messages from the LISTSERV, your reply will be sent to everybody on that particular distribution list. For this reason, do not post messages or reply to messages with frivolous or personal information. If you would like to send a personal note to one of your *Wanted* colleagues, by all means send a private e-mail to his or her personal address. On the other hand, if your reply is relevant to the subject at hand and you want the entire list to read it, simply reply as you would to any e-mail message and it will be posted.

ADVANCED LISTSERV FUNCTIONS

Most of us will only need to know how to post and reply to the LISTSERV. Others, however, might want to experiment with some of the more advanced settings that LISTSERV technologies provide. If you are interested in learning more about LISTSERV functions you can view the *Users Guide* online by visiting the following site: http://www.lsoft.com/manuals/1.8d/user/user.html.

Any problems or questions regarding the LISTSERV should be directed to Sean DiGiovanna at digiovan@rci.rutgers.edu.