

Equitable Development in Action

What Makes Community-
Driven Revitalization
Models Work?



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INTRODUCTION

Communities in the Southeast are transforming their neighborhoods from the ground up. These communities, often low-income people of color, have been subject to an unfair share of contamination, along with limited public investment in schools, housing and infrastructure. To advance both environmental justice and equitable development, EPA Region 4¹ hosted a series of conversations with these community change-makers to understand what strategies have helped neighborhoods increase local wealth and opportunity while preventing gentrification. In this brochure, EPA shares success stories from a range of community-based organizations who are taking revitalization into their own hands to increase affordable housing, education, economic opportunity, and health. Each story highlights a unique model that empowers the local community and includes the following pillars that have contributed to victories for these communities.



A Community Champion with skilled leadership and the capacity to connect different stakeholders, and coordinate multiple, concurrent efforts is critical to building and maintaining momentum for long-term implementation. The champion may also tap a network of contacts, whether funders or other decision makers, to advocate for the community.



A Community-Driven Process that centers the voices and goals of existing community members from the outset, enlists them in the implementation throughout the development process and ensures they benefit from the outcomes.



Small Neighborhood Area to focus investments and maximize the benefits from limited resources to address multiple needs within a focused area.



Resident-Focused Investment that stabilizes neighborhoods while preventing displacement by supporting the quality of life and prosperity of current residents by investing in schools, jobs, health, housing and other community needs simultaneously.



Formal Organizational Structures, such as 501(c)(3) status and community development corporations or dedicated government structures, such as land banks, allow organizations to manage their own funds relative to community goals and access new funding sources and other capacities. Several organizations used formal agreements, such as Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) to establish clear roles and streamline implementation.



Ownership of Community-Anchored Assets including real estate, social enterprise businesses, and community-led institutions, enable the community to guide land use, manage service delivery and generate sustainable income independent of external funders.

¹ Through a collaboration between the Brownfields Program and the Regional Administrator's Office's Programs of Environmental Justice and Equal Employment Opportunity.

Environmental justice is achieved when everyone, regardless of race, color, national origin, or income, enjoys the same degree of protection from environmental and health hazards, and equal access to the decision-making process to have a healthy environment in which to live, learn and work.



Equitable development is an approach for meeting the needs of under-served communities through policies and programs that reduce disparities to better foster places that are healthy and vibrant. It is increasingly considered an effective place-based action for creating strong and livable communities.



Community-Based Non-profit Organizations

Community-based non-profit organizations can play a vital role in community development by addressing needs that are not being addressed by government programs and private sector interests, especially in neighborhoods that have suffered long-term disinvestment. Community-based non-profits are in a unique position to affect transformative, long-lasting change that restores the vibrancy of disinvested neighborhoods and empowers them to thrive for generations to come. Community non-profits are neighbors, conveners, connectors, innovators, funders and advocates. Less bound to prescriptive requirements and short-term results, non-profits can occupy a wide range of roles, adapted to unique local conditions and needs. Often staffed by residents from the neighborhood, they are committed to investing in the community over the long term.

Photo Caption: People working in a community garden in Atlanta, Georgia (Source: EPA).



Photo Caption: Community members interacting with the McCoy Creek restoration plan (Source: EPA).

GROUNDWORK JACKSONVILLE JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA

The North Riverside neighborhood, a historically African American community near downtown Jacksonville, experiences repetitive flooding from the heavily polluted McCoys Creek. Roads, homes and businesses are frequently flooded even after a normal rainfall event, limiting economic development potential and exacerbating decades of disinvestment. Between 1980 and 2017, homeownership was cut in half while the number of vacant properties nearly doubled. Over a third of neighborhood residents lived below the poverty line and nearly 20% were unemployed. By 2018, the North Riverside neighborhood lost more than a third of its residents.

EPA's Superfund Redevelopment Program sponsored a community-based integrated planning process to identify community goals, strategies for meeting those goals and potential resource partners. One outcome of this process was the establishment of Groundwork Jacksonville. The city of Jacksonville (the City), in partnership with community and government entities and Groundwork USA, established a local trust in 2014 to restore its urban creeks and clean, redevelop and convert contaminated land into parks, playgrounds, trails, and public greenspace. Groundwork Jacksonville serves

as the City's non-profit partner in building the Emerald Trail, a 30-mile trail and linear park system, and restoring the adjacent Hogans Creek and McCoys Creek.

Work on McCoys Creek started in 2018 and the City committed more than \$100 million to remedy McCoys Creek flooding. Rather than conventional retention ponds and drainage ditches, Groundwork Jacksonville asked the City to consider a more natural, aesthetically pleasing and sustainable option. Groundwork raised private funds to create an ecological restoration design that will transform an inaccessible, polluted, and channelized creek into a natural water body that the neighborhood can enjoy and be proud of. As part of the creek design process, Groundwork Jacksonville engaged North Riverside residents in visioning meetings, focus groups, a McCoys Creek Task Force and a Creek Fest event that attracted more than 150 residents. In these conversations, residents expressed needs and concerns beyond those related to the creek design. They were concerned about displacement from their homes, safety and finding jobs. They expressed interest in home repair funding, educational opportunities and a desire to get more involved in beautifying their neighborhood.

In response, Groundwork Jacksonville embarked on two initiatives. The first was the creation of a new program called Community Restoration Environmental Stewardship Training (CREST). The goal of CREST is to

COMMUNITY MODEL: NATIONAL CAPACITY



Jacksonville leveraged two national organizational models to build local capacity:

Groundwork USA is a national network of local organizations devoted to transforming the natural and built environment of low-resource communities working at the intersection of the environment, equity, and civic engagement to ensure everyone's neighborhood environment is green, healthy and resilient.

Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) works with a national network of community-based partners to connect funding from banks, corporations, foundations and government agencies to community-driven investments in housing, businesses, jobs, education, safety and health.

train environmental stewards and empower community leaders through workshops, field trips, creek cleanups and advanced job training. Currently five CREST members have received training from the City's Environmental Quality Division and are employed by Groundwork as Water Quality Technicians. CREST members have taken numerous field trips to see other green spaces in the area and partner with the neighborhood community development corporation (CDC) on monthly McCoys Creek cleanups, contributing thousands of dollars' worth of time and labor.

In addition, Groundwork partnered with LISC (Local Initiatives Support Corporation) Jacksonville to help the community create an equitable development plan with the goal of educating and empowering residents to advocate for their families and their neighborhood. LISC is a community development financial institution with offices in 44 states (including Georgia, Florida, Kentucky, Tennessee, North Carolina and South Carolina in the southeast region) dedicated to forging resilient and inclusive communities. Four resident-led working committees were established in the North Riverside neighborhood to support plan implementation for housing, economic opportunity, history and culture, and environmental stewardship.

The most immediate work was around home ownership and preventing displacement. LISC partnered with three organizations to provide free assistance on legal issues including gaining clear title to homes, claiming homestead exemption and creating wills. In addition, LISC convened a coalition of Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFI) funded by a planning grant from

JP Morgan Chase to invest in the plan. The CDFI partners assist residents with financial education, credit repair, mentors and funding for home improvements. It is anticipated that the CDFIs will invest in affordable housing and new business creation. Work continues on the plan as Groundwork, LISC, and other partners help residents address the quality-of-life issues that will enable this community to thrive, while enjoying a beautiful new trail and restored creek.

By leveraging national organizational capacity through Groundwork and LISC, the North Riverside neighborhood is addressing not only flooding, but investing and creating local wealth through job training, affordable housing and new business creation.

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE VISIT:

[Groundwork Jacksonville website
groundworkjacksonville.org](http://groundworkjacksonville.org)

[Groundwork USA website
groundworkusa.org](http://groundworkusa.org)

[Groundwork USA technical assistance on equitable development and brownfields planning
groundworkusa.org/ta-services/equitable-development-brownfields-planning](http://groundworkusa.org/ta-services/equitable-development-brownfields-planning)

[LISC website
lisc.org](http://lisc.org)

[Jacksonville Integrated Planning Project
semspub.epa.gov/work/04/11121269.pdf](http://semspub.epa.gov/work/04/11121269.pdf)

THE MILL DISTRICT COLUMBUS, GEORGIA

Community leaders in Columbus, Georgia, created a non-profit organization called the Mill District established as a 501 (c)(3) to implement the Purpose Built Communities model in four historic neighborhoods. The Purpose Built Communities model focuses on three pillars: quality mixed-income housing, education, and community wellness to support holistic and sustainable neighborhood revitalization. The neighborhoods of City Village, North Highland, Bibb Village and Anderson Village housed generations of working-class families, employed in the area's textile mills. After the mills closed, these neighborhoods experienced significant public and private disinvestment.

The city of Columbus received a \$300,000 Brownfield Assessment Grant and hoped that environmental assessments at these blighted properties could catalyze redevelopment in the Mill District area. Despite some limited local investment, the area did not see longer-term interest from outside developers. According to Justin Krieg of Historic Columbus and administrator of The Mill District,

“In hindsight, the delay in developer interest was a good thing. It gave us time to figure out what development we wanted based on the needs of the neighborhoods.”

The Mill District brought together local leaders from community organizations and foundations, city and county government, property owners and private businesses to connect and amplify investments in mixed-income housing, education and community wellness. The Mill District built long-term partnerships with public entities, such as the Muscogee County School District, with whom it signed a formal MOU. Through this MOU, the Mill District leveraged \$1.5 million to fund four additional staff members at an underperforming school, including a social worker, parent-involvement specialist, instructional coach and assistant principal.

The Mill District also partnered with community health clinics such as MercyMed to provide healthcare services at neighborhood-serving schools so that local students had greater capacity to learn and thrive. The success of these partnerships has helped pave the way for even more investment on and around brownfield sites. In 2020, a \$34 million dollar construction project broke ground that would serve as a new medical school campus for Mercer University in Columbus, Georgia, bringing nearly 240 students and 60 supportive faculty to the city.

Adjacent to the Mercer project, the historic City Mills buildings are under renovation to become a hotel, yoga studio and restaurant. Just north of that site is the location for a newly reconstructed mixed-income multifamily housing development that was successful

Photo Caption: A community mural in City Village (Source: EPA).



Photo Caption: A teacher tutoring a student at a school in City Village (Source: EPA).

in securing low income housing tax credits to assist in leveraging the project. Another site received grant funds to assist with environmental assessments.

The Mill District connected with NeighborWorks Columbus, an existing non-profit housing developer to secure funding for quality affordable housing. NeighborWorks received nearly \$80,000 from the Historic Columbus Foundation's Revolving Redevelopment Fund to rehabilitate a historic home in the North Highland neighborhood. NeighborWorks plans to renovate/construct nearly 22 homes in the neighborhood. Many of these properties received assessment grants as well.

Focusing on schools, housing, and health care has been a conscious choice to invest in the people of the neighborhood in addition to the place. To evaluate its impact, the Mill District tracks key economic and educational outcomes, including changes in poverty rates, crime, building permits and school performance.

Through early community engagement and structured partnership-building, the Mill District was able to address multiple challenges simultaneously to advance the neighborhood goals of housing, education and community wellness.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE MILL DISTRICT: purposebuiltcommunities.org/our-network/columbus-ga-the-mill-district

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON PURPOSE BUILT COMMUNITIES: Purpose Built Communities website purposebuiltcommunities.org

Purpose Built Communities' white paper "Poverty and Place: A Review of the Science and Research that have Impacted Our Work" purposebuiltcommunities.org/poverty-and-place-a-review-of-the-science-and-research-that-have-impacted-our-work

COMMUNITY MODEL: PURPOSE BUILT COMMUNITIES

The [Purpose Built Communities](https://purposebuiltcommunities.org) model seeks to disrupt the root causes of poverty by focusing on neighborhood-scale investments in mixed-income housing, a continuum of education services and community wellness to advance racial equity in health and economic mobility. A local non-profit organization leads implementation by building partnerships from all sectors, aligning residents with resource partners and coordinating across efforts.

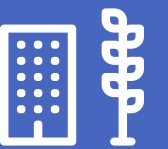




Photo Caption: A community leader in East Tampa (Source: EPA).

CORPORATION TO DEVELOP COMMUNITIES OF TAMPA, INC. TAMPA, FLORIDA

East Tampa is a historic community of African American neighborhoods, northeast of downtown Tampa. East Tampa became impoverished through decades of disinvestment, which manifested as racial disparities in housing conditions, employment, health care, education and criminal justice.

Community leaders founded the Corporation to Develop Communities of Tampa, Inc. (CDC of Tampa) to reduce long-standing disparities and create opportunities to build an equitable, prosperous and vibrant East Tampa. Under the leadership of local resident and community activist, Mrs. Chloe Coney, the CDC of Tampa first brought the local residents together to ask what they wanted to see in their community. Residents identified significant gaps in resources related to workforce development, youth education, entrepreneurship, affordable housing, and access to health care. After listening to resident priorities, the CDC of Tampa filled the gaps by using a Collective Impact approach that connects the priority areas to one another to address needs

comprehensively rather than individually. Developing relationships with local, regional and national organizations was critical to this comprehensive approach.

CDC of Tampa now has extensive partnerships and programs locally and nationally. Partnerships with the city of Tampa and NeighborWorks America enabled significant progress in education, housing and job training. The city of Tampa serves a critical role in advancing affordable housing and workforce development. For example, the city of Tampa has revised ordinances to provide directives that favor local hiring, particularly in the disadvantaged area of East Tampa. Once CDC of Tampa became a Community Housing Designated Organization (CHDO), through U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), they could partner with the city of Tampa to create affordable housing in the East Tampa neighborhood.

In education, initially only 40% of high school children were graduating in East Tampa, and busing resulted in a patchwork of 28 schools serving the East Tampa area. Lack of community and parental engagement in local schools was seen as a key contributor to the lack of success. CDC of Tampa began a movement back to community-based schools that serve as a supportive local hub to families in the surrounding neighborhood. Timing worked in their favor as housing boomed and with it, school funding during the 1990s-2000s. City of Tampa also provided funding from

COMMUNITY MODEL: COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION



Forming a community development corporation (CDC) provides the community with a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization that can receive public and private funding, anchor capital in the community by developing residential, commercial and institutional properties and organize residents to set community-driven priorities.

For more information, please visit: community-wealth.org and [National Alliance of Community Economic Development Associations](http://NationalAllianceofCommunityEconomicDevelopmentAssociations.org).

taxes on local communications companies. Additional partnerships helped provide student services for one year for each student, along with local university partnerships for help with homework and standardized testing. Graduation rates have climbed to 75-80% and are expected to reach 90% soon.

For health care, CDC of Tampa was able to partner with Tampa Family Health Centers to bring health care to those who would otherwise not have it at all. These centers now operate in collaboration with CDC of Tampa but also independently.

NeighborWorks America, started by Dorothy Mae Richardson in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, offers nationally available community training to develop and empower community leaders. There are now over 250 community organizations engaging with NeighborWorks America programs. NeighborWorks America mentors and conducts peer-to-peer trainings with communities and non-profits.

Reflecting on partnership building, Ernest Coney says,

“The key is to listen to the needs of partner organizations and to match those needs with the needs of the neighborhoods.”

He highlights the symbiotic relationships between needs and opportunities and through this approach has had success in finding the funds needed for programs, financial literacy and household budgeting, which has brought banks and credit unions back to the

neighborhood. Increasing personal income from workforce development created demand for new grocery stores.

Ernest noted that “Broken neighborhoods are a reflection of broken systems no longer serving the people. Building up Human Capital first changes everything that follows.”

Even the simple act of hosting a Drug March in neighborhoods with youth to take back the community from crime and drugs can build esteem and drive to take on more challenges.

CDC of Tampa now operates well beyond East Tampa and supports many communities in the surrounding counties. CDC of Tampa has built over 100 single family homes, 380 rental units and 141,598 square feet of commercial space, counseled over 3,500 families in housing needs, and created 12,000 youth and adults with workforce development training. New challenges for CDC of Tampa include supporting the growing senior population sector, improving entrepreneurship, particularly in favor of creating destination places in the East Tampa area. This will strengthen the economic flow within the community. And, finally, recognizing the need for some larger, institutional growth including a hospital and small manufacturing will diversify the economy and continue growing the quality of life in East Tampa, and the Tampa Bay area.

By listening to the local residents, and then engaging local and national partners, CDC of Tampa has been able to build prosperity within East Tampa with jobs, housing and health care, all interdependent for long-term success.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE SEE:
CDC of Tampa cdcoftampa.org

Community Development Corporations (CDCs) community-wealth.org/strategies/panel/cdcs/index.html

NeighborWorks America neighborworks.org/home

Collective Impact Model collectiveimpactforum.org/what-collective-impact

CITY OF NORTH CHARLESTON NORTH CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA

In 2002, the South Carolina State Ports Authority planned to redevelop the former Charleston Naval Base into an intermodal rail hub facility as well as construct a new port terminal and access road. National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) regulations required that the South Carolina State Ports Authority evaluate the project's potential impacts on low-income communities and people of color and identify appropriate mitigation measures. The impacted areas included seven historically African American neighborhoods in North Charleston. In 2005, the neighborhoods of Accabee, Chicora/Cherokee, Union Heights, Howard Heights, Windsor Place, Five Mile and Liberty Hill formed a new coalition, the Low-Country Alliance for Model Communities (LAMC), to leverage their collective voices and advocate for their community's interests during the NEPA process.

Under NEPA, the South Carolina State Ports Authority could implement mitigation actions that are clearly related to the potential adverse impact related to the project. The city of North Charleston designated Planning Department staff, including Wannetta Mallette, to support the new coalition.

As the city of North Charleston's Community Mitigation Plan Project Manager, Wannetta Mallette leveraged an underutilized tool under NEPA, known as a Social Impact Assessment (SIA), to incorporate neighborhood history, displacement risks, travel time impacts and health outcomes, and demonstrate adverse impacts on the North Charleston neighborhoods. The assessment for this North Charleston area was done in-house by city staff using available data.

In 2006, based on the results of the SIA, South Carolina State Port Authority, city of North Charleston and LAMC developed a \$4 million Community Mitigation Plan, the first of its kind in South Carolina and the nation under NEPA. It included funds for affordable housing, a maritime training center, a health center, a recreational center, small business development, and \$350,000 to develop a redevelopment plan to address broader planning needs for the community. It also required the collection of important impact assessment data before and after the port expansion such as a vibration study (due to blast and hammer pile driving concerns), air monitoring and a noise study among others. The Community Mitigation Plan garnered national, state and local recognition, which LAMC then leveraged to secure additional resources, including almost \$3 million in grant funding. The city of North Charleston adopted the redevelopment plan as an amendment to the city's Comprehensive Development Plan and paid the mitigation fund balance to LAMC

Photo Caption: An informational table at a LAMC community event (Source: Charleston Community Research to Action Board (CCRAB)).



Photo Caption: A LAMC environmental justice activism event (Source: CCRAB).

for implementation oversight. The Community Mitigation Plan outlined a schedule for fund distribution that aligned with the project development timeline so that funds were paid after federal and state permits were issued, during active construction and upon the opening of the port terminal.

In reflecting on the process, Wannetta shared, ***“Local governments have a greater responsibility to protect at-risk communities. The SIA was the process by which the community was able to use its ‘expert knowledge’ to identify issues in need of redress that led to the development of a successful mitigation plan.”***

By leveraging the NEPA process during the port expansion, and specifically the SIA and Community Mitigation Plan, North Charleston

secured significant investment in affordable housing, a health center, a recreational center and small business development for their near-port neighborhoods.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON LAMC AND SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENTS, PLEASE VISIT:

Handbook on Applying “Other Social Effects” Factors in Corps of Engineers Water Resources Planning
iwr.usace.army.mil/Portals/70/docs/iwrreports/09-R-4.pdf

Community Mitigation Plan by LAMC
epa.gov/sites/default/files/2015-09/documents/wed_georgia_7_8_830_mallette.pdf

COMMUNITY MODEL: SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT



A Social Impact Assessment (SIA) may be conducted voluntarily or required as part of an Environmental Assessment or Environmental Impact Statement during the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process. Once the assessment is complete, the SIA can be leveraged to negotiate mitigation actions that benefit the impacted community. Executive Order 12898 adds weight to the inclusion of SIA in NEPA analyses because it requires special attention to “disproportionate and adverse” impacts on the environmental and health concerns of low-income populations and minority populations.

For more information, visit: [Guidelines and Principles for Social Impact Assessment](#).



Photo Caption: The C.C. Woodson Community Center entrance (Source: Kris Decker, photographer).

REGENESIS SPARTANBURG, SOUTH CAROLINA

South Spartanburg is home to the Forest Park and Arkwright neighborhoods. Residents of these predominantly low-income and African American communities live among two hazardous waste sites, an operating chemical plant and several brownfields sites. A brownfield is an abandoned, idled, or under-used industrial and commercial property where expansion or redevelopment is complicated by real or perceived environmental contamination. As a result, Forest Park and Arkwright communities experienced high rates of cancer, respiratory illness and infant mortality. Proximity to environmental hazards, along with years of disinvestment began when urban renewal in the 1970s had decimated the community's formerly vibrant commercial core of 70 African American-owned businesses, creating the conditions for blight, unemployment, crime and homelessness. To address these community concerns, community member, activist and later State Representative Harold Mitchell formed the non-profit organization ReGenesis and pioneered the collaborative problem-solving approach to build

cooperative partnerships, overcome mistrust, and foster holistic, equitable revitalization in the Forest Park and Arkwright neighborhoods.

Harold realized that ReGenesis did not have the people, resources, or ability to implement the community vision on its own, so he enlisted other partners to support in areas that ReGenesis lacked. The ReGenesis Environmental Justice Partnership brought together ReGenesis, the city and county of Spartanburg, EPA Region 4, the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control, and later the Spartanburg Housing Authority and the University of South Carolina Upstate. The ReGenesis Environmental Justice Partnership provided the administrative, management and coordination structure needed to ensure that the project activities would be implemented as planned. An EPA Environmental Justice Small Grant (\$20,000) helped build the partnership's early foundation.

Strategic partnerships helped ReGenesis access necessary resources (e.g., financial, technical, legal, institutional), including federal, state, local grants and foundation grants, as well as Congressional appropriations. ReGenesis and the city and county of Spartanburg also signed a

COMMUNITY MODEL: COLLABORATIVE PROBLEM-SOLVING



Collaborative problem-solving is a seven-step community-based process that brings together multiple stakeholder groups (e.g., community groups, all levels of government, industry, and academia) to develop proactive, strategic and visionary solutions to address local environmental and/or public health and foster the conditions and resources necessary to realize stronger, more lasting solutions.

MOU, which outlined each partner's specific responsibilities. The MOU encouraged accountability, shared understanding of roles and a transparent structure for coordination. Through the MOU, the county established a Community Development Task Force to demolish abandoned or substandard housing, enforce neighborhood code and coordinate across different county departments. ReGenesis also became a Community Development Corporation, a status that gave them the authority to acquire and develop properties.

Through collaborative effort of more than 200 agencies, ReGenesis acquired more than \$270 million in public and private funding to transform the Forest Park and Arkwright neighborhoods through environmental cleanup; training and employment opportunities; improved quality of life and safety for the community; new housing projects; federally qualified healthcare centers; a new community recreation center; crime prevention; state environmental justice legislation; improvements in noise and odor control; new emergency preparedness procedures (including periodic joint emergency response exercises); and new access roads for the community. Neighborhood revitalization work did not come at the expense of community stability, and instead contributed to the health and well-being of locals, while ensuring a democratic spirit of inclusivity of residents in this economically and environmentally distressed community.

Harold Mitchell shares,

“Making equitable, targeted investments in our community was key to reversing decades of neglect and environmental racism, from the cleanup of

Superfund and brownfield sites, to building new roads and energy efficient homes, to providing good quality health care and job training. Now the next chapter means opportunities for clean energy infrastructure to create good-paying, high-quality jobs, and launch a just transition towards prosperity, environmental health, and revitalization.”

By applying collaborative problem-solving to build a robust network of supportive partnerships, ReGenesis has been able to secure significant investment and achieve collective impact for South Spartanburg in housing, health and local economic opportunity.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON REGENESIS AND COLLABORATIVE PROBLEM-SOLVING, PLEASE VISIT:

- To view the ReGenesis Partnership Benefits and Leveraging Report (2000-2020), visit:
- Project Description: michaeldbaker.com/portfolio-items/regenesis-partnership-benefits-and-leveraging-report-2000-2020
 - Press Release: michaeldbaker.com/MDB_WP_live_site/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/ReGenesis-Press-Release.pdf
 - Report: michaeldbaker.com/MDB_WP_live_site/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/ReGenesis-Report.pdf

For more information on Spartanburg's role in Collaborative Problem-Solving, please visit pages 19-31 here: epa.gov/environmentaljustice/epas-environmental-justice-collaborative-problem-solving-model

BUILD UP

BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA

Dr. Mark Martin began his teaching career with Teach for America at a low-income school in southwest Atlanta. He came to believe that education is a solution to poverty, but education alone cannot address the issue. After working with and looking to other schools and models around the world for solutions, Dr. Martin started Build Urban Prosperity (Build UP) in the Birmingham, Alabama, community of Ensley in 2017. This was the country's first and only school model that addresses poverty and urban blight while providing students with a quality education. Build UP focuses on addressing multiple root-causes of poverty simultaneously, including quality education; safe, stable, and affordable housing; high-wage, high-demand jobs; and social and financial capital.

Students begin the six-year program in the 9th grade and work toward earning both a high school diploma and an associate's degree while participating in a paid apprenticeship in the

real estate or construction sectors. In order to graduate, students must complete one of the three options under the school's "path to the middle class" – continue their education at a four-year college, accept a job with a Build UP partner, or create their own small business. Upon graduation, students are eligible to purchase two rehabilitated homes—one to live in and one that will be used as a rental property—with 0% interest mortgages.

Under the Build UP program, neighborhoods define their own goals and geographic focus area. Build UP enlists a class of 20 to 25 students to select a three to five block area. The cohort of students begin stabilizing the area by clearing blight, rehabilitating abandoned homes, and relocating quality homes to empty lots. The students also become empowered to continue improving and maintaining the area by becoming responsible landlords and supporting other programs. Dr. Martin believes these approaches:

“Let insiders lead change in the neighborhood and eventually profit off that change.”

Photo Caption: A young person fixing an aging façade (Source: USACE HQ, via Creative Commons).



Photo Caption: A community mural in Ensley (Source: André Natta, via Creative Commons).

Initially, Build UP students learned and worked alongside industry experts to rehabilitate homes. The students learned a variety of construction skills from electrical to carpentry to plumbing and were involved in every step of the rehabilitation process. In addition to rehabilitating existing homes, Build UP recently developed a program to physically move homes that are in good shape but are set to be demolished to vacant sites within a Build UP neighborhood. The original homeowner donates the home, receives a tax credit, and saves additional money by not paying demolition and disposal costs. In turn, the community adds a quality home to the neighborhood and continues Build UP's goal of providing affordable housing and clearing blight.

Build UP continues to look toward the future. They are opening a second school in Birmingham and have plans to open a third in Cleveland, Ohio, in a few years. They have also created a replication handbook with different options for other communities and

groups to replicate their model to continue to spread dignified change throughout the country. Until recently, Build UP has primarily relied on philanthropic donations for funding. As the organization has grown, they have started looking for additional revenue sources, including various tax incentives and government grant opportunities.

The Build UP program focuses on job training that directly benefits both the students and the neighborhood with affordable housing and related community needs to build sustainable neighborhood wealth long term, meeting one neighborhood need by fulfilling a second.

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT BUILD UP AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN ENSLEY PLEASE SEE:

buildup.work
buildup.work/why-ensley.html

COMMUNITY MODEL: BUILD UP

Build UP is the nation's first and only early-college workforce development high school, providing low-income youth with career-ready skills through paid apprenticeships with industry-aligned secondary and postsecondary academic coursework, leading them to become educated, credentialed, and empowered civic leaders, professionals, homeowners and landlords.





Photo Caption: A Woodlawn Foundation community event (Source: Woodlawn United Foundation).

BIRMINGHAM LAND BANK AUTHORITY & THE WOODLAWN UNITED FOUNDATION

BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA

Land banking and land trusts are not stand-alone methods of achieving equitable development. But in the battle for community stabilization, land banks can be a foundational tool to achieve multiple community goals. The city of Birmingham, Alabama, created the Birmingham Land Bank Authority (BLBA) as a public corporation in 2014 to work with many other community non-profits to help stabilize low-income communities, while improving housing options for residents, addressing abandoned and blighted properties, reducing city resources expended on abandoned and blighted properties, and increasing the property tax base. The BLBA also works to prevent speculative purchasing by developers, in turn reducing gentrification. The BLBA has cleared title for over 10,000 properties in Birmingham. This allows citizens or community organizations to take ownership of these properties putting them back into productive use and back on the tax rolls.

In addition to operations and personnel costs, the BLBA can spend over \$5,000 to quiet the title for each property that goes through the

process. Most of the BLBA's funding comes directly from the city; however, the BLBA is working toward having more of its funding come from the proceeds of selling these properties. The BLBA is also establishing a foundation to help tap into other funding sources and grant opportunities.

As a foundational tool, the BLBA works closely with the objectives of other organizations, mostly neighborhood non-profits. For example, the Crestwood community has acquired over 130 properties, 80 of them through BLBA. The Woodlawn United Foundation, a non-profit creating affordable housing, improving schools and creating community spaces, started in 2010 and follows the Purpose Built Communities model, which focuses on three pillars: quality mixed-income housing, education, and community wellness. The Woodlawn Foundation leads a partnership collective consisting of 40 non-profits formally known as Woodlawn. However, the speed of its affordable housing progress is enhanced by BLBA's ability to clear title for properties to be put into more affordable housing. In August 2018, 20 properties were acquired from BLBA, marking the first such bulk sale of property, with an additional 20 properties planned for acquisition. This significantly advanced Woodlawn's objectives for mixed-income and affordable housing.

Woodlawn has focused on the existing historic character of the neighborhood, helping homeowners acquire home rehabilitation

COMMUNITY MODEL: LAND BANK



Land banks are governmental entities or non-profit corporations that are focused on the conversion of vacant, abandoned and tax delinquent properties into productive use. Land banks are granted special real estate powers and legal authority pursuant to state-enabling statutes to allow them to acquire title to these problem properties, eliminate the liabilities, and transfer the properties to new, responsible owners in a transparent manner that results in outcomes consistent with community-based plans.

For more information, see [Center for Community Progress](#).

grants and also hosting homeowner training in the basics of insurance needs and writing wills that will help address the multigenerational poverty that once plagued this neighborhood. Expanding quickly with the assistance of over 40 community partners, Woodlawn works within the community on many social justice objectives simultaneously, including developing leadership among community associations that will support a thriving local business culture and advance post-secondary education.

Controlling real estate is a key foundational strategy for stabilizing and revitalizing a neighborhood, providing a platform to offer affordable housing along with job training, education and community health services that otherwise may not be possible.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON LAND BANKS AND BIRMINGHAM'S LAND BANK, PLEASE VISIT:

BLBA's general website
birminghamlandbank.org

For more information about land banks, please visit:
community-wealth.org/strategies/panel/clts/index.html

Center for Community Progress publications about land banks
communityprogress.net/publications-pages-396.php

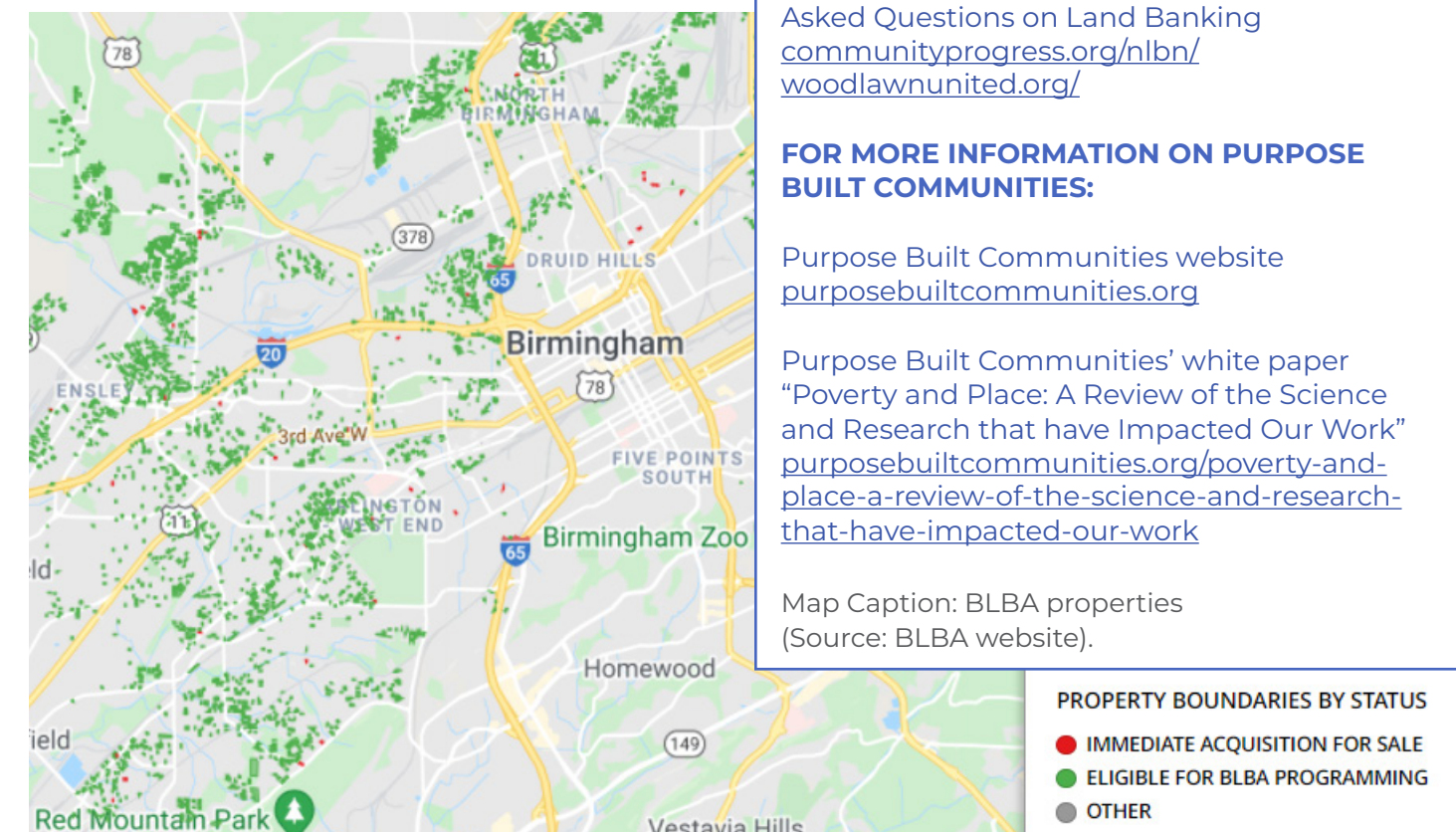
Center for Community Progress Frequently Asked Questions on Land Banking
communityprogress.org/nlbn/woodlawnunited.org/

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON PURPOSE BUILT COMMUNITIES:

Purpose Built Communities website
purposebuiltcommunities.org

Purpose Built Communities' white paper "Poverty and Place: A Review of the Science and Research that have Impacted Our Work"
purposebuiltcommunities.org/poverty-and-place-a-review-of-the-science-and-research-that-have-impacted-our-work

Map Caption: BLBA properties (Source: BLBA website).



PROPERTY BOUNDARIES BY STATUS

- IMMEDIATE ACQUISITION FOR SALE
- ELIGIBLE FOR BLBA PROGRAMMING
- OTHER

PUTTING EQUITABLE DEVELOPMENT INTO ACTION

Community-based organizations can play a significant role in transforming their neighborhoods to address the needs of their community. These stories celebrate communities who are charting their own future by adopting models that empower residents. They also share the same essential components of an effective process, applied to the unique local needs and context. Starting with community needs and strong partnerships, these community organizations are leveraging locally-controlled assets, regulatory tools, and national organizations to tackle multiple inter-related challenges at the same time. These integrated solutions invest in both the people and the place and build toward prosperity for existing residents with education, job training, jobs, community health services, and housing. EPA invites interested communities to learn from these inspiring change-makers and tap into EPA resources that can help take the next step to achieve community-driven solutions.

Photo Caption: A child and adult planting seedlings in a raised bed (Source: EPA).



+ The following resources are helpful, no matter where your community has needs:

For strategies and stories, see the Region 4 Brownfields website:

- epa.gov/brownfields/region4

For more information about EPA Equitable Development and Environmental Justice programs, visit:

- epa.gov/environmentaljustice/equitable-development-and-environmental-justice

For information on the Superfund Redevelopment Program, visit:

- epa.gov/superfund-redevelopment

Build partnerships using the Collaborative Problem-Solving Model:

- epa.gov/environmentaljustice/epas-environmental-justice-collaborative-problem-solving-model

Address potentially contaminated commercial or industrial property through EPA's Brownfields Grant Program:

- epa.gov/brownfields

Explore other land redevelopment technical assistance programs, including developing a roadmap that sets the overall agenda from larger goals to more specific strategies:

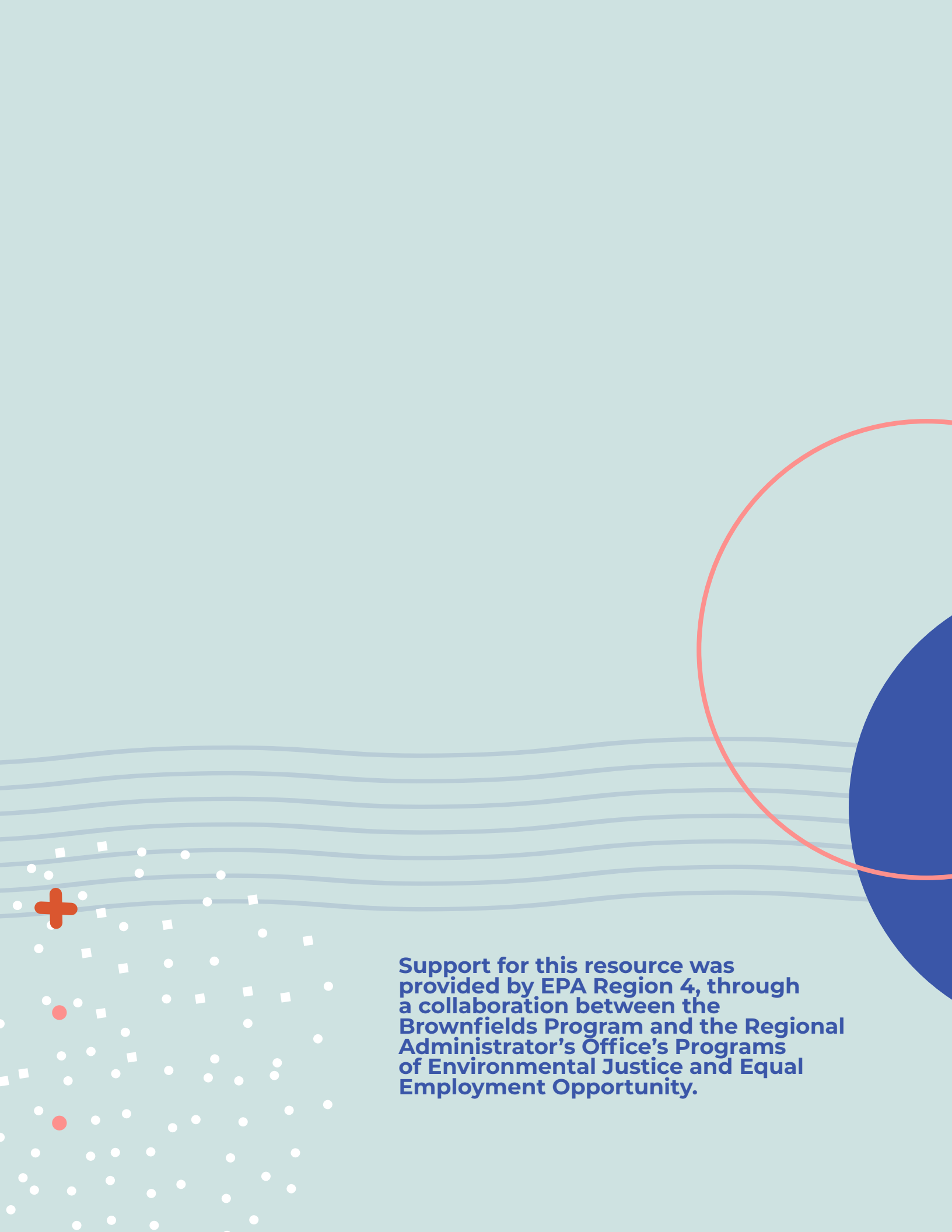
- epa.gov/land-revitalization
- epa.gov/brownfields/brownfields-technical-assistance-training-and-research
- epa.gov/sites/production/files/2018-10/documents/resource_roadmap.pdf

For more information about EPA's Smart Growth Programs:

- epa.gov/smartgrowth/smart-growth-technical-assistance-programs
 - Includes Building Blocks for Sustainable Communities, Cool & Connected, Greening America's Communities, Healthy Places for Healthy People, Local Foods Local Places, Recreational Economy for Rural Communities, among others

Connect, network and learn from philanthropic foundations, such as:

- The Southeastern Council of Foundations:
 - secf.org
- Council on Foundations lists an extensive network of foundations:
 - cof.org/content/philanthropic-support-network
- Environmental Grantmakers Association:
 - ega.org with a searchable database of nearly 125,000 grants, and many other such organizations.
- Video about tips to fundraising from philanthropic organization: Philanthropy and Community Development:
 - youtube.com/watch?v=J29RlaEOqhA



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