

STRONG CITIES, STRONG COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE (SC2)

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Place-Based Federal Initiatives

Partnership for
Sustainable
Communities

Strong Cities, Strong
Communities
(*National Resource
Network*)



Promise Zones
(*Neighborhood
Revitalization Initiative*)

Detroit Federal
Working Group

And many more ...

Strong Cities, Strong Communities (SC2)

- Governed by Executive Order (E.O. 13602)

- White House-led partnership between **19 federal agencies**



- SC2 supports the President's agenda to build **Ladders of Opportunity** for those working hard to make it to the middle class.

SC2 Components

SC2 Deployed Federal Teams

- Team of federal partners advise cities, provide technical assistance
- Team leads embedded in City Hall

SC2 National Resource Network

- Consortia of public and private experts
- Short- and long-term TA opportunities
- Peer networking; resource clearinghouse

Fellows/VISTAs

- Partner with German Marshall Fund and CNCS to build local capacity
- Fellows/volunteers embedded in cities

SC2 Economic Visioning Challenge

- U.S. Economic Development Administration-funded local competitions to spur economic development projects

SC2 Cities

To date, the Strong Cities, Strong Communities Initiative has provided technical assistance and capacity building to cities across the country that have enabled these communities to **more effectively use more than \$410 million dollars** in existing federal funds.

SC2 Deployed Federal Teams

Second Round

- Brownsville, TX
- Flint, MI
- Gary, IN
- Macon, GA
- Rockford, IL
- Rocky Mount, NC
- St. Louis, MO

First Round

- Chester, PA
- Cleveland and Youngstown, OH
- Detroit, MI
- Fresno, CA
- Memphis, TN
- New Orleans, LA

SC2 National Resource Network

- Fall River, MA
- Meridian, MS
- Miami, FL
- Kansas City, KS
- Yuba City, CA
- Wilkes-Barre, PA

SC2 Economic Visioning Challenge

- Greensboro, NC
- Las Vegas, NV
- Hartford, CT

SC2 Deployed Federal Teams

- **Interagency, federal teams** work closely with city leadership on the city's economic development priorities.
- Teams work to **improve coordination among federal agencies, programs, and investments** in an effort to better leverage existing resources and identify new opportunities, including philanthropic partnerships.
- Provide technical advice and expertise, while taking a **solutions-oriented approach**.
- Cut through bureaucratic tape to assist cities with **spending existing federal funds**.



Members of the SC2 team in Macon, Georgia.

SC2 National Resource Network

- Three-year, \$10 million technical assistance program funded by HUD and implemented by a group of leading experts from the private and public sectors.
- Communities connect to a network of private- and public-sector experts that will provide strategic help on key economic issues and aid the turnaround of local economies.
 - ✓ Direct technical assistance: rolling application
 - ✓ "311 for Cities" feature
 - ✓ Resources and Federal Technical Assistance Library
 - ✓ Local Resource Network



nationalresourcenetwork.org

SC2 Best Practices and Findings

Human Capital

Success factors:

- Mayors with a strong vision and plan
- Committed federal agencies
- Federal team who respect city autonomy and understand city leadership/culture

Bottom-Up Approach

- Creates and repairs city-fed and city/community relationships
- City staff and partners are more aware of existing federal resources
- Teams cut through bureaucratic red tape

Federal/ City Talent Development

Federal/ City employees:

- Gain better understanding of how cities operate
- Able to more effectively target federal resources
- Increased interagency knowledge

US-Mexico Border



SC2 Brownsville: Observations

- **Federal agencies are learning new cultural competencies to work with communities** – particularly bi-cultural communities- in a more hands on role.
- **City employees are learning more about the constituencies that federal partners work with and are being connected.**
- Federal team members are **learning how local governments work** and critically think on **innovative ways to offer support** through knowledge sharing.
- **"It's all about people"**- Federal and City employees are focused on the same client- the community.
- **Not "one size" fits all approach**; both parties learning about how to tailor equitable place based approaches to meet needs of the community.

SC2 Brownsville Practices: Building a Collective Team

- The City of Brownsville wanted to build a '**Strong Foundation**' by building up their **organizational assets**.
- Building up their city employees as part of the SC2 inter-agency federal team so that they'll work together with outside partners to implement their SC2 goals locally.
- Assisting local leadership create the time and space, and access the expertise, to evaluate their city and region's assets to build local visions to strengthen & rebuild, their economies
- Approach is about facilitating **peer-learning** and **knowledge exchange** between public servants of both levels of government in order to directly serve communities.

SC2 Brownsville: Moving Forward

- City of Brownsville puts together an **internal city POC's** to work with SC2 Federal Team.
- SC2 City Team **re-evaluated** their SC2 application to **define target goals** and **objectives** for a draft SC2 Work-plan in November 2015.
- **SC2 Reconvening Roundtables —September-
November 2016**
 - Continue to dialogue and work on the synergetic areas identified by the city .
 - **Finalize out the actions of the SC2 Work-plan.**

SC2 Brownsville: Areas of Work

- Environment and Infrastructure
 - Reduce municipal energy cost while protecting environment.
 - Preparing for climate change and natural disasters through smart growth.
- Economic Vitality
 - Focus on the Airport
 - Assist with creating local Workforce Strategies
 - Support Small Business
 - Revitalize Downtown
- Health and Wellness
 - Develop a blueprint to encourage healthy living and smarter choices in how the City grows.
- Community Engagement
 - Using existing federal tools to inform citizens

Case Study: SC2 City of Brownsville

Environment and Infrastructure: Reducing Municipal Energy Costs

The Brownsville SC2 team worked in support of Mayor Martinez's and the Brownsville Community vision for a sustainable and climate ready city. The SC2 team:

- Worked with the City to prioritize and invest in strategic infrastructure that supports sustainable climate practices by introducing renewable energy options for the community; ie, Solar;
- Started a dialogue on energy & efficiency needs for low income housing;(HUD, EPA, DOE)
- Identified opportunities for small business training and development around energy and innovation (HUD, EPA, DOE, EDA, SBA)

On June 2, 2016, **Brownsville** is **one of 30 cities** nationwide to participate in the **SoISPARC technical assistance program** provided by **the Solar Foundation** and funded by the **Department of Energy**.

The outlined process that the City of Brownsville developed was recently highlighted as an example for cities by *The Solar Foundation*.

Case Study: SC2 City of Brownsville

Environment and Infrastructure: Preparing for Climate Change and Natural Disasters through Smart Growth

The Brownsville SC2 team is working in support of Mayor Martinez's and the Brownsville Community vision for a sustainable and climate ready city. The SC2 team:

- Worked with the City to analyze and invest in strategic infrastructure that supports sustainable climate practices for reducing Stormwater;
- Started a dialogue pairing scientific researchers with city "real world" researchers to understand principles of hydrology;
- Identified opportunities for training and development around environmental health, hydrology and smart growth with federal agencies and local academia;
- Participated and collaborated with the City of Brownsville to serve host to the Good Neighbor Environmental Board (GNEB) in order to bring attention towards the issues of bi-national concern to the City of Brownsville and Sister City of Matamoros.
- **Brownsville is one of six cities** nationwide to participate in the **Greening Americas Communities technical assistance program** provided and funded by the **U.S. Environmental Protection Agency**.

Case Study: SC2 City of Brownsville

Economic Vitality: Capacity Development to support and strengthen small-business

In support of Brownsville's goals for economic development which includes supporting/retaining local business, the SC2 team is working to align community efforts and partnerships that will:

- Connect small businesses with community local partners who support local/small business
- Educate and empower financial literacy around capital access and assisting the city towards improving policies and priorities that promote long-term success for small business;

January 2016, the City of Brownsville and the **U.S. Small Business Administration**, signed a Strategic Alliance Memorandum (SAM) **to encourage entrepreneurship and economic empowerment through increased collaboration and technical assistance** for small business.

Case Study: SC2 City of Brownsville

Health and Wellness: Develop a blueprint to encourage healthy living and smarter choices in how the City grows.

In support of Brownsville's goals for health and wellness which includes neighborhood revitalization and preparing for public health risks, the SC2 team is working to align community efforts and partnerships that will:

- Neighborhood Revitalization- Pilot one project that would assess neighborhood revitalization by selecting one site within the city that would benefit from revitalization efforts.
- Educate and empower the community with information, tools, and data around public health issues of concern in order to promote more informed decisions.

June 2016, the **Housing Authority for the City of Brownsville (HACB)** and the **City of Brownsville** partnered, submitted and was granted a **HUD Choice Neighborhoods** grant to **transform the Buena Vida neighborhood**.

EPA inviting SC2 cities to participate in extramural research around environment and public health data for **ZIKA extramural research**. Brownsville was invited to collaborate with **EPA's Office of Research and Development** researchers on extramural research around **engaging citizens and community partners on temporal-spatial analysis of mosquito breeding habitats and mitigating vector-borne diseases**.

Questions?