Promise in Los Angeles?

Insights on comprehensive place-based initiatives and the potential for Promise Neighborhoods in communities across America

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Executive Summary

Comprehensive place-based initiatives address cyclical urban poverty by providing services that mirror the interconnectedness of the assets and needs in a community. Promise Neighborhoods, a new initiative from the Department of Education, provides federal funds to allow cities to implement or continue to implement place-based comprehensive community development strategies while using schools as the focal point. The Promise Neighborhoods concept is loosely based on the Harlem Children's Zone, an organization that connects education with community services in a 97-block area of Central Harlem. The initiative presents an opportunity for Los Angeles to revitalize neighborhoods that suffer from cyclical poverty.

In order to explore the potential for Promise Neighborhoods in Los Angeles, I spoke with individuals across the country, analyzed the planning process in Los Angeles, and conducted five case studies of cities that are ahead of the curve in their planning to attract funding from the new federal initiative. In these case studies I explore how cities are deciding what neighborhood(s) should apply, which schools to include, and which programmatic features to emphasize. In addition, I analyze how cities applying for Promise Neighborhoods funding are establishing organizational structures and leadership, raising necessary matching funds, and creating systems of evaluation.

On the basis of my research, I identify best practices to guide Los Angeles and other locations applying for Promise Neighborhoods funding, make recommendations for how Los Angeles should move forward with the process, and offer conclusions concerning the role of Promise Neighborhoods in building a larger agenda for comprehensive place-based initiatives in Los Angeles and elsewhere.

In L.A., I recommend swift action on the Promise Neighborhood opportunity via collaboration with community-based organizations, public officials, schools, and private foundations to create an application that tells the story of need in Los Angeles while highlighting the assets and capacity that exist within neighborhoods such as Boyle Heights and South Los Angeles.

I. Introduction

The philosophy behind [the Harlem Children's Zone] is simple: If poverty is a disease that infects an entire community in the form of unemployment and violence, failing schools, and broken homes, then we can't just treat those symptoms in isolation.
- President Barack Obama

Low-income neighborhoods suffer from lack of adequate schools, useable playgrounds, decent housing, functioning civic organizations, safe streets, access to health services, and proximity to nutritious food. The federal government's policies have, not only failed to serve neighborhoods of intense generational poverty, but have passed legislation that maintains poverty in urban neighborhoods. Schools have become pipelines to prisons. Zip codes have become an indicator of health problems. At a conference hosted by PolicyLink[1] and the Harlem Children's Zone in November 2009 Deputy Secretary of HUD, Ron Sims proclaimed, " a zip code should be an address not a life determinant."[2] By failing to address the issues in neighborhoods across the nation, segregated poverty has become institutionalized.

But while low-income neighborhoods frequently offer limited resources and opportunities, often they contain significant assets, as well: strong social networks, for instance, and a deep sense of community with a legacy of resiliency. Lacking adequate infrastructure, many communities respond in innovative ways to address their problems. Some create non-profits and community-based organizations to provide important resources to the community, while others form community-organizing groups to change political power dynamics and build local leadership.

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[1] PolicyLink is a national research and action institute dedicated to advancing economic and social equity.
[2] Remarks by Ron Simons at *Changing the Odds Conference: Learning from the Harlem Children's Zone Model*, November 9, 2009.

Because they address the challenges that exist in low-income communities while also recognizing existing community assets, place-based strategies can be a valuable and effective way to revitalize and sustain neighborhoods. *Comprehensive* place-based strategies go a step further, addressing the ills of concentrated poverty by providing interconnected programs that mirror the interconnectedness of neighborhoods. Without a comprehensive place-based approach, programs are typically created in isolation from each other, and institutionalized in silos. Attempting to address problems via topical silos ignores the interconnectedness of community needs and assets, and as a result frequently does not get to the root of problems.

Comprehensive place-based approaches are becoming more and more visible across the country. National urban policy efforts are increasingly place-based and include various innovative approaches. The Obama administration has embraced a strong place-based approach across various departments; for example, consider the EPA's Sustainable Communities program and HUD's Choice Neighborhood program. States including Wisconsin and Florida are enacting legislation that promotes comprehensive place-based efforts focused on coupling broader community services with schools. Foundations related to health, housing, and education are shifting their programming focus from topical areas to specific neighborhoods.

In New York, an innovative place-based education and community development effort has secured national attention. Harlem Children's Zone, founded by Geoffrey Canada, operates on a place-based model that focuses on schools and ties them to broader community institutions. Harlem Children's Zone makes links to broader community institutions and sets a model to be replicated. During Barrack Obama's campaign for

President, Harlem Children's Zone became an often-cited example and model, as he

discussed strategies to combat urban poverty

During the 2008 U.S. presidential campaign, Barack Obama pointed to Harlem

Children's Zone as a model to transform communities that could be replicated in cities

across the nation. On July 17, 2008, for example, he said:

> In this country – of all countries – no child's destiny should be determined before he takes his first step. No little girl's future should be confined to the neighborhood she was born into. Our government cannot guarantee success and happiness in life, but what we can do as a nation is to ensure that every American who wants to work is prepared to work, able to find a job, and able to stay out of poverty. What we can do is make our neighborhoods whole again.[3]

A former community organizer on the South Side of Chicago, Obama offered hope that,

if he were to become president, there would follow a federal focus on cities from a

grassroots perspective.

Now that he is in office, Obama has allocated $10 million dollars of the 2010

federal budget to planning grants to help 20 communities replicate Harlem Children's

Zone. These locations will be called Promise Neighborhoods. The rollout of this new

federal education initiative represents a visible and comprehensive approach to

addressing neighborhood revitalization and education. Will it work? The answer is

unclear, but given the history of federal place-based urban agendas and the capacity and

vision of community stakeholders across the country, the Promise Neighborhoods

program might be a viable and successful approach.

Numerous American cities have begun thinking about and planning for Promise

Neighborhoods. Hosted by Harlem Children's Zone and PolicyLink, the Changing the

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[3] "Remarks of Senator Barack Obama: Changing the Odds for Urban America." July 18, 2007. Available: http://barackobama.com/2007/07/18/remarks_of_senator_barack_obam_19.php.

Odds: Learning from the Harlem Children's Zone Model conference was widely attended by delegations of community organizations, public officials, foundations, and teachers from various cities. Across the nation, local governments, philanthropic funding sources, community organizations, and schools are thinking about ways to organize around comprehensive place-based programs that link to education, in order to better position themselves for the Promise Neighborhoods application. Although the Promise Neighborhoods program is not yet in its final form, and the content of related Request for Proposals is not yet finalized, stakeholders are coming together to strategize about the promise of comprehensive place-based approaches that partner with schools. Whether or not these efforts end up bearing fruit in the Promise Neighborhoods application process, the act of local organizing has mobilized communities to think creatively and collaboratively about addressing poverty and neighborhood revitalization.

II. Research and methodology

This paper looks at the importance of Promise Neighborhoods legislation and the range of activities communities are engaged in to prepare to apply for the program. In addition, it will consider the feasibility of Promise Neighborhoods in Los Angeles, and identify issues and strategies that applicants from that city should be aware of.

Since September 2009, I have been speaking with stakeholders and other interested parties about the potential for Promise Neighborhoods in Los Angeles. In these conversations, a number of common questions have emerged. What collaborative structures are likely to work? What outcomes will be expected? How should data be collected and used? What schools would it be wisest for Promise Neighborhoods to work with? Will Los Angeles only submit one application? What role should the city take in the application and planning process?

To better understand the Promise Neighborhoods planning process, and to attempt to answer some of these questions, I used a variety of methodological approaches. One portion of my research included interviewing individuals working with Promise Neighborhoods on a national level to obtain an understanding of federal-government perspectives on the program. In addition, I developed case studies of five cities' efforts to plan for Promise Neighborhoods: Austin, Chicago, Milwaukee, New Orleans, and Oakland. By speaking with individuals in each city, analyzing planning documents, exploring demographics, and studying existing programs, I was able to get a deeper understanding of they're going about the process, while at the same time identifying strategies, obstacles, and lessons for Los Angeles. Finally, I studied Promise Neighborhoods planning efforts in Los Angeles, while also looking at the needs and

assets of the city today. This included participating in conference calls with public sector officials and funders, attending meetings for other comprehensive place-based initiatives, and interviewing seasoned experts on these sorts of programs in Los Angeles.

Before continuing, it's important to note that discussing the Promise Neighborhoods in advance of the release of the program's Request for Proposals (RFP) has presented some challenges. When I began my research in September 2009, many believed that the RFP would be released by the start of 2010. Since the RFP has still not been released as of the writing of this paper, many of the specifics regarding Promise Neighborhoods and various cities' efforts to implement the program in their schools remains tentative.

In my paper I first present and overview of the Promise Neighborhood program and a history of the Harlem Children's Zone effort led by Geoffrey Canada. I then situate this emerging initiative in the context of Obama's current urban agenda, other Department of Education initiatives, and past federal place-based initiatives. I end my section contextualizing Promise Neighborhoods by looking in-depth at Los Angeles's attempt to secure federal Empowerment Zone funds. Next I survey the current situation in Los Angeles in terms of leadership, non-profit sector, and challenges to access if the city is well poised for Promise Neighborhoods.

Then I will turn to five case studies, to explore and lift up thoughts and practices from other cities in the nation. After thematically pulling out best practices in terms of neighborhood choice, identifying schools, choosing programs and scope, organizational structure and leadership, funding tactics, and preparing evaluation methods I will apply these findings to Los Angeles. Returning to Los Angeles I will summarize the lesson for

Los Angeles, recommend ways in which Los Angeles should move forward with Promise

Neighborhoods, and finally conclude commenting on the place of Promise

Neighborhoods in the larger progressive movement.

III. Promise Neighborhoods: background and context

Harlem Children's Zone

Amidst countless charter models and numerous proposed school reform initiatives, Harlem Children's Zone has secured the attention of President Barack Obama and others investigating school reform models. What is unique and innovative about Harlem Children's Zone? While the Harlem Children's Zone model is innovative in its attempt to integrate schools with community services, it is not the only organization in the country engaging in this work. From the Atlanta's East Lake Foundation to Chicago's Community School movement, locations across the nation are tying schools to place-based community development approaches. But under the leadership of Geoffrey Canada, Harlem Children's Zone has perfected the packaging of its program as a model, proactively sharing that model with others. Since 2003, for example, Harlem Children's Zone has been educating other community organizations at its Practitioner's Institute, a workshop that presents the model, allows visitors to see the zone in action, and discusses methods of recreating the zone in other locations. Its efforts to create a clear and concise model and then establish a system to share this model nationally and internationally are what set Harlem Children's Zone apart from other organizations engaged in similar work.

Here's how Harlem Children's Zone was born. In the late 1980s and 1990s, while Harlem suffered from a crack epidemic, the Rheedlen Center for Families and Children began to question its model of sporadic and fragmented social serves. The Center's executive director, Geoffrey Canada, observed that community programming efforts divided into topical silos were not leading to massive change. As a result, in 1997,

Canada launched Harlem Children's Zone. Today, Harlem Children's Zone serves 97

blocks in Central Harlem, including 10,462 children and 7,434 adults. Harlem Children's

Zone operates by following five key directives:

1) *Utilize a neighborhood based, at-scale approach.*
   Engaging the entire neighborhood helps to achieve three goals. It reaches children in numbers significant enough to affect the culture of a community; it transforms the physical and social environments that impacts children's development; and it creates programs at a scale large enough to meet local need.

2) *Utilize a pipeline approach.*
   Develop excellent, accessible programs and schools and link them to one another so that they provide uninterrupted support for children's healthy growth, starting with pre-natal programs for parents and finishing when young people graduate from college. Surround the pipeline with additional programs that support families and the larger community.

Figure 1: Visual of Harlem Children's Zone Program
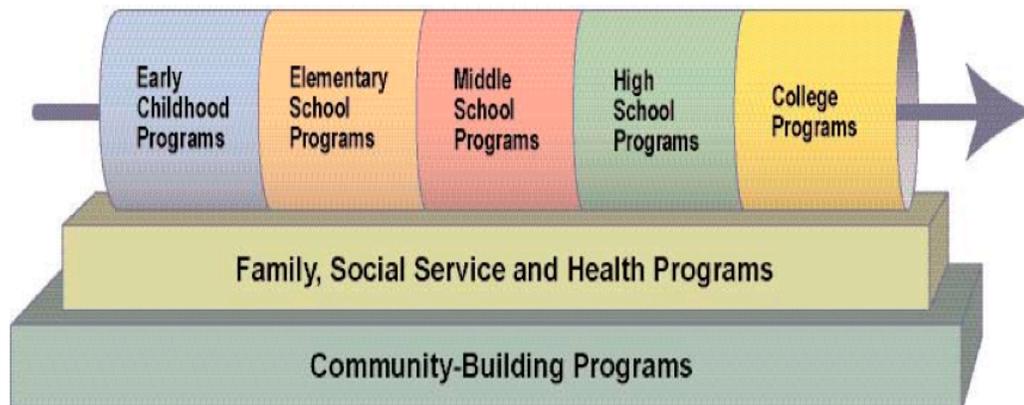
Source: Courtesy of Harlem Children's Zone Website

3) *Build community.*
   Build community among residents, institutions, and stakeholders, who help to create the environment necessary for children's healthy development.

4) *Evaluate frequently.*

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Evaluate program outcomes and create a feedback loop that cycles data back to management for use in improving and refining program offerings.

5) *Build a culture of success*.
Cultivate a culture of success rooted in passion, accountability, leadership, and teamwork.[4]

In Central Harlem, the presence of the Harlem Children's Zone is clearly visible in the 97-block zone it encompasses. From the newly built headquarters housing the Harlem Children's Zone charter school, Promise Academy, as well as other programs, to various storefronts that have been converted to program spaces, Canada's model is deeply entrenched in the neighborhood. In addition to the charter school, the services and programs offered by Harlem Children's Zone include (but are not limited to) a Baby College for expecting parents, free health clinics and dental services, initiatives to address high rates of asthma in the area, after-school tutoring programs, and college counseling services. Canada has created an organization that saturates the area with services that specifically serve neighborhood residents.

Should the Harlem Children's Zone model be replicated across the United States? Can the Harlem Children's Zone even be replicated? The possibility of success coming out of a strict replication of the Harlem Children's Zone model remains unclear. Harvard economists Will Dobbie and Roland G. Fryer Jr. assert that the Harlem Children's Zone "is enormously effective at increasing the achievement of the poorest minority children."[5] But their opinion is based solely on the model's ability to increase educational

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[4] Harlem Children's Zone, "Whatever it Takes: A White Paper on the Harlem Children's Model," (November 2009).
[5] Will Dobbie and Roland G. Fryer, "Are High-Quality Schools Enough to Close the Achievement Gap? Evidence from a Bold Social Experiment in Harlem" (November 2009).

attainment; the larger effects on the Zone's entire 97-block area have yet to be evaluated. Critics have pointed to this lack of comprehensive analysis of the program, as well as Harlem Children's Zone's reliance on the charisma of its leader Geoffrey Canada, the high cost of the program, and its brief history. Since Promise Neighborhoods will be modeled loosely on Harlem Children's Zone, it is important to keep these criticisms in mind when attempting to craft other zones based on the model. Ideally, as a result, neighborhoods will be able to reform the flaws in the Harlem Children's Zone model at the same time as they construct models that align more specifically with their own particular needs and assets.

Promise Neighborhoods

As discussed above, the Promise Neighborhoods RFP has yet to be released, so many of the program's details remain unclear. What is clear is that the initiative will be housed in the Department of Education, but will also be guided by the White House Urban Affairs Interagency Working Group. Promise Neighborhoods legislation has been included in the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, formerly known as No Child Left Behind. In 2010, the federal budget allotted $10 million for planning grants, and the 2011 budget proposes $210 million dollars for Promise Neighborhoods. It is believed that in 2011, $200 million will be used for implementation, while $10 million will be used for further planning grants. It is commonly understood that the Department of Education will release the RFP, neighborhoods will apply for planning grants, the federal government will select neighborhoods to be involved in the planning process, and then the federal government will re-evaluate and allocate funds to selected neighborhoods to implement the program. The implementation phase of the program is expected to span

five years. While the Promise Neighborhoods program will allocate money to neighborhoods, it is likely that, to fund portions of the program, Promise Neighborhoods will require those neighborhoods to obtain matching grants from private foundations, city or state governments, and/or corporations.

Department of Education

Looking beyond Promise Neighborhoods to the broader context of the Department of Education personnel and policies illuminates the department's priorities and can give neighborhoods insight into what direction to take in preparing for the Promise Neighborhoods opportunity.

Within the Department of Education, Promise Neighborhoods will be housed in the Office of Innovation and Improvement. Under the guidance of Arne Duncan, the Department of Education has chosen to focus on academic achievement with high expectations in low-performing schools, with a more holistic, community-focused approach to schools than in the past. Duncan hails from Chicago and comes to the Department of Education with an extensive background in Community Schools. Referring to his time in Chicago, at the Harlem Children's Conference in November 2009, Duncan said:

> Now, it's no secret that I am a big believer in high quality out-of-school programs, including full-service community schools. When I was CEO of the Chicago Public Schools, the city became the national leader in whole-district adoption of community schools. By the time I left, Chicago had more than 150 community schools, the most in the nation. Many of those schools have full-service health clinics.[6]

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[6] Remarks by Arne Duncan at Changing the Odds Conference: Learning from the Harlem Children's zone model, (November 9, 2009), http://www.hcz.org/images/stories/Arne_Duncan_keynote_excerpts.pdf.

Clearly, Duncan's emphasis on "full-service community schools" bodes well for the future of the Promise Neighborhoods program.

Race to the Top, which offers financial rewards to encourage education reform on a state level, is another key Department of Education program; unlike Promise Neighborhoods, the initial Race to the Top application and grant process is already complete. While the program's award of $700 million to Tennessee and Delaware left other states frustrated at the Department of Education because they didn't receive funding despite conforming to Department of Education requirements, aspects of Race to the Top are in line with Promise Neighborhoods' intended outcomes. According to Hayling Price, policy analyst at United Neighborhood Centers for America, these include "turning around the lowest-achieving schools, demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps, innovations for improving early learning outcomes, and supporting the identification of best practices, program evaluation, information sharing, and replication efforts among local efforts."[7] Recognizing these areas of overlap, some states, such as Wisconsin, included plans for children's zones in their Race to the Top proposals. If it had received Race to the Top funding, Wisconsin would have used a significant amount of the money to create a children's zone.[8]

Obama's Broader Urban Agenda

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[7] Hayling Price, "The Wisconsin Initiative for Neighborhoods and Schools that Work for Children", United Neighborhood Centers of America, (March 9, 2010), http://www.alliance1.org/Public_Policy/PDFs/WINS%20for%20Children.pdf.
[8] Erin Richards. "Children's Zone program advocated for Milwaukee", Journal of the Sentential, (Jan. 13, 2010).

While the Promise Neighborhoods program is housed in the Department of Education, it is but one program within Obama's larger urban agenda. Thus far, Obama's urban agenda focuses on place-based initiatives and attempts to break traditional federal silos by creating opportunities for collaboration, with the goal of coordinating and streamlining programs to more effectively address issues facing urban America.

On February 19, 2009, Obama began establishing his urban agenda by creating the White House Office of Urban Affairs. He appointed Adolfo Carrion to head the newly formed office. In order to communicate the administration's urban agenda and learn about innovative policies and programs in cities across the country, Carrion embarked on a national listening tour. From Philadelphia to Atlanta, Carrion and others from the Office of Urban Affairs presented the federal urban agenda and looked for programs and models that could be replicated nationally. This quest for replicable models, of course, brings to mind Obama's designation of the Harlem Children's Zone as a model for Promise Neighborhoods.

Relatedly, on August 11, 2009, in a memorandum to the heads of the executive departments of agencies that will be involved in the White House Office of Urban Affairs Interagency Working group, the White House stated its plans for developing effective place-based policies.[9] The memo defined federal place-based policies as policies that "leverage investment by focusing resources in targeted places and drawing on the

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[9] The White House, "Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies: Developing Effective Place-based Policies for the FY 2011 Budget." (August 11, 2009), http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/assets/memoranda_fy2009/m09-28.pdf.

compounding effect of cooperative arrangements."[10] Then the memo laid out the 3

principles for current federal place-based policy:

> 1) Clear, measurable, and carefully evaluated goals should guide investment and regulation
>
> 2). Changes should come from the community level, and often through partnership
>
> 3). Complex problems require flexible, integrated solutions, and many important changes demand a regional approach

These principles should be referenced as neighborhoods begin to formulate their Promise

Neighborhoods, as aligning proposed programs with these goals will inevitably result in a

more competitive application.

The Interagency Working Group of the White House Office of Urban Affairs

embodies the federal government's new emphasis on collaboration. The Interagency

Working Group consists of representatives of various federal departments, including the

Department of Education, HUD, the Department of Labor, and EPA. According to

Melody Barnes, Domestic Policy Advisor, "[W]e are starting to break down the silos that

have historically separated federal agencies and are ebbing to rebuild our communities

while advancing economic opportunity."[11] The Working Group will oversee and advise

Promise Neighborhoods. By expanding the guidance of Promise Neighborhoods to other

agencies that deal with urban policy, the government hopes to break down the silos that

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[10] The White House, "Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies: Developing Effective Place-based Policies for the FY 2011 Budget." (August 11, 2009), http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/assets/memoranda_fy2009/m09-28.pdf.
[11] Remarks by Melody Barnes at *Changing the Odds Conference: Learning from the Harlem Children's Zone Model*, (November 9, 2010) http://www.hcz.org/images/stories/Melody%20Barnes%20speech.pdf.

previously separated and even put at odds various federal urban policies and programs. This promises to allow easier collaboration between Promise Neighborhoods and other new urban programs, such as HUD's Choice Neighborhood program, which will allocate money to combine housing services with community development services. The Office of Urban Affairs' focus on place-based programs and efforts to facilitate collaboration not only align with the goals of Promise Neighborhoods, but more broadly support existing comprehensive place-based efforts.

Federal Historical Context

Promise Neighborhoods is part of a legacy of federal funded place-based initiatives, but comes after 20 years of limited federal attention to urban issues. As Alice O'Connor has put it, federal community development initiatives have lacked "coherence of institutional memory."[12] Still, looking back to earlier initiatives is crucial when planning for Promise Neighborhoods, as they can help applicants identify strategies and tactics that have been successful in the past, as well as helping them predict potential obstacles to success.

In 1964, against the backdrop of the civil rights movement, Lyndon B. Johnson announced the War on Poverty; its centerpiece program was the Community Action Program (CAP).[13] CAP aimed to build "community competence," in particular in urban places with high poverty. While CAP created various programs and resulted a surge in activity, it ended for political reasons after mayors began calling competition for CAP funds too cutthroat. While there are hundreds of communities across the country that are

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[12] Alice O'Connor "Swimming against the Tide: A Brief History of Federal Policy in Poor Communities" in *Urban Problems and Community Development* ed. Ronald F. Ferguson (New York: Brookings Institute, 1999).
[13] *Ibid.*

eligible for Promise Neighborhoods funding, to start, the program will only include 20

neighborhoods, so the application process will be competitive. When asked about the

potential obstacles to the success of the Promise Neighborhoods initiative, Junious

Williams, Executive Director of Urban Strategies Council in Oakland, expressed concern

about the level of competition.[14] In choosing which neighborhoods to grant funding, will

the Department of Education face similar political obstacles as CAP? It's a salient

question.

CAP was followed by the Model Cities program, which aimed to clean up slums,

establish mixed-income communities, and introduce innovative technologies and private-

public partnerships to help the urban poor. Both the federal government and the Ford

Foundation's Grey Areas Program funded Model Cities. (If Promise Neighborhoods

requires matching funding, it will also be funded both publicly and privately.)

Unfortunately, by the 1970s, unemployment was high and the economy was weakening.

Reports were published claiming that urban revitalization efforts were contradictory to

efforts aiming to strengthen the economy. The election of President Richard Nixon

brought lessened federal involvement in community development, ending the Model

Cities and CAP programs, and signifying the end of the War on Poverty. They were

replaced by Community Development Block Grants, which allowed localities to apply to

the government for funds, putting less emphasis on public-private partnerships.

In 1977, after campaigning for greater federal attention to urban policy, Jimmy

Carter was elected, ending the eight years of Republican control of the presidency. But

inflation, economic hardship, and political tensions led Carter to abandon his urban

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[14] Phone Interview with Junious Williams April 7, 2010.

agenda. While an Interagency Coordination Council was created to facilitated collaboration on urban policy, its efforts remained small and fractionalized; little of what was researched and planned during Carter's presidency actually got off the ground.

The 1980s brought the Republican Reagan and Bush administrations, and the continued decline of federal involvement in urban communities. Presidential urban agendas were filled with policies that promised to introduce free-market policies and encourage entrepreneurial activity in poor neighborhoods; the main program was Enterprise Zones.

In the 1990s, the Clinton administration's urban agenda was limited and mainly consisted of Empowerment Zones and Empowerment Communities, but the administration did fight to stop Republicans from closing HUD.[15]

Today, there is hope that the Obama administration will bring a return to federal activism in cities – and that Promise Neighborhoods will be a pivotal program in that agenda. But as the past tells us, success may be elusive in the face of sustained political tensions and the need to bring together federal and private funds.

Empowerment Zones: Learning from the Past in Los Angeles

Federal initiatives in Los Angeles have historically encouraged suburban growth and sprawl, rewarding outer suburban communities over the inner core. A look at the city's experience with Empowerment Zones, Clinton's hallmark urban program, illuminates the variety of obstacles that may prevent the city from winning funding for Promise Neighborhoods.

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[15] Hilary Silvers "Obama's Urban Policy: A Symposium." *City and Community,* (March 2010), p. 5.

Described by some as a combination of "Lyndon Johnson's War on Poverty and Ronald Reagan's more conservative economic development policies", Empowerment Zones provided tax incentives for businesses and funds for social programs.[16] The Los Angeles Empowerment Zone plan included areas from the east side of downtown to Boyle Heights, and then south along the east side of the Harbor Freeway to Watts. But while Los Angeles eventually received funding in 1998, in 1994, L.A. was not yet on the list of federal Empowerment Zones. What went wrong? For one thing, according to Denise Fairchild, member of the Urban Land Institute's Inner City Advisory Committee, as a relatively new city compared to its east coast counterparts, Los Angeles was not well positioned:

> Clearly, Los Angeles will never fare well against Eastern cities…[which] have experienced many cycles of economic downturn and transition, have longer histories of urban problems, and, by necessity, are seasoned at valuing and using grassroots initiatives and broad-based partnerships to manage urban problems…If Washington plans to embrace its Western cities with less experience in urban poverty and it alleviation, it must recognize the bias of these forms of competition and find ways to support nascent partnerships.[17]

Fairchild's analysis raises the following questions: Is Los Angeles better positioned to compete with Eastern cities 15 years later? If not, will the federal government once again favor older, more established cities?

Bruce Willison, Chairman of the First Interstate Bank of California, points to the local government's inability to collaborate in creating a cohesive strategy as the downfall of the initial Empowerment Zone proposal.[18] Los Angeles's vast, complex, and

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[16] Bill Boyarsky, "A New Chance to Fight Poverty's Old Problems" *Los Angeles Times*, (Nov. 24, 1993).
[17] "Platform Los Angeles Loses Out on 'Empowerment Zone': What Went Wrong?" *Los Angeles Times (*January 2, 1995).
[18] *Ibid.*

fragmented city and county structure creates numerous obstacles to coordinated, collaborative planning. Jack Dupont-Walker suggests that better collaboration and communication might accompany the creation of a "regional government."[19] While a regional government did not exist then and still does not exist today, there have been various advances in that area since 1994; hopefully the Promise Neighborhoods application process will foster further regional collaboration.

According to Sherri Franklin, another barrier to success in applying for Empowerment Zone funding lay in the region's "lack of intent to empower community residents from the ground up," coupled with the fact that those creating Empowerment Zone proposals were detached from the lived experiences of those the program would serve. For instance, she points to one L.A. county official who said, "Of course South Central has trees – there is a park down there."[20] This comment, of course, reflects an abject failure to engage and consult with community residents, not to mention sheer ignorance of the community in question. For Promise Neighborhoods to succeed in Los Angeles, community-based organizations with a long history and deep relationships in the region must be a major part of the effort. According to Alan Weeks, who is actively involved in the Promise Neighborhood application, "There is a threat that large national non-profits will take the lead. They normally veer from grassroots efforts and do not believe that communities can transform themselves."[21]

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[19] *Ibid.*
[20] *Ibid.*
[21] Interview with Alan Weeks December 23, 2009.

In 1998, Los Angeles finally received Empowerment Zone funding.[22] By then, though, it was too late to achieve success. On a national level, the Empowerment Zones were viewed as a failure, and this is even truer in Los Angeles.[23] Some of the main issues cited for the program's failure included "funds being misspent, funds spent outside of the boundaries, and results being misreported."[24] At the same time, one analyst of the program claimed that some applicants never received promised funds – but that the process still had value: "I've heard it a hundred times from communities that have applied for funds but didn't receive the funds, even the application process is valuable in that it brings people together to talk about their community's future."[25]

Only by studying the mistakes made with Empowerment Zones can Los Angeles best prepare and apply for Promise Neighborhoods status. This means accurately and compellingly presenting the struggles L.A. face as a comparatively new and western city, connecting with the lived experience of residents, including regional entities in planning, and defining clear expectations for the program and how it will be judged a success or failure.

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[22] Nancy Rivera Brooks, Jodi Wilgoren, Faye Fiore " L.A. Expected to Get Empowerment Zone.." *Los Angeles Times*, (July 31, 1997).
[23] United States Government Accountability Office, "Empowerment Zones and Enterprise Communities,"(September 2006), http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d06727.pdf.
[24] Winton Pitcoff, "EZ'er Said Than Done" *Shelter Force* online issue (August 2000) http://www.nhi.org/online/issues/112/EZEC.html.
[25] *Ibid.*

IV. Los Angeles today, Promise tomorrow?

Los Angeles Today

Today, Los Angeles still has significant need for federal funds to address concentrated neighborhood poverty. At the same time, though, it is better poised to compete for federal funding and implement federal initiatives than it was in 1994; in particular, it is much better positioned for Promise Neighborhoods.

The city's current fiscal challenges, high rate of poverty, and low high school graduation rates combine to argue for a real need for place-based strategic help. Consider the following: Angelinos are the most uninsured in the nation.[26] Los Angeles has been hard struck by the recession; by August 2009, unemployment was above 12 percent.[27] It is estimated by the end of 2010 that one in three children in Los Angeles County will live below the poverty line.[28]

While Angelinos are struggling individually, the public institutions serving them are in crisis as well. The Los Angeles Unified School District, the second-largest school district in the nation, currently has a budget deficit of $640 million.[29] The city of Los Angeles is also struggling financially, and failing to provide some necessary services to residents as a result.

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[26] [26] LAANE "Los Angeles on the Edge Part I: An Analysis of Poverty Data from US Census Burea" (September 29, 2009).
[27] *Ibid.*
[28] *Ibid.*
[29] Jason Song and Howard Blume "California disqualified from receiving federal school funds", *Los Angeles Times*, (March 5, 2010).

Neighborhoods like Boyle Heights and South Los Angeles continue to suffer from poor infrastructure and inadequate resources – and, as a result, low levels of academic achievement. In 2006, 43 percent of South Los Angeles residents did not have a high school diploma, as compared to 25 percent in the county as a whole.[30] A study of South Los Angeles conducted by UCLA's School of Public Affairs concluded that low educational attainment and limited job opportunities prevent residents from obtaining high-paying jobs.[31] Reinforcing the cyclical nature of poverty, the failure to obtain an adequate wage forces individuals to stay in neighborhoods with poor infrastructure and limited opportunities.

On the plus side, today, Los Angeles has a strong base of progressive leadership, a burgeoning community-based non-profit sector, and a robust philanthropic scene focused on funding initiatives in distressed communities.

The 2005 election of Mayor Antonio Villaragosa made him the first Latino mayor in Los Angeles in 130 years. Other progressive leaders include Karen Bass of Community Coalition, a former Speaker of the California State Assembly – the second woman and third African-American to serve in that role.

At the same time as the city's progressive leadership has been growing in strength, Los Angeles' non-profits have been driving innovative community-development and -organizing practices. Organizations like Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy (LAANE), Scope/Agenda, and SAJE have developed and implemented innovative strategies to encourage a more just Los Angeles. These organizations have laid the

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[30] UCLA School of Public Affairs, "The State of South Los Angeles", (September 14, 2008), p. 11.
[31] Ibid.

groundwork for continued growth of progressive movements in the region. On a more local level, organizations like East Los Angeles Community Corporation in Boyle Heights and Community Coalition in South Los Angeles have adopted practices that foster community participation, and have ample on-the-ground knowledge of the lived experience in their respective neighborhoods.

Place-based initiatives have also begun to take root in Los Angeles, from efforts coming out of the mayor's office to others driven by community-based organizations. Among these, The California Endowment's Building Healthy Communities (BHC) initiative is among the most impressive – and, because of its potential to align with Promise Neighborhoods, the most relevant to the current discussion.

Over a ten-year period, in 14 communities, the BHC initiative hopes to improve the lives of residents by enacting programs based on the following key assumptions[32]:

1) Quality health systems are family centered and prioritize prevention

2) Schools anchor communities, promote healthy behaviors, and are a gateway to resources and services

3) Quality human services systems are family centered, prioritize prevention, and promote opportunities for children, young adults, and their families

4) Positive physical, social, and economic environments support better health in local communities

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[32] The California Endowment, "Building Healthy Communities: The Four Big Results," (August 2009), http://www.calendow.org/healthycommunities/pdfs/FourBigResultsUpdate8_06_09.pdf/.

The program's 14 sites include two located in Los Angeles, Boyle Heights and South Los Angeles. Through the BHC initiative, The California Endowment has established collaborative relationships with various organizations in those communities. For this reason, The California Endowment should be a key player in the planning efforts for Promise Neighborhoods in Los Angeles. If there is a matching-funds requirement for Promise Neighborhoods, The California Endowment could direct existing funding streams in these neighborhoods to Promise Neighborhoods programming. Building a close relationship with The California Endowment can only improve L.A.'s Promise Neighborhoods efforts.

Promise in Los Angeles?

While specific neighborhoods in Los Angeles are preparing to submit Promise Neighborhoods proposals, to date the public sector and private philanthropies are working separately from community-based organizations. The public sector views Promise Neighborhoods as "an opportunity to build private-public partnerships in Los Angeles County."[33] This vision of increased public-private partnerships is shared by the Mayors Office, which in 2009 created the Deputy Mayor's Office for Strategic Partnerships. Deputy Mayor of Strategic Partnerships Aileen Adams expresses the goal of the new office as "advocating for and championing a partnership model between government and philanthropic sectors to galvanize and share expertise, lessons learned and creativity for civic problem solving."[34] She goes on to reference the region's "history of collaborative partnerships in some neighborhoods"; her office hopes to grow and

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[33] "Promise Neighborhoods Initiative Public Sector Exploratory Meeting Agenda", (April 2010).
[34] Interview with Aileen Adams February 24, 2010.

expand this history.[35]

An ad hoc public-sector task force has been created to discuss how best to support proposals for Promise Neighborhoods in Los Angeles. This committee consists of representatives from the Los Angeles City Mayor's Office, the Los Angeles County Chief Executive Office, the Los Angeles Unified School District, the Los Angeles County Office of Education, First 5 Los Angeles[36], and the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Office. The task force recognizes that federal agencies have historically perceived Los Angeles as "dysfunctional and uncoordinated because of complex multi-system and multi-jurisdictional environment."[37] The challenge for Los Angeles, then, is "telling its story" in such a way as to counter its dysfunctional reputation. Los Angeles Promise Neighborhoods applicants must capture the history and successes of past place-based initiatives as part of proving that city and county agencies are ready, prepared, and excited to partner and collaborate.

In addition to key players within the Los Angeles public sector, the effort to bring Promise Neighborhoods requires participations of philanthropies and other private entities. The reason for this is the probability of a 50-percent matching requirement for funds for Promise Neighborhoods. Led by Dr. Bob Ross at The California Endowment, private philanthropies in Los Angles have been meeting to understand how they can best support Los Angeles-based Promise Neighborhoods applications. This includes gaining an understanding of the assets and programs that already exist in Los Angeles, as well as

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[35] Interview with Aileen Adams February 24, 2010.
[36] A advocacy organization that strives to improve for pre-natal through age 5 children in Los Angeles County.
[37] "Promise Neighborhoods Initiative Public Sector Exploratory Meeting Agenda" (April 2010).

existing programs or funding streams that would be relevant to applications from local communities for inclusion in the Promise Neighborhoods program.

Due to its large size and sprawling nature, Los Angeles includes multiple neighborhoods that have a clear need for a program like Promise Neighborhoods. However, some neighborhoods are better positioned than others. According to an analysis by the Advancement Project, Boyle Heights and South Los Angeles are among the neighborhoods that demonstrate need and do not currently have place-based initiatives in place.[38]

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[38] Advancement Project, "Promise Neighborhoods: Neighborhood Selection Analysis" (December 14, 2009), p. 3.

V. Case studies

Introduction

To identify lessons and best practices for planning for Promise Neighborhoods in Los Angeles and elsewhere, I conducted case studies of five locations across the country which are ahead of the curve in terms of preparing to apply for the program: Austin, Chicago, Milwaukee, New Orleans, and Oakland. In each, I review the context for the Promise Neighborhoods opportunity, the progress made thus far, the obstacles the city faces, and the neighborhoods that are potential applicants. The list of neighborhoods I cite is tentative and incomplete, as the Promise Neighborhoods RFP has yet to be released and I have only included neighborhoods that I discuss in detail; for example, for Chicago, there are more potential applicants than the three neighborhoods I list.

Table 1: Case Study Cities and Potential Applicant Neighborhoods

City	Potential Promise Neighborhoods
Austin	Govalle/ Johnson Terrace
	St. John
Chicago	Chicago Park
	Woodlawn
	Logan Square
Milwaukee	Lindsay Heights
	Clarke Square
New Orleans	Central City
Oakland	West Oakland
	East Oakland
	Far East Oakland

Source: Interview with representatives from each city

Figure 2: Map of Case Studies

Austin, Texas

The time appears to be ripe for the development of place-based programming in Austin, a city of just under 800,000 people located in Travis County, Texas (which itself is home to just under a million people).[39] The new superintendent, Meria Carstarphen, is a strong proponent of community schools. Additionally, state representative Mark Strama and state senator Kirk Watson have strong connections with the Obama administration.[40] And according to Alan Weeks, an organizer for the St. Johns Community/School Alliance, it

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[39] http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/demographics/
[40] "Going for Harlem's proven touch," *Austin Statesman*, (November 22, 2009), http://www.statesman.com/opinion/content/editorial/stories/2009/11/22/1122children_edit.html.

will be easier to accomplish the goals of Promise Neighborhoods in Austin than in places like Baltimore.[41]

In November 2009, ten delegates, including representatives from the City of Austin, a local Baptist church, three private philanthropic organizations, the AUSD, and the Texas House of Representatives, attended the national convention on the Harlem Children's Zone. The delegation was selected and funded by representatives of the Sooch Foundation and Webber Family Foundation.

Since the November HCZ conference, two neighborhoods, St. Johns and Govalle/Johnson Terrace, have begun proposals for Promise Neighborhoods grants.

St. Johns is at the edge of the city in Northeast Austin and suffers from rampant poverty, poor infrastructure, and lack of access to transportation. At Reagan High School in the St. Johns neighborhood, the mobility percentage is 42 percent. When teachers there were asked about the biggest obstacle to meeting state standards, they cited student mobility.

The St. Johns Community/School Alliance is writing the Promise Neighborhoods grant proposal for the St. Johns neighborhood. The SJCSA was founded in 2006 when Webb Middle School and Reagan High School were threatened with closure due to poor academic performance. By 2008, Webb Middle School had been given "academically acceptable" status under the state's accountability system.[42] The Alliance consists of a coalition of organizations and individuals from the public and private sectors, which came together to choose the St. John community and its three schools, Pickle Elementary

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[41] Interview with Alan Weeks December 23, 2009.
[42] The Austin Project, "TAP raising Awareness for St. John Community Revitalization," (May 2008),http://www.theaustinproject.org/modules/news/article.php?storyid=8.

School, Webb Middle School, and Reagan High School, to apply for a Promise Neighborhoods grant. The coalition consisted of the City of Austin, Travis County, the Austin Independent School District, and various non-profit and community partners. The coalition worked for six months to make the decision based on data indicating that the community possessed the capacity for successful change. The steering committee for the initiative consists of six community members, six municipal and school district members, and six non-profit private philanthropy partners. The initiative has held a series of community meetings to gather input from residents in the St. John community.

Separately, the Govalle/Johnson Terrace neighborhood is preparing its own Promise Neighborhood application. Unlike the St. Johns neighborhood, the Govalle/Johnson Terrace neighborhood, on the other hand, has experienced gradual gentrification since the end of the 1990s.[43] The Govalle/Johnson Terrace neighborhood effort is spearheaded by Southwest Key, a national organization founded in 1987 that operates juvenile justice and family programs, safe shelters for immigrant children, schools, and community building initiatives.[44] Southwest Key plans to use its charter school, East Austin College Prep Academy, as the Govalle/Johnson Terrace zone's anchor school. There were no middle schools in the Govalle/Johnson Terrace neighborhood prior to East Austin College Prep Academy, which opened with a sixth-grade class in August 2009.[45] While the zone is using the charter school as its anchor, it will also work with local public schools.

[43] City of Austin, "Staff Task Force on Gentrification in East Austin", (March 13, 2003).
[44] Heinauer, Laura. "Two groups move forward on Promise Neighborhood application," *Austin Statesman, (*January 27, 2010)
[45] South West Key, "East Austin College Prep Academy Brochure," http://www.swkey.org/PDF_links/Charter_Brochure12page.pdf.

While Austin is drastically different from Los Angeles – for instance, it is just a tenth the size of L.A. – it may provide some guidance when it comes to ways to approach the Promise Neighborhoods opportunity. In particular, the competition between neighborhoods wanting to be part of the program and the public sector decision to support just one neighborhood provide Los Angeles with some food for thought.

Table 2: Demographic comparison of neighborhoods applying Promise Neighborhoods grants in Austin, Texas

	St. John Community (zip code: 78752)	Govalle Community (zip code: 78702)	City of Austin
Median Household Income	$30,368	$36,844	$51,372
Median Rent	$686	$505	$743
Percentage of household led by single mothers	8.2%	10.1%	7.5%
Percentage of people living in poverty	34.2%	21%	14.4%

Source: city-data.com, 2008

Chicago, Illinois

With almost eight million residents, Chicago contains a number of neighborhoods that could benefit from Promise Neighborhoods funding; it is estimated that seven or more neighborhoods are thinking of applying. Paul Tough, author of *Whatever it Takes*,[46] believes that Chicago is well positioned for Promise Neighborhoods because it is a city of neighborhoods and because, unlike Detroit, for instance, it is home to a wealth of philanthropic resources.

Three neighborhoods, Logan Square, Chicago Park, and Woodlawn, are applying with the support of Local Initiatives Support Corporation/Chicago, an organization that seeks to support community development in collaboration with local stakeholders.[47] LISC operates in these communities, and so already has a vested interest in them. These three neighborhoods are part of the LISC's New Communities and Elev8 programs, and have already begun to implement programs that would be part of potential Promise Neighborhoods, such as an after-school tutoring program and a program encouraging parental involvement.

The planning process for the New Communities Program has prepared the neighborhoods and the organizations in them for the Promise Neighborhoods application process. According to Chris Brown, the director of Elev8 Chicago, "All of these groups have a long history of responding to these types of efforts… All have gone through a

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[46] Book by former *New York Time* journalist that explores the life of Geoffrey Canada and the Harlem Children's Zone model.

[47] Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) is a national organization dedicated to helping community residents transform distressed neighborhoods into healthy and sustainable communities of choice and opportunity — good places to work, do business and raise children.

detailed and rich community planning process for the New Communities program … It's not a stretch for them to have the capacity to respond."

According to a University of Chicago report, "It is likely that a Chicago Promise Neighborhood would rely on Chicago Public School schools for at least part of its main K-12 educational component. This presents a potential problem, since a significant number of COS schools in low-income neighborhoods function very poorly because of problems among staff, leadership, or the supportive bureaucracy."[48] The report goes on to suggest that Promise Neighborhoods applicants should seek out schools with "above-average leadership and levels of professional development that nonetheless struggle with difficulties that stem from factors outside the school. These schools would have the most to win from working with a CPN."[49]

The Logan Square Neighborhood Association (LSNA), the probable lead organization in Logan Square, Chicago, hopes to launch a Promise Neighborhood to allow it to grow its programs. According to Nancy Aardeema, Executive Director of LSNA, when LSNA first became aware of the Promise Neighborhoods funds and the HCZ model, it realized that "a lot of what they do, we also do; they do some things better than we do, and we do some things better then they do … We focus on the whole family, on bringing the culture of the home and community into the school."[50] Because the neighborhood has "something to learn and something to teach,"[51] it has decided to move forward with its application. In its initial assessments of the services it provides, LSNA

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[48] Chicago Policy Research Team, "Chicago Promise: A Policy Report on Reinventing the Harlem Children's Zone,"(May 2009), p. 119.
[49] *Ibid*
[50] Phone Interview with Nancy Aardeema March 16 ,2010.
[51] Phone Interview with Nancy Aardeema March 16 ,2010.

identified as one of its gaps its lack of focus on early childhood education.[52] This gap has led it to explore possible partners in the area that are already involved in early childhood education.

Each of the three neighborhoods created "quality of life plans" in May 2005 that outlined the path to community development. The New Communities Program quality of life plan in Woodlawn includes eight strategies; four of these strategies relate directly to the mission of Promise Neighborhoods:

1) Organize people and resources to make all Woodlawn schools excellent.

2) Improve communication and coordination among organizations, residents, and institutions.

3) Plan and implement activities and programs for youth.

4) Expand recreational activities for all ages and develop new programs around arts and culture.[53]

Woodlawn has begun to act on many of these strategies as it creates the Woodlawn Children's Promise Zone, which includes after-school tutoring programs, and brings together a network of schools in the area.

Woodlawn has also been active in seeking to overcome the problem of student mobility. The neighborhood has one of the highest foreclosure rates in Chicago, which causes many students to be shuffled to new schools when their families move. Woodlawn has plans to include a law office that will counsel individuals that are threatened by foreclosure.

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[52] Phone Interview with Nancy Aardeema March 16, 2010.
[53] LISC, "Woodlawn Quality of Life Plan," (May 2005), http://www.newcommunities.org/cmadocs/Woodlawn_exsum.pdf.

While there are multiple neighborhoods that intend to apply for Promise Neighborhoods funds in Chicago, the city government and Chicago School District have not chosen to support any one neighborhood at the expense of others. The Chicago Public Schools committed to funding the executive director of the Woodlawn Children's Promise Zone, but has not ruled out supporting other neighborhoods as well.

As home to Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, Chicago has already played an influential role in the community schools movement; the city already excels in many areas that will be essential to Promise Neighborhoods programming. As a large city with multiple neighborhoods, Chicago makes sense as a model for Los Angeles as it studies the Promise Neighborhoods opportunity. That Chicago has already developed innovative strategies for place-based community programs only makes it more relevant to L.A.

Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Milwaukee by no means is the first city to come to mind in when considering community development, poverty, and education programs. Child poverty is a serious issue in Milwaukee, where 18 percent of children live below the poverty level; in other words, there is a real need here for programs like Promise Neighborhoods.

For more than a decade, state and local government officials in Wisconsin have been trying to implement public policies that support place-based initiatives. One example is the Wisconsin Initiative for Neighborhoods and Schools that Work for Children (WINS for Children, launched in 1999), whose goal is to connect struggling children and families with comprehensive social services and education opportunities. And in 2000, As a result, Milwaukee has a head start in preparing for the Promise Neighborhoods opportunity. Milwaukee Promise Neighborhoods efforts also have their roots in the Zilber Neighborhood Initiative, a foundation-funded effort to revitalize and support existing programs in distressed neighborhoods, which launched in 2008.[54]

There are two potential Promise Neighborhoods in Milwaukee, Lindsay Heights and Clarke Square. Both are part of the Zilber Neighborhood Initiative.

Lindsay Heights was plagued by high crime in the early 2000s, and a number of non-profits have been started in the neighborhood to address its revitalization. Clarke Square, one of the most diverse communities in Milwaukee, is also home to many

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[54] Hayling Price, "The Wisconsin Initiative for Neighborhoods and Schools that Work for Children: A Possible Model for Place-Based Urban Initiatives in Other States," *Alliance for Children and Families* and *United Neighborhood Centers of America*, (March 9, 2010).

community-based organizations.[55] The Longfellow School, a public K-8 school, is positioning itself at the center of the Clarke Square Promise Neighborhoods effort, a position that has solidified with the creation of an adjacent community center. Walnut Way Conservation Corporation in Lindsay Heights and Journey House in Clarke Square are the main CBOs, while LISC Milwaukee and United Neighborhood Centers of Milwaukee are also involved on a city level. These organizations are working to built capacity and organize collaborations with a variety of program providers. Both neighborhoods' efforts are directly in line with the central goal of Promise Neighborhoods. Backed by city and state officials and leveraging existing programs, both these Milwaukee communities are well positioned to become Promise Neighborhoods.

In the summer of 2009, Governor Jim Doyle convened a task force to explore reforms to the urban school district. Members of the task force, known as the Milwaukee Public Schools Innovation and Improvement Advisory Council, agreed that the long-term goal was to merge separate zones into a citywide zone. State officials, including Governor Jim Doyle and State Superintendent of Public Infrastructure Tony Evers, have declared that they will continue to make plans along these lines with or without federal funding.[56] State leaders have vowed to support the Promise Neighborhoods effort, and eventually expand it within the state of Wisconsin.

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[55] Zilber Neighborhood Foundation, "Clarke Square Quality of Life Plan", (September 2009)

[56] Hayling Price, "The Wisconsin Initiative for Neighborhoods and Schools that Work for Children: A Possible Model for Place-Based Urban Initiatives in Other States," *Alliance for Children and Families* and *United Neighborhood Centers of America*, (March 9, 2010).

New Orleans, Louisiana

In New Orleans, there has historically been little municipal interest – and almost no state funding – for youth and family services. However, in February 2010, New Orleans elected Mitch Landrieu as mayor, and he indicated that he would focus on family and youth services by appointing Gina Warner to his transition committee. Warner, Executive Director of the Greater New Orleans After School Partnerships, will advise Landrieu on youth and family services. Post-Katrina issues will certainly affect the proposed zone, because the aftermath of the hurricane exacerbated child mobility and led to a group of high school-age children who have returned to the city without their parents.

Initially, the Treme, the Lower Ninth Ward, and Central City all considered applying for Promise Neighborhoods funds, but eventually a single applicant, Central City, a neighborhood adjacent to downtown, emerged organically. According to Lauren Bierbaum, Research Specialist at the Greater New Orleans After School Partnership, "As far as we know, the other organizations thinking of applying have backed off."

According to Bierbaum, Central City is a "service provider-rich neighborhood. Existing levels of organization vary, but all are committed to the neighborhood. But we have leveraged [the fact] that you can't take people who don't care about kids and make them care about kids."[57]

Among the biggest issues facing the proposed Central City Promise Neighborhood are New Orleans' decentralized and fragmented school system, as well as an overall lack of crucial infrastructure, such as transportation. In New Orleans, the majority of students are enrolled in Charter Schools; this results in a decentralized school

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[57] Interview with Laura Bierbaum March 17, 2010.

system.[58] According to Bierbaum, "The school system is incredibly decentralized. There is a massive amount of fractionalization and turnover … It's difficult to have things like summer programs or free breakfast programs because of decentralization. Because the schools are independent, they don't have the funds for additional programs."[59]

Central City has decided to include its funders throughout the entire proposal and planning process. Central City has also decided not to form a separate non-profit, but to work collaboratively with existing organizations, with one organization as the lead. Working with a group of existing organizations means that clear roles and responsibilities must be assigned. The organizations in Central City have spent months formulating a governance structure, putting in place a structure that focuses on accountability not only for the steering committee but also for eventual service providers; it calls this structure "results-based accountability." Central City developed this model with the assistance of a consultant from the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

According to Bierbaum, as it assigned roles to different organizations, Central City tried to "situate [itself] within the collaborative [in a way] that will be intuitive to … stakeholders on the ground."[60] This will be crucial when the zone is implemented, and signifies the intentional nature of the Central City collaborative's planning.

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[58] Save our schools New Orleans, "Public Schools of New Orleans," http://www.sosnola.org/sosnolahome/docuploads/docshare/doc_12PSNOOrganizationalChartSnapshot.pdf.
[59] Interview with Laura Bierbaum on March 17, 2010.
[60] Interview with Lauren Bierbaum on March 17, 2010.

Table 3: Organizations on the Steering Committee of Central City Promise Neighborhood

Organization	Role within steering committee	Scope and Service Area	Type of Organization
Greater New Orleans After School Partnership	Advising on federal policy and practices	City wide	Advocacy Organization
Central City Renaissance Association	The public face of the Promise Neighborhood effort and the entity that directly involves and seeks community participation and engagement.	Central City Specific	Resident Association
Operation Reach	The applicant organization and the fiscal leader of the steering committee.	Central City Specific	Youth Development Program Organization
The Children's Defense Fund	Will connect with larger national initiatives, and will be able to contextualize work. National Notoriety	National Organization with a local chapter in New Orleans	Advocacy Organization
Total Community Action	Will consultant on how to develop programs that span a child's life.	City-wide	Social Service Provider
Mahalia Jackson Community Center	Will serve as the data	Central City	Community Based Organization

Source: Interview with Lauren Bierbaum

Table 4: Demographics of Central City, New Orleans

	Central City(zip code : 53204)
Median Household Income	$16,672
Median Rent	$496
Percentage of household led by single mothers	23.8%
Percentage of people living in poverty	49.7%

Source: city-data.org, 2008

Oakland, California

Oakland is well positioned for the Promise Neighborhoods opportunity, as it has a 20-year history of creating continuums of services and co-locating programs at schools. Still, there are obstacles the city must grapple with in the planning process. Oakland has developed a reputation of being dysfunctional; the Oakland School District is coming out of a receivership, and is finally back in city control. In addition, Oakland will likely face regional competition, as neighborhoods in San Francisco and Richmond also intend on submitting applications.

As three separate Oakland delegations attended the Harlem Children's Zone conference in November (one group from East Oakland and The California Endowment Building Healthy Community neighborhood, another group from Annie E. Casey's making connections neighborhood, and a final group from Safe Passages, a joint powers committee that operates in Alameda county), it remains unclear which neighborhood will be the Oakland applicant. City, county, and school district officials in Oakland hope that only one neighborhood will apply. They envision that with one application, they will be able to promote to the federal government the idea that everyone in Oakland is on board and ready to work collaboratively.

With a citywide childhood poverty rate of over 20 percent, Oakland has a clear need for federal funding for place-based community development programs. Violence, high rates of incarceration, and gentrification are among issues that currently face Oakland as it tries to help its most needy residents. With Promise Neighborhood funding, Oakland is hopeful that it will be able to build on past initiatives and overcome many of its problems.

Like Los Angeles, Oakland is struggling with what schools to include, and especially with whether it must pick schools with a trajectory of success. In addition The California Endowment[61] is a key and influential financial and programmatic leader in both cities.

In February 2010, city officials, representatives from the Oakland School district, funders, and community-based organizations attended this meeting to look at the Promise Neighborhoods opportunity and to create a tentative timeline for responding to it. Out of this meeting, an executive committee was formed consisting of Mayor Dellums, Superintendent Smith, funders, and community-based organizations interested in becoming anchor institutions for potential Promise Neighborhoods. This executive committee has decided to tentatively choose a neighborhood to be Oakland's Promise Neighborhoods applicant. The neighborhood selected will remain tentative because the Promise Neighborhoods RFP may position some neighborhoods to be more competitive applicants than others.

Oakland hopes to develop a continuum using a cluster of schools with a feeding pattern. According to CEO of Urban Strategies Council Junious Williams Jr., "We want to pick schools with a degree of success that can really accelerate results in a period of time."[62]

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[61] The California Endowment is a private foundation that strives to expand access to affordable, quality health care for underserved individuals and communities, and to promote fundamental improvements in the health status of all Californians.
[62] Phone interview with Junious Williams, Jr. , April 3, 2010.

Table 5: Potential Schools in Oakland

	Type	Percentage of Students Eligible for Free Lunch	PI Status	Academically Improving	Size
Oakland					
East Oakland					
Roots Academy	Public	74%	yes	no	349
West Oakland					
West Oakland Middle School	Public	81%	no	yes	160
Far East Oakland					
Sobrante Park Elementary School	Public	74%	no	yes	278
Madison Middle School	Public	91%	yes	yes	274

Source: California Education Statistics, 2009

VI. What Los Angeles can learn from the case studies

Now that I have presented each case study, I will lift up strategies and tactics that can be applied to Los Angeles. First I will look at how cities have decided to apply and what processes they are using to decide which neighborhood or neighborhoods will apply. Then I will look at what schools potential zones are considering including in their proposals. After exploring the conversations around schools, I will explore how numerous cities are considering basing their proposals off existing programs. This section will also look at what additional or innovative programs that neighborhoods are thinking of incorporating into the zone. Then I will turn to the proposed structural organization of the potential zone and comment on various neighborhoods thoughts on leadership. That will lead me to explore the conversation being had surrounding funding and strategies to address the potential matching fund. Finally I will explore how some neighborhoods are already beginning to establish methods and tactics to evaluate the potential zones.

Deciding to apply – and identifying how many neighborhoods should apply

What they really need to think about is whether or not this makes sense for them and how all the pieces fit together.

- Chris Brown , LISC Chicago[63]

Los Angeles has a population of ten million. If it were a state, it would be the eighth largest state in the nation.[64] The vast size of Los Angeles poses several challenges to the process of applying for Promise Neighborhoods funding. For one thing, unlike some smaller cities, like Charleston, South Carolina, Los Angeles has a long list of communities that would make sense as Promise Neighborhoods, rather than just one. In addition, because L.A. is so big, city and county governments must coordinate in order to effectively support both the proposal process as well as program implementation, should an L.A.-based applicant win Promise Neighborhoods status. A look at the case studies above can provide guidance on how best to approach the decision to apply for Promise Neighborhoods funding, as well as in identifying which neighborhood or neighborhood should apply.

In cities like Chicago and Austin, multiple neighborhoods have emerged as potential applicants. This potentially complicates the application process. According to a report prepared by the Bridgespan Group recommends, cities like these "will be pressured to base crucial decisions – like choosing the neighborhoods – on political considerations." Instead, cities should base their decisions on "objective criteria."[65] The

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[63] Interview with Chris Brown, March 16, 2010.
[64] United Way Los Angeles, "Tale of Two Cities," (January 2010).
[65] Bridgespan Group, "Realizing the Promise of Promise Neighborhoods", November 2009, available online at: www.bridgespan.org/promise-neighborhoods.aspx

report suggests that applicant neighborhoods should be identified based on firm need assessment.

Los Angeles is struggling with the question of how many and which applicant neighborhoods to support. At the core of this struggle is the question of whether or not to only support one neighborhood. One side says there should be no monitoring or narrowing of the applicant pool, and that all organizations that wish to apply should apply. The other says that in order to produce competitive applications that will produce collaborative community development models, there must be public and private support for a single applicant.

As the example of New Orleans illustrates, having just one applicant allows an entire city, public and private sectors included, to rally around the effort. This moves stakeholders' focus to preparing the Promise Neighborhoods proposal and implementation plan, eliminating the need to spend a lot of time deciding which neighborhood or neighborhoods should apply.

Making schools the centerpiece

The foundational component of Promise Neighborhoods is the schools. Promise

Neighborhoods applicants must be strategic and thoughtful in their selection of which

schools to include in the zones. In Los Angeles, navigating this process will be especially

difficult, both because the Los Angeles Unified School District is the second largest

school district in the nation and because it currently has a budget deficit of $640

million.[66] To complicate matters further, multiple charter corporations operate schools

within and outside of LAUSD. So how should L.A. approach making schools the

centerpiece of potential children's zones?

First, the city should be aware that including schools that already have programs

or initiatives that map to the Promise Neighborhoods "full-service" community school

model allows the creation of children's zones to occur more seamlessly. Consider the

example of Austin, where the St. Johns Community/School Alliance has implemented

various programs to create a network of support for children in the area, including

planning sessions with teachers from local elementary schools, middle schools, and high

schools to help bridge gaps that exist between the three school levels. Or consider the

schools under consideration for inclusion in Promise Neighborhoods in Chicago and

Oakland; these schools are part of LISC's Elev8 program, which strives to strengthen

schools and the communities they serve via programs like Family Advocates and Family

Resource Centers, which connect families with resources such as housing referrals and

parenting classes. Clearly, programs like these are aligned with the goals of Promise

Neighborhoods and could be core elements in the development of children's zones.

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[66] Jason Song and Howard Blume "California disqualified from receiving federal school funds", *Los Angeles Times*, (March 5, 2010).

Los Angeles would also be smart to consider the fact that many potential Promise Neighborhoods include schools that have a demonstrated trajectory of success; consider the Oakland as an example. The upside of this strategy would be to attract positive attention from the Department of Education as it considers choosing Promise Neighborhoods applications that are likely to show high levels of success. On the other hand, choosing schools that have already shown a trajectory of success might rule out bringing help to areas where the need is high and educational infrastructure, resources, and opportunity do not exist.

In addition, Los Angeles should consider the rate of student mobility (in other words, the rate at which students change schools) in potential Promise Neighborhoods, as a high rate of student mobility could prevent a children's zone from succeeding. High student mobility rates create inconsistency in the classroom, as well as presenting a significant challenge for a program that is attempting to create an educational pipeline.

Finally, Los Angeles should take note of the way cities like New Orleans are including charter schools in their plans for Promise Neighborhoods. In L.A., community organizations deciding which schools to include in potential Promise Neighborhoods have struggled with whether to include charter schools or traditional public schools. While charter schools may not have access to funds for programming such as after-school programs and summer school, they have the privilege of being able to function more autonomously. For example, this type of autonomy has been incredibly influential in the success of the Harlem Children's Zones' Promise Academies. In addition, the list of finalists for Race to the Top funds suggests that the Department of Education favors states that have adopted education reforms supported by the Obama administration, such

as "lifting caps on charter schools, using data to track the progress of students and teachers, and shutting down or replacing the staff at low-performing campuses."[67] (California failed to receive Race to the Top program funding because it failed to adopt Obama's education reforms.)

Strategically, South Los Angeles would be well advised to build its children's zone around one of the neighborhood's existing successful charter schools, and promote its strong existing base of charter schools in its Promise Neighborhood application. In the 2007-2008 academic year, seven percent of South LA elementary students were enrolled in 16 charter schools.[68] In addition, the growth of charter schools in the community has been recognized as having a positive effect on educational attainment;[69] charter schools in South L.A. have an average API score of 736, while traditional elementary schools in have an average API score of 673.[70]

Table 6: Chart on Charter Schools in South Los Angeles, Los Angeles County, and California

	Percent of Elementary Students in Charter Schools	Number of Charter Schools
California	3%	n/a
Los Angeles County	3%	67
South LA	7%	17

Source: The State of South Los Angeles/ National Center for Education Statistics 2001-2008

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[67] Jason Song and Howard Blume "California disqualified from receiving federal school funds", *Los Angeles Times*, (March 5, 2010).

[68] UCLA School of Public Affairs, "The State of South Los Angeles", (September 14, 2008), p. 30.

[69] *Ibid.*

[70] *Ibid.*

In Boyle Heights, on the other hand, building the program around a charter school may not be wise, because charter schools in the area do not primarily serve the immediate area. Boyle Heights would be well advised to take advantage of the existing Roosevelt Family network, a collaborative of schools that feed into Roosevelt High School, when crafting its educational pipeline.

Programs and scope

[Unlike] the HCZ, [which] has everything under one roof . . . none of these organizations has a cradle-to-college approach.
-        Chris Brown, LISC/Chicago[71]

Schools may be at the center of Promise Neighborhoods, but the most innovative aspect

of the initiative is the way it integrates schools with a web of services and programs

serving those schools' given neighborhood.

The lack of an existing cradle-to-college approach is an obstacle for most Promise

Neighborhoods applicants. In Los Angeles, few neighborhoods already have

comprehensive community and education development programming in place. But

Promise Neighborhoods will be required to function collaboratively with multiple

organizations, schools, and service providers in order to provide coordinated services for

children from birth until high school graduation. To begin the creation of Promise

Neighborhoods zone, some neighborhoods have begun to implement a variety of

community programs. By beginning collaborative and coordinated programming, these

neighborhoods are developing the skills and capacity it will take to construct an effective

Promise Neighborhoods zone.

Any city that is preparing for the Promise Neighborhoods application process

should conduct a thorough assessment of what programs already exist in various

communities. After only, it is only by understanding what it already has that a location

can determine what it needs. Then, when deciding on what additional programs and

services are needed in a potential Promise Neighborhoods applicant, applicants should

consider following the model of Oakland, which emphasizes making plans for programs

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[71] Interview with Chris Brown March 10, 2010.

and services as expansive as possible. Oakland realizes the importance of including an economic development agenda long with education and social services. According to Junious Williams, Executive Director of Urban Strategies Council, "A lot of the issues in these neighborhoods are about unemployment or underemployment."[72] Creating an expansive model has also led organizers in Oakland to explore how any potential Promise Neighborhood might overlap with HUD's Choice Neighborhood program.

Tina R. Trent and David M. Chavis define *comprehensive community initiatives* as exhibiting a "diverse range of multifaceted initiatives that are funded by public sector agencies and philanthropies and seek to address complex social problems."[73] While organizations like the Ford Foundation have been working in the inner city since 1955, in the 1990s organizations like the National Congress for Community Economic Development, the Community Development Research Center of the New School for Social Research, the Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago, and the Community Building project created by HUD and the Annie E. Casey and Rockefeller Foundations were created as comprehensive approaches. [74] [75] Many of the organizations and neighborhoods that were recipients or currently are recipients of foundation-funded programs are potential applicants for Promise Neighborhoods, and leveraging current philanthropic programs while preparing a Promise Neighborhoods application is an intelligent strategy for any applicant. According to Hayling Price, policy

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[72] Interview with Junious Williams April 3, 2010.
[73] Tina R. Trent and David M. Chavis, "Scope, Scale, and Sustainability: What it takes to Create Lasting Community Change," (September 2009).
[74] James V. Cunningham, Patricia Watkins Murphy,. *Organizing for Community Controlled Development*. (New York: Sage Publication,2003), p. 43.
[75] William Domhoff, "The Ford Foundation in the Inner City: Forging an Alliance with Neighborhood Activist," (September 2005).

analyst for United Neighborhood Centers for America, the Zilber Milwaukee planning

process shows that "local efforts should leverage existing assets in the community."[76]

Table 7: Neighborhoods Applying using Existing Programs

City/ Neighborhood	Foundation	Existing Program	Goal	Support Providing for Potential Promise Neighborhoods
Los Angeles: • Boyle Heights • South LA	The California Endowment	Building Healthy Communities Initiative	Our goal is to support the development of communities where kids and youth are healthy, safe and ready to learn.[77]	Funded organizations from neighborhoods to attend conference in November. Fund consultants to assist neighborhoods in application process.
Chicago: • Logan Square • Woodlawn • Chicago Park	LISC/Chicago: • Elev8 • New Communities Programs	New Communities Program	New Communities Programs efforts seek to rejuvenate challenged communities, bolster those in danger of losing ground, and preserve the diversity of areas in the path of gentrification.[78]	Funding consultant to assist in the application process.
Milwaukee: • Lindsay Heights • Washington	The Zilber Foundation	Zilber Neighborhood Initiative	Supporting the communities to come together	N/A

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[76] Hayling Price, "The Wisconsin Initiative for Neighborhoods and Schools that Work for Children: A Possible Model for Place-Based Urban Initiatives in Other States," *Alliance for Children and Families* and *United Neighborhood Centers of America*, (March 9, 2010).

[77] Taken from Building Health Communities Website: http://www.calendow.org/healthycommunities/

[78] Taken from the New Communities Program website: http://www.newcommunities.org/whoweare/

			to envision the future of their neighborhoods. [79]	

Source: http://www.newcommunities.org/whoweare/, http://www.znimilwaukee.org/, http://www.calendow.org/healthycommunities/

These privately funded place-based efforts benefit not only from having collaborative networks in place, but from having real-world experience with the planning process. Also, these initiatives are already funded through these philanthropic entities; if there is a matching-funds requirement in the Promise Neighborhoods RFP, they will be able to draw from existing funding streams.

The St. Johns Community/School Alliance in Austin is an example of an applicant, which has already begun developing a collaborative network. It is collaborating with city and county officials as well as private foundations. And as its partnership with the University of Texas School of Nursing illustrates, it is creating reciprocal partnerships, where receives a service while the partner is receiving something in return.

In L.A., Boyle Heights is at the beginning of discussions about Promise Neighborhoods, but it has already begun to strategically craft a collaborative network of organizations. So far the conversation has included the East Los Angeles Community Corporation, the Boyle Heights Learning Collaborative, Inner City Struggle, ABC, Proyecto Pastoral, and Dick James and Associates. Crafting the right collaborative

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[79] Taken from the Zilber Neighborhood Initiative website: http://www.znimilwaukee.org/

network of organizations will be imperative to creating a competitive Promise

Neighborhood application in Los Angeles.

As Los Angles learned when applying for Empowerment Zones, it is imperative

that community-based organizations, especially those with a grassroots focus, lead and

dictate the terms of initiative. As Alan Weeks says, "There is a threat that large non-

profits will move away from grassroots efforts … There is a difference between coming

to the community for a stamp of approval and facilitating the community actually lifting

up the programs, models, and projects."[80] Indeed, larger national organizations like

United Way or Southwest Key in Austin often do not have a history of active, extensive

community engagement, and are far removed from the lived reality in local

neighborhoods. As a result, it is important to prioritize grassroots community based

organizations when choosing anchor institutions and lead entities for potential Promise

Neighborhoods. As Nancy Aardema, the executive director of Chicago's Logan Square

Neighborhood Association, puts it, "[Any campaign] has to be worthy of our time, both

in terms of victory and building relationships. So part of our organizing is always

relationship building and making it worth staying in the community, because it's deeper

than a house – it's about relationships and creativity."[81]

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[80] Interview with Alan Weeks December 23, 2009.
[81] Taken from Logan Square Neighborhood Association website:
http://www.lsna.net/About-us/LSNA-Mission-description-and-history.html

<u>Organization and leadership</u>

Organizationally, the HCZ benefits from being able to act autonomously, as all of the programs and services are housed under the same organization. Many of the organizations applying for Promise Neighborhoods will be part of a collaboration-providing programs and services. Some of these collaboratives of organizations have decided to form new non-profits that will be the lead organization and others have decided to designate an existing lead organization to apply but will operate as a collaboration of organizations.

Thus far in the pre-planning stage three models for organizational structure have emerged. While the RFP may clearly dictate the structure neighborhoods must follow, these models me help other citied envision their own organizational structure.

1. One main organization with partners

An example of the first model comes from Austin, where Southwest Key plans to operate as the primary organization and team with partners as necessary. Southwest Key operates the charter school that will be the centerpiece of the Govalle/Johnson Terrace zone. In addition to the charter schools, it offers after-school programs, and it has identified early childhood and health services programming as gaps in its offerings. To fill these gaps, Southwest Key plans to either partner with other organizations or expanding the services it provides. In this model, collaboration with city agencies is not as crucial as in other models, and defining roles is not as necessary. This model is the most similar of the three

to the Harlem Children's Zone, as it consists of a single organization that is able to act relatively autonomously.

2. Complex collaborative structure with one existing anchor institution

Some neighborhoods are hoping to take a more collaborative approach. While they have identified an anchor institution, they are simultaneously creating clear roles for other organizations. For example, consider New Orleans. According to Lauren Bierbaum, Central City, New Orleans has decided not to form a separate non-profit but work collaboratively from existing organizations, with one organization as the lead: "We decided that we were not going to seek independent 501 c3 status for the steering committee collaborative. What that meant is we need to carve out clear [roles.]."[82] Central City plans to operate with an existing anchor institution, which will oversee a collaborative of organizations that together create the pipeline or continuum of programs.

3. Collaborative structure with newly created anchor institution

In the Woodlawn neighborhood in Chicago, a separate 501 c3 has been created to manage the Woodlawn Children's Promise Zone, even though the zone was developed within the context of the New Communities Program. Woodlawn Children's Promise Zone has already secured partnerships with various entities, including the University of Chicago's Office of Civic Engagement, School of Social Service Administration, Urban Education Institute, and Medical Center.

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[82] Interview with Lauren Bierbaum March 17, 2010.

Under this model, the Woodlawn group is able to construct a strategic board that can support the zone financially, politically, and programmatically. The board includes Don Thompson, President and Chief Operating Officer of McDonald's, and Tim Knowles, the John Dewey Clinical Professor of Education at the University of Chicago and director of the Urban Education Institute, which includes the University's charter schools. Knowles is also the former deputy superintendent of the Boston Public Schools, where he founded both the Boston Leadership Academy and the Boston Teacher Residency, both of which have become national models. The ability to construct a new board that directly aligns with the goals of Promise Neighborhoods is a clear advantage to creating a new organization to house the zone.

Much of Harlem Children's Zone's success is due to the Geoffrey Canada's strong leadership. Promise Neighborhoods, on the other hand, is attempting to create collaboration between various organizations in its children's zones. Does the collaborative model mean that Promise Neighborhoods will not have strong, central leadership?

While the Woodlawn Children's Promise Zone has stated that it wants its executive director to be an education leader with significant track record of success working with schools and communities, and while Canada's charismatic nature captured the attention of those in Harlem, President Obama, and the producers of *60 Minutes*, it may not be true that every children's zone requires a strong, autonomous leader. Indeed, in a more collaborative model, a strong leader might actually limit the ability to collaborate. The most important aspect of Promise Neighborhoods leadership is that it possesses longstanding, deep relationships with the community. The community must see

the leadership of any children's zone as accountable and approachable. While the final RFP may more firmly dictate the roles and responsibilities of leadership, in some instances a more collaborative leadership approach may offer maximum benefit to the community.

Los Angeles has the benefit of pre-existing collaborative networks, both citywide and more specifically in Boyle Heights and South Los Angeles. The California Endowment *Building Healthy Communities* initiative and various city-led place-based partnerships have forced these neighborhoods to collaborate. Los Angeles should capitalize on existing collaborations and use a collaborative model similar to that of New Orleans. While there are benefits to the Woodlawn model, I believe that since a separate 501 c3 has not yet been established in Los Angeles, there is not enough time to establish one and move forward successfully. In terms of leadership, I think it will be especially important in both Boyle Heights or South Los Angeles to choose leaders with a legacy of working effectively in the community and with multiple parties.

Funding

There is one problem that is going to be the biggest problem everywhere, and that is money. HCZ is a huge operation which raises $65 to $75 million a year. It's hard to imagine how you would replicate on that scale anywhere else. New York has access to a lot of Wall Street money. That is not to say that there are not large giving communities in other areas, but that is a lot of money for one area.

- Chris Brown, LISC Chicago[83]

The Promise Neighborhoods program will supply participating communities with federal money, but will also require a still-to-be-determined matching grant amount. While Los Angeles has a robust philanthropic/foundation sector, the public sector in Los Angeles, in particular the City of Los Angeles and the Los Angeles Unified School District, is currently in economic crisis.

Promise Neighborhoods' potential reliance on private funds may favor neighborhoods that already have links to private foundation funding. But many question the wisdom of this. According to Patrick Lester, Senior Vice President of Public Policy at United Neighborhood Centers of America, "Low-income communities by definition do not have access to lots of private funding."[84] Lester's colleague, Hayling Price, says, "There needs to be an option to reduce the matching funds."[85]

If the Promise Neighborhoods RFP requires a matching grant, it will be imperative to choose an anchor organization that has the capacity to obtain private funding. (One way to indicate an anchor institution's ability to raise funds is by looking

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[83] Interview with Chris Brown March 11, 2010.
[84] United Neighborhood Centers of America (UNCA) is a voluntary, nonprofit, national organization with neighborhood-based member agencies throughout the United States. Formerly known as the National Federation of Settlements and Neighborhood Centers, it was founded in 1911 by Jane Addams and other pioneers of the settlement movement.
[85] Interview with Hayling Price February 28, 2010.

at those guiding the organization. According to Price, "You can see the wealth of an organization in the wealth of its board of directors."[86] In order to prevent funding issues, potential Promise Neighborhoods should strategically tap into funding streams and create a large network of diverse funders.

Past attempts to replicate Harlem Children's Zone have shown that, while children's zones will not necessarily operate using directly provided state funds; they are likely to collaborate with state-funded programs. Promise Neighborhoods will be closely linked both programmatically and fiscally to the cities where they're located. Many locations are struggling financially, and this could hinder the feasibility of the initiative in those locations. When Rochester attempted to replicate the Harlem Children's Zone; its efforts were defeated in part due to a lack of state funding. The failure of the zone in Rochester due to issues in obtaining state funds serves as a warning for Promise Neighborhoods to communicate directly with state officials.

One innovative strategy is to include funders "at the table" throughout the process. Under this model, the funders are not directly dictating the process and progress of the zone, but they stay intimately informed of the entire process and plan as they develop. The collaborative effort in Central City, New Orleans, for example, has chosen to include its funders throughout the entire proposal and planning process. Lauren Bierbaum explains, "When we have our steering committee meetings, in addition to the organizations, there is a group of funders that work in Central City called the Central City funding collaborative, including some local funders, some regional funders, and some national funders, all of whom have current initiatives in Central City … [The funders] are

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[86] Interview with Hayling Price February 28, 2010.

poised to mobilize the funding collaborative in whatever way we need if there is a match requirement."[87]These funders include Entergy Corp, the local power company, and a regional philanthropic consultant from Chase Manhattan Bank.

Promise Neighborhoods applicants should also make sure their efforts do not take money away from other neighborhoods that are also in dire need. Nancy Aardema, Executive Director of the Logan Square Neighborhood Association, does not believe in benefiting Logan Square at the expense of the rest of Chicago: "I don't think that Logan Square is interested in saying to the neighborhoods next to us, Look, all this money should come to schools in our neighborhood … We are not trying to drain the city of all the education funds."[88] Chris Brown says, "One of the worries that everyone here has is, how do you keep a program of this scope and scale from sucking up all the resources in the city? … If there is a large matching requirement, that could put a dent into fundraising efforts in other neighborhoods that are just as needy and doing just as good work."[89]

In Los Angeles, philanthropic entities like TCE, Annenberg, and Ford have already looking at how they can support Promise Neighborhoods. This is a good indicator that if a neighborhood in Los Angeles is selected and there is matching grant required, the community will not be financially limited. In comparison to cities like Detroit and Baltimore, Los Angeles also has the advantage of access to corporate partners that are headquartered in the city. Finally, to return to organizational structure and leadership,

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[87] Phone Interview with Laura Bierbaum March 10, 2010.
[88] Phone Interview with Nancy Aardeema March 16 ,2010.
[89] Phone Interview with Chris Brown March 16, 2010.

when any Los Angeles Promise Neighborhoods zone chooses a leader and an anchor

institution, it should consider their financial connections.

Evaluating success

Data and evaluation methods . . . it's actually what keeps me up at night.
                    - Laura Bierbaum, Greater New Orleans Afterschool Partnership[90]

While it may seem premature, when preparing to apply for Promise Neighborhoods

organizations must begin to map out how they will evaluate the zone's success. In 1969,

Daniel Patrick Moynihan, the chair of the Council for Urban Affairs, argued for a

decreased urban agenda, saying, "Too many programs have produced too few results."[91]

In other words, there must be data that document a program's success for that program to

remain politically feasible. Data and clear evaluation methods are essential to ensuring

that a program can continue.

In the report *Preparing for Promise Neighborhoods*, the Annie E. Casey

Foundation details the quantifiable items that are likely to be required in the application

for inclusion in the program:

1. Define and justify target areas

2. Define poverty rates and economic status

3. Other than poverty rates can use: food stamps, Medicaid

4. Quantify the target population

5. Institutional and community assets

6. Evaluation metrics[92]

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[90] [90] Phone Interview with Laura Bierbaum March 10, 2010.

[91] Hilary Silvers "Obama's Urban Policy: A Symposium." *City and Community,* (March 2010).

[92] Annie E. Casey "Preparing for Promise Neighborhoods:…" (Nov 10, 2009).

Potential Promise Neighborhoods should begin to collect this information now, so that when the program RFP is released they are well positioned to complete the application and prepare to become part of the program.

According to a report by Child Trends, currently not a lot of this data is available at a neighborhood level.[93] As a result, Promise Neighborhoods will be forced to do their own data collection. For example, in order to show that Promise Neighborhoods have improved children's lives through infancy, childhood, and adolescence, Child Trends suggests that neighborhoods look at rates of infant and child mortality – but these data do not exist at a neighborhood level, so Promise Neighborhoods will have to partner with local health departments to obtain this data.[94]

Some neighborhoods are better prepared to collect and present relevant data than others. Lauren Bierbaum describes the data situation in New Orleans as follows: "We don't have a good plan for it, we don't have a good vision for it, and we don't have a good infrastructure. The databases we have currently are decentralized and are not compatible. Since the school district is decentralized we don't even have the school data." [95]

Those applicants which do not have the capacity to collect, maintain, and evaluate data themselves will need to partner with other organizations to do so. The United Way Capital Area Austin, for instance, has already begun to put together data for the St. Johns Promise Neighborhoods application, and will be a great resource for data and evaluation if the neighborhood is chosen as a Promise Neighborhood. It is crucial that

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[93] Child Trends "Results and Indicators for Children: An Analysis to Inform Discussions about Promise Neighborhoods" (November 6, 2009).
[94] *Ibid.*
[95] Interview with Laura Bierbaum March 3,2010.

neighborhoods and anchor institutions begin thinking about and connecting with data partner so that when the Promise Neighborhoods RFP is released, they can begin to compile data for the application.

Los Angeles has the benefit of having multiple possible data partners that could assist or facilitate evaluations for potential Promise Neighborhoods. In particular, the Advancement Project, the organization that runs the Healthcities.org clearinghouse website, offers all Angelinos access to statistical and map information on the city. The Advancement Project has already been involved in the Promise Neighborhood conversation in Los Angeles. In December 2009, it produced the beginning of a study on potential Promise Neighborhoods in Los Angeles in terms of demographics and where current convergences of place-based initiatives. In addition, L.A. can work with The California Endowment and the United Way, which in 2010 updated its report entitled *The Tale of Two Cities*, depicting neighborhood poverty in Los Angeles. Finally, Los Angeles has the benefit of being home to multiple world-class universities. For instance, a potential Promise Neighborhood could partner with either UCLA or USC to conduct all or part of its data gathering and evaluation.

VII. Moving Forward in Los Angeles: Recommendations

With an understanding of the processes and practices other cities are using to prepare to apply for Promise Neighborhoods, I now turn to explore the potential of Promise Neighborhoods in Los Angeles. In this section, I will explore how planning for Promise Neighborhoods, even if Los Angeles does not receive the funds, could be a necessary catalyst for coordinating and collaborating in order to create effective comprehensive place-based neighborhood revitalization programs that connect with schools. First I will briefly summarize the lessons for Los Angeles in order to reiterate the relevant strategies emerging nationally. Then, I will present tangible recommendations to move forward Promise Neighborhoods and a comprehensive place-based community development agenda. Finally, I will discuss broader implications potential benefits of merely planning for Promise Neighborhoods, commenting on its ability to change systems and ideologies Collaborating to create comprehensive place-based approaches furthers the progressive movement in Los Angeles by inviting a diverse group of individuals to the table, not merely public officials and funders, and having joint conversations that recognize the value and experience of those working within schools and community based organizations.

Summary of Lessons for Los Angeles

A. Deciding to apply – and identifying how many neighborhoods should apply

Los Angeles should be careful not to spend too much energy, resources, or time deciding which neighborhood would be best suited for the Promise Neighborhoods program. Based on the location of existing place-based initiatives, I believe an L.A. Promise

Neighborhoods application should focus on South Los Angeles or Boyle Heights. City and county officials should construct plans detailing how they can best support a Los Angeles Promise Neighborhood, be it in Boyle Heights or South Los Angeles. Concurrently, community-based organizations should assess whether this is a program they want to be involved with, and if whether it aligns with their mission and goals. When a neighborhood is selected, public officials, funders, and schools must begin to construct a zone, streamline programs, and create new services that fill gaps.

B. Making schools the centerpiece

Much of the decision regarding which schools to include in Promise Neighborhoods is contingent on the guidelines of the RFP, which has not yet been released. However, I believe it would be in the interest of South Los Angeles and Boyle Heights to choose as a zone anchor a school that has shown a trajectory of improvement. In the case of Boyle Heights, choosing such a school may be difficult, but choosing a school that is showing at least some improvements may suffice. Boyle Heights select one of the Mayor's partnership schools, which operate using more of a "full-service" model than most traditional LAUSD schools. In South Los Angeles, it would be advantageous to pick a charter school that is already high performing, as that would enable the neighborhood to promote itself as being a charter schools leader both in the city and in the state. Finally, it is imperative that LAUSD, the school board, school administrators, and teachers at the actual schools in question be involved in the entire planning process. As the heart of the program, schools will be greatly affected by Promise Neighborhoods; they should be allowed space to voice opinions and share perspectives.

C. Programs and scope

L.A.'s existing place-based programs are an asset when it comes to constructing a collaborative organizational infrastructure able to support comprehensive programming. By streamlining and coordinating existing programs, Los Angeles can create the framework for a program similar to Harlem Children's Zone. As this is done, gaps in the support-and-services continuum will become clear. By including successful and innovative programs, Los Angeles may be able to give its application a competitive edge. Linking Promise Neighborhoods to economic development efforts, especially to green-economy initiatives such as the Green Retrofits Program and a proposed green-jobs program at the local Department of Water and Power, may be the kind of innovation that impresses the Obama administration. Following the Chicago model and including in the continuum services that support residents from being displaced due to foreclosure is also crucial. Gentrification-related displacement may also be important to consider when crafting programs. This issue could be addressed by including community-organizing efforts, so that if residents need to organize in response to threats arising from real estate development, they will have access to the knowledge and skills needed to do so. Finally, the skillful consideration of how Promise Neighborhoods can overlap with other upcoming programs will be crucial, especially in the case of potential overlap with future federal programs such as Choice Neighborhoods.

D. Organization and leadership

I believe that South Los Angeles and Boyle Heights should employ a structure including a lead organization that is part of a defined collaborative. I believe the collaborative can initially be built around organizations that are involved in The California Endowment's

Building Healthy Communities Program, but that there should be a critical eye fixed on ensuring that the collaborative focuses on education, and that there is capacity to build a successful system. Modeling the effort on existing structures will speed the process of assigning roles and developing working relationships. I believe that for either neighborhood, the leader should be someone from the community with a track record of collaboration and who understands both the lived experience of the neighborhood and the steps necessary to develop a program on the scale of Promise Neighborhoods; this includes clear political and fundraising skills.

E. Funding

Focusing on South Los Angeles or Boyle Heights due to those neighborhoods' connections with The California Endowment is financially wise. By aligning with TCE's existing program areas, any Promise Neighborhoods applicant will ensure that funding streams will already be available should it be chosen for inclusion in the program. It will also be crucial to maintain strong, well-connected boards for whichever institution becomes an application's anchor member, as well as for collaborative-partner institutions.

F. Evaluation

South Los Angeles and Boyle Heights should consider employing the Advancement Project to assist in the evaluation of their performance. The Advancement Project is well positioned, with past experience with the city, The California Endowment, and community-based organizations. Seeking out evaluation partnerships with USC or UCLA as well as other organizations such as the United Way may also be wise.

To move forward with its Promise Neighborhoods application(s), following are the specific steps that I propose Los Angeles should take:

1. Create an executive committee that includes individuals who are working "on the ground" to identify the neighborhood that should apply, as well as the anchor institution within that neighborhood – but to also advise the application process and implementation phase.

Crafting a committee including principals, teachers, and staff at community-based organizations, as well as public officials, funders, and individuals from larger city or county-wide services entities, will allow for collaborative planning to begin as well as supporting neighborhood implementation. Thus far, there has been a lack of deep engagement by community-based organizations and individuals in schools; this must change. Allowing community-based organizations and schools to serve on an executive committee will change the traditional power dynamics that cast these entities as being of secondary importance in the decision-making process, as well as helping make sure that the decisions that are made are consistent with the realities in each neighborhood. Once an executive committee has formed similar to the ones in Austin and Oakland, the group can convene to decide which neighborhoods to will support in the application process and which anchor institutions to support. This process should occur after the release of the Promise Neighborhoods RFP. In order to identify anchor institutions, I believe that the executive committee should issue a call for applications from community organizations interested in anchoring the zone.[96] After the RFP has been released and the process of identifying the neighborhood and anchor institution is complete, the executive committee can serve as an advisory board to the potential zone.

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[96] See appendix for template of application from Oakland

2. Move forward with data collection and create a strategic narrative now.

It is crucial that data begin to be collected and narratives begin to be shaped, so that the high level of need and capacity and innovative approaches in Los Angeles can be firmly established. Funding for these efforts could come from The California Endowment, and the Advancement Project could complete the research. The data and narratives should focus on Boyle Heights and South Los Angeles. Collecting as much data as possible before the RFP is released will allow the proposal process to run as smoothly as possible. Los Angeles has not performed well in the past in competitions for federally funded programs; Boyle Heights and/or South Los Angeles must make it clear why they should be chosen over Woodlawn, Chicago; Central City, New Orleans; or East Oakland.

3. Seek out, organize, and participate in learning exchanges with individuals in Los Angeles and nationally to share strategies and discuss obstacles.

In my research, I found that there are few central hubs for information on the new initiative. Organizations like PolicyLink, United Neighborhood Centers for America, Bridgespan, and the Annie E. Casey Foundation have compiled information online, but there need to be more avenues that allow neighborhoods to learn about strategies and communicate about obstacles they are experiencing. Los Angeles would especially benefit from conversations with individuals in other cities, particularly Chicago and Oakland. Los Angeles would benefit from a learning exchange with Chicago, as both cities are large and are faced with a choice among numerous potential Promise Neighborhoods. In addition, in both Chicago and Los Angeles, there are well-established existing programs that can clearly align with Promise Neighborhoods: LISC's New Communities Program and TCE'S Building Healthy Communities program. Oakland is

also a site for TCE'S Building Healthy Communities Program, so Los Angeles may

benefit from looking to that city's approach as well.

4. Promote and advertise Los Angeles' efforts to secure Promise Neighborhoods funding to create broader local, state and national awareness of L.A.'s approach.

Promoting and advertising the Promise Neighborhoods planning process will both inform

Angelinos on the prospective program and show the national public that Los Angeles is

well positioned for inclusion in the federal program. Informing local city residents will

attract attention to community planning sessions and the visioning process. In order to

communicate with audiences in South Los Angeles and Boyle Heights, information

should be circulated via the *Los Angeles Times* as well as smaller local papers, local

English- and Spanish-language television stations, and community organizations that

have frequent contact with local residents. At the same time, in order to generate national

attention, articles and columns should be placed in national newspapers.

5. Begin collective thinking on comprehensive place-based community development and the potential of Promise Neighborhoods in Los Angeles by hosting a daylong interactive event.

In order to engage a mass of Angelinos in the Promise Neighborhoods opportunity, I

suggest hosting a daylong program on the current state of comprehensive place-based

programs and the potential for Promise Neighborhoods in Los Angeles. I propose The

California Endowment host the event in conjunction with the Mayor's Office for

Strategic Partnerships. The day should include presentations about current place-based

initiatives in Los Angeles, an overview of the Harlem Children's Zone model, a panel of

individuals from other cities preparing for Promise Neighborhoods, and workshops and

dialogues looking at what Promise Neighborhoods could look like in Los Angeles. While

other cities and neighborhoods have hosted lectures by Geoffrey Canada or Paul Tough, I believe that Los Angeles would benefit more from an interactive day-long event. Public officials, school board members, educators, community-based organizations, funders, and community residents would then have the opportunity to convene to discuss the future agenda for comprehensive place-based initiatives in Los Angeles, in addition to the Promise Neighborhoods opportunity.

VIII. Conclusion

Promise Neighborhoods has the potential to shift current community development and education ideologies by encouraging individuals to think collaboratively and develop interrelated and comprehensive programs within neighborhoods in need. By attempting to disrupt cyclical poverty within neighborhoods using comprehensive programs, the program aims to end the days when one's zip code dictates his or her destiny.

Regardless of whether the city ends up getting program funding, Los Angeles should use the Promise Neighborhoods application process as an opportunity to move forward an agenda that supports comprehensive place-based community development initiatives while bolstering communication and collaboration. The application and planning process gives Los Angeles (in particular, city and county public officials) the opportunity to think collaboratively across systems. In addition, it has the capacity to mobilize public officials, funders, and other stakeholders to more actively integrate community-based organizations and schools. Through the process, individuals from various sectors will be able to build relationships that have the potential to advance existing comprehensive place-based initiatives and give momentum to a regional movement that will result in similar new initiatives.

It may seem contradictory to mention a regional movement when discussing place-based policy, but the micro-level planning for Promise Neighborhoods is forcing individuals and organizations to communicate and collaborate across many systems that are regional in nature. For instance, the county will be interacting with after-school programs in South Los Angeles; this interaction forces school systems, public officials, and community organizations to set common goals.

In the end, the question shouldn't be, "*Can Los Angeles obtain Promise Neighborhoods funding?*" Rather, the question should be, "*Can L.A. prioritize comprehensive place-based community development and increase interagency and inter-sector communication and collaboration while allowing those "on the ground" to lead?*"

List of Interviewees

National Organizations:

Hayling Price
United Neighborhood Centers for America

Kay Fernandez Smith
PolicyLink

Paul Tough
Author, Whatever it Takes

Los Angeles

Maria Cabildo
East Los Angeles Community Corporation

Lester Garcia
Boyle Heights Learning Collaborative

Marqueece Harris-Dawson
Community Coalition

Fran Jemmott
Jemmott/Rollins, Inc.

Ron Palacios
Office of Yolie Flores

Jennifer Ybarra
The California Endowment

Ruben Gonzalez
The Center for Study of Social Policy

Susan Lee
The Advancement Project

Aileen Adams
*Office for Strategic Partnerships, Office of
Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa*

Austin

Alan Weeks
St. John Community/School Alliance

Joella Brooks
South West Key

Chicago

Nancy Aardema
Logan Square Neighborhood Association

Chris Brown
LISC/ Chicago

Charles Payne
University of Chicago

Bishop Arthur Braizer
Woodlawn Children's Promise

New Orleans

Lauren Bierbaum
*Greater New Orleans After School
Partnership*

Orlando

Betsy Early
Parramore Zone

Oakland

Judy London
*Director, District 1
Oakland Unified School District*

Steve King
Urban Strategies Council

Junius Williams
Urban Strategies Council

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