What we do

Why we do it

How we do it

Neighborhoods are meaningful places. They include homes, local businesses, public streets and sidewalks, parks, grocery stores, schools and places of worship. Many communities struggle with little capacity to address the day-to-day issues. Without a clear understanding of the neighborhood’s resources, leaders often fail to take advantage of these assets. Well-known author Jane Jacobs once stated, “The goal of a neighborhood organization is to avoid being swallowed by the issues that it faces and to increase effectiveness at addressing its problems over time.” The Center for Neighborhoods provides the curriculum, technology, and resources so that neighborhood leaders can realize the potential of their neighborhood organization and their full potential as advocates for positive change.

To provide these resources and do this meaningful work, we rely on our valued partners. Our partnerships to date include: NeighborWorks America, City of KCMO (multiple departments), Kansas City Police Department CIO Officers, Health Forward Foundation, Community Development Workshop, KC Healthy Kids, Greater Kansas City Food Policy Coalition, Missouri Department of Conservation, KCMO Health Commission, Alt-CAP/CCF, The Giving Grove, UMKC Center for Economic Information, Friends of Father Norman Rotert, Charloette Street Foundation, The Kansas City Eviction Project, Kansas City Public Television, Kansas City Public Library, UNESCO Creative Cities Network, Kansas City Creative City of Music, San Cristobal de las Casas (Mexico), Bruce R. Watkins Cultural Center, UMKC School of Social Work, The Kansas City Museum, Legal Aid of Western Missouri, ABCD Institute, Homes Associations of Kansas City, Mid-America Regional Council, Midwest Center for Nonprofit Leadership, Greater Kansas City LISC, UMKC faculty, staff and students - and all of our neighborhoods!

The UMKC Center for Neighborhoods is a community-university partnership housed in the Department of Architecture, Urban Planning + Design. The Center provides leadership training, technical assistance, and applied planning research to help neighborhood leaders address the challenges of neighborhood revitalization. Using an equity lens and an asset-based community development model, we collaborate with University faculty, staff, and students as well as partner organizations to provide a learning environment for community-identified priorities. Each leader participates in a 10-12 week program of neighborhood leadership classes on the University’s campus. We promote leadership development through asset mapping, problem-solving, and project implementation.
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Hello Friends,

On April 23, 2019, we celebrated three years since the Center for Neighborhoods opened its doors. Certainly, we have had our challenges – loss of staff due to budget cuts and financial uncertainties. In spite of it all, we have engaged with, equipped and empowered over 125 leaders who represent more than 50 unique neighborhood organizations. In this short time, we have witnessed new neighborhood organizations created, existing neighborhoods revived, and a record number of organizations that have requested and received significant financial resources to build the capacity of their organization.

As for us, a few exciting things have taken place. Last December the City of Kansas City, Missouri recognized our hard work with a Proclamation. We were honored in 2018 with a NeighborWorks America Training Faculty and Consultant certification. Our sponsored events have included local and national speakers – including John McKnight, Dr. Mindy Thompson-Fullilove, Tony Salazar, and Pulitzer Prize winning poet Tyhemba Jess. Our support for the Kansas City UNESCO’s City of Music designation has opened doors for international opportunities and partnerships.

As we move into our next season, we will continue to work in solidarity with our neighborhood leaders, community, civic, university and philanthropic partners. We will continue to hold the space where neighborhood leaders, advocates and residents can sit at the table of “learning and knowledge” to address those tough and wicked problems through an asset-based community development lens.

With deep gratitude, thank you to Senator Shalonn “Kiki” Curls and staff, Joy Swallow, Stella Szymanski and Jacob Wagner of the Department of Architecture, Urban Planning and Design, my student interns, our funders and supporters, and most importantly our neighborhood leaders.

*Future Forward*

Sincerely,

Dina Newman,
Director
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Dina Newman, Director

Sincerely,

From the Director

Students in internships, studios, and practicum classes.

57+ Cohort Leadership Class participants.

125+ Hours of technical assistance provided

1,000+ Attendees at Center sponsored events.

2,595+ 127,000+ Neighbors reached.

Partner organizations 36+

Neighborhood organizations trained.

50+

Center for Neighborhoods – by the numbers

*Self-reported funding to neighborhood organizations that have participated in Cohorts 1 through 5 (2016-2018). Funds include NTDF, PIAC, CCF/LISC and other miscellaneous grants.

In 3 years of work...

$1,023,023 New funding received by participating organizations*

Some of our past Cohort participants

“What is CFN’s return on investment? It goes beyond mere quantitative measures. Having an organization like CFN ready and available to help educate and assist neighborhood leaders is essential to the improvement, education, and quality of life of the most distressed communities in Kansas City.” Linda Manlove-Braxton, Citadel

“We consider them [Center for Neighborhoods] instrumental in our success in communicating within our neighborhood, other neighborhoods, and with City Hall.” Margaret Richcreek, West Plaza

“We are better able to look at code issues, development interests in our area, and network with other communities ... to work on our ... issues.” Gale Burris, Eastwood Hills

“We’re not sure how to proceed or hit a roadblock, we revisit the Center for Neighborhoods and draw on the collective wisdom and ... experience.” Cheryl Barnes, Blue Hills

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2018 PROGRESS REPORT

Building the capacity of Kansas City neighborhoods

neighborhoods@umkc.edu
816.235.6931
website: https://info.umkc.edu/cfn/
4747 Troost Ave., Rm. 222
Kansas City, MO 64110