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REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL:

Making the “Business Case” for Community Development: An Economic Analysis of Cost Savings and Societal Returns from Community Development Investments

Completed applications due: August 4, 2017, noon PDT

Overview

[Community development](#)¹ leaders often struggle to quantify and communicate the broad benefits of their efforts—be it affordable housing, grocery stores, health clinics, and other neighborhood infrastructure investments in low-income places. However, understanding and sharing the impact of holistic community development initiatives on important social determinants of health is key to scaling up successful efforts. Quantifying broad social, health, and economic value is essential to build the business case for continuing and expanding these types of investments. This analysis is intended for an audience of community development and public health policy leaders to attract investment and advocate for policy advancing holistic community development initiatives.

The [Build Healthy Places Network](#) is seeking proposals to carry out a broad analysis of the social and financial returns on investment generated by holistic community development projects. Frameworks drawn from the analysis are intended to serve as a basis for calculating the costs and impact of integrated neighborhood interventions and as a general tool for community development professionals to communicate the value of such programs to policymakers and investors.

To date, public health researchers have studied health cost savings and cost-benefit analyses for highly targeted interventions such as early childhood education and homelessness. However, most analyses are academic and theoretical, challenging practical application when forecasting the benefits and savings of different programs. This is partly attributable to the relatively recent emergence of holistic community development efforts in the last 5 years; however, as these programs continue to operate and proliferate, the need for practical models to fully understand ROI grows more pressing.

While some tools exist – such as the Low Income Investment Fund’s [Social Impact Calculator](#), which helps practitioners approximate the scope of societal return of affordable housing, early childhood, education, and health clinics – there still remains an empirical gap when trying to determine the value of multi-sector approaches to community development.

The proposed project will build on a review of existing literature currently being developed and will meet the following research objectives:

- Identify what types of returns are likely to be generated (e.g., economic, health, etc.);
- Determine to whom benefits accrue (e.g., residents, housing developers, hospitals, government, etc.);

¹ Community development is defined a \$200 billion dollar sector that addresses multiple social determinants of health through the development and financing of noted initiatives as well as affordable housing, businesses, community centers, health clinics, and services to support children, youth, and families (See the Build Healthy Places Network’s [Jargon Buster](#)).



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- Project overall cost savings and other societal benefits to stakeholders; and
- Identify key strategic audiences for the research output.

Background

While the value of cross-sector, holistic community development efforts is often [well-recognized](#) in general, particularly given the [growing public health policy focus](#) on cross-sector collaboration, only a few historical cases provide a research basis for quantifying multi-sector impact and broad social benefit measured in practical and economic terms.

These cases have largely assessed the broad impact of highly targeted interventions, rather than holistic community development initiatives. For example, early childhood education programs such as the Perry Preschool Program, Carolina Abecedarian Program, and Chicago Parent Child Center have demonstrated compelling, positive ROI². The Perry Preschool Program in particular showed significant health improvements in 37-year follow-up studies and an overall \$12.90 savings across the criminal justice system and welfare systems for every \$1 invested in education plus increased tax revenue³. Similar studies on affordable housing initiatives also demonstrate clear cost savings and improvements in health, education, and employment.⁴

Many of these cases, however, are decades old, and few tools exist to measure and validate current neighborhood development strategies given the movement towards cross-sector initiatives. Meanwhile, successful holistic community development efforts addressing multiple social determinants of health continue to be funded and grow. Examples such as the Purpose Built Communities-supported [East Lake](#) villages in Atlanta and [Columbia Parc](#) in New Orleans, and the [Conway Center](#) in Washington, DC, show promising outcomes.

Building a compelling business case to sustain and grow investment in holistic community development requires explicit quantification and clear communication of its value.

Build Healthy Places Network

The Build Healthy Places Network builds on the work of the [Healthy Communities Initiative](#) and [RWJF's Commission to Build a Healthier America](#). We were founded in recognition that a national network connecting sectors and promoting and enabling cross-sector collaboration was critical for ensuring that all people have the opportunity to live healthy and rewarding lives.

Scope of Work

We are interested in a variety of methods and approaches to be determined in close coordination with the Build Healthy Places Network staff. The deliverables should include the following:

- Comprehensive white paper publication with potential for submission to a peer-reviewed public health, community development, and/or interdisciplinary journal (e.g., Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco's [Community Development Investment Review](#))

² Dalziel, et al. Assessment of the Cost-Benefit Literature on the Early Childhood Education for Vulnerable Children: What the Findings Mean for Policy. *SAGE Open*. 2015: 1-14.

³ Belfield, et al. The High/Scope Perry Preschool Program: Cost-Benefit Analysis Using Data from the Age-40 Follow-up. *The Journal of Human Resources*. 2006. 21:162-190.

⁴ Bamberger, Joshua and Sarah Dobbins. A Research Note: Long-Term Cost Effectiveness of Placing Homeless Seniors in Permanent Supportive Housing. *Cityscape: A Journal of Policy Development and Research*. 2015. 17:2.



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- Two-page Executive Summary for use by community development professionals in conversations with investors and policymakers
- Final slide deck summarizing key findings
- Framework/Preliminary model for development of an interactive, online tool (e.g., Low Income Investment Fund's [Social Impact Calculator](#))
- Participation in at least one conference presentation sharing preliminary findings

Budget/Term of Contract

The budget range for this project is **\$20,000-30,000**. The proposed study should be completed in 4 months with a preferred start date of **September 1, 2017**.

Proposal Format

Applicants must submit a proposal (max 3 pages) including the following components:

- Statement of Qualifications
- Scope of Work
- Itemized budget and budget justification
- List of up to 3 references

Documents must be formatted in single spaced 12-point Times New Roman font and submitted in PDF format.

Selection Criteria

The final bid will be selected based on the following criteria:

- Applicant's qualifications and proven record of completing similar projects;
- Comprehensive and clear Scope of Work that fulfills research objectives described; and
- Feasibility of budget

Deadline

Completed applications are due **August 4, 2017, noon PDT**. Please send all submissions admin@buildhealthyplaces.org with subject line: "RFP Submission."

Questions

A learning webinar to answer initial questions about the RFP is scheduled for **Wednesday, July 19, 2017 at 10:00-10:45am PT**.

To register, please click on [this link](#) or copy and paste this URL into your browser:
<https://zoom.us/meeting/register/7cdba44ce0512951dc2040ba88984b7b>

A recording of the webinar will be posted at www.buildhealthyplaces.org for later reference.