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Collaboration Overview

The [Promise Neighborhoods](#) program is a place-based approach focused on addressing generational family and community poverty by ensuring quality educational opportunities and providing a range of supports for children, youth, families, and communities.

The program provides examples of interagency collaboration at the federal level, intra-agency collaboration within the Department of Education, and local level collaborations at grantee sites across the country.

The collaboration structure includes the following elements:

Federal level—

- Coordinated efforts across Department of Education programs
- Coordinated efforts across federal agencies and involvement in the White House Neighborhood Revitalization Initiative (NRI)
- Coordinated technical assistance support for grantees

Local level—

- Established partnerships with a range of entities
- Multiple levels of management, including a project director and advisory board
- Funding from public, private, and federal sources
- Tracking progress through longitudinal databases and other mechanisms

Promising practices include the following:

Federal level—

- Modeling other federal level collaborations
- Building on past experience with federal level collaboration
- Integrating Promise Neighborhoods work with other federal initiatives

- Having multiple mechanisms for ongoing and regular communication
- Reliance on data to assess the success of the work

Local level—

- Involving the communities in planning and implementation
- Conducting a needs assessment to understand the context of communities
- Putting a plan in place before implementation

Promise Neighborhoods programs have faced challenges at the federal and local level and learned the following lessons:

- Recognition of complex and varied work is essential for managing multiple unique grantees.
- Development of a longitudinal data system and sharing data can pose a challenge.
- Communities need support to create sustained financial resources, community engagement, and partnerships.

Collaboration Purpose

The vision of the Promise Neighborhoods program is that all children and youth growing up in Promise Neighborhoods have access to great schools and strong systems of family and community support in order to prepare them to attain an excellent education and be college and career ready. The Promise Neighborhoods program aims to significantly improve the educational and developmental outcomes of children and youth in the nation's most distressed communities, and to transform those communities by

- identifying and increasing the capacity of eligible entities that are focused on achieving results for children and youth throughout an entire neighborhood;
- building a complete continuum of cradle-to-career solutions of both educational programs and family and community supports, with great schools at the center;
- integrating programs and breaking down agency “silos” so that solutions are implemented effectively and efficiently across agencies;
- developing the local infrastructure of systems and resources needed to sustain and scale up proven, effective solutions across the broader region beyond the initial neighborhood; and
- learning about the overall impact of the Promise Neighborhoods program and about the relationship between particular strategies in Promise Neighborhoods and student outcomes, through rigorous evaluation.¹

¹ U.S. Department of Education (2012). Promise Neighborhoods: Program description. Retrieved from <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/promiseneighborhoods/index.html#description>

About the Collaboration

The Promise Neighborhoods grant program was established in 2010 under the legislative authority of the Fund for the Improvement of Education Program (FIE) and is administered through the [Office of Innovation and Improvement \(OII\)](#) within the Department of Education (ED). The program builds on the experience of initiatives such as the Harlem Children's Zone and is the realization of President Obama's vision for taking an all-hands-on-deck approach to addressing generational family and community poverty.

There are two types of Promise Neighborhood grants—planning and implementation.

Planning Grants

The Promise Neighborhoods planning grants focus on understanding the needs in a targeted geographic area and developing a sound structure and plan to implement a continuum of supports that address the identified needs in that neighborhood. The planning phase includes the following components:

- Conduct a comprehensive needs assessment and segmentation of children and youth in the neighborhood.
- Develop a plan to deliver a continuum of solutions with the potential to drive results. This includes building community support for, and involvement in, the development of the plan.
- Establish effective partnerships both to provide solutions along the continuum and to commit resources to sustain and scale up what works.
- Plan, build, adapt, or expand a longitudinal data system that will provide information that the grantee will use for learning, continuous improvement, and accountability.
- Participate in a community of practice.²

Implementation Grants

The Promise Neighborhoods implementation grants support eligible organizations in carrying out plans to create a continuum of solutions that will significantly improve the educational and developmental outcomes of children and youth in a target neighborhood. The implementation phase includes the following components:

- Implement a continuum of solutions that addresses neighborhood challenges, as identified through a needs assessment and segmentation analysis, and that will improve results for children and youth in the neighborhood.
- Continue to build and strengthen partnerships that will provide solutions along the continuum of solutions and that will commit resources to sustain and scale up what works.
- Collect data on indicators at least annually, and use and improve a longitudinal data system for learning, continuous improvement, and accountability.

^{2,3} U.S. Department of Education (2012). Applications for new awards; Promise Neighborhoods program—planning grant competition. *Federal Register*, 77(77), 23690-23704. Retrieved from <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2012-04-20/pdf/2012-9595.pdf>

- Demonstrate progress on goals for improving systems, such as making changes in policies and organizations, and by leveraging resources to sustain and scale up what works.
- Participate in a community of practice.³

Organizations that are eligible for Promise Neighborhood grants include nonprofit organizations (this may include faith-based nonprofit organizations);⁴ institutions of higher education;⁵ and Indian tribes. Learn more about [eligibility](#) for Promise Neighborhood grants on ED's website.

For both planning and implementation grants, a Promise Neighborhood is defined as both a place and a strategy. Promise Neighborhoods are places or distressed neighborhoods that are characterized by

- inadequate access to high-quality early learning programs and services;
- struggling schools;
- low high-school and college graduation rates;
- high rates of unemployment;
- high rates of crime; and
- indicators of poor health.

The program is also a *strategy* for addressing the issues that these communities face through a continuum of cradle-to-career solutions. Great schools are at the center of this effort. Other essential components of this effort include

- a focus on identifying and building the capacity of eligible organizations;
- high-quality early learning programs;
- interventions and services that support multiple domains of early learning for children from birth through third grade; and
- ambitious, rigorous, and comprehensive education reforms that are linked to improved educational outcomes for children and youth in preschool through the 12th grade.

While not requirements, Promise Neighborhoods also aim to contribute to broader neighborhood revitalization strategies by breaking down public agency silos, addressing regulatory and policy barriers, and leveraging and integrating existing investments in the community.

In 2010, the Promise Neighborhoods program awarded one-year grants to eligible entities in 21 communities across the country. In 2011, the Department of Education awarded a second round of planning grants and a first round of implementation grants. The five implementation grants and 15 planning grants will reach an additional 16 communities throughout the United States. As of the spring of 2012, the Promise Neighborhoods program is in 18 states and the District of Columbia.

⁴ Nonprofit organizations that meet the definition of a nonprofit under 34 CFR 77.1(c).

⁵ Institutions of higher education as defined by section 101(a) of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended.

Collaboration Structure at the Federal Level

The federal level Promise Neighborhoods structure models the importance of working with a variety of partners to implement and manage a complex program. The federal collaboration is supported by the following:

Coordinated efforts across Department of Education (ED) programs

The Promise Neighborhoods program supports intra-agency collaboration by bringing together strategies from programs across ED. For example, one of the competitive priorities included in the Promise Neighborhood application is a Comprehensive Early Learning Network. In the 2011 competition the majority of planning and implementation applicants responded to this competitive priority. This connection with early learning work was supported through collaboration with the Race to the Top early learning challenge fund. A workgroup of staff tasked on both initiatives met weekly as the notice inviting applications for 2011 was developed.

Race to the Top – District (RTT–D) integrates many place-based principles through a Competitive Preference Priority for cradle-to-career results, resource alignment, and integrated services. The RTT-D competitive preference priority focuses on an applicant’s partnerships to identify and improve results from cradle to career; its strategy to target resources to improve the results and integrate education and other services; and plan to build the capacity of school staff and families to take this approach, from identifying needs and assets to routinely assessing implementation progress. Whereas the Promise Neighborhoods program expects strong partnerships with schools and districts in a place-based strategy, RTT-D will support districts in taking a more central leadership role in place-based solutions to improve student achievement. The Promise Neighborhoods program also works with the Investing in Innovation grants, the Office of Safe and Healthy Students, and other ED programs to support the multifaceted aspects of the Promise Neighborhoods program.

ED recently released a report describing the key elements of a place-based theory of action and how the Department is implementing place-based strategies, including the Promise Neighborhoods program. The report, titled “[Impact In Place: A Progress Report on the Department of Education’s Place-Based Strategy](#),” assesses the progress that has been made as a result of the Department’s place-based approach. It also describes how communities around the country have adopted a place-based model to direct resources more effectively. The report highlights the unique role of federal agencies in catalyzing place-based approaches and the value proposition of a place-based strategy in the education sector. Learn more and read the entire report on [ED’s website](#).

Coordinated efforts across federal agencies and involvement in the White House Neighborhood Revitalization Initiative (NRI)

In addition to ED, a number of federal agencies support place-based programs, including Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the Department of Justice (DOJ), and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The White House NRI was established to coordinate work at the neighborhood level across agencies, to understand the intersections between the place-based programs being developed (e.g., Choice Neighborhoods, Promise

Neighborhoods), to build capacity at the neighborhood level, and to identify and share best practices.

The NRI includes the following:

- The White House Domestic Policy Council
- The White House Office of Urban Affairs
- HUD
- ED
- DOJ
- HHS
- The Department of the Treasury

Coordinating funding applications is one mechanism that has been used to coordinate place-based programs. For example, the Promise Neighborhoods planning and implementation applications included a competitive preference for neighborhoods that were the subject of an affordable housing transformation pursuant to a Choice Neighborhoods or HOPE IV grant during Fiscal Year 2009 or later years. The Choice Neighborhoods planning grant application also included a set-aside for organizations receiving a Promise Neighborhoods planning grant. As of Spring 2012, there are six Promise Neighborhoods grantees that also have a Choice Neighborhood grant—Little Rock, AR; Washington, DC; Atlanta, GA; Boston, MA; Tulsa, OK; and San Antonio, TX.

Another example of coordination stemming from the NRI work is the establishment of an interagency agreement through which DOJ transferred \$1.6 million to the Promise Neighborhoods program to fund Public Safety Enhancements among the 2011 Promise Neighborhoods implementation grantees. These funds will be distributed to the grantees as award supplements. DOJ and ED jointly hosted an interactive technical assistance webinar session to answer questions from grantees interested in applying for the supplementary funds. The agencies will also work together to review proposals, make awards, and guide grantees in the implementation of their Public Safety Enhancements.

In addition, the NRI aims to learn what works for community-owned revitalization and develop best practices, elicit feedback from communities and experts on how federal government agencies can work better together at the community level, and assess how policies and programs can be aligned and integrated (e.g., through common metrics, definitions, and monitoring) to help streamline work at the local level.

The coordination and integration of programs at the federal level helps to model the collaborative work needed at the local level in order to plan for, implement and manage Promise Neighborhoods.

Coordinated Technical Assistance support for grantees

OII supports Promise Neighborhoods grantees through contracts with a number of technical assistance providers. These include the Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP), Applied Engineering Management (AEM), and the Urban Institute.

- CSSP, along with partners including the Promise Neighborhoods Institute (PNI)⁶, provides grantees with programmatic technical assistance. Its focus is on building the capacity of grantees to successfully plan for and implement cradle-to-career strategies.
- AEM provides implementation grantees with training and technical assistance to use GRADS 360, an interactive web-based performance management tool.
- The Urban Institute, through a contract with the Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development (OPEPD) within ED, provides technical assistance to the grantees around data collection and longitudinal data systems, key facets of the Promise Neighborhoods work.

ED believes that this integrated system of support focused on results will help grantees achieve optimal results for their target neighborhoods and the children and families residing within them.

Collaboration Structure at the Local Level

The infrastructure and organization of individual grantees vary substantially based on the needs of the community and the organization leading the grant. Some examples of the structures that support grantee work include the following:

Established partnerships with a range of entities

The partners involved in Promise Neighborhood programs vary substantially from one grantee to another, but may include local governments, local education agencies, foundations, community-based organizations, and universities.

For example, the Promise Neighborhood in Buffalo, New York, includes partnerships with:

- Belmont Housing Resources for Western New York
- Bennett High School
- Bethel Head Start
- Buffalo Promise Neighborhood Steering Committee
- Buffalo Public Schools
- Buffalo Urban League
- Catholic Charities of Buffalo
- City of Buffalo
- Community Health Center of Buffalo
- Council Member Bonnie E. Russell

⁶ The Promise Neighborhoods Institute (PNI) is an independent, foundation-supported nonprofit comprised of PolicyLink, the Harlem Children's Zone (HCZ), and the Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP). PNI offers tools, information, and strategies to assist any community (not limited to grantees) interested in establishing a Promise Neighborhood as its members plan, identify quality approaches, build partnerships, and assess needs.

- Council Member Demone A. Smith
- EPIC (Every Person Influences Children)
- Highgate Heights School
- Jeremiah Partnership
- John R. Oishei Foundation
- M&T Bank
- Read to Succeed Buffalo
- United Way of Buffalo and Erie County
- University of Buffalo
- Westminster Community Charter School
- Westminster Foundation⁷

Partnerships are cemented by establishing Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs). These MOUs clarify a shared vision and theory of change that underlie the collaborative work and the roles and expectations of the partners involved.

Multiple levels of management, including a project director and advisory board

To manage the collaboration between stakeholders and partners, grantees establish a governance structure that identifies roles and responsibilities, facilitates decision-making, and holds partners accountable. An advisory board is established to provide guidance and direction to the overall program and manage objectives.

The Berea College Promise Neighborhood, a rural Promise Neighborhood, in Clay, Jackson, and Owsley Counties (Kentucky) has a management board that contains the following representatives:

- Berea College
- Save the Children
- East Kentucky Child Care
- Cumberland Valley District Health Department
- Jackson County Schools
- Clay County Schools
- Owsley County Schools
- Three youth (age 16-24)
- Three parent representatives with students in public schools in the counties

⁷ Buffalo Promise Neighborhood. (2011). *Buffalo Promise Neighborhood asset report*. Retrieved from <http://buffalopromiseneighborhood.org/public/files/BuffaloPromiseNeighborhood%20Assets.pdf>

- Three teachers or early child care providers
- Three business representatives
- Three representatives of providers serving within area⁸

In addition to the advisory board, grantees have a project director who is typically responsible for the day-to-day management of the project. Grantees may also set up working groups to lead the design and implementation of specific components of their work and establish teams for leading data and evaluation efforts (and/or bring on a local evaluator), fundraising efforts, and community engagement.

Funding from public, private, and federal sources

One of the conditions of the Promise Neighborhoods grants is that grantees must also obtain matching funds or in-kind donations from one or more entities in the public or private sector. Planning grantees must match at least 50 percent of their grant award (those working in Tribal or rural communities must match at least 25 percent of their grant award). Implementation grantees must match at least 100 percent of their grant award (those working in Tribal or rural communities must match at least 50 percent of the grant award).

Tracking progress through longitudinal databases and other mechanisms

Grantees track progress and communicate with ED program officers through various mechanisms including:

- the GRADS 360 performance management tool;
- longitudinal databases;
- Annual Performance Reports; and
- Regular check-in calls.

This ensures that technical assistance and support can be provided as needed, and challenges and successes can be shared.

Promising Practices at the Federal Level

The following are examples of practices that have helped the Promise Neighborhoods program to be successful in working collaboratively and achieving results at the federal level.

Modeling collaboration at the federal level

Through inter- and intra-agency collaboration, the Office of Innovation and Improvement (OII) has been able to model the importance of establishing partnerships, working together, integrating efforts, and collaborating to support multifaceted programs.

⁸ U.S. Department of Education. (2011). Berea College Promise Neighborhood Proposal. Retrieved from <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/promiseneighborhoods/2011/u215n110015narrative.pdf>

Building on past experience with federal level collaboration

OII and others in the White House Neighborhood Revitalization Initiative (NRI) have built on previous knowledge and partnerships as they develop new programs and work together at the federal level. For example, the Promise Neighborhoods program was able to draw on the experience of the [Safe Schools Healthy Students grant program](#) (SS/HS) and the [Coordinating Council on Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention](#) (the Council) which have supported cross agency collaboration and communication for many years.

SS/HS is a collaborative grant program supported by the U.S. Departments of Education (ED), Health and Human Services (HHS), and Justice. The initiative seeks to develop real-world knowledge about what works best to promote safe and healthy environments in which America's children can learn and develop. Since 1999, more than 276 urban, rural, suburban, and tribal school districts-in collaboration with local mental health and juvenile justice providers-have received grants using a single application process.

The Council, as restructured by the 1992 amendments to the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act, is comprised of nine ex officio members and nine non-federal members who are juvenile justice practitioners. The ex officio members are the Attorney General; the secretaries of HHS, Labor, ED, and Housing and Urban Development; the administrator of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention; the director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy; the chief executive officer of the Corporation for National and Community Service; and the assistant secretary, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Department of Homeland Security. The president may designate other key federal officials with significant decision-making authority to serve on the Council.

The Promise Neighborhoods program has built off relationships established by these interagency partnerships, the member experiences of individuals who participated in these programs and who continue to participate in interagency work and on the NRI, and reports developed by the collaborations detailing their experiences and history. The Promise Neighborhoods program was therefore able to continue strong interagency partnerships and utilize knowledge about how federal interagency groups have been established and maintained.

Integrating Promise Neighborhoods work with other federal initiatives

The Promise Neighborhoods program has been able to benefit from the work of the NRI. Two example of collaborative efforts spurred from the NRI are the connections between Promise Neighborhoods and Choice Neighborhoods in the cities of San Antonio and Atlanta. These communities both received Choice Neighborhoods and Promise Neighborhoods planning grants.

In the City of Atlanta, the Choice Neighborhoods planning grant helps revitalize its University Homes public housing development, while the Promise Neighborhood grant utilizes the expertise of historically black colleges and universities in Atlanta to provide educational opportunities to children living in the University Center neighborhood.

In San Antonio, both the Choice and Promise Neighborhoods grants serve the Wheatley Courts public housing complex and the surrounding Eastside neighborhood. The Choice

Neighborhoods project focuses on revitalizing the public housing development while the Promise Neighborhoods project focuses on improving the schools. At the federal level, these programs were designed and envisioned together in order to complement each other. At the local level, these programs have committed themselves to working together by integrating their advisory boards, planning processes, and community engagement efforts.

The NRI has also helped some grantees make a connection between Promise Neighborhoods and the Strong Cities, Strong Communities initiative led by the White House Council on Strong Cities, Strong Communities. Two Promise Neighborhood planning grantees, Fresno, California and Detroit, Michigan, are working to integrate their Promise Neighborhood efforts with the [Strong Cities, Strong Communities](#) initiative, a new interagency pilot initiative that aims to strengthen neighborhoods, towns, cities, and regions around the country by strengthening the capacity of local governments to develop and execute their economic vision and strategies.

Having multiple mechanisms for ongoing and regular communication

Connecting communities and helping them learn from each other is central to the Promise Neighborhoods program. Grantees, technical assistance (TA) providers, and OII regularly communicate through a number of mechanisms. This includes annual conferences that bring together program officers, OII leadership, grantees, and TA providers, and facilitate information sharing and networking. OII program officers also hold regular calls with grantees and are able to stay aware of grantee progress, challenges, and technical assistance needs through the GRADS 360 performance management tool and annual performance reports.

In addition, a central design element of the Promise Neighborhoods program is establishing communities of practice among the grantees and the broader field of practitioners. Doing this enables the grantees, as well as organizations across the country interested in the program and strategy, to meet, discuss, and collaborate with each other regarding their projects.

Reliance on data to assess the success of the work

While the Promise Neighborhoods program is still in the early stages of implementation, since its inception in 2010 there has been a strong focus on data collection so that longitudinal (long-term) data outcomes can be tracked. Some data on Promise Neighborhood grantees and applicants that is sourced from applications submitted for the program can be found at <http://www.data.gov/education/datasets/ed-grants-promise-neighborhoods-fund>. ED requires grantees to collect data on program indicators for academic results and family and community support results. Grantees may also collect data on any unique project indicators they have developed. Some examples of the required program indicators and the results that they intend to measure include:

Educational Indicators and Results⁹

| Indicator or Data Collected | Result Data is Intended to Measure |
|---|---|
| Number and percent of children, from birth to kindergarten entry, participating in center-based or formal home-based early learning settings or programs, which may include Early Head Start, Head Start, child care, or preschool | Children enter kindergarten ready to succeed in school |
| Number and percent of students at or above grade level according to state mathematics and reading or language arts assessments in at least the grades required by the ESEA (3rd through 8th and once in high school) | Students are proficient in core academic subjects |
| Attendance rate of students in 6th, 7th, 8th, and 9th grade | Students successfully transition from middle school grades to high school |
| Graduation rate | Youth graduate from high school |
| Number and percent of Promise Neighborhood students who graduate with a regular high school diploma, and obtain postsecondary degrees, vocational certificates, or other industry-recognized certifications or credentials without the need for remediation | High school graduates obtain a postsecondary degree, certification, or credential |

Family and Community Support Indicators and Results¹⁰

| Indicator or Data Collected | Result Data is Intended to Measure |
|---|---|
| Number and percent of children who participate in at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity daily | Students are healthy |
| Number and percent of children who consume five or more servings of fruits and vegetables daily | |
| Programs can select a third indicator of interest | |
| Number and percent of students who feel safe at school and traveling to and from school, as measured by a school climate needs assessment | Students feel safe at school and in their community |
| Programs can select a second indicator of interest | |
| Student mobility rate | Students live in stable communities |
| Programs can select a second indicator of interest | |
| For children birth to kindergarten entry, the number and percent of parents or family members who report that they read to their child three or more times a week | Families and community members support learning in Promise Neighborhood schools |

^{9,10} U.S. Department of Education (2012). Applications for new awards; Promise Neighborhoods program—planning grant competition. *Federal Register*, 77(77), 23690-23704. Retrieved from <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2012-04-20/pdf/2012-9595.pdf>

| Indicator or Data Collected | Result Data is Intended to Measure |
|--|---|
| For children in kindergarten through the eighth grade, the number and percent of parents or family members who report encouraging their child to read books outside of school | |
| For children in the ninth through twelfth grades, the number and percent of parents or family members who report talking with their child about the importance of college and career | |
| Programs can select a fourth indicator of interest | |
| Number and percent of students who have school and home access (and percent of the day they have access) to a broadband Internet connection and a connected computing device | Students have access to 21st century learning tools |

Note: For some of the results, programs are able to select additional indicators of interest to supplement those provided by ED.

Promising Practices at the Federal Level

The following are examples of practices that have helped communities implementing the Promise Neighborhoods program at the local level.

Involving the communities in planning and implementation

Promise Neighborhoods grantees benefit substantially from involving the communities they serve in the planning and implementation of the Promise Neighborhoods project. Some examples include the following:

- Designating students, parents, teachers, and/or community residents as members of the program advisory board, working groups, and/or other bodies established to steer components of the Promise Neighborhoods work
- Gathering resident input on neighborhood needs and assets through surveys, focus groups, and town hall meetings
- Sharing findings from data collected and soliciting feedback from the community as part of the needs assessment and the drafting of the implementation plans
- Hosting social events to bring the community together and cultivate a sense of shared ownership of, and excitement around, the Promise Neighborhoods work

One Promise Neighborhoods implementation grantee, the Northside Achievement Zone, uses “connectors” or trained neighborhood leaders who work one-on-one with families to connect them to the resources and supports that they need.

By involving communities, grantees ensure that the supports being planned or implemented match the needs of the community and ensure that the communities, families, youth, and children being served have buy-in for the work that is being done.

Conduct a needs assessment and asset mapping to understand the context of communities

Planning grantees are asked to conduct needs assessments and segmentation analyses to identify strengths, weaknesses, and areas on which to target their efforts. See [Whatever It Takes: Athens-Clarke County Promise Neighborhood Initiative](#) for an example of the benefits of needs assessment. Within its Promise Neighborhoods planning grant, the community conducted a needs assessment focused on family engagement, specifically, how much time families spend reading to their children. By going door-to-door throughout the community, the grantees uncovered the effects of generational poverty. For example, when one woman was asked whether she read to her child she responded that she didn't. When looking for the underlying reason for this, they discovered that she didn't know how to read. They were able to connect her to an adult literacy program at a local community college. As a result, she was able to set goals both for herself and her child. By setting high expectations for the community and determining the actual reasons behind community member actions, the grantees were able to recognize where efforts needed to be targeted and ensured that no one in the community was overlooked. Also, see examples of reports developed from the Buffalo Promise Neighborhood [needs assessment](#) and [asset mapping](#).

Putting a plan in place before implementing and focusing efforts on building organizational capacity

The grant program is structured so that grantees develop a clear plan before attempting to implement supports or reforms. This may be through a Promise Neighborhood planning grant or other strategic planning methods. Creating a strong plan prior to implementation allows grantees to build capacity and community buy-in and ensures that they have an infrastructure in place to support implementation. It also provides time to identify indicators of success and set challenging but achievable targets to guide program planning and implementation and ensure accountability among all partners. By establishing a clear plan that delineates responsibilities, the collaborations are able to hold partners accountable for meeting the goals of the collaborative effort. The [Comprehensive Neighborhood Revitalization Plan for the Hayward Promise Neighborhood](#) was developed through a Promise Neighborhood planning grant funded by ED. The plan is now being used as a framework for a 2011 Promise Neighborhood Implementation Grant.

The Promise Neighborhood program includes a focus on identifying and increasing the capacity of eligible organizations. Promise Neighborhood grantees use funding to support the capacity building effort by developing administrative capacity including their management team and project director, developing longitudinal data systems to support ongoing data-based decision making, investing resources in managing partnerships, and developing and integrating multiple funding sources. TA providers help grantees understand their organizational leadership's strengths and weaknesses. The TA providers offer support by defining a culture of accountability in the lead agency, partner organizations, and community as a whole; developing systems of support and accountability for front-line workers, managers, and leaders in the organizations that will deliver the continuum of solutions; defining the leadership characteristics, qualities, and skills needed for their approach to succeed.

Lessons Learned

Learn more about the lessons learned through the Promise Neighborhoods program at the local and federal level.

Recognition of complex and varied work is essential for managing multiple unique grantees

The Promise Neighborhoods initiative aims to address distressed neighborhoods facing a range of risk factors, and strives to take a comprehensive approach to finding supports to help children, youth, families, and communities.

As place-based programs, Promise Neighborhoods are unique and varied in their approaches. Promise Neighborhoods grantees include both rural and urban locations, and are led by established universities with already-developed strong infrastructures, and by smaller non-profit organizations that rely more heavily on strong partnerships and community involvement, among other entities. At the federal level, the Office of Innovation and Improvement (OII) recognizes the unique aspects of each Promise Neighborhood and uses a variety of approaches to support these programs. This includes establishing communities of practice so grantees can learn from each other and others in the field, supporting multiple technical assistance providers with a range of expertise to address challenges faced by grantees, and close ongoing communication between project officers and grantees to understand their unique needs.

Developing a longitudinal data system and sharing data can pose challenges

Establishing a data system and sharing data between partners to support youth, families, and communities from cradle to career is a central part of the Promise Neighborhoods project, but it can be challenging. To make data-based decisions and assess progress it is important to have individually identified student-level data, but federal privacy regulations can make this difficult. Developing longitudinal data-systems that have the ability to track these students over time also poses technical as well as practical challenges. While Promise Neighborhood grantees recognize these challenges, they also recognize the importance of data and are all actively making plans for and doing the work needed to advance this activity with the guidance and support of various technical assistance providers.

One grantee, Northside Achievement Zone, was able to address the challenge of sharing data by having each family sign an agreement that allows its child's data to be shared in a secure way across partners. Other grantees are working on ways to use technology to protect the identities of children in the program, while still capturing important information on the outcome indicators of interest.

Communities need support to create sustained financial resources, community engagement, and partnerships

While Promise Neighborhood programs have seen success with integrating multiple funding sources, establishing buy-in in their community, and establishing strong connections with partners, these efforts have also been challenging. To be sustainable and successful in

planning and implementation, grantees must continuously work to establish financial resources, generate community engagement, and maintain partnerships. As they work through these challenges, grantees have been able to reach out to their project officers at ED and the network of technical assistance providers enlisted to support their efforts and ensure they have the ongoing capacity to carry out their work.

Accomplishments

While data is a central element of the Promise Neighborhoods initiative, programs are still early in implementation and limited outcome data are available. Some early accomplishments include:

- Increased federal investment over time within an austere budget climate
 - FY10: \$10M (all planning)
 - FY11: \$30M (\$22M – implementation; \$6.5M – planning; \$1.5M – national activities)
 - FY12: \$60M (TBD, must be obligated by 12/31/12)
- Positive community feedback and increased coordination of various stakeholders and community sectors at the neighborhood level

Resources

[Promise Neighborhoods - ED.gov](#)

- [Resources](#)
- [Impact in Place: A Progress Report on the Department of Education's Place-Based Strategy](#) (Word document)
- [Creating Pathways to Opportunity](#) (PDF, 45 pages)
- [Legislation, Regulations, and Guidance](#)
- [Awards](#)
- [FAQs](#)
- [Applicant Data](#)

[Promise Neighborhoods Institute](#)

[Promise Neighborhoods Research Consortium](#)

[Promise Neighborhoods Resources – The Bridgespan Group](#)

[U.S. Department of Education Blog](#)

[White House Neighborhood Revitalization Initiative](#)

- [One-pager \(PDF, 7 pages\)](#)
- Building Neighborhoods of Opportunity – [White House Neighborhood Revitalization Report](#) (July 2011)

[The Urban Institute](#)

- [How to Evaluate Choice and Promise Neighborhoods](#)
- [Bringing Promise to Washington, DC: The DC Promise Neighborhood Initiative](#)
- [DC Promise Neighborhood Initiative: Supporting Cradle-to-College Success](#)
- [DC Promise Neighborhood Initiative: Needs Assessment and Segmentation Analysis](#)