

5-2014

Living Cities: The Integration Initiative in Cleveland, Ohio- Greater University Circle Community Wealth Building Initiative: Evaluation Executive Summary Year 3

Ziona Austrian

Cleveland State University, z.austrian@csuohio.edu

Kathryn W. Hexter

Cleveland State University, k.hexter@csuohio.edu

Candi Clouse

Cleveland State University, c.clouse@csuohio.edu

Serineh Baboomian

How does access to this work benefit you? Let us know!

Follow this and additional works at: https://engagedscholarship.csuohio.edu/urban_facpub

 Part of the [Growth and Development Commons](#), and the [Urban Studies and Planning Commons](#)

Repository Citation

Austrian, Ziona; Hexter, Kathryn W.; Clouse, Candi; and Baboomian, Serineh, "Living Cities: The Integration Initiative in Cleveland, Ohio- Greater University Circle Community Wealth Building Initiative: Evaluation Executive Summary Year 3" (2014). *Urban Publications*. 0 1 2 3 1170.

https://engagedscholarship.csuohio.edu/urban_facpub/1170



Maxine Goodman Levin
College of Urban Affairs

Prepared for:

**The Cleveland Foundation &
Living Cities**

Prepared by:

**Ziona Austrian, Ph.D.
Kathryn W. Hexter, MCRP
Candi Clouse, MSUS
Serineh Baboomian, MURP**

**Center for Economic Development &
Center for Community Planning and Development
Levin College of Urban Affairs
Cleveland State University**

**LIVING CITIES: THE
INTEGRATION
INITIATIVE IN
CLEVELAND, OHIO**

**GREATER UNIVERSITY
CIRCLE COMMUNITY
WEALTH BUILDING
INITIATIVE**

**EVALUATION EXECUTIVE
SUMMARY YEAR 3**

May 2014

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	2
Cross-Cutting Capacity Building Efforts	3
Building Civic Infrastructure through a Nested Set of Tables	3
Build Municipal Capacity in the Development Cluster	4
Community Development Finance	5
Buy Local	6
Hire Local	8
Live Local	10
Connect Residents	12
Conclusion.....	13

INTRODUCTION

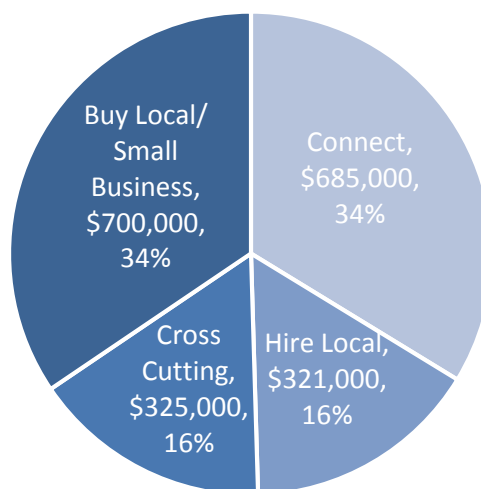
The Living Cities Integration Initiative (TII) began in 2011 as a three-year program to accelerate local initiatives promoting greater economic inclusion in five cities across the country. In Cleveland, Ohio, the TII was known as the Greater University Circle (GUC) Community Wealth Building Initiative and was part of the more comprehensive Greater University Circle Initiative (GUCI) between 2011 and 2013. The GUCI began in 2005 and will continue beyond TII. This report will refer to the three-year Living Cities program as the GUCI/TII.

This executive summary combines findings from two evaluation reports. The first is a formative and system change evaluation and the second is a program and projects evaluation. These reports cover 2013—the third and final year of the Cleveland initiative’s collaboration with Living Cities (LC).

The *Formative and System Change Report* focuses on the strategies, processes, achievements, and challenges facing the GUCI. It also identifies the interim and enduring system changes that occurred in Cleveland as a result of the TII. Meanwhile, the *Program and Projects Report* describes the progress made by the TII’s major programs and projects. It provides outcome data on the three participating anchors’ procurement and employment, NewBridge, Evergreen cooperatives, Greater Circle Living, and the community engagement efforts of Neighborhood Connections, as well as other programs funded by the TII.

The GUCI/TII is a multi-anchor, place-based economic inclusion strategy with four goals: Buy Local, Hire Local, Live Local, and Connect Residents. The reports are organized around these goals. Three cross-cutting capacity building efforts support these goals: 1) building the Civic Infrastructure (called “the table”), 2) increasing the City of Cleveland’s Economic Development Capacity, and 3) increasing the capacity of Cleveland’s Community Development Finance system. Figure 1 shows the allocation of the TII funds across the four goals over the three years.

Figure 1: TII Program Grants 2011-2013



CROSS-CUTTING CAPACITY BUILDING EFFORTS

BUILDING CIVIC INFRASTRUCTURE THROUGH A NESTED SET OF TABLES

From its initiation in April 2011, the Economic Inclusion Management Committee (EIMC) has catalyzed the work of the GUCI/TII. High-level “implementers” from each of the participating organizations are committee members. EIMC functions as a platform for collective work, knowledge exchange, and network building. The EIMC has engaged and empowered the stakeholders by establishing and strengthening relationships.

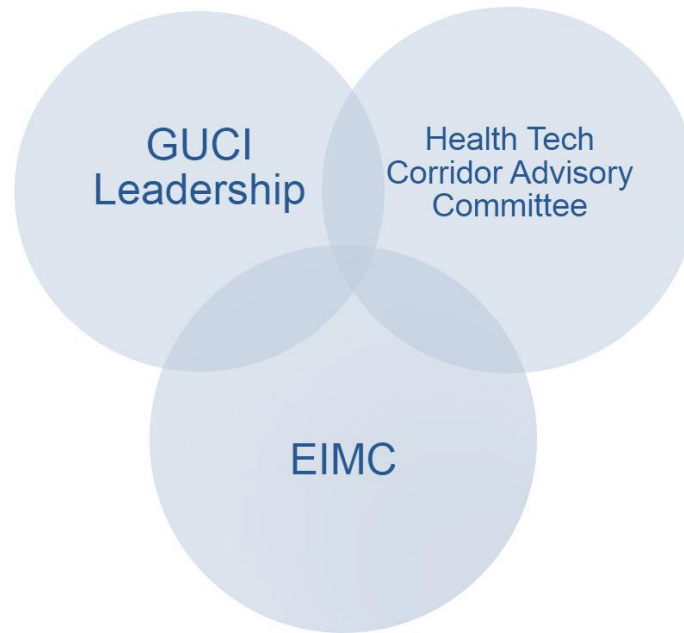
The membership and structure of the EIMC has evolved over the three-year period, including a significant shift in committee leadership from the program’s director, housed at the Cleveland Foundation, to anchor and city partners. In late 2012, three subcommittees were created (i.e. Buy Local, Hire Local, and Live Local/Connect). They were charged with achieving the program goals. As a result, a number of new organizations were brought to the “table” to work on the subcommittees, and some existing members of the EIMC became more active. Also, an Executive Committee was formed and charged with setting the overall direction, leading organizational efforts, and managing the work of the subcommittees. The Executive Committee consists of EIMC co-chairs, subcommittee facilitator, and highest level program partners.

The partners and the Cleveland Foundation staff have committed to continuing the “table,” which has demonstrated its resilience in the face of leadership changes (specifically among anchors). One member referred to it as an “unprecedented collaboration” that was more substantial than previous workgroups.

Systems Change. The EIMC functions as a platform for communication, collaboration, and innovation—facilitating and catalyzing progress toward shared goals and agreement on the necessity of monitoring progress toward those goals. The extent of EIMC’s influence on both forging new relationships and strengthening existing bonds among the stakeholders is considerable. The EIMC and its stakeholders have identified areas where they can work together for the benefit of the GUC neighborhoods. Anchor leadership understands that investing in neighborhood stabilization projects is important to both the community and their own organizations.

The nested set of tables represent an enduring system change outcome, as they are expected to continue catalyzing collaboration between public, private, and philanthropic players in the long-term. Figure 2 shows the three nested leadership tables.

Figure 2: Three Nested Leadership Tables in Cleveland



BUILD MUNICIPAL CAPACITY IN THE DEVELOPMENT CLUSTER

The city of Cleveland has played a multifaceted role in the Initiative. It played a leadership role in the EIMC; provided targeted economic development funding and expertise; and contributed to business attraction, expansion, and job creation in the Health Tech Corridor (HTC). Living Cities grants enabled the city to build its development capacity in three critical areas: online permitting, project development and implementation, and a business attraction web portal. The city also benefitted from new or deepened relationships with the other EIMC partners.

System Change. The increased capacity and enhanced relationships directly and indirectly resulted in enduring system changes within the city's development cluster, including:

- Implementation of a new citywide online permitting system to speed up development projects.
- The launch and operation of a new citywide business attraction portal, scheduled for spring 2014.
- HTC is now widely considered a regional attraction priority for biomedical, healthcare, and technology companies as a result of the city focusing its real estate investment dollars in the HTC.
- The city's adoption of a Community Benefit Agreement on new construction projects. Although this is not a Living Cities initiative, it is now connected with the GUC/EIMC work.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FINANCE

During the past three years, the capacity of community development finance system in Cleveland was enhanced due to the expanding roles of two organizations, National Development Council (NDC) and Economic Community Development Institute (ECDI). NDC provides small business and real estate loans and specializes in structuring complex financing, while ECDI specializes in microlending. In 2013, NDC provided loans for two projects in the HTC area: Ohio Knitting Mills and Contract Transportation Services. In addition, NDC currently oversees the Evergreen Development Fund.

In 2013, ECDI made two loans in the GUC area and 41 loans in the remainder of the county. Furthermore, ECDI financed \$400,000 for the Evergreen Cooperative Green City Growers. In their last fiscal year (7/1/2012-6/30/2013), ECDI handled \$1.4 million in loans. As of November 2013, ECDI has financed \$680,000 in Northeast Ohio.

System Change. The community development finance system in Cleveland is showing signs of change:

- New and stronger relationships developed among NDC, ECDI, the City of Cleveland, and MidTown, Inc.
- ECDI's new focus on place-based microlending in the GUC neighborhoods and the HTC.
- Start-up and operation of the HTC kitchen incubator, with assistance from ECDI and Midtown, Inc.

BUY LOCAL

The anchor partners, the city of Cleveland, ECDI, BioEnterprise, MidTown, Inc., and the Evergreen Cooperatives have collaborated to systematically increase the share of local goods and services purchased by the anchor institutions, thereby encouraging local business growth and creating local jobs. In 2013, the anchors combined spent almost \$2.8 billion on goods and services. Of this amount, 13% was spent in the city of Cleveland and 24% in Cuyahoga County. On the other hand, each anchor spent between 70%-80% of their procurement dollars outside of Cuyahoga County.

In 2013, \$200,000 (18.6%) of the LC grant money was deployed to support three strategies: 1) increase opportunities for Cleveland businesses, including small minority- and female-owned businesses by increasing the local share of anchor procurement; 2) build a local biomedical hub with incubator and post-incubator start-ups along the HTC; and 3) launch Interise (planning began in 2012) to provide training for small business owners in the University Circle area, branded locally as NextStep. While LC did not provide funding for the Evergreen cooperatives or Evergreen Cooperative Corporation (ECC) in 2012 and 2013, both continued to be a key strategy for the partners in the GUCI.

The HTC is a prime location for biomedical, healthcare, and technology companies looking to take advantage of four world-class healthcare institutions and their auxiliaries, including The Cleveland Clinic, University Hospitals, eight business incubators, four academic centers, and more than 123 high-tech companies engaged in the business of innovation. The HTC is becoming “the place to be” for healthcare companies as rehabilitation of old buildings and new construction dot the corridor. As of December 2013, a number of businesses and organizations were located along the HTC, including thirty pharmaceutical companies, eleven venture capital firms, forty medical device companies, twelve healthcare technology companies, 39 non-healthcare technology companies, as well as other businesses unrelated to the HTC’s mission. The city of Cleveland is a major partner in the HTC, and in the past five years has made over \$154 million in investments, helping leverage an additional \$275 million in investment in the corridor.

The three Evergreen cooperative companies are in various stages of profitability, while the anchors are engaged in differing levels of purchasing. Steve Standley, Chief Administrative Officer, University Hospitals, serves as the new chair of the ECC Board of Directors, which aims to make changes that continue to strengthen the Evergreen Cooperatives model. These advancements include a modified business structure for Evergreen Business Services, a new training program for cooperative employees, and a shift from calling employees “worker-owners” to “members.” The Evergreen Cooperative Laundry has yet to break even financially, but University Hospitals extended its long-term contract with its current laundry provider in exchange for a carve-out to subcontract two million pounds of laundry with the co-op. Meanwhile, Evergreen Energy Solutions (E2S) earned a profit for the first time in 2013, and CWRU has committed all of their solar projects to E2S. Green City Growers, the newest of the three co-ops, experienced some losses and management is adjusting their market, but it is too soon to quantify results. Its products are currently being sold to grocery stores and food service companies.

The Buy Local goal has been the most challenging component of the initiative in terms of figuring out the best approach and identifying opportunities for collaboration. While progress has been slow, there have been a number of successful outcomes: 1) the HTC marketing strategy expanded beyond bio-tech and health-related businesses to include companies that attract young professionals; 2) Owens & Minor, a distribution company serving University Hospitals, relocated to the GUC area; 3) LC grant dollars were

used to bring the Interise “Streetwise MBA” model to Cleveland (NextStep); and 4) ECDI continues to target GUC businesses for micro-loans and technical assistance.

System Change. Interim system changes associated with the Buy Local goals include:

- BioEnterprise continues to market and attract anchor supply chain companies to the HTC and Cleveland.
- Anchor procurement leaders see a connection between their procurement and local economic development (especially among the anchors’ leadership) and continue to sit together in meetings, exploring ways to jointly attract companies.
- Anchor procurement leaders take a new approach to increasing local procurement by focusing on the attraction of companies that supply multiple anchors. Each anchor is sharing a list of purchasing contracts expiring in the next 12-18 months with BioEnterprise for analysis.
- Attracting the Interise model “Streetwise MBA” model to Cleveland. The program is housed in University Circle, Inc., and branded locally as NextStep. One of the goals is to help small businesses reach a point where they can compete on anchor contracts, thus increasing the number of companies supplying goods and services to the anchors.

Enduring system change outcomes are:

- Establishment and operation of the new Board of the Evergreen Cooperative Corporation (ECC) with anchor leadership and representation.
- A new procurement policy at University Hospitals requiring that any contract over \$50,000 to bid to at least one local, minority-owned, female-owned, or veteran-owned business
- The Cleveland Clinic’s transparent goals for purchasing from MBEs and FBEs
- The relocation of Owens & Minor to a site near the GUC area following long negotiations among University Hospitals, the City, and the company.

HIRE LOCAL

EIMC members identified workforce development as a top priority in 2012, a choice strongly suggested and supported by Living Cities' staff. The anchors set a goal of 500 new hires from the GUC neighborhoods over 10 years with a focus on building and attracting a neighborhood workforce pipeline and retaining and providing career pathways with incumbent worker training.

One challenge to tracking progress toward the new Hire Local goal was identifying the baseline against which to measure success. All of the anchors have employees who live in the GUC neighborhoods, but they lacked a collective means of tracking new hires. In 2013, an agreement and structural implementations enabled the anchor partners to provide comparable local hiring data to the evaluators, marking a major triumph for the anchors. An analysis of this first round of data revealed that the two health systems had hired 539 new employees from the GUC neighborhoods in 2013—revealing that the original new hire goal was too modest and needed to be increased. Collectively, the healthcare anchors employ 58,276 workers, of which 3.5% (2,051 employees) live in GUC neighborhoods and 13.2% (7,679 employees) live in the city of Cleveland. Additionally, of the total 56 entry-level hires from GUC made by the two hospital systems in the first quarter of 2013, 75% were still employed in the fourth quarter of the year.

Another Hire Local strategy was to support current employees who live in GUC neighborhoods. Each anchor agreed to work internally to identify areas where they can strengthen support for employees residing in GUC neighborhoods. Both the Clinic and UH have employee “affinity groups” (or employee resource groups) that offer employees with shared interests an opportunity to meet monthly or quarterly. The hospitals are also exploring the creation of a group for GUC employees.

The TII has invested in a pilot initiative, “Step Up to UH,” providing opportunities for low-income residents to overcome the persistent disconnect between GUC residents and the region's largest employers, which are located in GUC. This pilot has begun showing some positive results in the large and complex workforce area. The program created an opportunity to develop the “funnel before the funnel” approach to backfill entry-level jobs with GUC neighborhood residents. Currently, 28 GUC residents have gained employment at University Hospitals through this new approach; with ongoing support from the Towards Employment job coach, retention has been high. Towards Employment also received a Living Cities grant to serve as a key partner in the Pathway to PCA (Patient Care Assistant) program, an incumbent worker advancement program at University Hospitals. The program started in 2012 and, to date, ten entry-level employees have participated in the program and successfully moved on to new PCA jobs. While Case Western Reserve University and the Cleveland Clinic are not participating in these particular pilots, each has internal programs to recruit neighborhood residents (and, for the Cleveland Clinic, veterans).

NewBridge Cleveland Center for Arts & Technology, located on the Health Tech Corridor, exposes youth to ceramics and digital arts with after-school programs and trains unemployed and underemployed adults for careers in the healthcare sector. Two career training paths are offered for adults: pharmacy and phlebotomy technicians. Since the program's inception in 2011, 108 adult students have enrolled in training programs. To date, 62 students have graduated from the training programs: 42 have accepted job offers, eight are not available to work, five are working outside of their field, and one is enrolled in higher education. At the end of 2013, there was a class of sixteen in the phlebotomy program and seventeen in the pharmacy technician program.

The Workforce Investment Board (WIB), with support from Living Cities' grant funds, hired a consultant to identify strategies to align workforce programs by facilitating the implementation of the new Strategic Workforce Alignment Group (SWAG). The strategies were designed to address three gaps. The first was the information gap, so steps are being taken to market programs and engage more residents in the WIB services. The second issue was the skills gap, and work in this area focuses on soft-skills training and creating a cross-industry talent pipeline for middle-skills jobs. The last area of concern is the location gap, inspiring WIB and SWAG to collaborate with public transit to improve access of residents to jobs. The consultant also worked to complete the merger of the county and city WIBs.

System Change. There are two types of system change outcomes related to the Hire Local goal: 1) Interim: outcomes related to individual workforce development programs at each of the anchors (as described above) and the continued improvements at NewBridge. 2) Enduring: outcomes related to the shared commitment of providing comparable data on total employment and new hires by the Human Resources Directors from each of the three anchors. The interim system change outcomes include:

- Each anchor has a workforce development effort focusing on GUC neighborhoods.
- Step-up to UH, a "funnel before the funnel" pilot program at University Hospitals to hire entry-level employees from GUC neighborhoods.
- Providing additional training to existing employees at the anchors – especially those in entry-level positions so they can advance to higher-level jobs.
- Ongoing anchor contributions to Evergreen.

The enduring system change outcomes include:

- A willingness of human resource departments to look outside the regular recruitment process to get access to candidates from the neighborhoods.
- Human Resource directors from all three anchors convened, mutually agreed on goals, and recognizing the necessity of measuring progress towards increased local hiring, agreed to provided data to the evaluators to track new hires according to place of residence and occupational category.
- Continued analysis by the evaluators using anchors' data, allowing it to drive strategies for increased local hiring.

LIVE LOCAL

The Live Local goal aims to attract and retain residents in the GUC neighborhoods. Although no Living Cities grant funds were used to support the Live Local programs in 2013, one of the three EIMC subcommittees is working to improve the area's quality of life to attract residents and make the GUC a neighborhood of choice. There are two programs closely aligned with the GUC/TII that support the Live Local goal: 1) Greater Circle Living (GCL), an employee housing assistance program; 2) the Evergreen Housing Program for Evergreen employees.

Greater Circle Living (GCL) is a housing assistance program for people working in the Greater University Circle area. Participating University Circle employers, including the GUCI/TII anchor partners, and the Cleveland Foundation fund the program. The program offers forgivable loans to improve access to affordable housing, assist individuals in building wealth, reduce commute times and costs, and enhance quality of life by offering employees of eligible institutions an opportunity to live and work close to world-class cultural institutions and services. In 2013 alone, University Hospitals spent about \$174,000 for employees taking advantage of the Greater Circle Living program, the Cleveland Clinic spent \$118,500, and Case Western Reserve University spent \$84,000. Since the program's inception and through the end of 2013, 178 loans or subsidies have been originated (Table 1). Almost 28% of the program participants relocated to GUC from outside Northeast Ohio and 27% relocated from outside the city from another place in Northeast Ohio. Since the program adjustments adopted in 2012 made the program more accessible, usage has increased dramatically.

Table 1: Number That Received GCL Financial Assistance: Before and After Changes in Program Requirement

Type of Financial Assistance	May 2008- May 2012	June 2012- December 2013	TOTAL
Funds to Purchase a New Home	31	21	52
Funds for External Home Repairs & Renovations	19	11	30
Subsidies for Rental Assistance	36	60	96
TOTAL	86	92	178

The second program, the Evergreen Housing Program, is funded by a \$380,000 grant from the Cleveland Foundation and provides affordable, five year, interest-free home purchase loans for up to 20 ECC employees. By the end of 2013, 12 employees had taken advantage of the program, purchasing homes in GUC neighborhoods with a monthly payment of under \$500. The housing program offers members stable housing, thus helping them to succeed at their jobs, build wealth faster, keep them in the target neighborhoods, and link the *people* strategy to the *place* strategy of the initiative.

A related pilot program, "Drive to Succeed," is also aimed at helping people achieve successful employment. It is a partnership between the Cleveland Foundation and Collection Auto Group's Nissan of Middleburg Heights, and it offers low-cost 2013 Nissans to employees of the Evergreen Cooperatives and NewBridge graduates. The program provides a new car at a reduced cost with only nine \$200

payments. This money can then be used as a down payment for the depreciated purchase price of the car or on a completely new car. Collection Auto Group is also paying up to \$150 of insurance per month for each new driver. This program solves the transportation problem facing many Evergreen employees and offers assistance in establishing credit and financial coaching. So far, three Evergreen employees have taken advantage of the program.

System change. Interim system changes associated with the Live Local goal are:

- Re-launch of Greater Circle Living Housing program so that more GUC employees could take advantage of living near their place of employment.
- Expansion of the Evergreen Housing program.

Enduring system changes are:

- A changed perspective recognizing the importance of stable housing for employment stability and linking people-strategy to place-strategy through the Greater Circle Living and the Evergreen Housing program that result in employees staying in GUC neighborhoods.

CONNECT RESIDENTS

The goal of the GUC/TII's community engagement work is to connect residents from different neighborhoods and backgrounds with each other and with the anchor institutions and to strengthen the resiliency of residents and the neighborhoods in which they live. This work is closely tied to the Live Local goal and forms the foundation for building wealth in the GUC and sustaining that wealth over time. Neighborhood Connections (NC) and Neighborhood Voice (a community newspaper and website serving University Circle and the surrounding communities) are the primary vehicles used by the initiative to improve relationships with residents.

Neighborhood Connections (NC) and Neighborhood Voice play a key role in all aspects of the EIMC work. Over the past three years, the two organizations received the largest share of the TII grant funding (\$685,000) for their empowering, connecting, and communication work with residents and uniting residents with opportunities and resources at the anchor institutions. The network-weaving approach developed by NC has been hailed as a new paradigm in community engagement. Their NeighborUP Network Nights brings stakeholders together with residents around a community-driven agenda that includes jobs, business development, healthy communities, and other topics identified by the community. In addition, NC provides small grants so that residents can act on ideas to improve their neighborhoods. Neighborhood Voice, with grant support from both Living Cities and the Knight Foundation, was able to increase capacity and re-designed their website as a responsive site with increased ease of use and better presence on smart phones, a growing platform for a key demographic, urban youth.

Neighborhood Voice gives voice to the community and is a vehicle for connecting residents with the anchor institutions. In 2013, Neighborhood Voice writers authored a total of 145 articles, half of which were written by GUC residents. A quarter of all the articles written in 2013 mention anchor institutions, and 60% of them describe the institutions in a positive light. A content analysis reveals that about one-third of the articles touched on one or more of the broad themes that are essential to the GUC /TII initiative (health, education, local workforce, local purchasing, and community engagement) and mention at least one anchor institution, reinforcing the connection between residents and anchors. The shift of *Neighborhood Voice* to a web-based platform has shown positive traffic and that strategy, coupled with social media, has received greater focus than the print newspaper. To promote the GUC neighborhoods, a regular feature was introduced that highlights the schools that are available in the neighborhoods. They have also added stories about what it is like to live in the neighborhood and described overall community engagement.

System Change. Interim system change outcomes associated with the Connect goal are:

- Neighborhood Connections created a new paradigm in community engagement.
- Neighborhood Connections is highly valued by the anchors as a partner.

Enduring system changes include:

- NC serves as a vehicle for the anchors to engage with the community, enabling the anchors to take the community's interests into account when making decisions.
- Neighborhood Voice—published both in print and electronically, with a new responsive web platform in place—enhances communication among the residents, anchors and other neighborhood organizations.

CONCLUSION

Throughout the Living Cities Integration Initiative's three years in Cleveland and the longer-run GUCI, the major players strengthened their commitment to improve the GUC neighborhoods. The commitment comes from the top leadership of every organization involved in the initiative. The evaluators have observed and verified extensive cross-sector work, as well as collective work by the three anchor partners. The collaboration among all of the partners (anchors, city, community, non-profits, philanthropy) at the same table is unprecedented, and so too is the GUCI and TII's shared goal of economic inclusion and community development in Cleveland. Furthermore, Neighborhood Connections, with its network-centric approach to community engagement, is a valued partner. Together, the city of Cleveland, the Cleveland Foundation, the three anchor institutions located in University Circle, and the many other EIMC members and participants are truly "writing the next chapter" in anchor-based economic development. These groups understand what it means to live and work together in a community, and that stronger communities will mean stronger institutions.

Collaborative work is also occurring at multiple levels within the participating entities. There are now at least two participants from each anchor and partner organization engaged at the EIMC table and its subcommittees. The national recognition associated with the TII has helped the anchors see themselves and their work at a different level.

The EIMC moved the economic-inclusion work that originated at the GUC leadership table to the next level. Relationships, structure, and strategies were developed in the first year; new structure and strategies were adapted and pilot programs were implemented in the second; and, by the third year, there was evidence of emerging and enduring system change. The TII program funding accelerated the programming initiatives and contributed to the emerging shift in thinking about and commitment for system change.

The three-year involvement of Living Cities has ended, but the Cleveland Foundation will continue to fund and lead the initiative in Cleveland along with the anchor institutions, the city of Cleveland, and other organizations. Objectives and challenges for 2014 and beyond include taking programs to scale, keeping EIMC and GUCI on the same page, and sustaining the effort without Living Cities' funding.