

**PROJECT
CENTRAL
VOICE**

RESEARCH REPORT



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND CALL TO ACTION

In October, 2016 a group of individuals formed Project Central Voice to conduct community-based participatory research (CBPR) as part of a grant funded by the Greater Milwaukee Foundation's Racial Equity and Inclusion Initiative. This group consisting primarily of African Americans with diverse experience conducting research, working in community-based organizations, and in life, came together because of their commitment to a goal – making a real difference in the African American community.

The process centered on researching the impact of services led by government and implemented in the African American community. The formal focus of our research centered on a study of the City of Milwaukee's Community Development Grants Administration's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program category of Strategic Planning/Community Organizing/Crime Prevention. The effort was focused on surveying residents, community-based organizational leaders, and government officials, in order to gain their perspectives regarding the City of Milwaukee's Community Development Block Grant's Community Organizing and Crime Prevention efforts.

Understandably, some of the residents interviewed were more focused on resolving the immediate needs of their families than on issues regarding community organizing and crime prevention.. Those who were more focused on community issues expressed their concerns about an environment that did not value their input or their leadership; programs that did not utilize their talents; efforts, that, unintentionally or not, left them feeling unempowered. A consistent thread in the opinions expressed by residents was the view of being excluded, being treated as children, being disrespected.

The perspectives of residents were not always in concert with those expressed by agency leaders whose organizations received CDBG funding. Resident respondents expressed strong support for the need for more African American community organizers, funding for more African American-led organizations, and support of grassroots efforts over government led initiatives.. Some leaders of community organizations agreed; others had different perspectives.

For more than forty years, CDBG funded programs have implemented programs and services, often utilizing a network of agencies. The findings and recommendations in this report clearly outline a need for change in the way funding is allocated, programs are administered and how the African American community is involved in services directed to affect change in their neighborhoods. With minimal competition and limited community participation in strategic planning or service prioritization by blacks, primarily white-led organizations are funded to implement required activities in the African American community. Further, the outcomes generated by agencies funded to provide CDBG community organizing and crime prevention activities generally resemble outputs that do not generate long-term transformational change.

While the specific findings and recommendations are important results of this research, just as important is the call for racial equity and inclusion of African Americans in key roles in community initiatives. Inclusion is not as simple as being recipients of services, but calls for participation in the design, implementation, and leadership of efforts focused in the black community. The voices in this research point to the need to restore hope, demonstrate respect and promote real investment that rebuilds the infrastructure in the black neighborhoods.

Government officials who were interviewed expressed an openness to consider ways to improve the CDBG. We encourage City leadership to acknowledge our study, its findings and commit to implementing our recommendations in their institution and to encourage implementation by other entities.

This is critical because the underlying purpose of this research and report is to provide a context for understanding the wide divisions that exist between mainstream society and the African American community on issues impacting black neighborhoods. While our specific research focus is narrow, the residents we interviewed not only address those specific issues but also speak to the existing imbalance of power, privilege and position between mainstream society and the black community.

While the City is a major funder of community-based organizations working in the African American community, there are a multitude of other initiatives, including efforts led by the Medical College of Wisconsin, Aurora Health Care, the Building Neighborhood Capacity Program (BNCP), Americorps, City Year, Public Allies, Brighter Futures, United Way, Zilber Foundation, Greater Milwaukee Foundation, the Byrne Grant, Continuum of Care and others. We assume that these initiatives are well-intentioned efforts to provide resources for positive change. While we appreciate the intent of these efforts, we challenge them as well.

Imagine residents being overwhelmed by siloed, duplicative, uncoordinated efforts with staff of many initiatives seeking to engage them. Imagine if each initiative has already set the agenda, designed the strategic approach, selected the leadership with little valid input from the residents. What if this is done with good intentions but lacking real knowledge about the community or the residents other than what the demographics, poverty data and police statistics tell them? What if they lack an understanding of the history, assets and resiliency of the black community?

What if these initiatives at times send people naively into the neighborhood to rescue “those people” without understanding the issues, causes or possible solutions from the residents’ perspectives; coming in to teach rather than to learn? Do initiative leaders understand that a more effective role could be working outside of the neighborhoods to support policy change, to address issues of structural racism or to take supportive rather than leadership roles? These are some of the sentiments expressed by residents.

Imagine if the residents and organizations in the neighborhoods served feel excluded from the leadership and decision-making of these initiatives? There are many black residents and black led organizations that are working hard in their neighborhoods to contribute to effective change. Unfortunately, many of these organizations are not well known or well-resourced. There is a strong need for a viable infrastructure in the black community; one that is grounded by black led organizations, businesses and institutions and supported by others who demonstrate dignity, respect and fairness to residents in the community. We encourage the black community to accept the challenge as well; to create and implement a strategy that demonstrates to our youth that we are active participants, not merely recipients of services, in the advancement, control and empowerment of our neighborhoods.

Milwaukee’s efforts to effect change are clear. Well-intentioned initiatives have come and gone, glowing reports have at times hidden harsh realities. By gathering the residents’ perspectives and analyzing the CDBG data, important, fundamental lessons were uncovered.. The simple truth is that:

1. We cannot change structural racism if we do not acknowledge or understand it.
2. Issues that are not adequately addressed do not fade away, but grow in intensity the longer they are neglected or left unresolved.
3. We cannot truly do good for someone, if we are unwilling to do good on their terms not ours.
4. Community development efforts focused in African American neighborhoods that do not involve African Americans in substantial leadership roles are paternalistic, perpetuate racial inequity and breed hopelessness.
5. Services provided consistently overtime often become normalized, entrenched parts of the mainstream status quo regardless of their level of quality or outcome achievement.
6. African Americans have a culture and tradition that merit respect, organizations that build community and an infrastructure that deserves investment.

Having said all of this, we recognize that no one wants to be criticized when they are working hard with good intentions to bring about positive significant changes. It is easy to identify reasons why an issue exists or explain how change will be difficult to achieve. It is human to want to point fingers and to assess blame. All of this is understandable but not effective in moving us forward. Our goal is not to offend, but to challenge our community to consider a new way of resolving old issues. All efforts must be evaluated on the basis of the quality of the outcomes they achieve. This is important because too many residents voice an overwhelming sense of hopelessness, a lack of control over their own lives and a loss of dignity. This is also critical because what time has taught us is that these issues will not go away, but will continue to grow, to divide us and to restrict the opportunities for the next generation.

So is there a winning formula, a critical strategy for success? Perhaps there is but if one does not exist, we must create it. This issue is just that important. This is not a time for division or segregation. Rather this is a time to come together; bringing our good intentions, our knowledge and resources with us to build infrastructure and to support/strengthen black institutions and leaders. This is a time to form a REAL partnership, to step out of our comfort zone and join a diverse team committed to transformational change. The challenges will be great, we will stumble, we will be uncomfortable, we will disagree, we will want to retreat. But if we are brave, bold and unrelenting we will find our way. And we will celebrate our victory; bringing hope, prosperity and dignity to us all!

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Section 1

THE REASON FOR PROJECT CENTRAL VOICE RESEARCH

Sometimes African Americans living in Milwaukee's central city are silent about issues of inequity, injustice and exclusion. They are silent regarding the effectiveness of services delivered by government and community based organizations in their neighborhoods. But their silence should not be misconstrued as consent. Silence can be interpreted in many ways. It is not always a gesture of approval, a granting of permission, a quiet acknowledgment of a job well done. It may be a sign of extreme satisfaction and appreciation or it could be a reflection of hopelessness, fear and depression. It can be anger smothered or desperation smoldering...held inside for far too long. Silence can be a strategy of "go along to get along," be the obedient citizens striving to be accepted in an unaccepting world.

As we experienced during the Sherman Park crisis this summer, the emotions that silence hides are not ways meek, mild or forgiving. The emotions that silence stifles, may seem small and insignificant. But sometimes they can no longer be managed and socially controlled with platitudes, promises or intimidation. Eventually the emotions cannot be ignored or discounted. And when they can no longer be contained, these emotions come spewing out spontaneously, violently, uncontrollably...unapologetically. Harming at times those once silent as well as the silencers.

Silence may be misunderstood and its underlying emotions muffled time and time again. Yet, unless the pain beneath the silence is heard, respected and addressed, rage can go undetected for some time, bubbling just below the surface.

Silence has a tipping point.... let us not be fooled.

Understanding all of this, the Project Central Voice Team sought to engage and connect with the silent. We wanted to listen to the opinions, hear the frustrations bottled up in African American residents living in the City of Milwaukee's Community Development Northside area, formally known as the Neighborhood Revitalization Strategic Area # 1; better known as the central city. We wanted their voices, not their silence, to be the central point of our research .

PROJECT TEAM

Funded by the Greater Milwaukee Foundation's Racial Equity and Inclusion initiative, Project Central Voice was formed to have a positive impact utilizing research to study critical issues impacting the Milwaukee African American community. Two foundational beliefs of the group are that 1) research teams focused on issues impacting the black community must include African Americans in primary roles and (2) the voices of African Americans, especially those impacted by specific issues must be captured as a central part of the research.

Administratively, there are two groups, the Partnership Team and the Resident Council.

The Partnership Team consisting of Fred Royal, CEO of the NACCP; Clayborn Benson, CEO of the WI Black Historical Society, Katie Pritchard, CEO of Data You Can Use and Deborah Blanks, co-owner of Kairo Communications. This team developed the overarching theme of the research, participated in the writing of the grant and managed the administrative functions of the project. The Partnership Team identified residents they felt might be interested in participating with this project, recruited them and worked closely with the Resident Council.

The Resident Council consisted of Jacqueline Hudson, Richard Clark, Samuel Holland, Harold Hudson, Marques Hogans Jr., Ben Watson, Tony Courtney and Earl Ingram, Jr. The Partnership Team and the Resident Council participated in discussions about the dynamic between government and community, the scope of the research, the methodology and goals for the effort and concerns about project implementation.

Operationally, the two groups, the Partnership Team and the Resident Council morphed into one Project Team. The team ranged in age from mid 20's to mid-sixties and included three women. All but one was African American.

The Project Team operated with a Research Committee and a Marketing Committee. The Research Committee consisted of Jacqueline Hudson, Richard Clark, Samuel Holland, Harold Hudson, Marques Hogans Jr., Ben Watson, Katie Pritchard and Deborah Blanks. This committee designed the questionnaires to interview residents. They were also trained in survey interviewing techniques and several became certified in the protection of human subjects through the online CITI training from the Medical College of Wisconsin. Additionally, over 30 leaders of community based organizations and City elected officials and administrators were interviewed by the Partnership Team. They also interviewed 90 residents.

The Marketing Committee consisted of Fred Royal, Clayborn Benson, Tony Courtney and Earl Ingram, Jr. The marketing team developed a strategy for marketing the project to prospective interviewees, identified specific sights for recruiting interviewees and coordinated the Community Meeting. They also assisted in testing the interview and survey instruments used in our research.

A community meeting was held on Saturday, October 8, 2016 where the Project Team presented the findings and recommendations of the research. More than 20 community residents attended and provided feedback regarding the research findings and recommendations and indicated whether they would be interested in working with the Project Team to implement solutions. In addition, residents provided information about the neighborhood initiatives they were leading or involved in.

THE RESEARCH FOCUS

During the initial planning phase, the Partnership Team was formed and determined that the goal of the project was to study government funding of community development networks in the African American community. The focus of the project was determined to be the City of Milwaukee's Community Development Block Grant's category of funding for Strategic Planning/Community Organizing/Crime Prevention.

This study focused on identifying how government officials, organizational leaders and African American residents view the delivery of community services in predominantly African American neighborhoods in Milwaukee. The delivery of community organizing and crime prevention services funded by the City of Milwaukee's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program is the focus of this study.

While CDBG programs are designed to decrease poverty and crime in the targeted neighborhoods, there is a belief among many interviewed that the organizations and activities funded reflect the priorities, values and culture held by government and organizational leaders rather than those held by the residents. This study explored how decisions are made regarding what programs and services are delivered, which organizations were selected to deliver the services and programs, and how these decisions/actions impact the African American neighborhoods served by these initiatives.

The purpose of the study was to assess the extent to which community development service delivery to predominantly African American neighborhoods through Milwaukee's CDBG program promotes racial equity and inclusion. Ultimately, the study aims to make recommendations to improve the administration of Community Organization/Crime Prevention funding, specifically, and community development delivery in African American communities, generally. In a broader sense, this project will contribute to research regarding place-based poverty and crime reduction interventions and community development strategies.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The methodology utilized for the study included four key components:

1. Analysis of CDBG and Organizational Documents
2. Interviews with organizational leaders and elected politicians
3. Surveys administered to residents of Milwaukee's Northwest side
4. Community Feedback session

1. Analysis of CDBG Documents

This analysis of documents is focused primarily on the allocation process, organizational decisions and inclusion of citizen participation in the decision-making.

Specific documents include the review of:

- A. City of Milwaukee's Community Service Block Grant Program Request for Proposals for Community Organizing/Crime Prevention.
- B. City of Milwaukee's Community Service Block Grant Program's Community Organizing/Crime Prevention guidelines, contract awards and outcomes for last 5 years.
- C. Last two years' proposals submitted by community based organizations for the CDBG Community Organizing/Crime Prevention funding.
- D. Nonprofit 990s for organizations that submitted proposals to CDBG for SP/CO/CP

2. Key Informant Interviews

- A. Leaders of Community -Based Organizations, the majority of them had applied for CDBG funding (20 interviews conducted)
- B. City elected officials and/or administrators (6 interviews conducted)

3. Surveys administered to residents

- A. Residents of Milwaukee's northwest side, adults ages 18 and older (90 interviews conducted)

4. Community Feedback

- A. This final component focused on obtaining feedback from residents regarding the findings and recommendations generated by the research the Project Team conducted. Twenty-five residents participated in a community meeting on Saturday, October 8, 2016 providing feedback as well as information regarding their current participation in community development efforts and their commitment to work with the Project Team to bring about more positive change.

RECRUITMENT AND MARKETING PROCESS

Fred Royal, CEO of the NAACP, and Clayborn Benson, CEO of the Wisconsin Black Historical Society (WBHS), led the Marketing Committee. The marketing committee developed a strategy to use flyers, social media and other advertising methods to inform the community of the project. Residents were directed to call to schedule an interview to be conducted at either the Wisconsin Black Historical Society, the NAACP headquarters or a location at 76th and Mill Road.

After approximately 10 days, no residents had contacted the scheduler to make appointments to be interviewed. The team decided to develop a less mainstream marketing strategy and identify other methods to recruit residents to be interviewed. The grassroots marketing strategy that was developed focused on members of the interview going to where the residents were, at venues or events, to conduct on the spot interviews. The interviews that were scheduled for future dates were well attended as well. Thus the focus became one of outreach and networking. Some of the places where interviews were conducted include:

- Wisconsin Black Historical Society
- UWM Golda Meir Library
- Office Building at 78th and Capitol
- Coffee Makes U Black
- Garfield Days (4th & Garfield)
- Brady Street Days (Locust & Holton)
- Friendship Inc. (2245 W. Fond du Lac)
- 12 Step Club (42 and Townsend)
- College Court (3334 W. Highland)
- Wendy Scott Complex (28th Wright)
- National Negro College Walk (Lakefront)
- Urban Ecology – NAACP Resource Fair (Washington Park)
- Residents' Homes
- Residents' Offices
- Community gardens

Section 2

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM

In 1974 Congress passed the Housing and Community Development Act that merged seven categorical grants (urban renewal, model cities, water and sewer facilities, open spaces, neighborhood facilities, rehabilitation loans, and public facilities loans) into one block grant with fewer regulatory constraints and with considerable local discretion over program priorities.

The act created the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) which funds municipalities and other units of government to develop viable urban communities. This goal was achieved by providing affordable, decent housing, a suitable living environment and expanding economic opportunities primarily for low and moderate income persons.

Local governments create programs and establish funding priorities while adhering to the following HUD national objectives, including:

- A. Principally benefits low/moderate income persons
- B. Prevents or eliminates slum or blight
- C. Addresses urgent need or problem in the community (e.g., natural disaster)

AN OVERVIEW OF THE CITY OF MILWAUKEE'S COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT (CDBG) PROGRAM

As a Participating Jurisdiction and entitlement community, the City of Milwaukee –Community Development Grants Administration (CDGA), receives annual funding allocations from the Federal government to fund activities to address the national objectives. The City of Milwaukee must submit an annual Funding Allocation Plan to HUD that outlines how the City will utilize Federal funds to address the national objectives to achieve the greatest measurable impact on the community.

The statutes for the Federal formula grant programs set forth three basic goals against which the plan and the City's performance under the plan will be evaluated by HUD. The City must state how it will pursue these goals for all community development programs.

HUD statutory program goals are decent housing, suitable living environment and expanded economic opportunities with long term goals of availability/accessibility, affordability and sustainability. The CDGA's stated outcomes are: 1) Reduce Crime; 2) Increase Property Values; 3) Increase Economic Vitality; and 4) Improve Quality of Life.

NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION STRATEGY AREAS (NRSAS)

The City established Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Areas (NRSAs) based on Census data and identifying the areas of the city that have the highest number of low income persons in the City of Milwaukee. In each of the NRSAs, at least 70% of the total population falls within the HUD-defined low/moderate income category. Funding is also allocated for low income persons in non-NRSA census tracts within the City of Milwaukee as well as City of Milwaukee departments. The major emphasis is on targeting resources to effectuate neighborhood revitalization by integrating housing, economic development and public services in a tightly defined geographic area through a clear and well planned development strategy.

The NRSA's are divided into 19 Neighborhood Strategic Planning Areas (NSPs). NRSA #1 on the Northside is comprised of sixteen Neighborhood Strategic Planning Areas (NSPs) including Parklawn, Northwest Side, Lincoln Park, United Community, Sherman Park, Harambee, Riverwest, Metcalfe Park, Amani, WAICO/YMCA, Grandview/Walnut Hill, Midtown, Hillside, Westside, Historic Grandville, and Little Menomonee River Parkway. The focus of this study is NRSA #1. As the chart below indicates, 75% of the residents in NRSA #1 are of low or moderate income.

Community Development Block Grant Data Regarding Population in NRSA's

NRSA Areas	Total Population*	Total Low/Moderate Income Population*	Total Percent Low/Moderate Income Persons*
NRSA #1 (North)	207,434	155,782	75.1%
NRSA #2 (South)	78,889	60,552	76.8%

Source: U.S. Department of HUD; Milwaukee CDBG "Draft" 2015 – 2019 Five Year Consolidated Plan and Strategy

CDBG'S NEIGHBORHOOD STRATEGIC PLANNING/ COMMUNITY ORGANIZING/CRIME PREVENTION CATEGORY

CDBG funds a category titled Strategic Planning/Community Organizing/Crime Prevention. Funds are allocated for this category on the north side in Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Area One (NRSA #1) and NRSA #2.

This study focused on the service category of Community Organizing/Crime Prevention/Neighborhood Strategic Planning. While there are four specific components of funding in this category, the translation services component, which involves translation during community meetings, door to door contacts and at schools, is not implemented in NRSA1. A total of \$1,060,910 was allocated in this category for the following three components implemented in the NRSA1 are:

- A. Community Organizing/NSP
- B. Community Partners
- C. Community Prosecution Unit

NSP/COMMUNITY ORGANIZING/CRIME PREVENTION

There are three different areas of funding for this category. The total amount of funding allocated for this category in NRSA #1 in 2016 was \$1,060,910, allocated in three different funding areas:

- A. NSP/Community Organizing/Crime Prevention.
- B. Community Partners
- C. Community Prosecution Unit

Information about each of these three funding areas is discussed below.

A. Community Organizing/Crime Prevention. (\$720,000)

For this component, a community based organization is selected for each of the NSPs and is allocated \$45,000 to work in a specific NSP area. The total amount allocated for this component in NRSA #1 is \$720,000 in a competitive process. Funded agencies work with public enforcement efforts (the City Departments of Neighborhood Services, Health, Police and City Attorney). In 2015, there was a competitive process for six NSPs in NRSA #1 totaling \$270,000 and a non-competitive process for ten NSPs in NRSA #2 totaling \$450,000. In 2016, this evolved into a process where there is a competitive process for all of the funds expended. There was limited competition, however, with only four organizations in 2015 and three in 2016 that applied not being funded in this funding area.

B. Community Partners (\$200,000)

For this component, the funded agency must collaborate with the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area program (HIDTAC) on crime reduction and neighborhood improvement activities; door-to-door contacts with residents in high-crime areas; block club creation, community meetings on issues, resources and referrals. Collaborate with the Milwaukee Police Department and the District Attorney's office to abate criminal activity." The total amount awarded in this category for NRSA#1 is \$200,000 which has been awarded in a non-competitive process for years.

For 2017 funding, this became a competitive process. For this funding, CDGA was seeking a non-profit community-based crime prevention organization, to partner with the Milwaukee High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA), and its 28 law enforcement agencies to build community-police relations and reduce crime. All program strategies should work toward building safe communities and reducing crime in the CDBG target area (see attached CDBG target area map) Letters of support from Milwaukee HITDA and Milwaukee Police Department were required to submit application.

C. Community Prosecution Unit (\$140,910)

The funded agency collaborates with the Milwaukee Police Department and the District Attorney's Office to abate criminal activity and nuisance properties and nuisance behavior in neighborhoods. The total amount allocated for this component is \$140,910 which has been awarded in a non-competitive process for years. However in 2017, this funding was increased to more than \$200,000.

For 2017, funding will be awarded through a competitive process and focused only on Police Districts 2, 4, and 5. A crime prevention partnership between the Milwaukee County District Attorney's Office, Milwaukee HIDTA, Milwaukee Police Department, Milwaukee Department of Neighborhood Services, Milwaukee Public Works, community based organizations, residents and businesses targeting CDBG neighborhoods within specific MPD Police Districts as determined by the Milwaukee District Attorney's Office. Per the 2017 RFP, letters of support from Milwaukee HITDA, Milwaukee County DA's Office, and Milwaukee Police Department were required with an organization's application.

Section 3

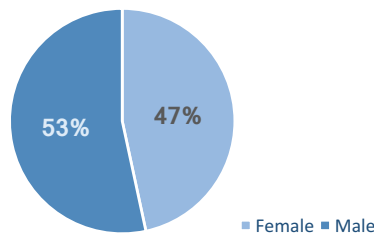
DEMOGRAPHICS OF THE RESIDENTS WE INTERVIEWED

While the ninety residents we interviewed are African American, they are diverse in many ways. Our project team wanted to listen to those individuals who at times feel marginalized, discounted, forgotten and invisible; we also wanted to listen to those who had experience working in social service, social justice, educational and community improvement organizations and initiatives.

Efforts were made to assure that the demographics of those interviewed corresponded to those living in the CDBG area to strengthen the credibility of this report. The input of residents is critical regarding issues that impact their lives. No matter what the data may tell you, the voices of residents complete the story.

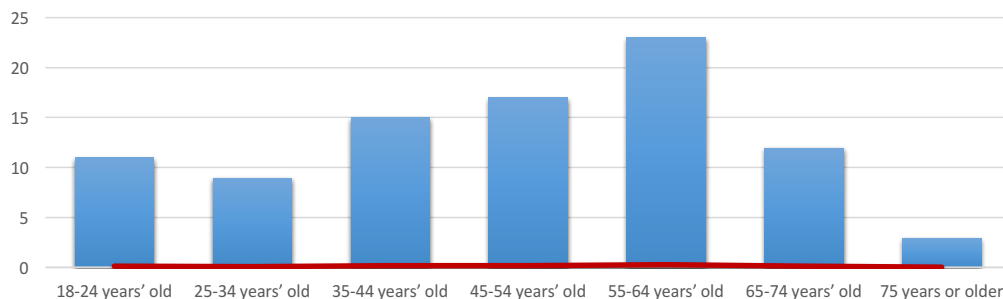
Often organizations providing social and community development services cater to women and children and unfortunately fail to connect with the men in the community. Our research reflects the opinion of men and women, with men being slightly in the majority of those interviewed.

Percent of Residents by Gender



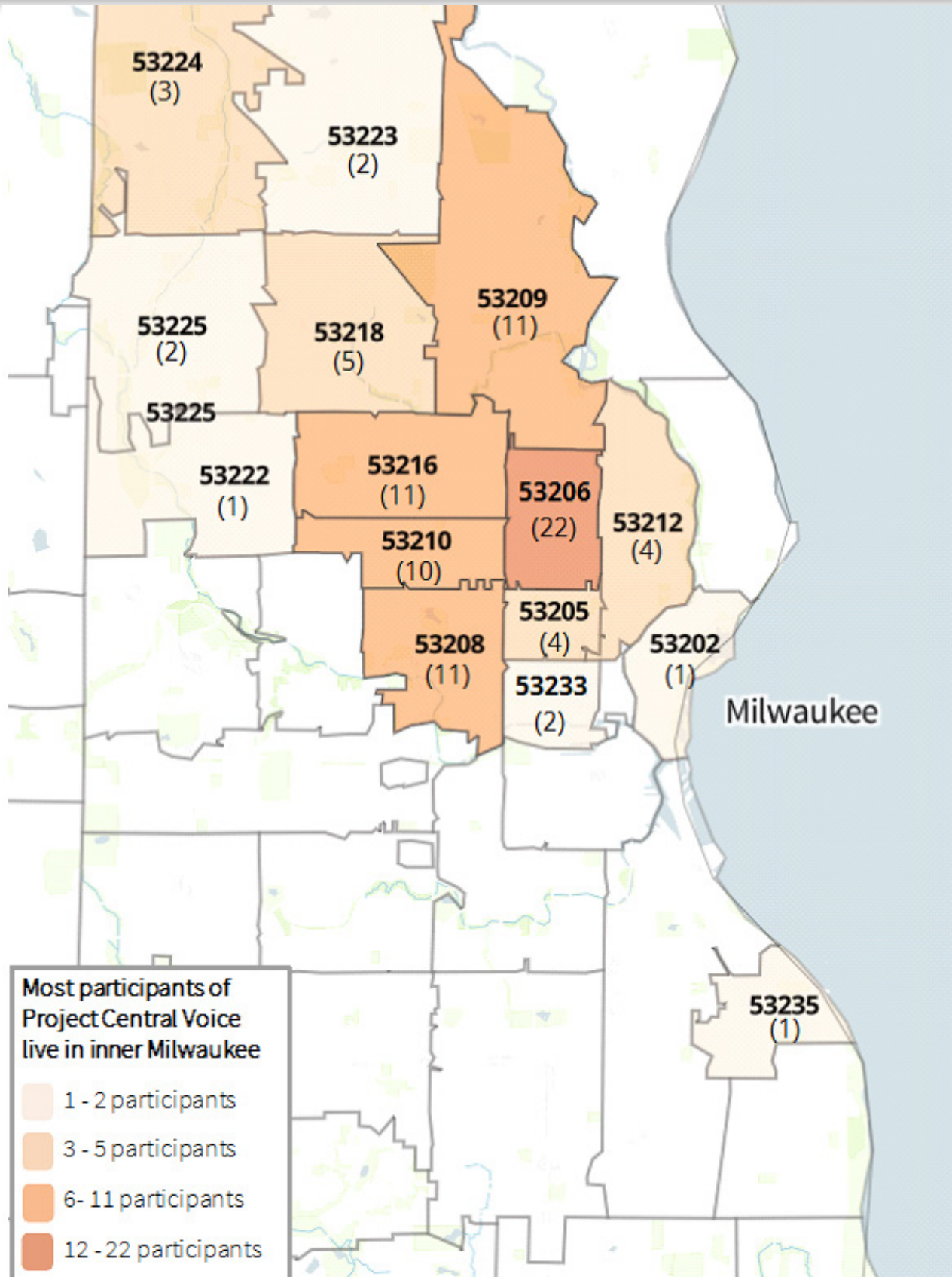
To ensure a variety of perspectives were heard, we listened to voices of adults ranging in age from millennials to elders. While age may have tempered the tone of their comments, many communicated similar views. Elders communicated a lifetime of experiences, parents discussed commitment to addressing their children’s needs; youth expressed a sense of an uncaring Milwaukee; many expressed an urgency for change.

Percentage of Residents Interviewed By Age Groups



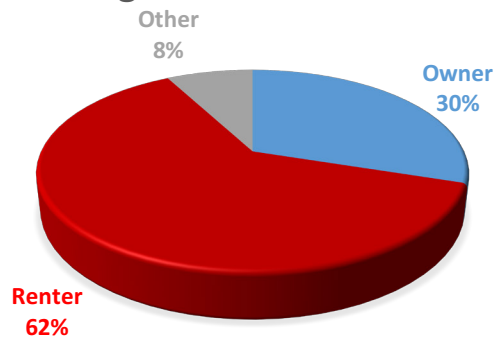
GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION FOR RESIDENTS RESPONDING

We interviewed residents from all of the ZIP codes in the City's Northside Revitalization Area. The following map provides a sense of where the residents who were interviewed lived. The darker the colors on the map; the more residents who lived in the ZIP codes were interviewed.



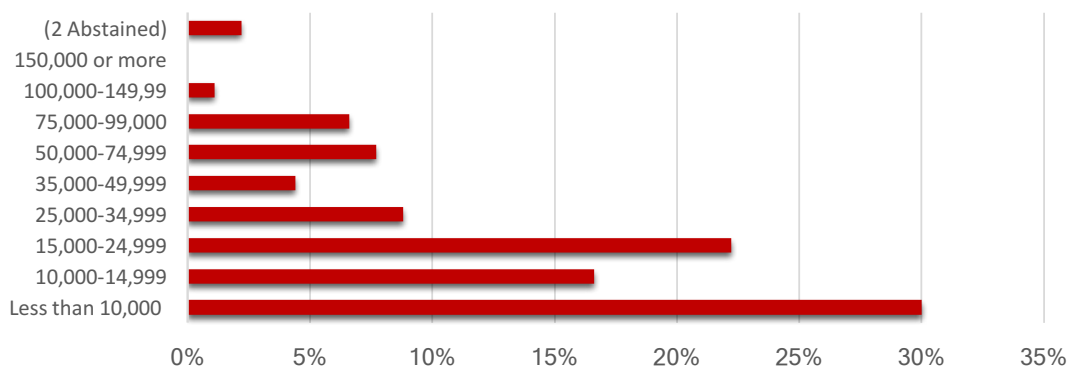
The residents represented all of the ZIP codes. Some residents had lived in their neighborhoods for more than thirty years; others had lived there only 30 days. Some were homeowners, some renters and others were living with family and friends.

Housing Patterns Of Residents

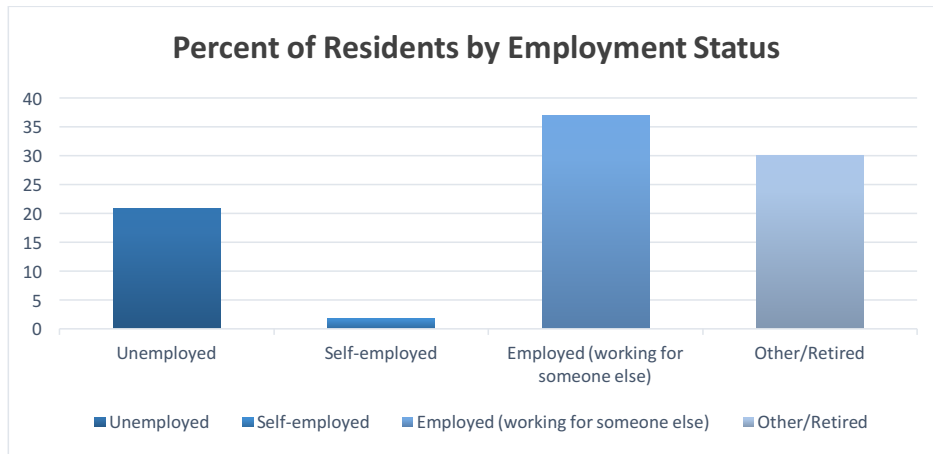


Three additional areas of demographic information further confirmed that we had interviewed residents who reflected different socio-economic levels include annual income, employment and education. Our goal was to talk to a diverse group of African American residents, but especially those who may not often be contacted for their input and/or connected with government initiatives. While the residents we interviewed reflected a range of annual incomes, more than 48% had annual incomes of less than \$15,000; almost 70% had annual incomes of less than \$25,000.

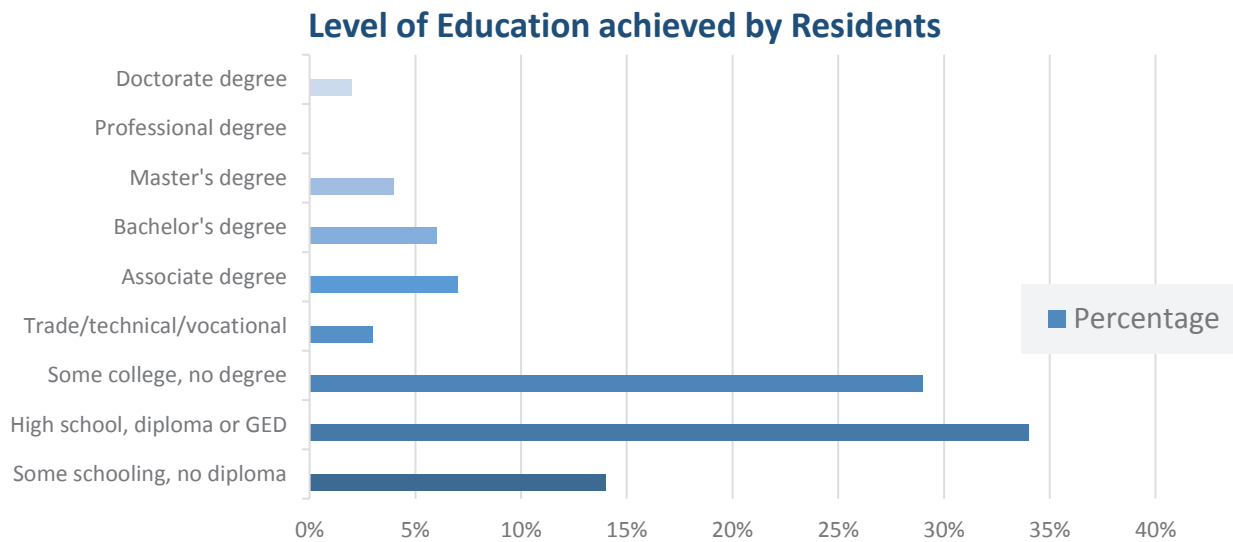
Percent of Residents by Annual Income



The annual income levels combined with the employment data indicated that we interviewed many individuals who are living in poverty and some who might be considered the working poor.



The educational levels of the residents interviewed are illustrated below. There is a wide range of educational achievement; almost fifty percent of the residents interviewed have not pursued education beyond high school.



RESIDENT AND PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

While views may exist regarding the lack of African American participation in community activities data collected during our interviews provide a contradictory image. Residents acknowledged that they participate in a variety of activities similar to those that CDBG funded agencies implement. As illustrated below, the residents indicated their participation in the following activities.

RESIDENT REPORTED PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

Specific Activity	Percent of Residents Participating
Block Clean – Up	68
Neighborhood Meeting/Planning	55
Acquire/Sell/Rehab House	49
Nuisances Reporting	48
Block Club Participation	35
Lead Removal Program	28
Drug House Reporting	17
Other	15
Graffiti Removal Program	11

While these are activities that CDBG funded organizations provide, many of the residents did not connect their participation in these activities with CDBG. Seldom were CDBG funded agencies mentioned as the source of resident involvement. For example, one resident indicated that he participated in a neighborhood clean-up that was organized by his landlord. Thus the residents interviewed had an understanding of these activities and participated in them with many different community organizations.

Section 4

DISCUSSION OF THEMES: What We Heard; What the Data Told Us

Our research combines the power of the perspectives of residents, community based organization leaders and government officials with the data documented in the Community Development Block Grant program to provide a framework for considering our findings and recommendations.

There's a sense of hopelessness that pervades neighborhoods in the Milwaukee African American community. There is a growing sense of frustration that is palpable. You can hear it in the voices of residents. It would be easy to suggest that this frustration is felt by those living in poverty and that would certainly be true. But this frustration is also felt by youth participating in agency programs, leaders of community based organizations, middle class residents active in the community and residents seeking social justice and change. These emotions are a part of the comments we heard as we listened to the community.

Residents talk about the past with a sense of loss, perhaps even a wish for a return to the good ole days. As one resident stated "It's not as bad as it is in other places but I can see it's getting there. It's moving in that direction and I'd like to see that changed. And I'd like to see homeownership come back in my community because the houses are beautiful. And I'd like to see homeownership and the way that it used to be. I guess I miss that." Residents see a Milwaukee ranking high in poverty, crime and segregation and they are concerned. As a resident said, "I hate to see Milwaukee being labeled as the worst place to raise kids. I hate to hear that. I'd like to see that changed." Another resident remembering how past actions hindered development voiced a different perspective, indicating "They tore houses down; people left, so services left. There were no banks, there were no clinics and actually there was no grocery store during that time."

“We’ve become almost disempowered somehow. We don’t believe that we have the power to make a difference... there’s hopelessness that permeates our community”

-Milwaukee Resident

Some African Americans are struggling to make ends meet, focused primarily on meeting the needs of their families and not concerned about the big picture of community issues. But others working to improve their lives are concerned about the issues that plague their neighborhoods and have strong opinions about the state of their community. The views that residents expressed were not anguished calls for handouts or for dependence on government. Nor was it a plea for well-meaning people to rush in and rescue the black community. Rather comments reflected an understanding among many in the African American community of the need for black agency, a focus on the African American tradition of mutual aid, self-help, neighbor helping neighbor. There was a yearning for control over their own lives and the lives of their families, their neighbors, their community. Their views along with data that supports or opposes their views are presented below.

COMMUNITY ORGANIZING AND CRIME PREVENTION ACTIVITIES

Some residents voiced opinions that mainstream strategies were not often aligned with the culture, opinions or needs of black residents. Whether well-intentioned or not, government often implemented strategies with a top-down, paternalistic approach to working with the African American community. This is reflected in the approach implemented in CDBG's community organizing and crime prevention services which establishes activities that

CDBG funded agencies are required to implement. The chart below demonstrates the imposed, civil remedies strategies that the City requires CDBG funded organizations to conduct in the NSPs. The terms “imposed” and civil remedies strategies are not intended to place these activities in a negative light, but are intended to ground this assessment in community development literature which uses this language to categorize these types of government led activities.

CDBG REQUIRED ACTIVITIES

1. Conduct and track door-to-door contacts with residents/businesses /stakeholders on issues; inform and provide resource information and follow-up.
2. In coordination with the Milwaukee Police Department (MPD), establish and maintain block clubs, neighborhood watches, and address criminal and other nuisance complaints.
3. Collaborate with City of Milwaukee Departments, law enforcement, and other community- based organizations and business groups on crime prevention, neighborhood improvement efforts, community events, community organizing and other collaborative projects.
4. Assist with coordinated clean-ups between residents, area stakeholders, and the City’s Department of Neighborhood Services.
5. Conduct neighborhood meetings involving stakeholders (residents and businesses to gather input on Community priorities.
6. Participate in CDGA required trainings and workshops on community organizing strategies and techniques and other trainings as mandated by CDGA.
7. Other neighborhood initiatives as mandated by CDGA.

Source: Year 2015 Request for Proposals for Community Development Funding

These activities are an example of why some residents, organizational leaders and even some government officials expressed the view that part of the problem with community development in black neighborhoods is that “the scope of work that community organizing is supposed to tackle is not being addressed with the structure that we have.” While some individuals question whether the current activities generate quality outcomes, others question whether the leadership of funded agencies redirect their community organizer to focus on other agency priorities.

CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT

Although the City of Milwaukee touts its involvement of citizens in the CDBG process, the activities identified above were not generated by residents. While CDGA has attempted to engage residents in decision making, the sentiments conveyed by residents suggest that this attempt is inadequate. As one African American organizational leader stated, “We bring community to the table when things are already in place and then we say ‘oh ok well what do you think about this?’ It’s never a conversation like ‘We want to involve you all in the beginning process because we may think we know what’s important but you all know best..’”

Instead the data suggests that the engagement of African American residents in the CDBG process is limited and superficial. Two examples of this are a) limited representation of African Americans on the Strategic Planning Committee; b) the community survey process for rating funding priorities.

“Community looks completely different when you listen to community.”
-Community Leader

STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE REPRESENTATION

First, while there was significant cross-sector representation on the Strategic Planning Committee that developed the 2015 – 2019 Five Year Consolidated Plan and Strategy, fewer than 25% of the individuals identified as having been consulted regarding the development of the plan were African Americans. African Americans are concerned about the degree to which they are represented at the table where critical resource allocation and strategic decisions are being made about community development in their community. As one resident said,

COMMUNITY SURVEY PROCESS FOR PRIORITY RATING

As confirmed by CDGA staff, the City makes a concerted effort to involve residents in this process and provides more opportunities than required by HUD and possibly more than many other cities do as well. The City’s Citizen Participation Plan requires public hearings to obtain citizen input on funding proposals and requires resident involvement at all stages of development, including the Consolidated Plan and Annual Funding Allocation Plan (FAP) and review of proposed activities and program performance.

Residents are provided the opportunity to prioritize a predetermined list of priorities and past funding categories. The community meetings facilitated to engage residents in providing their input into CDBG activities ask residents not so much for their ideas but rather to rank the pre-established CDBG funding priorities. As the chart below illustrates, this is a process to confirm decisions already made by CDBG officials with input from the Strategic Planning Committee.

RESULTS OF SURVEYS OF COMMUNITY RESIDENTS / STAKEHOLDERS

Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Area (NRSA) 1

Funding Category	Total
Housing Production Pool (acquire blighted properties, rehab and sell to owner occupant, construct new housing on vacant lots	478
Housing – NIP Forgivable loans to very low income owner occupants to fix code violations	511
Housing Rental Rehab Projects Matching grants to rental property owners for improvements to rental properties with income qualified tenants.	524
Housing – Owner Occupied: Low interest Loans and grants to income qualified owner occupants for home improvements 515 Employment Services(Job Training & Placement/Job Placement)	515
Employment Services(Job Training & Placement/Job Placement	511
Economic Development / Business Assistance	488
Crime Prevention / Community Organizing and Planning	502
Youth Programs	505
Senior Services	498
Homebuyer Counseling	490
Other	4
Total	5,026

Source: Milwaukee CDBG "Draft" 2015 – 2019 Five Year Consolidated Plan and Strategy

LIMITED FUNDING OF AFRICAN AMERICAN ORGANIZATIONS

There are many community organizations led by African Americans providing social service, child welfare, domestic violence, anti-poverty, food security, youth development, leadership development, community development, educational and recreational services. These agencies are led by elders, millennials and those in between. While these organizations have contributed to the community; most are struggling to obtain the necessary resources to provide more services; several are struggling to survive.

Like most organizations, African American led agencies would welcome funding from the private sector and from government to continue their work in their community. Yet leaders of these organizations expressed

great concern that not only are their agencies not valued or respected, but that they are not included in the funding and service opportunities focused on community development of the African American community. An African American executive stated that “I don’t believe black organizations receive the same level of support that white organizations do. It’s bad now as I have ever seen.” Another leader of an African American organization felt the problem was that “A lot of times the CDBG office only wants to deal with organizations who understand the type of paperwork that needs to be done... to send ...back to the federal government saying this is what you’ve done with the resources.”

“It almost feels like a conscious effort to disempower black-run organizations.”

-CBO Leader

Sometimes these opinions can be viewed with skepticism but the facts contribute to these opinions regarding CDBG funding for community organizing and crime prevention. The two charts below demonstrate the levels of funding received by organizations led by African Americans as well as those led by Caucasians. On the northside of Milwaukee, CDBG funds agencies to provide community organizing in 16 areas referred to as Neighborhood Strategic Planning Areas (NSPs). The chart below illustrates the level of funding received with the racial composition of the agency leadership.

Composition of Agency Leadership (Executive and Board)

that receive Funding to Lead the 16 NSPs in NRSA #1

Agency Leadership Composition	Number of Agencies Funded	Number of NSPs allocated to agencies	Total Funding Allocated to Agencies
Agencies with Black Executive & Board	4	4	\$180,000 (25%)
Agencies with Black Exec/Majority White Board	1	2	\$ 90,000 (13%)
Agencies with White Exec & Majority White Board	7	10	\$450,000 (62%)
Total	12	16	\$720,000 (100%)

Source: Year 2016 Funding Recommendations, Entitlement Funds, CDBG

Each agency receives \$45,000 per year; many of the funded agencies indicated that this level of funding was insufficient. Most of the agencies budget the majority of the funds in the following manner: approximately \$30,000 for staff and \$8,000 for fringe benefits and the balance for items including General Services (training, travel, printing); Office Supplies, Administrative Costs. Little, if any, is invested into the neighborhoods for community development.

The following chart focuses on all three areas of funding by CDBG for community organizing and crime prevention. This includes funding for a) the funding for the 16 NSPs, b) funding for Community Partners, and c) funding for the Crime Prosecution Unit (CPU). The chart below illustrates the total funding allocations for this category based on the racial composition of leadership (executive and board)

Total Allocation for Community Organization/Crime Prevention in NRSA1 Including Community

Partners and Community Prosecution Unit

Agency Leadership Composition	Number of Agencies Funded for NSPs	Number of Agencies for Community Partners & CPU*	Total Funding Allocated to Agencies
Agencies with Black Executive & Board	4	0	\$180,000 (17%)
Agencies with Black Exec/White Board	1	0	\$ 90,000 (8%)
Agencies with White Exec & White Board	7	1	\$790,910 (75%)
Total	12	1	\$1,060,910 (100%)

*The same agency receives funding for both Community Partners and the Crime Prosecution Unit.

Source: Year 2016 Funding Recommendations, Entitlement Funds, CDBG

Seventy-five percent of the total funding in this category is awarded to agencies that have neither an African American executive director or a majority African American board. Thus the issue of paternalism and social control emerge in conversations with African American residents and leaders regarding the lack of quality participation of black residents, leaders and organizations in the decision making, leadership or service delivery impacting the black community.

While the process has become increasingly competitive on paper; it has remained fairly non-competitive in reality. Thus, there is a perception that ensuring a competitive process has not been a high priority in the allocation of these funds. The facts that support this perception of CDBG being a closed, non-competitive process include the following.

- One agency has received almost 40% of the total funding in this category, primarily through non-competitive processes.
- In 2015, there was a competitive process for only 40 percent of the funding allocated for the NSPs in NRSA #1.
- In 2016, there was a competitive process for all 16 of the NSP. However, there was limited competition in 2015 and 2016 with twenty or fewer agencies applying for the sixteen grants.
- For 2017, the Community Partners and Community Prosecution Unit funding became part of the competitive process for the first time. However, only the incumbent applied for these funds. The incumbent's board is comprised in part of representatives of the Mayor's, Police, County Executive, District Attorney, Sheriff and other law enforcement/criminal justice leaders and corporate entities. The board is comprised of 73% Caucasian, 20% African American, 3% Latino and 3% Asian American. The application for this funding required a letter of support from Milwaukee HITDA and Milwaukee Police Department.

Residents' concern regarding the funding of organizations primarily led by Caucasians to provide services in the black community is more than just about funds; the concern is also about who makes service and staffing decisions. Do they have an understanding of the achievements of blacks in America, do they understand the struggles of blacks against racism and the strength displayed by many to overcome inequality? Do they primarily look at African Americans in negative, stereotypical terms; the black neighborhood as a place of deficiencies and African Americans as having character flaws that perpetuate neighborhood problems? How one views African Americans shape whether programs are based on their assets or their deficits; on the strength of the neighborhoods or their weaknesses, on the power of African American history/culture or on dismissing its importance.

- In 2014, an organization funded to provide services in an NSP Area indicated that of the approximately 9,800 area residents, 88% were African American; and 94% were people of color. The executive director of the organization is a Caucasian male; the board composition was 64% Caucasian; 36% African Americans.
- In 2014, another organization funded to provide services in a NSP Area indicated that of the approximately 8,600 area residents, 79% were African American; 95% were people of color. The executive director of the organization appears to be a Caucasian female; the board composition was 82% Caucasian; 18% African American.
- In 2016 for the organization that receives about 40% of the total funding in this category, the executive director appears to be a Caucasian female; the board composition is 73% Caucasian; 20% African American; 3% Latino and 3% Asian American.
- A review of the organizational partners that many funded agencies identified are often white led organizations and institutions, such as, City of Milwaukee and its departments, Milwaukee Police Department, United Way, Safe & Sound and Children's Hospital.

This network of providers forms a paternalistic system of social control through which funding and decisions that substantially impact the black community are made. Why is racial composition in leadership important? The lack of funding of black led agencies undermines a critical part of the African American legacy of mutual aid, a commitment of neighbor helping neighbor. Black agency, the concept of African Americans working on their own behalf, has developed strong organizations that promote self-help, solidarity and citizen participation. These organizations include the Black church, benevolent societies, fraternal orders, women's associations, community development, civil rights and social justice organizations. The historic role that African American organizations have played in the black community is, as Cornell West stated in his book *Keeping the Faith*, "to promote techniques of survival and to serve as a buffer against hopelessness and nihilism - a sense of worthlessness and a loss of control". The great need for these organizations was also supported by Edward Wilmot Blythe, the Father of Pan Africanism, who stated that "Every race has a soul and the soul of a race finds its expression in its institutions."

“I’m less of a believer in the fact that the system has the capacity to hold us back. I’m more of a believer in the power of us to be able to come out of it.”

-CBO Leader

IMPORTANCE OF ORGANIZERS LIVING IN THE NEIGHBORHOODS THEY WORK

While some organizational leaders feel that organizers should not work in the community that they live in. Most African Americans participating in the survey feel strongly that this is exactly what is needed: residents who live in the community working in those communities. Two examples are: the lack of concern regarding the racial mismatch between residents as recipients of services and whites as the providers of services is apparent in the racial compositions of residents and organizational staff and leaders discussed below.

For African Americans, the issue is one of commitment. As one community leader stated "It's more or less does your program or does your efforts have the authenticity that truly represents the heart of the community and where they are and the interests of the community. Is your heart and your interest strictly with the community? Another community leader indicated that "the funded agencies are run by people who are not entrenched in the community they serve."

*“Most organizations receiving CDBG funding...
at dusk they are trying to get out of town.”*
-Community Resident

This issue of whether staff should live in the area where they work draws a distinct difference of opinion between African American residents and many leaders of community based organizations as illustrated below. African American residents felt that it was critical to have individuals living and working as community organizers in the neighborhoods in which they lived.

IMPORTANCE OF ORGANIZERS LIVING IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD THEY WORK IN OPINIONS OF RESIDENTS SURVEYED

“We have a white community organizer over there which shouldn't be that bad but I would like to see more of us involved at that organizing level.” -Community Resident

“People want resources and they're looking for someone that lives in their neighborhood on their block that they can say 'oh man I don't know how to go about this but I know you do, can you help me?' 'Or, what can we do?'" -CBO Leader

I think it's important [that the people who work on the CDBG efforts live in the neighborhoods where the initiatives are implemented for]. I think you want at least 75% that [live there]. -Community Resident

While some leaders of community based organizations agreed with the residents, others did not see the value of having individuals living and working as community organizers in the neighborhoods in which they lived. Some African American and white CBO leaders were concerned that a person's capacity and skills would not be valued and that a person's race would be considered more important. Some residents expressed the idea that qualified residents are available, a college degree should not be needed and that the necessary skills can be developed. For residents, knowledge of and experience living in the neighborhood, a strong commitment to and compassion for the community, a willingness and ability to form strong ties with residents and the dedication to work hard to achieve important outcomes were key factors in selecting a community organizer.

OPINIONS OF SOME LEADERS OF CDBG FUNDED ORGANIZATIONS

“Most important is that we hire the best person for the position, the most professional and capable staff”

“Some representation is important, especially community organizers. First is capacity and skill – what do they bring to the table?”

“Just because they look like you doesn’t mean they’ll bring you justice.”

“Experience, sensitivity, and cultural competency are more important than address.”

“We promote a work/life balance so we don’t want staff to work in their neighborhoods to help them avoid burnout.”

Thus, what some frame as a choice between qualifications and race is viewed by others in the community as an issue of access to job opportunities, community leadership opportunities and the increased ability of residents to continue and sustain improvements in their neighborhoods long after the grants are gone.

CDBG OUTCOMES IN COMMUNITY ORGANIZING AND CRIME PREVENTION INITIATIVES

There is consensus that community development is necessary; that community organizing is needed. There is even much agreement that the current system of community organizing funded by CDGA is not effective. Residents, leaders of CBOs and government officials have voiced their concerns about the program. They have said:

Leaders of funded organizations also identified concern regarding the outcomes required by CDBG. As one organizational leader indicated “ CDBG outcomes are transactional, what we need are outcomes that are transformational.”

As the data confirms, the community organizing strategy is focused on short-term activities rather than long term transformative outcomes. The outcomes identified below represent the activities of one CDBG funded agency over a four-year period. These outcomes are in line with CDBG’s overall goal of providing services that connect with HUD’s Objectives.

Agency Outcomes of One Funded Agency from 2011– 2014

Activity	2011	2012	2013	2014
Door to door contacts	302	430	292	101
Establish & Maintain Block Clubs	54	56	56	56
Neighborhood Clean-ups	16	5	10	6
Coordinate Community Meetings & Events	49	50	47	37
Total # of Residents Involved	244	639	431	367

Source: Agency's 2014 Report to City of Milwaukee Community Development Grant Administration

The City of Milwaukee provides an annual report that indicates the activities and the outcomes that demonstrate achievement of a HUD objective. For the Community Organizing/Crime Prevention category, the City and its funded organizations consistently over-achieved in meeting and often exceeding the benchmark. Evidence suggest that the outcomes achieved as reflected in the chart above of one agency's outcomes and in the chart below of information contained in a CDBG report, are short term with little long term impact.

Comparison of Actual Accomplishments with Proposed Goals for the 2013 Program Year

Strategy	HUD Objective/ HUD Outcome	HUD Performance Indicators	2013 FY Benchmark	2013 FY Actual (# units)
Crime Awareness & Community Organizing				
Facilitate residents/stakeholders in community improvement efforts; crime prevention initiatives	Suitable Living/ Environmental Sustainability	# residents & Stakeholders engaged in community improvement efforts	3,000	5,610
Community Prosecution Unit				
Abate neighborhood nuisances & Drug houses through prosecution	Suitable Living/ Environmental Sustainability	# properties & nuisances abated/resolved	100	1,938

Source: City of Milwaukee Year 2014 Final Consolidated Annual Performance & Evaluation Report (CAPER)

For many African Americans responding to the survey, it is a matter of commitment and control. Control not just over the resources allocated into their community, but also control over who is tasked with community development and how the work is done. Residents comments suggest that if they had greater control over the funding

and services implemented in their community, they would take a different approach. For instance, when the issue of crime is discussed, residents talk less about character flaws and deficits and much more about the need for structural changes in society and the need for collective responsibility and solidarity, cornerstones of African American mutual aid and collective responsibility philosophies.

A resident indicated that the causes of crime were connected to a lack of employment in the black community, stating, “No money, no jobs, nothing to do. Disrespect.” Another resident pointed to the need for structural changes, saying, “People reacting to the level of oppression they are forced to live under.” And another resident focused on the cumulative effect of feeling powerless, saying that the cause of crime is a “lack of belief in ourselves and our worth. The imagery we have been spoon-fed; we are animals, subhuman, monkeys.”

BACK TO THE FUTURE AND THE POSSIBILITIES FOR CHANGE

Many residents envisioned having more control over their own community and what that might mean. As a resident said, “If we begin to unify, not only will we do better work in terms of organizing to effect change in people’s lives, but we will respect each other and respect what everyone has to bring to the table. That’s easier said than done.” Another resident agreed with this sentiment saying “When we work together we have a lot of power. I enjoyed looking at the power together that we had and how we can institute change.”

However, change is not inevitable. The lack of support for community based organizations led by African Americans is nothing new. More than a decade ago, Dr. Michaels Bonds, professor in the School of Education at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee conducted research, analyzing the City’s CDBG data for years 1975 - 1997. In his 2014 book, *Race, Politics, and Community Development Funding: The Discolor of Money*, Dr. Bonds discussed his study of the CDBG allocation. Bonds’ intent was to identify where funds designated to address problems of urban blight and poverty were allocated. Bonds reported the following findings:

1. Successful African American CDBG programs had their funding cut or eliminated. These agencies were penalized under Mayor Norquist’s administrations via inaccurate and biased write-ups, while poorly operated Caucasian led CBOs flourished and grew into multimillion dollar CBOs. Although the Mayor was willing to veto funding for a successfully operated African-American led CBO, he was not willing to take such action against problematic Caucasian led CBOs.
2. The CBGA did not provide technical assistance or establish a special committee for problematic African America led CBOs as was done with two Caucasian led CBOs in 1996. In addition, problematic Caucasian CBOs did not reach the full Common Council for public debate as was the case with two African Americans led CBOs. Finally, CBGA bent its existing policies to assist ineligible Caucasian CBOs to receive CDBG funds while denying eligible African American led CBOs CDBG funds.
3. The data revealed that although some CDBG dollars were going to aldermanic districts represented by African-American alderperson, a large share of those dollars were being awarded to Caucasian led CBOs located in those districts.
4. The defunding of African American led CBOs resulted in Caucasian led CBOs taking over their duties. These Caucasian led CBOs had fewer ties and commitment to the community being served, thus reducing their performance and advocacy. An example of an African American CBO that was defunded was the Commandos; an example of an Caucasian led CBO that was funded despite performance issues was ESHAC.
5. In none of the aldermanic districts represented by Caucasian alderpersons did African American led CBOs receive a large share of CDBG funds.

City officials have indicated that significant changes have been made in the administration of the CDBG process since the years analyzed by Dr. Bonds. CDBG transitioned from a process where an ad hoc committee made decisions without much external input to a formal, structured process that includes public hearings and citizen input. Still, as this report documents, the data that we analyzed showed funding patterns similar to those identified by Dr. Bonds. This continued pattern strongly suggests a structure of exclusion that has been normalized, ingrained into City government over the last forty years. This means that unless key actors, the Mayor, the Director of CDGA and the Common Council recognize and address this pattern and structure of exclusion, it will continue to exist, alienating residents, excluding African American community organizations and undermining the mutual goal of quality community development.

“CDBG funding activities are extensions of city services; they are not building individual or collective power.”

-Community Leader

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT: THE PREFERENCE FOR GRASSROOTS OR GOVERNMENT LED

There is consensus that community development is necessary; that community organizing is needed. There is even much agreement that the current system of community organizing funded by CDGA is not effective. Residents, leaders of community based organizations and government officials have voiced their concerns about the program.

Many residents were not familiar with the term “grassroots” and were unable to rate grassroots and government- led community organizing and crime prevention efforts. But for those residents familiar with the concept of grassroots, funding of non-black organizations to work in the black community is counter to their belief that grassroots community organizing and crime prevention are more effective than government led efforts.

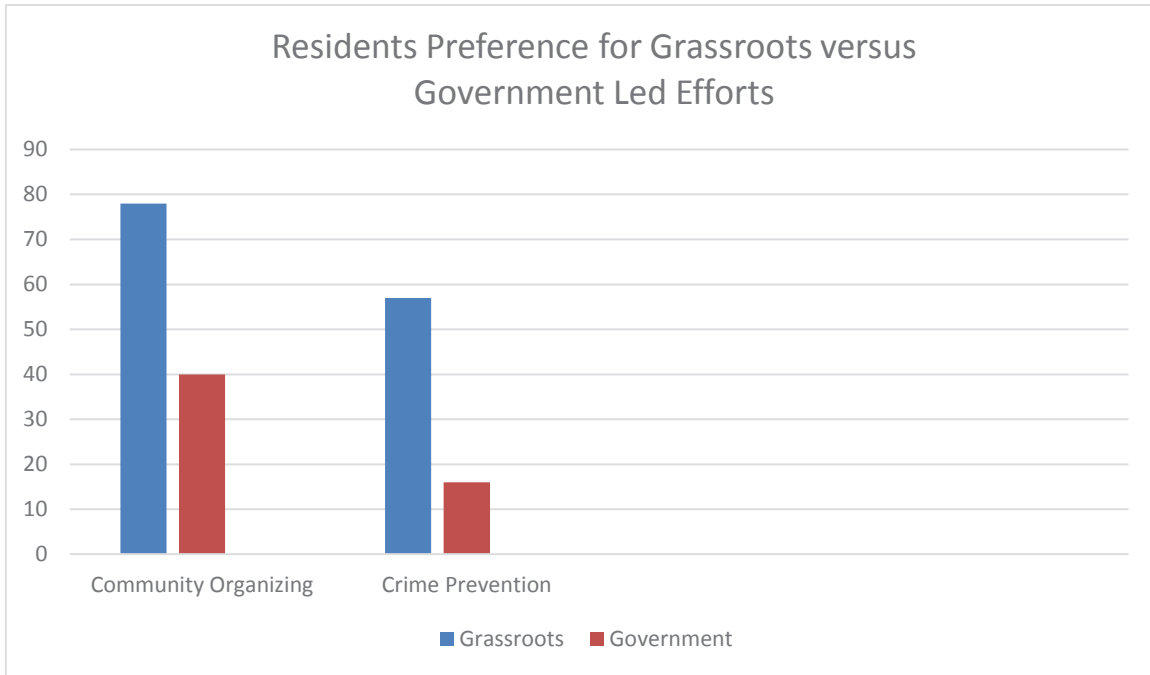
Residents said that “Grassroots works with people in the heart of the community. Help people know and understand, rather than have a hopeless feeling that there is nothing they can do.” There was resentment toward government initiatives in the black community, with a resident saying, “That’s how we’re always controlled... when the government steps in.” Another can Another stated that “Grassroots (is) more hands on with people you’re working with. The government is sort of superficial.”

Specifically, in regards to government led crime prevention, a resident stated that “Right now government led crime prevention is horrible.”

“The grassroots is for the people, of the people, and by the people. The government wants to control the people. They want the “say-so” amongst the people.”

In looking at how residents rated grassroots and government led initiatives in community organizing and crime prevention, that data indicate that residents who were familiar with these two concepts, preferred grassroots efforts. Residents view grassroots efforts as more effective than the government-led community organizing and crime prevention efforts. The questions that residents responded to were on a scale of great, good, fair and poor

1) rate how well you think these “grassroots” community organizing efforts are working? 2) rate how well you think these “government funded” community organizing efforts are working? 3) rate how well you think these “grassroots” crime prevention efforts are working? 4) rate how well you think these “grassroots” crime prevention efforts are working?



More than 75% of the residents who had an understanding of grassroots efforts rated grassroots community organizing as “good or great”; 40% of these resident rated government led community organizing as “good or great”. 57% of these residents rated grassroots crime prevention efforts as “good or great”; 16% of these residents rated government led crime prevention as “good or great.” These ratings are in contrast with the way in which some CDBG funded organizations view their work. Several rated their organizations efforts in providing community organization as Good or Great. Leaders of funded organizations indicated that they were very moderately to very much a part of the community where their organizations provided community organizing efforts.

Section 5

MAJOR FINDINGS OF PCV STUDY

- Finding One:** There is limited involvement of African Americans in the strategic planning process for CDBG.
- Finding Two:** There is superficial involvement of African Americans in setting funding priorities for CDBG. Residents are provided a list of priorities and past funding categories and asked to rank their priorities.
- Finding Three:** The majority of community-based organizations that receive CDBG funding to provide community organizing/crime prevention activities in the NSPs in NRSA #1 are not led by African Americans. This funding pattern has existed for forty years.
- Finding Four:** The majority of community based organizations funded by CDBG to provide the majority of services in this category are not led by African Americans.
- Finding Five:** Organizations funded to provide community organizing and crime prevention activities in the NSPs are underfunded to achieve these goals.
- Finding Six:** Ensuring a competitive process has not been a high priority in the allocation of these funds. One agency has received almost 40% of the total funding in this category, primarily through non-competitive processes.
- Finding Seven:** Most of the staff, board and executive leadership of the CDBG funded agencies are Caucasians and do not live in the target neighborhoods. Thus a racial mismatch exists between the residents in the community and the organizations funded to provide services in these neighborhoods.
- Finding Eight:** The community organizing strategy is focused on short-term activities rather than long-term transformative outcomes.
- Finding Nine:** Residents participate in neighborhood activities through CDBG funded agencies and other community based organizations.
- Finding Ten:** Residents view grassroots efforts as more effective than the government led community organizing and crime prevention efforts.
- Finding Eleven:** Most African American organizations are involved in the community providing services. Many leaders of these organizations are concerned that they are under-utilized and under-funded.
- Finding Twelve:** The community organizing and crime prevention dollars promote crime prevention activities connected to the Milwaukee Police Department and the work of city departments; few dollars are actually invested into the African American community.

Section 6

RECOMMENDATIONS

The three main recommendations are:

- A. Require cultural competency of all City departments and community based organizations utilizing government funding to provide services or programs in the African American community.
- B. Invest in Rebuilding African American Community Infrastructure
- C. Revamp CDBG to improve racial equity and inclusion, ensuring high quality, effective services to African American residents and community.

Specific actions that could be taken to implement these recommendations are provided below:

- A. Require cultural competency of City departments and community based organizations utilizing government funding to provide services or programs in the African American community.
 - a. Establish definitions, policies, procedures and best practices to assess the cultural competency of community based organizations funded by the City to work in the African American community.
 - b. Support initiatives that increase cultural competency of City departments and community based organizations.
 - c. Invest resources in organizations that utilize culturally competent curriculums and programs to address self-esteem and identity issues exacerbated by racism, poverty and health, education, employment and income disparities.
- B. Invest in Rebuilding African American Community Infrastructure
 - a. Implement Program similar to Minority Business Enterprise Program
 - i. Increase utilization of African American community based organizations.
 - ii. Conduct outreach to identify African American community based organizations, provide opportunity for assessment of strengths and areas for improvement.
 - iii. Provide coordinated training and support for African American community based organizations where operational issues are identified.
 - iv. Develop on-line directory of African American Community Based Organizations to increase government, funders, potential collaborators and residents' knowledge of organizations.
 - b. Decrease the racial mismatch between community based organizations providing services and the residents receiving the services.
 - i. Require greater representation of African Americans in leadership, executive and board, positions for community organizations receiving funding for NRSA #1.
 - ii. Establish priority for contracting with organizations whose staff and board live in NRSA #1.
 - iii. Invest resources and support into organizations that invest, not just operate, in African American community
- C. Revamp CDBG to improve racial equity and inclusion, ensuring high quality, effective services to African American residents and community
 - a. Eliminate imposed, prescribed activities that focus on social control.
 - b. Encourage innovative services that promote implementation of mutual aid and self-help initiatives.

- c. Evaluate effectiveness of funding and staffing practices
 - i. Assess the effectiveness of \$45,000 per agency providing services in the NSPs
 - ii. Assess the ineffectiveness of one organizer per neighborhood
 - iii. Reallocate Community Partners funding of \$200,000 to the funding for Community Organizing /Crime Prevention funds.
 - iv. Discontinue use of Community Organizing/Crime Prevention funding for Community Prosecution Unit; reallocate funds to Community Organizing/Crime Prevention funds.
- d. Revise required program outcomes to achieve long term impact.
 - i. Eliminate outcomes that are simply outputs, such as, number of doors knocked on, number of block clubs started or block clean-ups, etc.
 - ii. Require outcomes that have positive transformational impact on African American community
- e. Provide opportunities for real, viable participation of African American residents in strategic planning, decision making, prioritization and evaluation of services delivered in African American neighborhoods.

Section 7

REFERENCES

Community Development Grant Administration Documents:

Milwaukee CDBG “Draft” 2015 – 2019 Five Year Consolidated Plan and Strategy
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