

# Assessment of Bank of America Charitable Foundation's Neighborhood Builders Program

The Bridgespan Group,  
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## Executive Summary

The Bridgespan Group, an advisory firm to nonprofit and philanthropic organizations, conducted an impact evaluation of the Bank of America Charitable Foundation's Neighborhood Builders® program. Neighborhood Builders is a philanthropic initiative to enhance the nonprofit sector by providing leadership training and unrestricted funding to high-potential nonprofits in 45 communities. Since its inception in 2004, the Neighborhood Builders program has trained nearly 1,200 leaders in nearly 600 community-based organizations that provide critical support to predominantly low and moderate income individuals. The program represents the nation's largest philanthropic investment in nonprofit leadership development – approximately two and a half times the size of the next largest. It is the third-largest investment in terms of number of leaders reached<sup>1</sup>.

### Why Leadership Matters

Bridgespan believes the case for leadership development is strong. Research from our colleagues at Bain and Company indicates that corporate leaders who create a powerful vision, set and align their organization around priorities, and motivate their people to achieve them, consistently outperform other organizations and achieve superior shareholder returns. While the nonprofit sector lacks a common measure of return, Bridgespan has observed in our work with hundreds of clients that those organizations with strong leaders achieve greater impact for beneficiaries.

Developing nonprofit leaders is not just a luxury for large or well-funded nonprofits; it is a necessity for the entire sector. Indeed, Bridgespan research in 2006<sup>2</sup> indicated the nonprofit sector would need to add 640,000 new senior leaders—the equivalent of 2.4 times the number currently employed—over the next decade. Investing in leadership capacity was one of three key levers identified to address the looming deficit.

Unfortunately, not enough has been done to evaluate what *types* of investment can have an impact in the development of nonprofit leaders. Nearly a decade ago, the Kellogg Foundation's seminal report on leadership development<sup>3</sup> noted that despite the “explosion of leadership programs in communities and fields ... there are still no known well-developed theories of leadership development that are grounded in what is being learned through program evaluation.” Of the 55 programs it studied, few had formally tried

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<sup>1</sup> Bridgespan researched leading nonprofit leadership development investments. Not included are programs requiring participants to pay. See Appendix IV for the full list.

<sup>2</sup> The Nonprofit Sector's Leadership Deficit. The Bridgespan Group. March 2006.

<sup>3</sup> W.K. Kellogg Foundation, Evaluating Outcomes and Impacts: A Scan of 55 Leadership Development Programs, August 2002

to study the link between activities, short-term outcomes, long-term outcomes, and impact; our research suggests the situation today is much the same.

## What Our Research Found

The Bank of America Neighborhood Builders program combines a set of unique elements: rigorously selecting community-based organizations through local committees of leaders, pairing leadership training with a meaningful unrestricted grant, training both the executive director and an emerging leader, and fostering relationships within a network that has grown to 1,200 nonprofit leaders. Our evaluation of the program suggests a strong link between what the program does (its inputs and activities) and its impact on leaders, organizations and communities (intermediate and ultimate outcomes). We found that the Neighborhood Builders training has helped nonprofit

leaders grow as individuals and become more effective leaders. The gains are especially pronounced for Emerging Leaders, a group that few other programs target but one that is key to addressing the sector's leadership deficit. The training and award enabled Builder organizations to improve capacity in critical areas. And ultimately, residents of the communities where these organizations are located benefited from growth in program reach and impact. (Please see sidebar to the right for highlights of what we found).

The gains in leadership and organization capacity reported by leaders have increased over time; it appears this is the result of changes made in response to participant feedback. Though the program's scale in each community (to date, 12-14 organizations per local market) is too small to dramatically change communities, the deep local reach of Builder organizations and their leaders, combined with Bank of America's commitment to maintain the program's size during the downturn, suggest the program is making a real contribution to the 45 communities it serves. Finally, our evaluation suggests ways Bank of America can increase its impact both through program improvements, and on-going work with the large and growing number of Neighborhood Builders alumni organizations and leaders.

### How the Neighborhood Builders Program Improves Communities: What We Found

- **Training is provided to build leadership skills in community-based organizations**
  - **89%** leaders gain valuable knowledge and skills
  - **72%** report aspirations and expectations changed
  - **67%** develop valuable relationships
- **\$200,000 unrestricted award builds capacity**
  - **88%** report improved organization capacity
  - **91%** use Award to leverage other funds
- **Consequently, these organizations better serve their communities**
  - **92%** increased or enhanced program impact
  - **85%** become more effective community leaders
  - **80%** reach more people/organizations
  - Leaders reach, on average, **22** other community-based institutions through board service, mentorships, or other means

The remainder of the Executive Summary, and the full report, share the history of the program, its theory of change, how the program was evaluated, what the research found, and how the program can further improve impact. We believe the findings hold important lessons for other nonprofit leadership programs.

## **The Bank of America's Neighborhood Builders Program**

The Neighborhood Builders program is the largest component of Bank of America's signature philanthropic investment, the Neighborhood Excellence Initiative® (NEI), which supports nonprofit organizations and leaders who dedicate themselves to revitalizing and strengthening their communities. By the end of this year, Bank of America will have committed more than \$150 million through NEI to help these nonprofits improve communities across the United States.

The Neighborhood Builders program provides \$200,000 of unrestricted funding to local, high-potential nonprofit organizations, supplemented by leadership development training for their Executive Directors (ED) and an "Emerging Leaders" (EL) within the same organization. With a nationwide scope, Neighborhood Builders has engaged nearly 600 organizations working in 45 communities; collectively, the Builder organizations that have submitted data to Bank of America<sup>4</sup> have provided services to 11 million predominantly low- and moderate-income individuals in their communities. Ultimately, Bank of America would like to see these 45 communities become more vibrant places to live and work, creating improved business environments for Bank of America.

Bank of America created the Neighborhood Builders program in 2004 in response to challenges facing the nonprofit sector. Through research with community stakeholders, it identified unrestricted operating support as an opportunity to provide nonprofits with funding for what is most needed, rather than funding restricted to a particular program or project. In addition, Bank of America sought to address the anticipated nonprofit leadership deficit, as senior executives retire and new leaders are needed to step into these roles.

Bank of America collects data annually on the program and has used this information to make a number of changes to improve its impact. Until now there has never been a multi-cohort, third-party study of the impact of the Neighborhood Builders program against its theory of change.

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<sup>4</sup> Roughly 250 of the nearly 600 organizations have submitted this beneficiary data.

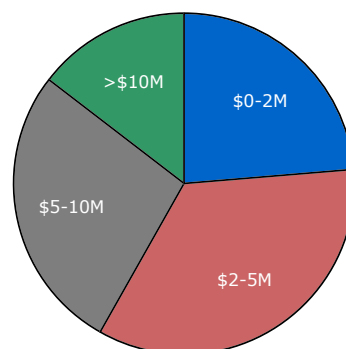
## Research Goals and Design

Bank of America asked Bridgespan<sup>5</sup> to: (1) Assess the overall impact of the Neighborhood Builders program on leaders, organizations, and communities since its inception, (2) Test each component of the program's theory of change, and (3) Identify ways to enhance the program's impact.

Our research, conducted in the first half of 2011, used a "mixed-method" design that included quantitative and qualitative assessment across a subset of the communities served to test whether the theory of change worked (that is, whether the program was implemented as designed and whether the program has achieved the outcomes intended). A survey was sent to every organization that had completed the program (referred to as a Builder) in seven of Bank of America's priority communities<sup>6</sup>, with a response rate of 71 percent (N=119). We supplemented the survey with one-hour interviews of 77 current and former program participants, interviewing a leader from 79 percent of the 2004 to 2009 Builders in the seven communities. We also interviewed program stakeholders, including Bank of America's employees responsible for coordinating the program locally, Bank of America's local market presidents, and community members who served on local selection committees. Finally, we analyzed some of the data collected through the program's existing evaluation tools to supplement our analysis. Because our research was retrospective and did not include a direct comparison group, the outcomes we found cannot be statistically attributed solely to the Builders program.

On all characteristics analyzed (class year, community, leader type, size, sector), survey respondents were representative of the Builder alumni population as a whole. As shown to the right, over 85% of Builder organizations earn \$10M or less in annual revenue. Organizations provide services across a range of critical need areas, including affordable housing, education, youth development, health and human services, economic and workforce development, and arts and culture. Of the beneficiaries reached by Builder organizations, 91 percent are low or moderate income.

### Size of Builder organizations



n=55  
Represents total revenues reported on the organization's 990 Form in the year 2010

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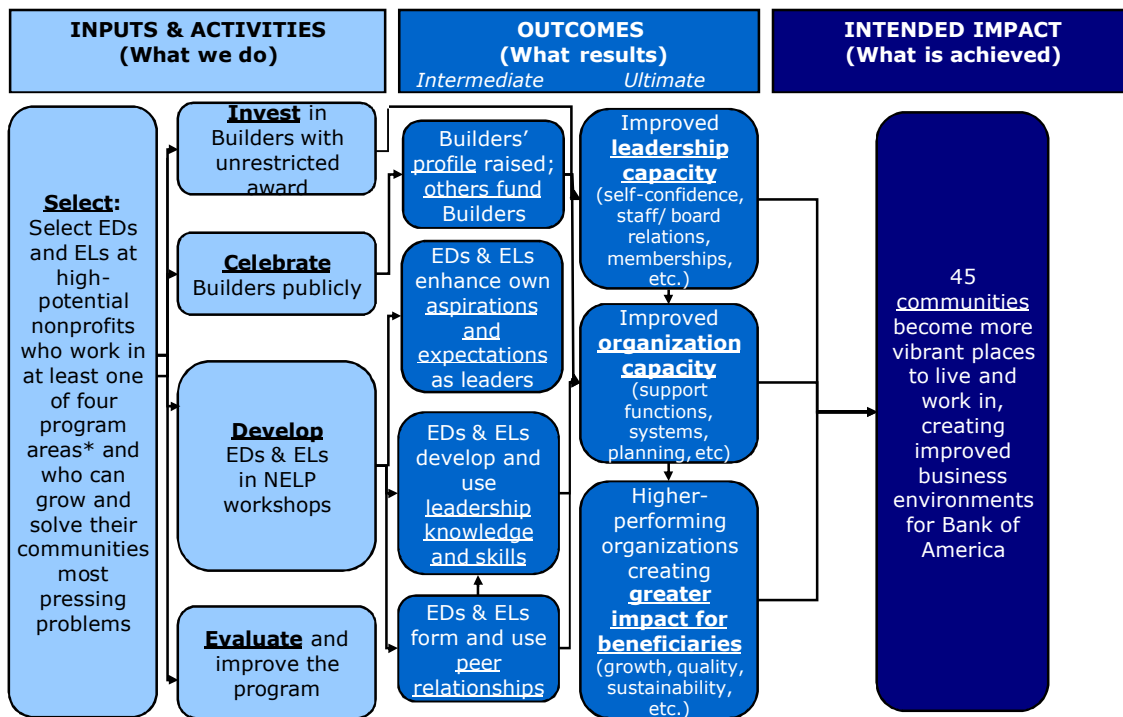
<sup>5</sup> The Research Goals and Design section of the full report describes in detail Bridgespan's prior relationship and work with the Bank of America Charitable Foundation.

<sup>6</sup> The seven communities studied were: San Francisco, Los Angeles, Chicago, Greater Washington (D.C. area), Boston, Charlotte, and New York City

## The Neighborhood Builders Program Theory of Change

Nonprofit leadership development programs often define success as the extent to which their theory of change is leading to the program's intended outcomes. Rigorous theories of change identify, at a very detailed level, who the participants are, what program elements they receive, what they gain from the program, how they apply it, and what happens as a result. Such a detailed theory of change provides useful scaffolding for evaluating programs. Shown below is the detailed theory of change for the Neighborhood Builders program.

### Neighborhood Builder's theory of change



\* Community development, health and human services, education and youth development, arts and culture

This evaluation focused most heavily at the left hand (inputs and activities) and middle (outcomes) sections of the program's theory of change. It was beyond the scope of our research to *directly* measure the right-hand side (intended impact on the community), though the surveys and interviews have enabled us to collect and consider information from nonprofit leaders as to their assessment of this impact.

## Results of the Impact Evaluation

Overall, our research indicates that the Neighborhood Builders program is having a strong, positive impact on the leaders and organizations that have had the opportunity to participate – and through them,

on the individuals and communities they serve. Leaders indicated the program had a strong impact on their leadership capacity (through improved aspirations, knowledge/skills, and relationships), the award had a meaningful impact on their organizations' results, and the program helped to raise their profiles with other funders and more generally in their communities. Interviews with leaders did not suggest alternative causes for the improvements in leadership capacity they experienced. The high percentages of leaders who reported such changes appear equal to or better than changes reported by peer programs (though this is directional at best given the challenges of comparing different programs)<sup>7</sup>.

The following provides highlights of our research, organized around the theory of change components:

**Inputs and Activities:** These are the key activities Bank of America undertakes to operate the Neighborhood Builders program:

*Select EDs and ELs at high-potential nonprofits with ability to grow and solve their communities' most pressing problems:* Since the program started in 2004, Bank of America has selected nearly 600 organizations and 1,200 leaders across 45 communities. Selection committee members identified the process as rigorous; one called it "strategic and sophisticated" and "designed to select the real anchor institutions in our neighborhood."

*Invest in Builders with a \$200,000 unrestricted award given over two years:* By the end of this year, Bank of America will have provided roughly \$117 million in unrestricted two-year funding to the Builder organizations. The unrestricted award makes a meaningful difference to Builder organizations; for 95 percent of them, the award represented one of the top three largest unrestricted awards in the two-year period. Leaders (97 percent) also highly valued the unrestricted nature of the award, citing the flexibility this gives leaders to sustain or grow their organization depending on the economic environment. Approximately two-thirds of organizations used the award primarily for non-program purposes (to build infrastructure, as capital for innovation or growth, or for another non-program purpose such as building operating reserves); a third used the award primarily for funding ongoing programs (a proportion that has increased in the recent downturn). Finally, the award serves as an important 'draw' for applications from Builder organizations: a majority of the leaders

"[Unrestricted funding] is such a rare grant to get ... such an anomaly ... it made managing the organization and thinking about the mission of the organization actually possible." *Executive Director*

<sup>7</sup> The full report provides an explanation of how we compared the outcomes from this study with the only two published evaluation studies of leadership development programs we could find, both conducted by OMG Center for Collaborative Learning. The studies were conducted on: Rockefeller Foundation's Next Generation Leadership Program and Annie E. Casey Foundation's Children and Family Fellowship Program



interviewed said they would not have applied had the program consisted only of the training (as they were unaware at the time how valuable the training would be).

*Celebrate Builders through an award ceremony and media mentions:* Awards ceremonies are held in all 45 communities, and the awardees are publicized both nationally and locally. One hundred percent of Builders had at least one representative at the ceremony, and three-quarters identify having received “media mentions” related to the ceremony and receipt of the award.

*Develop EDs and ELs through four leadership training workshops delivered over one year:* Since 2005, EDs have had the opportunity to participate in two, three-day Neighborhood Excellence Leadership

“The ability to get away from the day-to-day demands of running a nonprofit organization and to focus on leadership with colleagues, using top-notch trainers, is a gift that you can't put a price tag on.” *Executive Director*

Program (NELP) workshops, and ELs have had the opportunity to participate in three, three-day workshops, one of which combines both EDs and ELs<sup>8</sup>. The NELP workshops are conducted by The Center for Leadership Innovation. Builder leaders identify the workshops as highly unique in their focus purely on leadership, their inclusion of both the ED and EL, the creation of a safe and trusting environment (given

the participation of leaders primarily outside of one's local community), and the ample breaks between the three-day workshops to apply what was learned. Though strides have been made to make the program highly interactive, action-oriented, and experiential, Builder leaders suggested a few areas for ongoing improvement.

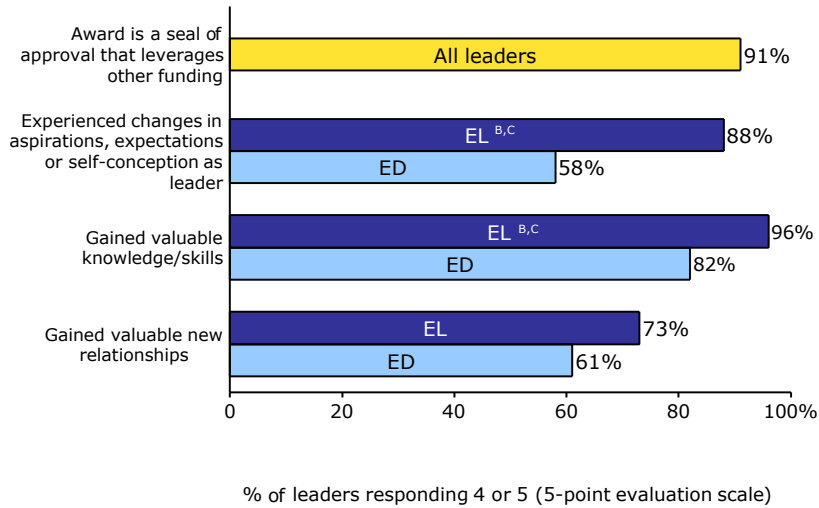
*Evaluate the Builders' success to understand impact and improve the program:* Bank of America collects data from each class of Builders in the first year of the award through awardee summaries, conference feedback, and a qualitative survey, along with another more extensive survey at the end of the two-year award period. Bridgespan's evaluation is an attempt to take a deeper look at impact and how the program might be improved.

**Intermediate outcomes:** These are the outcomes expected to emerge directly from the program, and some key results from our research in regard to them.

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<sup>8</sup> In the first two years of the program, EDs participated in three, threeday workshops; ELs in two, three-day workshops. A switch was made based on feedback that suggested ELs benefited more from the training and had fewer outside opportunities.

## Intermediate outcomes from the Builders program



n=114  
 B: difference is significant at the 95% level on CHAID analysis  
 C: difference is significant at the 95% significant level on standard T-test

*Builders' profiles are raised and they are able to leverage other funding:* Efforts to celebrate Builders publicly in the media have been successful, and some Builders have been able to develop valuable connections in their communities as a result of the program. As mentioned, 76 percent of Builders reported that they benefitted from media mentions of the program, while a third reported

*"The Award was a real validation for us. It put us on the map. We highlighted the award on our website and in all of our ensuing grant proposals. Since that time, our organization has been seen as one of the top organizations in our field." Executive Director*

benefitting from a connection made at the awards event. Builders (91 percent) see the award as a "seal of approval" to leverage other funding. On average they report that the \$200,000 award helps them obtain an additional \$400,000 from other funders.

*"Up until coming here a few years ago, I always considered myself more of a professional than a leader; the leadership program helped me acknowledge and accept that I was a leader."*

*Emerging Leader*

*EDs and ELs enhance their own aspirations and expectations as leaders through the training:* Seventy-two percent of leaders reported changes in their aspirations and expectation, with ELs (88 percent) more likely than EDs to report this outcome. In interviews, leaders (particularly ELs) described gains

in confidence leading to a change in how they perceived the upper limits of their career potential. Attendance at all workshops in the program is a predictor of success.

*EDs and ELs develop and use leadership knowledge and skills when they return to their organizations:*

The great majority of leaders surveyed (89 percent) reported gaining valuable knowledge and skills from the training; of those, 86 percent reported applying these new skills in their jobs, and of those, 92 percent reported an improvement in organizational results. ELs are more likely to report gaining and applying new

“There was this whole world out there of nonprofit management practices ... [Before NELP] we were the quintessential mom and pop grassroots organization, and now we are on a different playing field.” *Executive Director*

knowledge than EDs. A striking example is in the area of leadership succession, which is a topic covered at the NELP workshops and also, according to an organization diagnostic survey Bridgespan has used over the past four years, the single biggest leadership challenge identified by nonprofits. The number of Builders with succession plans increased from 21 percent before the NELP training to 57 percent after it.

*EDs and ELs form and use peer relationships after the training to continue to improve their organizations:*

Two-thirds of the leaders surveyed reported gaining valuable new relationships from their participation; of

“We developed strong peer relationships at this training, including one with another Chicago Builder who ended up advising us on our financial management, leading to a 40 percent reduction in our payroll services costs. Another Builder we met helped us design a new housing program.”

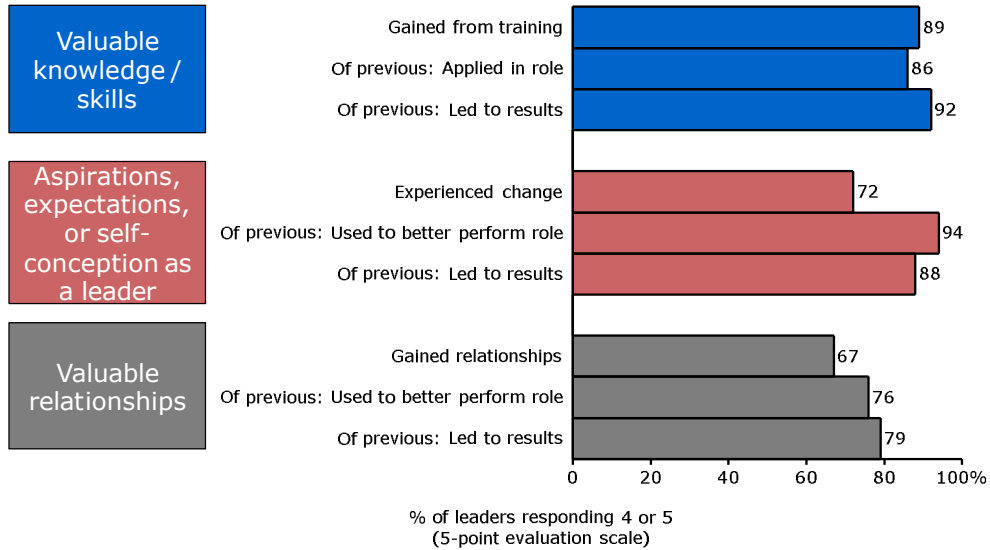
*Emerging Leader*

those, 76 percent of leaders used new relationships to better perform their role and, of those, 79 percent reported an improvement in organizational results because of these relationships. On average,

leaders have kept in touch with four peers from the program.

Across these outcome areas, our research indicates the program faces challenges similar to those of other leadership development programs in that initial gains from training are not always implemented and do not always lead to results. That said, as shown in the chart below, the “fall-off” is not very dramatic, suggesting the importance of first focusing on gains directly from the training (through ensuring leaders attend the full trainings, improving opportunities for peer interaction, and selecting leaders who will most benefit from the program). Bank of America might then focus on follow-up support that could increase the percent who apply the gains and the percent for which this leads to results.

## Application of skills gained, changes experienced, and relationships gained from NELP

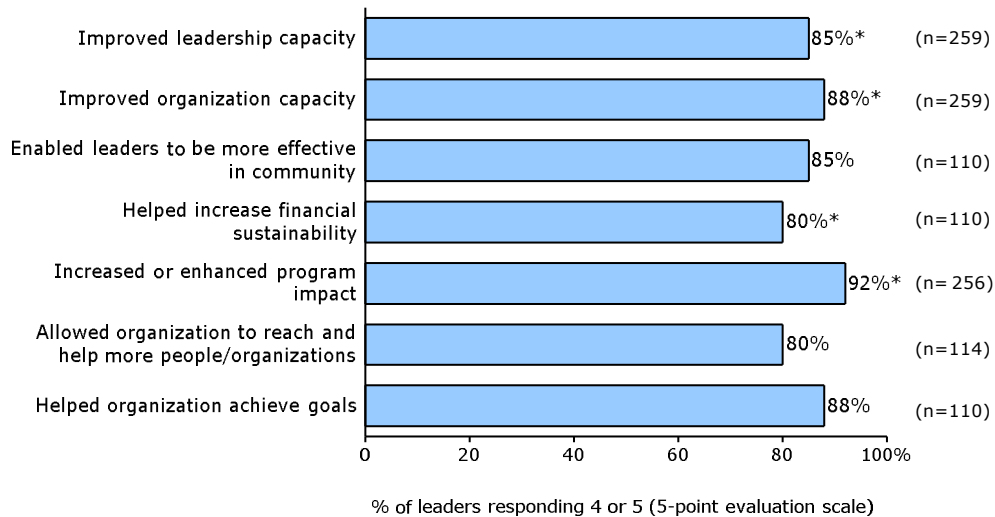


Note: Data is presented on a 'of those' basis. For example, 89% of leaders reported gains in knowledge/skills from training; of those 89%, 86% reported having applied those gains in their role

When leaders are able to apply their gains, organizational improvement generally results. For example, one EL told of learning how to do a “brutal facts” review of their programs, which helped the organization exit its “non-aligned” programs and eliminate its long-running deficits.

**Ultimate Outcomes:** The expected outcomes of the program (as a result of the expected gains in the intermediate outcomes reviewed above), and key research results are outlined in the following chart.

### Ultimate outcomes from the Builders program



\* Data comes from TCLI analysis and %s represent % of leaders responding “yes” (yes vs. no evaluation scale)

*Improved leadership capacity, manifested in such attributes as increased self-confidence of leaders and improved staff and board relationships:* 85 percent of leaders reported improved leadership capacity after the program, and 79% felt they had an improved ability to lead their specific organization as a result of the program. A higher percentage of ELs (85 percent) than EDs reported this latter improvement; we surmise this is related to another finding that ELs have significantly less exposure to high-quality leadership training opportunities than EDs.

*Improved organization capacity, as manifested in such attributes as strengthened support functions and better systems:* Both the survey and interview data indicated strong belief among Builders that the program's leadership training and unrestricted funding, taken together, improved the capacity of their organizations. Eighty-eight percent reported enhanced capacity, manifesting in a variety of ways. Over 50 percent of Builders cite each of the following areas of improved capacity: professional development, fundraising, strategic planning, and management systems. Smaller percentages report improved capacity in other areas.

*Higher performing organizations creating greater impact for beneficiaries, manifested in such attributes as faster growth, higher quality services, and increased sustainability:* Our research suggested the program contributed to Builders' results. Builders reported that the program helped their organization achieve its goals (88 percent), increase or enhance program impact (92 percent), increase financial sustainability (80 percent), and drive innovation (80 percent). Additionally, despite recent tough times for many nonprofits, all but one of the Builders remain in operation<sup>9</sup>.

**Intended Impact:** Forty-five communities become more vibrant places to live in and work: Bank of America is aware that its program alone cannot change communities, but it can positively contribute to them. Our research suggests the high-potential organizations selected (and the outcomes these organizations achieve as a result of the program) make a significant contribution to their communities. Of those reporting data, the Builders in aggregate reach over 11 million people. Participating EDs and ELs reach, on average 22 other organizations in their communities through such activities as board service, mentorships, or participating in coalitions. Many leaders reported sharing what they learned from the NELP workshops with these other organizations. Finally, Bank of America has grown the program and maintained its level of investment through the downturn, suggesting its contribution to the community may have increased over time.

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<sup>9</sup> According to a survey administered by the Bank in 2010, one Builder is no longer in operation, seven have merged into other entities, and the remainder are still operating as independent organizations

Across these outcomes (and others discussed in the full report), there is an indication that the program works better for smaller organizations than for larger ones, and that results have improved for Builders and leaders over time. We also found some of the seven communities we surveyed showed stronger results than others, though this finding, too, is not statistically significant due to small sample sizes in each community. We hypothesize that this variation is due to differences in selection, since the program is delivered relatively consistently across communities.

## Recommendations for Strengthening the Program and Enhancing Its Impact

Based on data and feedback from the surveys, interviews, and Bridgespan's own work in nonprofit leadership, we have identified several opportunities to strengthen the theory of change and the activities in the program to improve its impact. Among our recommendations (organized by the inputs and activities on the left-hand side of the theory of change diagram):

*Select:* Our research suggests that the benefits of the Neighborhood Builders award are greatest when organizations and leaders are poised for change. At such a moment, the program's unrestricted funding can help an organization build the infrastructure for change (and signal to other funders that the organization is worth investing in). The training provided by the program also can help a leader find the tools and develop the skills needed to lead that change. Thus we would recommend the program refine selection criteria to focus on leaders and organizations who can credibly demonstrate in their applications that they will benefit from the leadership training and the unrestricted award.

*Invest:* The \$200,000 in unrestricted funding has clearly been beneficial to Builders, and we recommend no changes in this component of the program. Even in larger communities, we found the award was meaningful in size and highly valued given the unrestricted and multi-year nature.

*Celebrate and promote:* Many leaders report that the Neighborhood Builders award helps raise their organizational profile in the community and secure additional funding. Through awards ceremonies and media coverage, Bank of America already promotes Builders in their communities. We suggest adding "promote" to the overall theory of change and adding two new activities to help Builders reap maximum benefit from the award: introduce Builders to other potential funders and provide guidance, training, and tools to Builders on how to use the award to more effectively market their organizations.

*Develop:* Our research did not indicate a need for major modifications in the program's training component. Leaders report high satisfaction with the structure, content, and delivery of the workshops. However, in some areas there is a gap between what is learned in training and what is applied back on

the job — suggesting that the program could strengthen its impact by providing more follow-up support. In interviews, leaders expressed interest in two kinds of post-training follow-up: accountability for implementation and further training.

1. Bank of America could provide a more structured way for leaders to report back and share what they have accomplished post-training. It could hold Builders accountable for implementing learning through post-workshop meetings or other means. Feedback from our research indicated that this also might help Builders more effectively use what they learned to improve organizational performance.
2. Leaders would benefit from more follow-on training on key topics. This would address the concern that while they gain a lot from the program, they do not consistently apply what they learned, especially over the longer run.

"I think follow-up support from Bank of America would have helped me implement new knowledge and skills more successfully. Peer accountability, Bank of America enforcement, and additional training would be helpful in ensuring more accountability toward implementation."

*Executive Director*

*Sustain:* On-going learning opportunities for all leaders (regardless of when they've completed the program) enhances the likelihood that the desired outcomes and overall intended impact will be achieved. Therefore, we recommend adding "sustain" to the overall theory of change and several additional activities (over and above peer networks) that can support ongoing learning. These could include:

1. Improving Builder access to Bank of America's current webinar series for nonprofits.
2. Bank of America could create national and local peer networks to support continuing learning and knowledge sharing among Builders. Peer networks could provide a powerful opportunity to reinforce workshops and increase their ongoing impact on leaders and organizations. Leaders expressed a desire for national network tools that would enable them to find, interact with, and access resources from other Builders working on (or expert in) related issues. Leaders we interviewed also emphasized the importance of local, face-to-face connections with their peers — making local networks that discuss leadership issues beneficial as well.
3. Creating and disseminating knowledge through the peer networks that informs Builders as well as other nonprofits and practitioners.
4. Encouraging more Bank of America employees to engage in skills-based volunteerism at Builder organizations, especially in the areas of board memberships and financial literacy training (which

were specifically identified by Builders as highly desirable areas). Employee volunteerism is widely encouraged at Bank of America, and with no program-wide effort to specifically target Builders for such opportunities, we found that 79 percent of Builders nonetheless report that Bank of America employees have volunteered at their organizations (though only one-third of this was skills-based in nature).

*Evaluate:* Bank of America should consider improvements in its measurement process to better track long-term impact. While Bank of America collects a significant amount of data during the two-year award period, the current measurement process could be strengthened by:

1. Delaying the survey conducted at the end of the award period by one year, allowing Bank of America to get deeper insight into what happens to leaders and organizations after the program is over, particularly if it adds "follow-on services."
2. Planning for the next multi-cohort, third-party evaluation several years from now. We believe this study has contributed to a sharper picture of how the Neighborhood Builders program operates, what is working well, and what could be improved. By planning for the next such evaluation further in advance, Bank of America has an opportunity to improve the rigor of the research design and, therefore, more confidently attribute the outcomes it is seeing to the Builders program. It can also explore new potential areas of impact, such as in changing career trajectories and seeing if financial performance (e.g., revenue growth) is improved as a result of the program.

## Potential Lessons for the Field

Over seven years, Bank of America has made a significant investment in the Neighborhood Builders program. Our research suggests this investment has made a real difference for participating leaders and organizations, and by extension, their beneficiaries and communities. We believe the research findings and recommendations provide eight key lessons for others who are working to develop leaders, build organization capacity, and improve communities.



- **Developing leaders highly-connected in a community multiplies the impact of a leadership program in that community.** Though a single program of the Neighborhood Builders’ size cannot change a community, the program contributes positively to its communities by providing high-quality leadership training

that targets leaders who are highly connected at a local level. Our research found these leaders reach an average of 22 (median of 12) other organizations in their communities – through board service, mentorships, participating in coalitions, or other means. Many leaders reported sharing what they learned from the NELP workshops with these other organizations, and 85% reported the program helped them to become more effective leaders in their communities. The potential for community impact is underlined by the 11 million predominantly low and moderate income individuals

### What Lessons Are There for Other Nonprofit Leadership Development Programs?

- **Developing leaders highly-connected in a community** multiplies the impact of a leadership program in that community
- **Rigorous selection** is a must to maximize the return-on-investment from training
- **Pairing training and funding** is far more likely to build organization capacity and enhance results than training alone
- **Unrestricted funding** that trusts leaders to direct how funds are invested is rare and highly valued
- **Linking training with follow-up support** helps leaders implement what they learn
- **National programs require a major and sustained investment** to reach the kind of scale where follow-up support can be delivered cost-effectively
- **Training both EDs and ELs** from an organization helps enable change and can be highly catalytic for ELs
- **Continuous measurement is critical** to improve the design and outcomes of a program

that Builder organizations report reaching. National leadership programs aiming to improve local communities can do so through careful selection of highly-connected leaders.

- **Rigorous selection is a must to maximize the return-on-investment from training.** The Neighborhood Builders program benefits from a rigorous and strategic selection process that identifies nonprofits with the ability to grow and solve their communities’ most pressing needs. The program’s tight focus on a small number of issue areas, combined with a selection process led by local community leaders familiar with both the leading community-based organizations and the critical local issues, helps ensure that high-potential organizations are selected. The ideal selection process for a “local/national” program like Neighborhood Builders combines local knowledge with insights developed from measurement done at a national level. Such a program

is strongest when there is a shared understanding at the national and local levels about the type of leaders best able to benefit from the program.

- **Pairing training and funding is far more likely to build organization capacity and enhance results than training alone.** Builder leaders, particularly those at an inflection point, pointed to the importance of receiving both leadership training and funding in order to bring their organizations to the next level. Further, the prestige of the award served as a “seal of approval” that allowed the organizations to obtain an additional \$400,000, on average, from other funders. Leadership programs, particularly those serving nonprofit organizations under \$10 million in annual revenue, should consider pairing funding with training to provide leaders with the capital (and credibility to access other capital) that is needed to implement their strategies.
- **Unrestricted funding that trusts leaders to direct how funds are invested is rare and highly valued.** Bank of America’s program is unique in combining leadership training with unrestricted funding: 97 percent of Builder leaders reported that they highly valued the unrestricted nature of the award. In interviews, leaders emphasized how few of their other funders make multi-year, unrestricted grants. This was borne out by our finding that the Neighborhood Builders Award was among the three largest unrestricted grants for 95 percent of Builder organizations, including those in the nation’s three largest cities (New York, Los Angeles, and Chicago). It is also borne out in national data: research from the Grantmakers for Effective Organizations (GEO) finds that only 20% of grants in the United States are unrestricted. Leadership programs that pair training with funding should consider providing that funding unrestricted to enable leaders to meet critical needs.
- **Linking training with follow-up support helps leaders implement what they learn.** Builder leaders reported significant gains from the training, and many were able to apply those gains to benefit their organizations. However, they also believe that follow-up support (whether through more training, peer networks or progress reviews) would enhance their ability implement the lessons learned. Most peer leadership programs we studied that offered follow-up support describe this as a critical driver of impact.
- **National programs require a major and sustained investment to reach the kind of scale where follow-up support can be delivered cost-effectively.** Having trained nearly 1,200 leaders nationally (an average of 24 per community), Bank of America has the opportunity to offer follow-up support to a very large cadre of leaders and organizations at a comparatively small additional cost, through such strategies as peer networks. If they operate at sufficient scale, other

leadership training programs may also be able to leverage the benefits of their initial investment through cost-effective follow-up activities.

- **Training both EDs and ELs from an organization helps enable change and can be highly catalytic for ELs.** The Builder program extends the benefit of leadership training beyond the typical participant (an organization's ED) to a 'next-in-line' Emerging Leader. Both EDs and ELs reported tremendous value in going through the program together, particularly the opportunity to align on vision, strategy, and priorities. Further, Emerging Leaders reported significantly greater changes than EDs in their aspirations/expectations, knowledge/skills, and ultimately their leadership capacity. Leadership programs should understand how powerful leadership training can be for these emerging leaders.
- **Continuous measurement is critical to improving the design and outcomes of a program.** Bank of America has been able to improve the Builders program over time by gathering feedback along the way, and using that feedback to implement key changes (such as the shift to providing more training to ELs and less to EDs). These changes have improved participant satisfaction with NELP, and more leaders have reported gains from the program over time. To maximize learning and strengthen impact, leadership programs should consider a combination of continuous internal measurement and periodic external evaluation.

These lessons emerged from research designed to assess whether the Neighborhood Builders program is achieving its desired outcomes. As such, they capture both the drivers of the program's success and some key opportunities to further its impact with modest additional investment and sustained commitment over time. We hope these lessons inspire others to make similar large-scale investments in leadership development.

## Neighborhood Excellence Initiative Overview

### Origins and history

The following summarizes information from Bank of America about its Neighborhood Excellence Initiative® (NEI), of which Neighborhood Builders® is a key component.

As part of Bank of America's effort to be the world's leading financial services institution, the company not only helps individuals and companies reach their goals but also seeks to help local communities achieve economic vitality. A core component of that effort is NEI, Bank of America's signature philanthropic program, recognizing community leadership and service. Through NEI, Bank of America supports local leaders, students and organizations as they work to improve their own communities.

In 2004, Bank of America created NEI to respond to challenges facing the nonprofit sector that impacted its ability to provide much needed services and programs in communities. Through research conducted with community stakeholders, Bank of America identified multi-year, unrestricted operating support as an opportunity to enable nonprofits to direct funds where they are needed the most, rather than be tied to more restrictive programmatic funding. In addition, its research surfaced the need to develop new leaders in response to the growing nonprofit leadership deficit anticipated over the next decade primarily as a result of the sector's expected growth and the increasing rate at which senior executives were expected to retire.

NEI responds to these issues affecting the long-term economic and social success of communities through a three-part approach. The Neighborhood Builders component provides a \$200,000 award of flexible grant funding over two years to outstanding nonprofits ("Neighborhood Builders") and leadership development training for each awardee's executive director (ED) and an emerging leader (EL) – approximately 180 leaders a year. As of 2005, EDs take part in two, three-day workshops, and ELs in three, three-day workshops (recognizing that ELs typically have had less access to this kind of training). These workshops, called the Neighborhood Excellence Leadership Program® (NELP), typically address topics such as challenges in high-performing nonprofits, leadership practices, time management, and storytelling. The training series is conducted by The Center for Leadership Innovation (TCLI,) formerly known as the Development Training Institute.

Bank of America also incorporates leadership development into its Student Leaders® component, offering high school students the opportunity to participate in a leadership summit and to learn more about the nonprofit sector through paid summer internships with local community organizations. Finally, NEI

includes a Local Heroes® component, whereby existing community leaders are recognized and asked to designate a local nonprofit to receive a \$5,000 grant from Bank of America. NEI was initially launched in 30 of Bank of America's highest priority markets (or communities where it does business) in the United States; subsequently, the program was grown to reach 45 markets. (See Appendix III for a list of these communities). NEI complements Bank of America's larger 'local grant-making program', which provides funding for a large variety of local organizations. Many Neighborhood Builder alumni also receive these local grants.

The impact of the Neighborhood Excellence Initiative has grown significantly since 2004 in terms of communities reached. Bank of America has maintained its level of funding during the economic downturn. By the end of 2011, its total commitment through NEI will exceed \$150 million. Nearly 700 nonprofits organizations and nearly 3,400 community leaders and high school students will have been recognized for their service, achievements and leadership. Within NEI, the Neighborhood Builders program was the focus of our research.

### **Comparison to other nonprofit leadership development programs**

To put Neighborhood Builders program in context, we sought to understand how it compared to other foundation investments in nonprofit leadership development. Our benchmarking identified several unique characteristics. First, few peer leadership development programs provide simultaneous leadership training to a nonprofit's executive director and an emerging leader. The Neighborhood Builders program recognizes the importance of development at both levels of an organization's leadership. Second, few peer programs pair their leadership training with a grant, and further, few grants given in any context are multi-year, unrestricted<sup>10</sup> and with a minimal reporting burden on the organization. Bank of America's approach recognizes that effective nonprofit organizations need talented, trained leaders with the funds to make investments as they grow and the trust to invest as they see most appropriate. Finally, few national philanthropic initiatives of this magnitude allow local community stakeholders to select recipients. In each community, a committee made up of key community leaders, past winners, and other influencers evaluates candidates for the awards based on local community issues and the efforts of organizations and individuals to address these challenges. See Appendix IV for our benchmarking research.

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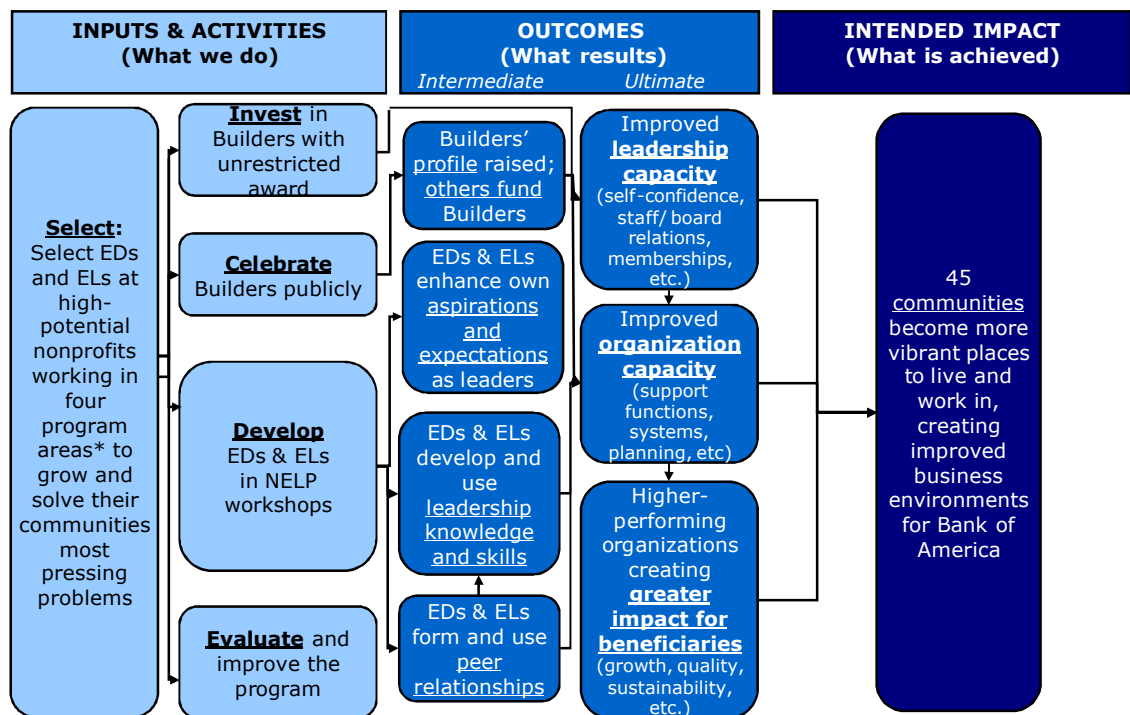
<sup>10</sup> GEO finds that grantmakers provide a median of only 20% of grants towards general operating support.

## Program Goals and Theory of Change

Nonprofit leadership development programs generally define success as the extent to which their theory of change is leading to the program's intended outcomes. Rigorous theories of change identify, at a very detailed level, who the participants are, what program elements they receive, what they gain from the program, how they apply it, and what happens as a result. Such a detailed theory of change provides useful scaffolding for evaluating leadership development programs.

Bank of America shared its theory of change for its Neighborhood Builders program in advance of our research. In order to develop our survey and interview instruments, Bridgespan asked several clarifying questions that led to the detailed theory of change shown below that we've tested in this research.

### Neighborhood Builder's theory of change



\* Community development, health and human services, education and youth development, arts and culture

Bank of America's Neighborhood Builders program is one of its many corporate philanthropy initiatives; collectively, these initiatives share the ultimate goal of making the communities in which Bank of America operates more vibrant places to live and work in. As such, Bank of America's corporate social responsibility programs, including the Builder's program, are an integral part of their business operation.

(We did not, however, examine Bank of America's other corporate philanthropy investments, nor their collective impact on the communities as part of our research).

The Neighborhood Builders program is designed to improve communities by enhancing the organizational and leadership capacity of high-potential nonprofits to do their work better – primarily by providing a combination of unrestricted funding and leadership development training for these organizations.

The detailed theory of change for the program is described below.

### **Inputs and Activities**

**Select:** The program selects high-potential nonprofits that work within a set of broad focus areas of importance to the community – including community development/neighborhood preservation, health and human services, education, youth development, and arts and culture. To select Builder organizations, each year the 45 local communities have an open application process for local nonprofits. In each community, a “Local Market Selection Committee” (comprised of key community leaders, past NEI winners, and other influencers) reviews the finalists’ applications and chooses the two winners in each community. The goal of this selection process is to find high-potential nonprofits deeply integrated into their local neighborhoods that – with an infusion of funds and training – can achieve even greater impact.

**Invest:** Bank of America awards each Neighborhood Builder winner a \$200,000 unrestricted grant, disbursed in two \$100,000 grants over two years. Bank of America suggests that leaders use the award to “build organizational capacity”, which it defines as “operating support to maintain or grow existing and future programs/projects or the general operations of an organization”.

**Celebrate:** To celebrate these Neighborhood Builders, Bank of America holds an annual awards ceremony in each community for Builders and other NEI awardees, and supports local media coverage of the Builders. The goal of these activities is to heighten the profile of Builder organizations, so that these organizations have additional opportunities for recognition and support from other community stakeholders, including potential funders.

**Develop:** In addition to funding, the Neighborhood Builders award provides leadership development training for the Executive Director (ED) and one Emerging Leader (EL) at each nonprofit award winner. (The EL is selected by the ED and is typically someone the ED believes could be a future leader of the organization). The goal of these trainings – called Neighborhood Excellence Leadership Program (NELP) workshops – is to develop EDs and ELs as leaders and to give them the tools to improve their organizations’ capacities. The training consists of two, three-day workshops for EDs and three, three-day workshops for ELs, in which a host of nonprofit leadership/management topics are covered.

The program is designed to create an interactive learning community for the participants and includes sessions on key questions facing these leaders of organizations addressing diverse needs. NELP sessions have focused on topics such as leading in times of dynamic change, responding to powerful trends in the social sector, creating and delivering high impact communications, employing innovative models of strategic thinking, increasing overall organizational effectiveness and exercising transformational leadership. The workshops include an onsite case exercise featuring a previous Neighborhood Builder awardee in the city where the workshop is being held, with the participants consulting to the leaders of this organization on how they might successfully address currently pressing issues and opportunities. As aforementioned, NELP is designed and conducted by The Center for Leadership Innovation (formerly known as the Development Training Institute).

**Evaluate:** To measure and continuously improve the program's results, Bank of America conducts: a) real-time surveys after NELP workshops to solicit session-specific feedback, b) one-year impact surveys to understand the impact of the award and training in year one, and c) a detailed two-year impact survey to measure the impact of the award and the training across both years of the program. Bank of America is also investing in a multi-cohort, third-party, deeper evaluation of the program's longer-term impact through this research.

## Two-Year Outcomes

The intermediate outcomes that this program seeks to achieve include:

- *Leaders enhancing their own aspirations or expectations of themselves as leaders.* For ELs, this is likely to be a stronger desire to eventually lead their (or another) organization. For EDs, this is likely to be a greater aspiration and commitment to be better leaders for their organizations and in their communities.
- *Leaders developing leadership knowledge and skills* through the NELP workshops and applying this learning at their organizations. Given the diversity of strengths and weaknesses among the participating leaders, and the breadth of topics covered at the NELP workshops, Bank of America believes that the specific knowledge or skills gained will vary.
- *Leaders forming and using peer relationships with other leaders,* as a result of the connections that they form at NELP workshops. The goal of these peer relationships is to help leaders in their own development and that of their organizations (e.g., by sharing management best practices and challenges, by identifying potential collaborations, etc).



- *Other local funders providing additional funds to Builders*, both as a result of the local public recognition of these Builders and as a result of the general “seal of approval” that the Bank of America award provides.

The ultimate outcomes that this program seeks to achieve include the following. While specific outcomes will vary among leaders and organizations depending on the specific issues that they’re facing, Bank of America expects to see some evidence of program impact within the two-year timeframe of the program, and ongoing impact in the years that follow.

- *Outcomes for leaders*: Greater leadership capacity, primarily through NELP workshops, so that leaders develop skills and competences that they apply in their roles (e.g., in areas such as staff management, board development, collaboration with other organizations, etc).
- *Outcomes for organizations*: Enhanced organizational capacity, through both the funding and the NELP workshops, so that leaders improve their results of their organizations (e.g., more funding, improved internal systems/processes, more rigorous strategic planning, better Board governance, etc).
- *Outcomes for communities*: Through the enhanced leadership and organizational capacity, improved outcomes for Builders’ beneficiaries and their communities more broadly (e.g., more individuals served, better outcomes for those individuals).

## Intended Impact

Together with Bank of America’s other philanthropic initiatives in communities, these outcomes for leaders, organizations, and communities from the NEI program contribute to the 45 communities in which the program operates becoming more vibrant places to live and work in, thereby creating improved business environments for Bank of America.

To evaluate the Neighborhood Builders program, Bank of America asked Bridgespan to measure the extent to which the program’s theory of change achieves the desired outcomes. In the remaining sections of this report, we share our research goals and design, report our findings on the program’s impact, and make recommendations to improve impact that are tied to the theory of change. We also suggest some revisions to the theory of change itself.

## Research Goals and Design

### Goals and Key Questions for the Research

Measurement and evaluation are part of Bank of America's theory of change for the Neighborhood Builders program. From the first cohort in 2004, the experiences of each class of Neighborhood Builders have been evaluated by Bank of America and TCLI through conference feedback, a short qualitative "impact survey" conducted in the first year of the program and a more in-depth survey at the end of the second year. The information collected from these evaluations has been used over time to improve the program and its results. However, these methods have focused on obtaining immediate feedback from the Builders on the NELP sessions and assessing the impact on leaders and Builders over only a two-year period.

For this impact evaluation of the Neighborhood Builders program, Bank of America asked Bridgespan to take a deeper and longer-range look at the program. Our goals were to:

1. Assess the overall impact of the program on leaders, organizations and communities since its inception.
2. Test each component of the program's theory of change.
3. Identify ways to enhance the program's impact.

Bridgespan was already familiar with the Neighborhood Builders program. For the past three years, Bridgespan has delivered one session on organizational effectiveness at one NELP workshop each year. We have also had the opportunity to work individually with some Builder alumni, delivering customized follow-up on organizational effectiveness training. This evaluation did not examine the effectiveness of the specific NELP workshop Bridgespan was involved with, nor our follow-up work.

Given the three goals of this evaluation, we focused on the following key questions:

- Are Builders participating in NELP activities? If so, which ones and how often?
- What impact has the program had on leaders? On Builder organizations? On communities?
- How has the program's impact on leaders and Builder organizations supported Builders in having an impact on the individuals and communities they serve?
- Has program impact varied over time, or because of factors like Builder characteristics or the economic downturn?
- In what ways could the program and its measurement be improved to enhance impact?

This research was conducted by Bridgespan in the first half of 2011.

## Research Design and Methodology

**Background research and benchmarking:** We began by researching other peer leadership development programs, interviewing leaders in the field to help us with design and benchmarking, and reviewing reference materials on leadership development.

We first identified and benchmarked the characteristics of the 13 leading investments in nonprofit leadership development programs<sup>11</sup>. Beyond helping us to identify the unique elements of the Builders program design and its relative scale, the benchmarking showed that only six peers publicly revealed their programs had been evaluated, and only two of those had made their full study results publicly available. We compared the results from these two evaluation studies with this current study of the Builders program— recognizing that given somewhat different program activities, participant types and research methods, such comparisons are, at best, directional.

We also consulted with two of the leading evaluators in the area of leadership development and capacity-building on the topic of research design. Finally, we referenced *The Handbook of Leadership Development Evaluation*<sup>12</sup> and other books and articles on the topic, to inform the structure and design of our evaluation.

**Review of previous evaluation data on the Neighborhood Builders program:** We reviewed and conducted analyses of data previously collected by Bank of America and TCLI through the existing program evaluation tools described above. We used this data to supplement our own analysis in places where Bank of America collected data along the theory of change. The advantage of this data is that it was collected across all 45 communities, as opposed to the seven key communities our research focused on.

**Choice and limits of evaluation design:** Given the comparatively short time-frame for our research, we chose a “retrospective post-then” design (a common way to assess self-reported changes in knowledge, skills, attitudes, or behaviors) as being best suited to addressing the goals of this evaluation. We recognize that this design does not allow us to definitively attribute the outcomes we report solely to the Neighborhood Builders program, since there is no comparison or control group. As shared in the ‘Recommendations and Conclusion’ section, we have therefore recommended that Bank of America explore *prospective* evaluation as a means to better understand the program’s impact.

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<sup>11</sup> We identified the 13 leading programs through prior Bridgespan research and a thorough scan of the available literature on the topic. Not included are programs requiring participants to pay.

<sup>12</sup> Hannum K, Martineau JW, Reinelt C. *The Handbook of Leadership Development Evaluation*. Center for Creative Leadership; Jossey-Bass (2007).

Among the program's 45 "local markets or communities" (typically cities or metropolitan areas where Bank of America has retail banking operations), we conducted our research in seven, given time and resource constraints. Bank of America selected the seven, based in part on their importance to its work. While we recognize that the representativeness of the findings are not as strong as if the communities were selected randomly, we do feel confident in representativeness given that:

1. Bank of America did not select the communities based on their perceptions of or prior feedback about program success.
2. The communities are diverse in geography and size.
3. Much of our 'ultimate outcome' data around leadership and organization capacity is from a review of previously collected data going back to 2004 which covers all 45 communities.

Our research involved a "mixed-method" design that included a combination of quantitative and qualitative assessment across these communities.

**Survey:** We designed an online survey to collect quantitative data on program impact. It contained questions on six topics:

1. The impact of program components on the leaders
2. Prior Bank of America support outside of the Builder program
3. Builder interest in potential future resources (e.g., peer networks and knowledge creation)
4. Leader involvement in the social sector
5. Organizational statistics
6. Impact of the Neighborhood Builders award on the organization.

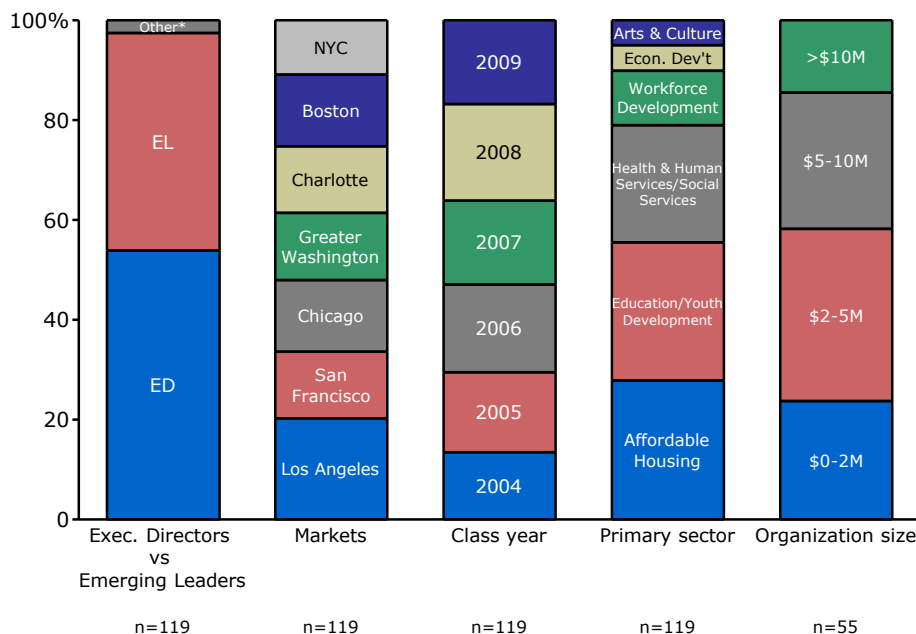
For the full survey instrument, see appendix VI.

For the survey, we attempted to reach every Builder in the seven selected communities from class years 2004 through 2009 (we excluded 2010 Builders because they had not attended any workshops at the start of the research). Within these communities, we attempted to survey 167 of the 192 EDs and ELs who were selected for the program. We did not survey all 192 leaders because either (a) the EL became the ED of the organization after the program so there was only one leader to contact at the organization, or (b) the ED or EL left the organization before or during the program, and we could not locate their contact information. We conducted three follow-up attempts with each leader via e-mail (and in some cases by phone) to maximize the response rate. Of the 167 we sought surveys from, the response rate on the survey was 71%, which varied by market from 60% to 84%. Thus, 119 leaders (from 86 unique organizations) were represented in the survey results. For nearly half of these organizations, both the ED and EL responded.

Figure 1 displays the characteristics of survey respondents. It shows a roughly equal distribution by class year, market/community<sup>13</sup>, and leader type (ED vs. EL), which demonstrates the representativeness of respondents. We confirmed with Bank of America that the sector and organization size data is also representative of the aggregate data on all 45 communities. Two additional variables used to examine differences in outcomes (subsequently referred to as ‘subgroup analysis’) were ‘number of NELP workshops attended’ and ‘percentage of total unrestricted funding the award comprised’.

**Figure 1: Characteristics of Survey Respondents**

% of survey respondents, by characteristic



Note: "Other" refers to leaders who are currently present at a Builder organization responding to questions on the program's impact on their organization, but who did not attend NELP; Sample size varies for organization size since this data was collected through follow-up correspondence with interviewees rather than through survey questions to the full set of respondents. Many Builders offer services in multiple sectors; primary sector therefore indicates the one that best describes their work.

**Interviews:** We supplemented the survey with one-hour interviews of program participants. Leaders were primarily asked to reflect on the impact of the award on their organization, the impact of the training on their leadership development and their reaction to program improvement ideas. The interviews were designed to explore in more depth the brief qualitative responses these leaders provided in the survey, with the goal of establishing whether there was a direct link between what was gained at the training, what was applied afterwards, and specific organizational results. We randomly sampled EDs and ELs by

<sup>13</sup> Note: Los Angeles is a 'double-market' (i.e., the Builders program selects four organizations annually, instead of two) due to its size. For this reason, we surveyed/interviewed roughly double the number in this market/community.

market to ensure a balance of perspectives. We attempted to interview at least one leader per Builder and the response rate was 83% (with 77 leaders interviewed in total<sup>14</sup>). 39% of interviews were conducted in-person and the rest were conducted over the phone based on time and availability constraints. Once the interviews in a market were complete, we reached out to each Builder individually to request any missing or unclear data or pose questions triggered by the interviews. Follow-up requests were sent within two weeks of interview completion and followed by reminder emails.

We also interviewed other key stakeholders in each of the seven communities to gain an additional perspective on program impact, a total of 24 stakeholder interviews in all. We interviewed non-Bank local market selection committee (LMSC) members to ascertain the rigor of the selection process and the program's impact in communities. Appendix V includes the interview guides used with program participants and LMSC members. We also interviewed Bank of America employees involved in the coordination of the Builder program locally (known as LMD, or local market delivery team members), and Bank of America's local market presidents. These interviews were focused primarily on opportunities to improve communications around the program and the feasibility of new program services.

Though participants were aware that Bridgespan was engaged by Bank of America to undertake research into the historical impact of the Builders program, all efforts were undertaken throughout the data collection process to promote candid responses, including assurances in all research instruments that data would not be individually identified in materials given to Bank of America or released publicly.

**Data analysis:** We analyzed the data we collected through surveys and interviews in the following way:

1. We looked at average scores on quantitative questions (for the majority of questions, respondents were asked to rate on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the most favorable) as well as means of those responses. We primarily present percentages, which refer to the percent of respondents who answered 4 and 5 on these questions; but where appropriate we also present means.
2. For qualitative questions, we grouped responses in categories to facilitate easier analysis. We then identified subgroups of respondents (as discussed earlier) to determine if responses varied by certain leader or Builder characteristics.
3. To test for statistically significant differences between subgroups, we worked with Bain & Company (Bain), a for-profit advisory firm<sup>15</sup> that employs market research and data analysis

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<sup>14</sup> A total of 91 organizations (two of which were non-Builder organizations that NELP participants moved to) were represented in the research (surveyed and/or interviewed)

<sup>15</sup> Bain & Company incubated Bridgespan in 2000, but the two organizations are separate and independent with no legal affiliation

experts, to conduct two different analyses. First, Bain conducted standard T-tests using SPSS on each of our subgroups across 57 key outcomes questions from the survey. These T-tests were used to look for significant differences between respondents within a subgroup on a given outcome variable. T-tests use continuous variables, so in this case were used to compare pairwise means. We looked for statistical significance at the 95% confidence level. There are two primary limitations to this type of analysis: (a) T-tests assume we are testing pairwise means with equal variances. However, it is very likely that variances are not equal between the groups specifically when the tested variables are measured on rating scales. The possibility of un-equal variances is increased further by the small group sample sizes. (b) This type of analysis tests the significance of one independent variable on one dependent variable, so does not test for all possible interactions between the various independent variables and the one dependent variable.

With Bain's assistance, we supplemented this analysis with another test called Chi-squared Automatic Interaction Detection (CHAID) on 15 key outcomes questions from the survey. Unlike the T-tests, the CHAID algorithm tests for all possible interactions between the dependent variable and all independent variables. In addition, CHAID uses different statistical tests and can analyze statistical significance between both means and categorical variables (e.g. % who answered 4 and 5 on a given question), so CHAID could find relationships that a T-test cannot. When the dependent variable is categorical, CHAID uses Chi-squared tests to determine if associations are significant instead of a T-test. A Chi-squared test compares response proportions across groups instead of pairwise means. When using a continuous dependent variable, like a mean, CHAID calculates ANOVA F-tests to determine if the variances across groups are different. CHAID output reports specific p-values. Given the low sample size in our data, we assumed anything with a p value <0.1 (i.e. a 90% confidence interval) was significant, though we also report at the 95% confidence level. CHAID's limitation is sample size. CHAID may indicate statistically significant splits between independent variables that have a very small N (number of responses). This could be misleading as the sample for that split might not be a good representation of the overall population given the small N.

Given the benefits and limitations of these (and all) statistical tests, we applied our understanding of the program to analyze the numerical results. Therefore we do not report any results from these analyses unless we are confident that it is an accurate representation of the data and the program. Throughout the results section we footnote the statistically significant findings as follows: A = significant at the 90% confidence level on CHAID analysis. B = significant at the 95% confidence level on CHAID analysis. C = significant at the 95% confidence level from t-test analysis.

## Research Findings

### Introduction

This section presents the results of our study and discusses the extent to which they substantiate Bank of America's theory of change for the Neighborhood Builders program.

We found that overall the program is performing well and adhering to the theory of change. Our research indicates that the Neighborhood Builders program is having a strong positive impact on the leaders and organizations that have had the opportunity to participate – and through them, is expected to have impact on the individuals and communities they serve. Leaders indicated the program had a strong impact on their leadership capacity (through improved aspirations, knowledge/skills, and relationships); the award had a meaningful impact on their organization's results; and the program helped to raise their profile with other funders and more generally in the community. Interviews with leaders generally did not suggest any alternative causes for the leadership changes they experienced. The high percentages of leaders who reported such changes appear equal to or better than changes reported by peer programs (though this is directional at best given the challenges of comparing different programs)<sup>16</sup>.

We also found some statistically significant differences in outcomes achieved between EDs and ELs, between those who attended all or only some of the workshops and among communities. Most notably we found differences between EDs and ELs in terms of program outcomes. In general, ELs report benefitting more from the program, which in some cases has been an explicit program expectation. Where we found significant differences between EDs and ELs on key program components we present that data here. In addition, we also found statistically significant differences in impact based on the number of workshops leaders attended. Controlling for other variables, leaders who attend more workshops tend to see more impact from the program. Finally, in a few instances we also found statistically significant variations by community. This may be somewhat unexpected given that program elements, training, and the selection process is similar in all communities. Unfortunately neither the data nor feedback from participants explains this variation, but we hypothesize that it may have to do with variations across local communities in the selection process or post-program follow up and support. In future evaluations, Bank of America may want to explore whether these significant outcome differences among communities remain, and what might be the causes.

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<sup>16</sup> This section provides an explanation of how we compared the outcomes from this study with the only two published evaluation studies of leadership development programs we could find, both conducted by OMG Center for Collaborative Learning. The studies were conducted on: Rockefeller Foundation's Next Generation Leadership Program and Annie E. Casey Foundation's Children and Family Fellowship Program



While the program is performing well, our results also suggest opportunities for several modifications or additions to the theory of change and program activities in order to increase impact. This will be noted in this section and discussed in detail in subsequent sections.

### **Assessing Program Inputs and Activities**

We first analyzed the program inputs and activities as shown on the left hand side of the Neighborhood Builders theory of change, considering whether the program is delivering its inputs and activities as intended. Areas of analysis include Builder selection, the financial award, efforts to publicly recognize Builders and the NELP training workshops.

#### **Select EDs and ELs at High-Potential Nonprofits with Potential to Grow**

The Neighborhood Builders selection process seeks to choose high-potential nonprofits that work locally within a set of program areas defined by Bank of America, and which have the capability to grow and address their communities' most pressing problems. Bridgespan's client work and research into the nation's top leadership development programs suggests that selecting the right organizations is a key driver of impact.

The program uses Local Market Selection Committees (LMSCs) made up of leaders in each community, including at least three members who have intimate knowledge of the social issues and the nonprofit sector in their community. Our analysis shows that the program has consistently selected nonprofits with a high potential for growth in their key program areas, with a deep focus on delivering services in their local communities. Specifically we found that:

- All Builders selected serve the program areas Bank of America identified as national and local priorities.
- The program chooses from among a strong applicant pool in each community. That applicant pool has grown by 40% during the 7 years of the program (from approximately 2,500 applicants in 2004 to over 3,500 in 2011), and today the program selects less than 3% of applicants as Builders.
- Based on our conversations with LMSC members, we found that each had a great knowledge of the needs and issues in their community. These LMSC members communicated to us that they feel the process is rigorous. For example, one member described the process as "strategic and sophisticated" and the organizations that were finalists as "real anchor institutions in our neighborhood".

Bank of America also asked us to test whether selection of organizations (by program area) had changed over time, with a hypothesis that during the downtown a greater percentage of “safety net” organizations (i.e., affordable housing, workforce development, and health & human services) were chosen. We did not find evidence of such a change, which suggests that if Bank of America wants to select specific types of organizations during specific periods of time, it may need to provide more guidelines to the local selection committees.

Even though selection has not historically been contingent upon the applicants’ intended use of the award and training, we wanted to understand whether Builders selected with a clear and credible demonstration of the benefits they would realize from the training and award (for example, being at a particular ‘inflection point’ in their growth) ultimately benefitted more from the program. Through interviews with LMSC members, Bank of America personnel in the communities, and leaders, we found that although not currently an explicit selection criterion, those who were at an inflection point (e.g., new strategic plan, new leadership, funders deciding whether to support them) benefited more from the program. As one current ED, who was an EL during the program and whose organization was at an inflection point when they received the award told us, “Without [the Builder program]...there's a good chance we wouldn't exist. We were in the size of nonprofits that typically went under. It sounds a bit dramatic, but it was the training and the money that I can really point to that allowed us to take the agency to the next level of sustainability.”

We also sought to understand whether Builders selected who used the unrestricted \$200,000 award for infrastructure/growth benefitted more than those who used it primarily for programs. We found no evidence that the value of the award to Builders depended on whether they used it for infrastructure or programs. Several of the Builders pointed to Bank of America’s trust in them to use the award for whatever was most pressing for their organization at the time.

Despite the success of program selection, we also found opportunities for improvement, shared in the ‘Recommendations and Conclusion’ section.

### **Investing in Builders with Unrestricted Award**

As discussed in previous sections, a critical component of the theory of change is combining a \$200,000 two-year unrestricted award to Builders with leadership training. The award is intended to be large enough to have a meaningful, long-term impact on the organization. Its unrestricted nature is an important and somewhat unusual aspect of the program. Research from the Grantmakers for Effective Organizations (GEO) finds that only 20% of grants in the United States are unrestricted.

The value of an unrestricted award is that leaders can use it as they see fit – investing in growth or infrastructure rather than having to invest in a particular program or project, which can be particularly valuable when that organization is at point in its lifecycle when it is facing particular opportunities or challenges.

We found that Builders consider the award highly valuable both in terms of its size and unrestricted nature. Specifically:

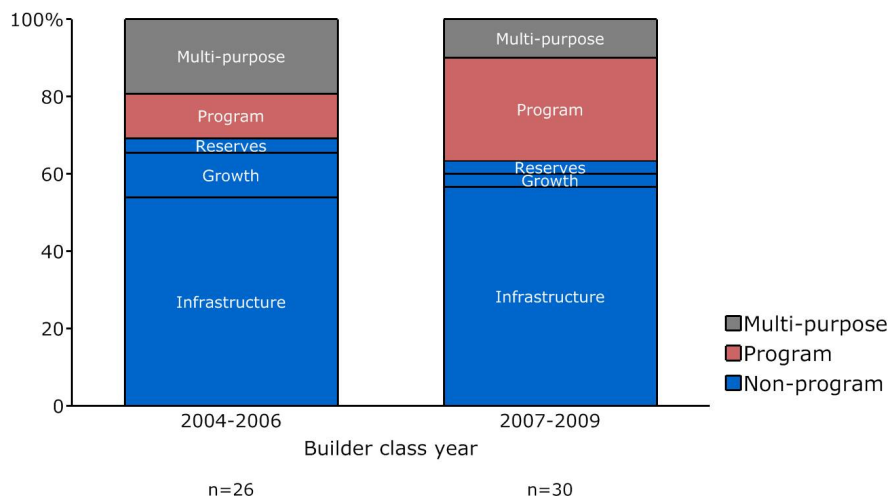
- Nearly all Builders considered the size of award meaningful and 97% highly valued the unrestricted nature of the award.
- The award represented a median of 17.5% of Builders' fully flexible unrestricted funding, but with a wide range (from 1% to 84%).
- For 95% of Builders the award represented one of their top three unrestricted awards over the two-year award period, and for 48% of them it was their largest unrestricted award over the that period.
- Leaders also mentioned a lower perceived cost of obtaining and maintaining the Award (relative to other unrestricted funds they raise), primarily due to a simpler application form and fewer reporting requirements.

Leaders consistently communicated the importance and value of having unrestricted funding. One ED explained: “unrestricted operating money is the most difficult money to raise. The financial award was really significant in that allowed us to do a major initiative that otherwise we would be unable to do.” Another told us: “[flexible funding] is such a rare grant to get ... it made managing the organization and thinking about the mission of the organization actually possible.” Builders also indicated that they appreciated Bank of America’s trust in them to use the award as they saw fit, and that such trust is rare in their relationships with funders. As one ED said, “It was a huge contribution to the field to show that you can give unrestricted grants to nonprofits and trust them how to use it.”

We also explored how the award was used by Builders and whether the use of the award was influenced in any way by external factors, specifically the economic downturn. As shown in figure 2, we found that primary award use is on non-programmatic expenses. Among the Builders included in our analysis of the seven communities, we observed an increase in the number of organizations that spent the award on program expenses during and after the economic downturn (i.e., Builder organizations in classes 2007-2009, which spent their awards primarily in 2008-2010, were more likely to use the award for program expenses compared to the 2004-2006 Builder classes).

**Figure 2: Builders' use of unrestricted financial award**

Primary award use



Note: Non-program spending includes investments in infrastructure (general operating support, fundraising, staff development, hiring senior leadership, support functions, performance measurement), growth (funds to grow existing sites/programs) or reserves (operating reserves, cash reserves, working capital reserves, endowment, etc.)

In addition, since the program includes both the award and leadership training, we were also interested in determining how important the award component of the program was in getting organizations to apply.

We found that the award was the primary driver in getting Builders to apply:

- Of the leaders we asked, a majority said they would not have applied, or that they would have required much more detailed information about the training in order to apply.
- Many leaders were unaware of the leadership training component at the time of application.

Therefore, while (as noted later) many Builders described realizing much later that the training is the 'jewel' of the program, the award was the important 'hook' that encouraged those organizations to apply in the first place.

Finally, Builders note in their applications their plan for how they will use the award. Although the training is not designed to influence their use of the award, we were interested to know whether the knowledge and skills gained during NELP training led leaders to rethink how they could most effectively spend the money. We found that most leaders did not feel that NELP training influenced use of the award, though there was a small subset who did mention this influence. One ED mentioned that the Nonprofit Stewardship training and book she was provided led her to use some of the award to hire a consultant to train the Board on its fundraising role, and to boost its operating reserve to improve the organization's cash position. When the use of the award was influenced by NELP training, it was most commonly to

allocate a small portion of it to leadership training of senior leaders beyond the ED and EL. One ED, for example, described using a portion of the award to run a week-long “mini-NELP” training for her senior leadership team using the principles she had learned and the resources she was provided. This suggests some “multiplier effect” from the training.

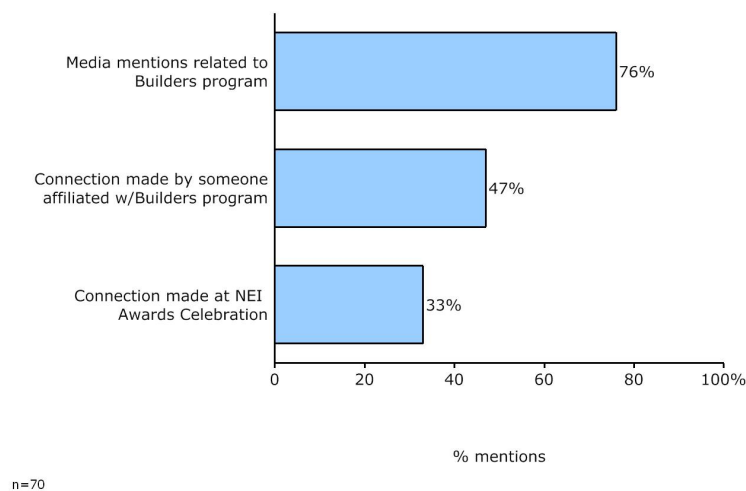
### **Celebrate Builders Publicly**

As part of the Neighborhood Builders program, Bank of America also publicly recognizes Builders for their accomplishments and seeks to help them raise their profiles in the community. One important way they do this is through the awards ceremony, and accompanying media coverage. The ceremony also offers an opportunity to connect with other Builders and other community leaders. In addition to the awards ceremony, many communities also invest in additional publicity and media coverage for Builders – though this is a local decision.

We were interested in whether and how the awards ceremony and additional publicity efforts benefitted Builders. Among the findings:

- 100% of the Builders surveyed sent at least one person to the awards ceremony.
- As shown in figure 3, we found that the primary way in which Builders benefitted was from media exposure. A smaller percentage of Builders also benefitted from connections made at the event.

**Figure 3: Ways in which Builder profiles were raised**



In addition to the value and success of these efforts, our research also identified real opportunity to implement other efforts to further raise the profile of Builders in their communities, which are discussed later.

### **Develop EDs and ELs in NELP workshops**

The NELP workshops are the other critical component of the program. The workshops are intended to provide high quality leadership training to EDs and ELs to help them grow in their roles, benefitting them and their organization. In the first year of Neighborhood Builders (2004), EDs attended three workshops (each three days long) and ELs attended two. Based on feedback from the first class (2004) that ELs had less experience with leadership training and wanted more of it, the allocation of training was subsequently reversed: two workshops for EDs, three for ELs.

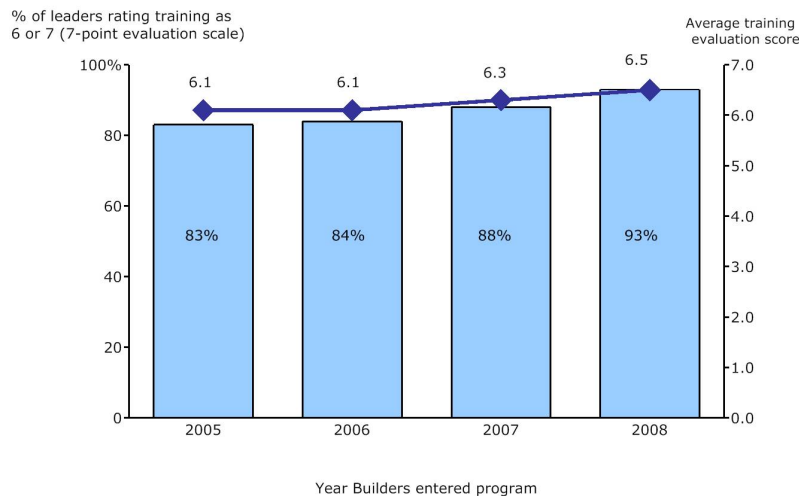
These workshops contain key components that we were interested in examining further, including the value of the training sessions, the “Leadership Commitment Memo” (a tool for leaders to commit to implementing a specific action in their organization when they return from the training) and peer consulting groups (leaders self-selected into groups of six during the NELP training, for the purposes of experiencing the training together and staying in touch afterwards). We were also interested in finding out whether leaders attended workshops consistently, felt workshops were valuable and liked the structure of the workshops.

The leaders we surveyed valued the NELP workshops. Specifically:

- The average attendance at any given workshop was 95% (based on attendance lists).
- 79% attended all sessions. Interviews suggested that EDs and ELs on occasion miss one of the multi-day workshops, often due to personal or professional conflicts and changes in position. [However, even assuming that a different ED/EL misses one of the multi-day workshops every time, these attendance calculations are lower than expected, potentially as a result of recall bias from survey respondents. We later share the importance of attendance and actions the program can take to encourage it.]
- As shown in figure 4, when surveyed immediately after the workshop a majority of attendees from the classes of 2005-2008 said it was “highly valuable” and that percentage has increased over time. One EL told us “The ability to get away from the day-to-day demands of running a nonprofit organization and to focus on leadership with colleagues, using top-notch trainers, is a gift that you can’t put a price tag on.”

- 85% of leaders felt they received helpful resources during the workshops. ELs (88%)<sup>17</sup> were slightly more likely to report receiving helpful resources than EDs (81%). Leaders who attended all workshops (95%)<sup>18</sup> were more likely to report receiving helpful resources than those who did not. One EL told us simply “I was not able to form significant relationships since I missed the first workshop.”

**Figure 4: Leaders’ immediate satisfaction with NELP**



We were also interested in understanding whether the Leadership Commitment Memo was an effective tool. We found that only 39% of leaders could recall the action they committed to in their commitment memo. However, of those who recalled their commitment, 100% reported being successful in implementing the action they committed to. Some leaders recommended Bank of America do more to hold them accountable for this and other commitments after the workshops. One ED told us “I think follow-up support from [Bank of America] would have helped me implement new knowledge and skills more successfully. Peer accountability, [Bank of America] enforcement, and additional training would be helpful in ensuring more accountability toward implementation.” Specifically related to the Leadership Commitment Memo, another ED told us “It could help if [Bank of America] or other peers ‘sent back’ the Leadership Commitment Memos ... to leaders later on, to keep them more accountable.”

In addition, we wanted to know whether leaders met with at least one person from their peer consulting groups after the NELP workshops, a commitment they make during the training. We found that only 17% of leaders following through on this commitment.

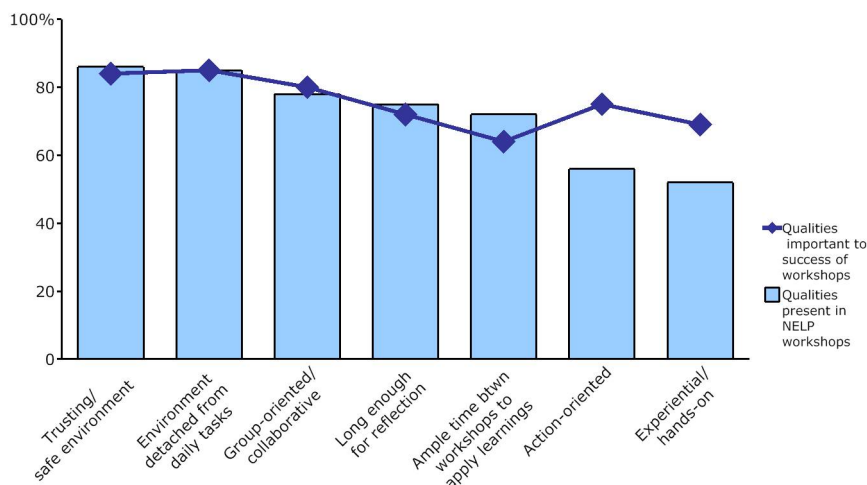
<sup>17</sup> C = significant at the 95% confidence level from t-test analysis.

<sup>18</sup> C = significant at the 95% confidence level from t-test analysis.

In our conversations with Bank of America and TCLI, they described how the workshops were structured in order to build the kind of environment necessary to achieve the workshops' goals. We therefore wanted to test whether leaders found such qualities present and important. Figure 5 shows that leaders found a number of structural components were important and present, but there was considerable variation. These findings, in particular the lower scores on the workshops being experiential and action-oriented (relative to the importance of these attributes), have led to several recommendations around increasing accountability and follow-up support that will be discussed in the 'Recommendations and Conclusion' section.

**Figure 5: Qualities of NELP workshops**

% of leaders responding 4 or 5 (5-point evaluation scale)



n=110

### Evaluate Builders' Success

An explicit component of the theory of change is to measure and evaluate the success of the program, both to make the program better over time and to provide information with which to communicate internally and externally the value of the program. Bank of America uses a variety of measurement tools today to accomplish this:

- NELP workshop surveys measure immediate views on the quality of the workshops and provide data about how specific sessions can get better.
- Short 1-year impact surveys qualitatively measure how the award was used in the first year and (to a relatively minor degree) the impact the award and training had during that year.
- In-depth 2-year impact surveys measure how the award was used in the second year, and the impact of the award and training at a much deeper level.



We found that these tools partially meet the needs of Bank of America for program improvement and communication. While we hope this research provides value where there were gaps, we also recommend improvements and supplements to the existing measurement tools in the 'Recommendations and Conclusion' section.

### **Follow-on Services**

While not an explicit part of the program's theory of change, one important theme that emerged from our analysis of the program's inputs and activities was the potential value of follow-up support and services (e.g. follow-on trainings, opportunities for alumni peer learning networks, opportunities for ongoing learning to help Builders further implement skills and knowledge developed throughout the program). As one EL told us "I would have loved some additional follow-up work ... on how we implement what they taught. If [Bank of America] could do this, we could continue to grow as they would have wanted us to". Another EL said "my sense is that while the information received was extremely robust, the ongoing 'roll up your sleeves' element of applying the topic to our organizations on a more frequent basis may have made the workshop even more powerful."

While Bank of America continues to engage Builders after the two-year program has ended (at least annually in 77% of communities), this engagement is typically for activities such as community needs assessments (i.e., what are the key issues the community is facing where nonprofits could be of help), rather than for learning. We later discuss opportunities to integrate follow-on services into the program.

### **Assessing Program Outcomes**

In this section we look at the program's effectiveness in delivering its intended outcomes to its intended beneficiaries (the middle section of the theory of change). Bridgespan has seen in our work that while leadership programs provide learning opportunities, the application of skills is an issue often faced by these programs. Therefore, one particular issue we were interested in was the ability of leaders not only to learn from the program, but to apply that learning in a way that generates impact for their organizations.

### **Intermediate outcomes**

#### Effectiveness in changing expectations, developing skills, and fostering peer relationships

Three expected, intermediate outcomes of the leadership training portion of the program are to:

1. Enhance the aspirations, expectations, self-conception and self-confidence of both EDs and ELs as leaders through the NELP workshops. Bank of America expected to see ELs benefit

more than EDs, primarily because ELs are at an earlier stage in their careers and the EL workshops spend more time on subjects such as transformational leadership.

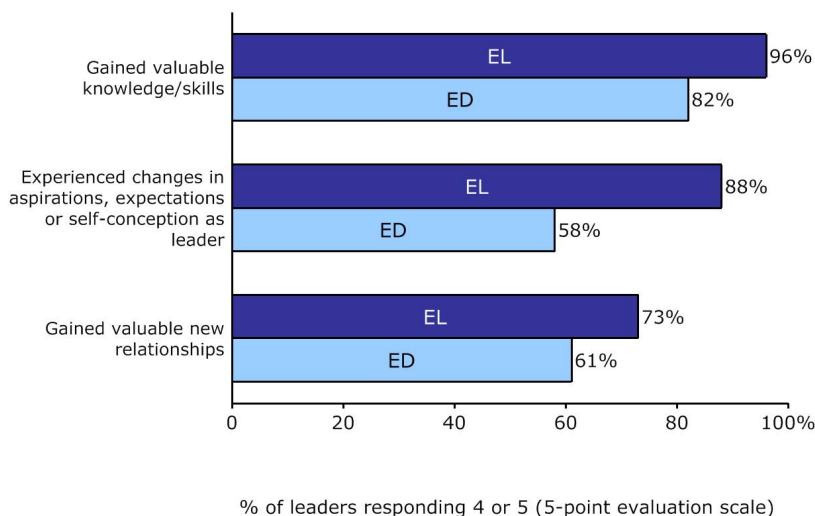
2. Help leaders further develop specific leadership skills and knowledge.
3. Help leaders develop and leverage valuable relationships with their peers.

For each of these outcomes, we sought to examine not just whether gains were made, but whether they were applied to their organizations and whether this brought about organizational improvement.

Our analysis shows that the NELP workshops had a positive impact on the leadership of both EDs and ELs, but varied between the two groups. Almost uniformly, ELs told us this was the first kind of leadership program they had participated in, and nearly all volunteered in interviews that they saw being selected to the program as an honor. Though EDs generally had access to quite a few other leadership programs<sup>19</sup> many noted that Neighborhood Builders was unique and valuable in that it gave them the opportunity to jointly plan with their ELs.

We looked at whether leaders experienced changes in their leadership, developed valuable skills and knowledge, and formed peer relationships. As shown in figure 6, we found that, on all three dimensions, more than half of leaders benefitted from the training – and that ELs benefitted more.

**Figure 6: Intermediate outcomes from NELP**



n=114  
 B: difference is significant at the 95% level on CHAID analysis  
 C: difference is significant at the 95% significant level on standard T-test

<sup>19</sup> 86% of EDs report attending other leadership programs (n=22); 62% of ELs report attending other leadership programs (n=16). In follow-up questions, both EDs and ELs (but especially ELs) suggested that these other programs they attended were typically shorter in duration and less focused on leadership.

**1. Leadership aspirations, expectations, and self-conception as a leaders:** Our interviews identified many examples of positive change. Four among many quotes from ELs:

- “Long ago I had thought I was on the fast-track to becoming an ED, but somewhere along the way I had flatlined. I lost my drive and became content. This program made me discontent. It reminded me that I should allow myself to fulfill my original expectations. This program inspired me to go back for my Masters degree. I think I’m back on track to become an ED.”
- “I had been chairing a city taskforce for years to change housing restrictions unfairly placed on low-income homeowners, but I hadn’t been making any progress. This program gave me the confidence to be more aggressive, to fight for what I believed in. One year after the training ended, we finally broke through and got those restrictions removed.”
- “It helped me see that I was not the only one who struggled with leadership challenges. Up until coming here a few years ago, I always considered myself more of a professional than a leader, the leadership program helped me acknowledge and accept that I was a leader.”
- “I felt more confident about my ability to be a leader, and began to envision what I might do next career-wise. While I hadn’t envisioned being an ED previously, the idea seems less daunting now.”

Attendance in workshops correlated strongly with impact, as (87%)<sup>20</sup> of leaders who attended all the workshops experienced changes in this area. A majority of leaders (75%) reported a change in confidence as a leader, with 92%<sup>21</sup> of ELs gaining confidence.

**2. Gains in knowledge and skills:** We used both the surveys and interviews to better understand the specific ways in which knowledge and skills were being built through the program. As shown in figure 7, when asked about the most important skills and knowledge developed, we found the most important were those related to leadership practices and style, and secondarily the area of management. Among the comments that leaders shared with us:

- ED (who was EL at the time of the training): “Without that leadership training, I would never have been in a position to apply for ED ... I really credit the Bank and TCLI for giving me those skills ... I credit the program entirely with enabling me to become our ED.”

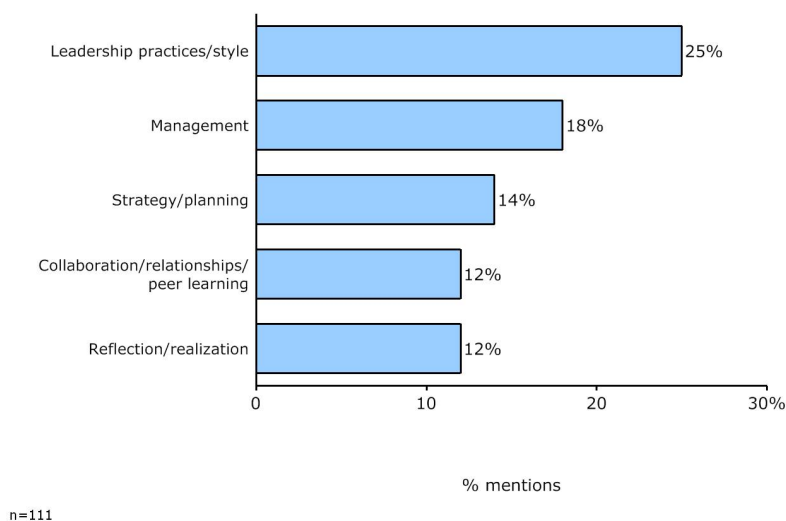
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<sup>20</sup> B = significant at the 95% confidence level on CHAID analysis.

<sup>21</sup> C = significant at the 95% confidence level from t-test analysis.

- ED: “There was this whole world out there of nonprofit management practices ... [Before the training] we were the quintessential mom and pop grassroots organization, and now we are on a different playing field.”
- EL: “We were being plain vanilla - we were being too shy to share our story ... This training made us realize we needed to start with the outcomes and tell them through the story of one client. We demonstrated this for staff as well and make sure they share the mission in this way.”
- ED: “We learned about the importance of building operating reserves. As such, we’ve worked hard to have a surplus in every year since receiving the NELP training, which has cushioned us through the downturn.”

**Figure 7: Five most important skills/knowledge gained from NELP**



Leaders who attended all workshops (97%)<sup>22</sup> were more likely to gain knowledge/skills than those who did not attend all the workshops. We also found that Builders in LA, Chicago, Boston, and Charlotte (97%)<sup>23</sup> were more likely to gain valuable knowledge and skills than those in other communities.

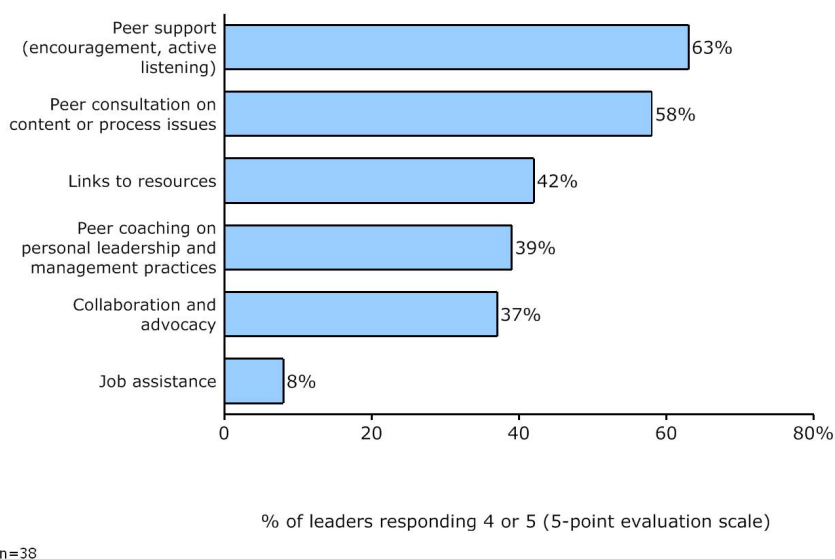
<sup>22</sup> B = significant at the 95% confidence level on CHAID analysis. C = significant at the 95% confidence level from t-test analysis.

<sup>23</sup> B = significant at the 95% confidence level on CHAID analysis.

Nearly two-thirds of leaders reported that: the training had helped them take at least one important action to significantly improve their organization’s results; they had gained knowledge on topics that were important to them; and had learned how to think more strategically when faced with complicated issues.

3. **Developing peer relationships:** A majority of both EDs and ELs developed new relationships through the Neighborhood Builders program. Leaders used these relationships in a variety of ways, but primarily for peer support and consultation and advocacy (figure 8)<sup>24</sup>.

**Figure 8: Ways in which leaders report they have used relationships formed at NELP**



Many peer relationships have been lasting. We found that 59% of leaders collaborated with other leaders from Builder organizations in the past year. Leaders have kept in touch with a median of four peers from the program.

- One ED said: “Having three sessions gave us an opportunity to get to know each other ... and sit and socialize and pick each others' brains to hear about how people ran programs ... I stayed in touch with one other ED who eventually went on to be a fellow at Harvard, and it's been really neat to have him be a mentor to me.”

<sup>24</sup> The survey question and answer choices were borrowed from the evaluation of Annie E. Casey Foundation’s Children and Family Fellowship Program, conducted by OMG Center for Collaborative Learning.

- EL: “We met an organization ... and struck up an immediate partnership of two agencies wanting to learn from each other. They sent 3 teams of staff members over 3 months to interview our staff and clients, and later we helped them to launch a new site. We realized that we had a responsibility to share what we know, and we hadn't been doing this enough.”
- Another ED: “We developed strong peer relationships at this training, including one with another Builder who ended up advising us on our financial management, leading to a 40% reduction in our payroll services costs. Another Builder we met helped us design a new housing program.”

We also found that leaders who attended all workshops (78%)<sup>25</sup> and those attending the program after 2006 (76%)<sup>26</sup> were more likely to develop new relationships.

These results struck us as strong in all three areas - expectations, skills, and relationships – and were on par with or better than those reported by the two somewhat comparable studies of leadership development programs that we found - Rockefeller Foundation’s Next Generation Leadership Program<sup>27</sup> and the Annie E. Casey Foundation’s Children and Family Fellowship Program<sup>28</sup>.

We then analyzed the success leaders had at applying gains in expectations, skills, and relationships to their roles and organizations and how that might have led to results for the organization.

Across these outcome areas, our research indicates the program faces challenges similar to those of other leadership development programs, in that initial gains from training are not always implemented and do not always lead to results. That said, as shown in figure 9, the “fall-off” is not very dramatic, suggesting the importance of first focusing on gains directly from the training (through ensuring leaders attend the full trainings, improving opportunities for peer interaction, and selecting leaders who will most benefit from the program). Bank of America might then focus on follow-up support that could increase the percent who apply the gains and the percent for which this leads to results. Additionally, when compared to the Annie E. Casey Foundation’s Children and Family Fellowship Program<sup>29</sup>, we found the Builders program appears to be on par or better than average in terms of the participants’ ability to apply what they learned.

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<sup>25</sup> B = significant at the 95% confidence level on CHAID analysis. C = significant at the 95% confidence level from t-test analysis.

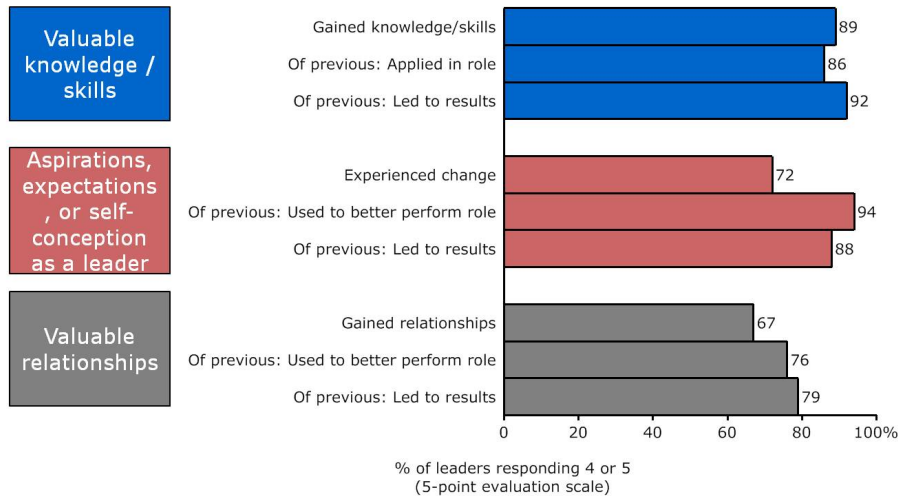
<sup>26</sup> B = significant at the 95% confidence level on CHAID analysis.

<sup>27</sup> Study by OMG Center for Collaborative Learning (March 2004). Relevant outcomes: 85% of respondents cite increased perspective development, 85% cite increased self-awareness, confidence, courage, and commitment, 69% cite expanded networks and collaborations/partnerships, 36% cite increased skill development.

<sup>28</sup> Study by OMG Center for Collaborative Learning (Dec 2005). Relevant outcomes: 66% of respondents cite increased influence, 60% cite increased impact, 47% cite increased leverage.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid. Relevant outcomes: % who said a specific change/skill/knowledge translated into results. 84% of respondents cited influence translating to results, 68% cited impact translating to results, and 36% cited leverage translating to results. Rockefeller study did not include such outcomes.

**Figure 9: Application of skills gained, changes experienced, relationships gained from NELP**



Note: Data is presented on a 'of those' basis. For example, 89% of leaders reported gains in knowledge/skills from training; of those 89%, 86% reported having applied those gains in their role

When leaders are able to apply their gains from the NELP training, we saw some striking stories about results. Figure 10 provides several examples of how gains were implemented, and how this implementation led to impact.

**Figure 10: Examples of builders implementing NELP learnings**

	<b>Gain from NELP</b>	<b>How gain was applied</b>	<b>What it led to</b>
<b>Aspirations and expectations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased drive to lead a nonprofit ('NELP uncontented me')</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provided final boost to enroll in dual MBA/law masters program</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Believes she is back on track to become ED in next five years</li> </ul>
<b>Leadership knowledge and skills</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Value of /how to do 360 degree feedback</li> <li>Value of /how to do 'brutal facts' reviews of programs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New feedback process throughout the org</li> <li>Annual program review exercise</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Significant reduction in staff turnover and increase in morale</li> <li>Exit of non-aligned programs, long-running deficits have stopped</li> </ul>
<b>Peer relationships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Importance of peer learning</li> <li>Met Builders with deep knowledge of local community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hosted teams from another Builder for 3 site visits over 3 months</li> <li>Builders helped identify optimal communities and locations for growth</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Peer Builder opened new Academy modeled on best practices</li> <li>Opened two new community-based sites in 'right' areas</li> </ul>

One specific, program-wide example of where leadership skills seem to have been successfully applied is in the area of succession planning. Our analysis found that the percentage of Builders with succession plans increased from 21% to 57% as a result of NELP. This is further substantiated by TCLI data (focused on 2006-2007 classes) which showed that as a result of the training the percentage of Builders with succession plans increased from 23% to 60%.

#### Builders' profile raised; others fund Builders

Bank of America also expressed the hope that the program would raise the profile of Builders, and that Builders could leverage the award as a “seal of approval” to secure additional funding from other sources. Bank of America, through its local grant-making program, is often itself a source of additional funding for Builder organizations, both during and after the award period (in some cases, Builders were already grantees before their participation in the program).

**1. The award as a seal of approval:** A great majority of Builders (91%) felt that the award was a seal of approval that enabled them to leverage other funds. As one ED said, “It allows some conversations to start [with other funders] that wouldn't otherwise have.” Another said that: “It was like the Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval. It said to people, 'You might be small but you're powerful. You might be small but you have best practices.’” TCLI data from 2006-2007 Builders shows that since the award was received, over two-thirds report greater public recognition and more partnerships/collaborations.

**2. Leveraging additional funding:** We then looked at how much funding Builders were able to secure as a result of having this seal of approval. Data from the program's two-year impact studies shows that the average Builder leverages the \$200,000 Builder Award to raise approximately \$400,000 in additional grant funding.

We used TCLI data from 2004-2007 in the seven key communities and supplemented it with additional data for those years and 2008 and found that 75% of leaders indicate the award enabled them to raise additional grants (2004-2008). This is substantiated by TCLI data across all 45 communities from 2004-2007 that shows an average of 73% were able to leverage the award to win additional grant funding. As one leader reported: “This program was catalytic for us. We were selected at our inflection point – we had a new vision but no one wanted to be the first funder. After the public validation from this award, our funding took off.” In addition, program survey data across all 45 communities shows that follow-on funding from Bank of America's local grant-making program is common (100% of communities surveyed continue to fund some or all of their Builders in year 3 and beyond, at a median level of ~\$20,000 annually).



There are some strong examples of just how valuable leveraging this award as a ‘seal of approval’ can be to an organization and its beneficiaries. See figure 11 for examples of how the award as a seal of approval led to significant results. We discuss in subsequent sections further opportunities for the program to raise the profile of Builders in the community.

**Figure 11: Examples of Builders leveraging award to raise profile and additional funds**

	<b>Gain from NELP</b>	<b>How gain was applied</b>	<b>What it led to</b>
<div style="background-color: #0070C0; color: white; padding: 10px; border-radius: 10px; text-align: center;">                     Builders’                      profile raised;                      others fund                      Builders                 </div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Significant publicity, seal of approval</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marketed receipt of Builder award to key funders / stakeholders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inclusion in 2 industry-leading publications, receipt of \$300,000 Ford Fndtn grant</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Seal of approval” at a critical growth period</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Credibility allowed for leveraging of other funds from Atlantic Phil., Grant Fndtn</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raised enough funds for randomized control trial; study results form evidence base for expansion plan to 25 cities serving 10K youth by 2017</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leveraged award as seal of approval since it is “held with highest regard”; became “known” to larger community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased recognition led to a board level, multi-year grant from large housing foundation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additional connection to large family foundation which led to a grant as well as a pro-bono marketing grant from Taproot Foundation</li> </ul>

## Ultimate Outcomes

### Improved leadership and organizational capacity

Two of the core ultimate outcomes of the program are improved leadership capacity for the leaders and improved organizational capacity for each Builder organization – which in turn should enable Builders to perform better and have more impact on their communities.

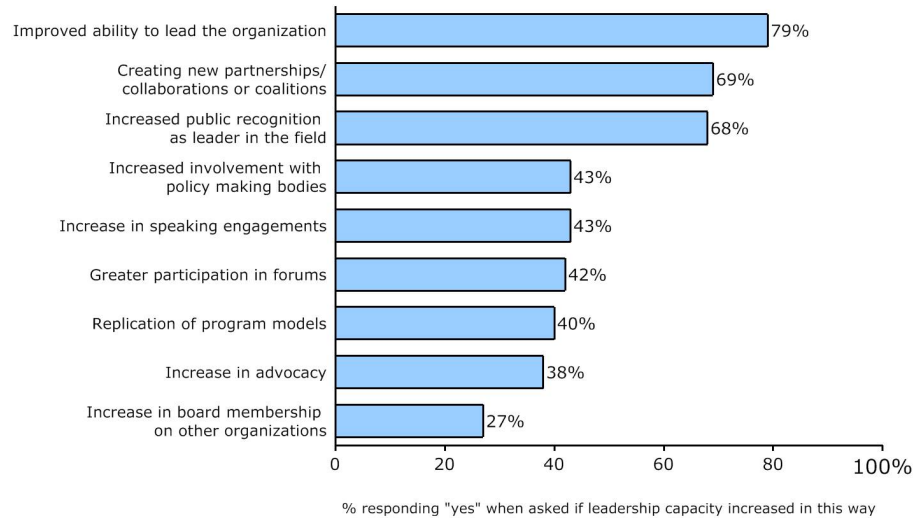
It is important to note that while improved leadership and organizational capacity are intended outcomes for all organizations in the program, Bank of America believed it would manifest itself differently in each organization given the different gains in leadership and uses of the award. For example, a Builder that spent the award to bolster its performance management systems might see a different gain in organization capacity than a Builder that spent the award to expand to a new site.

Prior Bank of America studies found that 88% of leaders reported greater leadership capacity and 85% reported greater organization capacity. In our survey, 79% of leaders felt they have an improved ability to

lead their organizations. We found some variation here by subgroup as well. ELs (85%)<sup>30</sup> and those who attended all NELP workshops were more likely to report that the NELP training improved their leadership capacity within the organization. As one ED told us, “I strengthened my whole bench and saw leadership in them. The training gave me the courage to see that leadership can be so much more inclusive and participatory.”

We found that leaders and organizations gained capacity from the training in different ways. Figure 12 shows the multiple ways leaders gained leadership capacity (note this is from TCLI data focused on the 2006 and 2007 Builder classes).

**Figure 12: Changes in leadership capacity in organizations as a result of NELP**

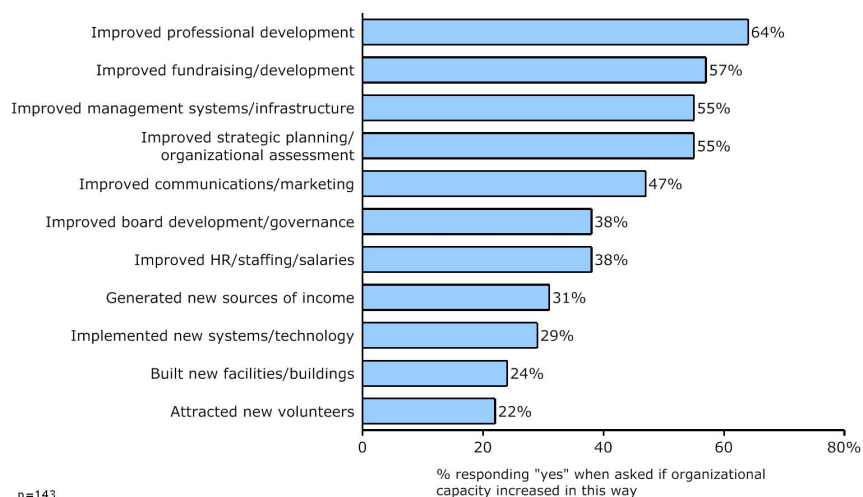


n=143

Figure 13 shows the multiple ways Builders gained organizational capacity (note this is from TCLI data focused on the 2006 and 2007 Builder classes).

<sup>30</sup> B = significant at the 95% confidence level on CHAID analysis. C = significant at the 95% confidence level from t-test analysis.

**Figure 13: Changes in organizational capacity as a result of NELP**



### **Higher-performing organizations creating greater impact for beneficiaries**

The ultimate goal of the program is to increase the impact that Builders have on their beneficiaries. The program's theory of change suggests that when an organization improves leadership and organizational capacity, that organization will be better positioned to deliver results for its beneficiaries. However, there is also recognition that there are many other important aspects of running a high-performing organization that this program does not address - such as leadership skills of staff beyond the ED and EL, and functional skills such as fundraising, performance measurement, and HR management. As such, and because the initiative selects high-potential organizations to begin with, Bank of America has told us that they believe the Builders program *contributes* to organizational performance, but they would not expect to be able to attribute the overall success of these organizations to the Neighborhood Builders program.

We looked at key outcome metrics for each of the Builder organizations. There is no one metric that will indicate whether Builders are having more impact, so we looked along a number of dimensions and found that Builders do seem to be having positive impact, as 80% or more of the organizations reported improved performance on several key dimensions (see figure 14). In addition, despite the downturn, only one Builder has ever gone out of business (seven have merged and the rest remain as independent organizations).

**Figure 14: Ultimate outcomes from NELP**



\* Data comes from TCLI analysis and %s represent % of leaders responding "yes" ( yes vs. no evaluation scale)

We heard numerous stories of the program helping Builders increase their impact on the communities they serve:

- A Builder focused on economic development reports that Bank of America’s training was “the catalyst for changing how we thought about ourselves and our community.” With a renewed commitment to innovation, the organization used its award money to help purchase a building and convert it into a community center, and to support the opening of a long-awaited and much-needed local high school, which today has graduation rates much higher than other local schools.
- A Builder focused on workforce development reports that Bank of America’s training helped its leadership to recognize the need to revamp its program model. The organization used the \$200,000 award to improve the services offered under the program model. Ultimately, this new model enabled the Builder to triple the number of people it reached within one year and to place 700 people in local jobs, even during the economic downturn.

## Intended Impact

### 45 Communities become more vibrant places to live and work in

Bank of America’s overall goal for the Neighborhood Builders program is to make a meaningful contribution to the communities it serves, which is why it has focused on choosing high-potential, locally

focused organizations in each community. We sought to evaluate the Builder program's contribution to the community in several ways.

First, we looked at community contribution by measuring the number of people and communities the Builders reach. To date, the program has engaged nearly 600 organizations in 45 communities, and the roughly 250 organizations from which we have data collectively served approximately 11 million individuals, 91% of whom are low and moderate income.

Secondly, we looked at how involved EDs and ELs are in their communities, and whether they might have some kind of "multiplier effect." In fact, the EDs and ELs we surveyed reach an average of 22 other organizations (median = 12) in their communities through board service, mentorships, volunteering and other forms of engagement. In interviews, we heard from a number of Builders that they shared knowledge gained through the NELP training with other organizations.

Finally, Bank of America has grown the program and maintained its level of investment through the downturn, suggesting its contribution to the community may have increased over time.

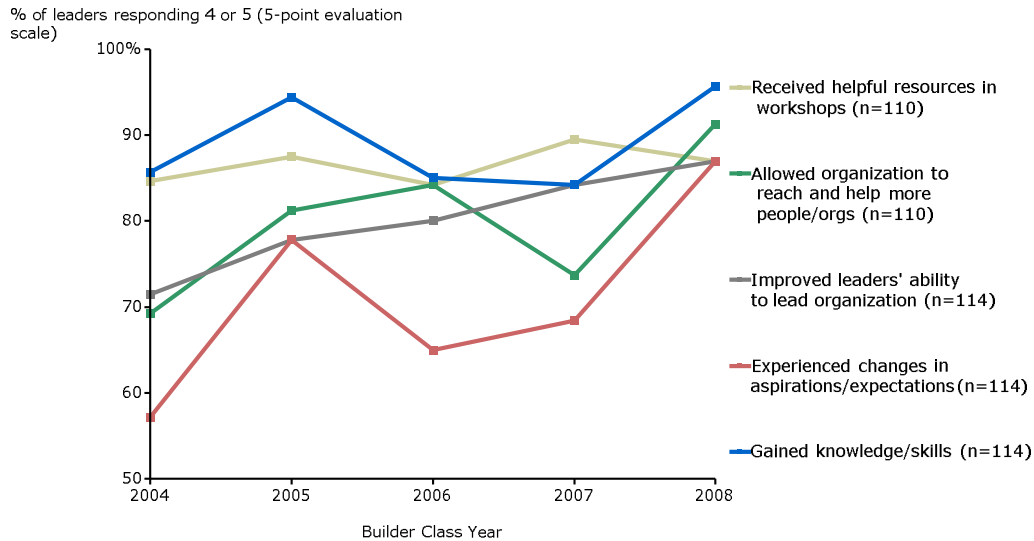
Bank of America did not ask us to evaluate whether the Builder program directly caused some or all of its 45 communities to improve, as it did not believe a program assisting two nonprofits per community per year could bring about such direct change. Our benchmarking confirms that those leadership programs striving for community change often focus on a much narrower set of communities. For example, the Blandin Foundation's Community Leadership Program, which has reached 5,700 leaders, is focused exclusively in rural Minnesota.

### **Additional observations**

In addition to the statistically significant data presented above there are additional observations worth noting. These are areas that Bank of America should continue to monitor moving forward to identify opportunities for program improvement.

In most cases, we saw program benefits increase from the Class of 2004 through the Class of 2008 (see examples in figure 15), suggesting integration of early feedback may have improved the program's quality. While we did see a decline across most program benefits for the Class of 2009, we have excluded this class from the analysis because 2009 Builders had not yet completed the NELP training and most had not yet put the second \$100,000 unrestricted award to use at the time the research commenced. Analysis in subsequent years (when the Class of 2009 has fully completed the program) would be required to ensure these benefits do increase as expected.

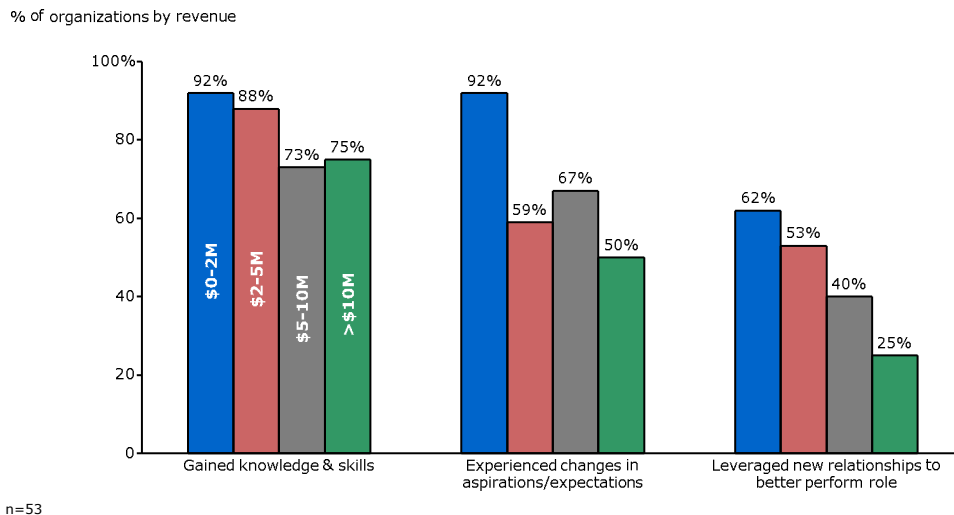
**Figure 15: Sample outcomes by year**



Note: 2009 Builders are not included because they had not started the NELP training at the time this research commenced and had not put the second installment of their award funds to use

Our analysis identified a few statistically significant findings by organizational size, showing that smaller organizations benefit more than larger ones along a few dimensions. However, given the low sample size for large organizations in the program, we present this as a general finding in this part of the report. In addition we found a few non-statistically significant trends by organization size that seemed to reinforce the point that small organizations benefit more. This could be because the award represents a larger percentage of funding or because EDs and ELs are less experienced and therefore benefited more from the training (see figure 16).

**Figure 16: Sample outcomes by organization size**



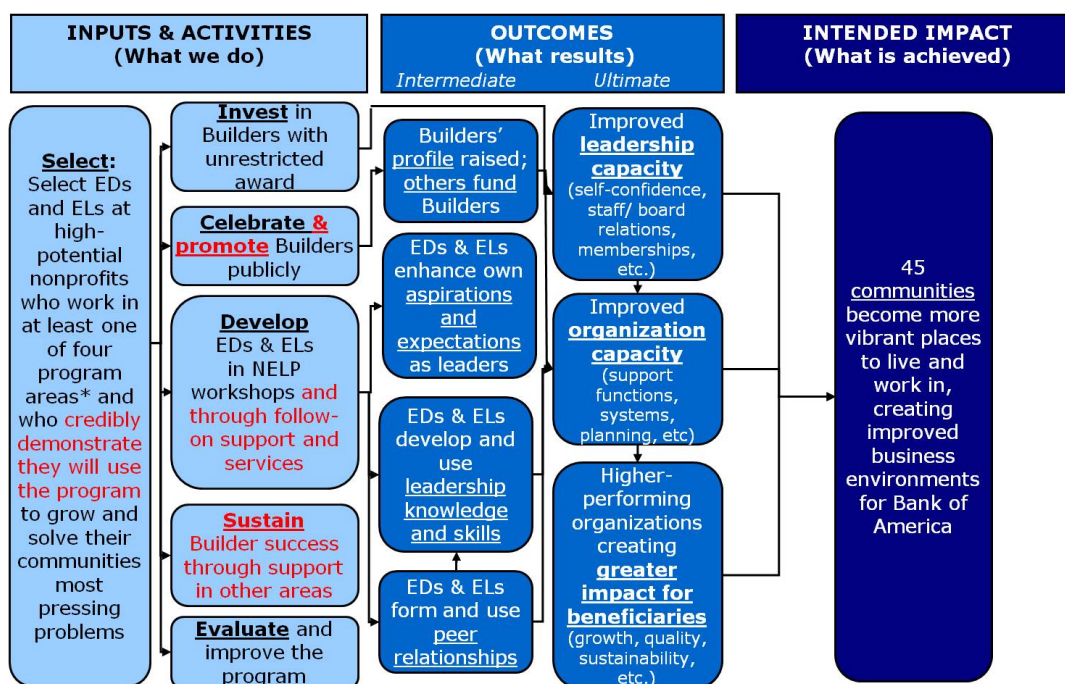
Additionally, we observe that in many cases, there is wide variation between communities. While it is not clear what factor may be driving such variation, since the NELP training and award size are consistent across communities, possibilities include variation in the selection process and differences in local community support post-program. As we will discuss in the next section, this suggests an opportunity for greater consistency in selection across communities to ensure that the organizations selected are those with the greatest potential to benefit from Neighborhood Builders program.

## Recommendations and Conclusion

While our research indicates that the Neighborhood Builders program is generally achieving its expected outcomes for the participating leaders and organizations, we have also identified several ways that Bank of America could strengthen the program’s design so as to potentially improve its overall impact.

As discussed, Bank of America shared a theory of change for the Neighborhood Builders program in advance of this research. This detailed theory of change has provided the scaffolding for this evaluation of the Neighborhood Builders program. It likewise frames these recommendations. In this section, we share these “impact improvement opportunities” for the inputs and activities in the theory of change, and suggest some modifications and additions to the theory of change (shown in red in the diagram below).

### Neighborhood Builders updated theory of change



\* Community development, health and human services, education and youth development, arts and culture  
 ^E.g., Political figures, elected officials, regulators

### Selection

The Neighborhood Builders program has ambitious goals; selecting the right leaders and nonprofits for the program is an essential step in achieving them. Overall we believe the selection process is strong, as evidenced by the finding that most participating leaders are achieving their desired outcomes. Some modest changes – suggested by the data and interviews, and our experience with other grantee selection processes – could help increase the odds that even more participants will achieve the desired outcomes.



**Recommendation: Refine selection criteria to focus on leaders and organizations that could benefit most from the leadership training and unrestricted funding.**

Our research suggests that the benefits of the Neighborhood Builders award are greatest when organizations and leaders are poised for change. At such a moment, the program's unrestricted funding can help an organization build the infrastructure for change (and signal to other funders that the organization is worth investing in). The training provided by the program can also help a leader find the tools and develop the skills needed to lead that change. During our interviews, we found many leaders benefited from the training because they *personally* were at an inflection point. Some had just transferred into a new role; others were contemplating such a transition; and some were charged with implementing a new strategic plan or organizational vision, though not all yet had the tools to do so.

Thus we would recommend the program refine selection criteria to focus on leaders and organizations who can credibly demonstrate in their applications that they will benefit from the leadership training and the unrestricted award (for example, an organization at an "inflection point" in its growth). In addition, the program should have a primary focus on organizations under \$10 million in size, which our research found are more likely to be at inflection points than larger organizations. Larger organizations should not be excluded, but would require greater scrutiny to ensure that they would benefit sufficiently from the training and funding.

To refine its selection process to select more leaders and organizations that credibly demonstrate they will benefit from the program, Bank of America should consider:

- Revising the application form to better emphasize the existence and importance of the training, and adding questions to better ascertain why the program is important for the applicant at *this specific point* in their personal and organizational growth, and how they would benefit from and share with other leaders in the program.
- Providing clearer guidelines for the Local Market Selection Committees that ultimately choose the Builders. During our interviews with Committee members, we regularly heard that they wanted more clarity on which applicants were the best fit for the program.
- Focusing on organizations under \$10 million in size, which our research found are more likely than larger organizations to benefit from the program's leadership training.

## Invest

We do not have recommendations for change in this area. As discussed in the previous section, the leaders we surveyed and interviewed were overwhelmingly positive about the amount of the award, its unrestricted nature and the two-year timeline. Neighborhood Builders funding has clearly been significant

for the organizations receiving it: 95% of them report that the award was one of their top three unrestricted gifts during that time period.

### **Celebrate and Promote**

Many leaders report that the Neighborhood Builders award helps raise their organizational profile in the community and secure additional funding – 84% cite media mentions and 91% report that they use the award as a “seal of approval.” On average Builders report that the \$200,000 award leverages an additional \$400,000 from other funders. However, we believe that there remains untapped leveraging potential for the Neighborhood Builders award.

#### **Recommendation: Help Builders leverage their awards to raise additional funds and market themselves more effectively.**

While many leaders reported the Neighborhood Builders award served as a “seal of approval” for their organizations, leaders were uneven in their ability to capitalize on this. Through awards ceremonies and media coverage, Bank of America already promotes Builders in their communities. We suggest explicitly adding “promote” to the overall theory of change, and adding two new activities to help Builders reap maximum benefit from the award:

- Introduce Builders to other potential funders. During our interviews, leaders frequently surfaced the idea of Bank of America connecting them to other funders in the community. This could happen, for example, through an annual event for current Builders and alumni to which Bank of America invites other potential funders.
- Provide guidance, training, and tools to Builders on how to use the award to more effectively market their organizations. Leaders expressed interest in learning the best practices from other grantees.

### **Develop**

Our research did not indicate a need for major modifications in the program’s training component. Builders report high satisfaction with the topics, structure, and delivery format of the NELP workshops. However, in some areas there is a gap between what is learned in training and what is applied back on the job – suggesting that the program could strengthen its impact by providing more follow-up support. In interviews, Builders expressed interest in two kinds of post-training follow-up: accountability for implementation and further training on specific topics.

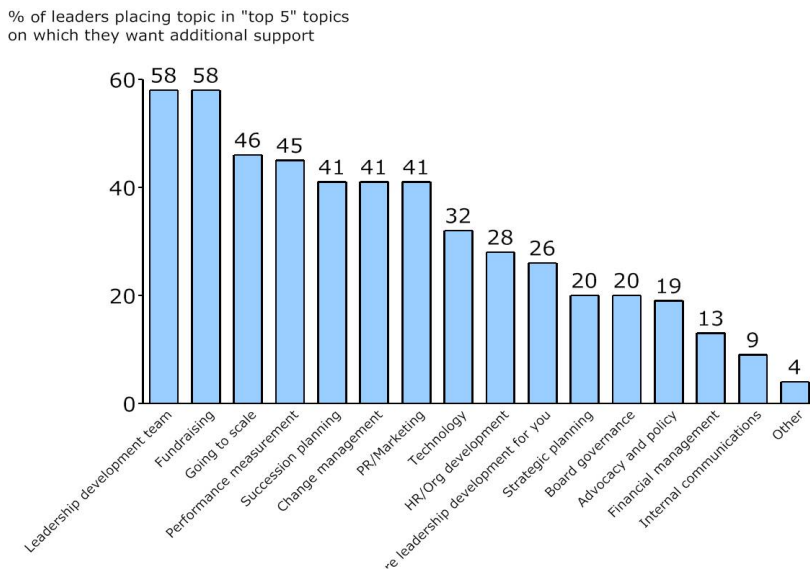
#### **Recommendation: Provide a more structured way for leaders to report back and share with Bank of America and each other what they have accomplished post-training.**

As described earlier, only 39% of leaders recall completing the “leadership commitment memo” (describing the type of actions they plan to take within their organizations to put what they have learned into practice), and only 17% meet with a member of their peer consulting group after NELP training (a program requirement). In fact, several participants suggested that Bank of America should hold them more accountable for progress against the self-identified goals set out in that commitment memo. One approach would be for Bank of America’s local philanthropy team, along with interested members of the Local Market Selection Committee, to meet with participants a few months after the NELP workshops and explore with them what they have learned and accomplished to date, as well as identify barriers to progress.

**Recommendation: Provide more follow-up training to help leaders effectively apply what they learned in the NELP workshops.**

We asked leaders in our survey where additional training would be valuable.<sup>31</sup> As seen in figure 17, the top need identified was “leadership development training for additional senior leaders” beyond the two in each organization who take part in the training. In interviews, Builders also indicated an interest in having the “Leadership Challenge” 360-degree feedback process administered to more of their senior leaders<sup>32</sup> - again emphasizing the extent to which participants see leadership training as a critical enabler of organizational success.

**Figure 17: Topics in which leaders desire additional support**



<sup>31</sup> Bank of America already provides training in new content areas through its webinar series, discussed below in the “Sustain” section.

<sup>32</sup> The “Leadership Challenge” assesses a leader on 30 leadership traits classified into 6 behavioral categories.

Additionally, Bank of America has collected separate feedback from leaders in NELP workshops indicating that storytelling and supervision are two topics on which they would like to see follow-up training.

## Sustain

Beyond immediate post-training support, on-going learning by the Builders enhances the likelihood that the desired outcomes and overall intended impact will be achieved. Therefore, we recommend adding “sustain” to the overall theory of change, and recommend several additional activities that can support on-going learning.

### **Recommendation: Improve Builder access to Bank of America’s current webinar series.**

For over a year, Bank of America has been offering free monthly webinars (featuring experts on different topics) to all of its grantees, including Builders. However, we found only 76% of Builders were aware of the webinars, and only 36% had attended any sessions. Through outreach in its local markets, Bank of America could increase awareness and attendance. By recording the webinars and making them permanently accessible online, more Builders might view them. Finally, it could review topics of interest to Builders developed through this research, and consider which might be appropriate for future webinar sessions.

### **Recommendation: Create national and local peer networks to support continuing learning and knowledge sharing among Builders.**

Peer networks could provide a powerful opportunity to reinforce NELP workshops and increase their ongoing impact on leaders and organizations. Additionally, peer networks capitalize on the emerging trend of “networked nonprofits”; as organizations increasingly recognize the critical need to learn from and collaborate with their peers<sup>33</sup>. Both in what they say and what they do, Builders have demonstrated their interest in continuing contact with their peers: 68% expressed an interest in learning from and sharing with other Builders and 59% report having kept in touch with at least one other leader from the program. On average, despite little direct facilitation from Bank of America, Builders keep in touch with six other leaders from the program.

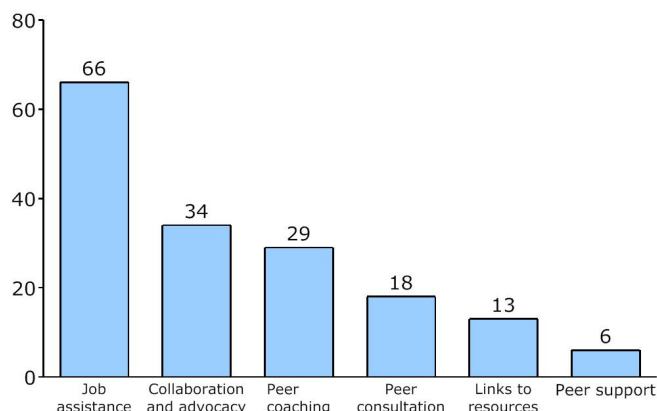
As shown in figure 18, leaders tend to use these peer relationships most often for job assistance and secondly for collaboration and advocacy.

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<sup>33</sup> *The Networked Nonprofit: Connecting with Social Media to Drive Change*. Beth Kanter and Allison Fine. 2010, John Wiley & Sons

**Figure 18: Leaders' usage of peer relationships today, for various purposes**

% of leaders using peer relationships with other Builder peers for this purpose



In interviews, leaders confirmed they would actively participate in exchanges with peers. The greatest need is for sharing and learning on leadership and management issues (such as fund development and board governance), but leaders also expressed interest in sharing on sector-related issues (e.g., evidence-based practices in workforce development programs).

To meet this demand, Bank of America should consider creating both national and local peer networks:

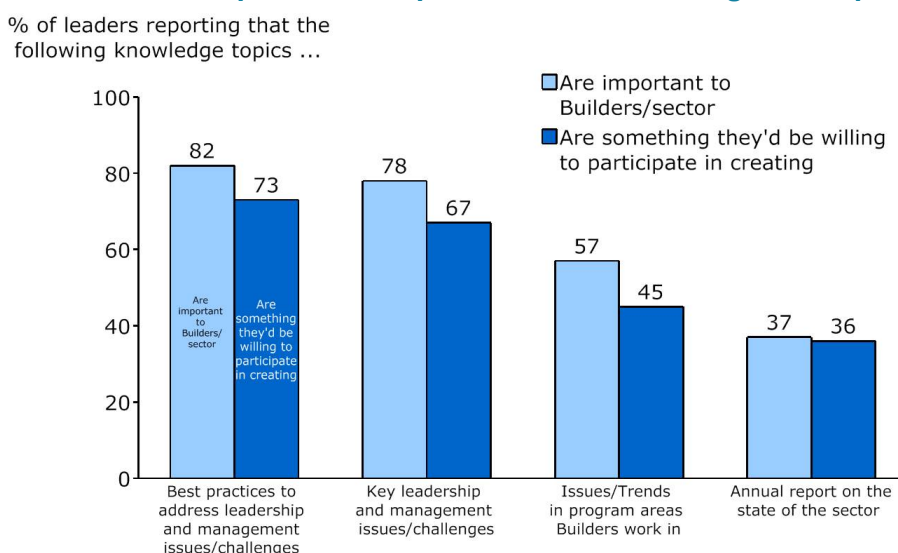
- **National network:** Leaders expressed a desire for national network tools that would enable them to learn from and share with their 1,000+ peers nationwide. Overall we believe that creating a national network would have great benefit: such a large network increases the potential for beneficial sharing and learning in many areas. And, a national network is reasonably inexpensive to set up and maintain. Our interviews with Builders were designed to surface the preferred design features of such a network. Among the recommendations we heard most often were:
  - Include all interested leaders, from all geographies, and from all years of the program.
  - Provide the ability for leaders to search for other leaders/ organizations on a number of dimensions (e.g., sector, geography, types of leadership issues).
  - Provide the ability for leaders to discuss ideas with other leaders, for example through an online discussion forum.
  - Provide an opportunity to share and access best practices resources and tools.
- **Local networks:** Leaders we interviewed also emphasized the importance of local, face-to-face connections with their peers – believing that these interpersonal relationships would generate the most useful follow-on support. Among their recommendations:

- Have Bank of America play a convener role, but seek Builders' preferences in how to organize the local network.
- Include current and alumni Builders from the local market and contiguous markets within reasonable driving distance.
- Create separate networks for Executive Directors and Emerging Leaders.
- Discuss pre-selected topics, potentially with expert speakers or facilitators, rather than meet solely to socialize.
- Meet twice a year, preferable for half a day each time. We believe these networks can play a vital role in reinforcing learnings and facilitating deeper relationships.

**Recommendation: Create and share knowledge on topics of interest through the peer networks.**

As one of the largest funders of nonprofit leadership development, Bank of America has an opportunity to use the knowledge gained through this work to support the field's understanding of leadership issues. Such knowledge creation can also help extend the program's impact beyond the limited number of Builders that are reached directly. Builders report that knowledge creation is important to them and the sector, and they are willing to serve as "inputs" to knowledge creation. Specifically, as shown in figure 19, leaders report that they are the most willing to participate in knowledge creation around leadership and management best challenges and best practices to address those challenges.

**Figure 19: Leaders' perceived importance of, and willingness to participate in, knowledge**



Bank of America could use the local Builder peer networks to help develop a knowledge plan, get input on topics and content and disseminate that content across the 500 Builder organizations and beyond. For example, Bank of America could commission research with select Builders on several network-generated topics per year, and then disseminate this knowledge beyond the Builder network through

articles, toolkits and conferences. During the course of our work together, Bank of America and Bridgespan conducted a knowledge creation experiment on ways to develop staff other than through external training. This was a topic of interest to many Builders given both the importance of professional development and the cost of sending staff to external trainings. A survey of 90 Builders from the 2010 class provided a host of ideas on such professional development opportunities.<sup>34</sup>

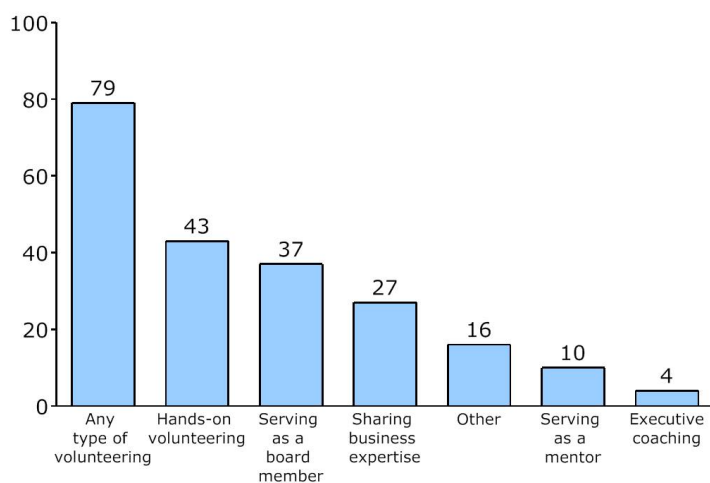
**Recommendation: Encourage more Bank of America employees to do skills-based volunteerism at Builder organizations.**

Volunteers, especially skilled ones, can be an important lever for Bank of America to expand the impact of its Neighborhood Builders program, benefitting the Builders, Bank of America and its employees. Our research suggests that high-impact corporate philanthropy programs frequently utilize their employees’ skills to increase impact. With a nationwide footprint, and employees in the 45 Neighborhood Builder communities, Bank of America may be particularly well-positioned to do this.

Volunteering is already an important component of the program: 79% of Builders report that Bank of America employees have volunteered at the organizations, totaling an estimated 12,000 employees. To date, per figure 20, most of this engagement has been through hands-on volunteering (e.g., tutoring children, sorting clothing) and through membership on Builders’ boards. The high percentage of board participation in Builders is particularly encouraging when one considers that Bank of America does not actively match its executives with Builders.

**Figure 20: Past Bank of America employee volunteering at Builders**

% of Builders reporting the following types of volunteering from BofA employees



<sup>34</sup> See Bridgespan’s “52 Free Development Opportunities for Nonprofit Staff” at <http://www.bridgestar.org/Library/52DevelopmentOpportunities.aspx>.

Leaders expressed a desire for expanded skills-based participation by Bank of America volunteers in their organizations, especially those who could contribute specific skills and knowledge. Among the areas of particular interest were marketing and communications, financial planning, management coaching and participation in Board committees such as Finance. Bank of America should consider a more intentional strategy to match skilled employees with volunteer opportunities in the Builder organizations.

## Evaluate

Measurement of leadership development programs is hard and there is no one, generally accepted, evaluation approach given that: (a) there is significant variation in program goals and outcomes; (b) impact is often seen over longer periods of time, making measurement more difficult and potentially expensive; and (c) it is difficult to attribute change in leadership and organization capacity given the short-term nature of many of these programs and the challenge of establishing a comparison group.

Ongoing evaluation of the Neighborhood Builders program has been one of its real strengths, and spurred some significant changes. Currently, Bank of America collects data from each class of Builders in the grant application, several times in the first year of the award through workshop feedback and a qualitative survey and, most intensively at the end of the two year award period. Even with this information, it has been difficult to determine the long-term impact of the program, resulting in the engagement of Bridgespan to do the first retrospective measurement of the impact of the program across cohorts.

Bank of America has three measurement goals for the Builders program: generate insight on which elements of the program are working and which may not be, build evidence on impact and support communication of program impact to staff, customers, community leaders and the philanthropic sector. The current measurement process partially meets the goals.

- **Generating insight on how the program is working:** Bank of America has made changes in its program to reflect what it has learned through evaluation. For example, based on feedback from EDs and ELs, the NELP training reduced the number of workshops for EDs (who were pressed for time) and increased the number for ELs, who had reported they were eager for more training. Other changes in the training program included a more interactive approach and the addition of a “live case exercise” involving consultation by the participants to leaders of the host organization.
- **Building evidence on impact:** Prior to this research the theory of change was not used to drive the measurement questions and approach. In advance of our research Bridgespan



reviewed and refined the theory of change with Bank of America. After the theory of change was defined, we then developed questions that would help test it for the entire period of time that Neighborhood Builders has been in operation. Prior surveys are simply too close in time to the end of the program for participants to fully judge its impact.

**Recommendation: Bank of America should consider two key improvements in its measurement process to better track long-term impact.**

1. **Delaying the survey conducted at the end of the award period by one year**, allowing Bank of America to get deeper insight into what happens to leaders and organizations after the program is over, particularly if Bank of America adds 'follow-on services'.
2. **Planning for the next multi-cohort, third party evaluation** several years from now. By looking across the full seven years of the Neighborhood Builders program, and surveying and interviewing Builders in selected markets, we believe that a sharper picture has emerged of how the Neighborhood Builders program operates, what is working well and what could be improved, and the kind of improvements that could be made. By planning for the next such evaluation further in advance, Bank of America has an opportunity to improve the rigor of the research design and therefore more confidently attribute the outcomes it is seeing to the Builders program. It can also explore new potential areas of impact, such as in changing career trajectories and determining if financial performance (e.g., revenue growth) is improved as a result of the program.

## Conclusion

Over seven years, Bank of America has made a significant investment in the Neighborhood Builders program. The program is unusual in that it combines intensive leadership training with an award of unrestricted funding. Our research results indicate that Bank of America's theory of change accurately describes the program's inputs, activities, and outcomes, that EDs and ELs who have participated in the leadership training found it useful, and that Builder organizations benefitted from the training and the award. By selecting community-based organizations providing service to vulnerable populations and improving these organizations' capacity to serve, and by selecting and developing leaders with deep roots in the community, the Neighborhood Builders program is contributing to the vibrancy of the communities in which it is operating. With modest additional investment in the recommended areas and a sustained commitment to the program over time (annually adding 180 leaders in 45 communities to its alumni base of 1,200 leaders), Bank of America can have a substantial impact on millions of individuals each year, potentially inspiring others to make similar long-term large-scale investments.

In addition, as the largest such nonprofit leadership program supported by philanthropy (in terms of total dollar investment), and as a result of its prior measurement work and this study, Neighborhood Builders can offer insights that may be valuable to other leadership development efforts. Among key lessons:

- Developing leaders highly-connected in a community multiplies the impact of a leadership program in that community
- Rigorous selection is a must to maximize the return- on-investment from training
- Pairing training and funding is far more likely to build organization capacity and enhance results than training alone
- Unrestricted funding that trusts leaders to direct how funds are invested is rare and highly valued
- Linking training with follow-up support helps leaders implement what they learn
- National programs require a major and sustained investment to reach the kind of scale where follow-up support can be delivered cost-effectively
- Training both EDs and ELs from an organization helps enable change and can be highly catalytic for ELs
- Continuous measurement is critical to improve the design and outcomes of a program

## Appendix I: Participating Organizations:

### *Boston, Massachusetts*

- The Center for Teen Empowerment
- Interseminarian Project Place
- Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Development Corporation
- JumpStart
- Nuestra Comunidad Development Corporation
- Raw Art Works
- Roca
- St. Francis House
- United Teen Equality Center
- Urban Edge Housing Corporation

### *Charlotte, North Carolina*

- A Child's Place
- Charlotte Emergency Housing
- Charlotte-Mecklenburg Housing Partnership, Inc
- Child Care Resources
- Communities In Schools of Charlotte-Mecklenburg
- Crisis Assistance Ministry
- Hope Haven, Inc.
- Jacob's Ladder Job Center
- Latin American Coalition
- Second Harvest Food Bank of Metrolina
- United Family Services
- YWCA Central Carolinas

### *Chicago, Illinois*

- Bethel New Life
- BUILD, Inc.

- The Cara Program
- Casa Central
- Centers for New Horizons
- Chinese American Service League
- Erie Neighborhood House
- Greater Southwest Development Corporation
- Little Village CDC / Enlace Chicago
- Metropolitan Family Services
- National Museum of Mexican Art

### *Los Angeles, California*

- A Community of Friends
- A Place Called Home
- Academy of Business Leadership
- Bethune Theatredanse
- CARECEN
- Challengers Boys and Girls Club
- Chrysalis
- Community Financial Resource Center
- Downtown Women's Center
- Esperanza Community Housing Corporation
- Goodwill Southern California
- Homeboy Industries
- Inner-City Arts
- Koreatown Youth and Community Center
- New Economics for Women
- Pacific Asian Consortium in Employment
- Para Los Ninos
- Proyecto Pastoral

- PUENTE Learning Center
- Skid Row Housing Trust

*New York, New York*

- Abyssinian Development Corporation
- Asian Americans for Equality
- Bronx River Alliance
- Common Ground
- Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation
- Fifth Avenue Committee, Inc.
- Harlem RBI
- HEAF, Inc.
- Heart of Brooklyn Cultural Institutions
- Sunnyside Community Services
- West Side Federation for Senior and Supportive Housing, Inc.

*San Francisco, California*

- Aim High for High School
- BAYCAT
- Bernal Heights Neighborhood Center
- Boys and Girls Club of San Francisco
- Chinatown Community Development Center

- Community Housing Partnership
- Goodwill Industries of San Francisco, San Mateo and Marin Counties
- Jamestown Community Center
- Juma Ventures
- Renaissance Entrepreneurship Center
- St. Anthony Foundation
- Tenderloin Neighborhood Development Corporation

*Greater Washington, DC*

- Arlington Free Clinic
- Carpenter's Shelter
- Casa de Maryland
- Community Ministry of Montgomery
- DC Central Kitchen
- Higher Achievement
- Housing Initiative Partnership, Inc.
- Interfaith Works
- Latin American Youth Center
- Manna, Inc.
- Metro TeenAIDS
- Northern Virginia Family Service
- Reston Interfaith

**Note:** *Two leaders who are no longer at their organizations were reached and interviewed for the project*

## Appendix II: Participating Local Market Selection Committee Member Organizations

- Mass Mentoring, *Boston*
- OrthoCarolina, *Charlotte*
- Chicago Community Trust, *Chicago*
- United Way of Metropolitan Chicago, *Chicago*
- Los Angeles Chamber, *Los Angeles*
- The California Endowment, *Los Angeles*
- United Way of Greater Los Angeles, *Los Angeles*
- Local Initiatives Support Corporation, *New York City*
- Local Initiatives Support Corporation, *San Francisco*
- San Francisco State University, *San Francisco*
- Reston Interfaith, *Greater Washington*

## Appendix III: Bank of America's 45 Local Communities

- Atlanta, Georgia
- Austin, Texas
- Baltimore, Maryland
- Boston, Massachusetts
- Bridgeport/Stamford/Norwalk, Connecticut
- Broward County, Florida
- Charlotte, North Carolina
- Chicago, Illinois
- Dallas, Texas
- Delaware (Kent, New Castle & Sussex Counties)
- Detroit, Michigan
- Greater Washington, DC
- East Bay/Oakland, California
- Ft. Worth, Texas
- Hampton Roads, Virginia
- Hartford, Connecticut
- Houston, Texas
- Inland Empire, California
- Jacksonville, Florida
- Kansas City, Missouri
- Las Vegas, Nevada
- London, UK
- Long Island, New York
- Los Angeles, California
- Miami, Florida
- Nashville, Tennessee
- New York, New York
- New Jersey
- Orange County, California
- Orlando, Florida
- Palm Beach County, Florida
- Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
- Phoenix, Arizona
- Pinellas County, Florida
- Portland, Oregon
- Rhode Island
- Richmond, Virginia
- Sacramento, California
- San Antonio, Texas
- San Diego, California
- San Francisco, California
- Silicon Valley, California
- Puget Sound, Washington
- St. Louis, Missouri
- Tampa, Florida

## Appendix IV: Nonprofit leadership development peer benchmarking

Program	Investment (cumulative)	Leaders (cumulative)	Target population	Award components	Services	Geography
<b>Bank of America: Neighborhood Builders</b>	\$110M	1200	EDs + ELs	Grant + training	Several multi-day workshops	National
<b>Blandin Foundation: Community Leadership Program</b>	≈\$40M	5,700	Rural leaders	Training	8 days training	Minnesota
<b>RWJF: Community Health Leaders</b>	≈\$25M	187	Health leaders	Grant + stipend	N/A	National
<b>AED Center for Leadership Development: New Voices</b>	≈\$10M	110	ELs	Training	2-year fellowship	National
<b>NeighborWorks: Achieving Excellence</b>	≈\$10M	250	EDs	Training	3 week-long sessions, plus ongoing support	National
<b>Ford Institute: Leadership Program</b>	≈\$10M	1,800	Rural leaders	Training	4 2-day sessions	California; Oregon
<b>American Express: Nonprofit Leadership Academy**</b>	<\$10M	150	ELs	Training	2 half-day sessions, plus year of 1:1 coaching	National
<b>Rockefeller Foundation Next Generation Leadership Program</b>	<\$5M	125	ELs	Training, stipend & grant fund	4, 1-week modules, plus alumni network	National
<b>Durfee Foundation: The Stanton Fellowship</b>	≈\$1M	18	Leaders	Grant + peer convenings	N/A	Los Angeles
<b>The Annie E. Casey Foundation Children and Family Fellowship</b>	Unknown	60	Experienced leaders	Training	20-month fellowship, with ongoing support	National
<b>Gap Inc: Capacity Building Initiative</b>	Unknown	60	Youth nonprofit leaders	Training	2-day workshop + peer convenings	National
<b>Brainerd Foundation: Leadership Initiative</b>	Unknown	N/A	N/A	Grant	N/A	Pacific Northwest
<b>Switzer Foundation: Leadership Program</b>	Unknown	N/A	N/A	Grant	N/A	New England; California

Builders program largest by >2.5x

Builders program third largest

Builders program only to reach both ED and EL

Only two programs (other than Builders) pair grant & training

Several peers offer follow-on support

Most peers are national

Note: Represents programs from leading foundations (corporate, private, and family); excludes university-led programs and others that charge participants (since the organizations behind these programs are not making investments). In many cases estimates were made based on publicly available information. Data is as of end of 2010. \*\* Estimate based on several assumptions on program cost (e.g., AmEx's annual total leadership grantmaking); Source: Bridgespan research

## Appendix V: NEI Impact Assessment Local market interview guides

### Builder interview of ED or EL who went through NELP

#### *Introduction*

As you may recall from the email we sent to the online survey, Bank of America has recently begun a research effort with The Bridgespan Group to study the long-term impact of the Neighborhood Builders program within the Neighborhood Excellence Initiative (NEI). (Bridgespan is a nonprofit organization that assists other nonprofits and philanthropies to achieve greater social impact). The goal of this effort is to research the impact of the Builders program on its participants and their work in communities, and to understand the views of all stakeholders that are part of this program. Our research will result in a report that Bank of America will use to share the impact of the Builders program with key local and national audiences. We will include the Builders as one of these audiences for the report. We will also work with Bank of America to explore potential improvements that could be made to the Builders program based on what we learn.

An important part of this impact research is the perspective of NEI's past Builders Award Winners, so we appreciate the time that you are taking to speak with us. We also wanted to address how we will share your input today. The first part of our discussion today will ask for several stories about your organization, your beneficiaries, and how the Builders program changed you as a leader. We are very much hoping to use some of these stories to bring the program to life in our final report, and we will come back to you to get your permission if we can use one of your stories. The remainder of our discussion today will touch on other aspects of how the program might be improved—those results would only be shared with Bank of America in aggregate, meaning they won't be identified to you.

We have a lot to cover in this hour, and we hope that it is okay if we may let you know if we have enough information on an answer and need to move forward to the next question.

*Where relevant:* Thank you for completing the online survey. You will see that some of our questions relate to your responses.

Do you have any questions before we start?

#### **Question set # 1 – Community issues and Builder's benefit to society**

1. What is the most pressing issue your organization has addressed in the years since receiving the Builder Award? Please describe the progress or results you have experienced?
2. How did your participation in the Neighborhood Builders program help you achieve the progress or results you've just described?



### **Question set #2 – Impact of the monetary award over time**

3. We understand from your online survey that you used the award to do \_\_\_\_\_. Would you have been able to make this investment without this funding? What was the single biggest impact of the award on your organization?
4. Please briefly describe how the NELP workshop(s) influenced how you utilized the Award.
5. Do you feel the award it was of sufficient size to have a meaningful impact on your organization? Why or why not?

### **Question set # 3 – Stories of beneficiaries**

We are trying to gather compelling stories of how beneficiaries have been impacted after the Builders program.

6. Can you describe one example of how a beneficiary was impacted through your organization since the end of the 2-year Builders program? We are ideally looking for examples where the Builder award or NELP training was a factor (for example, imagine a performance measurement system funded with the Award that highlighted \$5,000 in annual government benefits that a beneficiary was able to access, and then use for job training and ultimately to land a new job).

### **Question set # 4 – Testing NEI's logic model**

Now we would like to talk to you about how the Neighborhood Excellence Leadership Program influenced you as a leader.

7. From the online survey, we understand that the NELP program most affected, influenced, or changed you as a leader by \_\_\_\_\_. Can you tell us more in depth the story of how your leadership changed as a result of the program?
8. From the online survey, we understand that the most significant gain in knowledge or skills you acquired from the Neighborhood Excellence Leadership Program was \_\_\_\_\_. Can you tell us more in depth how you applied that knowledge when you returned to your organization? What were the results?
9. From the online survey, we understand that the most significant change you experienced in aspirations, expectations, or self-conception as a leader was \_\_\_\_\_. Can you tell us more in depth how this change enabled you to better perform your role? How did this change your organization?
10. From the online survey, we understand that the most significant relationship you formed allowed you to \_\_\_\_\_. Can you tell us more in depth how that allowed you to better perform your role? How did

this change your organization?

11. [If Builder entered in a year that had the 'Leadership Challenge']
  - a. Do you recall the action you committed to in your Leadership Challenge Commitment Memo? Were you successful in implementing this action? Why or why not?
  - b. Did you meet on a monthly basis with at least one person from your peer consulting group (between NELP workshop(s))? What came out of these sessions?
  
12. Prior to receiving the Neighborhood Builder award, did your organization have an emergency succession plan?
  - a. If NO, does your organization now have an emergency succession plan?
  
13. One of the things we would like to explore in our research is whether we can show that investing in a leader can have important ripple effects in their community as a result of all the other organizations they are involved in. From your online survey, we understand you have been involved with \_\_\_\_\_ boards or organizations in your community since the Builder program, as a board member, mentor or advisor, partner, etc. Can you share with us names some or all of these boards or organizations you have been involved with? We have no intention, whatsoever, of contacting these organizations in any way.
  
14. Please describe any other ways in which the NELP workshop(s) changed you as a leader.
  
15. Please describe any other ways in which the NELP workshop(s) benefited your organization.
  
16. How would your personal and organizational outcomes have been different if you had not been part of the NEI program and had not received support from Bank of America?

**Question set # 5 – Prior Bank of America support and potential future support**

17. Can you tell us about how Bank of America employee engagement has impacted your organization?
  
18. You indicated in the survey that you had a strong interest in learning from and sharing with other Builders. Can you please tell us more about how you would construct such sharing opportunities?
  - a. *Probe:* Is it a light-touch social network for all Builders for basic resource exchange, or a deeper network by issue area and/or geography, etc.
  - b. What would be the right frequency?
  - c. What would be the right venue?
  - d. Who would facilitate?

- e. Would there be any sub-groups or smaller communities within the network (e.g., local sub-groups of an issue-focused network, issue sub-groups of a local network, etc)?
19. What resources would help the Builders to learn from and share with each other in the way you described above?
- a. Is there a role that Bank of America or another third party might play in these efforts?
20. Are there any other groups affiliated with the Builders program that you would like to learn from or share with (e.g., NELP presenters, local market selection committee members, etc)?
21. You told us you had a strong interest in \_\_[knowledge topic]\_\_. Tell us more. For example, what would this look like, how could you and other Builders contribute to it, and what would you want to get back from it?
22. Currently, where do you get most of your knowledge? For example, are there specific newsletters, websites, or conferences that you rely on?
23. You described keeping in touch with \_\_\_ leaders. Can you tell us about the three most important relationships you've developed from the Builders program and what those relationships have meant for you as a leader, and your organization?
24. What other networks (aside from Neighborhood Builders) are you a part of?
- a. *Probe*: Network purpose, frequency of meeting, etc
- b. What are the main gaps that these other networks aren't fulfilling?
25. What other leadership development programs (aside from Neighborhood Builders) have you participated in?
- a. *Probe*: Program purpose, length, frequency, what was learned, etc.
- b. Ideas from these trainings that might improve Builders training.

### *Conclusion*

*The questions below were added later in the interview process and were not asked of the entire group of leaders interviewed:*

- If the award was half the size, would you have still applied for the award?
- If there were no award, would you have applied for just the training program?
- At the time when your organization was applying for the Builder award, were you actively looking for a leadership training program to attend?

- If you were unable to implement skills/a commitment you made, why was this and what could have helped you do it? (Probe with (a) additional follow-on training (if barrier is they need more help) (b) peer accountability (if barrier is not prioritizing) (c) Bank of America reinforcement (through contacts or even tying future funding)- if again the barrier is not prioritizing).
- Would you actively participate in exchanging information with other Builders who have experienced leadership and management issues that you are interested in? For example, if you are in a situation where you need to fire a senior member of your team, another Builder may have done that before and may be able to offer advice. Other examples may include setting a vision for your organization, communicating priorities, improving culture, etc.
- Would you actively participate in exchanging information with other Builders who have experienced industry or sector-related issues that you are interested in? For example, in workforce development, we have heard that many organizations are challenged by how to move their clients from transitional jobs to permanent jobs, and that it would be beneficial to hear or brainstorm on how other workforce development organizations have done it.
  - Are there other examples of industry or sector-related issues you might be interested in learning from others or contributing your experiences to the group?
- Would you actively participate in exchanging information with other Builders who have experienced functional issues that you are interested in? For example, you might be considering putting in a performance management system, and may find it helpful to talk to other Builders who have done that recently.
- How would you most like to receive or contribute information on these issues with the group?
- Tell us about your ideal national network.
  - Would you actively utilize a searchable list-serv of all Builders from all years with sector information, issues you are facing, and issues where you are advanced?
  - Would you actively utilize a discussion forum built onto this?
  - What you actively utilize best practice resources and tools?
  - Anything else?
- Tell us about your ideal local network.
- What would you most value/attend:
  - A group that met to socialize/network
  - A group that met to listen to a leading speaker on a topic pre-selected by the Builders, or to have Builders share with each other on a pre-selected topic?
- Do you think a semi-annual, half-day gathering of Builders is about right, or would it ideally be more or less frequent?

## Interview of Local Market Selection Committee member

### *Introduction*

As you may know, Bank of America has recently begun a research effort with the Bridgespan Group to study the long-term impact of the Neighborhood Builders program within the Neighborhood Excellence Initiative (NEI). (Bridgespan is a nonprofit organization that assists other nonprofits and philanthropies to achieve greater social impact). The goal of this effort is to research the impact of the Builders program on its participants and their work in communities, and to understand the views of all stakeholders that are part of this program. This research is being conducted in seven markets around the country over the next 3 months, and will result in material that can be used to more clearly communicate the impact of the program.

All responses will be anonymous and will be kept strictly confidential by Bridgespan, as we will report back only aggregated results, with no answers or comments attributed to individuals. If we have an interest in using any of your thoughts about the impact of the program in the reports we produce, we will certainly come back to you for your permission.

An important part of this impact research is the perspective of members of the Local Market Selection Committee, so we appreciate the time that you are taking to speak with us.

Do you have any questions before we start?

### **Question set # 1 – Impact of Builders on communities and community issues**

1. In your words, what has been the impact of the Neighborhood Builders program in your community in the years that you have known it? Do you feel the program has made significant progress against a particularly pressing issue in your community- and if so- which one?
2. What are your impressions around how the Builder program has resonated in your community? Can you please provide us with a few examples?
3. In what ways do you feel this program is distinctive or innovative as you think about the other training or grantmaking initiatives in your community?

### **Question set # 2 – Selection of Builders**

4. Were there particular community issues that were discussed or prioritized in your committee?
  - a. How did this affect the selection of Builders?

### Changes to issue focus and award size

5. Currently, Builders tend to operate in a few broad issues areas, such as education and youth development or workforce and community development. In Bridgespan's research on other, similar programs, we tend to see that some focus on one or two **issue areas**, both to make greater progress (as participants share best practices and coordinate efforts) and make it easier to communicate the program's results.
  - a. First, what is your reaction to this?
  - b. How interested would you be in an "issue area focus" for the Builders program at the **local level**, with an LMSC selecting Builders in the same issue area for several years?
  - c. What if there was a **single national issue area focus**, such as "solving the high school dropout problem" or "rebuilding America's workforces", which changed every few years. How interested would you be if you had to select **one Builder** in this area, and had one Builder to select as the LMSC saw fit?
  - d. How about the same scenario, but with the need to select **both Builders** in the same (national) issue area?

### Willingness to convene as a network

What is your level of interest in Bank of America keeping you better informed about the Builders program, and if so, through what ways would you like this to happen? Would you also have an interest in further supporting the Builders' work, and if so, in what way and how frequently?

### Willingness to share and produce knowledge

6. Bank of America is interested in harnessing the expertise of all NEI participants to create valuable knowledge for Builders and for the nonprofit sector at large
  - a. Would you have an interest in participating in knowledge creation, and if so, **what type of expertise** would you be best-positioned to share? (E.g., type of functional expertise, sector expertise, or community expertise)
  - b. If so, **in what ways** would you prefer to share this expertise? (E.g., ongoing mentoring/coaching, local Builder alumni group discussions, online webinars, etc)

### Ideas for using local market story for community influence

7. In your view, how can the NEI story be told more effectively in your community?
8. Do you have any final recommendations around how the selection process or any other aspect of the Builders program can be improved?

## Appendix VI – Survey of Neighborhood Builder Leaders

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### Survey of Neighborhood Builders for Bank of America

**Introduction:**

As you may know, Bank of America has recently begun a research effort with the Bridgespan Group to study the long-term impact of the Neighborhood Builders program within the Neighborhood Excellence Initiative (NEI). (Bridgespan is a nonprofit organization that assists other nonprofits and philanthropies to achieve greater social impact). The goal of this effort is to research the impact of the Builders program on its participants and their work in communities. Your participation will allow Bank of America to create a better experience for you and for future leaders.

An important part of this research is the perspective of our past Builder Award Winners. As part of this research, we would like to ask you to complete a brief survey to share some data about your experiences in the Builders program. Please click the link below to take the survey:

<<INSERT SURVEY LINK>>

The survey should take approximately 30-40 minutes to complete. Please know that all responses will be kept strictly confidential. We ask that you complete this survey as soon as possible, but no later than <INSERT DATE>.

As you progress through the survey, your answers will be saved every time you click "Save and continue". To return to the survey at another time and continue your responses, just click on the link above.

The survey includes several questions that may require you to gather data (e.g., how the Builder Award was utilized, what % of your organization's unrestricted funding the Award accounted for, revenues, net assets, total employees, beneficiaries served). You may want to have your prior impact survey and these pieces of financial information at hand before you begin the survey. If having to gather this information or answering other mandatory questions (marked with asterisks) would cause you to miss submitting the survey by the deadline, it is also fine to provide this information after the deadline by responding to this email.

If you have any questions about this survey, please feel free to contact Nicole Leeds at the Bridgespan Group ( 617-572-2869 or nicole.leeds@bridgespan.org). Questions indicated by an asterisk are mandatory.

#### Module 0: Identifying information

\*Name

\*Please indicate your organization name:

\*What is the **primary sector** in which your organization works? (Check one only.)

- Affordable Housing
- Economic Development
- Workforce Development
- Education/Youth Development
- Arts & Culture
- Health & Human Services/Social Services

What are the other sectors in which your organization works? (Check all that apply.)

- Affordable Housing
- Economic Development
- Workforce Development

- Education/Youth Development
- Arts & Culture
- Health & Human Services/ Social Services

\*In what year did you win the Neighborhood Builders Award?

**Module 1: Neighborhood Builders program components**

\*Which Neighborhood Excellence Leadership Program (NELP) track did you attend?

- Executive Director track
- Emerging Leader track
- I did not attend any NELP trainings

\*Please indicate how many of the Neighborhood Excellence Leadership Program (NELP) workshops (3-day training sessions) you attended.

- 1
- 2
- 3

\*On a scale from 1 to 5, how helpful have the NELP workshop(s) been in improving your ability to lead your organization?

- 1=Have not helped at all
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5= Have been extremely helpful

\*Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements: 1 = Do not at all agree 5 = Strongly agree

	1: Do not at all agree	2	3	4	5: Strongly agree
I gained valuable knowledge/skills from the NELP workshop(s)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I was able to successfully apply the knowledge/skills to my role or organization	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The application of this new knowledge led to an improvement in my organization's results	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



\*Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements: 1 = Do not at all agree 5 = Strongly agree

	1: Do not at all agree	2	3	4	5: Strongly agree
As a result of the NELP workshop(s), I saw important changes in my aspirations, expectations or self-conception as a leader	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I was able to successfully use these changes to better perform my role	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
These changes in my leadership led to an improvement in my organization's results	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

\*Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements: 1 = Do not at all agree 5 = Strongly agree

	1: Do not at all agree	2	3	4	5: Strongly agree
I gained valuable new relationships from the NELP workshop(s)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I was able to successfully use these relationships to better perform my role	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
These new relationships led to an improvement in my organization's results	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

\*Please briefly describe how the NELP workshop(s) affected, influenced or changed you as a leader, and what impact this had on your organization.

In one sentence, please briefly respond to the following about the NELP workshop(s):

\*a. The most valuable knowledge/skill I gained and applied was:

b. Other knowledge/skills I gained and applied were:

\*c. The most important change I experienced in my aspirations, expectations, or self-conception as a leader was:

d. Other changes I experienced in my aspirations, expectations, or self-conception as a leader were:

\*e. The most important relationship I formed has enabled me to:

f. Other relationships I formed have enabled me to:

\*Looking back at the NELP workshop(s), on a scale from 1 to 5, please indicate the degree to which you feel you've **experienced each of the following changes** as a result of the program

How you define/conceive of yourself as a leader	<input type="text"/>
What you expect from yourself as a leader	<input type="text"/>
What you are aspiring to do or to achieve in the future	<input type="text"/>
Which behaviors you wanted to change when you returned to your organization	<input type="text"/>
How you would change those behaviors when you returned to your organization	<input type="text"/>
Your confidence in yourself as a leader	<input type="text"/>

\*Looking back at the NELP workshop(s), please indicate the degree to which **each of the following** occurred during or coming out of the program

Engaged with other leaders around the significant questions or challenges facing you or your organization	<input type="text"/>
Identified one important action you could take to significantly improve your organization's results	<input type="text"/>
Gained knowledge/learning on topics that were top of mind for you (given the environment or trends at the time of the workshops(s))	<input type="text"/>
Learned how to think more strategically when faced with complicated issues	<input type="text"/>
Received helpful resources (books, articles) that guided you in your role	<input type="text"/>

\*For each of the following characteristics, please indicate the degree to which you feel the characteristic **describes** the NELP workshop(s); then indicate **how important** you felt this characteristic was to overall success of the workshop(s)

	1=Not at all descriptive	2=	3=Somewhat descriptive	4=	5=Highly descriptive	1= Not at all important	2=	3=Somewhat important	4=	5=Highly important
Experiential/hands-on	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Group oriented/collaborative	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Trusting / safe environment (engaging with leaders that aren't your direct 'competitors' or peers in your local communities)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Detached environment (able to separate from daily tasks of running your organization)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Long enough (roughly 3 days per session) to allow for ample reflection	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Action-orientation (focus on how you will apply what you've learned)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Non-continuous (ample breaks between NELP workshop(s) to allow time to apply what was learned)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Looking back at the NELP workshop(s) today, what recommendations would you have for additional topics that should be covered, changes in the format or structure, or any other ideas for how to improve the workshops?

On a scale from 1 to 5, how strongly do you agree with the following statements?

Without Bank of America's support our organization would have difficulty attracting adequate financial resources.	<input type="checkbox"/>
The NEI program has helped our organization achieve its goals.	<input type="checkbox"/>
The NEI program has allowed our organization to reach and help more people/organizations.	<input type="checkbox"/>
The NEI program has allowed our organization to be a more effective leader in the community.	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Module 2: Prior Bank of America Support

In this section, we ask you to describe what support you've received in the past from Bank of America

\*Please indicate whether any of the following helped to raise the profile of your organization and/or contributed to accessing additional funding. **Please select all that apply.**

- Media mentions related to the Builders program
- My organization's own use of the Builder award as a 'seal of approval'
- A connection made by someone affiliated with the Builders program
- A connection I made at the NEI Awards Celebration
- None of these

Given your answer to the question above, please briefly describe what happened and how this impacted your organization.

\*In what ways have Bank of America employees served as volunteers for your organization since you received the Builder award? Select all that apply.

- Engaging in 'hands-on' volunteerism (e.g., sorting clothing, tutoring a child)
- Sharing business expertise (e.g., accounting, marketing)
- Coaching an executive
- Serving as a mentor
- Serving as a board member
- Other- please specify
- None

How many cumulative Bank of America employees would you estimate have served as volunteers? If you selected more than one answer choice above, please estimate separately for each type of volunteerism.

» Engaging in 'hands-on' volunteerism (e.g., sorting clothing, tutoring a child)

- » Sharing business expertise (e.g., accounting, marketing)
- » Coaching an executive
- » Serving as a mentor
- » Serving as a board member
- » Other- please specify
- » None

Please provide one sentence on **what impact** Bank of America volunteers have had on your organization.

\*Since 2010, Bank of America has offered free monthly continuing education webinars (called the 'Nonprofit Impact Series') to Builders and Builder alumni. Which of the following best describes your awareness and attendance in these webinars?

- I was **not aware** these webinars are being offered
- I was aware, but **havenotparticipated** in any webinars
- I was aware, and I have participated in at least one webinar. **Please indicate the approximate number you have participated in:**

On average, how would you describe the relevance and effectiveness of the webinar(s) you have attended?

	1= Not at all relevant; 5= Highly relevant
Relevance	<input type="range"/>
Effectiveness	<input type="range"/>

Since the last NELP workshop(s), what other interactions, if any, have you had with Bank of America (e.g., participation in organizational effectiveness cohorts)? Please briefly describe these interactions and the impact they have had on your organization.

### Module 3: Potential future resources

In this section, we ask you to describe what resources could assist you in your future organizational growth.

\*Please select the five topics for which you and your organization would most value additional support.

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Additional leadership development for you                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Fundraising / resource creation                | <input type="checkbox"/> Advocacy and policy  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Human resources / organization development                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Going to scale (options/strategies for growth) | <input type="checkbox"/> Performance measurement of programs, organization (metrics, dashboards, evaluations, etc.) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Leadership development for other senior members of your team | <input type="checkbox"/> Internal communications                        | <input type="checkbox"/> Board governance / development   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Financial management   | <input type="checkbox"/> PR/Marketing/External communications           | <input type="checkbox"/> Succession planning for key leadership positions   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Technology   | <input type="checkbox"/> Change management framework/processes          | <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="text"/>   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Strategic planning   |   |   |

\*Imagine you have 100 points to allocate against these five topics. Please assign these points, giving more to those topics that you would find more valuable. You can assign as many or as few points to any topic below, so long as the total is 100.

» Going to scale (options/strategies for growth)	<input type="text" value="0"/>
» Board governance / development	<input type="text" value="0"/>
» Strategic planning	<input type="text" value="0"/>
» Financial management	<input type="text" value="0"/>
» Fundraising / resource creation	<input type="text" value="0"/>
» Human resources / organization development	<input type="text" value="0"/>
» PR/Marketing/External communications	<input type="text" value="0"/>
» Internal communications	<input type="text" value="0"/>
» Advocacy and policy	<input type="text" value="0"/>
» Performance measurement of programs, organization (metrics, dashboards, evaluations, etc.)	<input type="text" value="0"/>
» Succession planning for key leadership positions	<input type="text" value="0"/>
» Additional leadership development for you	<input type="text" value="0"/>
» Leadership development for other senior members of your team	<input type="text" value="0"/>
» Change management framework/processes	<input type="text" value="0"/>
» Technology	<input type="text" value="0"/>
» Other	<input type="text" value="0"/>
<b>Total</b>	<input type="text" value="0"/>

\*Have you collaborated in any way with leaders from other Builder organizations in the last year (not including webinars)?

- Yes
- No

Please fill in the following chart about the number of Neighborhood Builder leaders who you've kept in touch with. This information will help us determine how best to structure cohort networks in the future.

Total # of leaders you've kept in touch with	Of the total, the # who were in your six-person group at the NELS workshop (s)	Of the total, the # whose organizations are focused in a similar program area	Of the total, the # who are located in your market or community
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Please indicate the extent to which you have used these relationships for each of the following purposes.

	All of the relationships	Most of the relationships	Some of the relationships	None of the relationships
<b>Peer Consultation:</b> advice, expertise, and coaching relating to substantive content issues (e.g., youth development, affordable housing) or process issues (e.g., strategic planning)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
<b>Peer Support:</b> provided personal support, encouragement, active listening	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Links to resources:</b> provided links to potential collaborators who are not Builders, and to resources (e.g., tools, information)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>Job Assistance:</b> provided links to job opportunities or other career assistance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Peer Coaching:</b> advice and coaching on personal leadership and management practices	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Collaboration and Advocacy:</b> collaborated on projects and/or advocacy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	

\*On a scale from 1 to 5, please tell us how interested you are in ongoing learning from and sharing with other Builders

- 1: Not at all interested
- 2:
- 3:

- 4:
- 5: Extremely interested

In one sentence, please tell us what you would most want to **learn from other Builders.**

In one sentence, please tell us what you think you can most **contribute to other Builders.**

Which other Builders would you most want to learn from and share with?

We would like to learn your interest in helping to create and disseminate knowledge that may be of interest to you, other Builders, and the nonprofit sector at large.

\*For each of the following topics, please indicate **how important** you feel the topic is for the Builder network and the nonprofit sector **and** how **willing you will be to participate** in creating and disseminating knowledge.

	<b>Importance</b> 1 = Not at all important to the Builders/the sector 2= Somewhat important to the Builders/the sector 3= Somewhat important to the Builders/the sector 4= Extremely important to the Builders/the sector 5= Extremely important to the Builders/the sector	<b>Willingness</b> 1= Not at all willing to participate 2= Somewhat willing to participate 3= Somewhat willing to participate 4= Extremely willing to participate 5= Extremely willing to participate
Providing input to an annual report on the state of the sector	<input type="range" value="2"/>	<input type="range" value="2"/>
Providing input on key leadership and management issues/challenges	<input type="range" value="2"/>	<input type="range" value="2"/>
Providing input on best practices to address leadership and management issues/challenges	<input type="range" value="2"/>	<input type="range" value="2"/>
Providing input on issues /trends in program areas	<input type="range" value="2"/>	<input type="range" value="2"/>
Builders work in		



Please list and describe any other knowledge topics that you believe the Builders and the nonprofit sector at large would benefit from, AND that you believe the Builders network would be well-positioned to generate

**Module 4: Other involvement in the sector**

We would like to better understand the various ways in which you as a leader play a role in your community.

For each of the following categories, please indicate the number of boards or organizations you have been involved with since the beginning of the Builders program. **Please only include organizations you have been involved with for at least one year in the years following your receipt of the Builder award.**

	Number of boards or organizations you have been involved with since the beginning of the Builders program
Board member of a nonprofit or community organization	<input type="text"/>
Mentor or advisor to an individual at a nonprofit or community organization	<input type="text"/>
Formal or informal partnerships or alliances	<input type="text"/>
Any other organizations where you have shared or applied what you learned at NELP	<input type="text"/>

**Module 5: Organizational statistics**

The following questions will ask you to report **basic statistics for the years subsequent to your participation in the Builders program.** If you have completed a Neighborhood Excellence Initiative (NEI) impact survey in the past that asked similar questions, please attempt to answer these questions in the same way you answered the questions in those previous impact surveys.

We recognize the questions in this section may require you to pull data from various sources in your organization. **If this prevents you from submitting the survey by the deadline, please fill in as much as possible and submit the survey on time.** In this event, we ask that you please bring this information to the subsequent conversation we have (or will be) scheduling within two weeks.

How many people (total) did your organization serve annually in the following years?

2005	
2006	

2007	<input type="text"/>
2008	<input type="text"/>
2009	<input type="text"/>
2010	<input type="text"/>

If your organization works in Affordable Housing, how many people did your organization serve in Affordable Housing in the following years?

Please type in N/A if you do not work in Affordable Housing

<input type="text"/>	
2007	<input type="text"/>
2008	<input type="text"/>
2009	<input type="text"/>
2010	<input type="text"/>

If your organization works in Affordable Housing, what is the total number of housing units started, developed, or purchased in the following years?

Please type in N/A if you do not work in Affordable Housing

<input type="text"/>	
2007	<input type="text"/>
2008	<input type="text"/>
2009	<input type="text"/>
2010	<input type="text"/>

If your organization works in Economic Development, how many people did your organization serve in Economic Development in the following years?

Please type in N/A if you do not work in Economic Development

<input type="text"/>	
2005	<input type="text"/>
2006	<input type="text"/>
2007	<input type="text"/>
2008	<input type="text"/>
2009	<input type="text"/>
2010	<input type="text"/>

If your organization works in Economic Development, how many square feet of commercial space has your organization developed or acquired in the following years?

Please type in N/A if you do not work in Economic Development	<input type="text"/>
2007	<input type="text"/>
2008	<input type="text"/>
2009	<input type="text"/>
2010	<input type="text"/>

If your organization works in Economic Development, how many jobs did your organization create or preserve through your Economic Development work in the following years?

Please type in N/A if you do not work in Economic Development	<input type="text"/>
2007	<input type="text"/>
2008	<input type="text"/>
2009	<input type="text"/>
2010	<input type="text"/>

If your organization works in Workforce Development, how many people did your organization serve in Workforce Development in the following years?

Please type in N/A if you do not work in Workforce Development	<input type="text"/>
2006	<input type="text"/>
2007	<input type="text"/>
2008	<input type="text"/>
2009	<input type="text"/>
2010	<input type="text"/>

If your organization works in Education or Youth Development, how many people did your organization serve in Education or Youth Development in the following years?

Please type in N/A if you do not work in Education or Youth Development	<input type="text"/>
2006	<input type="text"/>
2007	<input type="text"/>

2008	<input type="text"/>
2009	<input type="text"/>
2010	<input type="text"/>

If your organization works in Arts and Culture, how many people did your organization serve in Arts and Culture in the following years?

Please type in N/A if you do not work in Arts and Culture	<input type="text"/>
2007	<input type="text"/>
2008	<input type="text"/>
2009	<input type="text"/>
2010	<input type="text"/>

If your organization works in Health and Human Services (HHS) or Social Services, how many people did your organization serve in HHS or Social Services in the following years?

Please type in N/A if you do not work in HHS or Social Services	<input type="text"/>
2007	<input type="text"/>
2008	<input type="text"/>
2009	<input type="text"/>
2010	<input type="text"/>

In one sentence, please describe the types of programs delivered through your organization's HHS or Social Services work.

Please type N/A if you do not work in HHS or Social Services	<input type="text"/>
Description of programs	<input type="text"/>

What were your organization's revenues, as they would be reported in your 990, in:

2009	<input type="text"/>
2010	<input type="text"/>

What were your organization's net assets, as they would be reported in your 990, in:

2009

2010

How many employees did your organization employ, as they would be reported in your 990, in:

2009

2010

**Module 6: Neighborhood Builders Award**

We recognize some questions in this section may require you to pull data from various sources in your organization. In this event, we ask that you please bring this information to the subsequent conversation we have (or will be) scheduled within two weeks.

\*In the first year you received the Builders Award, how did your organization utilize the funding? Please be as specific as possible. For example, you might answer 'for partial compensation of a new Development Director' instead of 'for fundraising'.

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In the first year you received the funding, what percent of your organization's total unrestricted revenue did that funding account for?

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\*In the second year you received the Builders Award, how did your organization utilize the funding?

In the second year you received the funding, what percent of your organization's total unrestricted revenue did that funding account for?

\*On a scale from 1 to 5, to what extent has the way in which you utilized the award **improved your organization's results?**

- 1: Not at all improved
- 2:
- 3:
- 4:
- 5: Extremely improved

\*On a scale from 1 to 5, how important was the **unrestricted nature** of the grant to your organization?

- 1: Not at all important
- 2:
- 3:
- 4:
- 5: Extremely important

On a scale from 1 to 5, did the NELP workshop(s) influence the way in which you chose to utilize the Award?

- 1: Did not influence at all
- 2:
- 3:
- 4:
- 5: Highly influenced how we utilized the award