



BEYOND REPORTING

Using Data as a Performance Management Tool

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THIS BRIEF is the fourth in a five-part series documenting the implementation of an economic mobility initiative supported by the [Change Capital Fund \(CCF\)](#).¹ CCF set out to build the capacity of its grantees, local community development corporations (CDCs), to use data for performance management. This entails moving beyond simply tracking the services that participants receive, which presumably every nonprofit organization does in some form, to following participants' progress in real time, so the staff can analyze program data and results and make adjustments as needed to maximize program effectiveness.

CCF, like other community initiatives influenced by the collective impact framework,² promotes the use of program data as a tool for continuous learning and program improvement. One of the core tenets of the [collective](#)

- ¹ CCF is a consortium of New York City donors formed to invest in local community development corporations that undertake data-driven antipoverty strategies integrating housing, education, and employment services. The [first brief](#) in this series introduced the CCF initiative's grantees and their work plans in detail; the [second brief](#) discussed challenges to service coordination and the ways grantees have responded to them; and the [third brief](#) described how their service coordination efforts have helped place individuals without extensive work histories in higher-wage jobs, encouraged first-generation college students to enter school and stay enrolled, and helped academically struggling students get back on track, among other outcomes.
- ² The collective impact framework involves a group of important actors (often from across sectors or areas of work) committed to collaborating on a common agenda to address a specific social problem (Kania and Kramer 2011).

impact approach is making information “actionable.” This approach can be a challenge to community initiative grantees, because it requires that they overcome a perception, *shaped and reinforced by decades of standard funder-grantee reporting practices*, that data are solely for reporting outcomes,³ and begin to view data as a tool to help them reach an ultimate program or organizational goal. Put simply, data can inform practice. CCF intended to foster this approach to data among its four grantees (see Table 1) for two reasons.⁴ First, with funders increasingly interested in data collection and analysis to demonstrate program effectiveness, building this capacity within the CDCs might improve their sustainability by enabling them to make an evidence-based case for their programs. Second, maximizing the effectiveness of services that meet the needs of low-income residents in each of the CDCs’ neighborhoods is a matter of urgency.⁵ What makes CCF unusual compared with other community initiatives is its *investment in building the capacity* of its grantees to use data for performance management. CCF’s approach has the potential to help transform CDCs’ use of data.

This brief describes the challenges of altering staff perceptions of data’s purpose and provides examples of how grantees have begun using data for program improvement. It discusses the critical role of funders in this work and identifies the specific assistance that CCF has provided to the grantees to make their data capacity-building efforts possible. (See Box 1 for the full list of CCF’s investments in building data capacity.) The brief draws on 27 interviews with staff members across the CCF grantees, ranging in position from executive leadership to frontline staff, and offers their reflections on building data capacity within their organizations and using the data to improve programs. Based on these interviews, we learned that in order to use data for performance management purposes, CDC staff members need three things: (1) a cultural embrace of data within their organization and a recognition of its usefulness for internal assessment (both largely influenced by funder requirements, as described in the next section); (2) a data infrastructure, meaning a functioning, well-integrated management

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- 3 Standard funder-grantee reporting practices require that grantees submit outcomes reports to funders of a specific initiative or program.
 - 4 CCF’s initial idea was to prepare the groups for pay-for-success programs or social impact investing, but the funders believed that the grantees needed to get better at managing by objectives to do so.
 - 5 The poverty rates in the selected CDCs’ respective neighborhoods range from 30 percent to over 40 percent, and residents struggle with unemployment, underperforming schools, and crime rates higher than those elsewhere in the city.

TABLE 1
CHANGE CAPITAL FUND GRANTEES AND INTERVENTIONS

GRANTEE	INTERVENTION
St. Nicks Alliance	NABE 3.0 initiative integrates St. Nicks Alliance’s outcomes-driven strategies in housing, employment, and education through one-on-one “coaching” to individuals and their households. Priority area: 11206 zip code (Williamsburg, Brooklyn)
Fifth Avenue Committee (FAC)	Stronger Together (FAC in partnership with Brooklyn Workforce Innovations, Red Hook Initiative, and Southwest Brooklyn Industrial Development Corporation) is helping local, low-income public housing residents gain access to adult education, support services, and job training and employment opportunities. Priority area: New York City Housing Authority’s Red Hook and Gowanus developments in Brooklyn
New Settlement Apartments (NSA)	NSA is further developing its Community School model, as well as improving the coordination among and efficacy of its affordable housing organizing, Community School, College Access and Success Center efforts, and young adult employment services in order to ensure greater continuity and intensity of program participation. Priority area: Mount Eden neighborhood of the Bronx
Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation (CHLDC)	CHLDC is using real estate development strategies to increase affordable housing; offering neighborhood students a continuum of educational services that starts with school readiness and continues through college; and connecting local residents with jobs through its sectoral employment initiative. Priority area: Cypress Hills/East New York, Brooklyn

BOX 1**CHANGE CAPITAL FUND INVESTMENTS IN BUILDING GRANTEES' DATA CAPACITY (2014-2018)****Planning Phase**

Seven months before Year 1 implementation, each grantee received \$50,000 to develop a business plan and work with Nonprofit Finance Fund on developing logic models and budgets.

Years 1-4

CCF provided flexible funding of \$250,000 per grantee per year for four years. Funds were used for a variety of purposes, including internal evaluation staff and data systems but also for program, development, and administrative staff. Grantees were required to submit quantitative outcomes and narrative reports, but CCF was not prescriptive about program strategy or implementation; funds could be redeployed as needed.

CCF offered technical assistance to support grantees' efforts to improve their ability to track and use data. In Year 1, technical assistance was provided to the entire cohort by Nonprofit Finance Fund. In Years 2-4, CCF offered grantees up to \$35,000 per year in technical assistance grants. In general, grantees used these funds to hire pre-approved consultants to help them implement and customize data systems and learn how to use them for performance management.

CCF convened grantees in quarterly meetings and presented workshops for the staff members in charge of collecting and processing data.

CCF retained Public Works Partners to work with grantees to develop individual and common metrics and to compile the metrics and help donors and grantees learn from them. In addition, Public Works Partners held a number of learning

network meetings for grantees to discuss issues related to data tracking and analysis.

Year 3

CCF retained Lili Elkins, LAE Consulting, to help grantees develop public benefit rationales by analyzing program data against counterfactuals (what would have occurred in the absence of the program) and estimating costs. This exercise was intended to further grantees' ability to use data to improve programs and to make a compelling case for sustaining and expanding programs.

CCF is partnering with the New York City Mayor's Office for Economic Opportunity (NYC Opportunity) to gain access to New York State Department of Labor (NYSDOL) data through a recent [law](#) that made employment data accessible to municipalities and postsecondary institutions. MDRC serves as the technical assistance provider for this work and the data intermediary between the grantees and NYSDOL. MDRC will facilitate the grantees' access to quarterly wage and employment data currently collected through Unemployment Insurance records and help grantees build their capacity to analyze the data for program improvement purposes.* This will result in a guide describing data security, data access, and data analysis processes.

* Grantees will receive quarterly wage data for participants who possess a Social Security number and are employed (on the books) in New York State. Additionally, grantees can request data describing the areas of work their participants are employed in, allowing them to learn whether participants gained employment and continue to be employed in the workforce area in which the grantee trained them.

information system (MIS) or centralized database;⁶ and (3) performance management practices that use program data as a regular tool.⁷

BUILDING DATA CAPACITY WITHIN A CDC

Well-documented challenges faced by community organizations attempting to use data to inform programming include a lack of staff time, insufficient financial resources, and little internal expertise with using data for this purpose.⁸ These were all mentioned by CDC staff members as obstacles that must be overcome to build data capacity within their organizations. Yet focusing on such factors assumes that staff members already have understood and embraced the idea that data should or could be used to improve programming. The CDCs emphasize that expanding staff perceptions of how data should be used (perceptions directly informed by staff members' experiences with funder requirements) is a critical first step when trying to build data capacity.

Expanding Staff Perceptions of Data Use

Altering staff perceptions of how data could be used requires modifying funder-driven data practices. Funder-driven reporting is the main way that staff members interact with data. This means that data are used primarily to assess progress toward outcomes for accountability purposes, and less as a learning tool for management or frontline staff.

All the CDCs receive funding from government agencies and foundations to support single-issue initiatives (for example, workforce or education programs), and this funding requires that they report on specific program outcomes. Frontline and program management staff members are experienced in collecting data on such outcomes as program enrollment and persistence, the number of participants who earn a diploma or pass a high-school equivalency exam, or the number of participants who obtain and keep employment. They note that these reported outcomes are typically clear and distinct data points — funders have traditionally required little information about the intensity of service delivery or the coordination of services that produced the outcomes, and grantees are not funded to learn what is working when it comes to their programs. And because participant data may be in several different funder-mandated databases associated with

6 MIS and centralized database will be used interchangeably throughout this brief.

7 Fruchterman (2016).

8 Grantmakers for Effective Organizations (2011).

separate programs, it may be impossible to see the number of program interactions for a single participant.⁹

Traditionally, program data were (and sometimes still are) stored in paper files or separate databases. Some databases (mostly those required by government funders) used a one-way reporting system in which grantees could only submit data to funders; after staff members entered program data into such a system, they could not view those data without requesting them from the funders — an activity often deemed too time-consuming by the frontline staff. This process could give rise to resentment about data-based interaction with funders, as described by one staff member:

It used to be that you would literally hand in paper to the [funder] tracking your work and then they would enter the information [in their database], and then when they created the databases they pushed that all back on us without funding any of the time for the entry in addition to actually doing the work. So that is where we are at now. Some of them [the funder-mandated databases] have no export capabilities. Some have no ability for us to run our own reports. [So] if you want [a] report, you have to ask them [the funder] for a report. It is not that they do not know this and it's not like they don't recognize it . . . but where is it on the priority of things that need to change? They should create databases that are, and I do not know the terminology, but that speak to each other. I mean [funders] should not have a proprietary database that doesn't . . . download the information and easily upload into your own database. I mean they should all be able to do that, so the information can be shared if you're not using that same database that the funder may be using.

It is only recently that some funders have begun to request limited data analyses from the grantees. One staff member who oversees workforce programming noted that the requested analyses consist mostly of drawing correlations — for example, comparing rates of training completion or employment by race, age, or sex. Unfortunately, according to the grantees, these additional requests do not come with additional funding. As one CDC executive said:

⁹ To use the example of workforce outcomes, documenting intensity or coordination of services would require staff members to report on the number of participants who complete a training program or obtain employment while also noting the additional services they received (such as services to stabilize their housing or obtain child care) that may have supported their workforce efforts, as well as when they received them (in a sequence or simultaneously).

All of this pushing down of more requirements and more data tracking . . . when the contract amounts have not gone up, but our costs have gone up. At some point there is a breaking point. Funders should fund the true cost of the program if they value collection of information.

Managers shared related reasons why some staff members may resist embracing data.¹⁰ When data are primarily used to report to funders, staff members may be apprehensive about spending time analyzing them, especially if outcomes are short of expectations — even if this is exactly when some analysis or reflection could be helpful. As one staff member said, “If the data is bad (meaning the outcomes are not meeting expectations), staff on the ground think they’re doing a bad job.” In addition, some frontline staff members feel that data entry cuts into their time with participants — that the residents they serve come first, and data entry can feel like a distraction from this important and often urgent work. To address their concern about distraction, some CDCs have instituted that one day a week be dedicated to data entry, emphasizing the importance of collecting accurate and timely data while allowing the staff to focus on service provision the majority of the week. This was a negotiated change, as it still involves a nontrivial reduction in service time.

Additionally, some frontline staff members expressed a discomfort with their organization’s or program’s current metrics (which are likely informed by funder reporting requirements) because the metrics did not account for qualitative improvements seen among participants. For example, a staff member who works with middle school students to address their behavioral issues noted that one of her students helped to deescalate a verbal disagreement between her peers. The staff member said, “This is a person for whom services were provided, then she [took] this on herself . . . giving advice, being a leader, and counseling her peers. Taking the services to her peers indicates the potential for these services to create leaders in the students.” She described how such information is usually captured in a comment or notes section of the database, and used as a success story to highlight to funders, but it is not treated as “real data.” To frontline staff members, though, these are the big wins that signify progress.

Managers attempt to reframe these concerns by emphasizing to the frontline staff that the work they do is part of a larger effort and that “if there’s anything worth doing, you have to find a way to measure it.” Across the

¹⁰ They did note that there was less resistance to embracing data among new staff members. They attribute this change to revised job descriptions that set clear expectations about data collection and the use of data for performance management.

CDCs, the messages seem to resonate: Several frontline staff members said, “If it’s not in the database, it didn’t happen.”

CCF’s establishment of common measures reporting, requiring that grantees submit midyear and end-of-year reports that reflect cross-program, collective efforts rather than outcomes from just one program, reinforces the management messaging about data. For the past three years, CCF has enlisted [Public Works Partners](#), a consulting firm in New York City, to provide technical assistance to the grantees to establish meaningful common measures among the CDCs and support their ability to report on the metrics.¹¹ The goal is to help frontline staff members view data as a collective learning tool instead of a value judgment on their work.

Creating and Benefiting from a Data Infrastructure

Creating a data infrastructure requires dedicated funding to establish and maintain a sophisticated relational database and internal staff expertise in data management, and to allow for external consultants to fill immediate and short-term data capacity gaps. In order to use data for performance management purposes, it is necessary for organizations to use a well-functioning MIS or relational database that is integrated into daily practice.¹² This is the area of work that CCF has most effectively supported, with three of four CDCs using technical assistance and staff resources to build these data systems. This kind of database can alleviate the problems of one-way submission of data to funders and redundant data entry caused by multiple funder databases.¹³ It is also important to have a database that can create reports that can be reviewed by management and frontline staff, as described below.

Over the past three years of the CCF initiative, the CDCs have developed centralized MISs, paid for staff members to lead their data integration efforts, and hired expert consultants to update their data systems and maximize

11 CCF’s common measures reporting requires that grantees capture the total number of participants served by CCF-related programming, job placement numbers and rates, the number of children and young people served in education programs, the number of adults served in education and training programs and their program outcomes, the number and percentage of adults earning a high school equivalency credential, and referrals made within or between the organizations.

12 A relational database allows downloads and uploads of data to and from other databases, as well as allowing an individual to be tracked across programs and services received.

13 Such a system would allow a grantee to either import data from the funder-mandated database into its system or enter data in its centralized MIS and then generate a funder report. Redundant data entry can be eliminated only if all the databases are compatible; otherwise, frontline staff members must enter the same data in multiple systems.

their utility for their respective organizations. CCF's flexible funds and individualized technical assistance have made these efforts possible.¹⁴ For example, with CCF's support, Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation (CHLDC) and St. Nicks Alliance both have invested in maintaining staff members dedicated to their data efforts — CHLDC hired a director of evaluation and research, and St. Nicks supports a data administrator position. While all the grantees have made progress, these organizations are furthest along in having a functional, centralized database capable of running cross-program data reports. CHLDC draws on these data to inform quarterly meetings in which leaders and frontline staff members discuss program performance; the director of evaluation and research pulls program data to help prepare frontline staff members for these meetings. At St. Nicks, a staff member describes how managers are adjusting to the new capacity:

In Year 4, we are able to look at all of our outcomes and program measures. Before [this database was created], our leadership struggled with access to these reports on a timely basis. Now the leadership team can [generate] a report to see how programs are running. Dashboards are being manually updated after information is pulled from ETO [efforts-to-outcomes software] but the goal is to have the dashboards integrated in the system . . . Before, I used to have to plead with the directors to pull dashboards. Now, they chase [me down] to have a dashboard updated.

St. Nicks and CHLDC also use their technical assistance funds to consult with database experts on continuously improving their MISs to meet the needs of their programs, divisions, overall organization, and funder reporting obligations.¹⁵ Stronger Together's Fifth Avenue Committee used its technical assistance funds to hire a consultant to build a centralized MIS (using a Salesforce data hub), which now facilitates uploads from the databases of the four Stronger Together partner organizations. Previously the partners shared a Google spreadsheet to keep track of their Stronger Together participants, requiring separate data entry and frequent maintenance by frontline and management staff members. Now each partner can track Stronger Together participants in its own database system and

¹⁴ The Change Capital Fund provides the four grantees with flexible funding for technical assistance, which means the CDCs can decide how to use this funding each year, as long as the assistance supports the grantee's CCF-related work.

¹⁵ St. Nicks Alliance invested most of the first two years' technical assistance funds to hire a consultant to develop data management plans for its NABE 3.0 service programs in its housing, youth and education, and workforce divisions. These data management plans have served as a blueprint for St. Nicks as it continues to build a performance management system and find ways to track and measure key performance indicators across programs.

export the data to the Fifth Avenue Committee's MIS. One staff member described how the centralized MIS is a welcome improvement, specifically as it relates to monitoring participant progress in a high school equivalency preparation program:

For our [program], it has been great because we are able to keep track of students' . . . pre and post scores easier. That was one of the big headaches that we had [before a centralized MIS]. That was a manual thing that they [frontline staff] had to keep track of . . . now we are able to just generate [a report] and see what the difference is between where they first came in and where they are now.

For New Settlement Apartments, the adoption of Salesforce as the database system for its College Access and Success program yielded benefits quickly:¹⁶

The way students are enrolled is not linear, they are dropping out and reenrolling. With Excel it was not easy to [track]. It would take me a month to do one aspect of [a] report [for a funder]. . . . [With Salesforce] it takes me 15 minutes [to run] the semester assessment report. That's changed significantly . . . and there is confidence in what we are reporting.

New Settlement staff members also mentioned how their newfound data capacity has benefited their organization financially, allowing them to pursue more data-centric funders and use data to make a case for programs. For example, New Settlement obtained a \$1.1 million YouthBuild contract from the U.S. Department of Labor in September 2016. New Settlement was one of 77 community-based organizations across the country selected to operate a YouthBuild site, a contract it previously pursued without success. Staff members who worked on the applications said that they generated reports in Salesforce that demonstrated their program success in working with young people. One manager said that without their data capacity, "I do not think we would have gotten it [the contract]. We have tried for YouthBuild twice, this is our third. I think we were [in a] better position to present data." Another program director said that New Settlement repurposed the outcomes reports included in the YouthBuild application to successfully solicit additional funds from the Tiger Foundation in 2016.

Because there are still incompatibilities with funder-mandated databases, it has not been possible to reach the ideal of eliminating all but one centralized database. Even so, having a centralized system can decrease time

¹⁶ Salesforce was also adopted by New Settlement's Young Adult Opportunity Initiative (YAOI).

spent on data entry; bridges can be built between databases to make data transfers possible and sometimes seamless. Additionally, a centralized MIS allows for a more holistic view of efforts, because the system can produce reports or dashboards showing outcomes across programs, divisions, and the organization overall — reaffirming to staff members that their individual service provision is part of a larger effort.

For example, in St. Nicks' workforce division, managers have begun generating a monthly dashboard that pulls milestone and outcome goals from each contract that supports their sectoral training programs and shows a snapshot of their progress toward those goals. Division leaders require frontline staff members, with support from the administrative staff, to enter data into the system regularly; job descriptions for the division now include data entry. Before staff meetings, division leaders work with the data administrator (the position supported by CCF funds) to generate dashboards for the full team to review together, to manage overall performance. One staff member noted, "the leadership is using it [the MIS] as an evaluation tool."

USING DATA FOR PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT PURPOSES

Although the CDCs have made great progress in building their data infrastructures, use of data to improve program performance remains limited. CDC staff members overwhelmingly expressed that using data for this purpose is their goal. The gradual pace of change speaks to the high level of effort, staff time, and funds needed to establish a practice and culture of using data for performance management.

During the CCF initiative, the grantees have grown more comfortable working with their data systems to improve the quality and efficiency of their interactions with participants. St. Nicks Alliance and New Settlement both described how they use their databases to build better relationships with participants by reducing time spent on data entry while meeting with someone who currently or previously received services at the organization. A staff member gave an example from New Settlement's work with students in high school: "We have students that come in and out all the time so people used to come and say, 'when were you here?' 'Do you remember who your counselor was?' So we were asking people basic information that we should have." Now, with the new database, staff members are prepared to greet a participant: "Oh, you were last here in 2004 and you met with [staff member name], and she's not here anymore but we can assign you a new counselor." Because the database is used to track all interactions with program participants, including intake, referrals, last interaction or service

provided, and achievement of milestones, the ability to instantly review a participant's history means that staff members can focus on providing services and building a relationship with the individual while experiencing the utility of data in that process.

CDC staff members also use their databases to send service prompts, which they have found to be particularly helpful to frontline staff members who work with multiple participants daily. For example, staff members who work with students in St. Nicks' after-school program and in New Settlement's College Access and Success Center have instituted service prompts in their database that are activated by the entry of a grade or social and emotional learning score that falls below a predetermined threshold.¹⁷ When this occurs, the system will generate an email to the staff member working with the student to flag that additional support services are required. At New Settlement, staff members used to manually track students' difficulties while using a Google spreadsheet. Now, in their Salesforce database, if a grade below 70 is recorded,

Salesforce can automatically trigger an email that goes to [the student's school] counselor that says "hey look, [this student] now has a 65 average, give him a call." There are ways for us to track our students in an intensive way and to get red flags sooner, and then we can actually see if someone followed up or didn't follow. Before it took a lot of human power to do that.

Also at New Settlement, the College Access and Success Center consulted attendance data for its SAT exam class — which did not serve a large number of students but was used as a venue to encourage students to participate in one-on-one college advising services — to determine whether the class was worth continuing. Staff members cross-checked the list of students in the SAT class with the list of students who participate in one-on-one advising and determined that only a few students in the class did so, so they decided to terminate the SAT class this year. One staff member noted, "we are able to really look at things we were not able to capture before and reevaluate things."

In the case of Stronger Together, staff members used data to help fill some gaps in their outreach efforts when they anticipated that they would not meet the outreach goals they set for themselves in Year 3 of the CCF initiative:

¹⁷ "Social and emotional learning (SEL) is the process through which children acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions" (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning [CASEL] 2017).

We made adjustments on a macro scale in terms of how we outreach for ST [Stronger Together] across all programs. At the program level, many participants and residents for training that would lead to employment are not meeting the minimal TABE [Test for Adult Basic Education] requirement for employment training. As a result, adult education started providing on-site TABE testing for all ST participants. The potential participants not meeting this requirement are encouraged to take adult education classes.

This approach has expanded the pool of potential job training participants for Stronger Together. By offering resources for participants who may not be ready for job placement rather than turning them away, the organization is building a pathway for residents by which they become ready to enter job training and ultimately obtain employment.

SUSTAINING CCF'S GAINS

Building the capacity of CDCs to use data for performance management requires cross-program database systems, staff time, expertise, and financial support. For funders, it is essential to acknowledge that each community organization comes to this work with its own data capacity and staffing structure (it may or may not have a point person for data collection and analysis), so CDCs require different types and levels of support to move them closer to the goal. CCF's flexible funds and individualized technical assistance have been essential in responding to grantee-specific needs as they relate to building data capacity — supporting the salaries of in-house staff members tasked with leading data collection and analysis efforts and providing the resources to hire expert consultants as needed, whether to improve an existing MIS or to build a comprehensive system to meet the grantee's needs.

The CDCs have made progress, but there is much work ahead to establish and sustain a data culture and infrastructure within their organizations. The staff reflections reported here illustrate the effort required of staff members at all levels, not to mention the external support (expert consultants) necessary to fill an organization's knowledge and capacity gaps in the interim — gaps that often exist at nonprofit organizations because funders do not typically support data-focused positions. The takeaways from this initiative — the need to provide CDCs with flexible financial support, and the importance of technical assistance — are critical for CDCs that plan to embark on data capacity-building efforts, and even more critical for funders that are interested in seeing more data collection and analysis from their grantees but that have not yet invested in building the capacity of those grantees to deliver on this request.

Despite the work still required, the CDCs already perceive their new capacity and level of comfort with data as an opportunity to engage with funders differently and to seek out funders that are more focused on data, as in the example of New Settlement's YouthBuild contract. The prospect of CDCs gaining such additional funder support has prompted CCF to hire a consultant to assist them in determining the true cost and public benefit of their programs. This step is well timed, as an increasing number of funders are interested in data beyond independent program outcomes.¹⁸ Yet if these funders continue to overlook investment in community organizations' data capacity, the sustainability of the CDCs' nascent data culture — not to mention the prospects for CDCs outside the CCF initiative — comes into question. The experiences of CCF grantees shared in this brief and their improved capacity to use data for performance management suggest that CCF's approach may be worthy of emulation.

LOOKING FORWARD

This brief describes an increasingly important issue in community initiatives — the use of data to improve program performance — and offers reflections on the experience of building data capacity and a data infrastructure within a CDC. The final brief in the series, scheduled for the end of 2017, will cover one of the most significant challenges for the community development field — managing the tensions between funders and implementers concerning the goals of their work and the outcomes that can be expected from it.¹⁹ The brief will share reflections from both grantees and funders about their CCF experience.

Read more about [MDRC's approach to the evaluation](#)

Learn more about [CCF and the grantees](#)

¹⁸ Tatian (2016).

¹⁹ Brown and Fiester (2007).

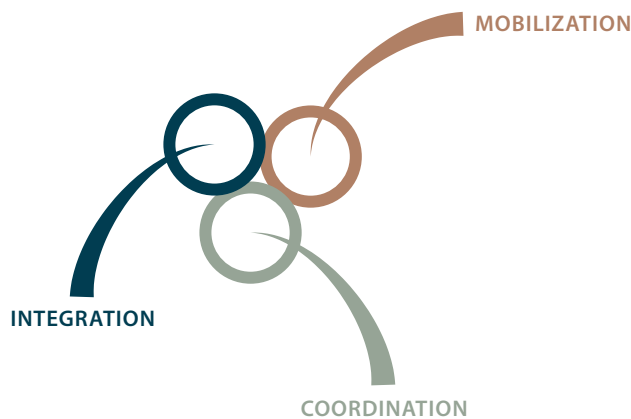
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