Dear friends,

More than 26,000 individuals served in 28 communities, 12 cities, across 9 states, over the past 39 years—these are the numbers that define Urban Strategies’ impact across the country. However, we believe that it takes just one person to create powerful change.

We believe our communities are stronger thanks to the collective strength of empowerment for each individual resident. To demonstrate this impact, I’m pleased to present you with Urban Strategies’ 2015 Annual Impact Report: The Power of One.

The numbers in this report represent pivotal changes happening in distressed communities across the country, but it’s the successes of each individual resident where we see those changes in action.

We could not have done this without the assistance of generous funders, a committed board of directors, our dedicated employees, and collaborative partners.

Thank you for helping us change communities, one person at a time.

Sincerely,

Sandra M. Moore
President
Urban Strategies
Urban Strategies provides a range of comprehensive human service supports for low-income families living in distressed urban core residential communities across the country.

Each of the residents featured in this report live in Choice Neighborhood Implementation (CNI) project areas. CNI is an initiative of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, created to help communities revitalize distressed public or assisted housing, while investing in people.

Urban Strategies was selected as the grant recipient to provide education, health, and workforce development services for nearly half of the CNI projects across the country, including two of the first projects ever to be implemented.

Columbus, Ohio
Memphis, Tennessee
New Orleans, Louisiana
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
Sacramento, California
San Antonio, Texas
San Francisco, California
$100,000

4,019

Individuals living within Choice Neighborhood Initiative (CNI) project areas receiving “people” services from Urban Strategies.

2,135

Families in CNI areas receiving case management services from Urban Strategies, such as education, tutoring, youth mentorship, family wellness programs, and other supports.

1,545

CNI communities benefiting from Urban Strategies’ services that include workforce development, health initiatives, education, and many other supports.

7

Urban Strategies believes that it takes just one person to create powerful change for the community.

100,000

Adults in CNI areas receiving direct case management services from Urban Strategies, such as job training and placement, financial counseling, healthcare and mental health referrals, and other supports.
Urban Strategies’ work has leveraged over $100 million in human capital investments.

It’s our philosophy that if we provide sustainable solutions and truly believe in the potential of each individual, our communities will be collectively stronger.

- In San Francisco, 50% of preschool children in the neighborhood are enrolled in early childhood education.
- 50.2% of all CNI in-school youth engaged in youth enrichment activities.
- 52.6% of all CNI pre-school children are receiving early childhood development services.
- 55.6% of all CNI pre-school children received a developmental screening.
- In Pittsburgh, 60% of middle and high school youth are participating in enrichment programs.
- 75% of all CNI households successfully maintain housing stability.
- Urban Strategies’ work in Memphis resulted in a 40% increase in employment for adult public housing residents.
- Work in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina increased employment rate by 53% in focused neighborhood.
- 27.6% of all CNI unemployed, able-bodied adults engaged in workforce activities or higher education.
- In Urban Strategies’ Memphis community, crime decreased by 30%.
- In the St. Louis neighborhood, violent crime dropped 71%.
28% of U.S. households face financial strains on income, expenditures, or wealth. Many families confront not just one but two or even all three of these challenges.*
58% of U.S. individuals who were in poverty in 2009 remained in poverty in 2013.

After losing a job, there is an inevitable sense of urgency to find work.

One still needs to pay bills and support his or her family. In the East Liberty/Larimer neighborhood of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, it can be even more daunting to overcome the rampant poverty and crime that afflicts the neighborhood.

After years of working a series of odd jobs that would keep her employed for a year or less at a time, Jamisha Young found herself jobless again. She desperately looked for another job, but she kept getting turned down. She was finding it difficult to pay her rent and began to fall behind.

“It took months to find a job. I had interviews, but I still didn’t get hired.”

When she went in search of help, she found support from the unique partnership of Urban Strategies, Three Rivers Workforce Investment Board, and PA CareerLink—Choice Neighborhood Initiative [CNI] service providers working as a team to provide supportive services to residents. Jamisha realized, though, there was still work to be done.

It became quickly apparent that it was time to invest more energy now to find a long-term career opportunity. With the help of the team, Jamisha quickly began improving her “soft” skills and practiced interviewing. She polished up her resume, while searching for a job that would be a good fit for her interests and career goals.

“Rondeea [from PA CareerLink] pointed me in the right direction. Once she helped with my resume and prepared me for interviews—that is what finally helped.”

After attending a handful of job fairs and lots of networking and searching together, Jamisha and Rondeea found an open position at Safelite Auto Glass. It was a perfect fit.

“Most of life is about paying bills and money, but you need a job that you want to go to every day. I work at Safelite now and I love it. We are like family there; it’s a second home.”

Jamisha reports that she is currently up-to-date on rent. She’s looking forward to moving back into the redevelopment and seeing positive changes in the community—thanks, in part, to the PA CareerLink staff, Urban Strategies, and the Choice Neighborhood Initiative-Pittsburgh team’s support.
Not everyone can truthfully say that they built the home in which they live, but Yomo Shaw will soon be able to make that claim.

In one of the very first Choice Neighborhood Implementation (CNI) projects, Yomo works hard every day to help transform San Francisco’s Eastern Bayview/Alice Griffith public housing development into a new, sustainable, mixed-income community—brick by brick. In his job as a construction laborer, Yomo puts sweat equity into his neighborhood in hopes of seeing positive change.

According to Yomo, Eastern Bayview has seen its fair share of violence and crime. Admittedly, Yomo himself was part of the problem.

“The person I used to be is a terrible person—I’ll never see him again. Out there selling drugs, doing crime, and all that. Around here it used to be really, really rough. There were lots of shootings and robberies.”

After being incarcerated for selling drugs, Yomo was released with a new attitude and a willingness to work for better opportunities for himself and his family.

Without much work history, though, it was difficult for him to find a job—one that would provide him with a living wage. Even with passion, a strong work ethic, and a desire to change his life, he couldn’t make enough to support himself and also provide for his six children.

It was then when he contacted Urban Strategies.

He worked with workforce development specialists and case managers who helped him develop his “soft” skills and also assisted him in joining the laborer’s union. Once he was a qualified apprentice, they were able to connect him with his current HUD Section 3 job opportunity. Yomo is now on his way.

“Now I focus on going to work and taking care of my family. I am happy with the person I am now.”

“The revitalization of Alice Griffith is critical to San Francisco’s long-term goals for the Bayview neighborhood,” said U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein. “This $30.5 million investment from HUD is a vote of confidence in San Francisco that will spur economic development and create more than 1,200 units of affordable housing, while leveraging resources to build infrastructure, improve the community and put Californians back to work.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Average Household Income 2014</th>
<th>$14,840</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average Household Income 2015</td>
<td>$15,665</td>
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INCREASE 5.5%
For Yvonne Green, embracing a healthy lifestyle was more about reducing stress than reducing her waistline. After years of drug and alcohol abuse, Yvonne was in recovery when she continued to experience great loss and traumatic events, slowing her progress toward overall health and success. Her brother, with whom she was close, died in prison under suspicious circumstances. The stress of his loss and the ongoing investigation was a source of constant pain for Yvonne. She would watch similar stories on the news and feel like she was grieving again and again.

“When I see stuff on TV, it brings up a whole range of feelings. I’m living paycheck to paycheck… plus, just living in this neighborhood is stressful. It’s hard.”

Seeing this potential threat to her well-being, case managers at Urban Strategies urged her to join the program: With Every Heartbeat is Life (WEHL). The program centers on goal-setting and education to help residents improve their knowledge of healthy behaviors. She learned how to monitor her health, make dietary changes, and exercise regularly in order to help keep her stress levels down.

Perhaps the biggest help came in the form of a referral from her Urban Strategies’ case manager to a mental health counselor. In many poor communities, seeking mental health support is seen as an act of weakness. But Yvonne overcame this stigmatization and sought help.

“It helped to talk to somebody. I know that I need to deal with things hands-on and not use. I know that is not going to bring him back. It would only hurt my kids and my grandkids and not solve anything.”

Yvonne helps care for her grandkids and her other brother, who has disabilities. She’s currently working at Target and feeling hopeful about changes in the neighborhood, and within herself. She still sees her therapist and keeps up with exercise – taking Zumba workout/dance classes a few times a week. And it helps; she describes herself as more stable.

“My thinking is much clearer since I’ve been eating right and taking care of myself. Even though sometimes I cry and feel like I want to give up – I can’t. I just put my boots on and go do what I’ve got to do. It’s good.”

Approximately 1 in 25 adults in the U.S.—10 million, or 4.2%—experiences a serious mental illness in a given year that substantially interferes with or limits one or more major life activities.

By 2020, at least 60% of jobs in Texas will require a career certificate or college degree.

- Carnevale, Smith, and Strohl, 2013
It was a momentous occasion, filled with joy, but also uncertainty. How would she support three children on her own? How can she provide the best for her children without a job or even a high school diploma? Will she ever feel safe in her own neighborhood?

Years later, circumstances in Mary’s life had left her with four beautiful children under the age of six and little support from her partner. She met the kids’ father at the age of 16. She describes her situation as her “being a single parent” because they decided to part. It was then she decided to start over. “I didn’t want to be at a dead end with nothing but government assistance. I realized I really needed to get my high school diploma.”

She turned to Urban Strategies for help. It was then that she received resources to discover opportunities to get her diploma and begin the path to success. Mary was connected with the George Gervin Youth Center and their YouthBuild program, designed to help 16-24-year-olds obtain their high school diplomas, workforce training, and certification in construction.

Mary finished the program and walked proudly at graduation. “When my boys saw me wearing a cap and gown the day of graduation, they kept saying I looked so beautiful and they couldn’t wait to graduate and go to college.”

Obtaining her high school diploma was a promise to herself and her children. Mary is now pursuing an electrical apprenticeship and working with Urban Strategies’ workforce specialists to find a job in construction. She’s also looking forward to seeing positive changes in San Antonio’s Eastside.

Mary describes living in a neighborhood where she consistently saw people walking around with guns tucked inside their pants and she frequently witnessed drive-by shootings and other violence. She is hopeful that she will finally feel safe to be walking around outside with her kids.

“I remember one night hearing gunshots so close – I ran into their room and threw myself on top of my kids to protect them. I see now that things are changing. I am so happy that this renovation is happening. I feel positive about the whole change and I am excited to move back.”

Mary Gil’s third child came into this world on the very day that she moved out of Wheatley Courts in hopes of moving back in to a renovated community someday.

“When my boys saw me wearing a cap and gown the day of graduation, they kept saying I looked so beautiful and they couldn’t wait to graduate and go to college.”

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**Working-Age Participants with a High School Diploma**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>78 out of 141 participants</td>
<td>83 out of 141 participants</td>
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Increase: 5.2%
Not a day goes by that my kids don’t have food on their plates and a roof over their heads.”

This is a statement not often uttered by many residents in the Treme neighborhood of New Orleans, LA, especially from a single parent. Yet, Kimberly does everything in her power to not only provide for her children (and other’s), but work on her own goals as well.

Four years ago, Kimberly was living in the Iberville Housing Project. This housing development saw tremendous changes over the years, in particular when the city was recovering from Hurricane Katrina. During that time, residents were required to rebuild their city after a terrific disaster and were also required to rebuild their futures.

For Kimberly, the best path to a successful future is through education.

Today, her kids participate in Urban Strategies’ after school tutoring program where they work on homework and do activities, and parents get an opportunity to spend time reading to their kids. Her oldest son has even become a tutor himself and is getting ready to graduate from high school early. She beams with pride when she speaks of their accomplishments and discusses her own future.

“My son is going to college to become an electrical engineer; I’m going back to school to get my GED, graduate and go to college. I hope all of my kids go to college.”

It wasn’t always easy and she didn’t always handle the stress of caring for four kids on her own so well. So she, again, turned to Urban Strategies for help. She participated in a customer service training program that helped her work on job skills, but also taught her how to interact with just about everyone.

“I was a very disrespectful person coming up. Now I know how to talk to people without attitude.”

Her kids are now following in her footsteps, growing up to appreciate what they have – and what their mother has worked so hard to give them.

“I didn’t want to show my kids that it was hard. When I felt like I couldn’t do it, I talked to Urban people and they gave me the strength to keep going. It means a lot to have Urban.”

Kimberly is hopeful about all of the positive changes happening in her neighborhood, thanks in part to the Choice Neighborhood Initiative.

“Once people come together, I believe we can keep the crime down and keep drugs away from the community and [make it] safe for kids.”
Imagine being forced to leave the home you’ve known for years. You go in hopes of a better opportunity and positive change for the neighborhood, but it’s still no easy task.

The people you called neighbors, friends, family—they now live 20 minutes away when they used to be right next door. It’s times like these when individuals look to community leaders to keep them together. If you are from the Iberville community in New Orleans, Louisiana, people look to Sharon Campbell. Like many of her neighbors, Sharon has seen plenty of crime and violence living in Iberville.

"I’ve been living in this part of New Orleans since 1991 and I’ve seen lots of people lose their kids to violence.”

In addition to strife going on around her, she also experienced great personal loss. Her daughter died during childbirth 13 years ago, leaving behind a toddler and a newborn. For Sharon, it wasn’t even a question who would take over caring for them, but it wasn’t easy.

"I had to start all over. I am the only person my grandchildren have. They totally depend on me.”

Sharon works hard to send them to a private school and raise them right. They have participated in many of the educational offerings that Urban Strategies has in place for young people and Sharon takes tremendous pride in their success. Her grandson, Montel, is getting ready to graduate from high school and will go on to serve in the National Guard.

"I just wanted them to get what they are supposed to out of life. It’s been a hard struggle, but when I see my grandkids, I think: I’m doing my job.”

That same passion drives Sharon to support the community at-large. She is particularly passionate about providing opportunities for young people. She works in the cafeteria of a local school and is the vice president of the resident board. She volunteers for everything from serving breakfast and working in the garden to helping people clean their homes or organizing a coat drive.

"I love my community and I love helping people. I want my community to have the strongest pride in the world and I want to go back to a place where people don’t have to worry about their safety.”

Fellow residents seek out Sharon for her support and advice. She is incredibly respected and people value her opinion greatly. Change happens one person at a time, but with Sharon Campbell by your side, New Orleans is seeing an exponential force of positive change at work.

“I love my community and I love helping people. I want my community to have the strongest pride in the world and I want to go back to a place where people don’t have to worry about their safety.”
Our mission:

Urban Strategies seeks to empower residents in distressed urban core neighborhoods to lead healthy, prosperous lives in thriving, self-sustaining communities.

Thanks to strong partnerships with public and private organizations, we can transform communities by empowering residents and creating long-term, positive change.
Leadership

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Alecia Leonard, Director of Resident Development and Training

Fiscal Year 2015

Sources of Program Support

- Contributions 3%
- Federal Program Grants 7%
- Program Contract Revenue 77%
- Foundation Grants 13%

Program Expenditures

- Service Delivery & Implementation 73%
- Sustainability 12%
- General & Administrative 11%
- Policy & Planning 4%

2015 Funders & Donors

Urban Strategies is supported by a range of public and private funding sources. These funds assist in the planning and implementation of human services and social connections that support residents in 28 disadvantaged communities across the country. We gratefully acknowledge our 2015 funders and donors who helped us to advance our mission, and to empower possibility for children, families and communities.

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