Prospectus
2018
For 40 years, Urban Strategies has been committed to making sure that the families we serve become stable and thriving. By using housing as a platform for success, we build on existing community assets to align services before, during, and after large-scale neighborhood transformation efforts. In doing so, we effectively establish seamlessly coordinated networks of educational, economic mobility, health and wellness, and civic empowerment supports. The timeline above illustrates some of our greatest achievements during our rich history, and what we are working to accomplish in the coming years.
Urban Strategies, Inc. is a national not-for-profit organization with experience in strategic planning, capacity building, neighborhood transformation, and designing and implementing human capital building and community development strategies. We work with residents, foundations, housing authorities, city government officials, institutions, developers, property managers, and other stakeholders to build comprehensive plans around neighborhood assets and service needs.

Founded in 1978, Urban Strategies is a leader in human capital planning, policy development, cultural competence, creating and implementing equity agendas, and community development. We use place-based strategies and local resources to capitalize on the inherent strengths of communities, while concurrently working with developers to create new physical facilities and amenities that complement human service systems and improve the capacity of existing community systems.

Currently, we support more than 30,000 low- to moderate-income families, approximately 100,000 individuals, in 27 unique communities across 15 major metropolitan areas throughout the United States. Urban Strategies continues to provide a range of comprehensive human service supports for families living in distressed urban communities across the country, especially through federally funded initiatives like HOPE VI, Choice Neighborhoods, and Promise Neighborhoods.

Urban Strategies is an organization using a Results-Count framework to coordinate and better align efforts to improve outcomes for families. We leverage local community resources and convene equity-focused action teams to build robust local systems with structural alignment and seamless service delivery mechanisms for children and families. All of our work is driven by our RBA framework which steers us to actualizing our vision that all families are stable and thriving.
The Road Ahead: Ensuring Opportunity for All Families

The prominent civil rights leader Whitney Young once stated, “I am not anxious to be the loudest voice or the most popular. But I would like to think that at a crucial moment, I was an effective voice of the voiceless, an effective hope of the hopeless.” The families Urban Strategies serves too often feel like the voiceless and hopeless that Mr. Young spoke of. Many of these families are still struggling to break the same structural forces that generations have encountered before them, and still struggle for equality and opportunity.

In 2014, the shooting of Michael Brown, and the ensuing response from the Ferguson community in many ways triggered a more pressing focus on the isolation – from jobs, education, justice, and so much more – experienced by Ferguson’s citizens. For Urban Strategies, a St. Louis-based organization, the events forced us to re-assess and confront economic, health, and educational disparities in more actionable ways than ever before.

As told in our 2016 report, Ending Isolation in Southeast Ferguson: Insights from Residents and Community Members, “Overall, [Ferguson residents] report having very little sense of connection and belonging to the broader area. They describe a persistent feeling of geographic, economic and social isolation. This portrayal of life in Southeast Ferguson emerged from residents and other community stakeholders alike; a stark socioeconomic disparity between Southeast Ferguson and other parts of the city and region was revealed.”

Understanding the Barriers we must Work to Overcome

The challenges Ferguson residents continue to face are far too commonplace across our country today. Recent reports on Baltimore and Chicago police departments have detailed widespread patterns of practice against African-American and other communities of color. According to The Century Foundation, over 26 million – nearly half of all school-age children – live within a high-poverty school district. While poverty surely impacts White communities, The Brookings Institution has asserted that one in four Black adults experience some form of compounded disadvantage, compared with one in ten White adults. These widespread disparities, as well as so many others, are closely linked to race, place, and socioeconomic status.

Recently, there has also been a seismic shift in federal leadership. The current Administration has already acted on pledges that will have tumultuous effects on our families. These include threats to severely diminish or even end social service programming, attempts to dismantle advances in universal healthcare protections, and executive action against children and young adults with protected immigrant status.

Additionally, whereas previous administrations have supported place-based community redevelopment initiatives like Choice Neighborhoods, Promise Neighborhoods, and others, current leadership has indicated a desire to cut federal expenditures on anti-poverty programming. HUD has considered budget cuts that could end the important planning
and implementation efforts for vulnerable families as we know them. The specter of this looms large, and so we are seeking – with urgency – ways to build our organizational capacity to continue to deliver outstanding services for our people.

The challenges we face today may feel overwhelming and bleak. Yet still, although these challenges may be discouraging, we see opportunity. It is critical for us to face these challenges head-on and empower our residents to drive meaningful change in the neighborhoods in which we work.

The Road Ahead: Ensuring Opportunity for All Families

With these challenges in mind, we are entering a new era in our organizational history with an explicit focus on strengthening the field. For forty years, the primary focus of Urban Strategies has been to coordinate local services in the midst of large-scale community revitalization efforts so that impacted residents have greater opportunities. In those forty years, we have gained a deep knowledge about what works for families and communities.

As Urban Strategies continues to be a leader in the creation, implementation, and sustaining of aligned human capital systems, we are also making significant organizational shifts to make internal and external advances in our work. We recognize the enormous challenges facing us today, and in response we have developed a diverse and ambitious agenda looking towards 2025.

We believe that by focusing on results for families, we can shift peoples' mental models about people living in distressed communities and lead more meaningful change. That is why Urban Strategies is using Results-Based Accountability to refocus our own long-term organizational plan and integrate a results-based approach into the culture of our organization.

An important piece of neighborhood redevelopment is Urban Strategies' belief that the more we share, the more we all benefit. As we keep focusing on data and evidence, we are simultaneously increasing our capacity to inform and influence better policies at local, state, and federal levels. That is why we are doubling down our efforts to be thought leaders and field builders.

Importantly, our residents are not at all unconscious of the barriers described. In fact, residents can serve as the most powerful agents of change in their own communities. It is critical that families and communities are empowered through opportunities for political representation and self-actualization. That is why Urban Strategies is accelerating our efforts to go even further in making resident leadership opportunities a core component of our work in communities.

We at Urban know that serving children and parents together has a strong impact on breaking the cycle of intergenerational poverty. That is why we continue to implement integrated approaches for dual-generations, and collect data with our LEARN system that can be used for future research and development.
At Urban Strategies, we know that families thrive in neighborhoods that are stable and sustainable. Throughout our history of partnering with communities and experience in serving residents, we have come to understand what it takes to fundamentally alter the trajectory of vulnerable families living in distressed public and assisted housing.

First, **physical revitalization as well as human capital revitalization is necessary**, and we know how critical it is to have these pieces be closely aligned in their vision, strategy and timeline. Secondly, **focused action is needed at the family systems level as well as the community systems level** for sustainable social and economic development.

Our approach to work on-the-ground is driven by our Results-Based Framework. Through this framework, we are constantly assessing how our work on-the-ground can inform and better serve populations at greater levels. By using an assets-based approach to developing Individual Development Plans and Family Development Plans with households in the communities we work with, Urban aims to produce better outcomes for not only the residents directly served in 15 major metropolitan areas, but for all residents living in the neighborhoods we have a presence in – all the way up to the 3 million public housing residents living in the United States.
Southern Regional Population Breakdown

Places:
- Galveston
- Louisville
- Memphis
- Miami
- New Orleans
- Puerto Rico
- San Antonio

6,225,000 People

100,000 people in 30,000 households

Regional Population: Families in Neighborhoods
1,250,000 People

Southern Regional Target Population:
8,000 people living in 3,300 households

Western Regional Population Breakdown

Places:
- Sacramento
- San Francisco
- Tulsa

2,627,000 People

100,000 people in 30,000 households

Regional Population: Families in Neighborhoods
1,250,000 People

Western Regional Target Population:
2,000 people living in 750 households

Eastern Regional Population Breakdown

Places:
- Baltimore
- Columbus
- Minneapolis
- Pittsburgh
- St. Louis

2,515,000 People

100,000 people in 30,000 households

Regional Population: Families in Neighborhoods
1,500,000 People

Eastern Regional Target Population:
10,000 people living in 3,500 households
Urban Strategies works with people and communities that have experienced histories of systemic disinvestment and disenfranchisement. For our organization to truly make a difference for the families we serve, we recognize that, more than the day-to-day work on the ground, we need to challenge and change the assumptions and false narratives people carry about our residents.

Each day, we leverage our case management expertise to move families to better educational, economic, health, and influence outcomes. These Events are what are seen on the surface – people see our children enrolled in out-of-school programs, watch our families earn higher wages, and witness the improved wellness of our residents.

Underlying these events are targeted efforts to break down established Patterns of Behavior. Urban strives to shift paradigms and do more than conduct business as usual – we want to disrupt what has been happening to keep our communities from thriving. We emphasize tying these changes to measureable outcomes and results.

Breaking down these patterns of behavior helps us to further break down the Structures of the Systems that oppress and prevent our families from succeeding. Our goal is to influence policies, laws, and other physical structures through an equity lens to improve the outcomes of our families and communities of color.

This work is done through a frame of understanding that people hold Mental Models about our families that hinder the ability of those families to achieve lifetime successes. We at Urban believe that people hold very succinct mental models around race, poverty, and inclusion – to name a few. If we are to catalyze change, we must help people understand these mental models and remove the power and influence systems perpetuating these beliefs have in keeping our families from being stable and thriving.

Seeing what is Below the Surface: Challenging Assumptions & Changing Narratives
Our Impact

We have built upon the lessons of public housing transformation through more than 20 years of work with HOPE VI revitalization efforts, developed and demonstrated expertise in planning, implementing and supporting Choice Neighborhood Initiative (CNI) grantees, and continue to support residents with braided solutions that are based on local data, conditions and partnerships. As such, we continue to advance our strong national presence through policy and influence strategies to advance our mission and vision on a broader scale.

Urban Strategies embraces a culture of results – everything we do is created and implemented with a specific focus on positive outcomes for the children and families we serve. This means that to achieve our desired results, we have to be smart, adapt to changing times, and utilize evidence-based best practices in all of our work. Led by President Esther Shin, we have taken on an important role in thought leadership for the broader neighborhood development field.

At Urban Strategies, we constantly challenge ourselves so that the people we serve have the opportunities they deserve. As we continue to adopt and apply the most promising strategies, we never stop innovating and leading. Here are some primary examples of our portfolio.

Neighborhood Revitalization

- **The Leading Choice People Partner:** In 2011, Urban Strategies was awarded two of the first ever Choice Neighborhood Initiative grants for New Orleans and San Francisco, resulting in over $9 million in supportive services funding for families, and nearly $52 million in housing and neighborhood revitalization funds. Since then, we have been awarded CNI Implementation grants in San Antonio, Columbus, Pittsburgh, Memphis, Sacramento, Louisville, and St. Louis. In combination, Urban Strategies has allocated over $40.0 million in support services funding for families in CNI program areas, which has leveraged over $200 million through in-kind services and direct resources. We have led or are currently leading on $1.5 million in Choice Planning grant awards in 3 cities.

- **Improving Outcomes for Families:** Our work is powered by our service networks which consists of connecting families to supports around education, economic mobility, health and wellness, and power and influence. For example, each year we work to move 10% of all of our families to a living wage. We have seen demonstrated success in places like the Foote Homes housing development in Memphis, where since 2016 family wages have increased by more than 200%.

- **Resident Engagement & Leadership Development:** Urban Strategies is committed to the continued involvement and training of residents in the development process so that they can participate as full partners in the revitalization effort. This is true for young people as well as adults. For example, in the Heritage Park community in Minneapolis, Urban has supported local youth in an effort to create and operate a social enterprise effort around healthy food systems. Youth are growing food, baking and marketing their own products, and presenting their successes to other cities as a model for sustainable entrepreneurship. The business and life skills these youth are gaining illustrate the sort of empowerment Urban advocates for and achieves with our families.
Policy & Influence

- The Mixed-Income Innovation & Action Network: Urban Strategies has partnered with the Center for the Study of Social Policy and the National Initiative on Mixed-Income Communities at Case Western Reserve University to create a new influence group to improve, accelerate and better track the progress of the national effort to develop mixed-income and equitable communities. Urban Strategies is a key founding partner in this emerging network. Using lessons from our experience with HOPE VI and CNI, we aspire to accelerate and advance human capital development as the critical element in creating thriving and inclusive mixed-income communities. In the coming years, we will craft local, state and federal policy strategies that are critical to communities’ success.

- Choice MEANS Choice: In 2016, Urban Strategies served as host of the Choice MEANS Choice conference so to share best practices, participate in roundtable discussions, and hear from other people providers in various stages of CNI grant implementation. Over 100 people representing 16 communities participated in this interactive event, during which Urban Strategies organized and led learning sessions, open discussions, and other activities to network and share experiences. Though the participants came from very different places, we fostered new opportunities for participants to connect and learn about others’ experiences.

Thought Leadership

- Becoming a Results-Based Hub: The concepts, approaches, and tools of Results-Based Leadership (RBL) can accelerate our ability to achieve better and more equitable results for the families and neighborhoods they work with. Urban uses a Results-Based Accountability framework to ensure that our efforts are focused on actualizing our vision that all families are stable and thriving. Our approach is grounded in achieving a defined set of metrics.

- Using a Dual-Generation Approach: Urban Strategies connects youth to adults in the community who have the capacity and knowledge to support high achievement. To the greatest extent possible, we coordinate and leverage existing expertise, programs and resources to create collective impact. Wherever there are opportunities for dual-generation programming, we develop integrated services to address the needs of adults and children together.

- LEARN System: Urban Strategies has developed an inherently dual-generation metric to measure of the level of socio-economic risk that a family faces. Known as the Family Risk Index, this metric is a composite measure of the risks associated with adults as well as their dependent children/youth. Calculated on the basis of a rigorous and in-depth family assessment, this Family Risk Index allows the family to be the unit of analysis in measuring our impact. Success for us is when our work leads to a reduction in a participating family’s risk. By working closely with partners to understand how to measure results, we are setting the stage for the development of local policies and practices that successfully integrate dual generational principles into family and community development programs.
**Community Investment Sites**

**COLUMBUS** Poindexter Village

**GALVESTON** Cedars at Carver Park

**MEMPHIS** Foote Homes │ Legends Park │ University Place Resident Services

**MIAMI** Northpark at Scott Carver

**MINNEAPOLIS** Heritage Park

**NEW ORLEANS** BW Cooper │ Harmony Oaks │ Iberville/ Tremé

**PITTSBURGH** Larimer / East Liberty

**SACRAMENTO** Twin Rivers

**SAN ANTONIO** Wheatley Courts/ Eastside

**SAN FRANCISCO** Alice Griffith

**ST. LOUIS METROPOLITAN AREA** Allen Market Lane │ Arlington Grove │ Cambridge Heights │ Cahill House │ Forest Park Southeast │ North Sarah │ Renaissance Place │ Senior Living at Renaissance Place │ Westminster Place │ Murphy Park │ O’Fallon Place / Preservation Square │ The Brewery

**Developing Investment Sites**

**BALTIMORE** Perkins-Somerset-Oldtown

**PUERTO RICO** Various Locations

**TULSA** Eugene Field