



What is Neighborhood Revitalization?

Everybody knows “that side of town” or “that neighborhood”. For most people these are areas in a city to be avoided, or a problem that somebody needs to fix. Neighborhood Revitalization begins with the belief that the real people living in those places have inherent dignity and value, deserve access to a quality of life on par with others, and are themselves collectively the solution.

Neighborhood Revitalization seeks to draw out the best of what it means to be a good neighbor and part of a community. Imagine a city where every neighborhood is known for its positive energy, strong relationships, and a place where anyone would choose to live, work, worship, and play. While the vision may seem like a pipe-dream, we believe that it is a vision worth pursuing precisely because of the very real people that live in those neighborhoods. They are people with names, talents, hopes, dreams, and we believe that when they are connected and resourced, they have the power and ability to live an abundant life.

While we want to keep this grand vision before us, we do not want to ignore the reality that revitalizing a neighborhood is difficult and faces many challenges. It is an involved process that takes years of focused investment to see transformational change. The good news is that there are methods and best practices in action right now in different initiatives all over the country and even neighborhoods right here in our region. We can learn, implement, and adjust on a continual basis to help make the biggest impact and be responsible stewards of the resources we have.

The process made simple and accessible to anyone is: Listen, Align, Act, Measure, Repeat.

- ❖ Listen – This very important first step recognizes that the neighbors are the experts of their neighborhood, and based on their collective time, talent, and resources, most of what needs changed can come from the residents themselves if given the opportunity to be heard.
- ❖ Align – After listening, different themes will emerge. Alignment comes from pooling together all the voices within a community, and then pulling in partner organizations and leaders that can help fill in any gaps. This is a crucial step because it creates the bullseye that brings unity and focus to neighborhood efforts.
- ❖ Act – But all the listening and talking is meaningless unless that vision becomes a reality. Action must take place, both to build the spirits of neighbors in under-served areas, and to bring credibility to the claim that change can occur.

- ❖ Measure – Failing gets a bad rap. It's OK to try and fail, as long as you measure, adjust and try again! Measuring is a vital piece to neighborhood revitalization because it tells us if our investments of time, talent, and resources are in fact making a difference.

That's neighborhood revitalization in a nutshell: Listen, Align, Act, Measure...repeat. Starting with the inherent dignity and value of neighbors, knowing they have the time/talent/resources to bring long-term change to their neighborhood, and bringing in help to cover gaps and build bridges. We hope that you will join us in this exciting work of Neighborhood Revitalization and the new mission of Community One that leads to Neighbors Loved, Community Restored, and Hope Renewed.