When I moved to St. Louis in 2012, it didn’t take me long to notice how closely linked our community’s networks are. It seemed like half the people I met were somehow connected to other people I knew. “Two degrees of St. Louis,” friends often said about that. It felt like a kind of warm welcome, softened the sensory overload that comes with being new somewhere.

It took me longer to understand that these close relationships can take on a double edge when they govern without transparency. When our communities are small and navigable, it feels natural to focus our work at a human-to-human level. But when power aligns too closely with who knows whom—when it doesn’t leave room for process, or hides behind closed doors—it’s easy for that power to be abused.

The Community Builders Network was formed, in part, as a response to both these realities. When our founding members, over 30 community building nonprofits, gathered in 2011 for CBN’s first meeting, stronger relationships and more transparent collaboration were central to what they hoped to achieve as a collective. Today, CBN’s work is still guided by that group’s original goals: to build an inclusive table for peer support and shared learning in the community development world, and to advocate around community building issues with a shared voice. These members believed deeply that together, we are smarter, stronger, and more resilient.

There are choices we can all make in our everyday work and play to ensure that the St. Louis community’s close human-to-human ties are built for everyone. We can choose to share our connections and support for each other generously. We can choose to act and decide openly and honestly. CBN exists because you—our member organizations, partners, sponsors, and supporters—have chosen and keep on choosing to live by these values every day. We’re so grateful for your partnership in this work.

Recently, CBN’s staff had the opportunity to participate in Crossroads Anti-Bias, AntiRacist training, and it stirred up a lot of questions for us as a team. As we continue to strive for clearer transparency, stronger collaboration, and honest growth in 2019, we hope you’ll join us in asking reflectively: Who are my relationships benefiting? Who are they harming? Who’s missing from our table, and why? How can we change that?

We invite you too to hold us accountable with these questions—and with your own—as we work to keep equity, community leadership, and community voice at the center of everything we do in the years ahead. Thank you all for everything you share as partners at our tables, and as partners of St. Louis’ neighborhoods.

With gratitude,

Jenny Connelly-Bowen
Executive Director
Strong Organizations

Supportive Systems

Sharing Stories

Photo by Troy Anthony Photography

Photo by Campfire
Mission

CBN gathers community leaders of all backgrounds to build engaged and equitable neighborhoods.

Vision

As a network, CBN envisions a St. Louis region where all people live in safe, economically strong, and vibrant neighborhoods and all community-based organizations are sustainable, supported, and valued.

We believe strong, inclusive communities are the building blocks for a better St. Louis. CBN supports, connects, and celebrates neighborhood and regional leaders who make these places possible by focusing its work on three fronts, each of which is shaped and supported by a working committee.

Strong Organizations: Supporting our members and their partners so they can do their best work

Supportive Systems: Building bridges and advocating for policy that strengthens civic muscle

Sharing Stories: Spreading the word about what it takes to make our neighborhoods great places to live
The 2018 Ladder of Capacity Building Series supported four participants as they planned new partnerships for their organizations.

The CBN-supported Community Engagement Action Group transitioned to a member-driven model and began mapping the region’s community engagement anchors.

CBN's Organizational Capacity Building Committee worked with UMSL's Nonprofit Management & Leadership Program to host several capacity-building workshops.
St. Louis' Vacancy Collaborative launched by gathering almost 200 people to discuss how we can all tackle our vacancy issues together going forward.

The Affordable Housing Trust Fund (AHTF) Coalition successfully advocated for a $1 million increase in funding for the AHTF in the City of St. Louis.

MOWHA & CBN’s Civic Capacity Building Committee partnered on a roundtable discussion and other efforts about how CBN members can advocate for LIHTC in 2019.

St. Louis' Vacancy Collaborative launched by gathering almost 200 people to discuss how we can all tackle our vacancy issues together going forward.
Sharing Stories

We honored eight community organizations & leaders at our 2018 Community Building Awards & topped our highest fundraising goal to date thanks to your generous support.

CBN’s redesigned website, launched in October 2018, aims to be a friendly, welcoming space where people can learn about & connect with St. Louis’ community builders & their stories.

The redesigned Community Builders Exchange newsletter, released in March 2018, draws on reader ideas for making it more readable & user-friendly.
Along with our partners at UMSL’s Community Innovation & Action Center, CBN officially moved offices to the Grand Center neighborhood at the end of 2018 to be more centrally located within our network & have access to a more community-centric facility.

Did you know?

CBN members voted to self-institute membership dues in 2015 to fund staff that could be fully dedicated & directly responsive to the needs of our community building nonprofits.

CBN is a member of NACEDA, an alliance of 40 state & regional community development associations across the country, where we learn best practices to bring back to St. Louis.

CBN supports seven (7) community-based coalitions that work across sectors on systems change work in racial equity, community engagement, housing, & more.
Mission Members

Carry out place-based work focused on community development, economic development, and affordable housing.

Beyond Housing
BRAND Foundation*
Carondelet Community Betterment Federation
Community Action Agency of St. Louis County
Cornerstone Corporation
DeSales Community Development
Dutchtown South Community Corporation
Emerson Park Development Corporation
Grace Hill Settlement House
Greater Alton CDC
Habitat for Humanity Saint Louis
Hamilton Heights Neighborhood Organization
The Housing Partnership, Inc.
International Institute of St. Louis CDC
Kingsway East Conservation Association
Lansdowne Community Initiative
Lemay Development Corporation
LinkSTL
Lutheran Development Group
Lutheran Housing Support
North Newstead Association
Northside Community Housing, Inc.
Old North St. Louis Restoration Group
Park Central Development
Project 180 STL
Rebuilding Together St. Louis
Rise Community Development
Riverview West Florissant Development Corporation
Skinker DeBaliviere Community Council
Spanish Lake CDC
Tower Grove Neighborhoods CDC
University Square CDC
Washington University Medical Center
Redevelopment Corporation
Wellston Loop CDC

*New in 2018

Supporting Members

Support the place-based work of CBN members and partners with resources, connections, and expertise.

TheBANK of Edwardsville
BMO Harris
Busey Bank
Carondelet Business Association
Carrollton Bank
The Clark-Fox Policy Institute*
Commerce Bank
Creating Whole Communities
Enterprise Bank & Trust
FCB Banks*
Gateway Community Development Fund, Inc.
Horizon Housing Foundation
IFF
Justine PETERSEN
Midland States Bank
Midwest BankCentre
ND Consulting
North County Incorporated
PGAV Planners
PNC Bank
Prosperity Connection
Reliance Bank
Rosemann & Associates, P.C.*
Rung*
Saint Louis University Urban Planning & Development
St. Louis Association of Community Organizations
St. Louis Civil Rights Enforcement Agency
St. Louis Community Credit Union
St. Louis Community Foundation
St. Louis Development Corporation
St. Louis Equity Fund, Inc.
St. Louis Housing Authority*
St. Louis REALTORS®
St. Louis Regional Health Commission
Trailnet
UMSL Community Innovation & Action Center
Urban Strategies
U.S. Bank
Washington University in St. Louis
Organizational Assessment 2018

Each year, CBN’s community-building nonprofit members complete this survey to both self-assess and to help our network and external stakeholders better understand the strengths and needs of the St. Louis region’s community building sector.

Key Stats

- 76% have at least 3 full-time employees
- 59% engaged 25 volunteers or more in 2018
- 100% say they’re working in collaborations

Deep Local Knowledge

What information/data do you collect or store about your target area?

- Housing stock & property characteristics: 65%
- Vacant lots & buildings: 59%
- Economic Indicators (income, poverty): 65%
- Needs of residents & community members: 65%
- Crime & safety: 47%

Community Engagement Practices

- Community meetings: 100%
- Social media: 100%
- Flyers: 88%
- Website: 88%
- Email: 76%
- Surveys: 71%
- Events: 65%
- Focus groups & interviews: 53%
- Volunteer opportunities: 53%
- Phone calls: 47%
- Community advisory boards: 35%
- Advocacy: 35%
Organizational Assessment 2018

Each year, CBN’s community-building nonprofit members complete this survey to both self-assess and to help our network and external stakeholders better understand the strengths and needs of the St. Louis region’s community building sector.

Equity & Inclusivity

CBN member averages

- Under the age of 35: 25% (Staff), 13% (Board)
- Female: 65% (Staff), 47% (Board)
- Non-White: 54% (Staff), 32% (Board)
- Living in Service Area Boundaries: 56% (Staff), 29% (Board)
- Low- or Moderate-Income: 16% (Staff), 15% (Board)

Revenue Streams

+ average share of budget for members who use each

used by most 65% of members

- Government: 43% of budget
- Revenue generating programs: 38% of budget
- Individual or household donors: 7% of budget

used by some 24%-41% of members

- Endowment, investment, interest: 20% of budget
- Other institutions (civic/religious): 37% of budget
- Foundation(s): 18% of budget

CBN Members: 2018 in Review *

- 100 housing units produced
- 245 homes repaired or preserved
- 107 vacant lots cleaned or maintained
- 200 businesses supported
- 9,045 low- & moderate-income people served

* 17 community-building nonprofit members took the 2018 assessment

Member success stories

- Completed Intersect Arts Center
- Held a home repair summit
- Created Vacancy Guide for City of St. Louis
- Launched tenant rights organizing work
- Created affordable homes for local families
- Advanced the work of Invest STL
- Developed key partnerships with nonprofits locally & outside the region
- Provided home repair & elderly services
- Sold property to a nonprofit partner that supports success of local women
- Assisted with zoning issues
Finances & Fund Development

Dues-Paying Member Organizations

70+ members strong

34 do place-based work that's deeply rooted in local neighborhoods

39 support place-based work with resources, connections, & expertise

St. Louis City
St. Louis County
Madison County
St. Clair County

St. Louis City
St. Louis County
Madison County
St. Clair County

Finances

2018 Revenue Streams

2018 Total Revenue
$202,961

2018 Total Expenses
$158,825

- Fees for Service: 27%
- Membership Dues: 15%
- Sponsorships: 20%
- Grants: 35%
- Donations: 3%
2018 Sponsors, Friends, Affiliates

**Community Level Sponsors - $5,000**

- MANGROVE
- PNC

**Block Level Sponsors - $3,000**

- BJC HealthCare
- Enterprise Bank & Trust
- Missouri Foundation for Health

**Street Level Sponsors - $1,000**

- Commerce Bank
- St. Louis Title L.L.C.
- SAINT LOUIS UNIVERSITY
- Fox Grove Management
- usbank
2018 Sponsors, Friends, Affiliates

House Level Sponsors - $500

BEYOND HOUSING
HARRIS CONSTRUCTION
North Newstead Association
TheBANK of Edwardsville
PARK CENTRAL DEVELOPMENT

DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES
RubinBrown
rosemann & ASSOCIATES PC
PGAV PLANNERS
 Sansone group

Opportunity Sponsorships & Special Thanks

St. LOUIS EQUITY FUND
CIVIL LIFE Brewing Co
Saint Louis Design Alliance Architects
DeSales COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
GATEWAY

2018 Friends & Affiliates of CBN

Adam Bowen
Sara Bowen
Susan & Maurice Bowen
Emily Bowen-Marler & Travis Marler
Joe Cavato
Stephanie Co

Fran & Mac Connelly
Colleen & Jake Hafner
Claire & Dan Hutti
Kimberly & Kevin McKinney
Staff of St. Louis Community Credit Union
CBN 2018 Board & Staff
Board of Directors

Kimberly McKinney
President
Habitat for Humanity
Saint Louis

Jenny Ryan
Vice President
PGAV Planners

Sean Spencer
Treasurer
Tower Grove Neighborhoods CDC

Abdul Kaba-Abdullah
Secretary
Park Central Development

Stephen Acree
Rise Community
Development

Michael Burns
Northside
Community Housing

Stephanie Co
Beyond Housing

Enrique Flores
University Square CDC

Laura Gilbert
Commerce Bank

Colleen Hafner
Rise Community
Development

Sal Martinez
North Newstead
Association

Nathan Nelson
Enterprise Bank & Trust

Brian Phillips
Washington University
Medical Center Redevelopment Corp.

Angela Pinex
Spanish Lake CDC

Thomas Pickel
DeSales Community
Development

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Todd Swanstrom
Co-Founder & Advisor

Karl Guenther
Co-Founder & Advisor
Thank you to CBN’s member organizations for making this work possible...and fun.