

**Delaware**

**Community Development Network**

***simple* STRATEGIC PLAN**

*September 2021*

**About the Delaware Community Development Network**

The Delaware Community Development Network (DCDN) is the voice for Delaware’s community development sector. DCDN focuses on providing resources to affordable housing developers, housing counseling agencies, and community-based nonprofits located in Delaware.

**Mission:** The Delaware Community Development Network will increase the individual capacity of community partners by building partnerships, eliminating duplication of efforts, and to ensuring large scale community development funding.

**Vision:** The Delaware Community Development Network envisions Delaware communities that are safe, healthy and full of opportunity.

**Values:** The Delaware Community Development Network works to harness the potential of all communities by working alongside the community.

**Goals:** The Delaware Community Development Network will build capacity, promote policy, and engage with all community stakeholders to support community development.

**Goals:**

**Goal 1: Build Capacity of Partner Organizations**

1. **Revitalization of the Community Development Network: Engagement of Partner Organizations**
   1. Asset Mapping
      1. Define Community Development;
      2. Identify organizations doing community development work in Delaware; and
      3. Identify potential funding sources.
   2. Meetings
      1. Schedule ongoing monthly meetings with the partner organizations in attendance to continue to develop the DCDN.
   3. Communication / Outreach / External Voice
      1. Create an outward facing “brand” for the DCDN.
         1. Present a co-branded community development initiative.
         2. Work with individual community development organizations to assist with storytelling and marketing.
      2. Create a digital resource library focused on Community Development in Delaware.
2. **Build Capacity: Strengthen and Promote the Community Development Sector**
   1. Identify funding sources to support the work of the Delaware Community Development Network
      1. Funding for Marketing;
      2. Funding for Building Reports; and
      3. Funding to provide Webinars/Conferences/Technical Support.
   2. Identify funding sources to provide core operational support to organizations participating in the Delaware Community Development Network.
   3. Serve as a conduit for funding and advance collaborative funding proposals.
   4. Advocate to increase funding pool and connect the state to funding resources.

**Goal 2: Promote Policy/Engage in Advocacy**

1. **Develop an Educational Campaign** 
   1. Create a campaign about the important social and economic impact of Delaware’s community development sector.
2. **Respond to State Policy** 
   1. Review and provide feedback on state policy and procedural tools to develop, implement, evaluate, and support community development
3. **Participate in community development initiatives and share updates with partner organizations**
4. **Identify and Promote Long-Term Policy Objectives**
   1. Neighborhood Tax Credits;
   2. Community Investment;
   3. Land Bank;
   4. Land Trust;
   5. Zoning;
   6. Tax Sales/Foreclosures; and
   7. Maintaining Income Restricted Properties in Delaware.

**Goal 3: Engage with Community Stakeholders to Support Community Development**

1. **Increase Participation of Partner Organizations**
   1. Plan to increase participation of partner organizations;
   2. Plan to engage partner organizations; and
   3. Plan to support ongoing engagement of partner organizations.
2. **Provide Relevant Webinars and Education to Promote the Goals of Partner Organizations and the Community**
3. **Create a Resource Library** 
   1. Local Resources
      1. Plans, Reports, Studies, Links to Local Government
   2. State Resources
      1. Plans, Reports, Studies, Grants, Opportunities for Education, Links to Delaware Resources
   3. National Resources
      1. Reports from National Groups, Federal Policy

**The Current Situation of the Delaware Community Development Network**

The Delaware Community Development Network was formed in 2015 as an opportunity to bring professionals from many different fields together to facilitate a multi-disciplinary approach to improve communities.

The Delaware Community Development Network has the membership and capacity to be innovative and responsive to Delaware’s needs.

**Organization:**

The DCDN does not have a Board of Directors or independent organizational status. It is housed entirely within Housing Alliance Delaware.

The DCDN is being envisioned and revitalized by: Housing Alliance Delaware; Healthy Communities Delaware; REACH Riverside; Cornerstone West; NCALL; University of Delaware and Cinnaire Investments

**Staff:**

The DCDN is staffed by Sarah Rhine, Policy Director at Housing Alliance Delaware.

Housing Alliance Delaware will seek opportunities to expand staffing for the DCDN.

**Activities:**

The DCDN will promote Community Development.

The DCDN will represent the needs of its partner organizations to national organizations and funders.

The DCDN will develop capacity and build resources to benefit partner organizations.

The DCDN will represent its partner organizations during the Delaware legislative session. Through the regional coalitions and involvement with several statewide coalitions, DCDN will establish its Policy Agenda each year.

**Priorities:**

Specifically, DCDN will move forward with four priorities:

**1) Address the Economic and Social Impact of Community Development in Delaware**

DCDN will launch a campaign to educate the public, legislators and funders about the important social and economic impact of Delaware’s community development sector.

**2) Build Capacity of the DCDN and the Community Development Sector**

The DCDN must develop its capacity and the capacity of partner organizations.

**3) Promote Housing as a Vital Condition/Social Determinate of Health**

Housing is a social determinate of health or a vital condition. The Community Development Network is in a unique position to bring together partners to address the health and housing issues exposed by the COVID 19 crisis.

**4) Advance Approaches to Social Justice**

Community development initiatives must consider the impact on community and work as a driver of social justice.

Critical Issues/Challenges:

How does the DCDN provide the critical resources and capacity necessary to support its partner organizations?

-How do we lift up the data to inform other policy to support?

How does the DCDN organize and sustain a powerful coalition of organizations to promote the Community Development Network?

-Can we agree on certain metrics?

How does the DCDN create and promote a policy platform?

-Can we agree on an advocacy strategy?

How does the DCDN create the opportunity for funding or investment in Community Development?

-How do we make sure we are lifting up the work of group?

Strategic Direction:

Deepen Partner organization Services: DCDN serves an important and unique role for its partner organizations. DCDN will work over the next 5 years to increase the capacity of its partner organizations to successfully engage state and local policy makers. In addition, DCDN will continue to publicly showcase the work of DCDN partner organizations, facilitate partner organization communications and peer-to-peer learning, and will help educate public officials about community development issues.

**Decisions Made During the Planning Process/Items for Immediate Action:**

The DCDN made the following key decisions during the planning process and identified the following items for immediate action:

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Objective | Action Item | Start Date | Implementation Date | By Whom | Notes |
| **1) Address the Economic and Social Impact of Community Development in Delaware** | | | | | |
| Create Policy Agenda | Survey partner organizations and create strategic plan for policy engagement.  Connect advocacy across communities. |  |  |  |  |
| Launch a Media/Education Campaign | Identify common themes and issues in communities across the state for an education campaign—common issues around housing, neighborhood stabilization, community development.  With working group, brainstorm events/media/  marketing needs.  Create social medial presence and resource library. |  |  |  |  |
| **2) Build Capacity of the DCDN and the Community Development Sector** | | | | | |
| Increase capacity through identification and cultivation of founding sources. Support collective funding proposals. | Determine what would add the most value to the partner organizations (operative, capital, collective proposals).  Support the development of funding proposals and help to bring those proposals to government/foundations. |  |  |  |  |
| Increase capacity though shared resources and providing training. | Provide webinars, trainings, networking opportunities. |  |  |  |  |
| **3) Promote Housing as a Vital Condition/Social Determinate of Health** | | | | | |
| Promote work around the intersection of health and housing. | Continue to think about how DCDN can build capacity for the health and housing work. Provide guidance and leadership on advocating for CD with anchor institutions. |  |  |  |  |
| **4) Advance Social Justice** | | | | | |
| Be mindful of the impact of community development and capacity building work. | Work with partner organizations that are engaged in social justice efforts to identify and cultivate community development initiatives that further social justice. |  |  |  |  |