



Community Empowerment Organization: The Real CEO

1. Aspiration Statement

Community Empowerment Organization, the real CEO, is a national model for resident-driven collaboration that ensures attractive and sustainable neighborhoods which are thriving and safe places to live, work, and learn. In our rejuvenated neighborhoods, people are highly engaged to determine a positive lifestyle and future. Citizens, government and businesses feel shared accountability for a strong, prosperous, inclusive community.

2. Action Plan

- Conduct comprehensive research and interviews with community stakeholders and research best practices from other select cities.
- Identify neighborhoods as potential pilot communities.
- Development of “CEO” framework model.
- Implement a pilot CEO in at least one Cleveland neighborhood that includes alignment with respective CDC and support of councilperson.
- Long-term goal of citywide implementation of resident-based CEO model that serves to provide formal input to CDCs, council members, and the city administration, with additional models being implemented in suburban communities throughout NEO.

3. The Change We Want to See in the Data

Today's Data

- 29 identified Community Development Corporations (CDCs), some defunct, with overlapping boundaries and varying missions, service sizes, and levels of public engagement.

2030 after Action Plan

- Overlaps in service areas are greatly reduced or eliminated entirely.
- Community Engagement Specialists are effectively engaging residents within each CDC area.

4. The Change We Want to See in the Lived Experience

Today's Lived Experience

- **HYPOTHETICAL**
 - Jamie lives in Cudell, where she enjoys the sense of community, the easy access to transit, and proximity to her job in Lakewood. She has some concerns about vacant buildings nearby and is not sure who to contact about code violations. She sees lots of potential for the neighborhood but is unsure how to get involved.

2030 after Action Plan

- **HYPOTHETICAL**
 - Jamie has seen significant investment take place along Detroit Avenue near the W. 98th/Cudell Rapid Station. She and several other community members serve as Community Engagement Specialists for their CDC. She has been able to assist long-time residents obtain Home Improvement Loans from the City while rents remain affordable.

5. How Our Action Plan Leads to the Change

Lived Experience

- Increased and informed resident participation helps to build confidence in the trajectory of each neighborhood and trust in CDCs.
- This confidence and trust helps to build resident stability within communities.
- Consistent communication and participation helps to more quickly identify needs, such as infrastructure repairs/improvements and investments in technologies such as high speed internet.

Economic Growth

YES or NO	Plan will influence
YES	Workforce – The attraction, growth or retention of a skilled workforce.
YES	Infrastructure – Investments or improvements in things needed for commerce such as roads, machines, factories and airports.
NO	Natural Resources – The amount and availability of natural resources like water, electricity and fuel.
YES	Technology – Improvements or investments in technology and innovation.

6. Updates, Reflections, Help Needed

Highlights

Obtained insightful feedback from resources with CDC/Council experience.
Identified ongoing efforts that appear to support the aspirations of this group.

Reflections

Engagement opportunities are numerous, inconsistent, and sometimes complex.
Better aligning/connecting/streamlining opportunities may be best path forward.

Help Needed/Next Steps

Capacity to ensure additional research is done and connections with resources are made and utilized.

7. Outcomes/Recommendations

What else does the public need to know before Phase II?

- The preliminary results of our research indicate that there are already numerous channels by which citizens can get involved, provide feedback, and seek change to improve their communities. Additionally, new efforts to enhance resident engagement have been or are in the process of being implemented, particularly:
 - City of Cleveland Community Development – Community Engagement Specialists
- What is lacking is coordination and leadership to eliminate duplication, build efficiencies, and rally community organizations around a shared vision for a strong, inclusive, equitable Cleveland.
- A new effort to bridge community information gaps, launched by a number of philanthropic foundations including the Cleveland Foundation (Common Grounds), may be helpful.
- Based on the results of this research and due to limited participation/capacity of the existing Group 9, we believe our goals could be best achieved by combining with another group that is pursuing similar goals.