BUILDING A TALENT PIPELINE

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2009–2010 Robert H.B. Baldwin Fellow

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# Table of Contents

## Acknowledgements

## Executive Summary

## Background and Landscape

- Why Does Talent Pipelining and Talent Development Matter? .................................................................................. 05
- Taking Advantage of the “Magic” Attraction of Communities In Schools ................................................................. 05
- What Is the State of Talent Pipelining and Talent Development in Communities In Schools? ................................. 06
- Defining Talent Pipelining and Talent Development ................................................................................................. 07

## Project Design

- Methodology ................................................................................................................................................................. 09

## Findings

- Overview ...................................................................................................................................................................... 11
- Generational Issues ....................................................................................................................................................... 13
- Geographic Issues ........................................................................................................................................................ 16
- Gender Issues ............................................................................................................................................................... 17
- Racial Issues ................................................................................................................................................................. 18
- Organizational/Structural Issues .................................................................................................................................. 20

## Action Strategies/Recommendations

- Program Action Strategies ............................................................................................................................................. 22
- Policy Action Strategies .................................................................................................................................................. 23
- Organizational Structure Action Strategies .................................................................................................................. 10
- Talent Building Action Strategies ............................................................................................................................... 10

## Conclusion

## Appendices

- Appendix A: Program Action Strategies Chart .......................................................................................................... 34
- Appendix B: Policy Action Strategies Chart ................................................................................................................ 41
- Appendix C: Organizational Structure Action Strategies Chart ................................................................................. 43
- Appendix D: Talent Building Action Strategies Chart ................................................................................................. 45
- Appendix E: Interview Demographics Charts ............................................................................................................ 48

## Bibliography

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Copyright © 2010 Communities In Schools. All rights reserved.
This work opened my eyes to a number of new futures—for Communities In Schools, the nonprofit sector and me. It could not have been completed without the help, guidance and support of a number of people. There were many who contributed their experiences and wisdom both inside and outside the Communities In Schools network. I am grateful to them for sharing their expertise and guiding my research and thinking. I am especially grateful to my fellowship “coach” Susan Siegel who kept me on track, reacted to my (sometimes) crazy ideas and encouraged me in pursuing this topic. Susan is a good friend and great example of talent herself and I am the beneficiary of her thoughtful approach to this work. Communities In Schools and I were very lucky to have Daria Teutonico as the newly hired director of the Robert H.B. Baldwin Fellows Program joining Communities In Schools when this fellowship began. Daria contributed her support and guidance and was always there as my cheerleader. Both Susan and Daria modeled the flexibility that is a hallmark of talent pipelining and development when I needed it and that made some difficult times much easier. I am also truly grateful for my “sister” Fellows, Judy Frick and Maxine Elliott, partners in this adventure and a constant source of mutual support, creative ideas and wonderful friendship. And I am very grateful to Communities In Schools for providing me with this opportunity and for supporting the future by building on the expertise and abilities of all who are a part of the Communities In Schools network.

Carole Levine
June 7, 2010
If nonprofits want to remain relevant and viable, they must function at the edge of the present and the future. They must not only adapt to their environments but also shape these environments to create productive change. Strategies must be fast moving, flexible and continuously experimental.”

Ruth McCambridge
Nonprofit Quarterly, Spring 2009
indicated that employees and volunteers who start at schools and site-level positions in local Communities In Schools affiliates do not understand that they are part of a larger network and often look beyond Communities In Schools for new, higher-level and more challenging positions. Communities In Schools can do more to engage high-performing individuals and provide them with a better sense that Communities In Schools is an organization where they could stay and grow.

Four key principles that lead to successful talent development strategies were identified through this project. Action strategies are recommended to attract and keep high-performing people that incorporate these concepts. They are:

1. **Intentionality:** Organizations might be “lucky enough” to attract good people, but keeping them requires intentionality. In an interview with Ken Williams, director of New Voices National Fellowship Program at the Academy for Educational Development (AED), he said, “Intentionality is the difference between management and leadership and can make the difference in attracting and keeping talented staff and volunteers.”

2. **Sector Agnosticism:** Younger employees often come to the nonprofit sector to do “good work,” not to work for a particular organization. And in tough economic times, employees from every generation may find themselves less committed to an organization and more committed to remaining in the nonprofit sector. The thoughtful, future-focused organization will be constantly checking in with people and looking for ways to build their skills, while building their connections to the organization’s mission and work.

3. **Flexibility:** In interviews with Communities In Schools employees across the country, flexibility was the critical factor for people in attracting them to an organization that might not pay them much and that had few or no benefits. Flexibility means something to employees and while it will not pay their rent or cover their doctor bills, it does give them a better quality of life and time for their personal priorities. Flexibility will attract good people and it can help to keep them.

4. **Customization:** One size does not fit all. Not all of the steps that are taken to nurture talent will apply to all people. The challenge is also to find those appropriate action strategies that will work for an organization’s future needs and not just to plug holes in its current situation. How that is done will not be the same across the Communities In Schools network.

In the final section of this report, the action strategies that can be implemented to attract and keep the best and the brightest in Communities In Schools are described. These strategies fall into the following categories: program, policy, organizational structure and new ways to develop talent. Some of these strategies can be implemented with little cost in dollars or time, and some will require long-term strategic thinking and greater commitments of human capital and funds. Any strategy worthy of consideration should align with Communities In Schools strategic plans and should focus on the future of the organization. Some of the action strategies that will be suggested are universal and can be considered and utilized by any Communities In Schools affiliate at any level of the organization or by any nonprofit. And some of them will be more applicable to specific types of affiliates, such as rural affiliates or large urban ones.

A key purpose of this work is to elevate the place of talent development and talent pipelining as a critical function of Communities In Schools and of all nonprofit organizations. This is not just about professional development or the development of senior leaders. Talent development is a mission-critical process and applies to all levels of organizations. When organizations have the right people on the bus, and in the right positions, they can move an organization forward.
Why Does Talent Pipelining and Talent Development Matter?

Everything that is done in the nonprofit sector has a cost. Often that cost is one of time as much as dollars. The bottom line for Communities In Schools is the achievement of its mission: to surround students with a community of support, empowering them to stay in school and achieve in life. That mission cannot be achieved without the talents and dedication of Communities In Schools’ staff and volunteers who move that mission forward. Finding and keeping good people in staff and volunteer positions has a great impact on every aspect of Communities In Schools and all nonprofit organizations. The costs of replacing staff—both in time and in money—pulls people away from the important work of Communities In Schools and causes setbacks in the achievement of Communities In Schools’ goals and in the effectiveness with which it operates. In addition, turnover creates unease among the staff who remain and shoulder additional assignments while positions are being filled or eliminated. Changes in volunteer leadership can disrupt the smooth operation and future-focused processes of board and volunteer programs.

Talent pipelining for staff and volunteers, as well as focused and intentional talent management, can assuage some of these monetary and time-on-task costs. Does this matter? From a “return on investment” perspective, the answer is a resounding yes.

When local and state Communities In Schools leaders were asked in a network survey conducted in January 2010 about what hinders them in attracting and keeping staff, they gave a range of responses, many of which focused on salaries and benefits. But the literature would suggest that most people do not leave a job because of salaries. More often than not, they leave because of people and work relationships and environment, or because a new opportunity—an offer too appealing to turn down—presents itself. At the local level, and often at the state level, Communities In Schools leaders are not in a position to counter an offer made to one of their staff. To quote one comment in the survey: “…we seem to attract young professionals for one to two years (like myself) who stay until a higher-paying job is available or we go on to grad school. This situation has become a cycle—feeding our organization’s instability and our organization’s inability to attract long-term employees. The key to our success will be to find someone who will last longer than two years.”

Richard Wellins, Audrey Smith and Scott Erker

1 Interviews by author with local Communities In Schools leadership staff, March 2010.
Taking Advantage of the “Magic” Attraction of Communities In Schools

If you had asked me when I began my first job with Communities In Schools if I would still be here in 20 years, I would have answered, “Absolutely not!”

—Interview with Communities In Schools national staff member who began her career at a local affiliate

Historically, the “magic” of Communities In Schools has been sufficient to engender loyalty and commitment to the organization. While salary and benefits are high on the laundry list of what attracts people to work for an organization, the top attractors for most employees are people and, in the nonprofit sector, mission. For certain generations of Communities In Schools staff, predominantly Baby Boomers, the mission, vision and culture of Communities In Schools has fostered a “magic” attraction that has kept them committed to the organization throughout their careers—often in the same position. In the national survey of Communities In Schools state and local leaders, 23 percent had been in their current position for more than six years and 27 percent had been in their positions for more than 11 years. When asked what helps them attract staff, Communities In Schools leaders rank ordered the following: mission, work environment, reputation and people.

However, this “magic” does not appear to be as compelling a factor for younger workers who, while committed to the sector, do not see themselves staying with any one organization. Interviews indicate that Gen Y workers and some Gen Xers do not share the same organizational loyalty as the Boomers. They definitely want to do good work and are very much attracted to the Communities In Schools mission and work, but the “magic” is not as strong as it has been for older generations. Even so, most of the younger workers interviewed indicated that if they moved to a new city, they would definitely look for Communities In Schools as a potential employer.

What Attracts People to and Keeps Them at Communities In Schools?

These quotes come from field interviews:

- I have had incredible bosses who have taken me to a different place.
- At Communities In Schools, you have leaders who impart knowledge and help people develop skills.
- What is most important at Communities In Schools is the work and the mission. You have stability and flexibility.
- I came to work for Communities In Schools so that I could do work that matters.
- People at Communities In Schools have a passion for this work.
- When I learned about Communities In Schools, it “spoke to me.” I approached Communities In Schools about work when there was no real job opening.
- Communities In Schools touched me in many ways... and the programs touch so many.

What is loved about Communities In Schools work seems to emanate from the bottom upwards. Entry-level and site coordinator staff spoke of the flexibility and diversity of the work; the ability to engage with both the school and the community, grow their own networks as they helped build Communities In Schools and work directly with kids and families; and how the work speaks to their passion and allows them to make a contribution. While managers and directors did not put answers the same way, their responses mirrored the answers of entry-level employees and site coordinators. This demonstrates the power of Communities In Schools to attract talented staff, however it does not appear to be sufficient to retain them.

From the charisma of Communities In Schools founder Bill Milliken, to the passion of the entry-level Gen Y employee who just got a hug from the 3rd grader she has taught to garden and grow healthy foods, there is something about...
Communities In Schools that makes it a talent magnet for employees and volunteers alike. But attracting and keeping talent is not the same thing. To truly ensure that good people stay with Communities In Schools, there must be a means for them to develop and grow within the organization. Talent pipelining and talent development in Communities In Schools and in the nonprofit sector needs to be an intentional process. The “Action Strategies and Recommendations” section of this paper offers some options and directions for doing this.

What Is the State of Talent Pipelining and Talent Development in Communities In Schools?

The nonprofit sector is an employment sector. We make up 11 to 12 percent of the total workforce in this country. What we do is not something that can be outsourced.

—Irv Katz
National Assembly for Human Service Organizations

Whether a Communities In Schools career path for staff or volunteers exists is a key issue. When state directors and local affiliate executive directors were asked in the January 2010 network survey if there was a career path for staff in their local Communities In Schools organizations, 34 percent said yes while 66 percent said no. When the question was whether there was a career path in the Communities In Schools network, the numbers were even lower, with 27 percent saying yes and 73 percent saying no. These data demonstrate that many in the Communities In Schools network feel that they need to move “out” in order to move “up.” With over 180 affiliate sites, state offices and a national office, and more than 2,500 full time and 2,000 part time positions at the local, state and national level, it is disheartening that Communities In School leaders do not see a way for themselves or their employees to grow within the organization.

Common sense would indicate that employees and volunteers alike are unlikely to stay where they are not valued and when they are not satisfied with their work. Employees and volunteers with skills and talents become valuable commodities in the nonprofit sector. When asked, Communities In Schools leaders will say that their employees are their most valuable assets. Not all of these talented employees aspire to the highest leadership positions, but their value in the Communities In Schools organization is very evident and the need to intentionally provide them with growth opportunities is critical. If you talk to a Communities In Schools executive who just lost his/her IT person or a site coordinator who was loved by his/her school, that leader will validate the crucial nature of retaining employees at all levels of the organization.

It is likely that many employees and volunteers who start at schools and site-level positions in local Communities In Schools affiliates do not really understand that they are part of a larger network. This would certainly contribute to why they look beyond Communities In Schools for new, higher level and more challenging positions. When interviewed, site coordinators in both urban and rural local affiliates, almost unanimously did not see themselves being with Communities In Schools in three to five years. When asked if they would consider a position with a Communities In Schools affiliate in a different locality, with a state office or the national Communities In Schools office, they seemed intrigued (a number said yes) but were mostly noncommittal.

If the “base level” staff of Communities In Schools make up a talent pool with great potential to stabilize, energize and grow the organization, Communities In Schools can do more to engage them and provide them with a better sense that Communities In Schools is an organization where they could stay and grow. Clearly, there is work to be done on talent pipelining and talent development.

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3 Interviews by the author with Irv Katz, President and CEO, and Karen Kay, Vice President, Programs, National Assembly for Human Service Organizations, January 2010.
4 2008-2009 Results from the Communities in Schools Network.
Defining Talent Pipelining and Talent Development

Before enlightenment, chop wood, carry water./
After enlightenment, chop wood, carry water.

—Zen proverb

 Depending on where you sit, definitions for almost anything can be varied and interpreted to fit the time, place and situation. This is certainly the case with the concepts involved in talent pipelining and talent development. Just like beauty, talent is often in the eyes of the beholder. For this reason it is important to establish some common ground as to what is meant by the words used in this paper.

James Weinberg, founder and CEO of Commongood Careers, speaks of human capital and human capital management as he looks to define talent and talent management. Weinberg comes to definitions of talent, only after he has described these two concepts. The term human capital refers to all of the people who work directly to help an organization achieve its mission — employees, consultants, volunteers and community supporters. Human capital management, according to Weinberg, encompasses the activities designed to recruit, hire, manage, develop, advance and retain those individuals that make up an organization’s human capital. For Communities In Schools and other nonprofit organizations, looking at human capital and human capital management provides a broad platform for building a comprehensive talent development strategy that encompasses the entire organization.

In studying the literature that defines talent, talent pipelining and talent development and management, most of it focuses only on executive leadership. While ensuring that the best and the brightest are leading nonprofits, this narrow scope misses what can and should be done to develop people at all levels of an organization. This broad view of talent includes everyone, from the receptionist to president, from the bookkeeper to the CFO and all of those in between. It also includes those who serve as volunteers on the board and in other capacities. Without talented volunteers, organizations can stagnate as volunteers are a key component of the leadership talent that helps to guide and govern an organization. “The ability to effectively hire, retain, deploy and engage talent—at all levels—is really the only true competitive advantage an organization possesses.”

How should the terms “talent,” “talent management” and “talent pipelining” be defined? Is this about a process or about people? Or, perhaps, both? Some alignment begins to emerge as we define each of these from both a people and process perspective.

The term “talent” can refer to the individuals who, when brought into an organization, can make a difference in how that organization performs in both the short-term or over the long haul. This same term can be the process of recruiting and employing enough people with the core competencies to excel in their roles, at any level of the organization. Talent can focus on a limited group or can refer to all staff and volunteers in an organization. For purposes of this study, and in the context of Communities In Schools, the term talent will be defined as the individuals who can make a difference in organizational performance and who populate both staff and volunteer (board and other) positions within the organization.

Defining the talent pipeline becomes a bit complex, but the definition offered by Rich Deare seems most appropriate for Communities In Schools and the work of nonprofit organizations. Dear states that a talent pipeline is “a collective of identified talent with whom regular structured contact has been established and a recruiting relationship has begun.” This is the process component, but it cannot and should not be limited only to those who have the potential and desire for management and executive leadership. It needs to encompass the totality of the organization — staff at all levels as well as board and volunteers.

A talent pipeline is about “bench strength” and having the right people already within an organization. The cost of constantly filling positions saps the time, strength and effectiveness of people and organizations. The site coordinator may not aspire to a leadership role, but might bring innovation and more effective strategies to his/her current role with the right talent management. The board member who has no expertise in raising funds may find a new talent when properly nurtured.

**Talent pipelining** is defined as the process of finding people within and outside of an organization with potential and skills that can be nurtured to bring value to the organization’s mission, vision and outcomes.

Talent management is also a multi-faceted concept. Tom Adams defines it as “a mission-driven strategy that guides hiring, talent development, performance management, compensation and rewards and communications for an organization.”

It covers all key aspects of an employee or volunteer’s “life cycle” with an organization: selection, development, succession and performance management. Judy Barnett describes it as “the systemic identification, development, engagement and deployment of those individuals with high potential who are of particular value to the organization.” For purposes of this paper, **talent management** will be seen as a strategy and, in implementation, a process guiding all aspects of staff and volunteer development. In order to be effective, talent management needs to be understood as a key job component of leadership at the highest organizational levels (from the CEO down) as well as a shared function with human resources. The strategy aspect of talent development makes it a critical concern for and responsibility of both staff leadership and board leadership. The right people in the right seats can move an organization from good to great.

One other key factor can influence the impact of talent management — culture. According to Weinberg, culture describes the variables that collectively determine each individual’s experience as a member of the team. Often some of the most overlooked elements, common cultural factors include: management style, work intensity, employee benefits, team diversity and office environment. Understanding talent development in these contexts as well as that of generational impact, gender, racial diversity, geography (urban/rural) and socio-economic factors will also play a role in the impact of any talent management strategy.

Opportunities exist within the Communities In Schools network to strengthen and develop the current staff and boards. Thoughtful, strategic talent management creates an environment in which being a part of the Communities In Schools network is viewed as being a part of a better future — for individuals; for a well-respected organization; and for all of the children, youth, families, communities and schools that are touched by Communities In Schools. These definitions lay the groundwork for this to happen.

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**Definitions**

For purposes of this study, and in the context of Communities In Schools, the following definitions will apply:

**Talent:** The individuals who can make a difference in organizational performance and who populate both staff and volunteer (board and other) positions within the organization.

**Talent Pipelining:** The process of finding people within and outside of an organization with potential and skills that can be nurtured to bring value to the organization’s mission, vision and outcomes.

**Talent Management:** A strategy and, in implementation, a process guiding all aspects of staff and volunteer development.

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15 Ibid.
Leaders who are able to manage talent share four traits: first is the willingness to take risks...second, leaders have to be good communicators...third, successful leaders are decisive...and fourth, perhaps most important, is intellectual honesty.”

Ann Winbald
Hummer Winbald Venture Partners

Methodology

Getting to strategic recommendations on talent pipelining and talent development for Communities In Schools involved a multi-pronged strategy. Because it was necessary to understand the state of the nonprofit sector in terms of talent development and to look beyond Communities In Schools in order to gain a broad perspective, the methodology involved five components: Interviews with other national nonprofit organizations and experts on talent development and related topics; an extensive literature review of books, articles, websites, blogs, monographs, surveys and other written materials; a survey of leaders in the Communities In Schools network; interviews with staff at all levels of the Communities In Schools network; and participation in courses and symposia to expand the knowledge base around this topic. Each of these components yielded quality information that helped to shape the action strategies and strategic recommendations that comprise the end product of this work. Each served to reinforce the others and together provide cogent directions and options for Communities In Schools on talent pipelining and talent development.

Interviews with other national nonprofits: During the course of this project, interviews were conducted with six national nonprofit organizations. These included: The National Assembly for Health and Human Service Organizations, the Academy for Educational Development, Independent Sector, the Institute for Educational Leadership/Coalition for Community Schools, United Way of America and Civic Ventures. While many other organizations might have been tapped for this project, these six provided a range of options and ideas and were representative of others in the nonprofit sector. Information from these meetings and discussions will be included throughout the “Findings” section of this report.

Literature review: The literature on talent pipelining is abundant, but very focused on the corporate and for-profit sector. In addition, it is very much about building executive leaders as opposed to developing staff and volunteers at all levels of the organization. However, a growing number of surveys, monographs, articles, websites, blogs and writings address these issues from a nonprofit perspective. These resources will be used as substantiation and as resources for the recommended action strategies that are described at the end of this report.

Survey of leaders in the Communities In Schools network: In January 2010 an online survey of Communities In Schools leaders at the state and local level was distributed. Of the 100 responses, 87 percent were from Communities In Schools affiliate directors and 13 percent were from Communities In Schools state office leaders. The survey results provided demographics that are used in this paper and responses
to nine questions specific to talent pipelining and talent development. While these data may be somewhat self-selecting (those who chose to respond), they provide a platform for the interviews that followed the collection of survey data.

Interviews with staff at all levels of the Communities In Schools network: The discussions and interviews with Communities In Schools staff provided this project with a wealth of information. Interviews were conducted with national staff, state directors and staff at the state level in multiple states, and local executive directors and staff at all levels in affiliates. More than 50 employees were interviewed (some in groups). To ensure open and honest responses, all interviewees were told that they would not be named, even if they were quoted for this work. Because of this, the people interviewed were very forthright in their responses and shared very directly their feelings, ideas and sense of their own future with Communities In Schools.

Participation in courses and symposia: In addition to surveys, research and interviews, this project allowed for participation in three short courses, Developing High Performing People, Critical Issues in Board Governance and Leading for the Future, at the Center for Nonprofit Management at the Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University. In addition, the project included participation in a one-day institute, “Creating Extraordinary Solutions In Extraordinary Times,” at the Axelson Center for Nonprofit Management at North Park University, with the main session on “Strong Boards for Extraordinary Times.” The resources and information garnered in these sessions will be woven into both the findings and the strategic recommendations and action strategies.
No one ever promised that the fastest horse in the race was the easiest to ride.”

Eric J. Joiner, Jr.

Overview

The nonprofit sector gives a great deal of lip service to the importance and value of talent pipelining and talent development. Nonprofit managers look for good people and hope to keep them as employees, but do little to ensure that this happens. The literature on these topics tends to align and overlap with that of the corporate sector. It is dominated by looking at how to develop executive leaders, and particularly how to cultivate and build towards smooth, seamless transitions in the succession process as high-level leaders exit an organization or retire. What is missing for both sectors is a broad focus that looks at talent in every aspect of an organization. The factory worker in a supply line may not aspire to be the CEO, but could, given the right supports, see new options for his/her career. He/she may be able to rally co-workers around a new production strategy or perhaps even develop that new strategy. The literature on next generation leadership in nonprofits documents that many promising younger workers have little or no desire to move into executive management positions in their organizations. The reasons for this “aversion” to nonprofit leadership will be discussed in the section on generations, but the fact remains that if you do not aspire to leadership positions, it is highly unlikely that you will be cultivated for the talent and skills you have.

Much is lost when organizations only cultivate and groom for the highest levels, leaving those who perform essential tasks to fend for themselves in terms of growth, promotion and status in the organization. When people are interviewed about why they join organizations, the most common answer is: ‘because I was asked.’ Would not this same idea hold true for talent development? The lack of outreach to younger and lower-level workers and the lack of knowledge about their skills and expertise create great gaps in our ability to build organizations for sustainability and change. As a younger Communities In Schools local staff member explained when interviewed for this project: “If there is a career path with Communities In Schools, it is more about horizontal moves (with some salary increases) than anything vertical.” In follow-up about what it would take for the interviewees to stay with Communities In Schools for the “long haul,” the responses included: feeling more valued; more opportunities to learn about the Communities In Schools national office and to see how Communities In Schools operates in other places; to be targeted for training; to be able to travel and meet others in this kind of work; to have more conversations like this one, in which they are asked what they think and that may result in some actions. Overall, interviews with non-managerial staff at the local, state and national levels of Communities In Schools pointed to a desire for more opportunities for advancement (not necessarily management), to test their skills and grow professionally.

It is helpful to gain a “sector perspective” on the issue of talent pipelining and talent development. To do so meant not only analyzing the writing that has been done on nonprofits and this topic, but also talking directly to other national nonprofit leaders to gain their perspective. Two of those nonprofit organizations, Independent Sector and the National Human Services Assembly, have taken this topic on but in very
different ways. The National Assembly\(^{17}\) has approached this work with the following focus: “...to make the nonprofit human services-community development sector attractive to diverse talent, particularly entry level and mid and later career-changers, to make the sector competitive with other sectors, and to provide the leadership the sector needs for the future.” The National Assembly established an internal team, made up of representatives from organizational members, the Nonprofit Human Services/Community Development Workforce. The workforce's strategy is to promote the adoption of comprehensive talent management approaches for both paid and unpaid personnel; collaboratively promote employment (as well as volunteerism and internships) in the nonprofit human services-community development sector; and promote the identification and development of under-represented groups for leadership in the sector. The National Assembly participates in the Nonprofit Sector Workforce Coalition (American Humanics\(^{18}\) leads this coalition) to address the talent challenge for the nonprofit sector as a whole. The National Human Services Assembly has also participated in the work of American Humanics, which has developed the National Nonprofit Workforce Coalition. This group has developed a “pledge” to increase diversity in the sector; expand outreach to career counselors at colleges and universities to raise awareness of nonprofit careers as options for college graduates; and create a policy for loan forgiveness for those college grads who enter careers in the nonprofit sector. While worthy efforts, it is unlikely that these initiatives will change the state of talent pipelining and development in nonprofits. As Irv Katz, president and CEO of the National Assembly, stated, “In this area, our sector is very much about tactics in search of a strategy.” Strategies need to be collaborative, smart and knowledge-driven. To be effective, strategies will need to be supported by investments from the organizations that implement them. Staff and volunteers need to feel that they are moving into a sector, not just a job, according to interviews with staff at the National Assembly\(^{19}\). Loyalty to this sector will need to be strategically developed.

The approach of Independent Sector\(^{20}\) is to target what it has dubbed the “N Gen” group of nonprofit leaders. The tag line for this group says it all: Moving Nonprofit Leaders from Next to Now. N Gen leaders are emerging or current leaders in Independent Sector member organizations who are under the age of 40. Developed to help expand and improve the nonprofit talent pool by developing the skills and networks of those N Gen leaders, the initiative includes an N Gen program at Independent Sector’s annual conference and an N Gen Fellows Project in which 12 fellows create and work on a team project, which is described at the conference. This focus on leaders under 40 has potential but still leaves those talented “non-leaders” behind. Independent Sector indicated that diversity is an issue for this group (diversity is discussed in a number of sections in this report) as is mobility.

As Independent Sector, the National Assembly, American Humanics and other organizations develop ways to engage the next/now generation, the question of talent development at all levels of nonprofits remains. As the CEO of another national nonprofit aptly stated, the nonprofit sector is one of “leaky pipelines.” The need for real intentionality (a buzz word that is repeated throughout the work of this project) and not just lip service in approaching talent pipelining and development is of fundamental importance. The findings of this project will lead to action strategies that can, hopefully, plug some of the pipeline leaks and build a robust means for attracting and keeping the best and the brightest in Communities In Schools and in the nonprofit sector.

\(^{17}\) The National Human Services Assembly (www.nassembly.org) is an association of the nation’s leading national nonprofits in the fields of health, human and community development, and human services. Many of the member organizations are national offices of large networks of local health and human service organizations. Others are national research or resource organizations or national programs. The mission of the organization is: “To strengthen health and human services in the United States through the active involvement and leadership of its members.”

\(^{18}\) American Humanics is a national alliance of colleges, universities and nonprofit organizations dedicated to educating, preparing and certifying professionals to strengthen and lead nonprofit organizations (www.humanics.org)

\(^{20}\) Independent Sector (www.independentsector.org) is the leadership forum for charities, foundations and corporate giving programs committed to advancing the common good in America and around the world. This non-partisan coalition of approximately 600 organizations leads, strengthens and mobilizes the charitable community in order to fulfill its vision of a just and inclusive society and a healthy democracy of active citizens, effective institutions and vibrant communities.
Generational Issues

Don’t stop, thinking about tomorrow,
Don’t stop, it’ll soon be here,
It’ll be here, better than before,
Yesterday’s gone, yesterday’s gone.

— Christine McVie
“Don’t Stop”

The Silent Generation, Baby Boomers, Gen Xers, Gen Y/Millenials... These familiar terms are widely used in the media, in literature, and in everyday conversation. They name and distinguish four different generations that are currently part of today’s workforce. Much has been made of the differences between generations and even more of the impact of generational difference on how each generation works. An abundance of literature is specific to understanding the ethos of each generation and to developing a means of working with and across generations, including how these differences are and will continue to impact the efficacy of the workplace.

The literature on generational issues and talent development again gets caught in distinguishing between leadership development (cultivating those who will become executive-level leaders) and talent development (cultivating and developing all levels of staff and volunteers within an organization). Because the nonprofit sector perceives loss of leadership—with Boomer leaders retiring and people from Gen X and Y reluctant to take on leadership—as a crisis, the issues around talent at all levels of the organization and within each of the generational groups is often lost. In their 2007 monograph Next Shift: Beyond the Nonprofit Leadership Crisis, the authors contend that, “There needs to be more intentionality among nonprofits for identifying and supporting young staff who are interested in becoming nonprofit leaders.” At the same time,

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<tr>
<th>NAME(S)</th>
<th>APPROXIMATE NUMBER IN THE USA</th>
<th>KEY EVENTS &amp; ACHIEVEMENTS</th>
<th>CHARACTERISTICS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SILENT GENERATION OR VETERANS OR BORN: 1925–1945</td>
<td>30 MILLION</td>
<td>Pioneers the formation of new organizations; served in WWII and Korea; lived through the Cold War</td>
<td>Top-down style of management; loyalty; self-sacrifice; patriotism; emphasis on commitment, especially to their organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BABY BOOMERS OR BOOMERS 1946–1964</td>
<td>80 MILLION</td>
<td>Cold War; Vietnam; rebellion against their government; saw major changes to almost every social, scientific and cultural institution during adolescence</td>
<td>Sense of entitlement; they have the power to make change; optimism; cynicism about institutions; competitive; career-focused; defined by work; endless youth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GENERATION X OR GEN X 1965–1979</td>
<td>45 MILLION</td>
<td>Both parents working; latch-key kids who grew up looking after themselves; indulged; expect instant gratification; grew up in the era of Nixon and Watergate; no heroes—tend to be skeptical; rise of technology and personal computers; cable TV; video games; skeptical of politics</td>
<td>Independent; self-reliant; desire for stability; like working with peers; stress results; informality; fun; accepting of different lifestyles, roles and cultures; practical—“can do”; accept and readily adapt to change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GENERATION Y, GEN Y OR MILLENNIALS 1980–2000</td>
<td>75 MILLION</td>
<td>Born into high-tech society and the Internet; diverse parenting; single mom or dad; or grandparent; indulged; accustomed to being constantly entertained with extramural “activities”</td>
<td>Personal life and work are equal; like to work in groups; positive and determined; expect understanding and acceptance of varied lifestyles; inventive and creative; value the greater good; complete comfort with technology; networking; realism; confident</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

22 Ibid.
in 2001 that they would retire within five years and who are still in place. Interviews with Communities In Schools leaders at the local and state levels bear this out. Communities In Schools leaders talk about retirement, but most are reluctant to set a timeline, develop a succession plan or cultivate those who might follow them. Interviews with younger staff at all levels also support the research that says they do not see leading a nonprofit (Communities In Schools or any other one) as a part of their careers. Indeed, many do not see themselves staying with Communities In Schools at any level for more than a few years, if that.

The literature is not consistent in describing the parameters and characteristics of the four generations that currently make up the workforce. For purposes of this report, the chart on page 13, based on the work of Peter Brinkerhoff in his book *Generations: The Challenge of a Lifetime for Your Nonprofit* and the work of Frances Kunreuther, Helen Kim and Robby Rodriguez in *Working Across Generations: Defining the Future of Nonprofit Leadership*, describes the four generations.

So what does all of this tell us about working with and across generations? While the literature portrays this as a somewhat daunting task, the reality is that not enough attention has been given to how to use the wide range of skills, background and commitment of each generation to the advantage of the nonprofit sector. The demographics of Communities In Schools indicate that it is led, for the most part, by Boomers. The survey of Communities In Schools state and local leadership conducted in January 2010 found that 49 percent of these leaders were ages 36 to 54 and 42 percent were over 55 years of age. Non-management employees, at all levels of Communities In Schools, are more likely to be under age 35. Five charts in Appendix E of this report provide a snapshot of the demographics from the interviews conducted with Communities In Schools staff at all levels of the organization. The data show that the staff in local Communities In Schools affiliates is, predominantly, under the age of 35, Gen X and Gen Y, but being led by Boomers. When interviewed, those younger Communities In Schools staff were impressive in their commitment to the work they do, but they also reflected the national trend of “sector agnosticism,” which marks their generations. They like the work they do, but are not loyal to the organization. Their commitment is to “good work” and that can take place at Communities In Schools or at another nonprofit that offers them a step up or a higher salary or benefits. While working for Communities In Schools does engender some loyalty, it seems to be more at the upper management levels, where Baby Boomers are prevalent. Most of this younger staff had been in their current positions less than one year, and with Communities In Schools between two to five years. In contrast, the majority of Communities In Schools executive directors who were interviewed have been in their current positions for six to 10 years, with a large number having been with Communities In Schools and in leadership positions for more than 11 years.

The issue of employee and volunteer turnover, particularly among those in Gen X and Gen Y, is a critical one. Replacing good people costs not only money but also time and stress on all who remain. When surveyed about how successful they are at attracting and keeping talented staff, 72 percent of Communities In Schools leaders indicated that they were successful or highly successful at keeping high-performing staff, contradicting the responses garnered in interviews with Communities In Schools staff and with individual Communities In Schools executive directors and the literature about the “staying power” of the nonprofit workforce. When asked, most of the Gen X and Y employees, including those in management, interviewed for this project indicated that they did not expect to be with Communities In Schools in three to five years. True to what was described in the literature on nonprofit leadership, they saw the work of running Communities In Schools as an overwhelming, 24/7 type of job. While they all would like to advance, they are not looking to give up everything else that they do in their lives for Communities In Schools and their jobs. In *Ready to Lead? Next Generation Leaders Speak Out*, the authors found that commitment to the nonprofit sector was at 53 percent, while 42 percent did not feel strongly one way or the other. This report also documented the key barriers

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25 See Interview Demographic Charts in the Appendix.
to staying in a nonprofit and the top reasons for not seeking an executive position, listed in the following chart: 27

### BARRIERS FOR GEN X & Y TO STAY IN NONPROFIT WORK
- Long hours
- Compromised personal lives
- Nonprofit salaries perceived as insufficient life-long earning potential
- Lack of mentorship and support from incumbent leaders (Women have less mentorship and other types of support than men do.)
- Inherent nonprofit structural limitations and obscure avenues to career advancement
- Unappealing job descriptions

### TOP REASONS NOT TO PURSUE AN EXECUTIVE POSITION
- Fundraising responsibilities
- Sacrifice work/life balance
- Not the ideal way to impact the community and their field of interest
- Cannot have the kind of family life they seek
- Skills and interests are better suited to program work than to executive leadership

Financial concerns were also part of the problem: feeling underpaid in their current positions and unable to retire comfortably, achieve a desired standard of living, support a family, own a home, pay off debt in a reasonable amount of time or pay off student loans in a timely manner. 28 Interviews with Communities In Schools employees mirrored much of what was described in the CompassPoint report. Like the subjects in the CompassPoint study, Communities In Schools employees expressed a desire to do good in whatever sector they found themselves. “This sector agnosticism—a growing trend, in our view—works against the notion that the nonprofit sector will always have the upper hand in attracting those who are most strongly committed to advancing the public good.” 29

There is something to be gained by having a generationally diverse workforce when it is managed and balanced to develop and utilize the gifts that each generation brings. The Boston-based nonprofit Civic Ventures has looked at generational issues from a different perspective—that of encore workers and volunteers. In a phone interview with Phyllis Segal, vice president of Civic Ventures, she stated: “Encore careers are those that take place after one’s primary career. These people take jobs because it is what they want to do and not what they need to do. They are looking for new work and new ways to work.” 30 This talent pool of older adults wants to have a social impact. Initially, many of these encore career seekers were “sector switchers”—retirees from the corporate sector who are now seeking work that “matters” in the second half of their lives. But in the last few years, there is also an influx of same-sector encore career seekers—people who have retired from nonprofit careers but wish to continue to work in different capacities in that sector. During interviews with Communities In Schools staff, examples of this type of job seeker cropped up: retired school leaders who are heading up specific Communities In Schools programs at local affiliates on a part-time basis and seasoned volunteers who have served on Communities In Schools boards and are then hired into staff positions. When asked if she saw encore careers as a threat to younger nonprofit workers, Segal said that her research showed that the threat was more a perception than a reality. She said that eventually there would be more work to be done (with compensation) than there would be people to do that work. “Encore talent should meet and is really meeting unmet needs.” The nonprofit sector needs to be thinking “both/and” rather than “either/or”. 31

No discussion of generational differences in the nonprofit sector would be complete without a few words about technology. While there are some very high-tech users among the Silent Generation and the Boomers, it is clearly people from Gen X and Gen Y that have lived, eaten and breathed technology from their earliest handling of a joystick or key-

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27 Ibid.
28 Ibid.
29 Ibid.
30 Phone interview with Phyllis Segal, Vice President, Civic Ventures, February 2010.
31 Ibid.
board. Their use of and familiarity with technology and their ease in adapting to technological innovations and changes is a skill and a talent that all nonprofits need to cultivate. We live in a technological age and culture, and future communications as well as the effectiveness of nonprofit work will depend on understanding how to work with technology and adapting to it as it evolves. This may mean that those in the Silent and Baby Boom generations should learn some new tricks, but they also should seek out those who have the skills they do not and mentor them as they bring Communities In Schools and other nonprofits in line with the most current technology and with the students Communities In Schools seeks to serve.

It may seem as if these differences create a huge divide between the generations working at Communities In Schools but that is not so. Boomers may point out that differences that are assumed to be generational are more often simply differences in strategies. Trust is a huge factor. Older generations need to trust that younger ones can fill roles that they have held but perhaps not in the same ways. Each generation has an opportunity for learning from other generations.

Communities In Schools has an opportunity to bridge these differences in the coming years. The “Action Strategies and Recommendations” section of this paper offers a range of options to maximize the opportunities that exist with a multigenerational staff.

Geographic Issues

You can’t always get what you want
You can’t always get what you want
But if you try sometimes, well you might find
You get what you need.

—Mick Jagger and Keith Richards
“You Can’t Always Get What You Want”

It does not take a rocket scientist to understand that where you have a greater population, you will have a larger talent pool. This “finding” poses a dilemma for Communities In Schools and other nonprofits that have a substantial number of their affiliates in largely rural areas. Of the 181 Communities In Schools affiliates, 83, or 46 percent, are rural by their own designation, with smaller populations and smaller talent pools from which to seek both staff and volunteers.

When interviewing a Communities In Schools state office director in a state with affiliates in rural areas, the director said that “keeping good staff is a crisis.” That “crisis” is due to these factors:

- Too few people are available.
- Those who are available are not highly qualified.
- Programs and strategies are limited by the priorities and culture of the communities.
- There is little leadership development.
- Younger people with talent are leaving these areas and sometimes the state itself.

What Generations Want from Each Other

Younger generations want older social change leaders to:

- Provide information and advice based on their experience that will help younger leaders be more effective in building future social change.
- Acknowledge younger generations’ leadership, ideas, and vision.
- Share power and recognize that newer generations will be leading social change in the future.

Older leaders want the next generation to:

- Acknowledge their work and contributions.
- Support their relevancy now, not just in the past.
- Recognize the legacy they are leaving.
Another state Communities In Schools leader expressed having to “settle” for whomever is available in the more rural areas, rather than being able to put the best and most-qualified person in the job. When this topic was discussed in rural North Carolina, staff indicated that many who are available for Communities In Schools work are not “cut out” to do it and that recent college graduates move away to more urban settings. A former board member who is now on the staff of a local affiliate stated, “We need to make opportunities here in this community for young people to come back and make a good living.”

Some of the same issues also apply to recruiting and keeping rural volunteers. When asked how many of her board members sit on other boards, a rural executive director indicated that they all did. When asked how many of those board members sat on more than three boards, the number was high. Few of these volunteers are “full time” and must divide their time, effort, leadership, donations and passion among multiple organizations. Their hearts are in the right place, but their leadership is diluted. Because these volunteer leaders are expected to lead everything, cultivating talented board members and volunteers is highly problematic. Change becomes difficult and garnering what limited community funding sources exist becomes even more difficult.

The Communities In Schools affiliates in urban and suburban areas face different issues in attracting and keeping employees. They are dealing with a glut of applicants for every position, overqualified candidates who may or may not stay if something better presents itself and constant competition from other nonprofits for those employees who are talented and ambitious. One urban executive director expects to keep her entry-level staff for at least two years. “If they only stay one year, I’ve lost my investment of time and dollars in training them for this position. After two years, I break even and any time after that is gravy! We don’t have a lot of management positions for them to grow into, so our expectation is that they will not be here much beyond four years.” In interviews with her staff, that held true — none had been there more than four years and all expected to move on to other jobs and organizations.

Geography/location also impacts the ability of nonprofits to raise the operating funds, including those needed to attract and pay a qualified staff, including providing benefits. Funding opportunities are much more limited in rural areas, making operating revenues more dependent on grants and government funding. In the urban areas, the opportunity to solicit individual gifts and corporate funding as well as foundation sponsorship is much greater. The exodus of young people from these areas to the “big cities” has drained talent from the rural nonprofit sector and has increased the competition for limited jobs in the urban areas.

While all of this paints a somewhat grim picture geographically, it is important to note that there are thriving rural Communities In Schools affiliates. They have been creative and resourceful about attracting and maintaining talented people as well as the funds to sustain them. And there are options for helping those affiliates that struggle to keep both people and programs. The “Action Strategies and Recommendations” section of this paper will offer options for consideration.

**Gender Issues**

*Women hold up half the sky.*

—Chinese proverb

Females are the dominant employees in the nonprofit sector and in Communities In Schools. National data for those in leadership positions in nonprofits showed women at 66 percent and men at 34 percent. This is also reflected in the data from the January 2010 survey of Communities In Schools leaders with women at 76 percent and men at 24 percent. When the national data was juxtaposed against the size of the organizational budget, there was a shift. Women in leadership roles dropped to 46 percent and men in leadership roles rose to 54 percent in the nonprofits with the largest budgets. What this indicates is a clear discrepancy.

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34 Communities In Schools Fellows survey of state and local Communities In Schools leaders, January 2010.
While women compose most of the employees, even when in leadership positions, they do not draw the same compensation as their male counterparts. Salary then becomes a factor and is an issue at all levels of the nonprofit sector. The discrepancy in salary between male and female hires, in both the corporate and the nonprofit sectors, has been well documented and has resulted in legal actions and laws to protect women and others from such discrimination. For women seeking employment in the nonprofit sector, issues of pay equity can become a deterrent.

Why are female employees over-represented in the nonprofit sector? While location may be a factor in that over-representation, the structure of nonprofit compensation is also an important factor. Women are often willing and do work for less money than men. They are trading other perks, such as flexible hours, for higher compensation. Are women better suited to nonprofit work and leadership? A Canadian study in 2005 suggests that both gender and generation are important variables in the study of values and should not be considered in isolation of each other. But there is little that shows that women are less qualified than men to lead. Therefore, gender should not be a consideration when looking to attract high-performing people to nonprofit work.

The issue of salary and attracting talented people is an important area for further exploration, with and without the gender overlay. Interviews with local and state Communities In Schools executive directors always brought forward the desire to be able to compensate staff more and to provide benefits. Women are often willing to work for less and forego benefits because of a spouse whose work has family benefits and whose compensation would balance with the lower Communities In Schools salary. While time and work on equity has pushed these issues from being so gender (female) specific, it is clear that women still earn less than their male counterparts doing the same work which raises concern about equity in the nonprofit sector. This issue should be considered as Communities In Schools looks to attract and retain high-performing staff.

There is also a gender imbalance in volunteer leadership in the nonprofit sector, including Communities In Schools. The Nonprofit Governance Index 2007 from BoardSource shows that nonprofit boards are 43 percent female and 57 percent male. Truly representing the communities and children served by Communities In Schools calls for gender equity at all levels, on both the staff and volunteer sides.

Having the best person in any position with Communities In Schools, no matter their gender, is always the goal. The children and families in Communities In Schools schools need good role models, both male and female. Attracting talented people to both the staff and the board of Communities In Schools is about that — talent. While gender is not the key issue to talent pipelining and talent development, it needs to be kept in mind as options to attract and keep the best and brightest to Communities In Schools are explored.

**Racial Issues**

Right now, when black or Hispanic children look at the faces of Communities In Schools, they will see themselves reflected most at the lower levels of the organization, and least at the leadership level.

—Mariko Lockhart
2007 Robert H. B. Baldwin Fellow,
*Race and Representation in Communities In Schools*

In her 2008 report to Communities In Schools, Mariko Lockhart took a hard look at race and representation in the Communities In Schools network. She found that there was a lack of intentionality around issues of racial equity and social justice among Communities In Schools leaders. In 2007, most of the students served by Communities In Schools were children of color. This has not changed. But most of the staff and volunteers that work with those children, their schools, families and communities are not people of color. Seventy-six percent of Communities In Schools leaders responding to the 2010 Fellows survey identified themselves as people of color. This is a significant increase from 2008, when Mariko Lockhart found that only 43 percent of the Fellows were people of color.

39 Communities In Schools Fellows survey of state and local Communities In Schools leaders, January 2010.
as white. Thirteen percent were African American, 3 percent were Hispanic, 3 percent were multi-racial, and 5 percent identified themselves as “other.” These data are consistent with Lockhart’s findings from three years ago and mirror national statistics for the nonprofit sector. 

In looking at staff at non-leadership levels in Communities In Schools, there was greater diversity, but still not in significant enough numbers to reflect the populations served. Of those interviewed for this project, 67 percent were white. These numbers remained consistent among non-executive staff in Communities In Schools state offices and the national office. African Americans make up the next largest group of staff, with very limited numbers of Hispanic, Asian and Native Americans. The issue for Communities In Schools in these numbers is why?

The literature indicates some reasons for the difficulty of nonprofits in attracting and keeping talented staff of color. “The biggest obstacle to filling nonprofit jobs, according to the Bridgespan report, was insufficient compensation, followed by a lack of candidates with specialized skills and a lack of meaningful career paths for managers.” 

Skilled candidates of color are in great demand and the limitations on compensation that are offered by the nonprofit sector can prove to be a tipping point, sending talented people to the private sector.

Racial/ethnic diversity improves effectiveness in nonprofits. When leadership is more diverse, evidence shows that there are new perspectives, different conversations, and new approaches to increasing community health and resiliency. In addition, Tom Adams points to the need to understand the populations being served. That requires trust and understanding that is not always gained from the “outside in.” There is, according to Adams, greater potential for attracting and retaining staff of color when there is real racial diversity in a nonprofit that is more than tokenism.

Changing the racial face of an organization, at both the staff and the board level, requires a large commitment and can be a complex path to navigate. It is difficult for nonprofits to recruit when the talent pool is also being sought by the private sector, which can offer higher salaries, greater benefits and greater investment in career advancement. Many people of color do not see the nonprofit sector as a viable career path. The options for advancement, increased compensation over time, and opportunity to gain new skills are not well promoted in the nonprofit sector, limiting the perspective of talented people of color.

The issues around a lack of diversity in the staff of Communities In Schools as well as the nonprofit sector may also be applied to nonprofit volunteers and boards. Having racially diverse volunteer leaders can impact the effectiveness of an organization and influence others to join and bring their skills and talents to this table. It may even carry over to influence staff of color to join and participate and see work in the nonprofit sector as a viable career path. Currently, the makeup of nonprofit boards is predominantly white (86 percent). 

Board size and budget can influence the demographics of a board. Larger organizations have more African Americans on their boards and these numbers grow as the organizational budget grows. But this growth factor does not seem to apply to any other race/ethnicity.

Communities In Schools aligns with the literature and the national demographic data for both volunteers and staff. To change this will require great commitment, thought, effort and strategies that embrace and engage those whom Communities In Schools would like to recruit. Several options are proposed in the “Action Strategies and Recommendations” section of this paper.

43 Ibid.
45 Ibid.
Organizational/Structural Issues

It is unlikely that you will create a more flexible, responsive organization if you don’t first reduce hierarchical barriers.

— Esther Dyson
Principal, EDventure

“Do you see a talent/career path in Communities In Schools?” was one of the key questions asked in interviews conducted for this report. Most often, the answer was “no.” Those who responded no gave a number of reasons for their answer. Most often, it was the issue of structure. Communities In Schools, especially at the local level and especially in smaller programs and rural communities, operates with a “flat” hierarchy/structure. There is often an executive director, an administrative assistant (often part-time) and a number of site coordinators. Even in larger Communities In Schools affiliates, mid-management positions are limited in number and the only “next step” position for them would be executive director. As one site coordinator said, “We can make a lateral move that will bring us more responsibility and a bit more salary, but it does not move us up.” Larger Communities In Schools affiliates with more than 50 employees seem to have developed a more clear sense of a career path for employees. In these Communities In Schools affiliates, entry-level employees as well as volunteers from AmeriCorps and VISTA felt there were opportunities for them within Communities In Schools. Executive directors who were interviewed also confirmed this. In one case, a local executive director of a large, urban affiliate stated, “All of our field directors came from the field and 80 percent of our leadership came from the field.” So a dilemma exists in Communities In Schools. In some affiliates there are clear career paths and a pattern of hiring from within, but in others, the paths are blocked by long-term employees. In one interview, an urban Communities In Schools executive stated: “The problem is—nobody leaves,” meaning no one in management leaves. While this would seem to be a good thing for the stability of the organization, for entry-level staff it creates a barrier to advancement.

From a structural perspective, there are both opportunities and roadblocks to advancement of talented staff and volunteers. Only two positions are specified in the Communities In Schools Total Quality System (TQS)\(^\text{46}\): that of executive director, qualified by stating that it must be a full-time position for national accreditation, and site coordinator, with at least a half-time position in every comprehensive site. This leaves the door open for Communities In Schools to develop a range of positions in between these two designated positions. It offers creative leaders options to develop new ways to provide employees with career opportunities. TQS offers both guidance with flexibility and some limitations on structures and hierarchies that might attract and keep talented staff. For smaller Communities in Schools affiliates, these limitations can become a barrier, with limited options for talented staff to grow within the Communities in Schools structure.

Because staff at all levels and geographic regions echoed the sense of “no place to advance,” this project explored a number of options for structural variations. All relate to building a talent management system for every level of the organization. Structure and opportunity seem to go hand in hand. Looking at both, with an eye to the future, seems to be a logical direction. As stated in the monograph *Convergence*: “The capacity to identify, create, adopt and revise an array of creative structural alternatives will become the defining feature of the successful nonprofit of the future.”\(^\text{47}\) Also according to *Convergence*, successful nonprofits will develop new structures and ways of managing both staff and volunteers to meet generational needs and adapt to changing workplace values and expectations. The focus will be on developing organizational strategy and leveraging diverse ideas, approaches and talents in support of the mission.\(^\text{48}\) Some of the suggestions, such as shared leadership, would be counter to the TQS standards. But collaboration, a long-standing value within Communities In Schools, is at the core of many of the structural and hierarchical dilemmas and decisions. A nonprofit’s capacity to

\(^{46}\) The Total Quality System (TQS) is used as a yardstick for continuous quality improvement and growth throughout the Communities In Schools network. The goal of TQS is to ensure uniform quality and improved outcomes for the students we serve.


\(^{48}\) Ibid.
determine when to collaborate and when to compete can be the key factor in its survival. Being able to experiment with different forms of leadership and partnership could open the door to creative structural responses and build the attractiveness of an organization to talented staff and volunteers. Several structural options are outlined in the “Action Strategies and Recommendations” section of this paper.

The concept of operating in silos or in isolation was mentioned a number of times in reference to Communities In Schools and other nonprofits. These “silos” seem to be present at all levels of the organization and throughout the sector. They tend to box people into an area and do not allow room for experimentation or challenges that might reveal new talents from current staff and volunteers. In a short article “Talent Development: The Architecture of a Talent Pipeline that Works,” author Jeffrey Gandz discusses how talent-rich organizations look at “cadres of talent” at different levels in the organization. Gandz suggests that individuals who show potential outside of their specialized areas should be given broader experiences, programs, challenges and opportunities. At the same time, he notes that others who are not interested in leadership roles but have high potential for specialized development should be given opportunities to develop as “specialist leaders.”

In March 2007, *Harvard Business Review* published an article entitled “Maximizing Your Return on People” that provides guidance on how organizations can monitor and maximize 23 human capital management practices (HCM). The HCM drivers include: leadership practices, employee engagement, knowledge accessibility, workforce optimization and learning capacity. Together, they offer organizations a means of planning, implementing and measuring organizational performance. Improvements or declines in organizational performance can be tied directly to improvements or declines on HCM practices, according to the authors who correlated scores on their HCM tool with test scores in South Carolina schools. As HCM scores rose, so did test scores. For Communities In Schools, following some of these practices might raise structural/hierarchical issues. Not considering those issues, however, may result in less effective organizations that struggle to keep talented people (both staff and volunteers) engaged. Several options for dealing with these concerns are outlined in “Action Strategies and Recommendations”.

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50 Ibid.
52 Ibid.
The value of talent pipelining and talent development for the nonprofit sector has been demonstrated in the literature, in the research and in the “reality check” of direct data from and interviews with those currently working in the Communities In Schools network. In considering all of this, there are a range of action strategies that can be implemented to attract and keep the best and the brightest in Communities In Schools. Some of these strategies can be implemented with little cost in dollars or time and some will require long-term strategic thinking and greater commitments of human capital and funds. Any strategy worthy of consideration should align with Communities In Schools strategic plans and should focus on the future of the organization. Some of these strategies can be universal, and can be considered and utilized by any Communities In Schools affiliate at any level of the organization or by any nonprofit. And some of them will be more applicable to specific types of affiliates, such as rural or large urban ones.

Throughout this project, four themes continuously recurred in the literature and other research as being relevant to best practices in talent development. Each has importance in determining action strategies. Each can stand alone as a strategic concept. And each intersects with the others as the action strategies evolve and are implemented. Those themes are intentionality, sector agnosticism, flexibility and customization. The action strategies in the next section provide ideas for Communities In Schools to incorporate these concepts into its work.

1. **Intentionality:** Talent development does not happen in a vacuum. Organizations might be “lucky enough” to attract talented individuals, but keeping them requires intentionality. In an interview with Ken Williams, director of New Voices National Fellowship Program at AED, he said, “Intentionality is the difference between management and leadership and can make the difference in attracting and keeping talented staff and volunteers.”

   53 Interview by author with Ken Williams, Director, New Voices National Fellowship Program, AED Center for Leadership Development, Academy of Educational Development, January 2010.
If Communities In Schools intends to become a “talent magnet,” it needs to acknowledge that: talent attracts talent; talent can recognize other talent; talented people want to join winning teams.  

**Sector Agnosticism:** As was discussed in the “Findings” section on generational issues, both employees and volunteers in Gen X and Y are loyal to the idea of doing good work, but not necessarily to an organization. Even Baby Boomers who are struggling in this economy are questioning their own commitments to organizations they have worked for and supported for years and years. Being aware of this factor can be helpful in building a talent pipeline and in keeping talent in an organization. Even “encore” workers and sector switchers who move from the corporate to the nonprofit sector can be lured away by a nonprofit with a similar mission but a better opportunity for learning and growing. Allegiance to an organization, even to Communities In Schools, is subject to competition and to scrutiny by those who work and volunteer for that organization. The thoughtful, future-focused organization will be constantly checking in with people and looking for ways to build their skills, while building their connections to the organization’s mission and work.  

**Flexibility:** If there was one word that came up most often in interviews across the Communities In Schools network, that word would be flexibility. It was the critical factor for people in attracting them to an organization that might not pay much and had few or no benefits. Flexibility means something to employees and while it will not pay their rent or cover their doctor bills, it does give them a better quality of life and time for their personal priorities. This is especially important to younger workers who do not seek to emulate the work styles of Baby Boomers. Flexibility takes many forms and shapes. It can be the opportunity to work one day a week at home. It can be the opportunity to work less than full time. It can be the offer of a telecommuting position when a family move is taking place. It can also be the responsiveness of leaders when opportunities for schooling or special programs come up. Flexibility needs to be a part of the talent pipelining and talent development process for all of the action strategies and for the general operations of Communities In Schools. It will attract talented workers and can help to keep them.  

**Customization:** One size does not fit all. Talent management is not a democracy. Not all of the action strategies will apply equally to all Communities In Schools organizations. Not all of the steps that are taken to nurture talent will apply to all people. In an age where the term equity has great resonance, it is hard to offer broad opportunities to a chosen few, rather than limited ones to all. But in the long run, and with an eye to the future, the former is a much more effective strategy. “The challenge is to maximize the yield from the potential that is hired without expecting every person to maximize their potential initially.” The challenge is also to find those appropriate action strategies that will work for an organization’s future needs and not just to plug holes in its current situation. This will not be the same across the Communities In Schools network. What will work for the national office will not necessarily work for the state offices and local affiliates. What works for an affiliate may not work for a state office. In the same way that hierarchy can block talent development, uniformity can have this same effect. Given the importance of flexibility in attracting and keeping staff, there can be no “lock-step” process or program for talent pipelining and talent development. But there must be options and commitment, or even flexibility will not be enough to attract and retain the talented people who will keep Communities In Schools moving effectively into the future.  

**Action Strategies**  

These action strategies have been developed specifically for Communities In Schools. Some can be used across the network while others are more appropriate for the national office, state offices or affiliates. In addition, these action strategies address many of the issues discussed in the “Findings” sections of this project. As each is described, there will be an indication of which issue it responds to and how it addresses that issue. Charts of these strategies

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are available in the appendices, so that there will be a short, concise means of exploring these options, considering the pros and cons of each, looking at costs and benefits, and understanding the target audience. Where possible, the charts will include references to examples and more detailed supportive information on a particular action strategy.

**Program Action Strategies**

These action strategies involve the development of planned initiatives that can be implemented at the local, state or national level of the Communities In Schools network.

Utilize mentors/coaches: “Mentors can do a number of things for your career. They can help you build your résumé, guide you on a project and help you identify resources, including referring you to other mentors and important people in your field.” In interviews with Communities In Schools employees, both managers and entry-level employees, many of them mentioned having a mentor or role model as a way to keep them engaged in their work and to give them a sense of their value and of a career path. The concept of mentors and coaches for both staff and board is to provide each with a role model and a resource to enhance professional development. Both mentors/coaches and mentees will need training and information on the background and parameters of the mentoring program. Communities In Schools has a number of options for developing a mentoring program for both staff and board at all levels of the organization, including:

- Creating an online data bank of Communities In Schools people (board and staff) who are willing to mentor and coach others and allowing those who wish to participate to “self-select” and contact potential mentors online. United Way of America has such a data bank although it is focused on upper management. It allows employees in certain functions, accounting, for example, to be mentored by someone who is also in accounting, even if the mentor is in another city.

- Developing materials to support each Communities In Schools “unit” (national office, state offices, affiliates) in developing its own staff/volunteer mentoring program and supporting this with webinars or E-Learning.

- Tapping into some of the existing mentor-matching programs that connect seasoned nonprofit professionals with professionals early in their careers. Two of those resources are: Center for Nonprofit Success ([www.cfnps.org/mentoring.aspx](http://www.cfnps.org/mentoring.aspx)) and the International Mentoring Network ([www.imno.org](http://www.imno.org)). These options would not have the Communities In Schools “stamp” on them, but are a resource requiring little more than the time to let people know they exist.

- Developing a mentor/coaching program specifically geared to acclimating new board members to the organization and to building their understanding, skills and comfort level in participating in the growth and development of Communities In Schools at any level of the organization. Such a program would take a commitment on the part of current board members to serve as mentors and staff leaders, and would need support, guidance and training (possibly online) from the Communities In Schools national office.

Create and distribute college scholarships that require a commitment from recipients to work for Communities In Schools after graduation: The lack of qualified staff for Communities In Schools work, particularly in rural areas, was a recurring issue throughout this project. Often, employees have been in place for a long time, even though they are not right for their positions. But the “right people” for the job may not live in the community or may be among the young people who grow up in the community only to leave after college. A Communities In Schools scholarship program could create a pipeline of recent graduates to fill jobs in rural and other areas where finding qualified staff is difficult. The response from the network regarding this type of program was positive. A full program would need to be developed, funded and managed, including contracts and commitment forms for students who would receive these funds. It could be funded and managed nationally, regionally or within a state and might attract local benefactors.

An additional strategy might be to link to other organizations or foundations that provide scholarships to students from rural areas to partner on this kind of project.

Community Learning Partnership ([www.community](http://www.community))
learningpartnership.org) works with community-based organizations to create new educational pathways into careers with community change organizations (such as Communities In Schools). These new educational pathways focus on recruiting and preparing people of color and those from low-income communities to engage in a specialized curriculum at the community college or college level. The curriculum would equip students to move into work in nonprofits and change organizations within their own communities. A long-term action strategy for Communities In Schools would be to work in partnership with Community Learning Partnership to build a stronger talent pipeline of qualified staff for Communities In Schools affiliates.

Develop a reward bank for staff beyond salary and benefits: Interviews with Communities In Schools staff at all levels of the organization revealed some innovative, non-monetary rewards programs for Communities In Schools staff. These ranged from special days off to a weekly “work from home day” (chosen by the employee) to being nominated for awards in the community. The national Communities In Schools office could develop a site on the intranet where reward ideas could be posted for the entire network. While developing, implementing and promoting the program would take some time, it would be easy to maintain once set up. In addition, it was suggested that there should be some means for the national and state Communities In Schools offices to acknowledge and recognize staff at all levels of Communities In Schools for years of service. This could be as simple as a certificate of recognition for service at different years (5, 10, 15, etc.) that a local or state organization could request from the national office. More substantive tokens, such as lapel pins or paperweights, could be offered as staff move along a longevity timeline.

Require hands-on, school-based work for all Communities In Schools staff: It has been the policy at the Communities In Schools national office to have all new staff visit and spend some time at a Communities In Schools partner school and Communities In Schools affiliate in order to gain a better understanding of the work and mission. Developing a program that would require all staff (and possibly board members) to work in local Communities In Schools affiliates on an ongoing basis could build a greater sense of loyalty, team and mission among staff and volunteers who are removed from the direct work. Because this would require actual hands-on work rather than observation, it will require guidelines and thoughtful management in order to make it work for all parts of the organization. But the return on this “investment” could be the difference in a staff or board member staying or leaving the organization.

Creatively Assign Work

Implement stretch assignments: Throughout the literature on talent development, the concept of “stretch assignments” recurred. The idea is to encourage people to move outside of their comfort zones and even outside of their current work and training to take on a new challenge for the organization. Often this is done in tandem with others on staff, but it can be just one person pushing his or her skills into a new arena. Stretch assignments can occur at any level of an organization and can be utilized across the Communities In Schools network. Asking a site coordinator who has been terrific at building relationships to take on organizing a training for community partners may provide an opportunity for that coordinator to demonstrate new skills that even he did not know he had. Asking an IT person to help lead a project that involves field interviews may provide insights for the project, the participants, the outcomes and that IT professional. There are certainly risks in this, as not everyone can “rise to the occasion” and some staff may flounder and need extensive help and support. But, as a way to provide professional opportunities and keep staff engaged, this concept has great merit and has proven itself a good way to spot new, hidden skills in employees. It also tells employees there is an interest in what they can do and in having them as a part of the organization.

Encourage cross-functional work: Just as a “stretch assignment” might reveal new talents and skills, so, too, can cross-functional work. Developing and building teams of people who come from different work areas and backgrounds to collaborate on projects can have a high return on investment, especially in the area of talent development. Linking the finance person to a group of site coordinators to work on a means of managing time at the school sites could produce some effective new strategies. At the same time, it might reveal
unanticipated talents and skills among people. This strategy also exposes employees in different parts of the organization to each other’s work. When creating talent pipelines and career paths, exposure to different options can intrigue and engage talent. Cross-functional work can be a good way to make that happen.

**Tap into Non-traditional Workforce**

*Use AmeriCorps and VISTA volunteers:* Many Communities In Schools affiliates and state offices utilize AmeriCorps workers and VISTA volunteers to help build the capacity of their organizations to meet community needs and fulfill the Communities In Schools mission for students and families. These workers are committed for a year of work, but often renew for a second year. Interviews revealed that AmeriCorps and VISTA provide Communities In Schools with a temporary talent pool that, in many cases, becomes permanent as affiliates eventually hire these volunteers when they complete their service. Working with volunteers requires time and effort from an organization and often requires funds as well. The payoff for Communities In Schools is the opportunity to observe a volunteer’s work, develop the volunteer, and tap into this pool of often energetic, younger people, who were not previously available. When budgets are small and tight, these are great options. A volunteer program like AmeriCorps can help keep talented young people in their home communities or bring them from other places. While these government programs limit what a worker can do and for how long, they provide an option for screening potential permanent workers and perhaps crafting a permanent place for them in the organization. These two programs currently provide Communities In Schools with a wealth of workers for the short-term and the possibility to retain talented workers for the long-term.

*Utilize encore workers:* “Encore workers” enter the nonprofit sector after having had a career elsewhere. They bring a wealth of experience and expertise, and a desire to do this “good work” that may just be developing in their younger colleagues. A number of Communities In Schools affiliates are benefiting from the skills of people who are older and want to have social impact. Encore careers should be promoted as part of the “new social norm.” This is a resource for Communities In Schools that is just too good to waste. Because nonprofit work is not something that can easily be outsourced, and because of the lure of the corporate sector for many in Gen X and Y, encore workers make a good investment. Research shows that there are many who are looking for this kind of work. Communities In Schools can encourage the network to investigate this option and connect to groups like Civic Ventures for resources and supports in expanding this underutilized option across the network.

*Develop a system-wide internship program:* We are witnessing an unprecedented influx of talent to the nonprofit sector, including a surge of recent graduates, career changers and older employees. Internships offer an option that gives Communities In Schools affiliates an opportunity to build relationships with developing talent. Interns are looking for meaningful work, and Communities In Schools is a good source. Even for the short-term, an intern may be able to accomplish work that others in the organization have not been able to fit in. By developing a program that could place interns in Communities In Schools affiliates across the country, the national office could build a means of familiarizing talented young people with the organization. Many interns are still in school, but their internships could bring them back to Communities In Schools once they complete their studies. While creating an internship program will involve staff time and funding, it could be a key component in building a talent pool that enhances and sustains the work of Communities In Schools.

**Centralize Appropriate Recruitment Strategies**

*Expand the Communities In Schools job bank so that it covers all states and all jobs:* If you go to the Communities In Schools website ([www.communitiesinschools.org](http://www.communitiesinschools.org)) and look under “Careers”, you will find a list of employment opportunities. This section rarely offers job listings outside of positions with the national office that are below the level of local executive director. Interviews with Communities In Schools local affiliate and state office staff indicated that they had a great deal of interest in continuing to work for Communities In Schools if they moved to another city. But they have no way to find such jobs except by looking on a city-by-city basis to find open-

ings at Communities In Schools local affiliates and state offices. Building a more robust job section on the national office website, and promoting it in the nonprofit sector; at college placement offices and schools of social work; and at related conferences and conventions, could make this the “go to” place for employment opportunities within the Communities In Schools network.

Utilize network-wide recruitment strategies and systems: Building on the concept of a robust, network-wide jobs site, Communities In Schools could also put in place a full recruitment strategy that would reach out to other nonprofit organizations, leadership development programs, colleges and universities. Putting together a list of some of the nonprofit career sites where openings at Communities In Schools could be advertised (www.idealist.org, www.cgcareers.org, www.nonprofitjobs.org, etc.) and setting up tables at career fairs (especially those that target people of color and those from low-income communities) could position Communities In Schools as a key organization for launching or continuing a nonprofit career. Connecting to the work being done on this issue via the National Human Services Assembly (www.nassembly.org) and American Humanics (www.humanics.org) will provide the Communities In Schools network and others with a wealth of information and resources.

Collaborate with other national nonprofits to grow and build a talent pool: A number of national nonprofit organizations have looked at talent pipelining and talent development as a critical issue for the nonprofit sector. The National Human Service Assembly59 has done some exploration with its members to build a website, Careers For Good, for posting and finding work in the sector among its member organizations.60 As a member of the Assembly, the Communities In Schools national office and its affiliates can take advantage of this site, but even more can be done. When an affiliate has a talented staff member and truly has no place for her to grow within the current structure of the organization, helping that person to find an appropriate place within the nonprofit sector may be a sensible move. As that person gains skills and new expertise, she might be able to return to Communities In Schools at some point and move into a leadership position. Creating talent pools in smaller and rural communities may be helpful in keeping qualified workers in a community where they may be of service. This involves a great deal of trust among organizations. But it could also lead to shared training and staff development opportunities, and ways in which some positions (IT, data management, finance, training) might be shared across organizations. Where the talent pool is limited, doing all that can be done to keep talent in the community becomes a priority. Working in new ways within and outside of the Communities In Schools organization may provide some new and effective strategies. See Appendix A: Program Action Strategies Chart for additional information.

Policy Action Strategies

These action strategies involve system-wide actions that may require decisions and actions by the Communities In Schools board and senior staff prior to implementation. Not all are board decisions but most should have board acknowledgement and engagement prior to implementation.

Develop and manage a Communities In Schools benefits policy: The inability of many Communities In Schools affiliates to provide their staffs with basic benefits, especially health insurance, is a major factor in retaining talented workers. Interviews for this project indicated that lower salaries were more easily accepted when there were benefits. New federal health care policies may help Communities In Schools affiliates offer their employees health care benefits, but so much is still unknown and implementation is spread over a long time frame. In the past, the Communities In Schools national office explored an “umbrella” policy that offered coverage to affiliates, and staff decided not to move forward with the policy for good reasons. Communities In Schools is a federated network and, therefore, most of the individuals who would need to be covered by the umbrella policy would not be employees of the national office. This would make it impossible to provide potential insurance carriers with the detailed information they need to estimate the cost of an umbrella policy. It is unknown at this time if pending changes in the health insurance system will make such an umbrella policy more feasible. Even if a national program is not possible, other options should be explored. For example, the national and state offices might be able to assist

local affiliates to navigate the health insurance options available to their staff and to ensure selection of the best coverage within the affiliate’s budget. Health care is a critical issue for all people and should be given the highest priority possible.

Continue to address racial inequity in leadership and staffing: This action strategy is well covered in the work done by 2006-2007 Communities In Schools Robert H.B. Baldwin Fellow Mariko Lockhart, who studied race and representation in Communities In Schools. Like most nonprofits, Communities In Schools staffs and boards do not reflect the racial diversity of their communities and of the children they serve. The Communities In Schools national office has begun to address this issue with the development and implementation of the Race Equity Initiative and the assignment of staff and funding for this work. The work will require long-term attention and for that reason is considered a high priority for the network. Because both the industrial and corporate sectors are also looking at ways to diversify their workforces and boards, the competition for talented people of color is fierce. Communities In Schools should revisit some of the recommendations in Lockhart’s 2008 study, looking especially at recommendation #4: “Collect racial demographic information on staff and boards on an annual basis,” and recommendation #11: “Establish a leadership development initiative for staff of color at the school site-level and in middle management.” Both of these recommendations speak to the commitment and concern that Communities In Schools has about attracting and keeping talented employees of color. Collecting demographic information will allow Communities In Schools to measure progress (or the lack of it) on an annual basis. A leadership development program would provide a career path for people of color to move into leadership positions. In addition, Communities In Schools should intentionally recruit staff of color from those communities and universities where they currently live and matriculate, and from communities where Communities In Schools has a presence.

Develop options for gender and racial equity in the Total Quality System and Standards and Evidence-Based Curriculum: In her Fellows report on race and representation in Communities In Schools, Lockhart also addressed the need to integrate race equity and diversity into the Communities In Schools Total Quality System. Adding gender equity is also an important component. Information on race and gender equity should also be integrated into the Standards and Evidence-Based Curriculum to increase Communities In Schools staff awareness and understanding of these issues. While these may not seem to relate to talent pipelining and talent development, they serve as the base on which Communities In Schools builds its programs. Having standards and a curriculum that are culturally sensitive and responsive will make a difference in how employees of color feel about implementing these tools and standards. See Appendix B: Policy Action Strategies Chart for additional information.

Organizational Structure Action Strategies

These action strategies address new ways of organizing, managing and leading Communities In Schools initiatives and positions within affiliates, state offices and the national office. Others reach across the Communities In Schools network to engage staff and volunteers in new ways. Many of these strategies can be implemented on the national, state or local level.

Change current organizational structures to enhance mobility: “We just don’t have the right opportunities for them,” was the straightforward statement from a senior management staff member of a large, urban Communities In Schools affiliate, pointing out how little upward movement is possible for Communities In Schools employees. Because most Communities In Schools affiliates and state offices are not complex organizational structures, they have limited opportunities for upward, progressive moves to more responsible positions. The most common and numerous positions in the Communities In Schools network are site coordinator positions. The skills and potential of many of these staff for growth and development within Communities In Schools is limited by the structure of the organization. When only 34 percent of Communities In Schools leaders indicate that there is a career path for staff in their local organization, there is no reason to expect talented people to stay.

Many nonprofit structures are hierarchical and based on corporate models which are cumbersome and inflexible. The desire to rethink this structure is not new, but the models

| 61 Communities In Schools Fellows survey of state and local Communities In Schools leaders, January 2010. |
used are still business-based. Completely rethinking the organizational structure might lead to new, creative models not based on a for-profit business structure. A flatter leadership structure with challenging responsibilities given to employees currently at the lower end of the hierarchy would offer creative opportunities to those who might otherwise leave. Because flat organizational structures seem to offer limited options, many employees believe they need to leave in order to advance their careers. This does not need to be the case, even when there are limited options for moving “up” within an organizational structure. Replacing dated power structures with a less traditional hierarchy and more accountability for mission impact could assist with retaining high-performing individuals.

Enhance participatory decision-making/collaborative management structures: If changing organizational structures are not currently possible, another option is to make decision-making processes more collaborative. When all of the decisions in an organization are top-down, there is little opportunity to know if there are talented people at the entry-level of an organization. Generational research confirms that all generations — Silents, Boomers, Xers and Ys — want to be heard. The younger generations are seeking acknowledgement of their leadership, ideas and vision, while Boomers are also seeking acknowledgement of their work and support for their relevancy now, not just in the past. Bridging the generations from an organizational perspective involves current leaders and management listening to all levels of staff. Seeking real input from staff, not just lip service, as organizational decisions are made builds a sense of ownership and sharing among employees who might not otherwise work together. Innovative, effective, new strategies and directions can result, along with the emergence of multi-generational and multi-dimensional thinking that cut across organizational silos.

Shared management is another way to address hierarchical/structural issues and engage people in ways that guide them toward greater responsibility. Linking a very organized site coordinator with a seasoned middle management grant writer to conceptualize and pilot a new way to capture data from partner organizations, for example, could result in a win-win for staff, kids and the organization. Collaborative management structures take time to develop and continuous, open communication, both internally and externally, is vital. But this strategy offers another means to address hierarchical barriers and move people forward rather than losing them. Sharing power and decision-making, and providing creative leadership and skill-building opportunities within a flat structure, as well as in more hierarchical ones, could make a difference in keeping talented employees.

Create cross-state affinity groups for staff, with a focus on non-management positions: “I wish I could talk with others doing the job I do in different communities,” commented a site coordinator in a group interview, followed by similar comments from his coworkers. “We know our work, but we are isolated in our schools. We could learn so much more from others and really build and contribute to Communities In Schools that way,” he continued. Being able to learn from coworkers can be the small thing that retains employees while not having that opportunity can drive employees away. Technology now allows for this kind of information sharing. For Communities In Schools to create groups at the national or state level that could meet online to dig deeply into an issue, or to provide feedback on a case or an article, would allow for a number of positive outcomes. One would be uncovering talent in areas of the organization that would not ordinarily be known to national or state leadership. A second would be generating the “group-think” ideas that could be more cutting edge than what is currently happening. And a third is building a real sense of being part of something larger than a school or a local Communities In Schools organization. These “affinity groups” could be offered by position (site coordinator, data & IT, field support, etc.) or by issues (after-school programs, student behavioral issues, data collection, etc.). The groups could be convened via a wiki or other online opportunity so that staff could log on when they have time. The groups would have to be monitored and supported by staff, but the information that results could be quite valuable to Communities In Schools and could make the difference in someone feeling isolated or engaged; disenfranchised or valued.

Develop and support shared leadership: Shared leadership, unlike collaborative leadership, addresses an individual position rather than a project. Could there be “co-executive directors”? The current Total Quality System requires a full-time executive director. Shared leadership does not necessarily mean doing only part of a position or dividing it into smaller positions. In these times of great talent with “no place to go,” shared leadership could be the delegation of some leadership responsibilities to others and a re-thinking of a job description that restricts what someone can do. It can free leadership to focus on and do more talent management and talent development, which needs to be seen as the work of those at the highest levels of organizations. Shared leadership offers a way to keep talented employees who may, for a variety of reasons, wish to work less than full-time. The cost of training a new hire, who may not stay for more than a year or two, could be offset with a split position. See Appendix C: Organizational Structure Action Strategies chart for additional information.

Talent-Building Action Strategies
These action strategies all have a training component to them. Leadership for these strategies would come from the national office, but could be implemented at the state level as well.

Hold regular, face-to-face exchanges and meetings/trainings targeting staff in baseline/non-management positions: In numerous interviews, Communities In Schools staff from local affiliates and state offices mentioned how much they missed having the Communities In Schools Multi-Track Training, regionalized trainings that moved around the country and engaged Communities In Schools staff at all levels of the organization. This “face-to-face” opportunity gave local staff who are not in management and leadership positions an opportunity to participate, learn, build relationships with others in the Communities In Schools network and demonstrate their own skills and talents. As Communities In Schools embarks on regionalized meetings/trainings in 2011, the emphasis should be on encouraging local and state leaders to not send the usual suspects, but to reach out to those employees who do not often travel, or attend trainings/meetings outside of their own office. The investment made in developing the talents and skills of site coordinators, the administrative staff and the data and IT staff could pay off in one of these people becoming the next middle manager or even, at some point, the executive director. There is a hunger among the younger workers in Communities In Schools for “face time” with others who do this work. Facilitating that time will open eyes and open doors for savvy staff to see new options in Communities In Schools.

Create a platform for board talent development: Like developing staff talent, developing board talent takes research, savvy and stewardship. Volunteers bring particular talents to a nonprofit and most who volunteer do so to “do good work” just as many of Communities In Schools employees do. Developing a talent pipeline for volunteers is critically important. Future board members will want information about just what this “job” entails. Transparency in sharing information about the board member’s role will ensure that those who are invited and agree to serve, are truly prepared and committed to the fiduciary, strategic and generative roles of board work. Communities In Schools affiliates and state offices need to think “outside the box” in recruiting board members and maintaining their boards. It is just as important to bring in new voices with skills and talents to share with the organization as it is to move others out the door (never an easy task). Cultivating volunteers so that their talents, some unknown to them, surface can be done in a variety of ways: in a regular 10-minute board training at each meeting; in introducing board members to staff who are in the schools and can share experiences with them; in meeting one-on-one with board members and volunteers to assess how they are feeling about this experience and what they might bring that they are not currently doing. This list could be much longer. What is important, however, is to emphasize that providing the Communities In Schools network with the tools and information it needs to build and maintain talented boards must be a priority.

Develop and implement job clusters, meetings and projects: As indicated in the organizational structure action strategies recommendation to create cross-state affinity groups for staff in non-management positions, a key means of attracting and keeping talent is to offer them opportunities to learn, share and shine. Developing job “clusters” that could meet (via conference call, online or in person) regularly and experi-

ence training together would broaden the perspective. Giving these groups projects to work on, or asking them to develop projects would produce information, materials and resources for the entire Communities In Schools network. And projects would solidify the participants’ sense of being a part of a national organization, broadening their thinking about possible career paths and opening doors for them as they and their work are exposed to the Communities In Schools network, ultimately resulting in keeping talented hard workers.

Host generational conversations to build talent: The work of groups such as Civic Ventures and the Building Movement Project in the Encore Employer Initiative indicate that the issue of generational conflict and differences be re-framed as a “multigenerational workforce.” New structures and approaches will be necessary for what is a four-generation workplace. Multi-generational conversations with both staff and volunteers can be held at the national, state and local levels. The goal is to listen to and learn from the various perspectives and to move toward a workplace that is structured for effective and satisfying work for all who are a part of it. These conversations may address issues of decision-making and power in organizations as well as issues of work/life balance, salaries and benefits. What could come from such conversations are ways to work that will make Communities In Schools a “talent magnet,” now and in the future.

Address the talent development needs at the entry- and mid-levels of Communities In Schools: When new workers join an organization, they are usually given an orientation to their work and to the organization itself, followed most often by a probationary period and then annual performance reviews. This is common practice, but not adequate for those who are new and for those who have risen from entry-level positions to mid-level work, especially those with ambition and passion for their work. Renewal has become a buzz word in a number of sectors, but it applies here. Communities In Schools needs to provide opportunities for both new and mid-level staff to demonstrate and develop their skills and talents. These could be in the form of trainings, mentorships or new assignments. The role of the Communities In Schools national office is to help state and local leaders hone in on and be able to implement these options. Working with those in the network who oversee staff development (in most local Communities In Schools affiliates this is the executive director) is a starting place. If a mid-level staff member is asked to work on development for all staff, rather than just his or her own, a whole range of options might open up for all levels of the affiliate. While the Communities In Schools national office will be the catalyst, the actions and results will happen in the field.

Provide additional professional growth opportunities to site coordinators: Staff at all levels of the organization, particularly site coordinators, welcome the development of a Communities In Schools site coordinator certification program. In interviews and discussions, the primary response to this certification was: “It validates my work and my position.” The scope of this certification is the first step in guiding site coordinators toward further professional growth and to become part of a pathway toward greater responsibility and organizational leadership. The investment that is needed to train, nurture and develop site coordinators, who manage a myriad of tasks and responsibilities, is huge. The work done by these staff is what makes a difference in the life of children. These employees are often the real “face” of Communities In Schools. The site coordinator certification program can be a step leading to even greater professional growth for these key members of the Communities In Schools network. See Appendix D: Talent Building Action Strategies for additional information.

Talent pipelining and development in the nonprofit sector is a mission-critical function. It is the responsibility of all managers and volunteer leaders to ensure that nonprofit organizations are viewed as “workplaces of choice.” This is work where professionals can hone their skills and talents and grow. It is where they can find a career path that will bring them personal satisfaction, security in terms of salary and benefits, opportunities for creativity and a means to give back to their communities. Having the right people in the right places can make all the difference between success and failure, between doing good and doing great, and between making a living and making a difference. Attracting and keeping the best and the brightest in Communities In Schools and the nonprofit sector is about intentionality and flexibility. It is not just about the young, as talent abounds in every generation. But it is about how multiple generations work together and how Communities In Schools and others create opportunities for that to happen. It is not about any one group or culture, but rather, about a workplace that reflects the diversity of its communities and of this nation. And it is not about a single way to achieve a mission, but about a multitude of options and ideas that will move missions, organizations and people forward. Talent pipelining and development is not just for those that Communities In Schools employs, but is also about those who volunteer their time and effort to guide and lead.

This report provides a platform and options for Communities In Schools to make talent pipelining and development a priority and a seamless, but intentional, component of how Communities In Schools operates. It offers a pipeline and a pathway to the future.

“...The future is no longer the networked organization, but rather the organization as network.”

David Renz
Director, Midwest Center for Nonprofit Leadership
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<td>Mentors and coaches provide direct support, assessment and expertise to employees and volunteers. This process can happen virtually as well as in person and can be an individual or group process. Mentors and coaches can be linked based on different criteria, or could be chosen by the mentee to push their skills. The development of a mentor and coaching program at the national level that is available to staff and volunteers across the network could provide the “hook” to keep talented people engaged. People that anticipate moving might use this to build a network and link to CIS in another city.</td>
<td>Good mentors and coaches need training and coaching themselves. Any mentor system needs a screening process for those who wish to participate and someone should be in place to match people (some programs are self-selecting), monitor the process and evaluate on a regular basis. These actions may actually be a “pro” as much as a “con.”</td>
<td><strong>Costs:</strong> Staff time in organizing, participating in and maintaining a mentor or coaching program is the greatest cost. Investing in solid training with an experienced organization is also important. Allowing staff the time to actually work with coaches is both a cost and a benefit. All of this applies to volunteers (board) as well.</td>
<td>United Way of America began a Minority Leadership Development Program in 1988 that ran for five years: Program used mentors/coaches with talented minority staff. United Way also created an online mentor system. All United Way directors and above are invited to become mentors. Currently, they have 150 mentors and about 200 mentees. This is only available to United Way employees. <strong>Benefits:</strong> Staff and volunteers who participate in these kinds of programs gain valuable skills and information, build their loyalty and their networks, and give back to their organizations. <strong>Resources:</strong> United Way of America (<a href="http://www.LiveUnited.org">www.LiveUnited.org</a>) Center for Nonprofit Success (<a href="http://www.cnps.org/mentoring.aspx">www.cnps.org/mentoring.aspx</a>) International Mentoring Network (<a href="http://www.imno.org">www.imno.org</a>)</td>
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<td>CREATE AND Distribute college Scholarships with a commitment to “work for CIS” upon completion of a degree:</td>
<td>This is an incentive to young people to “give back.” Scholarships could be targeted to low-income students who want to work in nonprofits, students at partner schools and students from rural communities who might not otherwise return once they have a degree. The two to three year work commitment would give time to build loyalty to an affiliate and begin to build a career within the organization.</td>
<td>This is a complicated and expensive process. Funding would need to be obtained and maintained; a screening process put in place; monitoring of students while in school; placement with CIS affiliates; and contracts for repayment if students do no fulfill their commitment to serve.</td>
<td>Costs: Obtaining the endowment and or actual scholarship funds is a primary cost. Developing and administering this kind of program will involve staff time and oversight as well as board engagement. There are legalities that will need attention in terms of contracts and liabilities. Benefits: Targets talented students who can become talented staff. The monetary costs may not be offset in the short term, but the reputation of CIS as concerned about qualified staff in all of its affiliates and offering students options to “give back” are a huge benefit.</td>
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<td><strong>TARGET AUDIENCE</strong></td>
<td>College students who are potential CIS employees Also students graduating from PLCs or partner high schools</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>BEST USED BY</strong></td>
<td>CIS organizations at the national, state and local levels Most useful for rural programs.</td>
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<td>DEVELOP AN IDEA BANK OF REWARDS FOR STAFF BEYOND SALARY AND BENEFITS:</td>
<td>This is something that the entire network can contribute to and use. It would offer ideas and “how-tos.” For affiliates with limited resources, it would provide options for staff rewards at little cost. It could also include a means of accessing certificates or other means of acknowledgment of longevity of service from the national office. This reinforces the sense of being a part of a national network.</td>
<td>In an online format, this will take time to build and engage the network so that employees contribute. If it is not embraced by affiliates, updated and used, it will not be of value. It will need to be maintained and evaluated. If there is a longevity rewards program developed as a component, that will need management and recordkeeping.</td>
<td>Costs: Staff time in development, outreach and PR, and maintenance of such a system. There may also be costs in developing a longevity rewards program for years of service. Benefits: People like rewards and acknowledgment for their work. Little things may make a difference for that talented person contemplating leaving. The system could be “franchised” or shared with other nonprofits and position CIS as a thought leader in low-cost means of rewarding staff.</td>
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<td><strong>TARGET AUDIENCE</strong></td>
<td>Staff and Volunteers</td>
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<td><strong>BEST USED BY</strong></td>
<td>CIS organizations at the national, state and local levels</td>
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**ACTION/STRATEGY with Short Description**

**PROS**

“Doing good work” is a key reason cited by those who work for CIS. Asking employees to do direct work (as a mentor or assisting in an after-school program or working with kids on computer skills, for example) connects them to the CIS mission and builds their understanding of the impact their piece of this work, however removed from kids, really has. It may open new possibilities for employees and reveal unknown skills.

**CONS**

Not all staff will embrace this happily, and it will take them away, even for a limited amount of time, from their “real” work. It could be seen as a distraction as much as a learning experience. Supervisors will need to oversee this process and that is in addition to their workload.

**COSTS/ BENEFITS**

**Costs:** Someone will need to take time to develop and evaluate the program, perhaps as a pilot, so that there is evidence of the impact this has on staff engagement, commitment and longevity. This could involve grant funds or simply the allocation of staff time.

**Benefits:** The responses from CIS employees who are not in the field, to experiencing a school site and the work done there is extremely positive. The time spent organizing such a program could pay off in a better work ethic and new program ideas as well as staff longevity.

**Target Audience:** Staff and Volunteers

**Best Used By:** CIS organizations at the national, state and local levels

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**IMPLEMENT STRETCH ASSIGNMENTS:**

Challenge talented staff with assignments that move them a bit outside of their comfort zone and require the acquisition of new ideas, information and skills. This can reveal new talents and potential and can be seen as a step on a career ladder and into the CIS talent pipeline.

The payoff in giving someone a stretch assignment is often in extra effort to learn a new area, build relationships and successfully execute the assignment. This strategy also acknowledges the potential seen in staff and points out the career path possibilities.

There are risks involved in handing an assignment to someone who needs to be “brought up to speed” in order to fulfill that assignment. The work may not get done as well as it would by someone who knows the area. The person may need extra supervision taking up more senior staff time.

**Costs:** Staff time for supervision, management and oversight, and evaluation. There is the possibility of having to do something over if the employee is not successful, thus doubling both time and cost.

**Benefits:** Assigned employee may have new, creative ways to do assignments and can demonstrate new talents. The employee may see new career options and want to stay with a very future-focused CIS.

**Target Audience:** Staff and Volunteers

**Best Used By:** CIS organizations at the national, state and local levels

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**CREATIVELY ASSIGN WORK**

The literature review cited this strategy in numerous articles and books as an effective way to offer talented employees new options as well as to see what they can do. While there are risks, the benefits are new skills in staff and new ideas for the organization.

**Target Audience:** Staff and Volunteers

**Best Used By:** CIS organizations at the national, state and local levels

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ENCOURAGE CROSS-FUNCTIONAL WORK:
This strategy builds teamwork that reaches beyond the work silos that are evident in most organizations to reveal new talents and skills and offer employees a sense of other options within the organization.

PROS
Approaching work with different perspectives provides CIS with new ideas, new work teams and new strategies to reach goals. Beyond the organizational payoff, this strategy also provides participants with new colleagues, new work to consider and options for work and career that might not have otherwise been considered.

CONS
Team projects can be difficult to manage, hard to organize and can move the organization in a different direction than anticipated or needed. Teams do not always gel and get along, which can delay outcomes and occasionally undermine them. This strategy can make employees feel uncomfortable about their positions and skills.

COSTS/ BENEFITS
Costs: Time is a large cost as this will take time to organize and for staff to learn each others’ strengths. It can create competition within a team that can push people out—in some cases a loss of talent.

Benefits: Staff work in new ways and create new ideas making the organization more effective. Costs are reduced in areas where teamwork reduces time on task and replication of work. Staff are able to see new career options in the work of others on a team.

TARGET AUDIENCE
CIS organizations at the national, state and local levels

BEST USED BY
CIS organizations at the national, state and local levels

TAP INTO NON-TRADITIONAL WORKFORCE

USE OF AMERICORPS & VISTA VOLUNTEERS:
This is already a key source for staffing and volunteerism in many CIS affiliates. But reaching out to talented AmeriCorps and VISTA volunteers to stay with CIS, beyond their volunteer service, is a real resource for staffing the organization with skilled people.

PROS
In many cases, following up with AmeriCorps and VISTA volunteers reveals a great desire to continue in this kind of work. Because these volunteer workers (many do receive federal stipends) are a “known talent,” inviting them to stay as an employee or to return upon completion of a degree is a win for everyone. CIS does not have the heavy learning curve with these staff as with new employees and these employees are excited about building on their volunteer experiences.

CONS
Having a paid position to offer a VISTA or AmeriCorps worker is often a reach for affiliates. Part of the reason for using them is that they are federally subsidized. What is done as a volunteer does not always translate when that person transitions to a full-time position. The possibility exists that former volunteers may see their work with CIS as a “stop gap” and they may not stay with the organization long enough to take advantage of what they know and what they can do. Their own sense of job security could be a factor.

COSTS/ BENEFITS
Costs: If an affiliate needs to create a new position, it can be costly. Sustaining new positions over time can also be difficult in terms of funding.

Benefits: Knowing that an organization has volunteers with talent who can be transitioned into staff positions is a savings in HR costs (to fill openings). Not having the orientation and job training costs in staff time is another savings to the organization. But having staff that want to stay with the organization because they are passionate about the work is priceless!

TARGET AUDIENCE
CIS organizations at the national, state and local levels

BEST USED BY
CIS organizations at the national, state and local levels
## Utilize Encore Workers:

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| Hiring workers who bring experience from previous careers can fill gaps in the workforce, build a more multi-generational staff and provide talents in unanticipated people and ways. Encore workers are seeking to do “good work” in their second careers and bring that desire and passion to what they do. They may not need to work full time and may not need benefits. | Not all encore workers have the energy and background to do direct school-based work. They may need more training and greater support and supervision. They may not stay and could interrupt or clog the talent pipeline for other, younger staff. They may not adapt well to the new technologies that are evolving and being used. | **Costs:** Saving through use of part-time positions and limited benefits needed could be offset by training and supervision costs.  
**Benefits:** Encore workers tend to be committed, passionate hard workers. They often want less than full-time work and do not require benefits (both cost savings). They diversify the workplace and bring specialties and skills (finance, HR, etc.) from their previous work. | There are a number of excellent resources for Encore workers including: Civic Ventures:  
www.civicventures.org  
AARP: www.aarp.org  
Other sources are the associations and unions for educators and social workers who can connect to their own cadre of retirees seeking new work. |

**Target Audience:**  
CIS organizations at the national, state and local levels

**Best Used By:**  
CIS organizations at the national, state and local levels

## Develop a System-Wide Internship Program:

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| Hiring interns is a way for organizations to build relationships and develop talent. Offering meaningful work to an intern can result in a real understanding of and commitment to an organization. Interns can move a project from start to finish in a short period of time. Talented people with newly acquired degrees may be willing to intern (paid or unpaid) for CIS to gain skills that will help them land a full-time job. | There can be questions about the work commitment of a short-term intern. The amount of time spent in training and supervision may not be justified for a short time span. Finding the funding for interns can be time consuming and limit funding in other areas. | **Costs:** Interns should not always be volunteers and can require salaries. (An alternative to salaried interns is student interns who receive class credit for this work.) They also require staff time in training and supervision.  
**Benefits:** An intern can complete a project in a short timeframe as it may be their sole focus. This can generate some benefits to organizations needing help and not having staff with either the skills or time. It also can populate a talent pool for future full-time job openings. | Internships provide a good way to get people with excellent talent and skills for short-term projects. Hiring an intern to help revamp materials or a website may yield high-quality work. Interns are walking advertisements for the work of an organization and can promote what is being done far beyond their internships. This can be a factor in developing a talent pool for filling openings as they occur. Some organizations, colleges and universities have funding to subsidize internships with nonprofit organizations. |

**Target Audience:**  
CIS organizations at the national, state and local levels

**Best Used By:**  
CIS organizations at the national, state and local levels, but should start at the national level.
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<tr>
<td><strong>CENTRALIZE APPROPRIATE RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES</strong></td>
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| **EXPAND THE CIS JOB BANK SO THAT IT COVERS ALL STATES AND ALL JOBS:**  
The national office does maintain an online job listing that includes jobs in state offices and local affiliates. Currently it is underutilized and shows few positions that are non-management. | This online job opportunities area of the CIS website could become a high-traffic area for both internal and external usage. The national reach of the network could make this a place where current employees who are moving to a new community find work within the network. | This is hard to maintain and keep current. If job listings are not posted and removed in a timely manner, it creates frustration for users. If enough jobs are not posted and enough people are not looking, it becomes a drain. | Costs: Publicizing the site and CIS as a “great place to work” will take staff time and planning. Fitting this into the priorities of the organization may be a key question. If this is to be more interactive (like the United Way internal site) it will also incur development and maintenance costs. Benefits: Attracting and keeping talented people in CIS is a benefit that is measured in achieving the mission and vision. | An interesting concept on an internal system: United Way of America operates the Leaders Engaged in Accelerated Development (LEAD) system, with 500 participants online. They have automated career alerts that are personalized to LEAD participants, giving them notice of new United Way job openings. |
| **UTILIZE NETWORK-WIDE RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES AND SYSTEMS:**  
The need to recruit highly talented people should be a high priority. CIS is not yet an organization that everyone recognizes (like Boys and Girls Clubs or United Way) so being “out there” to recruit at colleges and universities, through key job banks and with partner organizations, could change that dynamic. | Building name recognition is key in recruitment. Intentionality is the focus and being a presence at career fairs at conferences and meetings of social workers and other professional organizations helps in this process. Targeting the placement offices of colleges and universities that attract students of color would aid in building a more diverse organization. And being a “player” with collaborative organizations that are working on talent development issues will position CIS as a thought leader in this arena. | Time on task is a major issue for this recommendation. It will take staff time and funds to be a presence at conferences and career fairs. Outreach to colleges and universities will also need staff who can focus on this and make it a part of their ongoing work. Leadership time will have to be devoted to collaborative work on talent pipelining issues with other nonprofits. | Costs: Staff time and travel as well as the development of appropriate materials all are a part of the costs involved in this strategy. Benefits: This will build the name recognition of CIS with key audiences who can encourage talented people to consider work with the organization and who will recognize it as a leader in talent pipelining and development in the nonprofit sector. Attracting and keeping talented people is a benefit that is measured in achieving the mission and vision. | Some of the national nonprofit career sites that could be turning to CIS for materials, beyond just listing CIS jobs include: www.idealist.org; www.cgcareers.org, www.nonprofitjobs.org; There are many more, some local for large urban communities. Collaborative groups where CIS participation could result in more recognition of CIS as a key player in the nonprofit sector and a key employer as well are: National Human Services Assembly (www.nassembly.org) and American Humanics (www.humanics.org). |
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<td>COLLABORATE WITH OTHER NATIONAL NONPROFITS TO GROW AND BUILD A TALENT POOL: Providing shared training and talent development options with other nonprofit organizations can happen in communities as well as on a statewide or national basis. This is an ideal way to pool resources, provide quality professional development and stimulate talented staff.</td>
<td>Options for talent development can be expanded by collaborative efforts and programs. Simply taking advantage of existing initiatives and sending staff to others’ trainings and conferences is one way to go. But working in partnership with “like” organizations allows for the development of customized programs for professional development. Funders are generally open to and encourage such collaborations.</td>
<td>There are no guarantees that other organizations will not lure talented staff to join them in this scenario. This can take a long time to work out and each partner may have to compromise and/or give up aspects that are unique or important to it. This can be costly and may not always attract grant funding.</td>
<td>Costs: Staff time is needed for relationship building, development and implementation. Funding will be needed to implement this kind of collaborative staff development. Evaluation is an essential component that will need both people and funds. Benefits: Sharing costs with other organizations is a savings and each benefits from the thinking and skills of the other’s staff. This can result in a more robust talent development program with employees eager to participate as it moves their thinking to a broader, multi-organizational level.</td>
<td>This option may be especially relevant to building talents among employees of color. By partnering with ethnic organizations, CIS can benefit from the experience and knowledge of specific ethnic and cultural groups. They can gain from CIS expertise in partnering with schools and other community organizations. This can be a win-win for all involved.</td>
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TARGET AUDIENCE
CIS organizations at the national, state and local levels

BEST USED BY
CIS national office
**APPENDIX B: POLICY ACTION STRATEGIES CHART**

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<th>ACTION/STRATEGY with Short Description</th>
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<td><strong>CIS BENEFITS POLICY:</strong>&lt;br&gt;This strategy would explore options to provide benefits to staff throughout the CIS network.</td>
<td>Being able to offer benefits to staff is the most asked-for resource in the network. If CIS had health insurance for all staff, many talented people would stay. It would also ensure that CIS has a workforce that takes care of itself and models that for the students it serves. This strategy also speaks to the organization’s values of equity and social justice. Though an “umbrella” benefits policy is not feasible at this time, future changes to the health insurance system might make that possible. Other options should be explored, such as the national and state offices providing assistance to local affiliates in selecting healthcare benefits for staff.</td>
<td>CIS has looked at this issue in the past and not found a means to offer an umbrella benefits system for its network. The various levels of nonprofit incorporation in different states are a factor as is the complication of being “nationwide.”</td>
<td>Costs: If setting up an umbrella policy becomes feasible in the future, the monetary cost would most likely be high. Maintaining this kind of system and to deal with questions, whether internal or external, are also costly. This could mean adding staff to HR and even setting up a “call center” at enrollment times to manage such a system. Legalities and legal costs are also a factor.</td>
<td>Some comments from the January 2010 survey of CIS leaders on this issue: “Our inability to pay benefits is a hindrance to getting and keeping staff.” “We are able to attract retired persons who do not need benefits and only want to work 10 months a year.” “No health benefits or retirement is a negative factor in hiring.” “We don’t provide benefits of any kind because we can’t afford to, so that is a bit of a hindrance. We hope to have funding to do that in the future.” Those CIS leaders who provide benefits see it as a great help in attracting talented people. This was validated by interviews with local and state leaders.</td>
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<td><strong>CONTINUE TO ADDRESS RACIAL INEQUITY IN LEADERSHIP AND STAFFING:</strong>&lt;br&gt;This strategy would expand the current work being done on race equity in the network by documenting demographics annually and establishing leadership development that speaks specifically to leaders of color.</td>
<td>Having more diversity at both the staff and the board level would position CIS as a leader and a key role model for the nonprofit sector. Documenting progress in this is key and should be done on an annual basis. By focusing on developing more leaders of color, the network will become more representative of the children and families served. Just as talent attracts talent, so, too will diversity attract and maintain diversity.</td>
<td>Adding something else into the Communities In Schools End-of-Year Report will add to the work for affiliates who maintain this data. This is a sensitive area and could be interpreted as CIS national being judgmental about who the affiliates hire. Development of a specialized leadership program for leaders of color could be seen as biased reverse discrimination.</td>
<td>Costs: The cost to add questions regarding ethnicity of staff and board to the End-of-Year Report are minimal, but the accuracy is dependent on the affiliates who respond. Not having a baseline for this information is costly in that this is information that is often requested by funders.</td>
<td>The national PTA has held an Emerging Minority Leaders Conference for the last four years and seen it grow and build a strong cadre of volunteer leaders. This is one example of a strategy around leadership of color that has been successful.</td>
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<td><strong>TARGET AUDIENCE</strong>&lt;br&gt;CIS organizations at the national, state and local levels</td>
<td><strong>BEST USED BY</strong>&lt;br&gt;CIS national office</td>
<td><strong>TARGET AUDIENCE</strong>&lt;br&gt;CIS organizations at the national, state and local levels</td>
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<td>ACTION/STRATEGY with Short Description</td>
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<td><strong>DEVELOP OPTIONS FOR GENDER AND RACIAL EQUITY IN THE TOTAL QUALITY SYSTEM (TQS) AND STANDARDS AND EVIDENCE-BASED CURRICULUM (SEBC):</strong> With TQS and SEBC as the platform for CIS work, integrating race and gender equity into both would acknowledge the need for cultural and gender sensitivity and would require effort from the network.</td>
<td>Making diversity a part of TQS and SEBC will move affiliates, school sites, employees and volunteers to be more reflective of and responsive to the students they serve. While diversity cannot be mandated, it can be a goal to strive toward. Standards and curriculum can reflect this and build ethnic and cultural sensitivity into this work. This would make CIS work attractive to talented employees who will stay where this is in place.</td>
<td>This could be seen as inappropriate for the purposes of TQS and SEBC. It could be seen as race- and gender-biased from a reverse discrimination perspective and might be threatening to some current leaders and staff.</td>
<td><strong>Costs:</strong> CIS has made huge investments of time and money in developing and implementing both TQS and SEBC as they now exist. This would involve new materials, possible re-training and now re-certification for sites that have already completed TQS.</td>
<td><strong>Benefits:</strong> These changes would position the organization at the forefront of race and equity issues in the nonprofit sector. It would make the organization an attractive workplace for people of color.</td>
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**TARGET AUDIENCE**
CIS organizations at the national, state and local levels

**BEST USED BY**
CIS national office
## Appendix C: Organizational Structure Action Strategies Chart

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<th>ACTION/STRATEGY with Short Description</th>
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<td><strong>Change Current Organizational Structures to Enhance Mobility:</strong> Much of the current nonprofit structure is hierarchical and based on corporate models. Replacing dated power structures with a less traditional structure and more accountability for mission impact could impact the exodus of talented employees who leave in order to advance.</td>
<td>In creating new ways for affiliates to structure organizationally, new options for staff to advance, demonstrate talent and contribute are created. By moving away from top-down management, CIS can build the commitment and loyalty of people who now have a key role in the efficacy of the program. This offers options and CIS career paths for talented people.</td>
<td>Change is difficult and threatening to those who are part of the current structure. Boards, especially those that are from the corporate sector, may question the impact of these changes as being more disruptive than useful. Measuring impact in the short-term will be difficult.</td>
<td>Costs: Structural changes may mean both losing some current staff and hiring new staff, both of which have time and monetary costs. Benefits: Development of new career paths for talented staff will help keep talented people and attract others. It will also encourage creativity and the achievement of the CIS mission.</td>
<td>There are many resources for information about nonprofit structures. They move from highly structured, hierarchical models to flat-lined ways of operating. Finding the right balance to attract and keep talent while achieving the CIS mission should be the goal in looking at these options. A few places to look include: <a href="http://www.missionbased.com">www.missionbased.com</a> <a href="http://www.peterblock.com">www.peterblock.com</a> <a href="http://www.blueavocado.org">www.blueavocado.org</a> <a href="http://www.compasspoint.org">www.compasspoint.org</a> <a href="http://www.nonprofitnext.org">www.nonprofitnext.org</a> And there are many more.</td>
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### Target Audience
CIS organizations at the national, state and local levels

### Best Used By
CIS organizations at the national, state and local levels

| **Enhance Participatory Decision-Making & Collaborative Management Structures:** This creates opportunities for getting to know talent at all levels of an affiliate. It can help to build bridges across generations, engender creativity and new ideas, and address barriers to a career path in CIS. | Giving people more responsibility for decisions and directions creates a sense of ownership and loyalty. This strategy allows for new ways to cross-fertilize thinking and working. It breaks down barriers that could be seen as roadblocks to advancing in the organization and can shine a light on talent that would not have otherwise surfaced. It helps to build bridges across generations. | Not all staff will function well in collaborative processes and some may be very threatened by this. Others may attempt to hijack leadership and work to undermine team efforts. This can be difficult to plan and implement with people who either know each other well, or do not know each other at all. Not all decisions can or should be made by this process. | Costs: Some talented employees who are not comfortable with this type of process may leave. This would cost time and money in replacing them. It requires training some employees in how to facilitate these processes and takes oversight and development of guidelines and parameters to make this work well. Benefits: This can result in new, creative directions—people seeing a career path and management discovering new talent within the existing staff. It may result in less turnover, which creates cost savings. | Books, articles and research on shared/participatory decision-making and collaborative management abound online and in publications. CIS could develop and post some of these resources and cite examples from the network to demonstrate how to use this strategy to engage staff and enhance effectiveness. Collaboration around organizational decisions could be a part of training and offered in a number of ways (online, webinars, within states and regions) to the network. |
### CREATE CROSS-STATE AFFINITY GROUPS FOR STAFF WITH A FOCUS ON NON-MANAGE-MENT POSITIONS:

**Relationships and connections can make a large difference in why employees stay with organizations. In linking employees doing similar work in different states and different environments to one another, CIS can create learning options, build relationships and enhance creativity.**

**TARGET AUDIENCE**
- CIS organizations at the national, state and local levels

**BEST USED BY**
- CIS national office

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<td>Staff, especially at the entry level, are hungry to get to know and learn from each other, especially from those who work in different parts of the country. This strategy offers them that opportunity. It is both a support and opportunity for participants. In setting up such groups (and they could be oriented around an issue or topic or just general discussions), CIS can build an information exchange, allow for creativity and can spot new and talented staff for future growth and development.</td>
<td>This process will need organization, facilitation and management. These groups might meet online or via conference call, but someone on the national staff will need to provide oversight, monitor what is said and provide follow-up. Without proper ground rules, these groups could become a means of venting rather than of sharing, counseling and facilitating new ideas.</td>
<td>Costs: Development, recruitment and staffing this process are all cost areas. Dissemination of new information that might be generated could also take staff time. Benefits: Affinity groups are most often self-selecting so that participants are often those who are most talented and ambitious. This provides a means of engaging them, building their networks, creating support systems and keeping them in the organization. This can also be a source for new ideas, strategies and ways to work that have already been “field-tested” by those who suggest them.</td>
<td>Numerous blogs target specific groups of people. Some are very broad and others have a narrower audience. An example is Rosetta Thurman’s blog that targets young nonprofit professionals of color (<a href="http://www.rosettathurman.com">www.rosettathurman.com</a>). Other examples of how this might be done are can be seen in other organizations. The National Assembly for Human Services hosts a number of these affinity groupings (family strengthening, youth development, etc.) at <a href="http://www.nassembly.org">www.nassembly.org</a>. These are just two examples of many.</td>
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### DEVELOP AND SUPPORT SHARED LEADERSHIP:

**This strategy targets actual positions rather than projects. It looks to shared positions and new ways to work that will respond to the different needs of talented employees.**

**TARGET AUDIENCE**
- CIS organizations at the national, state and local levels

**BEST USED BY**
- CIS organizations at the national, state and local levels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTION/STRATEGY with Short Description</th>
<th>PROS</th>
<th>CONS</th>
<th>COSTS/ BENEFITS</th>
<th>COMMENTS/REFERENCES/EXAMPLES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shared leadership could delegate leadership responsibilities and titles to multiple people, who would work where their talents are best used, but would have the &quot;greater good&quot; as their main focus. It can free management to focus on developing and managing talent as they run the organization. As employee lifestyles change, many who are ready for management are not seeking full-time work and this strategy allows CIS to keep talented people and capitalize on their skills. This also allows talented people to &quot;test the waters&quot; on management positions without taking all aspects on at one time.</td>
<td>The Total Quality System (TQS) require a full-time executive director and a minimum of a half-time person at the school site level. Moving to this kind of structure would mean changes or modifications to TQS, which is now in full implementation. Not all positions will work with shared leadership. Implementing this process without a great deal of planning and consideration could wreak havoc on a CIS affiliate and its smooth operations. People are not always willing to give things up and that would need to happen for this strategy to be implemented.</td>
<td>Costs: Failure of this strategy could be very costly in terms of CIS possibly losing talented people who might leave the organization. Time, thought and clarity need to go into this before it can be initiated and the risks are great that people sharing leadership may not always be in sync and could give mixed messages to staff. Benefits: This strategy allows affiliates to keep talented people and promotes their talents via new ways to work. It can result in a stronger more viable organization.</td>
<td>In tight economic times, this strategy is another way to keep talent and avoid eliminating jobs, positions and people. Research shows that this not only creates greater organizational loyalty, but it can also boost productivity and impact.</td>
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## Appendix D: Talent Building Action Strategies Chart

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<tr>
<th>Action/Strategy with Short Description</th>
<th>Pros</th>
<th>Cons</th>
<th>Costs/ Benefits</th>
<th>Comments/References/ Examples</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hold Regular Face-to-Face Exchanges and Meetings/Trainings Targeting Staff in Baseline/Non-Management Positions:</strong>&lt;br&gt;Hold national and regional meetings and conferences on a regular basis to bring together employees who might not otherwise interact with others outside of their programs or states.</td>
<td>The boost that comes from being able to attend a meeting, training or conference on behalf of your employer can have long-term effects on work ethic, productivity, creativity and organizational loyalty. The cross-fertilization of ideas and work strategies is enhanced and staff feel valued. By targeting non-managerial staff, the organization can closely look at developing talent and spotting skilled people and potential leaders who can be nurtured and developed.</td>
<td>Managing onsite training and meetings is staff intensive. It is also expensive to host such meetings. Because so many sites are not able to budget for travel and training, much of this strategy would need subsidies from CIS state offices or the national office. There are no guarantees that employees who attend will stay, so that investment could go to another organization if someone leaves. Controlling for the quality of both presentation and participation can be another difficulty.</td>
<td><strong>Costs:</strong> A great deal of staff time will be needed for this strategy. Other costs include travel, hotel, meeting rooms, food, materials, etc. for the employees coordinating the meetings and then for participants if their participation is subsidized. <strong>Benefits:</strong> This strategy provides CIS the opportunity to meet and get to know first-hand the developing talent in the network. It offers non-management employees an opportunity to learn, meet others and share their skills. It builds loyalty and can be a key step in a career path with CIS.</td>
<td>The fond memories of CIS multi-track trainings surfaced numerous times in outreach and interviews with the network. Leaders and participants greatly valued the face-to-face nature of these trainings and saw them as key in talent pipelining and talent development. Finding new ways to replicate what the trainings provided to the network would be important in building out this strategy.</td>
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</table>

### Target Audience | CIS organizations at the national, state and local levels |
### Best Used By | CIS national office |

| **Create a Platform for Board Talent Development:**<br>Cultivating and developing the talents of volunteers who serve on boards is a critical function. Building a base of strategies and resources to do this will strengthen CIS organizations at the national, state and local levels. | Talent development at the board level keeps board members engaged and creative about their work. It can be a key recruitment strategy for new members as well as a tool for succession planning at the board level. Attracting and keeping talented board members can position CIS as “the” place to give back for community volunteers. | Not all board members will willingly participate in board development. It can be costly if a facilitator at the “right” level for a board is needed and it requires attention and time from senior staff. | **Costs:** Staff time (particularly senior staff) and funds for facilitation, retreats and travel to trainings that might be offered by partner nonprofits or other organizations. **Benefits:** A strong, engaged and talented board can move an organization forward. Organizational direction, function and funding can be enhanced with a talented board. | A key resource for all things related to boards is BoardSource (www.boardsource.org). This is a resource for materials, consultants and information. For short tips, quick ideas and information look at Board Café—a monthly feature in the free e-newsletter from Blue Avocado (www.blueavocado.org.) Locally, looking to classes and courses in the schools of nonprofit management at business schools are often on point and attractive to board members to attend. Collaborating with other nonprofits to build local board talent development is also a good option. Board mentorship is also cited as an excellent means for talent development. |
### Develop and Implement “Like” Jobs Clusters, Meetings, and Projects:

**Pros:**
- This expands the action strategy in the structural action strategies to focus on a particular job in CIS (and perhaps in other organizations) and to build the capacity of those who do that job by connecting them to each other. This strategy can highlight talents and skills of the employees working together to solve a problem or implement a project, while providing the organization with new ideas and options.

**Cons:**
- Determining who does this and managing the process can be time-intensive for both participating and managing employees. It can pull people away from other work. If this is done in collaboration with other organizations, there is the threat of losing staff to another organization that spots their talents via this process. Projects implemented in this way may be myopic and narrow.

**Costs/Benefits:**
- **Costs:** Management and development costs will be incurred as well as implementation costs. If talented staff are lured to other organizations that they meet via this process, costs for replacing and training new people will be needed.
- **Benefits:** This strategy can acknowledge and build on talent as it creates new strategies and problem-solves old ones. It can build solid collaborations among organizations and help employees build their own networks. This could create more walls than connections if it becomes an opportunity for groups to vent about one another. It could consume a lot of time, not just in sessions, but in follow-up and continued talk beyond the sessions.

**Comments/References/Examples:**
- This could create new career paths for people and help to solve problems in new ways.
- The new book, Working Across Generations, offers not only wisdom and example on this topic, but actual exercises (at the end of each chapter) that can be used by nonprofits in developing a more comfortable multi-generational workplace.

### Host Generational Conversations to Build Talent:

**Pros:**
- This simple to do, with limited facilitation and some good “ground rules,” but the outcomes can be new ways for employees (and volunteers) to work with each other and to appreciate what each brings to the table. The potential to see talent at all levels of staffing in an organization and to create new partnerships and relations is huge.

**Cons:**
- This could create more walls than connections if it becomes an opportunity for groups to vent about one another. It could consume a lot of time, not just in sessions, but in follow-up and continued talk beyond the sessions.

**Costs/Benefits:**
- **Costs:** Some planning and possible facilitation costs in staff time could be incurred. Oversight would need to be maintained and possibly some record-keeping.
- **Benefits:** This simple process could result in a more comfortable workplace and new appreciation of skills and experience among staff. It could also create some new internal partnerships and strategies.

**Comments/References/Examples:**
- Other good resources for this are the examples found in the work of Civic Ventures (www.civicventures.org) and the Building Movement Project (www.building-movement.org) as they created these dialogues on a national scale.
### ADDRESS THE TALENT DEVELOPMENT NEEDS AT ENTRY- AND MID-LEVEL EMPLOYEES:

Developing talent early in a person’s career can have long-term residuals. CIS should ensure that there is an intentional focus on the talent development of entry- and mid-level employees and an individual talent development plan for each employee.

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<tr>
<th>PROS</th>
<th>CONS</th>
<th>COSTS/ BENEFITS</th>
<th>COMMENTS/REFERENCES/ EXAMPLES</th>
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<tr>
<td>Increasing the emphasis on talent development at early stages of an employee’s career may keep talented people for the long-term. By investing time and training beyond orientation for entry- and mid-level employees, the talent pool is increased. This should be an ongoing, natural process that taps into multiple sources and strategies for talent development and includes an individual development plan for each employee as well as shared experiences and trainings.</td>
<td>Developing an individual talent development plan for each employee can be time consuming and costly in terms of funding training for staff development. Allocating resources to this area is not a high priority for many CIS programs and finding funding for it from outside sources is difficult (and time consuming as well). Not all staff are worth the time spent in doing this as many will not &quot;rise to the top&quot; in terms of talent and skills.</td>
<td>Costs: Time spent by supervisors on individual professional development plans can be costly, as can the components of the plans themselves. Some can include tuition reimbursement and training expenses. Benefits: Using time and funds to intentionally build the professional skills of talented staff can provide new commitment and ideas, and build effectiveness. The organization’s commitment to talent development can make it more attractive to other talented employees who might join the CIS workforce.</td>
<td>This needs to be seen as more than an HR function and something that is a critically important investment of time and funds. In budgeting for professional development, ensuring that funds are there for those in non-management and entry-level positions, beyond basic orientations, is important, and those funds should be protected from cuts. Management at all levels should see this as a mission-critical component of their work.</td>
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### PROVIDE ADDITIONAL PROFESSIONAL GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES TO SITE COORDINATORS:

Expanding the scope of the new site coordinator certification to offer guidance for talent pipelining and career advancement within CIS would build the value and usefulness of this process and allow tracking of talent from entry level onward.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CIS organizations at the national, state and local levels</td>
<td>CIS national office</td>
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This would help leaders at all levels of the organization include talent pipelining and talent management as a key component of their work. It would also demonstrate to entry-level employees that there is a career path in CIS. It would also build a system to track talent and assess how well the organization is doing at advancing and keeping talented people in the CIS network.

This would mean another change to a process that is just getting underway. It could open the door for even more changes. This could be difficult to develop and administer as it is not something that can be simply described, managed or tracked.

**Costs:** This will take staff time and will change how others are trained (more costs) to administer this certification program. It may add to the costs of using this training in the field.

**Benefits:** This adds to the value of the certification, providing participants with a better idea of how they might be able to stay and advance within the network.

The implementation of site coordinator certification is a real plus for the organization in validating the work done in the field and at the school-site level. Expanding this process to demonstrate the ways in which site coordinators can grow and develop and advance their careers has great potential to both attract and keep good people in CIS.
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Books


Articles


Monographs


Bibliographies/Resource Lists


Surveys


Websites

Academy for Educational Development: www.aed.org
Alliance for Nonprofit Management: www.allianceonline.org
American Humanities: www.humanics.org
Blue Avocado: www.blueavocado.org
Center for Civil Society Studies (Johns Hopkins), Listening Post Project: www.ccss.jhu.edu/index.php?section=content&view=9&sub=5
Independent Sector: www.independentsector.org (for NGen information)
Leadership Learning Community: www.leadershiplearning.org
Mission Based Management: www.missionbased.blogspot.com
National Human Services Assembly: www.nassembly.org
Nonprofit Next: www.lapiana.org/nonprofitnext/
Peter Block, Community Engagement: www.peterblock.com
Public Agenda: www.publicagenda.org
Young Nonprofit Professionals: www.ynpn.org