



COMMUNITY ORGANIZING RESOURCES

A lot has been produced about organizing in the past few years: books, case studies, research reports, toolkits, web-based materials, films, and more. As we developed the GrantCraft guide, *Funding Community Organizing: Social Change through Civic Participation* (available at www.grantcraft.org), grantmakers recommended some excellent resources, compiled below. You'll find general organizing print and film resources as well as materials on some of the major branches of organizing in the United States: congregation- or faith-based, education, immigration, and youth organizing. We offer special thanks to Cyrus Driver and the Working Group on Education Organizing, and Maria Mottola and Kevin Ryan of the New York Foundation for their significant contributions to this list.

General Resources on Community Organizing

Dave Beckwith and Cristina Lopez. **Community Organizing: People Power from the Grassroots**. Available at: <http://comm-org.wisc.edu/papers97/beckwith.htm>.

Kim Bobo, Steve Max, and Jackie Kendall. **Organizing for Social Change: The Midwest Academy Manual for Activists**, 3rd Edition. Seven Locks Press, 2001.

Marguerite Casey Foundation. **Three organizing case studies**.

Available at:

http://www.caseygrants.org/pages/resourcesresources_reportsandpubs.asp#casestudies/

Center for Community Change. **The Linchpin Campaign to expand resources for community organizing**. Available at:

<http://www.communitychange.org/expanding-resources/method.html>

Henry G. Cisneros, editor. **Interwoven Destinies: Cities and the Nation**. Norton, 1993.

Among the 13 accessible essays compiled here is “Reweaving the Fabric: The Iron Rule and the IAF Strategy for Power and Politics” by Ernesto Cortes, one of the premier community organizers in the Industrial Areas Foundation network of organizations. This essay describes the so-called “Iron Rule” of community organizing: Never do for others what they can learn to do for themselves.

COMM-ORG Listserv, “to link academics and activists, and theory and practice, toward the goal of improving community organizing and its related crafts.” <http://comm-org.wisc.edu>

Gary Delgado. **The Last Stop Sign**. Shelterforce Online, November/December 1998, <http://www.nhi.org/online/issues/102/stopsign.html>.

Robert Fisher. **Neighborhood Organizing: The Importance of Historical Context**. 1995. Available at: <http://comm-org.wisc.edu/papers96/fishercon.htm>.

Funders’ Network for Smart Growth and Livable Communities. **Community Organizing: A Populist Base for Social Equity and Smart Growth**. Livable Communities @ Work, Vol. 1, No. 1. 2002. Available at: http://www.fundersnetwork.org/usr_doc/Community_Organizing.pdf.

Marshall Ganz. **Web Module on Organizing**. Hauser Center for Nonprofit Organizations, Kennedy School for Government, Harvard University. Available at: <http://isites.harvard.edu/icb/icb.do?keyword=k2139>

Michael Gecan. **Going Public: An Inside Story of Disrupting Politics as Usual**. Beacon Press, 2004.

An inside story of how a city really works and how any organized group of citizens can wield power in seemingly unmovable bureaucracies. Gecan offers unforgettable lessons that every American should know: What is the best way to talk to politicians? What resources do all communities need to create change? What kinds of public actions really work? The final chapter on bureaucratic, and market, cultures is particularly useful.

Mark Winston Griffith. **The Black Organizer Blues**. Gotham Gazette, July 7, 2003, available at: <http://www.gothamgazette.com/print/470>.

Judy Hertz. **Organizing for Change: Stories of Success**. 2002. Available at: http://www.nfg.org/publications/Organizing_For_Change.pdf.

Joan Minieri and Paul Getsos. **Tools for Radical Democracy: How to Organize for Power in Your Community**. Jossey-Bass, 2007.

Needmor Fund. **The Needmor Fund: 50 Years, 50 Stories.** 2008. Available from Needmor, <http://www.needmorfund.org>

Larry Parachikni, & Sally Covington. **Community Organizing Toolbox.** Neighborhood Funders Group, 2001.

A useful tool to help funders integrate community organizing into grantmaking strategies. Available at: <http://www.nfg.org/publications/index.htm>

Charles M. Payne. **I've Got the Light of Freedom: The Organizing Tradition and the Mississippi Freedom Struggle.** University of California Press, 1995.

Robert R. Putnam. **Better Together: Restoring the American Community.** Simon and Schuster, 2003.

In response to civic crises and local problems, meet people driven by their vision to succeed by building community, often in innovative ways that may turn out to be appropriate for the twenty-first century: Mexican Americans in the Rio Grande Valley who want paved roads, running water, and decent schools; Harvard clerical workers searching for respect and improved working conditions; Wisconsin schoolchildren organizing to improve safety at a local railroad crossing; and Tupelo merchants joining with farmers to improve their economic status. Chapters 1 and 4 focus especially on community organizing.

Rinku Sen. **Stir It Up: Lessons in Community Organizing and Advocacy.** Jossey-Bass, 2003.

Kristin Layng Szakos and Joe Szakos. **We Make Change: Community Organizers Talk About What They Do — And Why.** Vanderbilt University Press, 2007.

Shel Trapp. **Basics of Organizing: You Can't Build A Machine Without Nuts and Bolts.** National Training and Information Center. 1986. Available at: <http://www.tenant.net/Organize/orgbas.html>.

Shel Trapp. **Dynamics of Organizing.** National Training and Information Center, 1976. Available at: <http://www.tenant.net/Organize/orgdyn.html>.

Congregation- or Faith-Based Organizing

Interfaith Funders. Publications. Available at: <http://www.interfaithfunders.org/publications.html>

See, in particular:

Mark R. Warren and Richard L. Wood. **Faith-Based Community Organizing: The State of the Field.** Interfaith Funders, 2001. Available at: <http://comm-org.wisc.edu/papers2001/faith/faith.htm>

Mary Beth Rogers. **Cold Anger: A Story of Faith and Power Politics.** University of North Texas Press, 1990.

Mark R. Warren. **Dry Bones Rattling: Community Building to Revitalize American Democracy.** Princeton University Press, 2001.

An in-depth treatment of how to rebuild the social capital of America's communities while promoting racially inclusive, democratic participation, this study profiles the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF) network in Texas and the Southwest and its role in reviving democratic life in the inner city. It shows how the IAF network helps unlikely collaborators - interfaith leaders from poor communities of color and those from more affluent communities - to build organizations with the power to construct affordable housing, create job-training programs, improve schools, expand public services, and increase neighborhood safety.

Richard L. Wood. **Faith in Action: Religion, Race, and Democratic Organizing in America.** University of Chicago Press, 2002.

Over the past 15 years, associations throughout the US have organized citizens around issues of equality and social justice, often through local churches, to reshape public policies that neglect the disadvantaged. Wood explores how this faith-based form of community organizing succeeds by comparing two local groups in Oakland, CA. He argues that the alternative culture and strategies of these two groups give them radically different access to community ties and social capital.

Education Organizing

A. S. Bryk and B. L. Schneider. **Trust in Schools: A Core Resource for Improvement.** Russell Sage Foundation, 2002.

Over the course of three years, 12 Chicago elementary schools were studied as they underwent extensive reorganization in response to the Chicago School Reform Act of 1988, which called for greater involvement of parents and community leaders in their neighborhood schools. Drawing on a longitudinal survey and achievement data, as well as in-depth interviews with principals, teachers, parents, and community leaders, the authors develop an account of how effective social relationships - which they term relational trust - serve as a prime resource for school improvement.

Center for Community Change. **Publications on education organizing.**

Available at: <http://www.communitychange.org/education/publications.html>

Community Involvement Program of Annenberg Institute for School Reform at Brown University. Publications. Available at:

<http://www.annenberginstitute.org/CIP/publications.html>

See, in particular:

Kavitha Mediratta, Seema Shah, Sara McAlister. **Organized Communities, Stronger Schools: A Preview of Research Findings, 2008.**

Concha Delgado-Gaitan and Trueba Enrique. **The Power of the Community: Mobilizing for Family and Schooling**. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2001. Delgado-Gaitan began literacy research in Carpinteria, California, at a time when Mexican immigrant workers had almost no voice in how their children were educated. Regular community gatherings gave birth to a community organization that reached out to everyone in the community, not just other Latino families. In a society that accentuates individualism and independence, these men and women look to their community for leadership, support, and resources for children, developing a fresh approach and workable solutions to the problems that face schools today.

Norm Fruchter. **Urban Schools, Public Will: Making Education Work for All Our Children**. Teachers College Press, Teachers College, Columbia University, 2007.

Kavitha Mediratta, Norm Fruchter, & Anne Lewis. **Organizing for School Reform: How Communities Are Finding Their Voice and Reclaiming their Public Schools**. 2002.

Public Interest Projects. **Communities for Public Education Reform: A Fund for Education Organizing**. Available at:
<http://www.publicinterestprojects.org/CommunitiesforPublicEducationReform.pdf>

Jonathan Schorr. **Hard Lessons: The Promise of an Inner-City Charter School**. Ballantine, 2002.

The E.C. Reems Academy, a charter school-in-progress established by the Oakland Community Organization, gave Jonathan Schorr complete access to the students, teachers, and parents. Schorr documents the school's struggle to increase its effectiveness in teaching children from neighborhoods where success is rare, all the while trying to avoid becoming a self-sabotaging bureaucracy. Through successes and setbacks, *Hard Lessons* reveals just how difficult it is, even with the best of intentions, to offer a quality education to every child in America.

Immigration Organizing

Center for Community Change. **Fair Immigration Reform Movement**. Toolkit and other publications. Available at: <http://www.fairimmigration.org/toolkit/>

Louis DeSipio. **Immigrant Organizing, Civic Outcomes: Civic Engagement, Political Activity, National Attachment, and Identity in Latino Immigrant Communities**. Center for the Study of Democracy, 2002. Available at:
<http://repositories.cdlib.org/csd/02-08>.

Craig McGarvey. **Pursuing Democracy's Promise: Newcomer Civic Participation in America**. Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees and Funders'

Committee on Civic Participation. 2004. Available at:
<http://www.gcir.org/publications/order>

Public Interest Projects. **Four Freedoms Fund**, “a national funding collaborative to energize American democracy by supporting and engaging immigrants and refugees.” Available at: <http://www.publicinterestprojects.org/FourFreedomsFund.pdf>

Saurav Sarkar. Immigrant Organizing, Gotham Gazette, April 2006, Available at:
<http://www.gothamgazette.com/article//20060407/20/1810>.

Youth Organizing

Funders' Collaborative on Youth Organizing. Occasional Papers Series and other publications. Available at:
<http://www.fcyo.org/sitebody/resources/index.resources.htm>

Pedro Noguera, Shawn Ginwright and Julio Cammarota. **Beyond Resistance! Youth Activism and Community Change: New Democratic Possibilities for Practice and Policy for America's Youth**. Taylor and Francis Group, 2006.

FILMS

Building Hope: Community Development in America. [Pratt Center for Community Development](#), 1994.
<http://prattcenter.net/cdcoralhistory.php>

A unique documentary that takes up the history of community development corporations and their origins in community protest and organizing efforts.

Bill Duke. **The Killing Floor.** [Public Broadcasting Service \(PBS\)](#), 1985.
<http://www.imdb.com/company/co0039462/>

Feature film about the 1919 Chicago race riots. It focuses on African-American migration from the south, their ghettoization in the City of Chicago, efforts of workers in the meatpacking industry there to unionize, and the tensions that led to the riots.

Ginny Durin. **Promises to Keep.** [Durrin Productions Inc.](#), 1988.
<http://www.imdb.com/company/co0034153/>

The work of Mitch Snyder, a homeless advocate, is the subject of this documentary. It looks at how Snyder, along with the Community for Creative Non-Violence organized during the 1980 in response to federal housing cuts and rising homelessness.

Rob Epstein. **The Times of Harvey Milk.** [Black Sand Productions](#), 1996.
<http://www.imdb.com/company/co0072484/>

In its examination of the rise of gay politics in San Francisco, CA, this documentary highlights the importance of coalitions and the link between grassroots organizing and electoral politics.

Barack Goodman. **Daley: The Last Boss.** [Social Media Productions](http://www.imdb.com/company/co0010546/), 1996.

<http://www.imdb.com/company/co0010546/>

Documentary about Mayor Richard Daley of Chicago, IL – father of the current mayor – and how he ran his urban political machine. It shows what community groups are up against, but it also shows how to build a political/electoral organization that can deliver the goods.

Slawomir Grunberg. **Fenceline: A Company Town Divided.** [LogTV Ltd.](http://www.imdb.com/company/co0098060/), 2002.

<http://www.imdb.com/company/co0098060/>

A documentary on community organizing that takes on environmental justice issues. The film looks at a community called "Diamond" located near a Shell chemical processing plant in Norco, LA. The community struggles to be relocated and eventually 'wins' their request for relocation.

Robert Houston. **Might Times: The Children's March.** [HBO Family](http://www.imdb.com/company/co0006163/), 2004.

<http://www.imdb.com/company/co0006163/>

This 20-minute film is about young people organizing in Birmingham, Alabama when the elders were encouraging slowing down civil rights organizing.

LAANE. **David Beats Goliath: How Inglewood Defeated Wal-Mart.** LAANE, 2004.

A 10-minute documentary, sponsored by the LA Alliance for a New Economy, about a community-labor coalition's victorious fight to turn back Wal-Mart's efforts to locate a mega-story in Inglewood.

Ken Loach. **Bread & Roses.** [Parallax Pictures](http://www.imdb.com/company/co0103670/), 2000.

<http://www.imdb.com/company/co0103670/>

Maya (Pilar Padilla) is appalled at the work conditions and unfair labor practices at her job as a janitor in a downtown Los Angeles office building. She teams up with Sam (Adrian Brody), a labor organizer, in a stirring fight against her ruthless employer. The film is based on the Justice for Janitors campaign among Los Angeles' immigrant workers. It was a selection of the 2000 Cannes Film Festival.

John Sayles. **City of Hope.** [Esperanza Films Inc.](http://www.imdb.com/company/co0018966/), 1991.

<http://www.imdb.com/company/co0018966/>

A feature film about urban politics by director John Sayles. It focuses on the tensions between urban redevelopment and community development in a city undergoing gentrification; based on Jersey City or Hoboken, NJ. It has some interesting scenes about organizing and politics.

Tim Ward. **Hull House: The House that Jane Built.** 1991.

Documentary about the first wave of urban social reform at the turn of the 20th Century, focusing on women reformers in the settlement house movement.