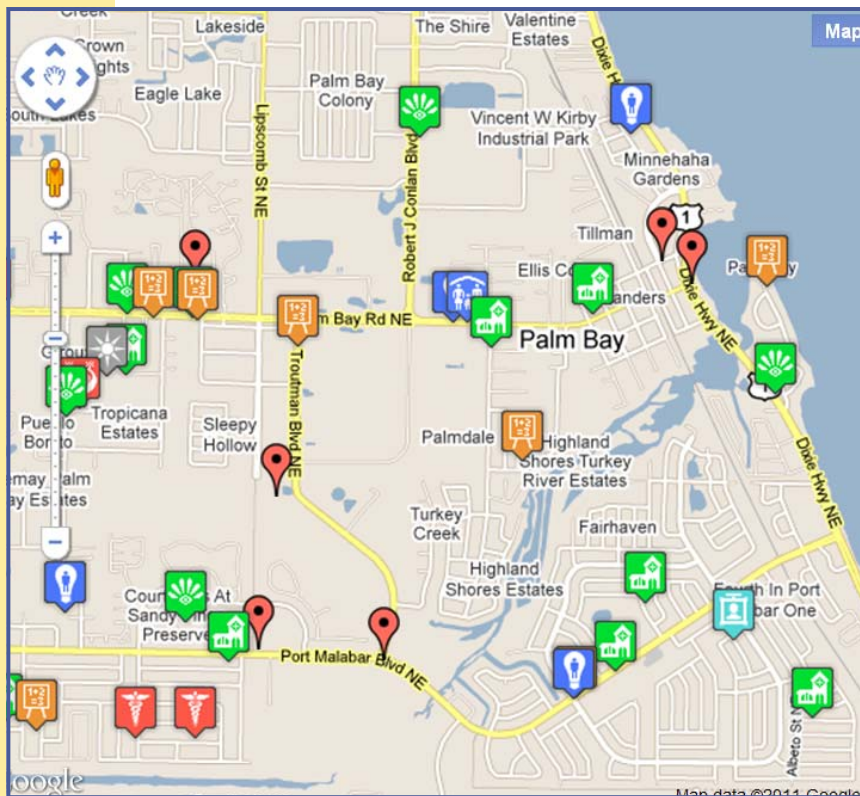# The Community Platform
Engagement, Analysis, and Leadership Tools

Community-level action is where progress must occur to address community problems, beat back poverty, improve education, and reach our nation's potential. Sustaining this action requires long-term commitment, energetic civic-minded leadership, honest dialogue, patient collaboration, and teamwork. In an era of enormous federal and state budget deficits, high unemployment, and major market failures, the limitations of government and for-profit sectors are evident—the nonprofit sector will need to take on added responsibility.

The nonprofit sector's ability to strengthen communities requires better information, collaboration, analysis tools, and knowledge-sharing resources. The Urban Institute's National Center for Charitable Statistics (NCCS) developed the **Community Platform** to provide the necessary web tools for community collaboration and action. The initial support came from the Boston Foundation, the Mott Foundation, and the Kresge Foundation.

The Community Platform combines NCCS national-level data on nonprofit organizations, scalable, open technology, and strong partnerships with state and local nonprofit and community infrastructure organizations that are linchpins for strengthening local civic capacity. Around the country, we are working with community foundations, United Ways, state nonprofit associations, community action and development organizations, and local governments to create cost-effective pilot projects that meet local needs and lay the groundwork for a national learning community and national impact.

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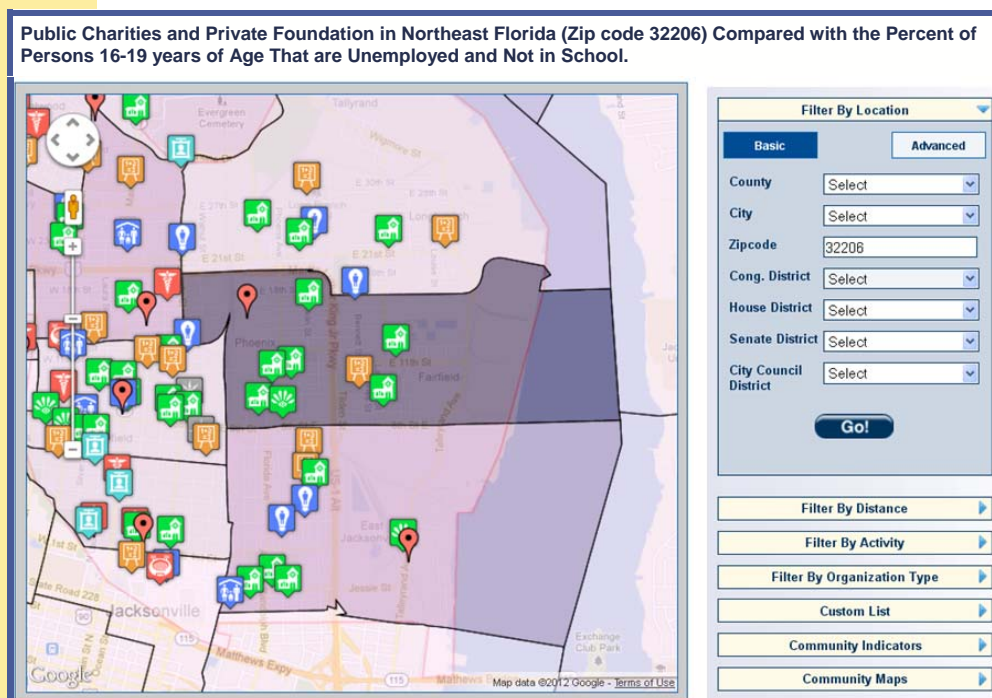
Community Platform Modules

The Community Platform offers a broad range of interactive tools for finding and tracking information, building online and on-the-ground teams, and taking action. Some users will focus on our tools for nonprofit organizations; others will use our civic engagement or community planning modules. The beauty of the system is that while different users will use the platform differently, the information and data will flow into this shared community resource.

The Community Platform includes eight modules:

Mapping Community Resources

With the Community Platform, users can quickly map resources—nonprofits, schools, or congregations—in relationship to needs in their community.

- Users can view organizations down to the neighborhood level. Their programs are color-coded on the map to designate their type and activity areas (e.g., arts, civil rights, youth services).
- Users can build on our base of IRS nonprofit data by adding new organizations, places, programs, or resources, one at a time or from spreadsheets.
- Users can map the location of organizations, program offices, and service delivery areas.
- Users can quickly turn the map into a list of nonprofit organization or community places that provide links to detailed organization information (e.g., Form 990 images, web site), community needs, or volunteer opportunities.
- Users can overlay community indicators such as unemployment rates, housing costs, health insurance, income, and poverty to identify gaps in community needs and available resources.

Public Charities and Private Foundation in Northeast Florida (Zip code 32206) Compared with the Percent of Persons 16-19 years of Age That are Unemployed and Not in School.

- Existing community databases, such as 2-1-1 information and referral hotlines, can link to the Community Platform for real-time data exchange.
- Authorized users can add, describe, classify, and update information on nonprofit organizations, other resources, and community needs subject to approval by the local community administrator.
- Users can search by legislative districts or by distance.

Shared Resources

A centralized directory of goods and services helps organizations develop partnerships or share equipment, facilities, goods, services, or volunteers with other nonprofits.

- Organizations can post both "needs" and "available goods and services" and receive automatic e-mail notifications.

- Users can find or post volunteer opportunities in their neighborhoods. (We expect to integrate our volunteer posting with Idealist.org and others.)

- A proximity search allows users to find resources within a certain distance (e.g., one mile) from a specified location.
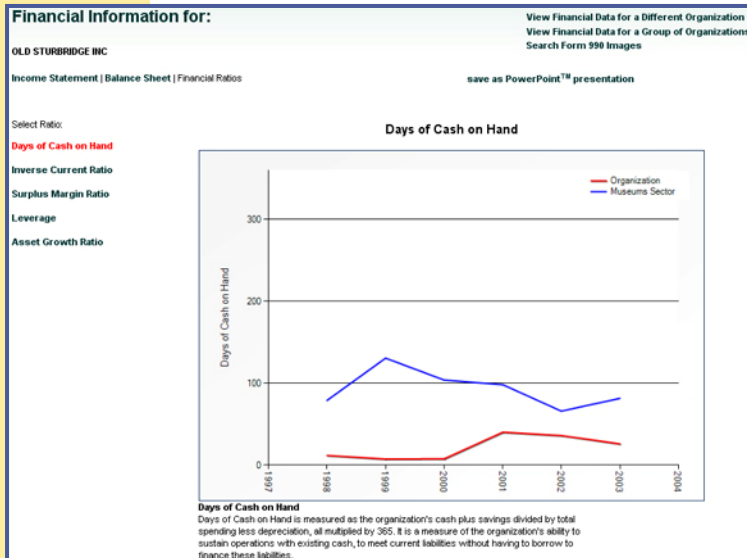

Community Needs

Neighborhood associations, nonprofits, university-based community researchers, and individuals can contribute to a comprehensive map of community needs, ranging from public spaces to babysitting services, transportation, and more.

- Users can mark a map and fill in the details about a problem: a pothole, a playground that needs maintenance, or a public space that needs upkeep.

- Project teams can upload Excel spreadsheets of the information they collect.

- We expect to link to SeeClickFix.com to incorporate needs posted on its site, too.

- Comprehensive reporting, mapping, and notification systems give communities and local governments the ability to see exactly where needs are.

- Users can add data to the Community Platform and make it publicly accessible or keep it confidential. For example, data collected from door-to-door canvassing on the needs of families or seniors can be uploaded and analyzed keeping private information confidential.

Financial Analysis

Using comprehensive data from the IRS Form 990, this tool provides detailed financial information going back 20 years on revenues, expenditures, charitable donations (selected years), assets, and liabilities.

Financial Information for:

OLD STURBRIDGE INC

Income Statement | Balance Sheet | Financial Ratios

View Financial Data for a Different Organization
View Financial Data for a Group of Organizations
Search Form 990 Images

save as PowerPoint™ presentation

Select Ratio:
- **Days of Cash on Hand**
- Inverse Current Ratio
- Surplus Margin Ratio
- Leverage
- Asset Growth Ratio

Days of Cash on Hand

Days of Cash on Hand
Days of Cash on Hand is measured as the organization's cash plus savings divided by total spending less depreciation, all multiplied by 365. It is a measure of the organization's ability to sustain operations with existing cash, to meet current liabilities without having to borrow to finance these liabilities.

- Users can examine financial characteristics of specific organizations over time and compare them to other organizations of the same NTEE designation or to a user-created peer group using asset growth, cash on hand, surplus margins, and more.

- The tool will also include video and written guides to help boards and managers understand financial analysis basics.

Data

- *Preloaded with all nonprofits registered with IRS*
- *Census and other regional statistics*
- *Links to 2-1-1 and other sources in real time*
- *Flexibility to add other datasets*
- *Add additional organizations & resources*

Community Statistics

Combining socioeconomic data with figures on nonprofit resources (expenses, assets, and more) as well as charitable giving within the community, this module creates overviews and detailed community reports.

State	Name	Population	Median Household Income	Poverty Rate	Number of Children	Child Poverty Rate	Number of Seniors	Senior Poverty Rate	U.S. Census	Drill Down	Community Inventory
Florida	32754 - Mims	9,166	35,952	12.7	2,370	16.4	1,452	12.1	Census	Orgs.	CI
Florida	32775 - Scottsmoor	544	43,897	6.4	105	0.0	49	20.4	Census	Orgs.	CI
Florida	32780 - Titusville	30,996	38,596	9.9	6,501	15.6	6,890	5.0	Census	Orgs.	CI
Florida	32796 - Titusville	20,471	37,283	12.4	5,049	16.3	3,818	8.2	Census	Orgs.	CI
Florida	32901 - Melbourne	22,568	25,261	16.3	4,064	23.8	6,145	8.9	Census	Orgs.	CI
Florida	32903 - Indialantic	12,708	59,773	4.6	2,425	3.5	2,866	3.7	Census	Orgs.	CI
Florida	32904 - W Melbourne	18,048	39,780	6.7	3,077	7.5	5,063	6.5	Census	Orgs.	CI
Florida	32905 - Palm Bay	21,919	28,214	14.9	4,483	18.2	4,777	9.3	Census	Orgs.	CI
Florida	32907 - Palm Bay	33,732	42,121	7.7	9,425	9.8	4,853	6.9	Census	Orgs.	CI
Florida	32908 - Palm Bay	5,782	40,575	7.0	1,835	9.6	547	5.9	Census	Orgs.	CI
Florida	32909 - Palm Bay	18,299	39,762	7.0	5,278	9.4	1,646	7.8	Census	Orgs.	CI
Florida	32920 - Cpe Canaveral	9,167	30,813	11.4	994	27.2	2,258	7.1	Census	Orgs.	CI
Florida	32922 - Cocoa	15,799	23,608	28.1	4,318	43.9	2,162	14.4	Census	Orgs.	CI
Florida	32925 - Patrick Afb	2,018	40,282	3.7	781	4.0	3	0.0	Census	Orgs.	CI
Florida	32926 - Cocoa	19,363	40,799	12.2	4,704	19.0	2,772	8.2	Census	Orgs.	CI
Florida	32927 - Cocoa	27,027	43,783	6.7	7,119	8.7	2,425	8.8	Census	Orgs.	CI
Florida	32931 - Cocoa Beach	14,666	43,100	7.0	1,851	9.9	4,688	3.8	Census	Orgs.	CI

- With the help of census and other demographic and economic neighborhood-based data, users can readily assess community needs and resources such as poverty levels, affordable housing, educational attainment, and other indicators down to the neighborhood level in relationship to nonprofit and community resources.

- Local data can also be uploaded through the platform or through the Open Indicators Consortium's WEAVE data visualization tool, which we plan to incorporate into the platform.

Schools Module

School principals and other community stakeholders can identify and track nonprofit organizations working in education, mentoring, and other services for students and their families.

- Users can locate programs and activities that support education and extracurricular activities surrounding public schools.

- Schools can connect with the resources and programs of these nonprofits and meet existing needs within the school system.

- Similar modules to support health clinics and medical facilities are also possible.
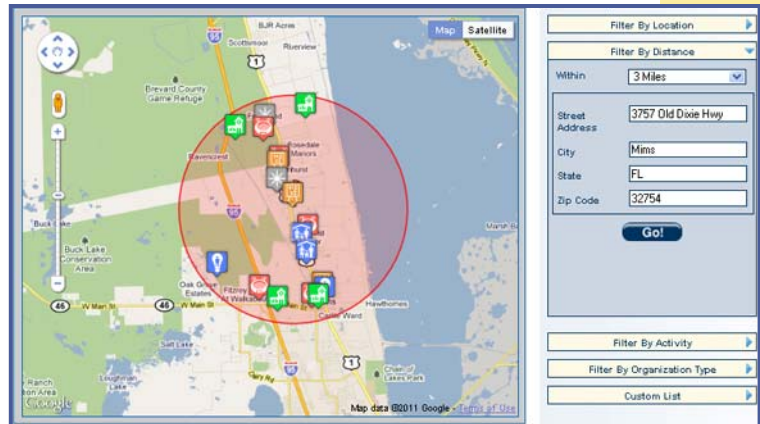

Community Stakeholders

- *Community foundations*
- *State nonprofit associations*
- *United Ways*
- *2-1-1 hotlines*
- *Civic associations*

- *University researchers*
- *Local governments*
- *Community development & community action programs*
- *Public health initiatives*

Program Outcomes

Nonprofits can track quantifiable program outcome indicators daily, weekly, quarterly, or annually.

- Users can analyze trends and performance (e.g., graduation rates, number of families served) for individual organizations as well as communities, fields/industries, peer groups, and member organizations to produce statistics on program accomplishments.

- Organizations can come together, discuss programs, track metrics, and coordinate their service delivery in order to continuously improve the quality of their programs.

- Developed in collaboration with The Center for What Works and the Center on Nonprofits and Philanthropy.
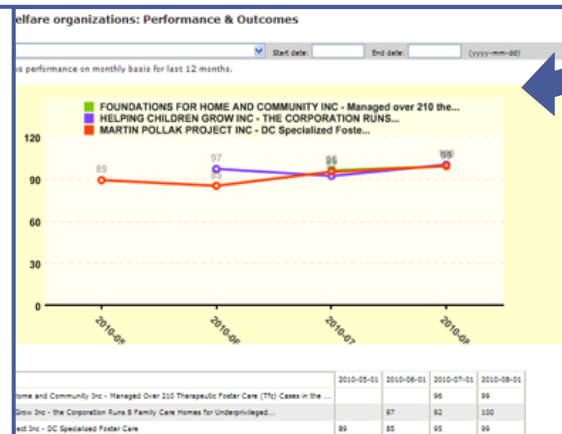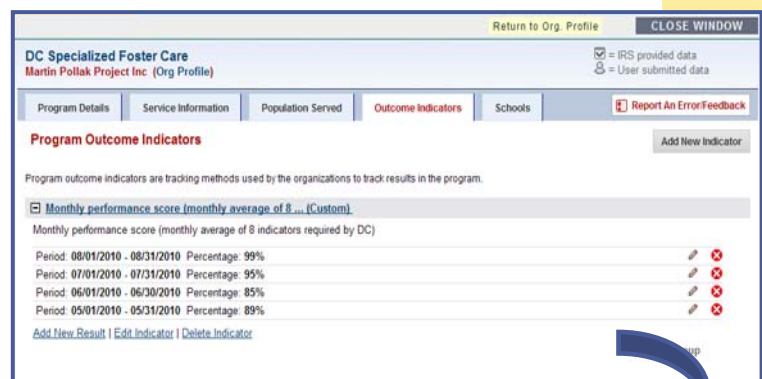
Knowledgebase

The Knowledgebase is a clearinghouse of resources that can help organizations perform better within their communities. Sharing information across the community sows the seeds of learning, growing, and achieving greater impact.

- Building on our own work, and that of key national partners, the Knowledgebase includes links to successful community projects, information on best practices, and webinars addressing program management, project development, advocacy, and other topics.
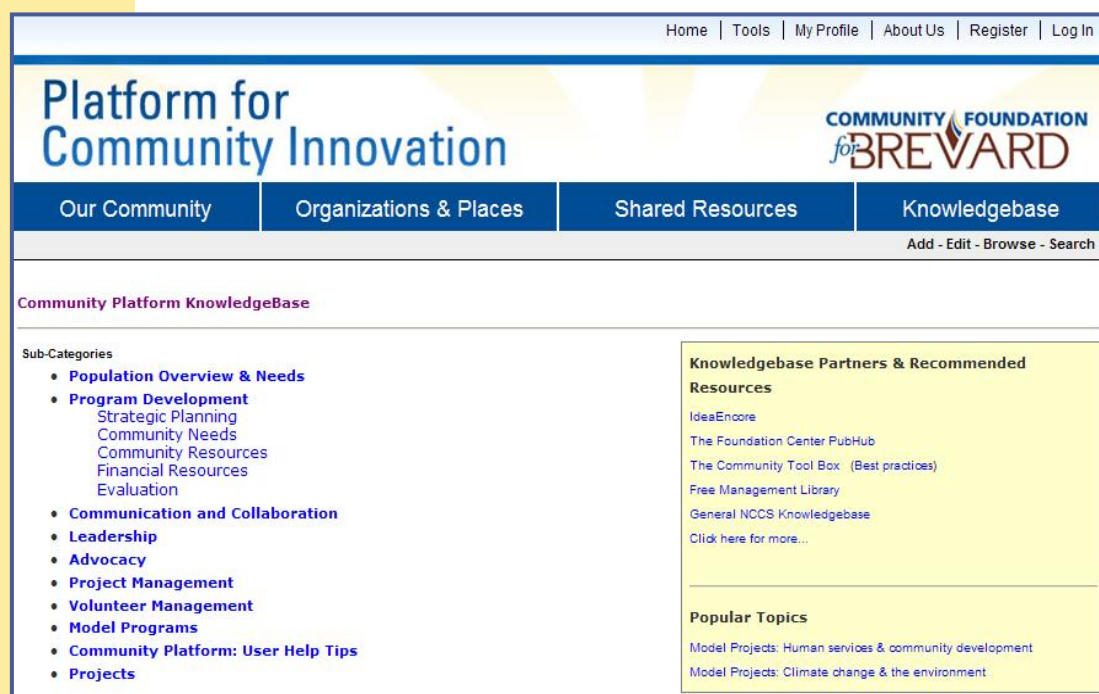
User Scenarios

- *Create a comprehensive collaborative tool for education, family support, and youth development like STRIVE (Cincinnati) or the Harlem Children's Zone in your community*
- *Map service delivery areas of nonprofits & government agencies and find gaps and excess capacity*
- *Identify neighborhood cleanup and environmental issues and organize ways to address them*

- *Collaborate on measuring program outcomes*
- *Compare nonprofit organization's financial performance to peers*
- *Develop peer learning communities*
- *Help neighborhood associations find practical community projects*

Customization

Each of the dozen active Community Platforms is tailored to meet the needs of our community partners and can incorporate data from national, state, and local sources. Data can also be submitted by individual organizations and community research projects. In addition to customized tools, each Community Platform site is branded to meet the look and needs of the community and partnering organizations.

Customized landing pages and maps can be created for projects, umbrella associations, neighborhoods, towns, topics or types of resources, or peer learning groups. For example, Connect Brevard has a custom page devoted to mapping "food deserts" and resources in the county. Other communities are working on neighborhood-level and town-level pages that communities can use to map activities, resources, stories, and needs, as well as their nonprofit organizations. Several umbrella associations are using custom search pages so that people can search for just their member organizations. Their pages incorporate the associations' logos and provide an alternative to costly customized websites.

unique banners

exclusive webpage

individualized tools

customized action buttons

community-specific text

your logos

Contact Information

We hope that this project will support transformative community change by enabling public-spirited citizens and nonprofit organizations to work together in new and more effective ways. NCCS will continue to build new national and local partnerships, add new content, and create a user community committed to sharing information on how to help nonprofits and communities work more effectively together.

For additional information on the Community Platform, please e-mail Tom Pollak or Katie Roeger of the National Center for Charitable Statistics at **NCCS@urban.org** or call us at **202-261-5536.**

Center on Nonprofits and Philanthropy

www.urban.org/center/cnp/

The Center on Nonprofits and Philanthropy conducts and disseminates research on the role and impact of nonprofit organizations and philanthropy. The Center's mission is to promote understanding of civil society and improve nonprofit sector performance through rigorous research, clear analysis, and informed policy. The National Center for Charitable Statistics (NCCS) is a program of the Center.

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