

Strong Cities, Strong Communities Initiative (SC2)

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How was SC2 created?

Through conversations with Mayors, Members of Congress, foundations, non-profits and other key executives and stakeholders working in economically distressed communities to highlight the following:

1. Challenges of local governments facing disinvestment and other economic shocks
2. Opportunity to better align and improve existing federal programs; and
3. Need for a clearer and more coordinated relationship with the federal government.

What is SC2?

- The Strong Cities, Strong Communities Initiative (SC2) supports President Obama's agenda to make historic investments to build ladders of opportunity for those working hard to make it to the middle class and to partner with communities that were hardest-hit by the recent recession.
- In July 2011, the Obama Administration launched SC2, an innovative and flexible pilot initiative designed to strengthen local capacity and spark economic growth in economically distressed communities.

White House Council on Strong Cities, Strong Communities (SC2)

On March 15, 2012, President Obama signed an Executive Order establishing the White House Council on Strong Cities, Strong Communities (SC2 Council)

- Council Oversees the work of the SC2 Initiative

White House Council on Strong Cities, Strong Communities (SC2)

SC2 Goals



1. Improve the relationship between local and federal governments
2. Provide coordination and support among federal programs
3. Partner for economic growth
4. Enhance local capacity
5. Encourage regional collaboration

SC2 Pilot Phase Cities

10 locations were chosen through the pilot phase of the initiative.

SC2 Pilot Phase: Community Solutions Teams

Chester, PA
Detroit, MI
Fresno, CA
Memphis, TN
New Orleans, LA
Cleveland, OH
Youngstown, OH

- These 7 cities receive intensive technical assistance from federal inter-agency Community Solutions Teams (CST) that work alongside the mayors in City Hall to build capacity and support the community's vision for economic growth

SC2 Pilot Phase: EDA Visioning Challenge

Three additional locations have been named as recipients of the
U.S. Department of Commerce
Economic Development Administration
SC2 Economic Visioning Challenge

Greensboro,
NC

Hartford,
CT

Las Vegas,
NV

Additional SC2 Components

National Resource Network

The National Resource Network (NRN) will offer a single portal through which communities can connect to national and local experts with wide-ranging expertise and skills for TA engagements. Funded at \$10 million, the SC2 Network was developed by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and will launch this year.

SC2 Fellowship Program

Operating in the SC2 pilot locations since September 2012, the fellowship program has selected, trained, and placed early-to mid-career, philanthropically-funded professionals in local government positions to serve two-year terms and build additional local capacity.

SC2 Accomplishments

At a time when communities must accomplish more with every dollar of investment, SC2's work has achieved the following:

- Enabled communities to more effectively utilize **almost \$331 million in existing federal funds.**

SC2 Accomplishments

Redefining and strengthening the relationship between the federal government and local partners by aligning philanthropic and non-profit partners, anchor institutions and local businesses to work in partnership with municipal and federal staff to create:

- **160 new cross-sector partnerships**

SC2 Accomplishments

Supporting local economic development goals:

- More than **700 small businesses** and other organizations have received technical assistance from SC2 Community Solutions Teams.

SC2 Accomplishments

Strengthening local government capacity:

- With a \$2.5 million gift from the Rockefeller Foundation, SC2 has placed 17 **philanthropically funded fellows** with strong subject matter expertise in SC2 pilot cities to work on a range of strategic projects and bolster local government capacity.

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Chester

The team helped facilitate an investment by a Philadelphia-based food-bank, Philabundance, to provide residents with low-cost, nutritious food in a supermarket-style food bank, addressing a major impediment to attracting investment and growth in the community. The project broke ground in late September 2012 and will provide the first new grocery store in the City for over a decade.

Cleveland

NASA, working with the City, County, and the Manufacturing Advocacy & Growth Network, selected nine medium- to small-sized companies to receive a total of 400 hours of subject matter expertise and access to \$450K in low-interest loans, which will allow them to grow their business and hire more employees.

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Detroit

SC2 worked with the City of Detroit and the M-1 Rail investors facilitate partnerships and lay the groundwork for the construction of a light rail system along the Woodward Corridor. M1-Rail is a consortium of Detroit area corporate business ventures, foundations and public and private institutions, which are committing over \$100 million in funding to build and operate a 3.3 mile modern streetcar system on Woodward Avenue, the region's primary north-south thoroughfare.

Fresno

The SC2 Team identified the opportunity to re-route the planned Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) line through the City's top priority area for downtown revitalization, which will also host the Nation's first high-speed rail station. The new location will create a vibrant downtown transit-corridor that will help the Fresno maximize the economic impact from the BRT line and better leverage multiple federal investments.

Memphis

In Memphis, the SC2 team working with the City identified and worked with a local non-profit, Community LIFT, to build capacity and provide technical assistance to support the incubation and launch of a new CDFI, River City Capital Investment Corp. Through technical assistance and by partnering with the U.S. Department of the Treasury CDFI Fund, which was created to promote economic revitalization and community development through investment in and assistance to CDFIs, this new affiliate of Community LIFT was awarded nearly \$100,000 from the Fund.

New Orleans

SC2 provided technical support to the City that accelerated the launch of a \$52 million homebuyer assistance and neighborhood redevelopment initiative. This assistance reduced a significant amount of red tape, and helped get the funding out into the community. To date, more than 220 first-time home buyers have closed on homes due to this intervention.

Youngstown

As part of the pilot phase of the SC2 National Resource Network, HUD commissioned a contractor to review the regulations that complicate effective demolition activities in a city with a serious vacancy problem. The resulting reports will suggest regulatory changes at the local, state, and federal levels and provide recommendations on how city processes could be improved to better target demolition activities and more rapidly utilize existing resources.

Q&A

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