

NSDI Cooperative Agreements Program Institution Building and Coordination Project Final Project Report

Agreement Number: (04HQAG0180)

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- Project Narrative

The Detroit Data Partnership has established the project as a viable and broad based source for data in Detroit and regionally. This second phase of project operations began with a roll out event to garner attention for the Detroit Data Partnership and to introduce the project to the community and Southeast Michigan. More than 100 members of the nonprofit, government, and business community from all over the region packed the New Detroit Science Center's planetarium for a public announcement of the Detroit Data Partnership's online tools. Project partners and supporters highlighted the project's work during its demonstration period and outlined plans for Phase II. In subsequent months, the Detroit Data Partnership established a solid technical basis for the Detroit Community Data Connection (<http://www.datadetroit.org>) (DCDC) and developed processes and procedures for securing reliable and manageable data. Recently, the partnership's success was recognized by an invitation to participate in the Urban Institute's National Neighborhood Indicators Partnership, an organization of premier community indicator projects. This success was enabled and will continue thanks to a strong project framework, ample community involvement, and the ongoing commitment to new and exciting partnerships and activities in support of regional data sharing.

Project Framework

A significant component in developing the Detroit Data Partnership was developing the best infrastructure for the region. Components of the Detroit Data Partnership work plan include a blend of technical, management, and development activities, which contribute to this end. Included in these activities are the creation of best practice technical infrastructure, partner identification and recruitment, and consideration for the best procedures and processes to ensure the continued success of the project. A project manager was hired at the beginning of Phase II, who immediately established processes and procedures for data collection and management. Among the focus areas were the definition of best practices, metadata standards, presentation standards, and projection standards. In establishing these standards state and local organizations were consulted to determine which standards were the most accepted in the region. Data recruitment was also conducted, with new data sets secured for the DCDC website. Mechanisms for measuring user interest in the online tools were also established.

Phase Two partner recruitment activities resulted in two significant partnerships to support the project's technical and data-related goals. First the nationally recognized Institute for Geospatial Research and Education at Eastern Michigan University in Washtenaw County was secured to provide technical services and capacity in the development of GIS maps and metadata and to assure achievement of project standards. Next, Public Sector Consultants (PSC), a Lansing-based company which provides public policy research and advice on sources and quality of community indicators, was secured to help identify and interpret data sets to further its usefulness among communitybased organizations. PSC also provides a connection to the Michigan State government and to data sources covering the entire State of Michigan from their base in the State Capitol.

Detroit Data Partnership consists of an advisory panel of local decision makers and opinion leaders with an interest in the area of community data. These partners provide guidance and advice to the development of the DCDC web site and direct the actions and projects of the Project Manager. The Detroit Data Partnership membership roster consists of representatives of the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments, Detroit Public Schools, Mayor's Time, Detroit Planning and Development Department, NPower Michigan, Warren Conner Development Coalition, and the Skillman Foundation. Regular meetings were conducted to elicit feedback from Detroit Data Partnership members and to report out on the progress and accomplishments of the project.

- Next Steps

There are several interesting projects the Detroit Data Partnership has recently begun to pursue, in support of the initiatives future direction. These include:

- Discussions have begun with Oakland County about the possibility of hosting the Counties Quality of Life statistics on the Detroit Data Partnership web site.

The Detroit Data Partnership is coordinating with the Brookings Institute to develop an "intelligent middleware" product in conjunction with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology which would enable automated datasharing across multiple databases and servers and would serve as a network for regional data providers and data consumers.

- The Detroit Data Partnership has also begun talks with the Fannie Mae Foundation to develop a prototype system that would integrate Detroit data into DataPlace, the foundation's national GIS and demographic data website. This system would leverage the data developed by the Fannie Mae Foundation, but would allow for localization and the addition of local data sets for the region.

The next steps for the Detroit Data Partnership will be to continue regional data recruitment, further enable automated data-sharing, promote the region to national organizations intent on

doing cutting edge research, and to reach out to community organizations, governments and others to help them use data to make better decisions.

Feedback on Cooperative Agreements Program

Some of the biggest strengths of the Cooperative Agreement Program resulted from bringing together the award recipients to meet and talk about their programs, best practices, and experiences from a wide range of organizations. It would have also been beneficial to offer a second meeting of participants to discuss the final results and lessons learned. A monthly telephone conference with the Cooperative Agreements Program recipients would also have been beneficial. More contact with the NSDI program officer would have been desirable.

Because the Detroit Data Partnership is part of City Connect Detroit, we had excellent access to expertise on building and running collaboratives which helped us greatly in our efforts. However, it might be beneficial for NSDI to offer training and guidance on operating a collaborative for those organizations that do not have the same built-in capacity that we enjoyed.

Overall, we feel that the NSDI program are strong because of their flexibility to address changing needs by offering new programs each year. We also salute the NSDI's willingness to offer support for infrastructure programs that are often difficult to fund through other sources.