

Introduction

The purpose of this manual is to assist individuals in improving the quality of the social and physical aspects of neighborhoods and change the way residents, local government and others interact to solve problems. To fulfill this purpose, this manual presents a step-by-step guide that can be used to implement the “holistic neighborhood revitalization model” (HNR). In addition, it contains a case study of the neighborhood revitalization process in St. Petersburg, Florida as well as a sample of tools, forms and helpful hints that will be useful in putting the model in place. The HNR model is an approach to revitalization that has been used effectively in many localities in this country. Its primary characteristics are as follows.

- The HNR model is broad-based and big-picture in orientation; looks at all of the quality of life issues within a geographically defined area; that is, the neighborhood.
- It is inclusive; brings together residents, local government, and other interested community parties to collaboratively address these issues.

- It is a dynamic, problem solving and asset-based approach; addresses the specific issues facing the neighborhood through a dynamic and systematic process and uses existing neighborhood resources in doing so.

Furthermore, the model’s tools are designed to be flexible and based on common sense. In addition, even though it is best to use a broad-based approach, these tools may also be applied to more limited efforts with a more narrow focus to produce positive results. In fact, few of even the most elaborate processes start out in an ideal, full-blown manner. Limited and more focused efforts often serve as the beginning from which the more collaborative partnerships develop that lead to larger and more encompassing revitalization initiatives.

But the value of the HNR model may be viewed from another perspective. Few problems are as simple and straightforward as they first may appear. However, the model provides a process and focus by which to organize and redirect efforts as resolutions become more complicated. In addition, the issues that affect the quality of life within a neighborhood are usually in-

terconnected. Thus, gains made by resolving one obvious issue may be minimal or short-lived if other related issues are not addressed. The truth of the matter is, a holistic approach is the best way to bring about sustainable, positive change.

On whatever basis one chooses to use the HNR model, it is important to understand the process and how it may be implemented. An overview of the manual is as follows. In Part I, the manual discusses the principal characteristics of the model and why they are important. Part II presents a step-by-step guide to the holistic HNR process that can be used to implement it. There is also a checklist accompanying the discussion that serves as a reminder of what points need to be addressed as the model is implemented. Part III is the “HNR Toolkit.” It provides a set of tools that are consistent with the process described in Part II and can be used to implement it. Part IV consists of a case study of the revitalization effort that has taken place in the Harbordale Neighborhood in the City of St. Petersburg, Florida, including information as to how certain elements of that city’s government were restructured to support neighborhood revitalization initiatives.