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## NEW REPORT PROPOSES STRATEGIES FOR COMMUNITY ORGANIZING TO CREATE JOBS, PREVENT CRIME, IMPROVE EDUCATION

*Success Depends on Community-based Citizen Action,  
not “Expert” Consultants, Academic Theory*

WASHINGTON, DC – April 3, 2001

*The Community Organizing Toolbox*, released today by the Neighborhood Funders Group (NFG), details the achievements of community organizing groups nationwide in creating jobs, combating crime and reforming schools. The Toolbox is the first-ever comprehensive review of the community organizing field for grantmakers. It will help foundations exploring and investing in community organizing make informed decisions in their grantmaking.

Spurred by philanthropic interest in the growing field, NFG spent two years developing *The Community Organizing Toolbox*. Community organizing strategies are making a difference in neighborhoods that are often forgotten or ignored – faith-based organizing by Communities Organized for Public Service (COPS) in San Antonio; issue-based coalitions such as The Campaign for a Sustainable Milwaukee; and direct membership organizing by groups such as the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN). According to the report, they are also developing the leaders who are finding solutions to the issues facing their communities.

Each successful campaign came about because neighborhood residents were the decision makers and leaders of community-based action. “The increased sophistication and clout of community organizing groups at the local, state and national levels is drawing the attention of policy makers, the media, elected officials, and grantmakers,” said NFG member Henry Allen of the Hyams Foundation.

The two dozen or more regional and national organizing networks which nurture and support over 6,000 local community organizing groups all look to grassroots people – not the government, business, academics, the media or anyone else – to set their own priorities. In Minneapolis, the Lyndale Neighborhood Association worked to transform a crime-infested, transient community into one of the most diverse and vibrant neighborhoods in the city with new housing, revitalized retail areas and community-based services for families and children.

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In Los Angeles, the Korean Immigrant Workers Advocates (KIWA) has become the voice for the working poor in the Korean community. From the reinstatement of employees who are wrongfully terminated to an industry-wide labor agreement with the Korean Restaurant Association, KIWA has helped workers improve the quality of their lives and those of their family members and the entire community.

The Neighborhood Funders Group is a national membership association of grantmaking institutions working to increase support for community-based efforts to organize and improve the economic and social fabric of low-income urban neighborhoods and rural communities. The Toolbox is available online at [www.nfg.org](http://www.nfg.org) or by calling 202-833-4690.