



**NATIONAL LEAGUE OF CITIES**  
**Institute for Youth, Education, and Families**

*Natural Allies: City Partnerships with Local United Ways and Chambers of Commerce*  
September 20, 2007

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Institute for Youth, Education, and Families  
National League of Cities (NLC)

*Speakers:*

**Daniel Dodd**, project director, Step Up Savannah, Savannah Chamber of Commerce, Savannah, Ga.;  
**Nina Sazer O'Donnell**, director, National Strategies/Success By 6, United Way of America; and  
**Tammy Papa**, director, Lighthouse Afterschool Program, City of Bridgeport, Conn.

*HOLSCLAW:* Thank you to everyone that has joined us today. You have logged in to the YEF Institute conference call on “Natural Allies: City Partnerships with Local United Ways and Chambers of Commerce.” We are glad that you could be with us today. My name is Abby Hughes Holsclaw. I am the program director here at the YEF Institute for early childhood and family economic success. Today, we have three very knowledgeable speakers with us that I am anxious for you to hear from and have a conversation with the Institute today about partnering with local United Ways and Chambers of Commerce. First, we have Daniel Dodd, who is the project director of Step Up Savannah. He is located in Savannah’s Chamber of Commerce. Daniel, would you like to say hello?

*DODD:* Hi, Abby. Hi, everyone.

*HOLSCLAW:* Thanks. We also have on the line, Nina O’Donnell, who is the director of national strategies for Success by 6 at United Way of America. Nina, would you like to say hello?

*O’DONNELL:* Hello, everybody.

*HOLSCLAW:* Thanks. We also have Tammy Papa, director of the Lighthouse Afterschool Program with the City of Bridgeport, Conn.

*PAPA:* Hi, everybody.

*HOLSCLAW:* Great. I know that most of you on the line know this, but it is so important to understand that at the local level, we here at NLC believe that partnerships really do matter and

no matter your city's size, whether you are New York, N.Y., or Arkadelphia, Ark., most communities have some automatic ingredients at the local level. Those usually include a city government, a United Way, and a Chamber of Commerce. So, we see a lot of power in the partnership and collaboration among these types of organizations that can really move an agenda for family, youth and children, no matter the subject, forward, and we are very anxious to hear your questions and also share with you the expertise that Daniel Dodd, Nina O'Donnell and Tammy Papa bring from their experiences.

I wanted to dive right in to some questions and perhaps the first couple of questions are for Daniel and Tammy, and Nina may be chiming in from what she has seen at a national level. Certainly, she serves United Ways, nationwide. One of my first questions is, tell us a little bit more about why your city was motivated to partner with the local United Way or Chamber of Commerce? What brought you to the point where you saw value in that partnership? Maybe we will start with Daniel?

*DODD:* Okay. Yes. In Savannah, we saw that we had a persistent poverty rate of six points higher than the national average and this has not changed for 30 years. So, the city government really realized that we had to do things a different way. So, they went about building an alliance with the Chamber of Commerce and the United Way and 80 other organizations built to create the Step Up Savannah poverty reduction collaboration, which exists today, really linking poverty reduction to economic development.

*HOLSCLAW:* And what about you, Tammy?

*PAPA:* First, it was a little bit about our afterschool programs, a little bit about early childhood and the education system in general. You know, the mayor has worked closely with both the United Way and the Chamber of Commerce, but it has really been within the last year or so, that these three important issues have come to the table and more and more partnering with these organizations has been happening.

*HOLSCLAW:* Talk about why the partnership between the local government, and as you mentioned, the United Way and the Chamber has been effective. What is that you are doing, specifically, that you are leveraging these partnerships?

*DODD:* Well, we are working in six areas. First of all, the research was done collectively under the form of a task force that was looking at the various cost efficiencies. So, everybody was at the table and diagnosing the problem, including the residents from the neighborhood and business people from the Chamber and from the college and the development authority. They determined the barriers as being transportation, healthcare, workforce, asset building, affordable housing and healthcare. So, now all of the action teams – we have six action teams working within those areas that all have anywhere from 10-20 organizations of all of those from non-profit, United Way, city, county and residents, that are all involved on those action teams that are set and measuring outcomes, looking at policy issues. In the case of asset building, it is very easy to get the EITC coalition together under that action team and look at how to expand afterwards. It is very palatable to business folks because when they are involved and you have things that

you can quantify, that you can measure, they are a lot more interested in staying involved, because they can see the progress that is being made.

*HOLSCLAW:* And Tammy, how about for Bridgeport?

*PAPA:* Well, for us, we have just been able to work in the area of early education, for instance. We have the blueprint for early education and that was really initiated through a partnership with the United Way, but we have also, between our local business community, or counsel, I should say, and the United Way, have been able to bring over 50 people together for our Bridgeport After School Program. That is a network of providers working to insure that all of our children have access to high quality afterschool programs, but in the area of education, the business community also stepped up to the plate and is promoting an independent and effective budget through the board of education. Currently, the board of education falls under the city and it is really the city that controls the board's budget. The business community has been working very closely with both the superintendent of schools and the mayor to have an independent budget for the board of education and we just completed a long term strategic plan, which over 400 community members, spearheaded by United Way and the business community, in partnership with the mayor and the superintendent, developed. So, we are excited about that. Then the issue of homelessness is also part of what we are doing to expand services to families and that is a direct result of a partnership with the United Way and the City of Bridgeport.

*HOLSCLAW:* Nina, thinking nationwide, are there some examples that pop out to you as maybe a couple of communities that you could point to that partner with their local United Way and what that has meant?

*O'DONNELL:* Well, yeah. Before I give you an example, I just want to point out to people who don't know, that over the last five years or so, maybe a little bit longer, the United Way has, throughout the country, been changing its mission, from being seen as the typical old model, where the United Way raises money and then gives it out to a set of agencies to moving into what we call in United Way land, community impact. We are working towards the common good. So, fundraising becomes one of many strategies. So, it is really sort of very central to United Way's mission. The United Ways around the country are in varying stages of switching to this community impact model, that is very much part of how work has to get done, which is to partner with Chambers and other kinds of leaders to do this. Because if you are really going to change conditions for the common good, multiple priorities are needed and I think that everyone has to be involved.

One exciting example of community/executive collaboration with the United Way and the city and the business community is in Richmond, Va., which has partnered for a very long time with the United Way and, in fact, the United Way and the city and the Chamber have actually gotten together and got someone to do a lot of early childhood work. One of the reasons that it is so helpful to have the Chamber involved and to have businesses involved is not only that you have employers or employees if you are trying to reach parents for information or outreach or get them involved with issues, then you can reach them through the work place, but also because very often times, business leaders are the funders of policy. So, they are a very powerful influence of policy.

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*HOLSCLAW:* That is very helpful and a great point to make, Nina, about local United Ways changing their missions and as that evolves nationwide, I know that cities that, perhaps in the past, have not found opportunities to partner, may in fact in the future rethink that and find new places of common ground, where agendas meet and that is certainly important. Looking at Bridgeport and Savannah, again, I want to delve a little deeper. Tammy, in Bridgeport your United Way has very specifically helped bridge the gap between the city, the school district and the community organizations. Can you describe what has been happening there?

*PAPA:* Sure. Really, it also started with the technical assistance that we got from NLC for expanding afterschool efforts for strengthening the system that supports our afterschool program here. The Lighthouse Program, itself, is the largest provider of afterschool programs in the city. However, there are multiple agencies out there that operate afterschool programs on a smaller scale. There has always been a little bit of a divide here between those agencies and the Lighthouse Program. So, with the technical assistance, we were able to bring some folks together to the table. We did that through the Mayor's office, but again because the Lighthouse Program is part of a city department, you had your traditional players coming to the table, so maybe there were 30 or so people that came and generally came regularly, but it still was not the larger mix of most folks.

So, the mayor spoke with the United Way and said that you are more of a neutral organization. You are changing the focus of how you get business done here. You are not going to be in the business of supporting individual projects or organizations to do their regular programming. You want to be more about system change. How about this opportunity to work with us on expanding quality afterschool programs, or at the very least, helping us build the system that can support that? United Way was more than happy. They had already been participating in the conversations and they also saw that there was a little bit of a divide there. So, seeing as they are more of a neutral partner or player, it just made perfect sense for them to coordinate future meetings and for them to bring focus to the table and we have had quite a few successful meetings.

Our most recent meeting, last week, has really moved us forward here and enabled us to pinpoint about eight items that we want to act upon as a community and the number one area that came out of it was really, you know, we need to define a leadership for this after-school network, whatever we are going to call it. We need to really define that, but it was only because the United Way took the initiative – well, the mayor took the initiative – but the United Way was more than willing to step up and take on that role and partner with the city in that effort and the board of education, to really bring people around the table and we are really moving forward with the afterschool piece, which is obviously going to make better outcomes for our kids here.

*HOLSCLAW:* You know, that is a great example, Tammy, and a reminder that while sometimes government is seen as the neutral conveners, sometimes it is not. And that an outside force like the United Way with such a strong brand at the local level can really step in and play that role, perhaps, more effectively than the municipal government. Just reminding me that every community is unique in its own strengths and weaknesses and so that is a helpful reminder. Daniel, I am interested in having you tell our call participants a little bit more about in Savannah,

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how you're very uniquely situated as a city employee, but located out of the Chamber of Commerce in Savannah and can you talk a little bit about that decision that was made and how it has been advantageous to the work that you have been doing there, specifically related to the asset building work that you have been doing?

*DODD:* So, since we are really using business as a starting point and we have a city that convened this task force, but Step Ups have evolved out of this task force, based on those six areas that I was talking about and keeping poverty reduction and connecting with economic development, they are using poverty simulations as an exercise to kind of create a common frame of reference and to help make people aware of what it is like for people who live in poverty. The majority of the people that are at the poverty level are working, according to the census in Savannah. These simulations or exercises are very useful. People can look at those simulations on our web site at [www.stepupsavannah.org](http://www.stepupsavannah.org).

But I am actually, as Abby said, a city employee, although I am located at the Chamber of Commerce and the United Way actually acts as our fiscal agent and lends us their 501(c)(3) status. Of course all of those people are on the board of Step Up and a lot of other business folks are on there as well, but then two people that are in my office, that work under Step Up and under me are Chamber employees and then we have two other employees that are county employees, and one other person who is a city employee. So, the people, the whole six staff that are under Step Up are arms out to that in such a way. Since we are not a 501(c)(3), nor do we intend to become one, we do not want to be connected to another agency that is competing for resources. We want to be a collaborator, holding all the organizations under the umbrella of working together. So, that stops us from becoming threatening to other agencies and we redirect resources to agencies that are showing results.

Now, thanks to the NLC and the support of the Casey Foundation, we were granted a technical assistance grant, for example, in the area of asset development, we were able to go around the country and see what other cities within the country in this area were doing and we have actually based our model, in Savannah, around a model that is being used very successfully in San Antonio. We had a volunteer income tax coalition that had claimed up to about \$2 million of what the IRS had determined. There is another \$12 million that was unclaimed in tax returns from the Earned Income Tax Credit. That is a real easy case to make for business folks. You know, they hate to hear about money that is unclaimed. You know, money that could be going into the local economy. So, it was a very convincing argument to make. Workforce development is another argument that is a very easy business case to make. So, they see all of that as increasing family's earnings and spending power, which obviously will affect the local economy.

*HOLSCLAW:* Daniel, that is really helpful and I am hearing from Tammy and from you, and I am interested in Nina's additional perspective on this, the sort of litigious use of local elected officials in this work. Nina, did you want to chime in on whether or not the city coming to a local United Way or a local United Way reaching out to elected officials, from your perspective, how elected officials can be helpful in advancing the work of strengthening families at the local level.

*O'DONNELL:* Well, A lot of the resources that are needed to actually support families or caregivers that tend to children before and after school or older people or whatever, are services that are transportation or Parks and Recreation or libraries or whatever it is, a lot of the solution lies in public policy and so, it is with that approach a community challenge in this way. You cannot really do this without the policymakers, but I think that it is also equally important to understand the assets of each partner. They see the paper as people have been talking about this and one of the things that the United Way does, in addition to neutral convening, very often, they either in house or contract out some kind of a planning counsel that does have data. Cities also have data and, as we all know, you know, to make needed changes are much more effective when you start with good data. The United Way also all have a communication capacity and sometimes it can be a little more flexible than the government can be in terms of their communications campaign or communications strategy. On the other hand, partnering with the Chamber of Commerce and a city official can really get a lot of media attention. So, again, in that arena when you need to add communications to a strategy, the partnership makes a synergy that can be more powerful than everyone else and, again, the United Way has a reach into those places, which I think is an under-realized asset that cities can use and that Chambers can use and that community partners can use. I guess what I am saying is that it is important to understand the assets of each partner that your partnership has and use those strategically, but it is also equally important to understand where there can be synergies that can make  $1 + 1 + 1 = 10$ .

*HOLSCLAW:* You know, that is an excellent point, Nina and I want to remind the call participants that if you have a question, do not hesitate to e-mail to Michael Karpman at [karpman@nlc.org](mailto:karpman@nlc.org). Feel free to do that anytime, or jot your question down and very soon, I will ask the operator to give instructions for how you can ask a question over the line.

There are two more questions that I would like to ask though, as moderator. One is, you know, I am hearing the change in messages. So, whether it is reaching out to the business community via the Chamber of Commerce or local United Way, that that outreach may look different and I am interested to hear, both from Daniel and from Tammy, what outreach mechanisms or messaging has worked in your local community in gaining these partners and influencing them to be part of a broader or more collective agenda at the local level and, Nina, also for you, you know, what, from United Way of America's perspective works when reaching out to the United Way and you have already mentioned that they have a new charge to do business in a different way and that, in an of itself, may be an opportunity to reach out. So, I will open it up to all of the speakers to tell me a little bit more about messaging and marketing?

*PAPA:* You want me to go?

*HOLSCLAW:* Sure.

*PAPA:* I know that in Bridgeport, I am most involved in the after-school effort, but I have had the privilege of working with others on some other partnerships that involved education or the housing issues. I know that when the mayor is at the table and he is making a pitch to either the United Way or the business community to be supportive of certain efforts, one of the things that he focuses on with the business community is that they understand, or he makes the case for economic development and that businesses are not going to come to the city. It is common sense

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that businesses are not going to come to some place where their people cannot work, their employees cannot work and their children are not going to receive a good education and there are not all these supportive services to go along with it. If the community is not thriving, then business is not going to thrive.

So, if we want a better tax base, or if we want development to happen here, these are some of the thriving community issues that need to be taken seriously. We need their support to accomplish those things. He is very specific about what he asks for. He has some end goals that he wants to see accomplished and he markets to the business community, using the economic development piece and how some of these supportive services are then going to impact their own businesses and their own workforce. When he talks with the United Way or asks the United Way for participation, he is more or less focusing on the areas that the United Way is mostly concerned in and with our own local United Way, they have not gotten their focus on four specific areas and obviously I think most of the United Ways are interested in the Success by Six program, or have that as one of their key initiatives, but our local United Way is also looking at Operation Graduation and school kind of falls into that. In other words, preparing kids all the way up through the ladder to success into colleges and higher education, if that is the course that they choose to take and then Destination Home and that is a bid to end homelessness here with our local United Way. And then supporting a caring community, which kind of then takes a look at all of your other supportive services. So, when we look at United Way and ask for their participation, it is generally focused in one of those key areas, so that it really supports the work that the United Way is intending to do here in our community.

*HOLSCLAW:* And that make sense to meet them in a common agenda point.

*PAPA:* Absolutely.

*HOLSCLAW:* Daniel, what about in Savannah. The messages that you have used to engage the business community, you know, what about that?

*DODD:* Well, obviously, the problem with economic development is certainly leaving people where they are. Businesses like also – you know, we could not go out as a poverty reduction initiative. We tried this in the beginning and we got so far, especially with the government and with neighborhoods, but with the business community and the Chamber. The Chamber is not necessarily excited to have the poverty reduction initiative upstairs. The Chamber is trying to sell, you know, Savannah, as a tourist destination and for people to move to Savannah. So, they do not necessarily want to highlight poverty. Nevertheless, I think that people realize that this was an initiative that was affecting business. It is affecting crime. It is affecting tourism and affecting employers that were thinking about relocating to Savannah.

So, the business community really realized, with the help of the poverty simulations and with getting them engaged, that this was something that needed to be taken on, so, if people were questioning, “How can they have such a beautiful city and be affected with this problem?” then they can say, and they do now, “Yes, we do have a problem, but we are taking it on in a very comprehensive manner.” And so when we went about branding an initiative, we had a group of PR folks that managed their time at the hospitals and the

development authority, the Chamber, the United Way, they were all participating on a communications team monthly meeting.

At the beginning, two years ago, they went about branding the initiative and they came up with the name, Step Up, which we are not only encouraging businesses to step up and the government to step up, but also residents in the neighborhoods to step up and the mayor is constantly sending out that message, that, “Look, yes, institutions and systems can be fixed, but also individuals have to accept responsibility as well.” Our writer is very, very charismatic in the community and really has a lot of ideas and uses them very effectively in that way. So, I think, you know, that there is a messaging and a consistency of a messaging, you know, regularly getting it out, but it is not an easy sell. I am not saying that we have a panacea here, but definitely, we have seen a tremendous amount of progress, looking at a real tough issue because of its approach. I came in, my background being a community organizer, and I have to say that I was a bit suspicious, trying to get businesses involved, but I have to say very strongly that they are at the table and are more than just giving money. They are putting time and resources on the table. More importantly, they are putting their time to get involved within these action teams and as they do that, we are becoming more aware of the complexity of the problem. Where before they thought, it was, you know, hey, pull yourself up by the bootstraps and figure it out. Manage your money better. Now, they are realizing that this is a more complex problem and it is not going to go away overnight.

*HOLSCLAW:* Daniel mentioned something that the call participants may or may not know about the City of Savannah, but it has a very unique strategy of hosting poverty simulations for the business community and others that has really helped give a lot of folks in Savannah a new perspective on what it means to be poor and if you are not already signed up for the Summit in San Antonio, Texas, next week, we will be hosting a poverty simulation at that event. So, people can see first hand how that might be helpful with their local effort. Daniel, I think you also bring up something else that is extremely important to mention and that is collaboration at the local level is not necessarily easy and that there are a lot of challenges. Nina, I want to turn to you and have you reflect on the best advice that you have for folks wanting to better engage their local United Ways. Perhaps, they have found that challenging in the past. Is there any advice that you have on messaging that will work in engaging a local United Way? This would be very helpful, I think.

*O'DONNELL:* Well, one of the things that I wanted to mention, in general, and I think that both Tammy and Daniel have said this, is that you really need to make a case that makes sense to the audience that you are trying to engage. So, we call that a business case. What is in it for them and making an “ask” or presenting a partnership, so that the partners that you are asking to include understand that it is a win/win situation. But I also wanted to mention that we have something on our Born Learning Web site ([www.bornlearning.org](http://www.bornlearning.org)) that everybody can use for engaging business leaders in early child development and it is called a Community Member Outreach Toolkit. What we did is that we tried to put together a set of tools that make it easy for people to not have to reinvent, a PowerPoint, a brochure, or a vehicle that we are always reinventing and producing. We have a template for presentations in Power Point. We have a brochure. We have a fact video. We have talking points. They are all fully downloadable. They are all customizable. The Power Point, for example, makes the economic development case, the

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brain development case and then it sets up pretty much every policy act, so people can have their own local data. They can put in what they are asking for and all of these things are available from the [www.bornlearning.org](http://www.bornlearning.org) web site and it is called the Community Member Outreach Toolkit. So, that might be useful and helpful to people.

*HOLSCLAW:* You said that was [www.bornlearning.org](http://www.bornlearning.org).

*O'DONNELL:* Yes, [www.bornlearning.org](http://www.bornlearning.org).

*HOLSCLAW:* Terrific. Well, I want to pause for a moment and let people know that if you have any questions, please e-mail Michael Karpman at [karpman@nlc.org](mailto:karpman@nlc.org) and I also want to ask Ineri, the operator, if she would note how people can ask a question over the phone.

*OPERATOR:* If you would like to ask a questions, you can press \*1 on your telephone keypad. If your question has been answered, please press the # sign.

*HOLSCLAW:* Do we have any questions just yet?

*OPERATOR:* We have a question from Michele Marcel.

*MARCEL:* Hi, actually, I think Tammy is in a program which is called “Destination Home.”

*HOLSCLAW:* Yes.

*MARCEL:* Can she tell me a little bit about that?

*PAPA:* I have not participated on that actual steering committee as much. It is done through our housing and development office here in the City of Bridgeport, in partnership with the United Way, and spearheaded by United Way and the mayor, but it is Destination Home and it is available on the United Way web site, if you want more information on that. It is a bid to end homelessness within the city. So, it is all about affordable housing and making sure that people have access to affordable housing that when we are marketing the city and asking developers to come, that anything that they do develop include a piece of affordable housing. I am talking, of course, about the big projects that are now being discussed here in Bridgeport and are getting underway. Most of them include an affordable housing piece and that is all a part of what we are looking to do and it ties back to also the business community. People need to be able to work and afford housing in the communities that they work, so we are trying to tie in these initiatives, but for more information, the United Way Web site is, I believe, [www.thewaytocare.org](http://www.thewaytocare.org).

*HOLSCLAW:* Thanks, Tammy. You have a question from John in Virginia Beach and he says that there seems to be a focus on the part of the United Way to approach problems like homelessness as an example from a regional perspective and the programs that are highlighted in the call thus far have been very city specific. Can both Bridgeport and Savannah talk a little bit

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about attracting regional cooperation to their efforts and maybe how you have made that case in a larger geographical area. Is that happening in Bridgeport or Savannah?

*DODD:* In Savannah, it is happening and I will tell you why. Our United Way has, I think it represents both counties, that for example through Step Up, we do have, as we are one of the biggest areas and we have one of the largest ports on the East Coast, one of the top areas of employment is with the warehousing and distribution centers. So generally, those tend to be located a lot further away from downtown Savannah and they are generally located in municipalities that have not opted in to the regional transportation system, so we go in very regularly to speak with municipalities and we have the development authority and the Chamber that lead us in how we do that. Not going in there as poverty reduction, but going in there as economic development and saying, “Look, you have workforce needs and we need you to reconsider opting in to the regional transportation system because we are linked.” And we go in there with working statistics saying, “Look, the metropolitan areas are linked to their suburban areas, whether we like it or not, and we can all sink or swim together here.”

And so that is part of the most tangible way and with the workforce development programs, where we have a lot of homes that are being built in other counties even, and we have these workforce needs, the county came in and put some money on the table for us to put together a workforce development program that was just recognized by the National Association of Counties, as a model program where we are linking people with the Homebuilders Association for apprenticeship jobs from the city. Folks, in fact, back in class. We have a class of 16 people. Small numbers right now, but this last class, which we are doing quarterly, of 16 folks, all of them actually were ex-offenders and by coincidence, from the city and they were all released and 13 of them are going to get jobs through the Homebuilders Association working in other counties that lets them continue to live in Savannah.

*HOLSCLAW:* That is helpful, Daniel. In some communities, I understand that there is a question that lots of United Ways don’t just serve the largest city within the county or a regional effort, but rather they do take that regional approach and that is a balancing act, I am sure, that they often struggle with. So, if you do not have anything to add to that question, I have one more from New York City. Someone has asked, and Nina I am interested in your perspective on this too, what cities and United Ways are doing, in partnership, across the country, to assist parents who lack their own educational foundation, which obviously inhibits their ability to boost their own young child’s learning experiences?

*O’DONNELL:* I would like to just mention that we have a big national campaign and that is what I mentioned earlier called Born Learning and that is the whole point of Born Learning. It is actually – if you go to that web site, there are 500 different training materials. We have kits for learning about things that parents can do in everyday moments with kids. The campaign is really aimed at parents and kids and has tools to reach out to policy makers and business leaders, but the idea is that children are born learning and they are learning all the time. We can either help them learn good things or you can get in their way. There are PSAs. There are electronics that parents can play for their kids. There are downloadable kits that everyone can download and print themselves. So, if a community wanted to correlate some kind of material for parents, there

are resources on lots of other organizations that save parents. Yet, we stop short at, we don't give them adult education, per se. Maybe Tammy has some thoughts about that.

*PAPA:* Not specific thoughts, but what I can say is that part of what makes some of our partnerships unique is that aside from some of the more known leaders in the community, most of what we do also brings parents to the table. It gets them out to talk about specific issues and while they are there, what we are able to do is bring in community services that we are thinking that they might need, or generally don't have access to, or don't even know exist. So, they have the opportunities to link to those there, but it also gives those leaders that are organizing these events, and their staff, an opportunity to talk to parents a little bit more, one on one, either before a meeting, during a meeting or after a meeting, to find out what some of their needs are. I know that we have a ton of workshops that go on for our parents in the community. The United Way has worked very closely with our board of education here. We have a fully staffed parent center. Just last evening, there was a district-wide parent advisory counsel meeting. The business community is very active with that. The United Way is very active with that. So, we are engaging parents. We know that they are a valuable resource for us. We want to make sure, obviously, that the Success by Six initiatives with United Way does workshops for parents. We want to make sure that they are engaged in their children's education. It is all about quality services for children, but also for families and thus, a better community.

*HOLSCLAW:* This is a great opportunity for me to advertise a new report coming out of the Institute for Youth, Education and Families, that will be released at our summit in San Antonio. It is entitled, *Supporting Parents: Promising City Efforts to Help Young Children Succeed* and as Nina mentioned, it does stop short at talking about adult education, but talks about the various ways that city municipalities and city government can help support parents of young children and boost their child's potential success in life and I hope that you will look to that report, the week after next, if you are not attending the summit and if you are there, be certain to pick up a copy. We are happy to seminate this new resource to you all. Ineri, do we have any more questions on the line?

*OPERATOR:* There are no questions at this time.

*HOLSCLAW:* Okay. One of the questions that I had that is always a hot topic for folks is, are there shared funding opportunities that are happening in Savannah, or in Bridgeport? Do you find that in your community you are doing joint fundraising or joint grants, seeking grants together and/or putting actual organizational dollars together to accomplish something? If you maybe have examples of what has been happening that might provide some information for others to consider if they move forward and for moving this way?

*DODD:* I think that that is one of the reasons for having business folks at the table and the chair of my advisory board is the senior vice president of a bank and he is always saying how monies are drying up, so you need agencies working together. As we are hearing with United Way, that they are moving beyond just funding agencies and looking for community impact, and we just got a Ford Foundation Grant, and they really looked at the collaborative nature of the agencies and it seems like funders are requiring that a lot more. So I feel that, or we have seen

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that we have more of a competitive edge when we are hopeful for grants and when we apply for funds, but also you have agencies that are holding each other mutually accountable, setting standards and helping with quality increases of services as a consequence.

One example would be with our asset building coalition. They had gone for quite a few years to the City of Savannah for support and had been turned down, and with the technical assistance grant that we got through the National League of Cities, we went to San Francisco and we took our city manager – in Savannah, we have the city manager form of government. He has a lot of discretionary funds that he can allocate and he saw what San Francisco was doing with their asset building and how San Antonio also was involved more directly in funding the EITC coalition. So, afterwards, he came back and he saw the outcomes and how far the group had gotten in claiming, I think, two and a half million dollars, and said, “Alright, well if we need to get to this next level, we will give this amount of money, as long as it is going to be shared throughout the whole coalition.” So that has led to that coalition working more closely together and setting goals together and setting requisites and criteria for how to use the money and will hopefully lead to getting more of that money back into the community more efficiently.

*HOLSCLAW:* Tammy, what about in Bridgeport?

*PAPA:* Well, in Bridgeport, we have a central grants office and they do reach out to not only the United Way and the business community, or specific businesses, but they also reach out to other non-profits, to determine what kinds of partnerships should happen. Who should be making the ask for specific dollars, so we have the grants end of it kind of down pat. We have, for a couple of examples, we do quite a few community conversations here in Bridgeport, and they are always around very important specific issues. For instance, we have had one on after-school. We had one on education. We have had others that deal with economic development. I have not been to those, but both the business community and the United Way have supported these financially along with the city and the board of education. So people are pooling resources to discuss specific topics. One of the things that was brought up at the after-school meeting that was held last week, by United Way, was the issue of, you know, with this leadership, it might mean that all the main players have to put some dollars on the table to support a system that is going to make after-school programs more accessible to everyone and available with high quality programming and not one of the major players at the table seemed to think that that was going to be an issue. So, people are willing to do it if there is a strategic plan in place. If we know where we are going and if everyone is committed at the same level.

*HOLSCLAW:* Nina, if you are still on the line – because I know that you do have to leave early – do you have, you know, a couple of examples that you would like to point to where you are seeing United Ways and municipal governments pooling resources and leveraging off of one another to make efforts at the local level viable?

*O'DONNELL:* Well, what I see happens in similar cases, in which I see them go together to fund it. When they have the opportunity, a lot of United Ways in cities and Chambers partner to get those grants and work together on them. So, I think, and that is not going to be about the

financial stability or financial economic situation, but I know in early childhood, in order to fund those programs, there needs to be a real partnership.

*HOLSCLAW:* Yeah, and Nina, you reminded me of something that I certainly tell callers on the line and that is through the United Way of America new financial stability partnership, there is a huge new push to think about asset building at the local level and agenda around that and specifically around helping residents access public benefits and so if you are interested in that, certainly follow up and let us know and talk to your local United Way about their interest in that work and see that you do have common agendas. As we move to the end of our call, I did want to give the speakers a chance to tell me, you know, what their best advice is to callers on the line as they think about partnering with their Chamber or United Way, assuming that that partnership is not already in place and strong, I am very interested in hearing your best advice about the do's and don'ts as you move forward and what your best advice is on how to sustain these sorts of partnerships. Because as leadership changes, both within city government and within the United Way and Chambers, there are new challenges that allow them any advice you have there. Before I go to that person, I want to make sure from Ineri that we do not have any other callers on the line.

*OPERATOR:* There are no questions.

*HOLSCLAW:* Okay. Great. And I would love to let the speakers respond to my question about best advice.

*PAPA:* I guess that I can start it off if nobody has any objections. I think that we have all touched on it before. You need to make the ask, but be specific about what you are asking for. Tie it to something that is relevant to whoever you are asking, whether it is United Way or the business community, so that it is a win/win situation. You know, stress the importance of how it is going to impact the community, both short term and long term. Make sure, I guess, to sustain things as leaders do change. We will be going through our own change with a new mayor in November, but some of the things that the old mayor started will definitely continue because he was able to get, not only some key people in place, but he got the community excited about certain initiatives and once you get the community excited about it, parents rely on it and want it and want to see certain things happen, so they keep on top of a new administration that might come in. So, I would definitely think that those things would really help a community if they have not already gotten started, getting United Ways or the business community involved. Those would certainly help. You have to ask. Nobody is going to generally come to you. It is always good to reach out and be just as open as possible and continue to communicate plans and strategies and so on and so forth.

*HOLSCLAW:* Daniel, thoughts?

*DODD:* I think that business and government tends to be kind of joined at the hip. Kind of a love and hate relationship, whether they like it or not and they always seem to be communicating one with the other, probably to know what the other is up to. So, I think that is important also, just not to go in with assumptions and you have to really meet businesses where

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they are. I do not think that we can, after working non-profits, go and expect them to do anything. We have to look at win/wins as Tammy just said and literally look at what their needs are and how to respond to those needs as we are looking at the issues that we are working on to make those cases and I think that in order to do that, we really have to also make sure that they are at the table, other than just financially, but that they are really helping diagnose and explore competent solutions. Really be able to show the outcomes as you are moving and I see it over and over again, that people are patient if you show them the numbers and you don't hit them, but they want to see that you are striving for it. That is why our mayor has been phenomenal that he has been asking for outcomes since he has been here and it has been very palatable to the United Way and to the city and to some businesses as well.

So, it takes patience and working within collaborations and more importantly, I sense the most important message that I have in mind is that you really have to keep the door open and constantly be reaching out to new people and say, "Hey, we do not have it figured out here. This is not a panacea. We need you at the table. We can facilitate this process, but we need you to come and be sitting here and help look for the solutions as we go at something that is very complicated and very difficult."

*HOLSCLAW:* Well, that is very helpful and for the folks that are listening in, I know there are resources that can help you do that. Certainly the Institute can help. The topic of partnering and certainly partnering with United Ways and Chambers of Commerce, you know, criss cross all across our portfolio, so no matter what team you have a relationship with here at the Institute, feel free to reach out and ask for advice or help or further examples. In addition, Nina mentioned that United Way of America and very specifically their Born Learning web site ([www.bornlearning.org](http://www.bornlearning.org)). I encourage you, if you have not ever taken a look at that, to please look at that and also look at United Way's new financial stability partnership initiative that you can also find online. For Tammy and Daniel, is there a place that people can go to find out more information about what is happening in your communities?

*PAPA:* They can always visit our city web site; [www.ci.bridgeport.ct.us](http://www.ci.bridgeport.ct.us).

*HOLSCLAW:* Is there a specific place to go on that Web site?

*PAPA:* Not specific. There are different topics at the top of the web site will give them specific information on community impact stuff and they can just log on there.

*HOLSCLAW:* Okay. That is helpful. And Daniel, what about in Savannah?

*DODD:* They can go to [www.stepupsavannah.org](http://www.stepupsavannah.org) and on there you can click onto any of the logos of the partnering organizations and that will take you to their web sites and also if you go there and you look at the news section, that will give you the current news of what we are working on and under "about" you can read about the poverty simulations.

*HOLSCLAW:* I also wanted to mention that on the United Ways Web site is that business outreach toolkit, which is very interesting. So, if you have not seen that yet, I would definitely encourage you to go there. Well, on behalf of the National League of Cities, I want to thank

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Daniel, Nina and Tammy for being with us today. I appreciate their participation. If this call has been interesting to you, please do not hesitate to register and join us for our next free audio conference call, which is scheduled for October 18<sup>th</sup>. It is entitled, "Building on Success, Taking City Initiatives to Scale." It is scheduled for 2:30 P.M., Eastern Time. If you are one of the folks around the country, one of the 450 people around the country that are joining us in San Antonio, Texas next week for our National Summit on Your City's Families, we look forward to seeing you there. We will also have a session there on working with Chambers and United Ways. I encourage you to be part of that. If you have not already registered, registration has actually closed. We are sold out. So, I hope that you will look for this event, which will happen two years from now, again, and stay connected to the Institute. Thanks again for your time. We hope that we have been helpful and don't hesitate to reach out, if we can be of further assistance.