

Strong Cities, Strong Communities Fellowship Pilot Placement Program

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND OVERVIEW: FINAL EVALUATION REPORT
SC2 MANAGEMENT TEAM

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The SC2 Fellowship Management Team recognizes Lauren Bulka, research associate at the Metropolitan Institute at Virginia Tech, as the galvanizing force behind this assessment of the SC2 Fellowship Program. Under the guidance of Joseph Schilling, senior fellow at the Metropolitan Institute; and Kathryn Wertheimer Hexter, director of the Center for Community Planning and Development at Cleveland State University, Lauren established and managed our program evaluation process. She made many connections between academic and professional literature on capacity building with the project work of the SC2 fellows—a major breakthrough that we hope to pursue in the future.

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Note: Items in red are contained in the full evaluation report, available from Joseph Schilling at jschilling@urban.org

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Executive Summary

Today, many American cities are in transition, working to rebuild their economies after losing their traditional economic drivers over the past four decades. Revitalizing the economies of these places, particularly the most distressed, is a key challenge and opportunity in the 21st century. In July 2011, the White House launched the Strong Cities, Strong Communities Initiative (SC2), as a new federal interagency pilot program aimed at revitalizing the economies of challenged cities. SC2 is part of a robust suite of place-based efforts, including the Promise Zones Initiative and Sustainable Communities Regional Planning grants that leverage federal resources to strengthen neighborhoods, cities, and regions by enhancing the capacity of local governments to develop and execute economic visions and strategies.

The SC2 Initiative was designed to pilot a new model of federal-local collaboration, leveraging federal investment across federal agencies in distressed cities. It offers a more flexible, targeted, tailored, and holistic approach to building local capacity in cities facing long-term challenges.¹ Four pilot programs make up the SC2 Initiative, including the Fellowship Pilot Placement Program,² the Community Solutions Teams,³ the Economic Visioning Challenge,⁴ and the National Resource Network.⁵ Both the Fellowship program and the Community Solutions Teams were focused on the original seven pilot cities: Chester, PA; Cleveland, OH; Detroit, MI; Fresno, CA; Memphis, TN; New Orleans, LA; and Youngstown, OH. In 2011, these cities were selected following an assessment process implemented by a team of HUD officials and consultants, with local mayoral support and participation. Since the program's announcement, a second round of cities was selected for CST work in 2014. **This evaluation focuses on the impact and influence of the Fellowship Pilot Program in the first round of pilot cities.**

This report is the collaborative effort of the SC2 Management Team to both document and assess the SC2 Fellowship Pilot Placement Program. The following evaluation questions are drawn from the program's objectives, both operational and strategic, and were identified by reviewing program documents, team discussions, and consultation with HUD.

1. *How did the fellowship contribute to the professional development goals of the fellow?*
2. *How did the fellowship facilitate peer-to-peer learning amongst the fellows?*
3. *How did the fellowship supplement capacity in the organization, city and/or community?*
4. *Toward the overall mission of SC2, is the fellowship program worth replicating? What aspects should continue and what should be adjusted or changed?*

The evaluation used a mixed-methods approach to track and assess the influence, impact, and experience of the fellows. Data were collected from a range of stakeholders at both the individual and group level.⁶ The evaluation

¹ U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, "Fellowship Placement Pilot Program Requests for Expressions of Interest To Administer Pilot," Federal Register 76, no. 71 (April 13, 2011): FR Doc. 2011-8782. <https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2011/04/13/2011-8782/fellowship-placement-pilot-program-requests-for-expressions-of-interest-to-administer-pilot>. Accessed March 25, 2015

² This is the official name of the fellowship program. Within this document we refer to the program as the "SC2 Fellowship Program."

³ Community Solutions Teams consisted of federal agency staff that also worked with the pilot cities to improve coordination among federal agencies, programs, and investments and better leverage existing resources and identify new opportunities, including philanthropic partnerships and investments.

⁴ The Economic Visioning Challenge selected four cities to work with the Economic Development Administration to produce bottom-up comprehensive economic development plans. See more at <http://www.eda.gov/challenges/sc2challenge/index.htm>

⁵ The National Resource Network provides further assistance to cities around the U.S. in the form of a one-stop portal for information and access to technical assistance. See more at <http://nationalresourcenetwork.org/en/home>

⁶ Local Project Managers, local partners, German Marshall Fund, Cleveland State University, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

design was developed at the beginning of the program, and informed the work during the duration of the program. More details about the evaluation approach and methodology are outlined in pages 9-14.

Key Lessons

Our overarching conclusion is that mid-career fellows can serve as important catalysts for helping change dysfunctional, outdated, and ineffective processes, programs, and systems that commonly plague distressed cities. Urban fellowship programs also sow the seeds for building the next generation of city and civic leaders committed to regenerating urban communities.

As documented throughout this assessment report, the SC2 Pilot Fellowship Program taught us important lessons about the many roles that mid-career professional can play in helping develop capacity within public and nonprofit organizations in distressed cities. We now know for example that:

- When the conditions are right (a good placement/match and a good project), mid-career fellows can serve as catalysts for change within public and nonprofit sector organizations. Many of these changes will have lasting impacts within the organizations and the community at large.
- Development of new capacities or the enhancement of existing capacities takes time to scale to have maximum impact—these placements must be thoughtful and strategic, with sufficient resources and political support above and below the fellows.
- Foundations (national and regional) played critical supporting roles in several of the SC2 fellowship placements and more generally in urban fellowships; and the principles of place-based urban policy interventions often aligns with their longstanding efforts to support place-based strategies that further the goals of “equitable” economic revitalization and community development.
- Urban fellowships, to have maximum impact, should be carefully coordinated and aligned with other public and nonprofit regeneration programs, policies, and initiatives within a particular place or community.
- Urban fellowship programs, whether housed in just one city or across a cohort of cities, can develop a range of different types of capacity in the short term and serve as catalysts for changing dysfunctional systems and organizational cultures; SC2 is one model of this emerging community of practice.

Moving Forward

The SC2 pilot has demonstrated that mid-career fellows placed in distressed cities can be an extremely effective part of a federal place-based urban policy agenda. Although the second round of SC2 cities will not have fellows, many of this report’s insights and observations are relevant for all federal agencies involved with existing or considering future urban fellowship programs and partnerships.

- *Engage federal agencies with existing and new urban fellowship programs.* We found that federal place-based policies can greatly benefit from sponsoring, coordinating, and working closely with mid-career fellows. Urban fellows directly affiliated with federal place-based initiatives garner special credibility that can support their own project work and further the overall goals of federal and local government place-based urban policies and initiatives—it opens doors that non-federal fellowship placements may not. The federal government should continue to support and sponsor urban fellowships programs and/or consider partnerships with existing urban fellowship programs in designated SC2 cities.
- *Develop a competitive RFP process for the placement of future fellows.* As critical ingredients to an effective fellowship program, the host city and agencies must have the right blend of political, financial, and managerial capacity and commitment to host a team of fellows. Once the cities are selected, the fellowship management team and federal partner (HUD, in this case) should work closely with the host cities to identify the right project and project managers, then help them select/recruit, and put support networks in place for the fellows. Devoting sufficient resources and time upfront will ensure the results will be more enduring and lasting.

- Align each fellow's project work closely with existing city priorities and/or federal place-based policy interventions. In preparing to host fellows, cities should perform a detailed assessment, such as asset mapping of existing place-based public and nonpublic initiatives and investments, so that the fellowship work is aligned with existing federal investments, such as the project work of the federal Community Solution Team members (CSTs).
- Consider the mid-career fellows to help implement and advance preliminary place-based work. For example, in the second round 2014 SC2 cities, the fellows could be deployed after the members of the CSTs have spent a year providing technical assistance or helping to launch priority city projects. This would help focus implementation and organizational change on the same issues or project, extending the short-term surge in capacity of the CSTs or SC2 Network TA teams. In turn, this could make longer-term change and meaningful regeneration much more likely.
- Organize the participating cities themselves into a problem-solving network that targets the issues shared within a cohort of 7-10 cities. The GMF boot camps and peer learning events serve as proof-of-concept and a model worth replicating. Similarly, developing a network comprised of fellows, their local project managers, CSTs, and their partners across a cohort of cities would enable greater opportunities for collaborative problem solving and exchange of policy and program innovations. The federal government should consider providing resources for fellows and LPMs to visit other cities to create more long lasting relationships.
- At a minimum, ensure that at least two fellows are assigned to each participating city. If feasible, deploy teams of fellows (2) to work in the same office to support one another and perhaps expedite the policy work. Each city could apply for 2 or 3 pairs of fellows. Placing fellowship pairs with the same organization can increase the likelihood of more enduring capacity and greater potential for organizational change.

Overview of the SC2 Fellowship Program

The SC2 Fellowship pilot program was funded by the Rockefeller Foundation through a grant to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Policy Development and Research. Recognizing that distressed cities need highly skilled professionals with technical expertise to help revitalize their local economies, yet lack resources and capacity to recruit and retain mid-level workers, the Fellowship program was designed to directly place and support skilled, mid-career professionals with a commitment to public service in each of the seven pilot cities. In all, 17 fellows were placed directly within city government or a related nongovernmental organization (NGO) for a 20- to 27-month period.⁷ Fellows were recruited and matched on the basis of the needs and projects identified by each pilot city, as well as their individual experience and expertise. Within these cities and public-sector organizations, the fellows dedicated their time to projects critical to creating sustained economic and social change.

Through a competitive RFP process, HUD selected a team to implement and manage the program. The management team is comprised of the German Marshall Fund of the United States (GMF), the Maxine Goodman Levin College of Urban Affairs at Cleveland State University (CSU), and the Metropolitan Institute at Virginia Polytechnic and State University (VT). The specific structure of the Fellowship program, as developed and implemented by the management team, built on the strengths and existing experience of the partner organizations. Each brought experience and assets that helped shape the program's core components and emergent activities. GMF served as the Management Team lead, while experts from VT and CSU provided mentorship support to each fellow. CSU also conducted the SC2 Management Academy, the fellowship program's training component.

The SC2 Management Team

GMF's Urban and Regional Policy Program led the SC2 Management Team, leading the recruitment, selection, and placement of the fellows. GMF was responsible for the program management, operations, and budget; and served as the point of contact with HUD and the White House SC2 Council. GMF also coordinated the professional development activities, funds, and supplemental leadership activities (Boot camps and peer learning exchanges) that were supported through a grant from the Surdna Foundation. In addition, GMF offered several fellows an opportunity to participate in its Cities in Transition Network.

CSU led the SC2 Management Academy, the training component of the program. The Academy consisted of a comprehensive management and leadership development curriculum, led by experienced practitioners and faculty from CSU's Maxine Goodman Levin College of Urban Affairs and other participating institutions. CSU adapted the format from its Public Management program for the SC2 fellowship program. The Levin College's Center for Community Planning and Development provided mentor support for the fellows, along with research and technical assistance.

Metropolitan Institute at Virginia Tech also provided mentor support for the fellows, and led the research and evaluation process. The MI staff leveraged their role as researchers to convene a symposium on urban fellowships, which is detailed in the Evaluation Purpose and Approach section.

The evaluation team was comprised of three internal evaluators, one from CSU and two from Virginia Tech (VT). VT, as the lead for evaluation, was responsible for ensuring the confidentiality and consistency with human-subjects-research standards. The evaluation report includes reflections from the current SC2 Management Team. It is important to note that two of the evaluators served dual program roles, acting as both evaluator and mentor to the fellows. The primary purpose of the Evaluation Team was to develop data collection instruments, lead data analysis,

⁷ Seven fellows secured extensions for an additional three months from September 2014, the original end date, through November 2014. Extensions were awarded on a competitive basis to enable fellows to complete their projects and ensure a proper transition.

pull together data inputs, research relevant academic and practice literature, and develop and manage the collaborative evaluation report process.

Initiative Structure

Department of Housing and Urban Development

The Department of Housing and Urban Development developed the RFP for the SC2 Fellowship Program, and administered the program through a \$2.5 million grant from the Rockefeller Foundation. A project officer at HUD was kept apprised of the Management Team's activities through quarterly reporting; was involved in larger, political decisions faced by the Management Team; and carried out other grant administration tasks.

Community Solutions Team

Each participating city was assigned a federal SC2 Community Solutions Team, comprised of employees from participating federal agencies, deployed to work closely with city leadership for 12 to 24 months to support the city's strategic and economic development priorities.⁸

City

The pilot city's mayor or other city officials and staff played important roles in setting priorities for the SC2 Fellow(s), collaborating with the CSTs, and engaging with the fellows and the fellowship programs. For example, the mayors of Fresno, Youngstown, Chester, and Memphis participated in the local fellowship academies hosted in their cities by their SC2 fellows.

Local Partners

Each fellow's work was supported by diverse partners and local stakeholders, ranging from businesses to community organizations to citizens. In Detroit, Chester, and Fresno, these local partners were critical to the city's participation in the Fellowship Program. This is detailed in "Operationalizing the SC2 Fellowship Program."

Program Structure

Fellows

Each pilot city agreed to take between one and four fellows to supplement capacity for specific projects. Fellows functioned as independent contractors and were not considered employees of their host organization; they reported both to their Local Project Manager and to the SC2 Management Team. Originally conceived as a two-year placement, the actual fellow placements ranged from 20 to 27 months because some fellows left early, while others requested extensions.

Host Organizations

Although in most cases, fellows were placed within city government, some fellows were placed outside the city in relevant nonprofit organizations, in response to the local context and content of their projects.

Local Project Managers

Each SC2 fellow had a local project manager (LPM) onsite who was a full-time employee of the host city or organization, and who guided the fellow's day-to-day work and coordinated with the SC2 Fellowship Management Team.

Mentors

Each fellow was assigned a mentor from either Virginia Tech or Cleveland State University.⁹ Mentors convened

⁸ See evaluation report on the CST works from the first round of SC2 cities commissioned by HUD, at <http://www.huduser.org/portal/sc2/FinalReport.html>

⁹ CSU: Cleveland, Detroit, Chester, Youngstown; VT: Memphis, New Orleans, Fresno

regular phone calls with the fellows in each city to provide ongoing support for the fellows' work and professional development. Mentors also connected fellows with national experts and practitioners on policy and management issues, and with local partner organizations and resources. The mentors' professional networks and subject matter expertise gave fellows opportunities to learn from one another, as well as from colleagues working in a broader range of cities in the U.S. and abroad, while exposing them to new approaches and out-of-the-box thinking.

Projects

Each fellow was responsible for completing at least one long-term project identified by the city to enhance capacity in an area critical to its economic revitalization. Several fellows also performed smaller, supplemental projects throughout the course of the fellowship.

Management Academy

CSU adapted its nationally recognized Public Management Academy to the fellowship program. Training sessions were provided in project management, professional development, and leadership skills. The training supported the fellows in their project work, promoted their awareness that they were a cohort, and enabled them to build networks. SC2 Management Academies were held quarterly in each of the seven cities, and were attended by all fellows in fulfillment of their contracts, along with members of the Management Team. An important part of each academy was a tour and discussions with local leaders. These local sessions were organized by the local fellows to enhance the entire fellowship cohort's understanding about pressing urban policy issues and innovative practices in participating cities. The SC2 management team also held several "mentoring sessions" at the academies to address program issues and guide the fellows through critical transitions.

Professional Development Funds

Each fellow could draw on up to \$2,000 over the two years of the program to use for supplemental networking, professional development, and training opportunities. The funds were made available upon request to ensure they were used for activities that assisted the fellows and their projects. To access these funds, fellow were asked to submit short proposals, including a budget, detailing the proposed use of the funds. In the proposals, fellows were asked to describe the activity, its relevance to their project(s), and its potential impact on their projects. To access the funds, the fellows had to be current on all fellowship requirements and in good standing with their Local Project Manager.

Supplemental Leadership Activities¹⁰

GMF received a grant from the Surdna Foundation to further support the fellows' projects and expand the impact of the SC2 Fellowship Program, by connecting a broader range of city and civic leaders for training and mentoring. The engagement of a community of professionals and citizens in the SC2 program increased the likelihood that the capacity-building work of the fellows would have a long-lasting impact on the economic futures of the SC2 cities.

Three major activities were included in the Leadership Initiative:

1. City Bootcamps: a targeted multi-day workshop series offered in each SC2 city to build local networks and increase capacity of local economic and community development practitioners.
2. Peer Exchanges: an opportunity for peer-to-peer learning on selected topics. These exchanges can occur between SC2 cities or other cities in the GMF network.
3. Leadership Forum: a national meeting that occurred in April 2014 for the SC2 fellows, local project managers, and key leaders from each city to share knowledge and discuss the City Bootcamps, Peer Exchanges, and other resources related to the SC2 program.

¹⁰ See GMF's report on the SC2 Leadership Activities for additional details and impacts, at <http://www.gmfus.org/publications/strong-cities-strong-communities-leadership-activities-report-2013-2014>

Evaluation Purpose and Approach

The evaluation assesses the contributions of the fellows to their cities and tests this pilot program's underlying premise that placing mid-career professionals in distressed cities for two years can accelerate priority projects that will improve economic opportunity and quality of life.

In addition to the overall objective of building or adding capacity in participating cities, the program also sought to provide opportunities for professional development, network building, and peer-to-peer learning for the fellows. Each objective is evaluated in terms of program design and performance. The evaluation also broadly assesses the program's accomplishments and challenges, strengths and weaknesses. It identifies the successful elements and the lessons learned that could be used in the design of similar urban fellowship programs, and/or in replicating this particular program in future rounds of SC2 cities.

The heterogeneity of the fellow placements in terms of geography, host organization, and project work is a strength of the program, but also posed a key challenge for the evaluation. Generating a set of universal metrics was difficult, but this very difficult also made the case for how important it is to account for context when collecting, analyzing, and reporting data. Another evaluation challenge, given limited funding, was a provision in the original request for proposals that required an internal evaluation. This meant that the Management Team was also the evaluator. As internal evaluators guided by goals of merit and continuous project improvement, the Management Team was well positioned to capture the diversity of placements and design the evaluation to maximize strategic learning.

"Evaluation for strategic learning...assumes that strategic decisions are never made outside of a context, so 'controlling for context' only occasionally returns useful information for strategy. This means that evaluative inquiry for strategic learning isn't only answering questions about the client's actions. It may be answering questions about the shifting environment, other drivers in the system, and leverage points beyond the reach of the organizations at the table."¹¹

Methodology

Evaluation Questions

The evaluation is focused on four core objectives: supplementing local capacity, facilitating professional development, expanding and building networks and engaging in peer-to-peer learning. Based on the goals and objectives set forth for by the SC2 program,¹² the evaluation team developed these four questions, later reviewed and refined by the SC2 Management Team members, as well as HUD's Fellowship Program Officer.

1. *How did the fellowship contribute to the professional development goals of the fellow? What will the fellows take away from their experience in building their professional skills and laying the foundation for a career in public service?*
2. *How did the fellowship facilitate peer-to-peer learning and networks among the fellows? What were the barriers? What worked best?*
3. *How did the fellowship supplement capacity in the organization, and how "sticky" was it? Did the project contribute to an operational or dynamic priority of the city and was a mechanism put in place to sustain the work post-fellowship? If so, how and in what ways?*

¹¹ Julia Coffman and Tanya, *Evaluation to Support Strategic Learning: Principles and Practices* (Washington, DC: Center for Evaluation Innovation, June 2011), 4. At <http://www.evaluationinnovation.org/publications/evaluation-support-strategic-learning-principles-and-practices>

¹² These documents include HUD's Request for Proposal, the formal proposal from GMF, CSU, and VT, and the partnership contract between HUD and GMF.

4. *Toward the overall mission of SC2, is the fellowship program worth replicating? If yes, then what aspects should continue and what aspects should be adjusted or changed?*

Research and Evaluation

The SC2 Fellowship Placement Pilot Program is one of a number of relatively new urban fellowship programs. These programs represent an emerging model of policy interventions to benefit cities; thus, we found very little extant evaluation measuring impact or research demonstrating best practices. We believe this evaluation breaks some new ground in this regard; however the SC2 program focused on capacity building so we were able to draw on relevant literature about capacity building.

Capacity

Research on capacity and capacity building was conducted to develop the framework that is used in the section of this report on how urban fellows have contributed to capacity (pages 38-55). As capacity building was a primary objective for the program, unpacking these terms was critical to understanding the impact and influence the fellows had through their placements and project work. It provides a shared language for answering several of the evaluation questions and helps to explain the ways in which the fellowship program supplemented existing local capacity.

Symposium of Urban Fellowship Programs

The SC2 Management Team, led by the Metropolitan Institute at Virginia Tech, also hosted a two-day symposium focused on the promise and practice of urban fellowships (November 6-7, 2014).¹³ Discussions at the event examined how early- or mid-career urban professionals can be a catalyst for regeneration, innovation, and talent cultivation in cities. The event convened directors and managers, fellows, and local hosts and sponsors from four field and service urban fellowship programs: SC2 Fellowship Program, Detroit Revitalization Fellows Program (DRF), Capital City Fellows Program, and the Center for Urban Redevelopment Excellence (CUREx).¹⁴ Day One of the symposium began with an overview of the landscape of urban fellowships, with a focus on the four programs represented at the meeting, and then moved to elements common to designing and operating a fellowship program, such as placement, building support systems, and measuring impact. The second day explored broader themes critical to taking urban fellowship programs to scale.¹⁵ The dynamic exchanges among participants from the four fellowship programs provided the evaluation team with important comparative insights into the structure, operation, and impact of the SC2 fellowship program.

This event helped situate the SC2 Fellowship Pilot Placement Program within an emerging community of practice around urban fellowship. In fact, the symposium established a legacy relationship between the CUREx program and the SC2 and DRF: lessons learned during the three years of CUREx shaped and influenced these subsequent programs. Overall, the symposium yielded insight into how the SC2 Fellowship Program could best fulfill its promise as part of a portfolio of place-based federal policy interventions.

¹³ See <http://www.promiseofurbanfellows.com/> for more information and insights from the speakers and participants in the Urban Fellowship Symposium.

¹⁴ The Center for Urban Redevelopment Excellence at the University of Pennsylvania existed from 2003 to 2006, with major support from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation. See evaluation and assessment of the CUREx fellowship at <http://www.knightfoundation.org/publications/urban-fellows-gain-experience-and-knowledge-best-p>

¹⁵ Katy Locker, "Urban Fellowship Fosters Leaders to Move Cities Forward," *Knight blog*, Nov. 18, 2014. At <http://www.knightfoundation.org/blogs/knightblog/2014/11/18/urban-fellowships-foster-leaders-move-cities-forward/>. Accessed Mar. 26, 2015.

Data Collection

Evaluation Tools

Surveys

Interim December/January 2014 - Administered to both fellows and Local Project Managers (LPMs), the interim survey was organized around five program elements: application and orientation, professional development, projects, inputs, and placements. The survey included a mix of open-ended, Likert, and multiple-choice questions.

Exit October/November 2014 - Administered to fellows at the conclusion of the fellowship program, this survey uses some of the same questions from the first survey, but expands to include questions about the fellows' transition and the organizational structure, culture, and capacity of their host organizations. The survey included a mix of open-ended, Likert, and multiple-choice questions.

Both the interim and exit surveys included Likert questions on a 10-point sliding scale, allowing fellows to rate with a greater level of detail. Throughout the report, we pair verbal and exact numerical values for the fellows' responses for the Likert-based questions with the 10-point sliding scale (0-Very Satisfied, 10-Very Dissatisfied). For example, we might say, *“very satisfied to satisfied”* (1.22) or *“dissatisfied to very dissatisfied”* (8.67).

Management Academy Survey - Summer 2014 – Survey was administered by CSU at the conclusion of the last final Management Academy session. It asked the fellows to consider and reflect on the Academy as an integrated (single) program. The response rate to this final survey was low, although we can supplement its findings with the results of the individual surveys administered at the conclusion of each management academy session. The response rates for these individual sessions was 100 percent. The results are presented in the “Professional Development and Peer-to-Peer Learning” section of this report.

Interviews

The evaluation team conducted a series of interviews, primarily with each fellow and most of their Local Project Managers (LPMs), at the conclusion of the Fellowship Program. We developed a list of critical questions focused on the impact and influence of the fellows and their work. Mentors conducted the interviews with fellows, LPMs and a few local stakeholders identified by fellows. Interviews were conducted in January 2014, August/September 2014, and November 2014, depending on the transition schedule of the fellow.

Stakeholder Inventory

Fellows completed two inventories—one at the end of year one (September 2013) and at the end of their fellowships (July—September 2014). These exercises identify the relationships and ties that each fellow built in their placement cities over the course of completing their project work, as well as their connections to the other fellows and Management Team. The inventory was used to document the reach and range of partnerships present in the fellows' work, both internal to the organization and external to it. The inventory exercise also uncovered and provided a benchmark for the connectivity and strength of the fellowship cohort.

Focus Groups

Pre-Academy Focus Groups/Interviews

Detroit – April 2013

Informal focus group discussion with four Detroit fellows focused on challenges they were currently facing, the traits and attributes important for fellows, and the importance of local champions for their work.

Chester – August 2013

Informal one-on-one discussions were held with each of the Chester fellows. These discussions focused broadly on their work and the challenges they faced in their placement.

Academy Focus Groups

New Orleans, January 2013

The fellows offered feedback as a group on the first six months of the fellowship program.

Detroit, April 2013

The evaluation team divided fellows into four groups to discuss strategies for identifying, recruiting, and engaging partners to support their project work, both from within and outside of their local host department, agency, or organization. Fellows engaged in collaborative problem solving and troubleshooting for each other's projects.

Fresno, January 2014

The valuation team divided fellows into four topical groups to discuss their projects, major successes, and key challenges, with an eye towards preparing the fellows for transitioning their projects at the end of their fellowships.

Cleveland, April 2014

Two facilitated and interactive discussions took place in Cleveland. The first discussion was led by the evaluation team, focusing on capacity building and how the fellows' projects fit into the framework. The second discussion was led by a Management Academy facilitator, and focused on SWOT (Strengths/Weaknesses/Opportunities/Threats) analysis of the program.

Mentor Site Visits

Beyond meeting with fellows before or during the scheduled academies, the mentors also made site visits to their respective cities to meet with the fellows (often as a cohort) and also with the individual fellows and their LPMs. These took place in New Orleans (December 2012 and 2013), Memphis (April 2013), Fresno (December 2012 and 2013, and Chester (September 2013). Given the close proximity, the Cleveland Fellows met quarterly with their mentor.

The mentors also made site visits to mark the end of the fellowship program (September/October 2014) and provide the fellows with the opportunity to make a final presentation to city and community stakeholders (not all fellows participated in this activity, given the timing of the transitions). These final visits had a celebratory and reunion aspect as well, giving the mentors one last opportunity to meet with the fellows and their LPMs and also hear feedback from the many community and city stakeholders touched by the fellows throughout their placement and project work.

Management Team Reporting

HUD Quarterly Reports

As part of HUD grant reporting procedures, the SC2 Management Team led by GMF submitted quarterly reports on the activities, challenges, and milestones over the duration of the grant.

Year 1 Internal Evaluation Memo

Compiled into a formal memo to the White House Council on Strong Cities, Strong Communities, the SC2 Fellowship Management Team provide an internal assessment as of May 31, 2013. In this memo, the Team outlined what worked well, what could be improved, and recommendations for the future in the event that a second round of the fellowship program would be pursued.

Fellows' Reports, Requests and Work Products

Year 1 Report, September 2013

A report generated by each fellow and LPM reflected on the first year's accomplishments/milestones, identified challenges encountered, and recommended changes to project goals or team.

Final Report, September 2014

As a capstone to the SC2 Management Academy, each fellow completed a final report documenting project accomplishments, challenges, and a transition plan, as well as reflections on how their project supplemented capacity to the city.

Professional Development Requests

The short proposals that fellows were asked to submit to gain access to the Surdna-sponsored professional development funds describe their proposed activity, its relevance to their project, and the possible impact of the proposed activity on their project work. These documents also offer information about the range of professional development activities fellows pursued with these funds.

Data Analysis

A mixed-method approach was taken to analyze the several sources of data. The methods are outlined in the summary table on the next page, along with other inputs relevant to the evaluation question.

Methods Summary Table

How did the fellowship contribute to the professional development goals of the fellow? What will the fellows take away from their experiences in building their professional skills and laying the foundation for a career in public service?	
Data Inputs	Data Analysis
Surveys, interviews, focus groups, professional development requests, and final report.	Tabulation of quantifiable survey responses; transcription and open coding of interviews, qualitative survey responses.
How did the fellowship facilitate peer-to-peer learning and networks among the fellows and the cities? What were the barriers? What worked best?	
Data Inputs	Data Analysis
Surveys, interviews, stakeholder inventories	Transcription and open coding of interviews, qualitative survey responses; basic network mapping conducted on stakeholder inventories.
How did the fellowship supplement capacity in the organization, and how “sticky” was it? Did the project contribute to developing the capacity (operational or dynamic) of the city, and was a mechanism put in place to sustain the work after the fellowship concluded? If so, how and in what ways?	
Data Inputs	Data Analysis
Research, surveys, interviews, stakeholder inventories, Year 1 Report, Final Report.	Research conducted as outlined in the Methodology section. Transcription of interviews, relevant survey data.
Toward the overall mission of SC2, is the fellowship program worth replicating? If yes, then what aspect should continue and what aspects should be adjusted or changed?	
Data Inputs	Data Analysis
Surveys, Interviews, Focus Groups, SWOT analysis, Quarterly Reports, Year 1 Internal Evaluation Memo.	Transcription and open coding of interviews, focus groups, Fellows SWOT Analysis, Quarterly Reports, Year 1 Evaluation Memo.