# SOUTH SACRAMENTO HUB SUSTAINABILITY PLANNING PROJECT REPORT

Prepared for:

**The South Sacramento Building Healthy Communities Initiative**

**The California Endowment**

*March 2018*

Prepared by:

Dale Ainsworth, PhD, MSOD

Table of Contents

## List of Tables

## List of Figures

**Acknowledgements**

The author and project consultant thanks everyone that so generously gave his or her time and wisdom to this planning effort. This includes the members of the South Sacramento HUB Planning Committee, the members of the South Sacramento Building Healthy Communities Leadership Team, the local area funders that participated in multiple interviews, the members of the Youth Engagement Action Team and community residents that participated in focus groups, and all of the grantees that freely offered their insights to assure the efforts of the HUB continue. Last, the author wishes to acknowledge the dedication and passion of the California Endowment and HUB staff, which have and continue to work tirelessly to help build a healthy community in South Sacramento.

**Introduction and Purpose of Planning Project**

The California Endowment's (TCE) Building Healthy Communities (BHC) 10-year comprehensive community initiative was launched in 2010. As the end of the 10-year effort comes more clearly into focus, the South Sacramento HUB[1] began developing a sustainability plan to serve as a roadmap for continuation of the BHC after the initial 10-year funding period comes to a close. This report details the development of a sustainability plan and recommends steps to begin implementing that plan. The planning period covered approximately one year.

The report details the objectives of the sustainability plan effort, and describes the methods used to conduct the planning. In doing so it details the findings and conclusions that were uncovered throughout the planning process and closes with recommendations to begin the next step in implementing the sustainability plan.

The stated objective of this project was "…to develop a sustainability plan that can be used to launch the HUB into its next chapter after TCE funding and support changes/dissolves or is withdrawn."

**Planning Process**

**A Participatory Process**

A participatory planning process was used to develop the plan. To engage stakeholders throughout the BHC in the planning process several efforts were taken. First, a committee was formed that became the primary advisory group that guided the planning process. Members were selected as representatives of the multiple stakeholders engaged across the broad spectrum of the BHC. Second, multiple groups were engaged to provide information and feedback at various decision points in the planning process. These groups included the BHC South Sacramento Leadership Team, local area funders, all-grantees of the BHC effort, and the Youth Engagement Action Team.

**Planning Process**

A framework for planning was developed and served as a useful guide to lead the various planning groups through a rigorous and credible process. The framework was fashioned by integrating key features of two well-known planning frameworks – SWOT analysis and the *Enterprise Scheme*[2] (the full Enterprise Scheme framework can be found in Appendix A). SWOT analysis is a part of a strategic planning process that examines an organization's strength, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Based on the results of the analysis, organizations can make informed planning decisions. An Enterprise Scheme is a framework for understanding how a nonprofit organization can meet its stakeholder's needs and accomplish its mission in a self-sustaining way. These planning frameworks were integrated into one, and this is displayed in Figure 1. In essence, this framework follows the flow of helping an organization determine its unique competences, and how these may match needs in the community (this is addressed in the "where are we now phase"). After an organization understands these it can determine what its basic mission will be, and where the organization can deliver services in a broader geographic area (described in the "where do we want to go?" phase). Following, an organization can develop an implementation plan that moves it into the realization of its mission. These phases are displayed in Figure 1.

---

[1] The South Sacramento HUB is an organization set up to serve as the "back bone" agency for the South Sacramento Building Health Communities initiative.

[2] Bryson, J. M., Gibbons, M. J., & Shaye, G. (Spring 2001). *Enterprise schemes for nonprofit survival, growth, and effectiveness. Nonprofit Management & Leadership, 11*:3, 271-288.)

- Internal analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses)
- External analysis (Opprtunities, Threats)

**Where are we now?**

**Where do we want to go?**

- What is the mission of the HUB?
- Where will the HUB function?

- What are the next steps?
- Who will lead the transition?

**How will we get there?**
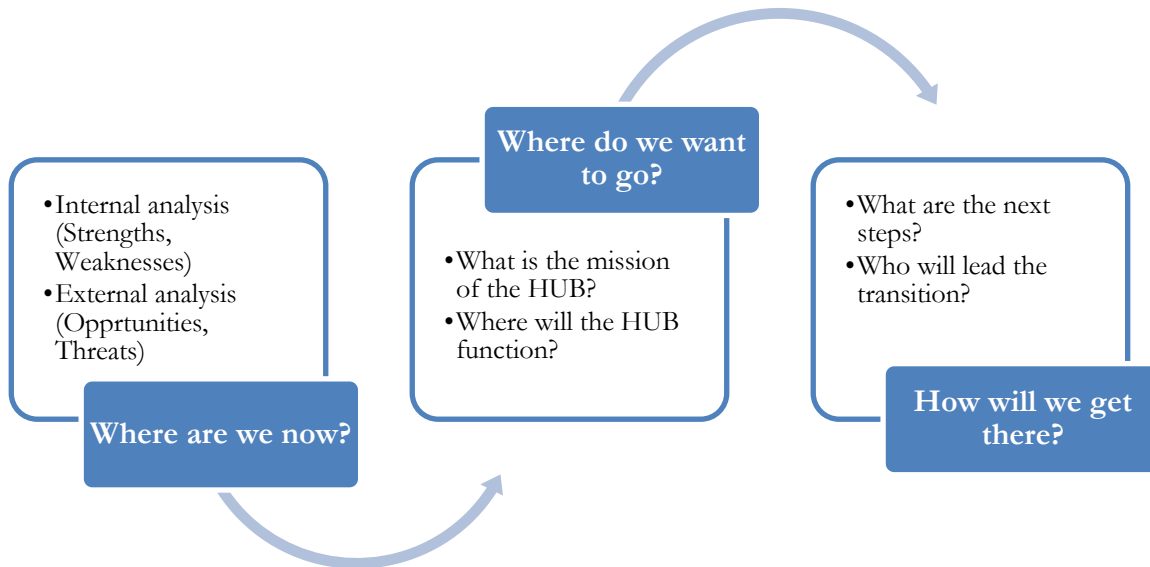
Figure 1: Planning Framework

**Sustainability—What it is and what is being Sustained?**

Sustainability, or continuance, for a nonprofit organization is attained when that organization can match its unique strengths and capabilities with both community needs and funding priorities. The intersection of these forces can be described as the "sweet spot" of sustainability and is depicted in Figure 2.



**Organization Strengths & Capabilities?**

**Unmet Community Needs**

**Funding Priorities**

**Sustainability**

Figure 2: Sustainability model – matching needs, capabilities, with funding priorities

Before planning could commence, an important question was addressed pertaining to the HUB's basic mission, and the manner in which it operates to fulfill the mission. To address this and reduce any ambiguity in the HUB's basic functions, two steps were taken. First, a facilitated discussion was held with HUB's Leadership Team to more clearly articulate the HUB's basic functions. Second, all grantees were surveyed to better enhance clarity of the HUB's basic mission and functions. (The survey is discussed later in this report and can be seen in Appendix B). The results of these two steps helped to further clarify the HUB's mission and core activities, which are listed below. In short, it was determined that the HUB:

❖ Convenes and provides space (physical and conceptual) for community building in the BHC
❖ Provides information to the community on key issues impacting the South Sacramento BHC
❖ Holds the vision of the BHC through branding, marketing, and related communication efforts
❖ Offers resources to grantees (e.g. media, marketing, mini grants)
❖ Coordinates BHC efforts with other initiatives in the South Sacramento area
❖ Provides administrative support services to Action Teams

## Information Gathering and Sense-Making

Information that was needed to support the planning process was collected from a number of sources. These are detailed in Table 1.

Table 1: Methods of data collection and details for the BHC sustainability planning Process

| Stakeholder Group | Method of Data Collection | Details |
|---|---|---|
| All Grantees | On-line Survey | Survey distributed to 52 grantees, with a 56% response rate (see Appendix B) |
| Key Informant Interviews | Semi-structured interviews with 9 area and/or state-wide funders | Interview questions and interviewees listed in Appendix C |
| Focus Groups | Focus groups conducted with 2 youth groups and 1 community resident group | Interview questions can be found in Appendix D |
| Literature Review | Conducted literature review to identify best practices in nonprofit sustainability and trends impacting nonprofit organizations | Results of literature review are described later in this report. The bibliography can be found in Appendix E. |

Results of these data collection efforts were compiled and analyzed, and then developed into a set of preliminary planning questions. These were presented to various groups for discussion and "member checking."[3] Working in an iterative fashion, the results of these feedback sessions informed subsequent actions and steps taken in the planning process. These groups included the Planning Steering Committee, the BHC Leadership Team, and all grantees of the BHC. Further, the results of these data collection efforts and analyses are described in the pages that follow.

## Results – Making Sense of Information Gathered

A summary of the key findings derived from the information collected is presented below. These findings are organized using the SWOT analysis framework described earlier in this report.

**Where are we now? (Strengths and Weaknesses)**

*What are the HUB's Strengths?*
Table 2 summarizes findings from the all grantee survey, funder interviews, and focus groups that addressed the question, "What are the HUB's strengths?" In all, seven strengths were identified. Table 2 displays the identified strength, and the source of information from which the strength was identified. Strengths that were identified across two or three of the groups can be seen as widely recognized strengths, and these are displayed in bold type.

---

[3] "Member checking" is a qualitative research technique used by researchers to validate research findings and improve the accuracy and credibility of a research study.

Table 2: HUB Strengths—Main themes from all grantee survey, funder interviews, and focus group

| Strengths | All Grantee Survey | Funder Interviews | Focus Groups |
|---|:---:|:---:|:---:|
| **Convenes, mobilizes, connects, coordinates** | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| **Advocacy for policy change** | ✓ |  | ✓ |
| **Strong brand (TCE)** | ✓ | ✓ |  |
| **Strong staff** | ✓ | ✓ |  |
| Displays character, courage, values | ✓ |  |  |
| Supports, provides resources | ✓ |  |  |
| Invest in youth |  |  | ✓ |

*Where are the areas in which the HUB could improve, where are the HUB's opportunities for Improvement?*
Table 3 summaries findings from all sources that answer the question, "In what areas could the HUB improve, where are the HUB's opportunities for improvement?" The table is organized similar to Table 1 in that it displays five areas identified by stakeholders as opportunities for the HUB to further enhance its capabilities.

Table 3: HUB Opportunities for Improvement – Main themes from all grantee survey, funder interviews, and focus groups

| Area for Improvement | All Grantee Survey | Funder Interviews | Focus Groups |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Goal Clarity – Be clearer about what you are trying to accomplish** | ✓ | ✓ |  |
| **Communication to external stakeholders and community** | News about upcoming events, goals, accomplishments | "What programs exist that can be sustained?" | Visibility, marketing |
|  |  | Tell your story, successes and failures | Schools don't know enough about HUB |
|  |  | Stop working in isolation, reach out to other funders for partnerships | Work more with City (Sacramento) |
| **Healthcare** | Expand healthcare access & coverage | Improve relationships with healthcare systems |  |
| Resident Engagement | Increase resident engagement |  |  |
| **Focus or core strategy** | Narrow focus, expand capacity |  | No school presence |

## Where do we want to go? Opportunities and Threats

*What opportunities exist for the HUB? What additional services are needed in the community?*
In keeping with the SWOT analysis framework, HUB stakeholders were asked to identify areas of opportunity for the HUB, as well as the services most needed in the Sacramento community. In general respondents identified three broad areas in which the HUB could focus on in the future. These are depicted in the figure below.

Move beyond existing boundaries

Develop, deepen relationships with other community organizations

Develop relationships with other funders (including healthcare systems) now for post 2020
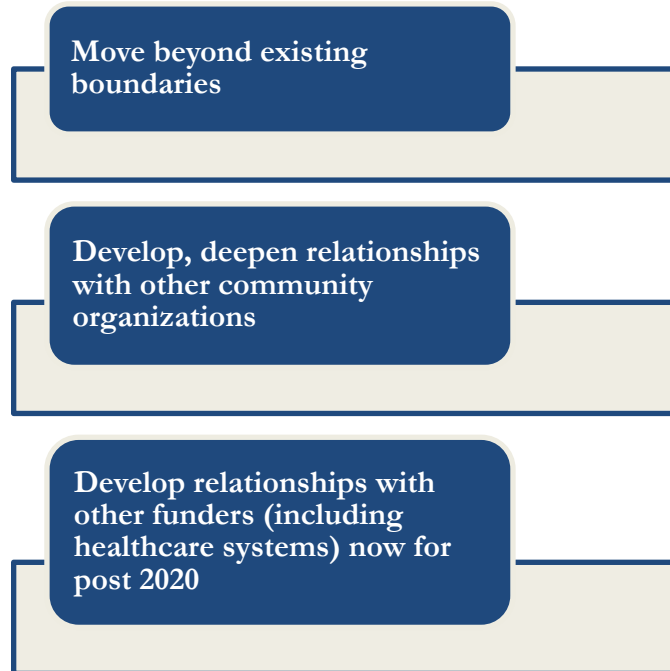
Figure 3: Broad areas of opportunity for the HUB

Further, stakeholders were asked to identify nonprofit services most needed in the Greater Sacramento Community. The following displays those services that were identified. The list is not ranked; however, those highlighted in bold were most consistently mentioned by stakeholders.

| **Mental Health** | **Affordable Housing** | **Equity** | Homelessness |
|---|---|---|---|
| Civic Engagement | Power Building | Policy Change | Youth Development |
| Economic Development | Access to Healthcare | Foster Care | LGTBQ |
| | Food Distribution | | |

Figure 4: Services needed in the Greater Sacramento Community

*What are the emerging trends impacting the nonprofit sector, and nonprofit organizations?*
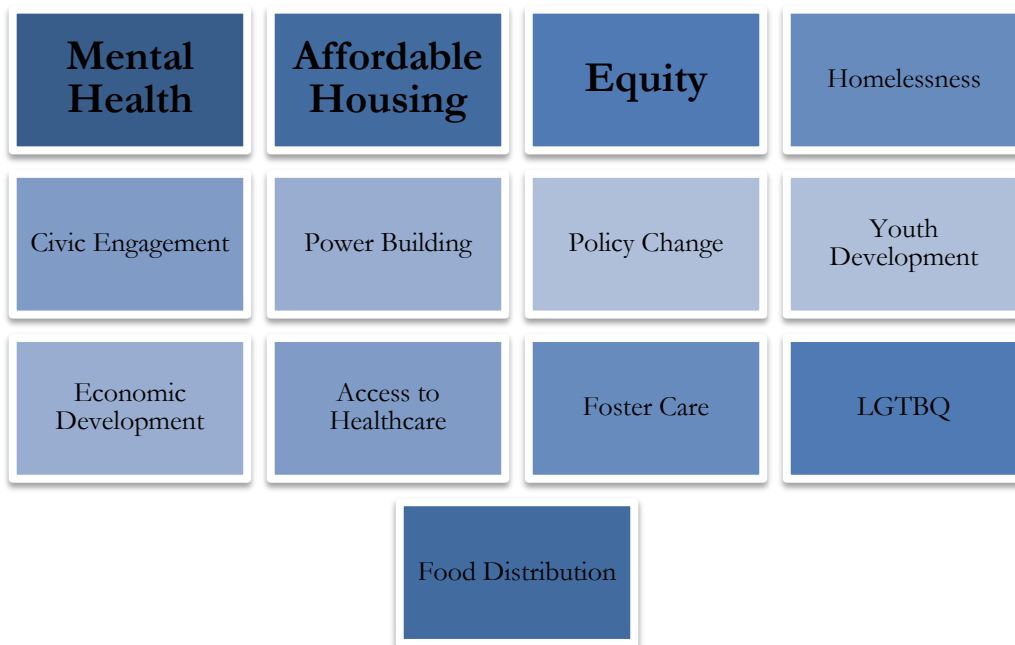Stakeholders were asked to identify emerging trends in the nonprofit sector that could impact the sector. Further, a literature review was conducted to identify trends in addition to those noted by stakeholders. The list below summarizes those identified from both sources.

❖ Nonprofits are becoming more "business-like" and "entrepreneurial"
❖ Sustainability as defined as viewing programs through an economic lens
❖ Adopting a more competitive mindset
❖ Focusing on efficiencies and best practices
❖ Expanding, diversifying funding portfolio (seeking revenue among multiple funding sources)
❖ Becoming "market oriented" where the funder is viewed as the customer
❖ Donors will make larger awards to fewer charities
❖ Funders are demanding evidence-based programs that can demonstrate impact
❖ Funders are moving "upstream" toward prevention, i.e., social determinants (especially in health)
❖ Demand for nonprofit services continues to grow in predominantly four areas:
  o Housing
  o Youth development
  o Jobs
  o Healthcare

Further, both the literature and key stakeholders noted that technology continues to shape the nonprofit sector and provides both enormous potential and vulnerability to organizations. Specific areas where technology continues to mold the sector include:

❖ Fundraising
❖ Data collection (using technology to demonstrate impact)
❖ Marketing and communications
❖ Networking
❖ Collaborating

**Where do we want to go? Narrowing Focus**
After summarizing the information gather in the first phase of planning, these questions emerged and guided the second phase of the project.

  **Mission** – What will the HUB do?
  **Geography** – In what community or communities will the HUB focus its efforts?
  **Issue areas** – What specific issue areas should the HUB focus on?
  **When** – When will the plan be implemented?
  **Decision-making process** – Who or what group will engage in sustainability decision-making?

To answer these questions three groups were engaged: 1) all grantees, 2) the Leadership Team, and 3) the planning committee. A set of discussion questions was developed and used to solicit feedback from each group. Both the Leadership Team and planning committee met and discussed each topic. To engage grantees, the questions were used to guide facilitated discussions at an all-grantee meeting. At the meeting grantees sat at tables of approximately 5-7. Each table was given the discussion questions and one member recorded each groups' responses on a flip chart. Responses were reviewed and summarized. A summary follows each question below. Specific comments made at each table can be found in Appendix F.

*Question 1: Mission*
"Based on information gathered through the survey and interviews with community stakeholders, the HUB is viewed as a networking, convening, coordinating, and mobilizing entity that engages communities and resources to affect large-scale community change.

★ In your opinion, does this represent the mission the HUB should embrace beyond the 10-year funding period?

★ If not, what suggestions do you have for the HUB as it considers its mission and goals for the long-term future?"

Table 4: Summary of all-grantee meeting table discussions regarding HUB's mission

| In your opinion, does this represent the mission the HUB should embrace beyond the 10-year funding period? | If not, what suggestions do you have for the HUB as it considers its mission and goals for the long-term future? |
|---|---|
| Yes!!!!! (Strong consensus) | Focus language more; answer the question "to what end?" |
| | Be clearer about goals, what the focus of the HUB is? |
| | Stay focused on collective impact |
| | Include "how to" in mission statement |
| | HUB is an "airport", planes can fly on their own, but need coordination support to make large-scale, collective impact type change |

*Question 2: Focus Area(s)*

"In both surveys and interviews some suggested that the HUB should expand its focus to move beyond the South Sacramento area of focus. In your opinion…

★ Should the HUB expand its area of focus to include other communities in the Greater Sacramento area?

★ If so, what communities would you suggest the HUB focus on in addition to South Sacramento?"

Table 5: Summary of all-grantee meeting table discussions regarding HUB's focus areas

| Should the HUB expand its area of focus to include other communities in the greater Sacramento area? | If so, what communities would you suggest the HUB focus on in addition to South Sacramento? |
|---|---|
| **Yes;** systems change requires multi-community approach | Del Paso Heights, Citrus Heights, North Highlands |
| **Yes;** but only after success in S. Sacramento | |
| **Yes;** create a HUB in other areas of need. | |
| **Yes;** remove boundaries of existing area and expand as needed. | |
| **Maybe;** is all of S. Sac being served? | Conduct another assessment, then determine where to move |
| **No;** but only no if HUB becomes a competitor | Focus on low-hanging fruit |

*Question 2: Focus Area(s) (continued)*

"The HUB currently focuses on 4 main issue areas: 1) Food, 2) Access to Healthcare, 3) Land Use, and 4) Youth. In your opinion…

★ What are the pros and cons of focusing only on these four areas?

★ Should the HUB shift its focus? If so, to what?"

Table 6: Summary of all-grantee meeting table discussion regarding focus areas

| What are the pros and cons of focusing only on these four areas? | Should the HUB shift its focus? If so, to what? |
|---|---|
| **Pros**<br>• Focused<br>• Developed wealth of knowledge in these areas<br>• Many of these are inter-connected<br>• Continuity, developing reputation in these areas | • Economic development<br>• Employment/jobs<br>• Education<br>• Equity<br>• Other issues that lead to existing focus areas |
| | Conduct assessment to determine additional focus areas |
| **Cons**<br>• Limiting | Add areas that are complimentary and easily expanded into |

*Question 3: Transition Planning*
"What are important considerations the HUB should be mindful of as it transitions to the post 10-year funding period? (When discussing, consider things like…)
- ★ Communication
- ★ Timing
- ★ Funding
- ★ Community Engagement
- ★ Other"

Table 7: Summary of main comments from all-grantee meeting table discussions regarding transition planning

| | |
|---|---|
| • Explain how things were done | • Communication with partners must be a priority |
| • Communication, communication, communication! | • Leverage state resources |
| • Start meeting funders, now!! | • Engage funder's collaborative |
| • Increase communication | • Who will replace TCE as convener, funder, umbrella org |
| • Bring grantees together more often | • Replicate for other areas, do not expand so as not to dilute impact |
| • Need clarity from TCE on their post 2020 vision | • Communicate, manage anxiety of transition |
| • Create certainty | • Focus on organizational self-care |
| • Help each org get post 2020 set up in terms of capacity and needs | • Manage people leaving and the loss of institutional knowledge |

## Conclusions and Main Take-Away's

**Mission**
In general, there was strong consensus among stakeholders that were familiar with the HUB concerning its main function as a "networking, convening, coordinating, and mobilizing entity that engages communities and resources to affect large-scale community change." This creates a solid foundation that the HUB can build upon as it transitions after 2020. However, other stakeholders that were not familiar with the HUB were less clear on the HUB's purpose and main functions. The HUB could work to expand knowledge among community members as to it basic purpose and overall mission.

**Geographic Area of Focus**
Stakeholders familiar with the HUB suggested it stay focused on the South Sacramento community, while replicating its basic functions and structure in other areas or communities identified by community assessments. Some noted that systems change, a major focus on the HUB, requires a multi-community approach while others suggested the HUB strategically expand, being careful not to create a structure that would become a competitor to other nonprofit organizations or itself. The HUB could remain focused on the South Sacramento community, while expanding or replicating its services to other communities in a strategic fashion and as opportunities arise.

**Focus Areas**
There was consensus among stakeholders that the HUB remain committed to the four issue areas it currently focuses on: 1) access to healthy foods, 2) access to healthcare, 3) land use, and 4) youth development. Many urged the HUB to add an economic development/employment focus as well. The HUB could remain committed to its existing focus areas, while strategically expanding as the demand for these services is identified through ongoing planning.

**Transition Planning**

The predominant theme that was discussed concerning transition planning was simply: "communicate." As noted in Table 7, HUB stakeholders had insightful recommendations regarding the HUB's transition planning. Other themes or ideas that emerged from discussions included topics such as transition timing: some suggested the HUB begin actively developing relationships with other funders beyond TCE. Others suggested working with existing grantees to prepare these organizations for transition planning. Other suggestions included thoughtful management of other transition matters. These recommendations are valid and should be integrated into implementation planning.

## Recommendations – Engage in Transition Planning and Management

Based on the input from key stakeholders across all groups that participated in the sustainability planning process, these recommendations are put forth.

**"Polish the HUB Brand"**

Based on stakeholder feedback, the HUB has a solid brand and reputation upon which it can build. A key limitation to overcome in this area is awareness among community stakeholders not familiar with the HUB's basic activities and its accomplishments.  The following specific recommendations are offered.
- Mission – refine and clarify the vision and mission of the HUB; spread the news that the HUB is continuing and what it intends to accomplish
- Tell the Story – articulate and disseminate the stories of success of what the HUB has accomplished as a back-bone type organization
- Focus Area – add an economic development focus area

Further, it is recommended that the HUB act now, and appoint transition champion (and team) that focuses on the following:
- Communications – tell the story of the HUB, making the case for its continuance
- Develop/deepen funder relations: develop a new funding strategy and streams now in preparation for 2020. Funders that were interviewed as a part of this planning process expressed interest in deepening relationships with the HUB. Engagement with the larger funding community should become a priority now, before interest wans.
- Develop and deliver transition services to existing grantees. These include technical assistance regarding transition planning for grantees, especially those that are solely reliant on TCE for funding, and only work in support of HUB initiatives.
- Organizational structure planning – design an organizational structure capable of continuance that can implement the transition plan and continue after 2020.

## Final Thoughts

The HUB has made notable accomplishments over the years. Further, the HUB and its staff have developed a solid reputation as a reliable community asset capable of making measurable impact in the communities it serves. Over the years the HUB has developed an extensive network and is embedded deeply in the South Sacramento community. These are valuable assets that are not easily built or duplicated, hence these should be protected and nurtured, ensuring their continuation. The HUB has many assets to leverage in moving beyond the TCE funding period—its brand and reputation, its list of accomplishments that demonstrate its capabilities. These should be deployed now and used to move the HUB into a realizable and sustainable future after 2020.