

Delivering on the Promise:

# Ways & Means

STRONG COMMUNITIES THROUGH FINANCIAL SUCCESS



Poor communities in America are renowned for the problems they confront. They are forced to support a dauntingly disproportionate burden: deficient education, limited transportation, inadequate healthcare, underemployment, job stagnation, high incidence of obesity, crime, drug abuse.

As mixed-income communities replaced poverty concentrated ancestors, integration across a range of incomes and strict screening helped to combat the centralization of crime. These communities are far safer than their predecessors. They increase the property tax base and hold out the future possibility of improved public education. They bring with them large capital investment and improved infrastructure.

They also introduce a new set of desires and concerns: retirement savings, educational loans, home-ownership, sub-prime mortgages. And still the same old worries – deficient education, limited transportation, inadequate healthcare, underemployment and job stagnation, obesity, crime, drug abuse.

The people in these communities need assistance. Where to start? What to do? How to assist? Nurture or enable? Questions of paternalism rise quickly to the surface. Priorities are examined.

One theme – a lack of resources – seems to act as an amplifier to all of these problems. This is manifested in a lack of money, money management problems, and

the high cost of being poor. These issues cut across the income ranges in our communities. It is at the center of The Community Builders' relationship with our residents and addressing it goes to the core of enabling our residents to improve their lives. We believe that by attacking this problem we equip our residents with the most potential to address the myriad other life problems they might confront.

Lack of money manifests itself in learned habits and techniques. These behaviors and the associated isolation from secure financial relationships construct a cyclical history of insurmountable debt. This is an enormous impasse to sustained success in the market. It is a downward spiral that can easily dispel the gains of a generation.

This social remove from the patterns and places that define financial success serves to exacerbate all of the other very real problems that intersect life in our communities.

**This is where Ways & Means intercedes.**

Ways & Means provides access to financial tools and helps to build behaviors of success. It enables the construction of a positive relationship to money that is founded upon trust, mutual benefit, and earned privilege. It enables individuals to achieve true financial success.

How does Ways & Means put financial success at the heart of these communities?

# Through **Integration**

INTERSECTION WITH EXISTING PATTERNS AND EVERYDAY BEHAVIORS

# Through **Immediacy**

AUTOMATIC INVOLVEMENT AND EASE OF ACCESS

# Through **Individual Impact**

PERSONAL PROFIT AND DIRECT RELEVANCE

# A Ways & Means Future

## TODAY

### ‘Take my money’

The Property Manager is often seen as a landlord who interacts with the tenant mainly as the agent for collection of rent.

## TOMORROW

### ‘Help me keep my money’

The Community Manager is a financial advisor who interacts with the tenant in a collaborative relationship where mutual benefit is the explicit goal.

## TODAY

### At the center of the community sits the **leasing center**.

It discourages lingering. Its functionality centers on fulfilling work orders and collecting rent.

Think: [Doctor’s office](#)

## TOMORROW

### At the center of the community sits the **Exchange**.

It’s a social space that fosters connections made through habit, happenstance and personal association. It embodies The Community Builders’ commitment to invest in their residents’ futures. It is a place for meeting a friend, solving a problem and seeking advice.

Think: [Coffee shop + book store + bank](#)

## TODAY

### **A newsletter**

This is distributed every month. It's a top-down communication vehicle to apprise the residents of services and programs. It offers canned advice on topics like 'taking salt out of soup', and 'softer laundry'. In residents' homes, it sits unread if not discarded.

## TOMORROW

### **An Online Forum is continuously updated.**

The Forum is a connector that bridges the community to existing services and offerings, and most importantly, to each other. Community directories help people meet – on their terms and in their time. They foster connections through affinity and allow people to remain anonymous. The Forum is a resource that is created by users.

## TODAY

### **Vocabulary of Need**

Money orders

Payday loans

Check cashing

Minimum payments

## TOMORROW

### **Words of Wealth**

Net worth

Investments and Returns

Dividends

Long-term Savings

What is *Ways & Means*?

It is the character of the community.

It is a network of physical, financial and social connections.

It is a set of tools that help bring residents toward financial success.

What will Financial Success look like?

## Increased Stability

Financial success will allow families to better manage fluctuations of income and ensure they have resources to overcome temporary setbacks. Firmly established in the market through new relationships and new access to capital, residents will have the strength to think long-term.

*Measurements include:* increase in formalized banking relationships, on-time rent payment, improved credit scores, access to mainstream lines of credit, debt reduction

## Increased Potential

The skills and connections made possible by Ways & Means will be leveraged for extension into the wider marketplace. Residents will develop the financial savvy to move to new careers and increase their incomes.

*Measurements include:* wage growth, college attendance, college graduation, improved elementary and secondary school test scores, increased individual participation in community activities

## Increased Assets

Equipped with personal financial reserves, residents will have the resources to fund their dreams for the future. The networks established through Ways & Means will provide the support for residents to map realistic strategies to achieve those dreams.

*Measurements include:* establishment of savings & investment accounts, increased savings, homeownership

# These are the tools and their functions:

## The Foundation

These three tools establish the foundation of Ways & Means and are essential to its successful implementation.

## The Culmination

This tool fundamentally restructures and redefines the community. It becomes possible only after the core of Ways & Means has been implemented and embraced.

## Targeted Tools

These tools explore the possibilities for working with particular resident segments. They are illustrations of an open-source, demand-driven structure that can expand based on resident desires and needs.

## Knowledge Economy

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS THAT INFORM AND EMPOWER

## Community Cache

FREEDOM FROM PREDATORY PRACTICES

## New Lease on Life

MOVE IN TO MOVE OUT DEBT FREE

## Networked Net Worth

A REAL STAKE IN THE COMMUNITY

## Learn to Save

REWARDING SUCCESS IN EDUCATION

## Going Public

EVENTS TO LAUNCH TEENS INTO THE MARKETPLACE

## Career Builder

FREEDOM TO BE YOUR OWN BOSS

This toolkit enables Ways & Means to provide pathways to success for the entire community. It allows residents to map their desires to real offerings.

It's not a program, it's not a service –  
Ways & Means is an opportunity.





