



Partnerships Make Transforming House in to Homes Possible

May 2021

Partnership Foundation:

Since 1988, Rebuilding Together Philadelphia (RTP) has revitalized communities by transforming 1,800 vulnerable, owner-occupied houses into safe, healthy and energy-efficient homes. RTP leverages both funding partnerships, such as with Univest, and community partnerships with hospitals and community development organizations to advance their mission of revitalizing communities by transforming vulnerable, owner-occupied houses into safe, healthy and energy-efficient homes.

For example, RTP partnered with The Enterprise Center to serve West Philadelphia with the help of MBA students from the Wharton School of Business, Drexel University students, and the Neighborhood Advisory Coordinator at The Enterprise Center. Although home repairs aren't The Enterprise Center's expertise, working with The Enterprise Center has allowed RTP to use The Enterprise Center's volunteers to assist with the home repair projects in West Philadelphia. The partnership has allowed RTP to do home improvements on 125 homes in Mantua. As much as they would like to continue to do that work, there are not enough clusters of multiple homes on the same street that need repairs to scale up this model.

RTP also partners with New Kensington CDC to implement a similar model in the Kensington neighborhood. Given that Kensington is rapidly gentrifying, while there are fewer homes that need RTP's services clustered together, helping long-term homeowners remain in their homes as the neighborhood transitions is critical. RTP has been able to continue the project because of the funding resources made possible by NKCDC.

Challenges to Partnerships

RTP has learned that every partnership is not ideal and may not work for a handful of reasons. For this organization, the biggest challenge is staff capacity. To seek, facilitate, and maintain a partnership requires someone to take on scheduling, completing paperwork, or undertaking other administrative tasks that come with partnerships. Another challenge is having the time to learn each partner's individual strengths and weaknesses. No organization is perfect, so having the time to find out how to leverage the best of each organization takes time, but applying to funding doesn't always allow for that relationship to be cultivated and ensure success.



Partnerships in the Last Year

The pandemic illuminated how much people need safe and healthy homes to keep them in good health. Despite the pandemic, an abundance of homeowners allowed RTP and their sub-contractors in their homes with open arms. A partnership with Jefferson helped RTP ensure that all of their contractors were vaccinated. This last year also illuminated no matter how difficult the world is, there are people who will still fight the fight and do the work. From recruiting homeowners non-stop to their partners showing up for their communities' day in and day out, RTP's work never stops. Lastly, this year illuminated how much volunteers contribute physically, emotionally, and monetarily to RTP and enable them to do the work and reach as many people as possible.

"I have to acknowledge the people who have made this possible. From our contractors taking the risk to be out and in KN95 masks all day, to our partners who continue to do the hard work despite all of the challenges of the past year," says Stefanie Seldin, President and CEO of Rebuilding Together Philadelphia.

[Learn more about RTP partnership with FHLBank and Univest](#)