**REASSESSING ROLES IN A CHANGING**

**LOCAL DATA ENVIRONMENT**

Friday morning, 8:30 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.

**Background and Purpose**

NNIP partners have always been defined by a set of core functions established in the network’s requirements for membership.

*To become an NNIP Partner, an institution must demonstrate that the following are central to its mission: (1) building and operating an advanced information system with integrated and recurrently updated data on neighborhood conditions; (2) facilitating and promoting the direct practical use of data by community and city leaders in community building and local policymaking; and (3) giving emphasis to using information to build the capacities of institutions and residents in distressed neighborhoods.*

As we worked on the NNIP Strategy Paper last year we recognized that there are other functions to be performed in a thriving data environment and there are other players involved, some performing aspects of the NNIP functions noted above. We saw that broader local data environments were expanding with the increased visibility of open data and growing emphasis on data driven decision making and performance management. Some city governments are expanding their roles in the field, civic developers are more active and other local and national institutions are staking out new turf. The list of activities includes government’s release of open data, training on how to be a good consumer of data, helping nonprofits with performance management or program evaluation, policy analysis, and creating apps or websites for broader audiences. A diverse array of other players are likely involved – government agencies, nonprofit organizations, university departments, civic developers, and local or national consultants.

The purpose of this Friday morning session is ***to begin a conversation about the characteristics of an effectively functioning local data environment; hear how partners view their own local environment; and share ideas about how partners can strategize about the roles they want to play.***

We were struck by what we had learned about the data environment that has emerged in the Twin Cities region where a sizeable number of local institutions have been working collaboratively for years to substantially expand the data availability and productive applications. In other cities, however, the local data environment is more fragmented than it ought to be and needs a push toward coherence (see UI’s assessment of the overall data environment in Chicago). In some cities, NNIP partners may want to play a proactive role, expanding their own functions as they take the lead in a broader agenda for improvement. In others, the NNIP partner may simply want to be one of the collaborators that help the system evolve in positive directions.

**The Session**

***Introduction***. Tom Kingsley will begin this session with a more complete discussion of background conditions and the challenges and opportunities (10 minutes)

***Data Sharing in the Twin Cities***: Jacob Wascalus of the Minneapolis Federal Reserve Bank will present a case study he and Jeff Matson have prepared on the data and institutional environment in their metro area (15 minutes)

***Contrasts in Other Environments***. Two NNIP partners will describe the civic data environment in their metros and the roles they are playing and want to play (10 minutes each)

* ***Detroit*** - Kurt Metzger, Data Driven Detroit
* ***Atlanta*** – Tahmida Shamsuddin, Neighborhood Nexus

***Dialogue*** – Tom, Jacob, Kurt, and Tahmida – compare and contrast (10 minutes)

***Discussion*** – Comments and questions from the floor (35 minutes). Questions to guide:

1. What conditions exist in the evolution of your own local data environment that contrast with those in the three cases presented? How are they changing? What are the implications?
2. How do you see the role of your own organization changing in relation to shifts in the environment? What are the barriers to be overcome to enable you to do what you want to do?
3. What should the network be doing to support local partners as they map out their local data environments and think through the strategy for their organizations?

**References**

Pettit, Kathryn L.S., and G. Thomas Kingsley. 2013*. An Assessment of the Community Information Infrastructure in the Chicago Metropolitan Area.* Washington DC: The Urban Institute.

Kingsley, G. Thomas, Kathryn L.S. Pettit and Leah Hendey. 2013. *Strengthening Local Capacity for Data-Driven Decision Making.* Washington DC: The Urban Institute.