ioby in Pittsburgh

A Plan to Enable & Elevate Resident-Led Change in the City’s Most Vulnerable Communities
Overview

In community development and urban planning circles, Pittsburgh is widely regarded as a model post-industrial city, admired for its ability to rebound from a decades-long loss of population and industry and reorient its local economy to build powerful education and technology sectors. During the Great Recession, Pittsburgh proved to be economically resilient, recording fewer store closures and foreclosures than many cities of its size and industrial history.

While Pittsburgh’s future looks bright, many barriers prevent its residents of color from enjoying the benefits of a more resilient and prosperous city. Histories of failed urban renewal projects and profound public and private disinvestment in African American communities have manifested in a number of physical and digital barriers to advancement and civic participation in these wards.

ioby first committed to working with Pittsburghers to dismantle these barriers in 2014, when we initiated our successful and ongoing partnerships with GTECH and the Sprout Fund:

- Through a successful and ongoing partnership with GTECH, ioby has been introduced to the challenges and opportunities in activating Pittsburgh’s vacant lots. We are working with GTECH to integrate our crowd-resourcing services and platform with their innovative Lots to Love initiative. Together, we are beginning to catalyze and support citizen-led interventions in many of the 45,000 vacant lots in Allegheny County.¹

- With the Sprout Fund, ioby offers training and one-on-one support for Neighbor to Neighbor Grant recipients who want to collect citizen philanthropy for their innovative ideas for the North Side. Through this partnership, ioby has supported ten groups as they have leveraged matching funds to raise more than $10,000 combined.

ioby now hopes to build on the outcomes of these remarkable partnerships and commit to deepening our roots in Pittsburgh. Working with partners like GTECH and the Sprout Fund, as well as Neighborhood Allies, Pittsburgh Community Reinvestment Group, NeighborWorks, and others, ioby hopes to identify and elevate the work of more neighborhood leaders who are committed to making their city stronger and more sustainable.

ioby will apply our unique blend of resource organizing and crowdfunding to help Pittsburghers find the resources they need within their own communities. Our vision is to create a future in which our neighborhoods are shaped by the powerful good ideas of our own neighbors. Our mission is to mobilize neighbors who have good ideas to become powerful citizen leaders who plan, fund and make positive change in their own neighborhoods.

We are looking to make a long-term commitment to bringing our online crowd-resourcing platform and wrap-around services to neighborhood leaders across Pittsburgh. We believe that by supporting low-cost, place-based, community-led projects, our model will be especially helpful to growing civic capacity in neighborhoods that have been historically overlooked and disinvested, including Uptown, the Hill District, South Pittsburgh’s Hilltop communities, Hazelwood, Homewood, and portions of the North Side.

Pittsburgh meets each of the minimum criteria that we use to evaluate whether a place is the right fit for ioby’s platform and services:

- History of neighborhood disinvestment (e.g. redlining, long-term population loss, mid-century urban renewal projects that resulted in social upheaval, or concentrations of high structural unemployment)
- People of color make up more than a third of the population
- City leaders—in government, philanthropy and the social sector—are interested in taking an innovative approach to supporting community-led and place-based projects
• City leaders value authentic civic engagement, and are interested in building leadership capacity within communities.
• City leaders are interested in achieving and measuring social, economic and public health outcomes as components of a long-term vision for sustainability; We are particularly interested in working with cities that have stated goals of fighting public health epidemics, strengthening sharing economies, and promoting social and environmental justice.

Methodology

ioby began researching Pittsburgh’s civic landscape by examining a variety of materials, including data from the United States Census Bureau and The Chronicle of Philanthropy. Synthesizing these data clarified our understanding of the social and economic structures that are at work in the area. A complete list of works consulted can be found in the appendix of this report.

Interviews

To date, we have interviewed a snowball sample of 26 leaders in Pittsburgh and conducted deep research around the nonprofit sector, local philanthropy and existing similar initiatives. While these leaders provided ioby with a tremendous amount of insight, we are deeply committed to engaging with and learning from more leaders of color and longtime residents as we begin our work in the city.

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<td>Will Bernstein</td>
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<td>Bethany Davidson</td>
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<td>Grant Ervin</td>
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<td>Katie Hale</td>
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Primary Predictors of Success in Pittsburgh

With our preliminary research in Pittsburgh, ioby set out to understand how our model would add value to the citizen leader’s experience. Indeed, we found that this area meets seven of the eight following criteria that we use to predict a successful roll-out of ioby’s platform and services.

1. **STRONG ATTACHMENT TO PLACE.** Residents’ demonstrable sense of ownership of and belonging to their city. *ioby uses five indicators to measure attachment:*

   1. **Knowledge of place:** the degree to which residents know how and where to access basic services and are familiar with the histories of their neighborhoods.
   2. **Social ties:** the extent of residents’ local social networks, accounting for both strong and weak ties to neighbors.
   3. **Security:** residents’ sense of security, or the feeling that they are protected from any threats to their safety or quality of life. These may include: the threat of displacement, the threat of crime, the threat of natural disaster, and the threat of economic shock.
   4. **Hope:** the availability of opportunities for residents to better their lives and to identify with people who have similar lived experiences and aspirations.
   5. **Pride:** the extent to which residents feel proud to live in their neighborhood or city.

The value of attachment to ioby’s work in New York:

We have found that many New Yorkers have a strong attachment to their city, and connect their personal identities to their borough. Our leaders in New York City are willing to spend time working with neighbors to fundraise for and implement an ioby project because they have a long-term interest in making their neighborhoods stronger and more sustainable.

Overall finding in Pittsburgh: ![x]

1. **Strong knowledge of place:** Many residents in the area have lived locally for many years, and are extremely familiar with the layout, character, and history of their neighborhoods.

2. **Strong social ties at the level of the neighborhood:** Residents feel connected to their communities and report knowing their neighbors. According to the National Conference on Citizenship and the Corporation for National and Community Service, 91.7% of Pittsburgh residents reported in 2013 that they speak to their neighbors regularly, and 32.5% say that they are active participants in community groups and organizations. Still, many leaders told ioby that residents rarely engage with people outside of their immediate networks, and neighborhood leaders feel especially disconnected to likeminded leaders in other areas of the city. Despite strong transit and walkability in many of the city’s core neighborhoods, we commonly heard that “Pittsburghers don’t cross bridges.”

3. **Weak sense of security:** Fears of displacement and crime disproportionately affect Black Pittsburghers. Gentrification in some areas of the city such as East Liberty, Allentown, and the North Side is forcing longtime residents to grapple with the threat of being priced out of their homes. Additionally, because the majority of crime is concentrated in a handful of historically disinvested neighborhoods including the Hill District, Homewood, and areas on the North Side, the mostly Black residents of these neighborhoods face a disproportionate risk of becoming victims of violence.
4. **Inequitably distributed hope:** Because they are primarily concentrated in neighborhoods with histories of disinvestment, Pittburghers of color are not afforded the same opportunities for economic and personal advancement as their white neighbors in other parts of the city. Recognizing this disparity, Neighborhood Allies and researchers at Carnegie Mellon University are currently developing a “Hope Score” that will define and measure communities’ confidence, self-reliance, and access to opportunities to better their neighborhoods and themselves.  

5. **Nuanced feelings of pride:** ioby heard often that, despite the city’s challenges around equity and inclusion, residents are proud to be from Pittsburgh. While vacant and neglected lots in areas of the city that have suffered from decades of disinvestment have damaged many communities’ senses of ownership and belonging, a fundamental belief in Pittsburgh’s potential still appears to run deep. In a recent study by the Urban Institute, a survey of African American men revealed both deep concerns about the future of their neighborhoods and a strong love for their city: “Despite the city’s challenges, several men, particularly African American entrepreneurs, described Pittsburgh with pride and love and as a place with great potential.”

2. **COOPERATIVE ENVIRONMENT.** An atmosphere of collaboration among organizations, where collaboration is born out of a mutually enforced creative or strategic ethos rather than from a funder. Example: Memphis non-profits have deeply interwoven staff, board and members, that are reinforced by social connections. Because Memphis boasts this supremely collaborative environment for non-profits, our local partner has had great success encouraging other organizations in the city to work with ioby.

- Finding in Pittsburgh: ✓

- Cooperative environment overall: Although many say that nonprofit organizations feel that they must compete aggressively for limited funds, almost every person with whom ioby has spoken in Pittsburgh has described healthy and productive partnerships as core to his or her work. These partnerships, particularly among organizations servicing the same geographic areas, seem to be underpinned by organizational alignment and by deep social connections.

3. **WELL-CONNECTED LOCAL GOVERNMENT.** A local government that has strong ties to the social sector, either through interpersonal relationships or formal partnerships. Example: When the Mayor’s Innovation Delivery Team invited ioby to work in Memphis, they introduced ioby to civically engaged individuals who helped us jumpstart our Phase Zero research. Having a government partner with a strong reputation on the ground helped ioby build trust with Memphians much more quickly than would have been possible on our own.

- Findings in Pittsburgh: ✓

- Since June 2015, the office of Grant Ervin, Pittsburgh’s Chief Resilience Officer (CRO), has intentionally and meaningfully engaged neighborhood stakeholders, city agencies, community-based organizations, community development intermediaries, local businesses, and other institutions to craft and implement plans for a more resilient and sustainable Pittsburgh. Almost every local leader to whom ioby spoke mentioned this work, and ioby has already seen the value of working with Mr. Ervin’s office to engage residents of Pittsburgh’s most vulnerable neighborhoods. (Please see the appendix for a draft description of a potential partnership between ioby and the CRO.)
The Office of Community Affairs attends weekly meetings in priority communities and is designed to connect residents to vital city services and to enable people who have historically been left out of economic development and planning conversations to participate in the development and implementation of the City’s initiatives.

At the same time, the Mayor’s Bureau of Neighborhood Empowerment is bringing development tools to residents in areas of the city that have been isolated from Pittsburgh’s economic growth. By working with small businesses, faith-based and non-profit organizations, housing groups, and education, the Bureau is working hand in hand with grassroots leaders to remedy the effects of decades of disinvestment in their neighborhoods.

With the p4 Conference in 2015, the City of Pittsburgh announced its commitment to planning for “People, Planet, Place and Performance.” The conference marked the initiation of a framework that values equity and inclusion as crucial components of planning for economic and environmental sustainability.

4. DEMAND FOR SERVICES. Unincorporated or informal networks of leaders who could benefit from ioby’s fiscal sponsorship services and capacity-building trainings and support modules. Example: During ioby’s early growth in New York, we learned that neighborhood leaders were as excited about our wrap-around services—fiscal sponsorship, grassroots fundraising trainings, and one-on-one project support—as they were about our online crowd-resourcing platform. Our success in every city hinges on leaders’ demand for these services.

Finding in Pittsburgh: ✓

The successes of ioby’s partnerships with the Sprout Fund and GTECH point to an unsatisfied demand for the grassroots fundraising trainings and services that ioby provides. A number of local organizations—including Neighborhood Allies, PCRG, and NeighborWorks—are interested in leveraging ioby’s suite of services to build the fundraising and organizing capacities of their constituents. These potential partners are especially interested in ioby’s wrap-around services, including fiscal sponsorship for unaffiliated groups and customized grassroots fundraising workshops.

5. PROJECT AREA ALIGNMENT. Leaders in the social sector are engaging in areas of work that ioby supports (e.g. leaders take on projects dealing with placemaking, tactical urbanism, food, safer streets, etc.). Example: Memphians’ varied interests and approaches to neighborhood change have resulted in a rich assortment of projects on ioby. Because there are communities of leaders working on projects that fall into each of our eligible project types, we have been able to cast a wide net as we find new leaders in Memphis.

Finding in Pittsburgh: ✓

ioby spoke to a number of leaders who are involved in or support “deep roots” activities—small-scale, hyper-local, relatively informal community efforts—at the block and neighborhood scale. A typical ioby project is place-based, costs an average $5,000 or less (but can range $100-$100,000) and has a measurable or tangible positive impact on the surrounding community. Through our research, we found neighborhood leaders in Pittsburgh working on projects that fall neatly within each of our types:

- Placemaking, including parklets
- Food
- Safer streets and transit
- Neighborhood greening and environment
- Education
- Public art
- Public health
6. STRONG COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT INTERMEDIARIES. Community development corporations or analogous entities that act as intermediaries for directing funds from city government to the neighborhoods. CDCs often also serve as the first stop for informal networks of neighbors looking to start a public space project or to receive information about planned changes coming to the neighborhood. Example: Livable Memphis is a program within the Community Development Council of Greater Memphis, a consortium of CDCs, civically engaged individuals and community-based organizations. Because they work closely with both CDCs and residents and understand the obstacles to civic participation better than most other organizations in the city, Livable Memphis has been an invaluable resource to our leader recruitment and support teams.

- Finding in Pittsburgh: ✓

- Pittsburgh boasts several strong community development intermediaries, including: Neighborhood Allies, Pittsburgh Community Reinvestment Group (PCRG), the Design Center, NeighborWorks of Western PA, and the Design Center. Each occupies an important role in facilitating and funding neighborhood-scale transformation and, in recent years, many have invested heavily in developing new citizen leaders and lending support to resident-led projects.

7. CULTURE OF GIVING. Higher than average participation in charitable giving. Example: The average household in Memphis donates about 5.58% of adjusted gross income to charity, a figure considerably higher than the national average of about three percent. Coming from Memphis’ culture of giving, most ioby leaders have felt comfortable making asks of donors and have had great successes in their grassroots fundraising campaigns.

- Finding in Pittsburgh: ✓

- The proportion of income that Pittsburghers give to charitable organizations (2.53% in Allegheny County) falls shy of the national average (about 3.0%). However, charitable giving in neighborhoods where the median household income is lower than the citywide median is often more robust than in all of Allegheny County. For instance, residents of Uptown—a neighborhood where the median household income ($19,860 for the 15219 zip code) is less than half the citywide median ($40,009)—give at a higher rate than any other neighborhood in Pittsburgh. Notably, in every Pittsburgh neighborhood, households with incomes of up to $25,000 each year give a significantly higher percentage of their incomes to charitable organizations than their higher-income neighbors.
Above: Although the proportion of the neighborhoods’ populations living in poverty are higher, residents of the Hill District, Hazelwood, and Homewood give a larger percentage of their adjusted gross income to charitable organizations than Pittburghers in many higher-income areas in the city. (Sources: U.S. Census Bureau; Chronicle of Philanthropy, How America Gives report, 2012)
8. **SUSTAINABILITY PLAN.** A citywide sustainability plan with which ioby can align citizen-led projects. Example: In each city, we have benefitted from connecting ioby’s block level projects as implementation opportunities for citywide or regional sustainability plans. ioby has worked with the NYC Office of Long-Term Planning and Sustainability, the Miami-Dade County Office of Sustainability, the City of Memphis Mayors Innovation Delivery Team, and the Shelby County Office of Sustainability, serving as a flexible facilitator between citizens and municipalities or counties.

- **Finding in Pittsburgh: ✓**

- The City’s efforts to mitigate and adapt to climate change enhance community resilience are guided by the Pittsburgh Climate Action Plan (PCAP), a plan to reduce the city’s greenhouse gas emissions 20% below 2003 levels by 2023. Since its inauguration in 2008, the development and implementation of the PCAP have been stewarded by the Pittsburgh Climate Initiative, a cross-sector collaborative that includes nonprofits, local government, and businesses.

- Funded by a 100 Resilient Cities grant from the Rockefeller Foundation, the Chief Resilience Officer (CRO) is tasked with crafting and implementing the Resilient Pittsburgh strategy in collaboration with community stakeholders, nonprofits, and businesses. The strategy, currently in development will include a series of actions and investments to combat inequality and bolster community resilience.
ioby in Pittsburgh: Preliminary Assessment of Fit

ioby’s Strategies for Overcoming Local Challenges

Three characteristics stand out to ioby as being particularly nuanced and require us to take an especially thoughtful approach to finding, training, and supporting citizen leaders. Several neighborhoods in Pittsburgh have suffered from a history of targeted displacement and disinvestment, limited leadership and confidence, and a wide digital divide. As such, ioby must be sensitive to limitations on the ease of access to our services, common feelings of powerlessness, and other contexts that impact ioby’s reception.

Challenge #1: History of Targeted Displacement and Disinvestment

“People in our community are vulnerable. They have limited resources, are unemployed or underemployed, have low academic achievement and limited inclusion into Pittsburgh’s new global trajectory. Pittsburgh is still a ‘Tale of Two Cities,’ separated by typographies and socioeconomic strata. A clear, unaddressed issue remains the institutional racism in the region: prejudice in everyday interactions such as applying for a job, negotiating contracts, or obtaining a cab. Despite Pittsburgh’s recognition as a city on the rise, it remains a place with deep dichotomies that will eventually affect its trajectory towards a global destination if not addressed systemically.”

- Fred Brown, President & CEO, The Homewood Children’s Village

History

- In the 1950s and 1960s, urban renewal projects—such as those in the Lower and Upper Hill, the Homewood-Brushton area, and East Liberty—forced thousands of families, mostly African American, from their homes."11

- Mid-century discriminatory housing practices such as redlining and cost variations by realtors prevented uprooted Black families from purchasing private homes, forcing into public housing. By the late 1950s, very close to 100% of African Americans in the city lived in the Hill District, East Liberty, Homewood, the Lower Northside, and Beltzhoover.11

Above: A 1937 Home Owners’ Loan Corporation (HOLC) map of the Pittsburgh metropolitan region. The areas shaded in red are “fourth grade,” or “red-lined,” indicating to lenders that mortgages written for homes in these areas are hazardous and should be avoided. “Source: “Digital HOLC Maps,” Urban Oasis. http://www.urbanoasis.org/projects/holc-fha/digital-holc-maps/
Above: Just as in the late 1950s, the Hill District, East Liberty, Homewood, the Lower Northside, and the Hilltop Communities are still home to the largest share of Pittsburgh’s African American population.

Above: Many of the areas with the highest percentage of African American residents are among the city’s lowest income neighborhoods.
Current Conditions

Pittsburgh's communities of color are still grappling with the effects of systemic racism:

• Black males in Pittsburgh have a 32% chance of being incarcerated in their lives, while white males have only a 6% chance.\(^\text{12}\)

• One-third of Black Pittsburghers live in poverty, compared to 15% of Whites. In 2008, the U.S. Census Bureau determined that the Pittsburgh region has the highest rate of poverty among any of the 40 largest metropolitan areas in the country.\(^\text{13}\)

• 59.1% of Black residents consider their neighborhoods to be a good place to live, compared to 87.1% of White residents.\(^\text{14}\)

Anticipated challenges to ioby's work

1. Residents in neighborhoods with histories of disinvestment are grappling with the long-term effects of displacement, mass incarceration, and foreclosure. Neighborhood leaders who are fighting poverty and hunger in their communities may not have time or resources to commit to sustainability and resilience projects.

2. The legacy of disinvestment in some areas of the city may have engendered feelings of hopelessness, and has damaged residents' feelings of attachment to their neighborhoods. Residents may also feel discouraged from civic life by the sense that they cannot rely on the stability of their built environment. (Note: our assumptions about the psychological impacts of disinvestment are based largely on ioby’s experience in other cities. As we begin to work in Pittsburgh, ioby hopes to learn more about residents’ feelings of attachment and hopefulness.)

ioby’s strategies to work in the context of disinvestment

1. Be mindful of residents' time constraints and priorities, and assist leaders to lessen the time burden of leading a grassroots fundraising campaign.

2. Focus on equity-building processes: Enable community ownership of assets through collaborative, team-led campaigns on ioby's crowd-resourcing platform.

3. Focus on equitable outcomes: Intentionally identify, train, and coach ioby Leaders working on projects that improve quality of life by enhancing community assets.

4. Lead workshops and facilitate one-on-one mentoring relationships, linking successful leaders to their neighbors who may lack the confidence and skills to lead projects of their own.

5. Give neighborhood leaders opportunities to showcase quick results and easy wins to neighbors and other stakeholders.
Challenge #2: Limited Leadership and Confidence

“There aren’t really a lot of processes to bring people to the table who aren’t already there. [...] There’s a need for more people to be heavily involved. The people who are involved are the community leaders; they may own property, they may be business owners, they may run nonprofits. The people who come to meetings make decisions on different community issues and that’s a problem, on a larger scale, when there aren’t a lot of leaders who have been in place for a long time who are planning for younger leadership.”

– Harry Johnson, BMe

- A number of organizations, including Coro and Leadership Pittsburgh, have invested in identifying, convening, and training neighborhood leaders. Each of these organizations places importance on diversifying the community development field. Many in the field feel that these programs, while widely respected, are insufficient to address the lack of diversity among civic leaders.

- In many neighborhoods, only a handful of residents show up to meetings to discuss their communities’ future. Many leaders feel that their neighbors lack the time, resources, and skills to participate in civic work at the block and neighborhood scales.

- At the same time, many leaders of small organizations lack confidence in their abilities to affect change without support from large funders and other decision-makers. This confidence will be critical to motivating more people to participate in local civic life and building long-term civic capacity in a neighborhood.

Anticipated challenges to ioby’s work

- Many Pittsburghers have told ioby that the city’s CDC industry suffers from a lack of diversity at the top. Community development intermediaries and funders are attempting to solve this problem by investing in robust leadership development programs for aspiring civic leaders in the city’s most vulnerable neighborhoods.

- Residents lack confidence in their abilities to affect change without support from large funders and other decision-makers. This confidence will be critical to motivating more people to participate in local civic life and building long-term civic capacity in a neighborhood.

ioby’s strategies to identify and inspire new leaders

1. Lead workshops and facilitate one-on-one mentoring relationships, linking successful leaders to their neighbors who may lack the confidence and skills to lead projects of their own.

2. Give neighborhood leaders opportunities to showcase quick results and easy wins to neighbors and other stakeholders.

3. Train and mentor partner organizations’ constituents to lead successful grassroots campaigns.

4. Equip successful leaders to inspire their donors and volunteers into creating and funding projects of their own.
Challenge #3: The Digital Divide

“It is our goal to lay out a vision for not only what city government can and will achieve, but to ensure that we provide these same opportunities to each of our residents through inclusive innovation.”

- Mayor Bill Peduto, in the introduction to the City of Pittsburgh’s Roadmap for Inclusive Innovation

- In 2015, the City of Pittsburgh launched its “Roadmap for Inclusive Innovation,” a plan to address the digital divide, strengthen city-to-citizen engagement, create new sources of open data, streamline City operations, advance clean tech, and promote local business.

- According to a 2014 report coauthored by the City of Pittsburgh and the Urban Redevelopment Authority, over 39,700 Pittsburgh residents—or more than 13% of the population—do not have a computer at home.

- In Pittsburgh, a lack of access and limited digital literacy and access are important barriers to broadband adoption. To increase digital literacy, the City works with community-based partners to offer trainings for senior citizens at recreational and senior centers. The City is crafting plans to enhance access based on the Digital Equity Study, commissioned through Carnegie Mellon University.

Anticipated challenges to ioby’s work

1. Successful ioby Leaders typically spend a minimum of about three hours each week online, posting and maintaining their campaign pages, engaging with our staff, and communicating with their donors. Potential leaders without a broadband connection at home are not able to access or navigate ioby.org on a consistent basis.

1. The majority of donations to campaigns on ioby come from donors who live in the neighborhood where the project will take place. Potential project donors and volunteers who do not have access to a computer at home are less likely to be able to access and give to ioby leaders’ campaign pages.
ioby’s strategies to account for the digital divide

1. Work with the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh to reserve times for ioby Leaders to access email and ioby.org on public computers and to offer tech trainings, specially tailored for ioby leaders.

2. Equip leaders who will be relying on in-person asks to fundraise, with mobile payment devices in order to accept credit card donations without a desktop computer. (This strategy was successfully piloted in Memphis.)

3. Set up stations with a trained ioby representative at places of worship, libraries, and local businesses where donors can write checks or give cash to ioby projects.

4. Beta test mobile ready platform improvements so that more Pittsburgh residents can access ioby on their mobile devices.

ioby’s Roadmap

Beginning in summer 2016, ioby’s newly hired Pittsburgh Action Strategist will use the findings of ioby’s early stage research and begin to identify neighborhood leaders across the city with ideas and funding needs. The Action Strategist will have deep local knowledge of the civic landscapes of Uptown, the Hill District, South Pittsburgh’s Hilltop communities, Hazelwood, Homewood, and portions of the Northside, and will commit to identifying permanent pathways for leaders to find and take advantage of our platform and services.

ioby’s Pittsburgh Action Strategist will work closely with the Chief Resilience Officer and Resilience Corps volunteers to reach residents in the city’s most heavily disinvested neighborhoods.

Government Partners

ioby is currently discussing opportunities to collaborate with the following City partners:

Chief Resilience Officer
Office of Community Affairs
Bureau of Neighborhood Empowerment
Department of City Planning
Current Nonprofit Partners

GTECH
Sprout Fund

Potential Nonprofit Partners
(* denotes organizations for whom ioby has already led a training)

NeighborWorks of Western Pennsylvania
Neighborhood Allies
Design Center
Allegheny Conference
Pittsburgh Community Reinvestment Group*
BMe
Student Conservation Association
Homewood Children's Village
Operation Better Block Homewood
Work Hard PGH*
BikePGH
Allegheny Cleanways
GrowPGH
New Sun Rising

Select Near and Medium-Term Strategies

1. Hire a Leader Action Strategist to be placed in the office of NeighborWorks or another community-facing partner. This will facilitate access to potential ioby Leaders and ensure that the Strategist stays connected to partners’ work.

2. Connect leaders with ideas to activate vacant lots with GTECH and the Office of Planning to expedite implementation and ensure that all requirements are met.

3. Work with the CRO and the Resilience Corps volunteers to identify new leaders in the city's most vulnerable neighborhoods.

4. Partner with Neighborhood Allies to support citizen-led placemaking projects and leadership development programs.

5. Work with the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh to offer web access, computers, and tech trainings for potential ioby leaders.
6. Train partners’ constituents in online grassroots fundraising and ask partners and previous ioby Leaders to refer neighbors to ioby’s crowd-resourcing platform and services.

7. Equip leaders in neighborhoods with limited web access, who will be relying on in-person asks to fundraise, with mobile payment devices in order to accept credit card donations without a desktop computer.

8. In low-access neighborhoods, set up stations at places of worship, libraries, and local businesses where donors can write checks or give cash to ioby projects. A trained ioby representative at those stations would then make a card donation on the donor’s behalf and print a tax-deductible receipt.

9. Ask local funders for matching funds for sustainability projects in neighborhoods with extremely limited access to capital.

10. To begin to control for economic segregation, ioby should train leaders in prospecting and making appropriate asks of donors with varying abilities to give.

11. Leverage media relationships to offer a public platform (i.e. print, television, radio, and online) for ioby leaders in low-income neighborhoods to reach donors citywide.

Expected Deliverables

In the near term ioby expects that:

1. More Pittsburghers—particularly those who live and work in the city’s most vulnerable areas—will lead projects at the neighborhood scale that are concerned with making their neighborhoods stronger, safer and more sustainable. These projects will be designed by residents, funded by neighbors, and implemented through neighbors’ sweat equity. Public spaces in neighborhoods will have more stewards invested in positive change.

2. Neighborhood-scale leaders will become better equipped to fundraise, use digital communications, and organize their communities.

3. Leaders will have a network of likeminded people doing similar work around Pittsburgh, to whom they can turn for peer support.

4. New, previously untapped sources of citizen philanthropy will become available to civic groups working to make their neighborhoods better.
Over the longer term, we expect that:

1. Previously disengaged residents will contribute to existing environmental and community development initiatives. As a result, resident participation in community-based organizations and citywide efforts to steward equitable and sustainable development will expand and diversify, and the civic sector will grow to be more connected.

2. City agencies will be better positioned to make smart decisions and policies for Pittsburgh based on authentic input from community leaders, the ingenuity of residents who live closest to the problems in the community, and small-scale demonstrations that build community buy-in.

3. Residents will feel more ownership over citywide initiatives such as the forthcoming Resilient Pittsburgh Plan and the Pittsburgh Climate Action Plan, which affect their communities and their blocks, and understand citywide impact of their own neighborhood projects.
Endnotes

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   http://www.pittsburghpa.gov/green/pcap.htm
11. Ibid.
12. Center on Race and Social Relations. “Pittsburgh’s Racial Demographics 2015: Differences and Disparities.”
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16. Ibid.
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