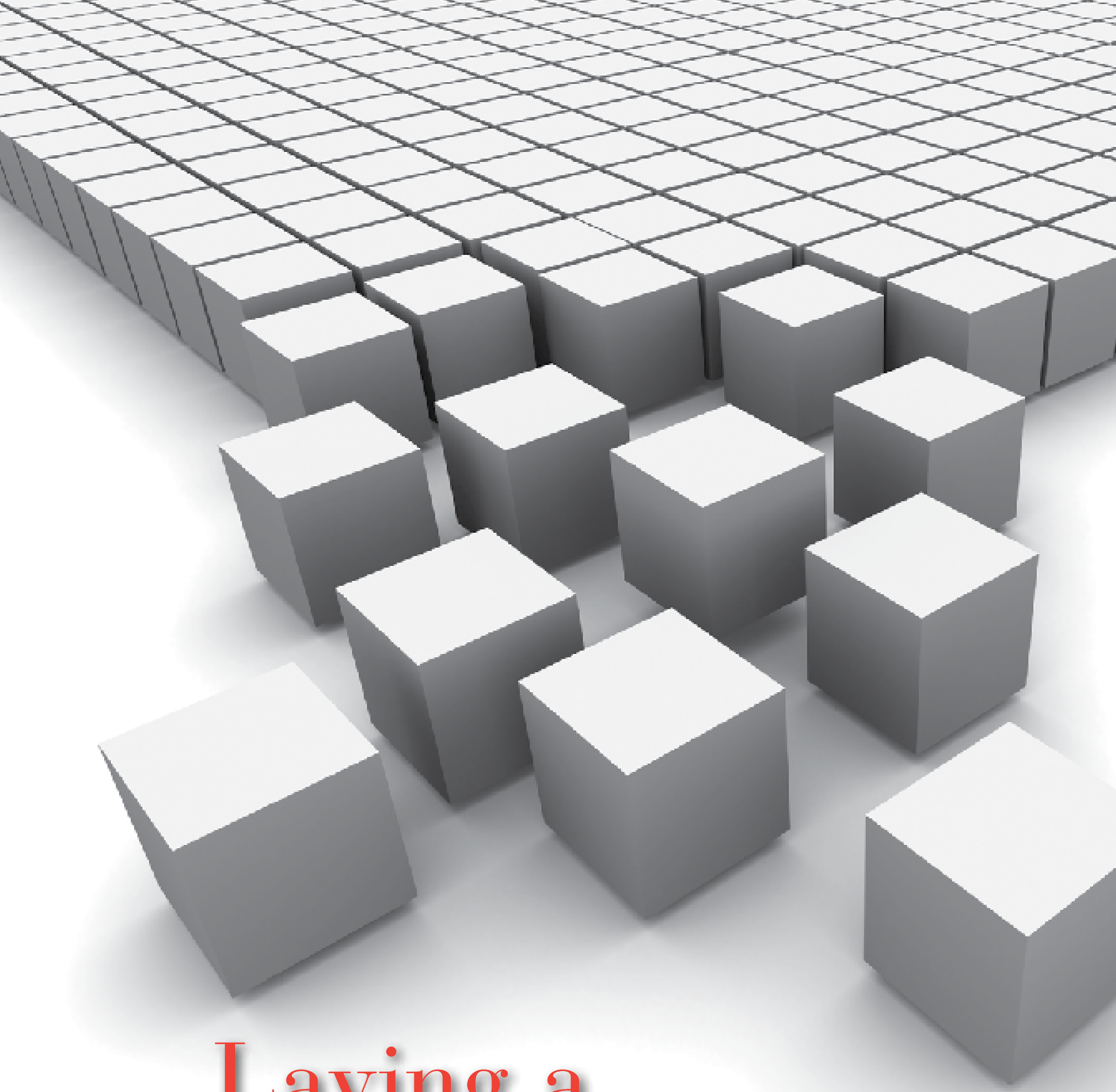


Laying a Solid Foundation

Strategies for Effective Program Replication

Geri Summerville
with Becca Raley

Public/Private Ventures
INNOVATION. RESEARCH. ACTION.

Laying a Solid Foundation

Strategies for Effective Program Replication

Geri Summerville
with Becca Raley

Public/Private Ventures
INNOVATION. RESEARCH. ACTION.

P/PV Public/Private Ventures is a national leader in creating and strengthening programs that improve lives in low-income communities. We do this in three ways:

INNOVATION
We work with leaders in the field to identify promising existing programs or develop new ones.

RESEARCH
We rigorously evaluate these programs to determine what is effective and what is not.

ACTION
We reproduce model programs in new locations, provide technical assistance where needed and inform policymakers and practitioners about what works.

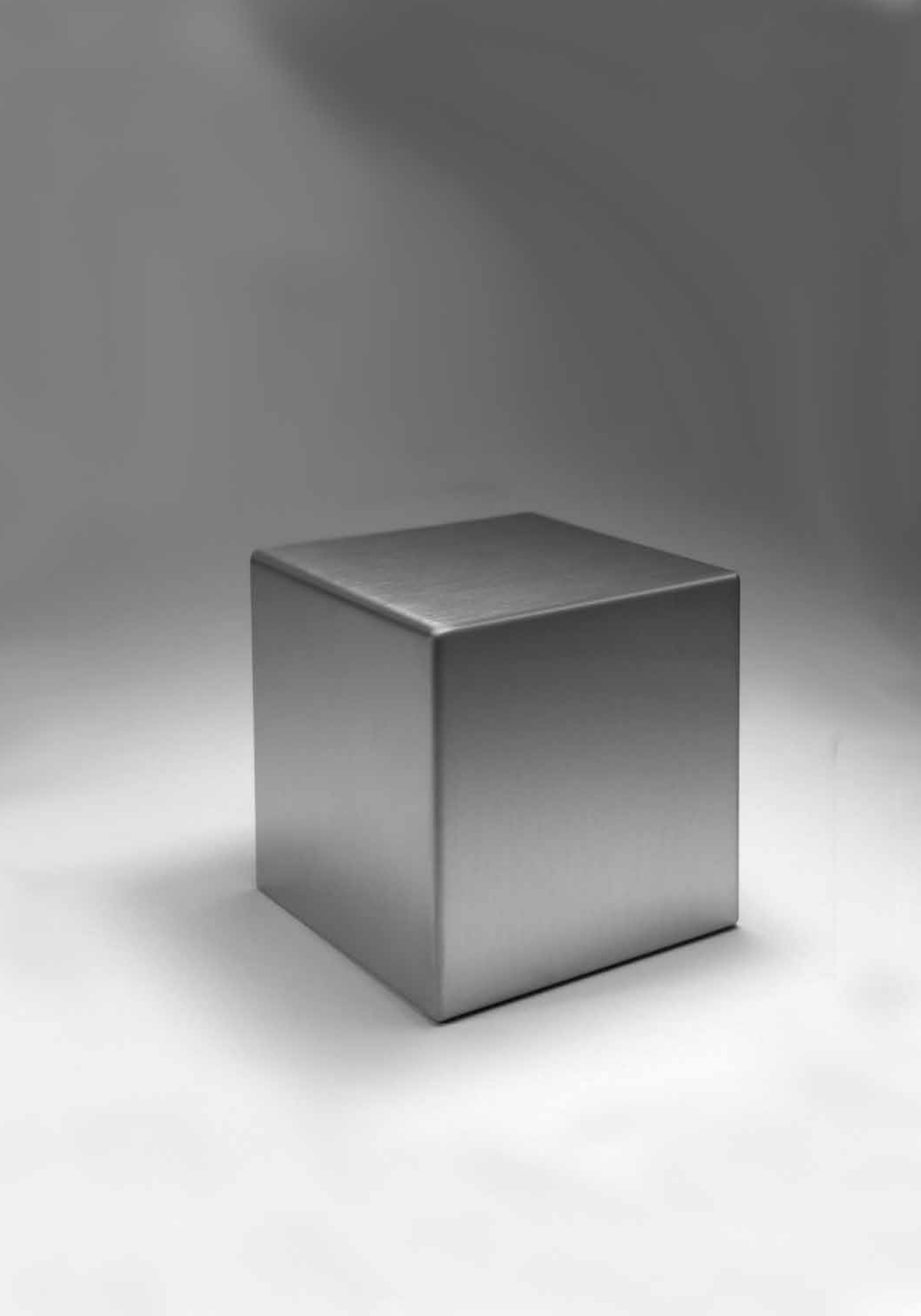
P/PV is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, nonpartisan organization with offices in Philadelphia, New York City and Oakland. For more information, please visit www.ppv.org.

Acknowledgments

Many organizations and programs have contributed to the lessons and information compiled in this report. While there are too many to name individually, we would like to extend our sincere thanks to all of the programs that P/PV has worked with through the years—experience that has taught us a tremendous amount about the science and art of program replication.

Without the dedicated staff in P/PV's communications department, this report would not have been possible. Chelsea Farley reviewed the report and provided excellent feedback about its structure and content. Laura Johnson carefully edited the report, and Penelope Malish created its graphic design. Additionally, Jeffrey Butts and Wendy McClanahan from P/PV's research team provided valuable content for the evaluation section.

Lastly, a special thanks to Matthew McGuire, P/PV's Board Chair, for his encouragement and support in getting this report to the field.

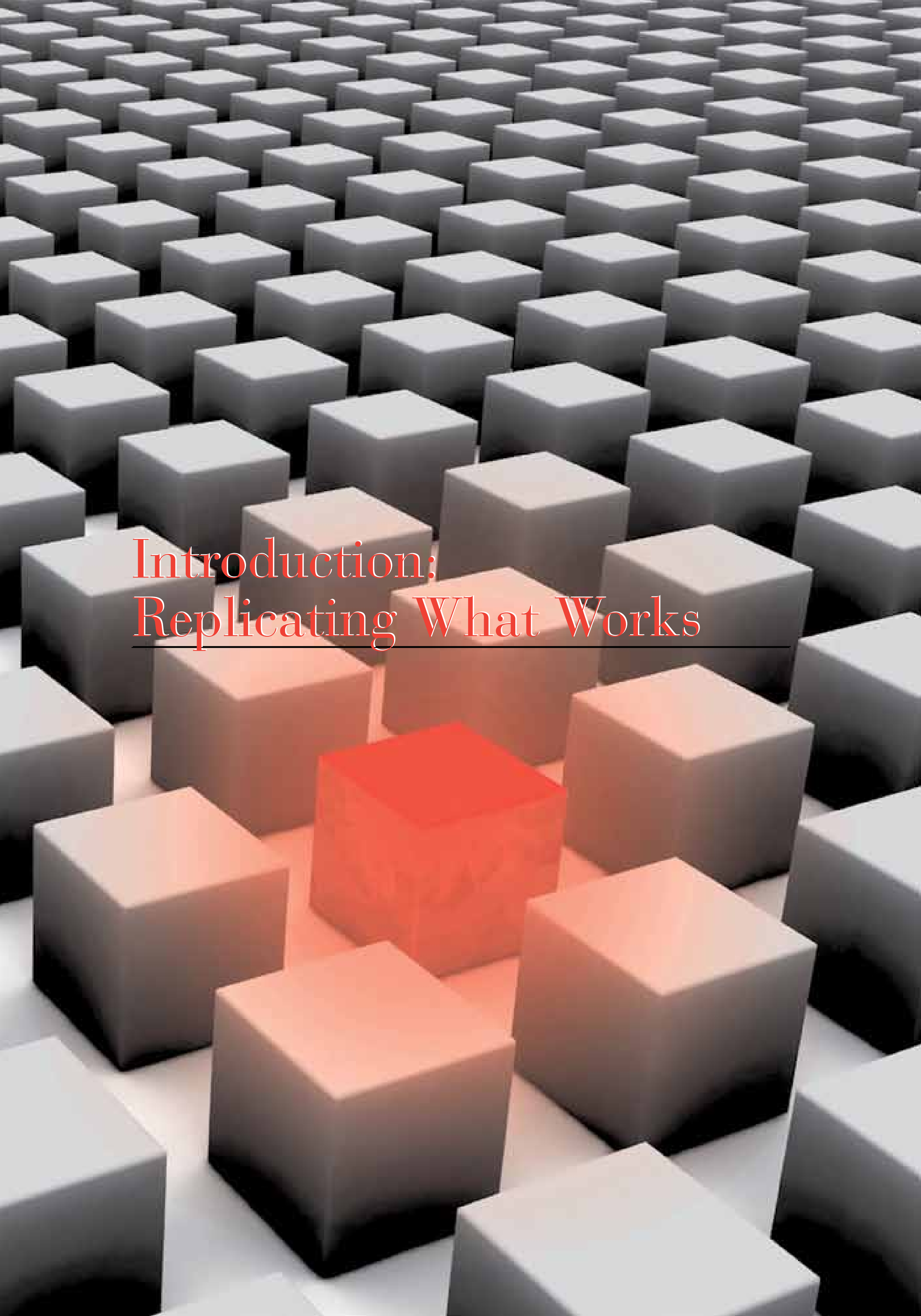


Laying a Solid Foundation

Strategies for Effective Program Replication

Contents

Introduction: Replicating What Works



With limited funds available for social investment, policymakers and philanthropists are naturally interested in supporting programs with the greatest chance of effectiveness and the ability to benefit the largest number of people. When a program rises to the fore with strong, proven results, it makes sense to ask whether that success can be reproduced in new settings.

Program replication is premised on the understanding that many social problems are common across diverse communities—and that it is far more cost-effective to systematically replicate an effective solution to these problems than to continually reinvent the wheel. When done well, replication of strong social programs has the potential to make a positive difference not just for individual participants, but indeed for entire communities, cities and the nation as a whole.

Yet despite general agreement among policymakers and philanthropists about the value of replication, successful efforts to bring social programs to scale have been limited, and rarely is replication advanced through systematic public policy initiatives. More often, replication is the result of a particular social entrepreneur's tireless ambition, ability to raise funds and marketing savvy.[1] The failure to spread social program successes more widely and methodically results from a lack of knowledge about the science and practice of replication and from the limited development of systems—at local, state or federal levels—to support replication.

Fortunately, there seems to be growing awareness of the need to invest in such systems. For example, the 2009 Serve America Act included authorization for a new Social Innovation Fund that would "strengthen the infrastructure to identify, invest in, replicate and expand" proven initiatives.[2] The Obama administration recently requested that Congress appropriate $50 million to this fund, with a focus on "find(ing) the most effective programs out there and then provid(ing) the capital needed to replicate their success in communities around the country."[3]

But more than financial capital is required to ensure that when a program is replicated, it will continue to achieve strong results. Over the past 15 years, Public/Private Ventures (P/PV) has taken a deliberate approach to advancing the science and practice of program replication. Through our work with a wide range of funders and initiatives, including the well-regarded Nurse-Family Partnership, which has now spread to more than 350 communities nationwide, we have accumulated compelling evidence about specific strategies that can help ensure a successful replication. We have come to understand that programs approach replication at different stages in their development—from fledgling individual efforts that have quickly blossomed and attracted a good deal of interest and support to more mature programs that have slowly expanded their reach and refined their approach over many years. There are rarer cases in which programs have rigorous research in hand proving their effectiveness, multiple sites in successful operation and willing funders prepared to support large-scale replication.

Regardless of where a promising program may be in its development, our experience points to a number of important lessons and insights about the replication process, which can inform hard decisions about *whether, when* and *how* to expand a program's reach and total impact. In the interest of expanding programs that work, funders sometimes neglect the structures and processes that must be in place to support successful replication. These structures should be seen as the "connective tissue" between a program that seeks to expand and the provision of funding for that program's broad replication.

This report represents a synthesis of P/PV's 30 years of designing, testing and replicating a variety of social programs and explains the key structures that should be in place before wide-scale replication is considered. It is designed to serve as a guide for policymakers, practitioners and philanthropists interested in a systematic approach to successful replication.

Knowing When To Replicate

The nonprofit sector has experienced dramatic growth in recent decades. According to the National Center for Charitable Statistics, approximately 1.4 million nonprofits registered with the IRS in 2006,[4] creating no foreseeable shortage of promising models eager to replicate in new locations.

Our experience suggests four basic criteria that should be used to determine whether a program is ready for replication.

- ***Does the program address an important social problem or need?*** Replicable models must stand out in the marketplace of social ideas by addressing needs that are recognized in many communities, and by policymakers, as compelling, unresolved and worthy of investment.
- ***Is the program effective and, if so, what makes it effective?*** Rigorous evaluations help determine which programs demonstrate sufficient evidence of producing positive results to warrant replication.
- ***Can it achieve positive results in a timely fashion?*** To thrive within a regional or national marketplace, replicable models should begin to achieve positive results fairly rapidly, typically within one to three years of program start-up.
- ***Are the program's essential elements clear and replicable?*** A systematic assessment of the program model is one of the most important steps in determining the viability of replication. A strong assessment identifies and outlines the essential components of the program that must be implemented with fidelity in order to achieve desired results; it also illuminates the more fungible qualities that can be adapted to meet local circumstances.

The Role of Evaluation

Research plays a vital role in the development of any social program. Data collection to monitor and inform ongoing practice as well as independent evaluations that objectively gauge a program's impacts are both important. Grantmakers seeking to support high-quality programs and make sound social investments are generally interested in both types of research.

Ideally, rigorous random assignment research should be used to test and confirm program effectiveness prior to large-scale replication. This is the surest way to evaluate a program's impact, and until this is known, it is hard to justify investments in replication or to determine what outcomes can be expected during program expansion. However, random assignment evaluations are not always feasible.

For one thing, there are inherent ethical issues tied to the temporary denial of services to a randomly selected control group (it is generally agreed that randomly selecting some people to not receive a program's services is more acceptable in cases where the program has a long waiting list). It can also be challenging to raise the substantial funds necessary to cover the costs of such robust research. Costly mistakes have been made when random assignment research was used to test young programs that were not yet ready for tough analysis. Articulating a clear theory of change and conducting a solid implementation study first can help ensure that subsequent random assignment research provides a true, fair test of the program's effectiveness.

When the gold standard of random assignment is not feasible, a quasi-experimental design that includes a comparison group is the next best option. The key difference between experimental and quasi-experimental designs is the mechanism used to assign research subjects to either the treatment group or the control/comparison group. In experimental (random assignment) designs, people are assigned to participate in the program (treatments) or not (controls) based on chance—using a random number table, a coin flip, etc. This means any differences that emerge between treatment and control groups can be attributed to the program. In quasi-experimental designs, people are assigned to the control/comparison group based on factors other than chance (for example, a similar population located in another city). It's possible that the comparison group is somehow already different from the treatment group, meaning one can't know with certainty whether the program caused the observed changes for participants. The findings of this type of evaluation will always be subject to greater scrutiny. Despite this drawback, a quasi-experimental design can be informative in many situations where an experimental design is not feasible and, in some circumstances, may even be the best choice.

When preparing programs for replication, ongoing data collection and analysis should be viewed as a continuous support that will inform and strengthen the program's performance over time. Data can be used to monitor a program's implementation and—as the program is replicated in new places—to confirm that outcomes seen in the formal evaluation are indeed occurring in new sites. Over time, solid data collection and analysis also allow for tweaking of the model as new "best practices" are identified.

The Role of Replication Assessment

When an independent evaluation affirms that replication may be worthwhile, the next step is to conduct a comprehensive replication assessment.

What it is: A good replication assessment lays the groundwork for replication by helping to determine whether a program is ready to be replicated in new communities. Assessments typically describe a program's history, define essential elements and related activities, explain lessons learned to date and make recommendations about subsequent steps necessary for successful replication. It is much like an implementation study but with an eye toward expansion and sustainability.

How it works: Replication assessments are typically conducted through comprehensive site visits to observe program activities and interview staff, participants and key partners about a program's operations, goals and management practices. They also include a review of relevant program materials and documents, such as evaluation results, program descriptions, marketing materials, training materials, meeting notes and participant data.

Careful analysis of these findings helps determine a program's essential elements. This step is not easy and requires careful consideration of which aspects of a program's model are essential to produce the program's results, as well as which aspects may represent desirable options for local variation and choice. Replication is often misperceived as a rigid, top-down approach that leaves little room for adaptation to fit unique community needs. While fidelity across sites regarding the essential program elements is necessary, so too is the ability of local implementers to shape a given program model within their local context. The types of essential elements typically documented through the replication assessment process are listed on the next page.

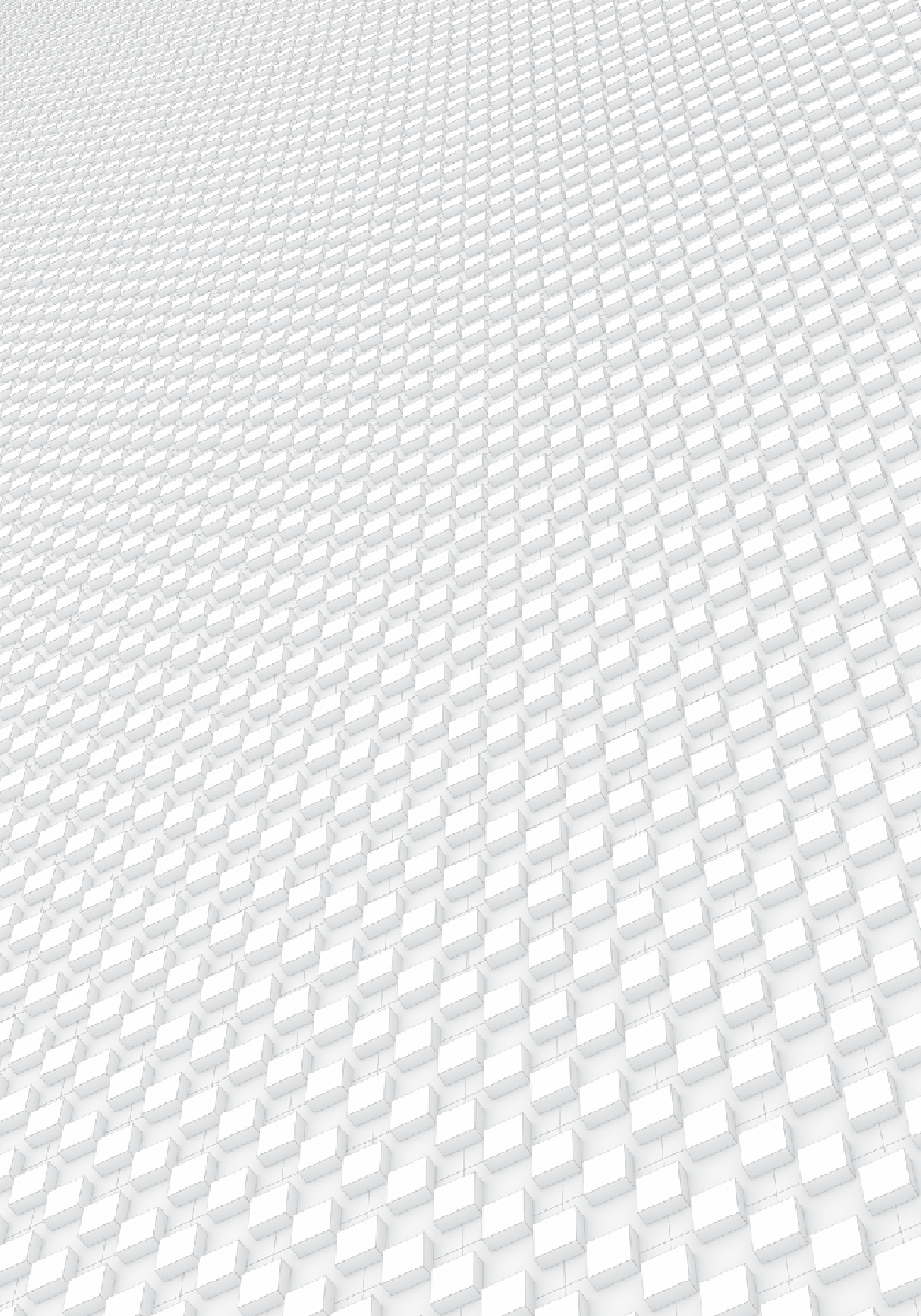
Opportunities within replicable models for local variation and potential modifications account for the fact that programs are fundamentally *social*, and thus situated within community environments where local contexts differ and human needs and behaviors vary and change.[5] For example, when considering the replication of an evidence-based youth violence prevention program, an essential element of the model might be community-based staff who are dedicated to building supportive mentoring-like relationships with local youth. While all sites may be expected to have such staff, the ways specific roles are designed and how and by whom they

Defining Essential Elements

Defining a program's essential elements is a vital first step in replication planning. While essential elements vary greatly across diverse program models, they typically include descriptions of the following:

- Participant demographics;
- Desired intensity and dosage of programming;
- Duration of programming;
- Key initiation and transition points for participants; and
- Staff qualifications and configuration.

are managed may vary across sites to fit the nature of youth violence in a particular community (e.g., gang-related versus school-centered). In this way, successful program models remain agile in their ability to balance essential and adaptive elements over time.[6]



Laying a Solid Foundation

Once research evidence confirms the value of a particular program and essential elements have been documented, a multiyear plan for replication should be created that will guide the development of new sites.

Where To Replicate?

One of the first decisions that will need to be made is where to replicate and how rapidly new sites may be adopted. Sometimes this decision is predetermined by opportunities that develop through the interest of a given funder or program director. However, it is important to think both opportunistically and strategically. An initial strategy should be developed to target areas that have the most need and show the most interest (e.g., cities, states or geographic regions).

The term "national replication" can bring to mind the idea of replicating 25 new sites in 25 cities across the country. However, this kind of diffuse approach is neither cost-effective nor efficient. It is important to note that full-scale replications fundamentally differ from demonstration projects. Whereas demonstrations seek to test a potential model's success in diverse communities, replication is intended to seed, embed and sustain a program in new communities. Successful efforts to replicate are highly deliberate about where to locate new sites and often maximize the benefits of growing a critical volume of sites in a given state or region that can eventually progress to national scale. There are three key benefits to *regional saturation:*

- ***Marketing:*** Regional efforts to promote the development of new sites can be focused on those specific audiences and individuals most likely to have an interest. A buzz about the program can be created among policymakers and communities of practice in a given area, and specific local or state funding streams can be carefully aligned to support the new model. In other words, it is easier to build awareness, create demand and obtain sustainable funding in a particular state when a program is replicated in many cities and localities.
- ***Cost:*** It is more cost-effective to conduct cross-site training and technical assistance for a group of sites within a given state or region than for sites scattered across the country. In essence, it is more efficient to provide technical assistance to ten sites in one state versus one site in ten different states.
- ***Peer-to-peer learning:*** The development of sites that are relatively close in proximity paves the way for valuable peer-to-peer learning opportunities. Often the first sites to be established become natural mentors to subsequent

Replication Timeline: Nurse-Family Partnership

The replication of the Nurse-Family Partnership provides an illustrative example of when, where and how to build toward a national replication. Nurse-Family Partnership seeks to improve the health, well-being and self-sufficiency of low-income, first-time parents and their children through regular nurse home visitation.

1995: Three clinical random-assignment research studies have been completed, proving the effectiveness of the program.

1996: The US Department of Justice invites Dr. David Olds, the program's developer, to implement the model in six high-crime, urban areas around the country.

1997: Replication and Expansion Services, Inc.—now a part of P/PV—is engaged to advance the program's replication nationwide.

2003: The Nurse-Family Partnership National Service Office is incorporated as a nonprofit.

2009: The Nurse-Family Partnership's national replication effort is thriving with more than 350 sites in 28 states.

sites, and opportunities to visit and meet somewhat regularly across sites support more learning and problem solving, thus enhancing program quality.

Dedicated Staffing

A staff solely dedicated to advancing a program's replication helps to create the momentum necessary to establish that program in new locations. When replication is in its earliest stages, there can be a temptation to reassign and stretch existing program staff to lead the development of new sites. However, the inherent risk of this approach is that it can weaken the original program *and* fail to provide the replication effort with the attention required to be successful.

In P/PV's experience, replication works best when it is informed by the knowledge of the program's original designer during the planning stage. To begin program replication, a minimum of three full-time staff positions are typically necessary: an expert spokesperson who is dedicated to beginning partnerships and positioning the program; a staff person assigned to training and technical assistance; and a data analyst who helps programs collect and interpret data. This team forms the basic "skeleton crew" of a national program office. As the replication effort progresses, new staff members should be added to train and manage new sites and to assist with the data analysis and reporting. The manager-to-site ratio varies depending on the complexity of the program being replicated. Additionally, once the replication is up and running, a policy/funding staffing position should be added. This will allow the national program office, as well as the program sites, to be informed about relevant policies and to pursue public funding opportunities that help ensure program sustainability.

Implementation and Training Guides

Well-structured initiatives that consistently implement proven essential elements can produce concrete, measurable benefits for communities. But this type of careful, effective implementation doesn't happen without the right support in place. A standard guide to program implementation helps new communities quickly gain a full understanding of what is required to successfully adopt the model. Strong implementation guides include information about the program's history and evaluation results, detailed descriptions of each essential program component, staffing recommendations, standard operating and reporting procedures, recruitment and retention practices, expected roles and responsibilities, data collection guidelines and evaluation tools. Similarly, a standard training curriculum should be created to ensure that all new sites begin with the same tools and foundation. Effective training guides break training modules down into individual units and include objectives, lecture notes and handouts for each module.

Implementation and Training Guides Developed by P/PV

- *Reaching Through the Cracks: A Guide to Implementing the Youth Violence Reduction Partnership*
- *The Plain Talk Implementation Guide*
- *Walking the Plain Talk: A Guide for Trainers*
- *Lessons Learned at Wilson Commencement Park: A Transformational Housing Implementation Guide (forthcoming)*

These guides and other resources are available for free download at www.ppv.org.

Communications Strategy

While many businesses use sophisticated methods to create recognizable brands, most nonprofits are relative newcomers to strategic communications efforts. Yet positioning a program well in the marketplace can be essential to successful replication.

A well planned and implemented communications strategy can build name recognition and foster positive associations with a program's brand, drawing champions and investors who may support the program locally, regionally and nationally. A comprehensive communications strategy designed to advance a program's replication may include:

- Identifying specific communications goals that align with larger organizational and program goals;
- Articulating what makes the program special or unique and adopting a name and logo that help convey those qualities;
- Developing clear, concise, consistent messages about the program (and often about the problem the program addresses);
- Pinpointing the audiences the program wants to reach and influence, as well as channels that will be used to communicate with these audiences;
- Promoting the program via marketing and media relations campaigns and web-based strategies; and
- Periodically evaluating the effectiveness of communications efforts to make adjustments as needed.

The public launch of a replication effort should be carefully planned to reach audiences that are in a position to support the work, including funders, partners and implementing agencies. The lead spokesperson for the program will need to focus on creating widespread awareness—presenting at local meetings, statewide forums and national conferences and engaging relevant media outlets.

Sound market research on prospective communities and partners can drive appropriate outreach and inform where time is spent seeding interest. For example, if a program model is designed to increase neighborhood safety, it would be useful to create a database that tracks communities that have relatively high crime rates, local leaders dedicated to this issue, and funding sources available.

Building Partnerships

Strategic partnerships that support replication through advocacy, fund development and the identification of new sites can broaden a program's natural appeal and help ensure sustainability. Well-aligned partners can also minimize potential resistance to a new approach—or a new "player" in the community—by sharing accurate information about the program's intent and results. Partners may include government agencies, policymakers, foundations and state or national nonprofits committed to the same issues.

Plain Talk, a teen pregnancy prevention program established by The Annie E. Casey Foundation, is a good example of the value of partnerships. Building close relationships with state teen pregnancy prevention coalitions, local and state health departments and adolescent healthcare providers is central to Plain Talk's replication strategy. These partnerships provide access to local, county and state government agencies and other policymakers, as well as key decision-makers in the foundation world—assets that are vital in developing public and private funding for new sites.[7]

Once a program decides to replicate, it is essential to start building partnerships with like-minded organizations with similar goals. State coalitions and national organizations both provide added visibility and opportunities to promote programs at their meetings and conferences. Partnerships are key in helping create demand and bringing visibility to new programs.

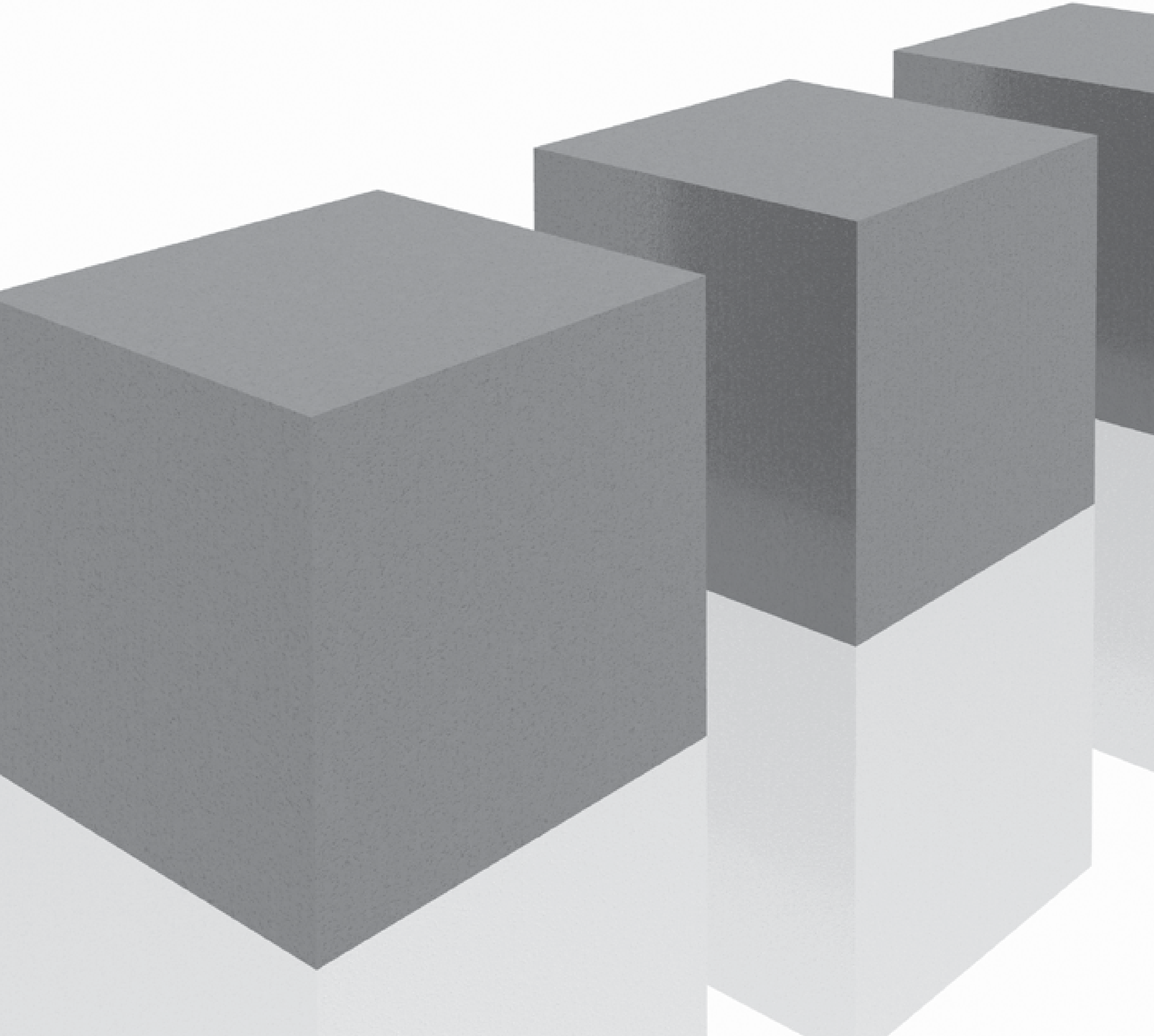
Universal Data Collection System

A universal data collection system is an essential tool for monitoring initiative-wide progress and informing programming at individual sites. Designing the system and related data collection forms and training materials prior to the adoption of new sites ensures that baseline data is captured from the outset and that data collection and analysis become an integral part of standard operating procedures. Effective data monitoring also helps ensure that new sites adhere to the model, achieving results that are comparable to those demonstrated during the original pilot research.

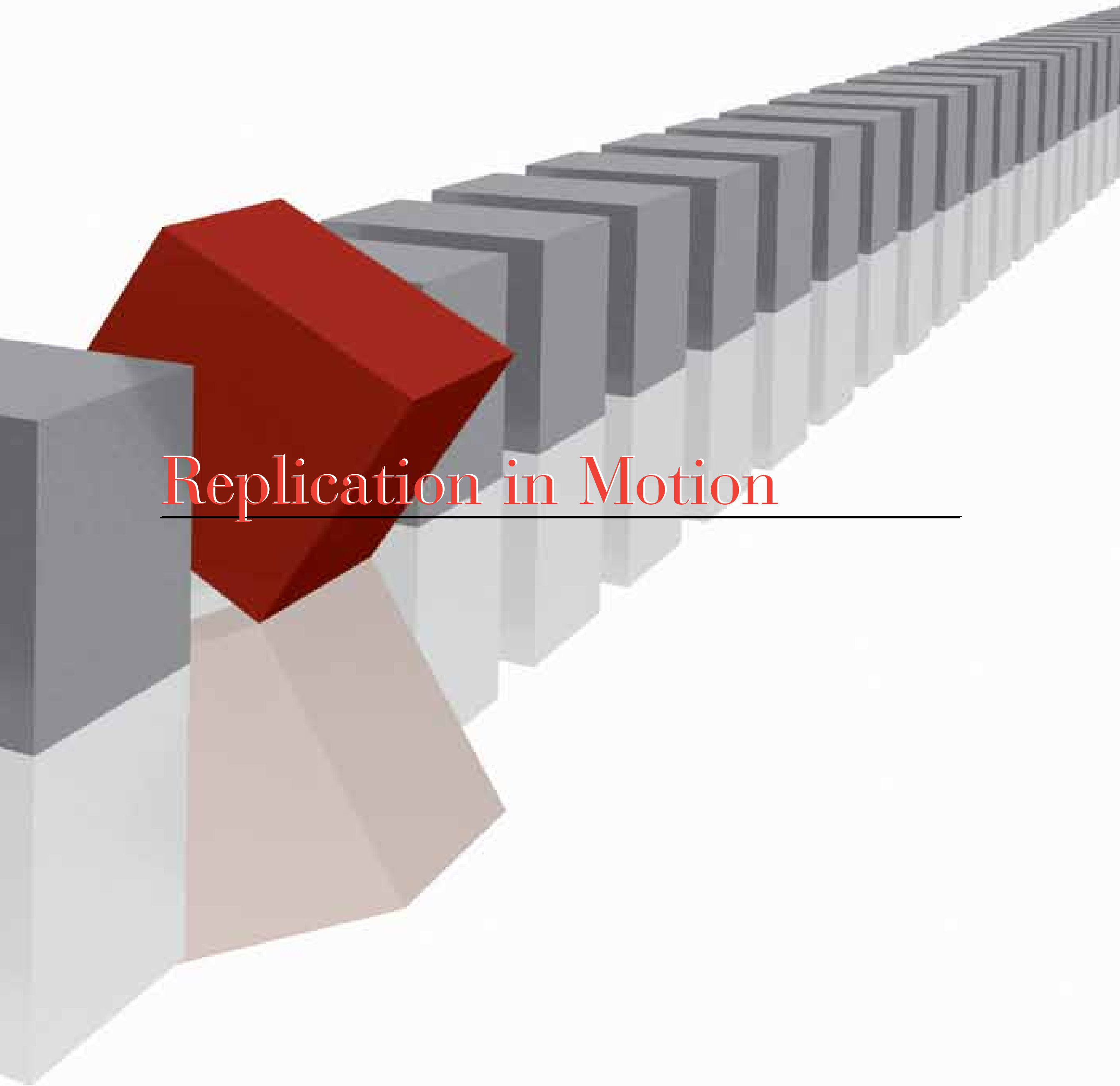
Strong data systems include implementation data and progressive benchmarks, as well as outcome measures that reflect program goals. Real-time, web-based data collection systems have several advantages: They are user friendly;

information is immediately updated to reflect current performance; and data can be aggregated to show the "big picture" and the impact the program is having statewide or nationally.

As new sites are brought on, the national program office should work closely with them to minimize the duplication of data collection efforts, through careful consideration of sites' existing data systems. Specialized training and ongoing technical support to data personnel at each site is equally important, as well as using the system to generate monthly performance reports on individual site progress, which can point to needs for technical assistance. When established as a tool for shared learning and collective performance improvement, such systems promote communities of practice that engage all partners in working toward common goals.



Replication in Motion



Depending on where an initiative may be in its development, the planning processes described in the last sections can take between one and two years to complete. But working deliberately to design a comprehensive plan for where and how to replicate, preparing implementation and training guides, developing a communications strategy and engaging strategic partners to assist with replication is time well spent: When site selection and training begin, programming can be up and running—and achieving results—relatively quickly.

Site Selection

An objective application process to guide and inform the selection and approval of new sites helps prospective sites comprehend whether they have the ability and commitment necessary to adopt the new program. Effective site application packages typically include an overview of the model, criteria to successfully implement and sustain the program, requests for basic information about community demographics and need for the program, early commitments of local partners and a budget template explaining each line item and the cost to run the program. A comprehensive site selection process may also involve an administrative and organizational assessment to determine internal capacity and technical assistance needs. An overview of criteria to consider during site selection is provided below.

Criteria to Consider During Site Selection

Is a proposed site able to demonstrate the following?

1. A committed, well-connected champion who is knowledgeable about the core issues the program addresses.
2. Experience working in the selected community and with the targeted population.
3. Explicit will among community and site leadership to commit to a change in business as usual through active participation in ongoing planning, resource sharing, data collection and monitoring.
4. Ability to recruit and retain program participants.
5. Commitment to implement the essential components with fidelity.
6. Letters of commitment from partners at multiple levels and evidence of prior success with collaboration.

Once sites are approved and confirmed, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or similar contractual agreement helps to reaffirm a clear understanding of the expectations of each site as well as the supports the national program office and other partners or subcontractors will provide.

Training and Technical Assistance

Replication is not a top-down, cookie-cutter approach. Strong initial training in how to carry out the program model should be paired with hands-on technical assistance that is tailored to the particular needs, interests and capacities of each site. In the beginning of many replications, the training and technical assistance are usually conducted by the same person. However, once the replication begins to mature, the position is almost always divided, with one person focused on initial training and a site manager who provides ongoing technical assistance—site managers are typically the main point of contact for sites.

One-time trainings rarely produce lasting results. Trainings should be staged progressively over time (e.g., beginning with new site orientation, participant recruitment and data collection, and then focusing on the best practices for each core component of the model). More importantly, training and technical assistance should work in tandem so that training is swiftly followed by hands-on technical assistance that helps site directors apply the lessons learned during training to their individual program.

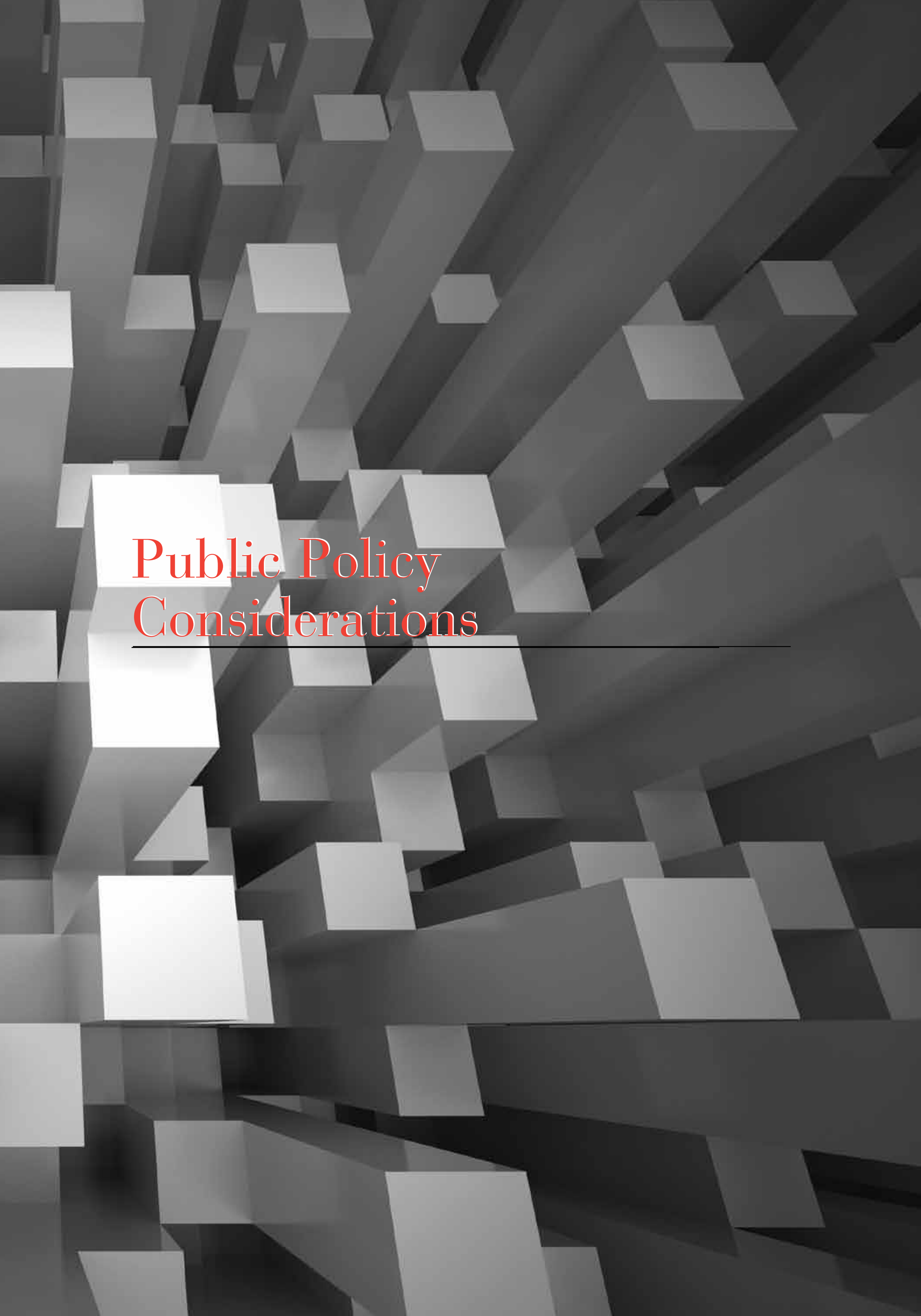
Initial and ongoing technical assistance plans often feature the following:

- ***Continuous support:*** Site managers have the benefit of maintaining a bird's-eye view to track regional and national trends, coupled with a grounded understanding of local issues and individual site needs and strengths. They regularly scan the field to identify new resources and share relevant information about best practices across all sites. They should also be readily accessible to guide and support individual site needs through regular visits, conference calls and a 24-hour call-back policy for more urgent issues.
- ***Data monitoring:*** As discussed in the last chapter, a universal data collection system is designed to monitor site progress, collecting information about key performance indicators and outcomes. Site managers use data to drive continuous program improvement at the individual sites and at state,

regional and national levels. Good data monitoring and reporting is the most important tool for crafting and providing successful technical assistance.

- ***Communities of practice:*** Site managers play an integral role in bringing sites together to learn about and share best practices. True peer-learning communities recognize that each program site has both knowledge to share and knowledge to gain. Annual conferences can offer inspirational opportunities to engage with peers at the regional, state and national level. Carefully structuring peer learning opportunities during the first year of implementation can be critical, planting the seeds for less formal but nonetheless very productive peer-to-peer exchanges as the program progresses. More experienced program sites should be actively encouraged to mentor new sites.
- ***Sustainability planning:*** Whether supporting sites that are new or mature, systematic planning to ensure program sustainability is essential. Technical assistance should include time spent educating sites about successful fund development strategies. Site managers can regularly disseminate fundraising tools and resources, including regular grant updates that highlight new funding opportunities.
- ***Public policy and advocacy:*** The public policy environments in which programs operate are often volatile, and they have a direct effect on replication efforts. Site managers should work closely with sites to develop a joint advocacy agenda that covers policy recommendations and funding authorizations. Monthly public policy updates shared across sites help to inform programs about new opportunities and potential threats to the program.
- ***Communications:*** Training and support on effective communication strategies, including media relations and consistent messaging across sites, is invaluable. It helps develop strong community buy-in and is critical for program sustainability. When sites work together, they can create a powerful "echo chamber" that fosters support for the program nationally—and advances successful replication.

In managing a variety of replication efforts, P/PV has consistently observed that local sites welcome high-quality training and technical assistance through the strategies described above, provided that expectations about roles and responsibilities are agreed upon at the outset. There is an unwritten 25-50-25 rule that most technical assistance providers encounter during large-scale replications. Program sites fall into one of three categories: below standards (generally about 25 percent of sites); meeting standards (about 50 percent); or above standards (about 25 percent). The 25 percent of sites that fall below standards require much more time and attention to bring them up to par, and sites that are operating at or above standards may suddenly require more support—even the best-laid plans cannot prevent some challenges from occurring, such as a program director or other key staff person resigning, a slump in funding, or an illness. These situations demonstrate the importance of strong, ongoing technical assistance in any replication effort.



Public Policy Considerations

P/PV's experience with a wide variety of replication efforts suggests a number of key recommendations for policymakers:

Invest in rigorous evaluation of promising programs. Many funders, both public and private, are willing to support programs but unwilling to commit resources or time to the kind of rigorous evaluation needed to conclusively determine a program's effectiveness. It can be a long process with no guarantee of positive results. Thus, it is a risk that many funders are reluctant to take. Because of this, too many unproven programs—which may not produce the final outcomes funders are hoping to achieve—are nonetheless being expanded. This is not to say that funders should rush into random assignment studies of every promising initiative. But when a program has been piloted in several locations, when it's clear that the challenges associated with start-up have been worked through and implementation is strong, and when the data being collected suggests the program may be making a positive difference in participants' lives, an investment should be made in rigorous evaluation—before massive amounts of public funding are funneled to expanding the program. In the long run, taxpayers will absolutely receive a stronger return on investment, and individuals, families and communities will be better served.

When funding program replication, invest in the structures and strategies that help reproduce positive results. To replicate a program successfully, a robust plan should be created and executed that includes:

- A sound replication assessment to determine the desirability and feasibility of replication;
- Documentation of essential and adaptive program elements;
- Creation of implementation and training guides that encourage consistency across sites;
- Staff positions that are dedicated to supporting the replication effort;
- Communications strategies that help attract new sites and build support for the program;
- A network of strategic partnerships that spans from the local to the national level;

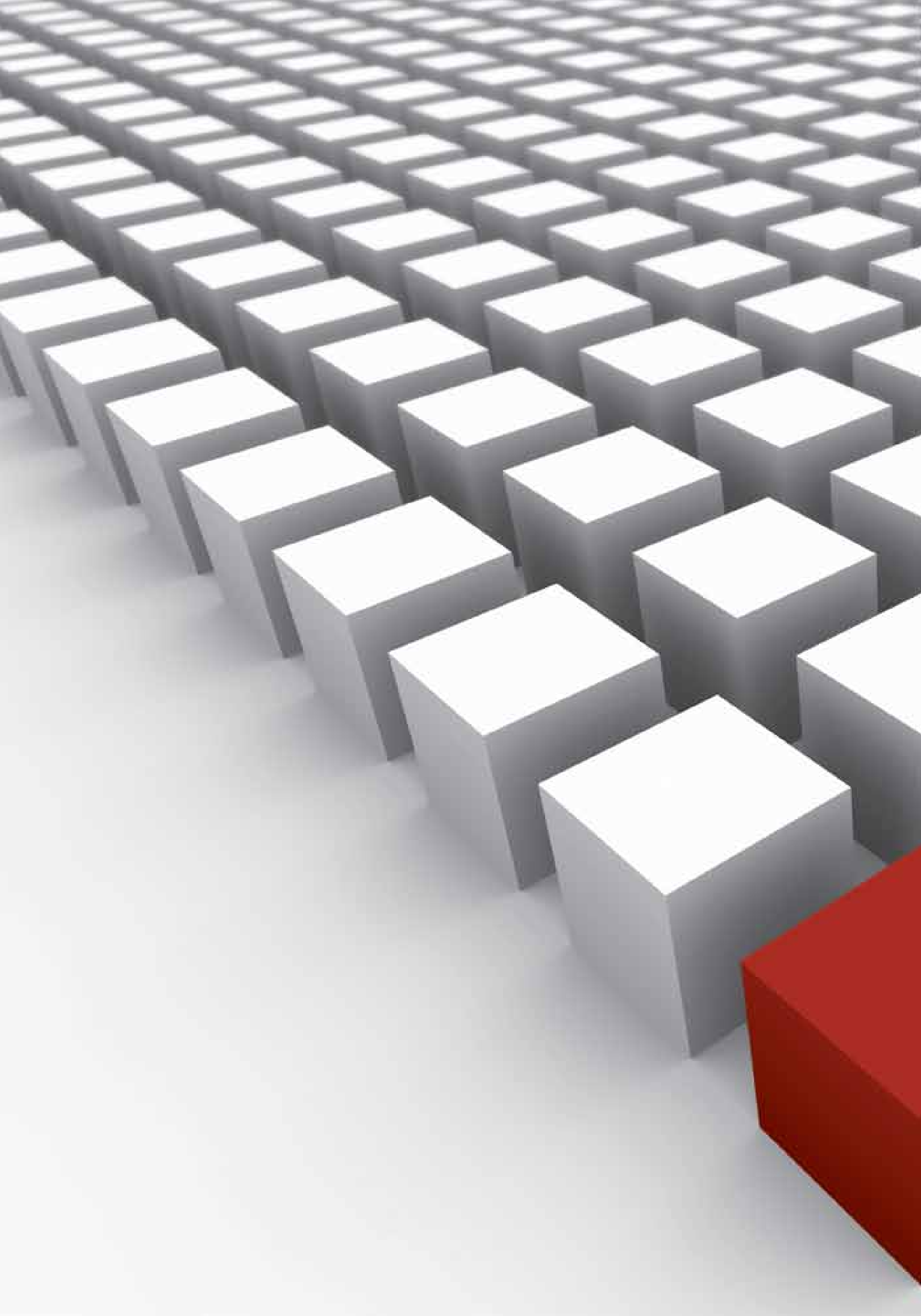
- A universal data collection system designed to monitor results;
- Careful site selection; and
- Standardized training and ongoing technical assistance.

Program developers need upfront funding to support these activities. Such investments are important for creating a strong replication structure that will increase the likelihood of success and sustainability.

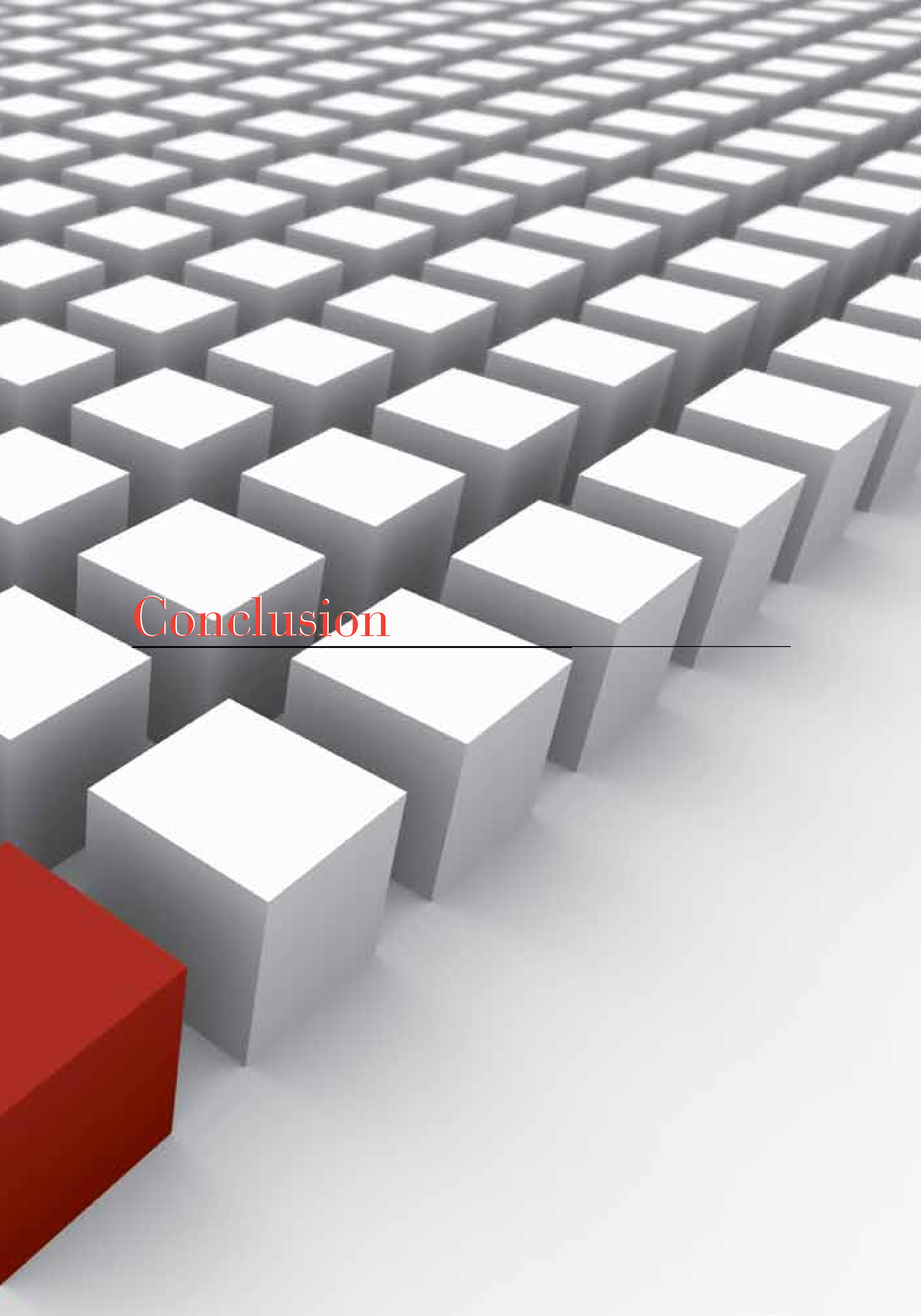
Have realistic expectations about the time needed to scale up effectively. Developing and establishing the structures and resources outlined above takes time (typically 12 to 18 months). Furthermore, staggering the launch of new sites over several years—rather than launching hundreds of sites simultaneously—can help ensure that young programs get the support they need. When a program is deemed effective, it can be tempting to embrace explosive growth, but a methodical, well-thought-out approach to replication fosters solid program implementation and is much more likely to produce positive results.

Consider funding mechanisms that encourage a regional approach to replication. Replication efforts benefit from regional saturation. Having a number of sites concentrated in one state or region enables effective local marketing of the program, reduces the cost of providing needed training and technical assistance, and facilitates the creation of strong peer-learning communities. Funders interested in expanding a program nationally should consider an approach that initially grows a critical volume of sites in particular states or regions and then progresses to national scale.

Insist on adherence to the essential elements of the program being replicated. Determining which aspects of a program's model are essential to produce results—and then ensuring that these elements are faithfully adopted in new sites—is absolutely vital to successful replication. While the essential elements vary greatly from program to program, they typically include things like participant demographics; the intensity and duration of programming; key initiation and transition points for participants; and staff qualifications and configuration. Implementation and training guides can codify these elements—and still leave room for local variation, choice and creativity.



Conclusion



Rapid growth in the nonprofit sector has created a field replete with innovative approaches to social problems. But not all of these approaches are effective—in fact, it is the rare program that is able to prove it can have a strong positive effect on the lives of its participants. And hard choices must be made about the use of limited funds. A deliberate and well-supported strategy to replicate the most effective programs is a wise use of public and private dollars.

When pursuing replication, it may be tempting to consider faster and less costly approaches than those described here. For example, some well-intended programs seek to carefully document relevant materials, make them widely available to prospective program sites and then step back to allow sites to drive local adaptations. Yet in the absence of a team or national program office that is dedicated to supporting and monitoring consistent results, independent local efforts may falter and weaken the case for continued public and private investment. A deliberate replication strategy, informed by the experience of programs that have successfully expanded, is the best way to reproduce not just programs but results.

Endnotes

1 The Conservation Company and Public/Private Ventures. 1994. *Building from Strength: Replication as a Strategy for Expanding Social Programs that Work.* Philadelphia: Replication and Program Services, Inc.

2 Serve America Act. 2009. 111th Congress.

3 Wilhelm, Ian. May 5, 2009. "White House Seeks $50 Million for 'Social Innovation.'" *The Chronicle of Philanthropy.*

4 Pollack, Thomas H. and Amy Blackwood. 2007. *The Nonprofit Sector In Brief: Facts and Figures from the Nonprofit Almanac 2007.* Washington, DC: Urban Institute's National Center for Charitable Statistics.

5 Racine, David. 1998. *Replicating Programs in Social Markets.* Philadelphia: Working paper prepared by Replication and Program Strategies, Inc.

6 Ibid. Also: Racine, David. 2004. *Capturing the Essential Elements.* Philadelphia: Public/Private Ventures.

7 Summerville, Geri. 2006. *Copy That: Guidelines for Replicating Programs to Prevent Teen Pregnancy.* Washington, DC: The National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, and Philadelphia: Public/Private Ventures.

Public/Private Ventures
2000 Market Street, Suite 600
Philadelphia, PA 19103
Tel: (215) 557-4400
Fax: (215) 557-4469

New York Office
The Chanin Building
122 East 42nd Street, 42nd Floor
New York, NY 10168
Tel: (212) 822-2400
Fax: (212) 949-0439

California Office
Lake Merritt Plaza, Suite 1550
1999 Harrison Street
Oakland, CA 94612
Tel: (510) 273-4600
Fax: (510) 273-4619

www.ppv.org

July 2009