Sample Abstract for an Individual Paper or Poster Presentation

**Paper Title:** Community Development Corporations (CDCs): Critical Factors That Influence Success

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**Topic Category:** Housing, Neighborhoods, Community Development

**Abstract Text:** As the CDC movement has gained momentum, their activities and impacts have been subject to closer review and evaluation. The most consistent finding in investigations of CDCs is: variability. CDCs vary in size, activities, financial resources, outputs, staff expertise, and other attributes. The unanswered question is: which organizational and/or programmatic attributes affect the success of CDC efforts in neighborhood revitalization? This paper examines this question through qualitative analysis of data and information gathered through interviews with CDC staff and board members, public documents (e.g. annual reports), and related research literature. Three case studies are developed that detail the experiences of individual CDCs in Newark, NJ, San Francisco, and Lowell, MA. Key Findings: four key factors influence CDC success: mission, organizational competency, political capital, and funding. Mission determines which individuals, groups, and institutions will support a CDC, and it dictates a particular development strategy. Organizational competency is reflected in the ability of staff and board members to engage in planning, community organizing, fundraising and program/project implementation. Political capital is accumulated through direct organizing of residents to pressure decision-makers, as well as through partnerships with powerful institutions. Funding provides basic resources to enact initiatives, but is also associated with a CDC's political clout and competency. In addition to these four key factors, the effectiveness of CDCs is affected by the local economic and political climate. The study findings show that despite differences in some basic characteristics, successful CDCs share certain common experiences and attributes. Future assessments of CDCs should incorporate these common denominators in order to gain a clearer understanding of how these factors operate in different contexts.