

# What is the Neighborhood Collaborative Project?



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## Overview

The Neighborhood Collaborative Project (NCP) brings services back into Rochester neighborhoods to create an agile, responsive services system, build resident capacity to problem-solve, and meet community needs. The NCP is led by three anchor neighborhood community agencies in NE, NW, and SW Rochester. These anchor agencies and additional support agencies collaborate to provide services such as basic needs distribution, benefits acquisition, vocational services, and eviction prevention.

## Description

The NCP (Neighborhood Collaborative Project) is an effort to collaborate across neighborhood community centers and service providers to strengthen the community from within. The mission is to improve the quality of life of residents by bringing access to health and human services while building the capacity of existing agency assets, providing workforce training and employment for residents and empowering staff and residents to be informed navigators of current health and human services systems. This is a shift from decades of centralized services that not only weakened neighborhood capacity, but also resulted in service gaps and barriers for residents.

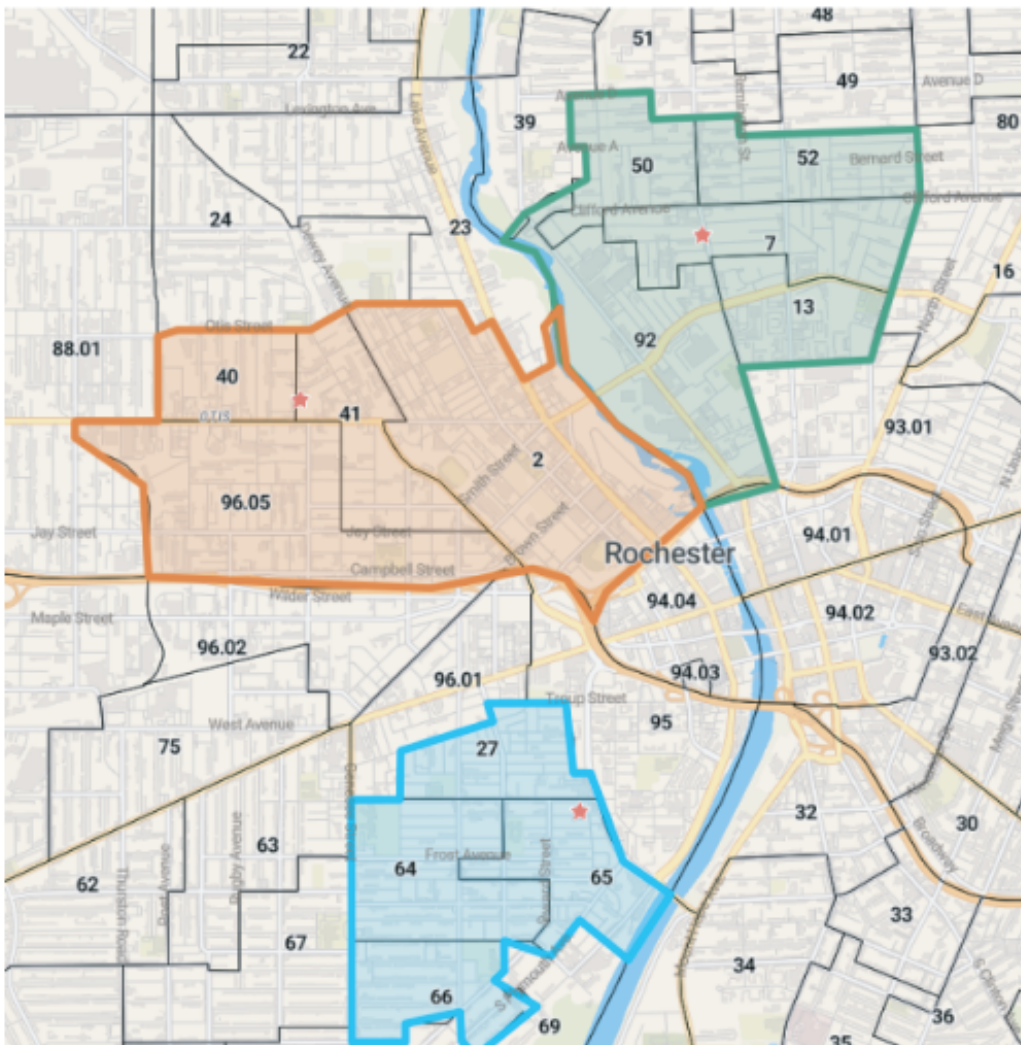
The goals of the NCP are threefold:

- 1) Develop and implement an agile, responsive, sustainable services platform at the neighborhood level;
- 2) Increase neighborhood capacity to address issues important to the community; and
- 3) Improve neighborhood conditions.

## NCP Partners

The NCP is comprised of three anchor agencies: **SWAN at Montgomery Neighborhood Center**, **Father Tracy Advocacy Center (FTAC)**, and **Cameron Community** (indicated by red stars in the map); six support agencies: **The People's Pantry**, **ABC Action Front Center**, **Baden Street Settlement Counseling and Support Center**, **Lyell Ave Business Association**, and **Barakah Muslim Charity**; four project partners: **Beyond the Sanctuary**, **MC Collaborative**, **C3 Consultancy Services**, and **On The Ground Research**, and our fiscal sponsor, **Community Resource Collaborative**.

Each anchor agency has neighborhood specific support programs and services that reflect unique neighborhood dynamics. These support agencies provide their respective services to community members and participate in NCP events. A more comprehensive services platform includes all partners that anchor agencies will draw from. New support agencies will be added to the services platform throughout the duration of the project. However, prospective agencies will be vetted to ensure they are accessible, accountable, consistent, and providing a service, not simply engaging in cold hand-offs. Eventually, the anchor agencies will become community portals.



The project partners provide services across all three neighborhoods. Beyond the Sanctuary prioritizes NCP clients for their wraparound support services and workforce development, MC Collaborative provides crisis and case management services, C3 serves as the community consultant who coordinates the project, and OTG serves as the local research partner.

## NCP Origin

NCP began with MC Collaborative staff and community volunteers (Marvin, Kevin and others) conducting walking outreach throughout 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic. Given MC Collaborative's long-standing relationship with Monroe County Department of Human Services, SWAN, Beyond the Sanctuary, and C3 Consultancy, a joint collaboration emerged to pilot vacant lot/corner canopy pop-up outreach at one of the most chronically violent areas in the city: Jefferson/Frost Ave for 8 ½ weeks during Summer 2021.

Other support service providers were vetted to ensure low-barrier engagement and immediate responsiveness. During this same time, walking outreach was piloted in the NW and NE areas of the city. FTAC, Cameron, and MC Collaborative, along with other providers (ABC and Trillium), conducted coordinated outreach.

The response from community members was overwhelming, “No one ever comes here to provide services!” was a common refrain. These activities led to formal planning to collaborate and leverage resources across all three neighborhood areas.

## Major NCP Components

In order to be responsive and agile, NCP partners are committed to meeting residents at their point of need. The NCP is focused on outreach and connection - in the moment. This is done through:

**Walking Outreach:** Teams go out in each neighborhood weekly to talk with people, distribute supplies, benefits acquisition, and service referrals.

**Corner Canopies:** On vacant City lots, the NCP sets up tents weekly to provide services. This allows providers to meet people “where they are.”

**Brick-and-Mortar:** Increased staffing will build capacity of the neighborhood centers, so they can serve more people with a wider variety of services than they are able to alone.

**Services Platform:** Vetted partners will be added (and removed) to respond to current neighborhood needs. Each Anchor Agency will have a social worker and a vocational trainer as determined by the organization. Social work presence will increase service connection, including behavioral health and basic needs. Neighborhood Ambassadors will be hired and taught the skills to help people obtain benefits, and refer friends/family to resources.

**NCP Guiding Principles:** The NCP is rooted in principles that guide decision-making and problem-solving efforts.

**Vibrant Community**

Focused on developing programming and services that connect and inspire residents. Support healthy, resilient neighborhoods, while ensuring that no one is excluded. Vibrant communities value diversity and different, sometimes conflicting, perspectives.

**Solutions-Driven**

Problem-solving is embedded in everyday work. Curiosity, creativity, and critical thinking guide this process, ensuring that a solution is developed. However, the solution today may not be the solution tomorrow. Every interaction is rooted in a belief that, “Yes, we can find a way,” instead of “No, we don’t do that.”

**Legacy-Generating**

Commitment to the future, by learning from and building on the past. The work is done, not only to help in the “now,” but to shape and support a prosperous future for the neighborhood. This includes valuing all residents, young and old, equally.

**Agile and Adaptable**

Frequent reassessment and adaptation is necessary in order to be responsive to the uncertain and complex nature of meeting the community’s needs. Services can be added and subtracted, and not all services are needed across all neighborhoods.

**Accountability**

Taking responsibility for actions, decisions, and their consequences. This includes a commitment to maintaining records and documentation to demonstrate and hold people/agencies accountable. Ongoing evaluation and reporting the findings to the community is a key aspect of accountability.

**Authenticity**

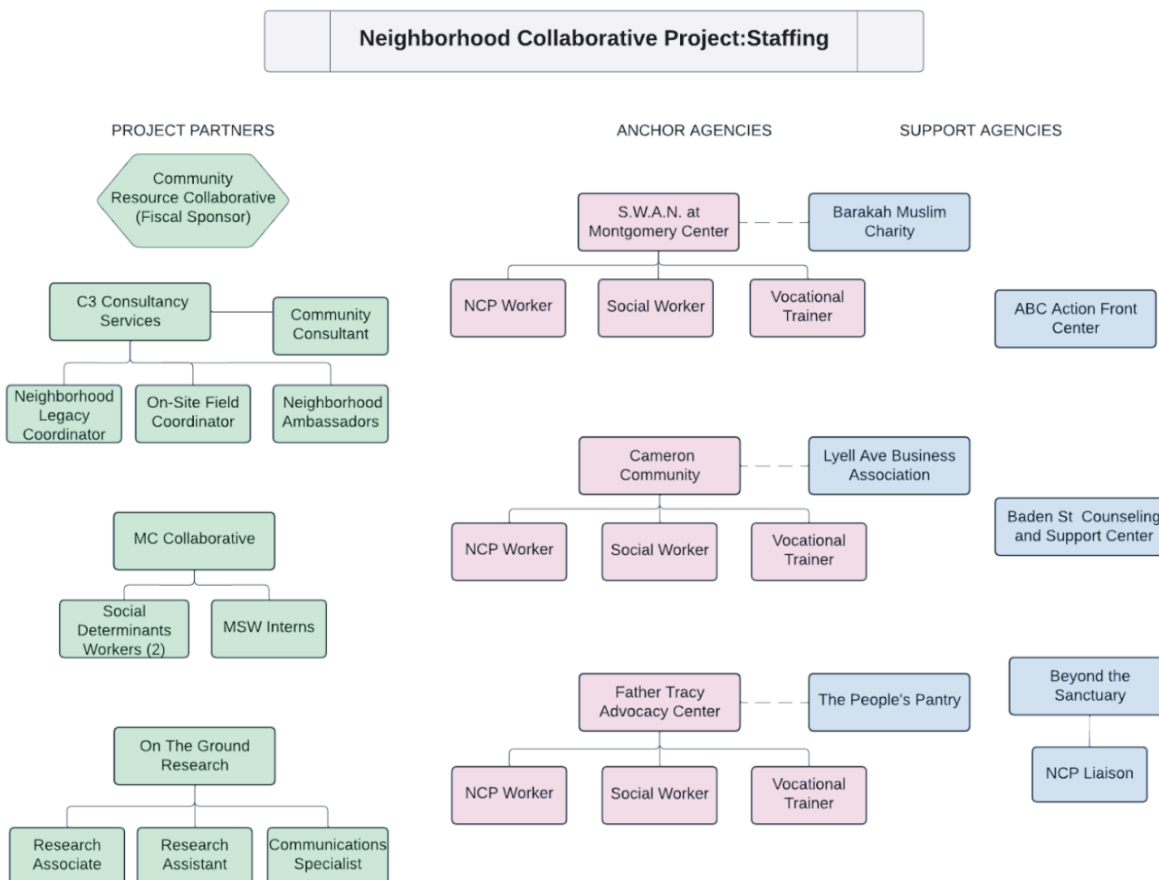
Commitment to acting with integrity and genuinely representing oneself and the agencies/providers. This also involves humility when approaching problems and people. It is okay to not know the answer, but to work together to find a solution.

**Neighborhood Centeredness**

Recognition that neighborhoods have their own interests, culture, and traditions. This is respected through the inclusion of neighborhood stakeholders not only as consultants, but through employing, training, and creating leaders in the neighborhoods. All activities must be community-based and driven from the ground up.

## Staffing

NCP is a collaborative project and as such there are no direct employees of the project. All staffing and volunteers are managed through the three anchor agencies, the four support partners and the project's platform of support services partner agencies. The figure below shows the NCP staffing for the project.



## Assessing Impact

On The Ground Research will conduct applied, action research to assess the impact of the NCP on people, agencies, and neighborhoods. Major elements that will be assessed include: capacity-building, collaboration, and changes in quality of life. Ongoing reports will be shared with NCP partners and the community to track the progress to date, as well as use the time to reflect on what is going well, what needs improvement, and challenges that are arising.

## Funding Source and Timeline

This multi-year project is funded through Monroe County's American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) award. The project began in March 2023 and continues through December 2026. Year one is focused on planning for implementation, year two is practicing the components and processes, year three is piloting, and year four is proceeding into full implementation.