# Building the Engine of Community Development in Detroit

# Community Development Organizations (CDO) Competency Framework

## What is the CDO Competency Framework?

The CDO Competency Framework was designed to identify *what an individual should know and be able to do to perform work that is essential to developing, managing, and maintaining* effective community development organizations and *carrying out the work of the organization in the community*. The tool represents three levels of competency statements (entry, mid- and managerial). It also captures foundation/employability competencies at a generic level and defines, more discreetly, specialized CDO competencies.



* Identifies foundational community development competencies that people at all levels of Community Development work should know and be able to do. In some instances, these competencies also cross affiliated sectors.
* Identifies and profiles specialized competencies within the CDO context at three levels of career pathways.
* Provides a framework to align competencies to existing and new educational programs and pathways including credit for work-based learning, development of new credentials, improved professional development pathways for CDO’s and increased mobility for CDO professionals to move within the profession and into other sectors

## How was the Framework Developed?

The tool’s **structure** represents a synthesis of information derived from:

1. Identifying the role and work of community-based organizations in the community development field.
2. Identifying organizations that employ community development professionals.
3. Identifying broadly defined categories of foundational activities, knowledge, and values held by employees within community development and allied sectors, with a specific focus on the work of community development organizations.
4. Using the “Preliminary Competency Model for Community Engagement” – a tool developed through extensive literature review and surveys.
5. Reviewing and synthesizing competency framework models from multiple sectors as well as those used in competency-based education and competency-based hiring.

The tool’s **content** was produced through an iterative process involving practitioners (Focus Groups, Kitchen Cabinet, Task Force) to:

1. Identify/validate work functions and competency categories within the community development profession.
2. Articulate what is done in each competency category through the development of competency statements.
3. Engage in multiple feedback loops to further develop and refine work functions, competency categories and competency-statements.

## How can this Framework be Used?

The CDO Framework is a tool **that can be used to:**

1. Align competencies to existing and new educational programs and pathways including credit for work-based learning.
2. Provide a shared taxonomy of competencies to support the development of new credentials including stacked credentials and modularized training.
3. Produce competency-based job descriptions to help better qualify talent, draw from alternative talent pools (people who may not hold a degree), and improve professional development planning for individual CDO employees.
4. Support broader organizational development.
5. Improve the clarity of professional development pathways and increase mobility within the CDO profession and across other related sectors/professions.

This framework is not a static document and will be updated as this set of community development work and competencies evolve.

\*\*\* Note: In the context of this tool, a competency statement describes what a person knows and is able to do within a specific context. The statement can be used to shape the assessment of how well someone demonstrates a given competency.

## Summary of Foundational and Specialized Competencies in a CDO Context

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| **Foundational/Employability Competencies** | **Specialized Competencies within a CDO Context** |
| **Self-Development & Awareness**   * Motivation (to learn community development on the job) * Ethics and Integrity (to listen, respond, & plan with residents in mind)   **Critical Thinking**   * Problem Solving, Flexibility, Resourcefulness * Creativity & Innovation * Power Analysis * Research & Applied Strategies * Ethnographic & Best Practices   **Communication**   * Interpersonal (with a variety of external stakeholders) * Written (including grant writing), formal and informal * Team * Visual Communication   **Professionalism**   * Dependable/Reliable * Flexible/Adaptable   **Digital Literacy**   * Microsoft Office Platforms * Digital Graphic/Visualization Tools * Social Media | **Resident Engagement**   * Social Justice/Cultural Respect & Effectiveness * Community Engagement * Volunteer Management   **Resident Empowerment**   * Community-Based Planning and Design * Board Training and Development * Community Education & Training   **Economic Development**   * Commercial Corridor Development * Business Organizing and Development * Commercial Real Estate Development * Housing Development * Vacant Land Reclamation   **Public Policy and Advocacy, Issue Organizing, and Facilitation**  **CDO Organizational Development and Management**   * Service Leadership * Staff Development * Board Management * Fundraising * Data & Information Management * Project Management * Financial Management * Organizational Strategic Planning   **Programmatic Initiative Development and Management**   * Research into Best Practices * Program Design * Fund Development * Implementation * Success Measure/Data Collection/Reporting, Leveraging, Scaling |

## Examples of Specialized Competencies

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| **CDO Functions** | **Competency Categories** | **Competency Statements** | **Level (Entry, Mid, and Managerial)** |
| **Resident Engagement** | Social Justice/Cultural Respect & Sensitivity | Uses reflective and critical thinking skills to gain insights into assumptions, worldviews, values, beliefs and biases within privileged and marginalized status | Mid to Managerial |
| Facilitates an understanding (in the workplace) of how privileged and marginalized status influences worldviews and experiences | Mid to Managerial |
| Assesses the degree to which privileged and marginalized status affects CDO initiatives and identify ways to reduce impact | Mid to Managerial |
| Seeks professional development opportunities for the community and staff to explore the impact of privileged and marginalized status on their ability to work effectively in the CDO sector | Managerial |
| Community Engagement | Understands, chooses, and applies tools to identify resident and local stakeholders skills, assets, rights and responsibilities | Managerial |
| Demonstrates the ability to inspire and recruit residents and other stakeholders to volunteer to assist in organizational activities | Entry, Mid, Managerial |
| Identifies community outreach strategies and engages community and stakeholders in recruitment of community members | Mid to Managerial |
| Volunteer Management | Organizes events, tasks and activities that utilize and deploy local volunteers | Mid |
| Assesses and leverages volunteer strengths to support organizational work | Mid to Managerial |
| Provides information, training, and supervision for resident volunteers | Mid to Managerial |

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| **CDO Functions** | **Competency Categories** | **Competency Statements** | **Level (Entry, Mid, and Managerial)** |
| **Resident Empowerment** | Community-Based  Planning and Design | Designs, coordinates and facilitates gatherings of community stakeholders to identify and resolve community issues | Mid to Managerial |
| Provides processes and tools that support idea generation and creativity | Mid to Managerial |
| Advocates for issues raised by the community and raises community awareness using multiple communication channels including writing, speaking, and listening | Mid to Managerial |
| Demonstrates and articulates knowledge of community history and evolution including realtionship and impacts within the current community context | Mid to Managerial |
| Employs mediation skills to resolve conflicts and align competing interests | Entry, Mid, Managerial |
| Engages in and encourages openess to learning about cultural and economic backgrounds and diversity within the community | Entry, Mid, Managerial |
| Builds community members’ confidence in their individual and collective power | Mid to Managerial |
| Assists in developing community defined, driven and operated programs by initiating conversations, supporting the development of a vision, soliciting and organizing sponsorship, setting goals, developing and implementing strategy | Managerial |
| Matches appropriate professional design services with resident-led projects | Mid to Managerial |
| Facilitates interaction between designers and resident organizations | Mid to Managerial |
| Resident Board Training and Development | Provides tools to help resident board members understand board decision-making, board roles and authority and board responsibilities | Mid to Managerial |
| Translates complicated policy language and programmatic jargon into understandable language | Mid to Managerial |
| Community  Education & Training | Helps residents participate in conversations or negotiations with public and private officials | Managerial |
| Uses basic community organizing techniques to organize committees, boards, and other collective decision-making bodies to continuously improve residents’ ability to ask appropriate questions and negotiate to achieve resident priorities | Managerial |

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| **CDO Functions** | **Competency Categories** | **Competency Statements** | **Level (Entry, Mid, and Managerial)** |
| **Economic Development** | Commercial Corridor Development | Assesses commercial corridor best practices and applies those with high potential to achieve desired outcomes | Mid to Managerial |
| Uses market analysis to understand the dynamics of a micro-economy within a corridor and its surrounding macro economy | Managerial |
| Engages local business stakeholders to align/match corridor strategies to priorities and needs defined in market and planning analysis | Managerial |
| Identifies and implements funding strategies that include government resources and tools, as well as private funding to achieve aligned strategies | Mid to Managerial |
| Business Organizing and Development | Understands principles of business development and management to inspire and recruit business to engage with CDO | Mid to Managerial |
| Uses community development principles, processes and tools when engaging and integrating businesses in community development work | Mid to Managerial |
| Facilitates and brokers support services to local businesses | Mid to Managerial |
| Commercial Real Estate Development | Employs necessary tools and strategies to generate market analysis for commercial/institutional real estate development | Mid to Managerial |
| Identifies and aligns development to resident priorities | Mid to Managerial |
| Develops and deploys real estate development team for any given project including design, financial strategies, securing financing, environmental impacts, site control and/or site clean up and clearance, construction/rehab/repair, tenant recruitment, property management | Mid to Managerial |
| Housing Development | Employs necessary tools and strategies to generate market analysis for housing real estate development | Mid to Managerial |
| Identifies and aligns development to resident priorities | Mid to Managerial |
| Develops and deploys real estate development team for any given project including design, financial strategies, securing financing, environmental impacts, site control and/or site clean up and clearance, construction/rehab/repair, tenant recruitment, homebuyer recruitment, property management | Mid to Managerial |
| Vacant Land Reclamation | Assesses and applies land reclamation best practices to develop and implement land reclamation strategies that align with resident and business priorities | Mid to Managerial |

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| **CDO Functions** | **Competency Categories** | **Competency Statements** | **Level (Entry, Mid, and Managerial)** |
| **Public Policy and Advocacy** | Public Policy | Employs an understanding of local, state, and federal political environment and the impact these environments have on the CDO community | Mid to Managerial |
| Identifies specific government policy and practices that facilitate or impede the organization’s mission and strategy and develops approaches to enhance or mitigate the impact of policies | Managerial |
| Develops professional, constructive relationships with elected/appointed government officials that help shape, anticipate, inform policy decisions impacting the community | Mid to Managerial |
| Uses basic community organizing tactics to engage residents in defining strategies to influence/impact policy | Mid to Managerial |
| Translates complicated policy language to help those residents unfamiliar with jargon understand the impacts | Mid to Managerial |
| **Issue Organizing** |  | Ensures larger systemic issues (e.g. racism, sexism, immigration, education) are identified and addressed as drivers of inequity | Mid to Managerial |
| Develops relationships with key intermediaries to address larger issues (beyond geography) that impact community, are barriers to community work, and impeded implemenation of locally driven initiatives | Mid to Managerial |
| Helps translate issues for the community as they relate to specific CDO initiatives | Mid to Managerial |
| **Facilitation of Collaboration** | Group Facilitation | Manages group discussions toward a specific goal, specifically with a cross-sectoral diversity of participants | Mid to Managerial |
| External Relationships | Identifies necessary external players/organizations that may impede or facilitate the organization’s mission | Mid to Managerial |
| Develops professional and constructive relationships with these various actors | Mid to Managerial |

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| **Organizational Development and Management (within CDO)** | Service Leadership | Cooperatively develops organizational mission, design, and policies in service of community-driven work | Managerial |
| Identifies and understands team dynamics and creates strategies to ensure teams are informed, effective, and productive | Mid to Managerial |
| Participates as a team member as opposed to leader when appropriate | Mid to Managerial |
| Ensures people have the tools and resources required to get work done | Managerial |
| Sets aspirational yet attainable team/organizational objectives | Mid to Managerial |
| Models curiosity and out-of-the-box thinking | Mid to Managerial |
| Staffing and Staff Development | Develops organizational structure and functions. Identifies staffing roles and responsibilities and aligns resources to ensure the organization operates effectively and efficiently | Mid to Managerial |
| Establishes processes and procedures to recruit, hire, and develop paid and volunteer staff | Mid to Managerial |
| Board Management | Seeks and recruits a community-representative and skilled board of directors | Mid to Managerial |
| Employs tools and resources to deploy board training and development for board members | Mid to Managerial |
| Utilizes board members appropriately for fund development, technical expertise and to provide amplification of resident priorities | Mid to Managerial |
| Employs tools and resources to keep board members regularly informed | Mid to Managerial |
| Works with board members to assure by-laws compliance and to set up required board committees which may include HR, Finance, Fund Development, Nominations, Programs, Real Estate Activity, or committees related to key issues of the organization | Mid to Managerial |
| Fundraising | Develops and leads fundraising strategies ranging from events to donor solicitations to crowd funding | Mid to Managerial |
| Identifies funding sources | Mid to Managerial |
| Secures support through individuals, philanthropy, grants, government funding | Managerial |
| Data and Information Management | Collects data and information to define program and organizational impact | Mid |
| Analyzes data and information to understand trends, fund development strategies, strategic positioning of community priorities | Mid to Managerial |
| Project Management | Uses fundamental project management processes, methods, tools and techniques and adapts them to CDO work | Mid to Managerial |
| Structures projects to reflect project goals, timelines, deliverables and resources needed to achieve outcomes | Mid to Managerial |
| Financial Management | Demonstrates a basic understanding of non-profit fund accounting | Entry to Mid |
| Works with financial personnel to: Deal with independent auditors; understand the rules and regulations of different financial resources; and ensure compliance with financial regulatory requirements, taxes, conflict of interest, etc. | Mid to Managerial |
| Manages revenue streams to ensure projects and operations are adequately funded. | Mid to Managerial |
| Identifies resources necessary to assure asset management is being handled appropriately | Mid to Managerial |
| Establishes processes and procedures to ensure financial management staff and consultants have the necessary skills and expertise to manage organizational/project finances. financial management staff and consultant expertise | Managerial |
| Organizational Strategic Planning | Works in concert with the Board of Directors to establish and set organizational priorities including who is served, how to serve, why to serve, and how to ensure the organizations future | Managerial |
| Ensures employees and stakeholders are working toward common goals | Mid to Managerial |
| Establishes agreement on intended priority outcomes and results | Mid to Managerial |
| Assesses and adjusts organization’s direction in response to changes in extermal environment | Managerial |
| Marshalls and focuses energy and resources to strengthen the organization’s ability to achieve mission and work | Managerial |

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| **CDO Functions** | **Competency Categories** | **Competency Statements** | **Level (Entry, Mid, and Managerial)** |
| **Programmatic Initiative Development & Management (Youth, Seniors, Workforce, Business)** | Research | Identifies key topical areas for research, synthesize information from that research and draw conclusions on how that research will apply to the CDO service area | Mid to Managerial |
| Fund Development | Matches the organizations’ initiatives and programs with appropriate philanthropic sources | Mid to Managerial |
| Projects the organizations’ direction and develops appropriate relationships with philanthropic, wealthy donor and government sources | Managerial |
| Creates a revenue portfolio that contains a diversity of funding sources | Mid to Managerial |
| Program Management & Implementation | Once programs are designed and resourced, recruits and hires appropriate staff to implement program details | Mid to Managerial |
| Sets and communicates clear objectives to staff and governing body | Managerial |
| Monitors and trouble-shoots program implementation, based on ongoing monitoring of progress against success indicators | Mid to Managerial |
| Success Metrics/Data  Collection/Reporting & Program Design | Uses logic models leading to ultimate community impact | Mid to Managerial |
| Identifies “success indicators” based on that logic model | Mid to Managerial |
| Establishes realistic processes to collect data to monitor and assess achieving success | Mid to Managerial |
| Synthesizes research, stakeholder input on desired outcomes and elements of logic model to develop and document beginning-to-end service program | Mid to Managerial |