

# CIVIC NONPROFIT DEMONSTRATION CASE STUDY UPDATE

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**Identity Statement:** The Civic Nonprofit is a demonstration of the Minnesota Active Citizenship Initiative. It produces a new approach to policy making—*civic policy making*—within the nonprofit sector that builds the civic imagination, capacity, and infrastructure needed to be a just society.

### BACKGROUND:

The Civic Nonprofit Demonstration (CNP) of the Minnesota Active Citizenship Initiative (MACI) was launched in 2003 when Sean Kershaw became Executive Director of the Citizens League. In August 2015, Citizens League membership in CNP was formally sunset after many attempts to advance a civic organizing approach within the institution. The experience provided essential information for developing a civic organizing model. (See details in the 2015 CNP Case Study Update)

**The civic organizing model was developed** between 1994-2014 and the process which required a “trial and error” testing across a diverse base and whatever piece we were focused on that passed the test in all sectors, became an essential part of the model. In this ambiguous process, more members dropped their governing role than sustained that obligation through what is a challenging co-creating experience.

By 2007-08 members had developed enough agreement on pieces of the model to draft criteria. 2009-2014, the focus was on establishing specific steps to meet criteria and methods for accountability against criteria.

**In 2015-2016** Sean Kershaw and Peg Michels (Civic Organizing Inc. Board members) with support from MACI, restructured the Civic Nonprofit Demonstration. The intent was to start fresh using what is now a *civic organizing model* produced from the 20 years of experimentation. This decision provided an opportunity to establish the Civic Nonprofit Demonstration as an autonomous MACI structure whose sole purpose was to expand the civic organizing model and make necessary adjustments. At the same time, we established a collaborative relationship with the Citizens League which allowed Sean Kershaw to use the *Civic Organizing Framework* to support the development CNP Demonstration in his role as Citizens League Executive Director. In return the Citizens League could use findings from MACI Case Studies to support their policy initiatives.

**Our current focus for organizing is to complete Stage 1 and sustain CNP as a governing demonstration of the Minnesota Active Citizenship Initiative. Deadline-June 2017.** ) If that deadline is achieved we will move forward to test our ability to expand in Stage 2.

## SUMMARY OF SPECIFIC OUTCOMES and INSIGHTS

### *Working-*

- **The decision to restructure CNP but sustain a collaborative relationship with the Citizens League** provides flexibility in the way an institution may contribute to MACI without advancing the civic organizing model within their institution. This agreement sustained the integrity of the Citizens League’s mission, the integrity of the *Civic Organizing Framework*, and provided a way to advance both.
- **Sustaining while building the lead organizing capacity needed to establish CNP as a governing MACI Demonstration.** It was important that Civic Organizing Inc. had been organized as a civic nonprofit. This provided an “institutional” base for accountability, and the lead organizing capacity to MACI needed to support the CNP 2015-16 Work Plan. However, CNP lead organizers know that for the demonstration to have sustained impact, we need institutional members who have integrated civic organizing into their governing system. These institutional members need to represent the Minnesota nonprofit sector. This need is driving our current organizing focus.
- **CNP Lead Organizers are staying very focused on meeting criteria** for Stage 1 by June 2017, and feel hopeful this will be achieved.
- **Do not need a large CNP institutional base.** A CNP base could be 2-5 nonprofits whose leaders are taking civic organizing deep inside their institution. This will expand upon the nonprofit base being organized in other demonstrations. At this time Jamie Pfuhl-Executive Director of the Minnesota Grocers Association, is testing the civic organizing model within her organization and Dan Holub-Minnesota Association of Professional Employees (MAPE), received approval from his Board for piloting a civic organizing approach within MAPE. (See pgs. 4-6 for investing in a civic organizing pilot)
- ***Civic Nonprofit Policy Agenda* provides a specific policy focus on nonprofit governance.** The agenda is supported by the CNP Case Study. (CNP Framing Document and 2016 Update). This 2 page agenda is being used to create a climate for the need for addressing nonprofit governance, describing the purpose for CNP institutional pilots, and recruiting potential pilot lead organizers.
- **Developing a “profile”** from lessons learned that supports the *Civic Nonprofit Policy Agenda* that provides a context for answering question: *What does civic organizing offer a nonprofit leader who believes re-imagining the role of nonprofits is necessary?* In addition to reflecting case study content, the profile is supported by feedback from existing nonprofit executive

### **The individual:**

- Is committed to and has authority to achieve the larger public purpose for their institution, takes responsibility for achieving it. Sees the need for greater ownership and accountability by members (Board, staff, membership) in achieving purpose and goals if the organization is going to survive in current economic, social realities.
  - Buys into the analysis in the *CNP Civic Policy Agenda*. I.e. the systemic cause for inability to meet stated challenges for effective practice relates to the way the internal function of governance is imagined and structured.
  - Shows interest in learning how civic organizing works.
  - Has allies on their governing body who share their belief in the need for change.
  - Has tried other approaches and can see the difference between those approaches and civic organizing.
  - Is willing to suspend judgement on knowing how civic organizing would work specifically and commits to investing in their own understanding of civic organizing.
  - Is looking for a peer group within and outside of the sector who share the need for change and can support learning.
  - Has a back-up plan if organizational leaders are not willing to take their lead.
- **Evidence Civic Organizing 101 educational track can support recruitment of potential lead organizers but most effective if member/s participate in the MACI Institute at the same time.** This information will be built into negotiating the cost for Civic Organizing 101.
  - **Impacting policy within the foundation sector is an important CNP goal.** Current funding policies within the funding community is a key barrier to advancing the *CNP Civic Policy Agenda*. (See CNP Framing Document) In response to that challenge, a civic organizing model is grounded in a dues paying membership base with small amounts of dollars leveraged from members existing operations. (1,500-5,000.00) This funding level supports institutional pilots whose members need to produce evidence that civic organizing increases the capacity to achieve institutional goals and sustains CNP as a governing demonstration of the Minnesota Active Citizenship Initiative. Members are accountable for making a case from their practice to impact funding streams in all systems including foundations.
  - **If the 2016-17 Focus for Organizing is achieved (good enough-3.0+) by June 2017, CNP can move forward into Stage 2** with a basic foundation and some confidence of success in sustaining the demonstration while testing capacity to expand.

## *CNP Gap-*

- **Lack evidence an institutional membership base can be organized.**
- **Need a flexible lead organizing team that reflects the different functions needed to grow and sustain the demonstration:**
  - Recruiting potential lead organizers.
  - Developing lead organizers and supporting institutional pilots
  - Supporting a demonstration educational track
  - Sustaining governing status within the MACI base. .
- **Need a strategy and structure to impact next generation nonprofit leaders-especially leaders of color.**

## **MAPE: Dan Holub Makes a Case for Civic Organizing**

### *What is MAPE?*

The Minnesota Association of Professional Employees is labor organization that represents 14,000 professional employees who work for the State of Minnesota. MAPE members work for each of the state government agencies, boards and commissions working in a wide variety of professions, such as: art, accounting, business administration, communications, criminology, design, economics, information technology, law, medicine, natural/environmental science, social science, social work, public health, statistics, and more. MAPE members work in all areas of Minnesota

As a labor organization, MAPE represents and serves its members through collective bargaining, legislative/political advocacy, leadership/professional development and organizing. MAPE is governed by elected leaders and managed/operated by a professional union staff (21 staff). MAPE is organized into both local associations and a state-wide association. There are 39 local associations arranged geographically throughout Minnesota and each elect their own local leaders, manage a local budgets and implement local programs and services. The state-wide organization serves as the exclusive representative with the State of Minnesota and manages unified programs and services throughout the organization. The MAPE Delegate Assembly, which meets once a year, is the highest governing authority of MAPE. The 28 member MAPE Executive Board governs the general operations of the organizations and the Executive Committee provides executive leadership and direction.

*What are the challenges facing MAPE?*

Declining state and national union membership, intensifying political and legal opposition to public sector unions, arcane and outdated union systems and practices and a changing workforce threaten the very existence of MAPE, as well as all other labor organizations in the United States. The most immediate threat MAPE faces stem from cases that will soon be heard by the U.S. Supreme Court. The new conservative majority Court is expected to overturn longstanding laws that allow public sector unions to collect fees for services provided to represented employees. If this occurs, labor organizations like MAPE will be obligated to represent all employees whether they are members (and pay dues) or not. Other changes are also possible.

The changing workforce also challenges MAPE. The new, more diverse, millennial workforce has different needs and priorities from those of the baby boomer generation. To survive, MAPE will need to transition its leadership from baby boomers to millennial and “X” generation cohorts. Though MAPE has made progress in this transition, the transition is incomplete and lacks authenticity.

More long term is the challenge MAPE faces in changing its approach to policy making. The current approach to policy making, described as a democratic democracy, produces very little evidence of sustainable civic capacity and infrastructure. Instead it has produced a form of “consumerism” that dominates the culture of the organization. It works something like this:

- Members pay dues and demand services.
- The organization works to deliver those services.
- These service demands often conflict with the goals of the contracting employer or legislature leading to weakened external relationships.
- The organization’s ability to provide services is then diminished.
- This leads to further internal pressure to provide service, so the organization then mobilizes against any perceived road blocks to providing those services. Sometimes this is successful, but often it is not.
- The end result is greater political polarization, poor relations with employers and an increasingly dissatisfied membership.

*How might Civic Organizing change this?*

MAPE cannot change the broader social-economic/political trends driving much of the change unions like MAPE face today. Nevertheless, MAPE can change its approach to policy making and do so in a manner that helps adapt the organization to a changing world, while also building active citizenship. By restructuring existing approaches to governance and policy making, MAPE can develop its civic capacity and infrastructure thus sustaining democracy as just system of governance.

*What will the first year focus be?*

During the first year of MAPE's formal involvement with MACI, MAPE will work to apply the civic organizing approach to its strategic planning and implementation process. Dan Holub, MAPE's Executive Director, will serve as lead organizer and work with Peg Michels, Civic Organizing Inc. as part of the MACI Civic Nonprofit Demonstration. Holub has already begun to organize a small organizing agency within MAPE made up of key executive committee members, with the goal of expanding this to include other key board members, local leaders and staff. Civic organizing standards have also been applied in the strategic planning process, and will continue to be utilized as part of the plan implementation process. The goal is to establish a decision making process that rewards effective behavior (active citizenship) and relates that behavior to the meaning of democracy. Holub will also participate in MACI events and discussions as needed.

*Next Steps-*

- **Follow through on supporting the Minnesota Association of Professional Employees (MAPE) in an institutional pilot.**
- **Support Minnesota Grocers Association to become a CNP Institutional Member.**
- **Do a 2017 Strategic Planning process** that will focus on addressing specific gaps.