

**Howard Snyder**  
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Howard Snyder is an independent consultant in community economic development. His roots are in community and industrial organizing with a lifelong emphasis on job creation and retention in economically depressed neighborhoods. He has a M.S. in Industrial Relations from UW-Madison with early experience at Esperanza Unida (1975-1978) and Silver Spring Neighborhood Center (1978-1983).

He founded the Northwest Side Community Development Corporation (CDC) in 1983, retiring in December 2019 after 37 years as Executive Director. In that time, the CDC revitalized a dying commercial strip, organized an area-wide industrial council, partnered with an alternative school and industrialists to establish the Northwest Opportunity Vocational Academy (high school), and led a dynamic community-organizing effort covering nearly a third of the City's population.

Howard and his Northwest Side CDC team successfully managed 21 Office of Community Services Community Economic Development Project grants, creating 1,080 new full-time jobs for neighborhood residents, as well as six Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFI) grants. Under his leadership, the CDC made \$11 million in loans to small businesses in Milwaukee's neighborhoods. After a successful, multi-year community organizing campaign to prevent the closing of the Villard Avenue Library, Howard and the Northwest Side CDC partnered with a private developer to build a mixed-use library/grand family housing building. This innovation became the model for the Milwaukee Public Library system's reinvestment in libraries across the City of Milwaukee. Howard's TEDx talk, [How a Few Kids \(and a lot of Adults\) Changed Milwaukee's Libraries](#) tells this remarkable story.

Many neighborhood-based economic development organizations established in the 1980's did not survive, falling victim to dwindling government support, weakened ties to community residents, and overly ambitious, financially shaky deals. The Northwest Side CDC has survived due to Howard Snyder's leadership; its success is profiled in [Navigating Community Development, Harnessing Comparative Advantages to Create Strategic Partnerships](#), by Robert O. Zdenek and Dee Walsh. Howard and the Northwest Side CDC have received three MANDI awards (Milwaukee Awards for Neighborhood Development Innovation) from the Milwaukee Office of LISC and been recognized nationally at numerous OCS and industry conferences.

Currently, Howard serves as a Trustee, Milwaukee County Federal Library System Board, member, Clarke Square Neighborhood Initiative Board and member, Milwaukee County Commission on Aging Senior Center Committee. He also consults with ICF in Washington, D.C. He previously served on the boards of Employ Milwaukee (2008-2018), VISIT Milwaukee (2014-2023), National Congress for Community Economic Development (1990-2002), and U.S. Small Business Incubator Association (1992-1995), (3) New Markets Tax Credits Board (2000-2019). He is author of [Northwest Side Community Development Corporation: A Story of Persistence, Adaptation, and Luck](#).

Howard brings real world nonprofit management experience, understands the complexities of working in diverse communities, and is able to sort out difficult projects and deals so they become manageable and achievable. He knows how to navigate projects out of danger so all project partners succeed and thrive. **Areas of expertise:** Nonprofit management including board development, staff mentoring, and strategic planning; partnership development and investment throughout the life of a project; OCS Community Economic Development Project implementation; CDFI formation and implementation; and project implementation within a context of neighborhood diversity and political challenges.