 **Shared Prosperity at Impact100 Fall Education Event**

Poverty is an intractable problem for large urban areas, and sadly, Philadelphia tops a list of the 10 poorest, largest cities in the country. Aware of the enormous challenges facing the city, Impact100 invited **Eva Gladstein** to headline our Fall Education Event on Wednesday evening, Nov. 4 at [Blank, Rome LLP](https://www.blankrome.com/index.cfm?contentID=17&itemID=1) in Center City.

Gladstein, Executive Director of the [Mayor's Office of Community Empowerment and Opportunity (CEO)](http://www.phila.gov/ceo/Pages/default.aspx), was charged by Mayor Nutter in January 2013 with sharpening the city’s focus on persistent poverty by collaborating with stakeholders and broadening access to resources of all types – job training and education; legal, housing and financial help; food stamps; and early learning and child care programs. Signs show this effort is steadily having an impact (*details in report cited below*).

Armed with years of experience in the field, a growing body of data, and a brief PowerPoint *link* (though Gladstein quipped she was old enough to know how to present without one), she told about 70 Impact members and guests how the city has initiated targeted measures in the city’s poorest communities, guided by a philosophy of **collective impact**. This means city leaders, businesses, academic institutions, and nonprofits are working collectively to bolster and coordinate efforts.

A primary goal is reducing the time residents spend among a baffling array of disconnected services, often not learning until they are in crisis, what programs are actually available to them, Gladstein said. “It can take an incredible amount of perseverance to keep trying to get services,” she said.

The city identified five major goals to both integrate services and broaden access to them, called **Shared Prosperity Philadelphia** (<http://sharedprosperityphila.org>):

* Jobs and training
* Access to benefits
* Early learning
* Housing security
* Economic security

“It’s not just about individuals or families. It’s about communities,” Gladstein said. A child’s zip code is a more accurate predictor of a child’s life chances than is character, intelligence or work ethic, Gladstein said, citing President Obama’s recent quote: “The zip code you’re born into should not determine your destiny.”

Developing a deeper understanding of poverty in Philadelphia is at the heart of Impact’s own goals: education of its members and grant-making for nonprofits often working with clients facing extraordinary odds, said Co-President **Sue Dubow**. “It goes to the core of Impact: what we are and what we do.”

Additionally, the city identified three core values in its renewed focus on poverty that very much align with Impact’s own, said Co-President **Mary Grace Tighe**. They are: **collaboration, education and empowerment**. Gladstein tipped her hat to Impact, saying, ““I really appreciate the whole idea of collective giving and making your money work.”

To read more about the city’s first year of progress, please see the 2014 report called [Shared Prosperity Philadelphia: Our Plan to Fight Poverty](http://sharedprosperityphila.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/SharedProsperityAR-Final2.pdf) (the 2015 Progress Report will be out soon). The report outlines areas where the city is making headway including setting up six community-based **BenePhilly Centers** (Pg. 11-12) to help people access benefits in person and by phone (on evenings and weekends too), and **Financial Empowerment Centers** (pg. 21) to help people open bank accounts and manage finances.