ADVOCACY FOR OPEN, EFFECTIVE AND ACCOUNTABLE GOVERNMENT

CBNO works tirelessly to ensure open, effective and accountable local government. Campaigns, activities and coalitions include:

The Neighborhood Participation Plan: CBNO’s leadership and advocacy for a formal citizen participation process that ensures residents have a voice in city planning decisions that affect them led to the passage of the City Planning Commission’s Neighborhood Participation Plan in 2013. This plan:

- Establishes an “early notification system” that ensures applicants meet with neighborhood residents to discuss developments before presenting to the City Planning Commission.

- Helps residents and neighborhood groups preserve the character of their communities while bringing in quality economic development.

- Enables business owners and developers to discuss and get support for their projects from their neighbors at the beginning of the process; this expedites city approvals and provides some protection against special interests arising later in the process.

Public Education: CBNO co-founded the Orleans Public Education Network (OPEN), an independent nonprofit organization dedicated to ensuring public engagement as a foundation for excellence, equity and sustainability in New Orleans’ public education.
People’ Budgeting Project: CBNO is leading a coalition of residents and organizations to promote meaningful community input into the city’s budgeting process, including participatory budgeting. This included convening the first People’s Budget Summit in October 2014, where a diverse group of community members came together to produce the initial People’s Budget. CBNO is working to create an online version of the People’s Budget exercise, so that the greatest number of people can participate and the resulting input carry greater weight during the city budget process. CBNO also launched a website that will allow anyone to track the city’s budget to actual spending going back to 2006 (www.bigeasybudget.org). This is a vital tool for facilitating understanding of, and input into, the city budget.

Forward New Orleans: CBNO works with the Business Council of New Orleans and a diverse coalition of more than 30 organizations each election cycle to present candidates for local office with a platform focused on creating accountability, transparency, efficiency, and financial responsibility in government. The coalition then monitors and reports on elected officials’ progress on the platform.

Water Management: CBNO convened the Interim Steering Committee that launched the Greater New Orleans Water Management Collaborative. This action-oriented group works with a variety of partners to create a sustainable city that uses stormwater management practices to improve safety, reduce flooding and insurance costs, and create new economic and recreational opportunities.

“Therefore, the shifts in spending patterns for new capital projects, such as health-care clinics in poor areas, produce not just temporary improvements but real lasting change. Participatory programs ... are a vital part of building better institutions and improving citizens’ quality of life.”

- The Washington Post, January 22, 2014