City of Portland
Charter Commission Agenda

Charter Commission Education Committee
January 24, 2022 at 6:00 PM

1. Call to Order

   a. Due to the existence of an "emergency or urgent issue", the Charter Commission Committees will conduct this meeting by remote methods/technology at the Zoom link provided below, in accordance with the requirements of 1 M.R.S. section 403 -B and the Charter Commission Remote Participation Policy.

   Please click the link below to join the webinar:
   https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81948408428?pwd=N1BRa0dINGtBd0s5UWtwUlhVUVNZUT09
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   Passcode: 618167
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2. Review and Approval of Minutes

   a. Approval of the January 5, 2022 Education Committee draft meeting minutes

3. Draft proposal for Joint Committee on Budget Guidance

   a. National League of Cities Municipal Leadership for Children and families in small and mid-sized cities.

      1. b. Draft Language for Charter Provisions Governing Budget Collaboration between the City of Portland and Portland Public Schools.

4. Public Comment
5. New Business
6. Adjourn

City of Portland
Charter Commission Ad Hoc
Education Committee Meeting Minutes
January 5, 2022 at 6:00 PM

CALL TO ORDER

CHAIR HOUSTON opens the meeting and takes attendance and committee does introductions. CHANN absent.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion to approve the minutes by EGLINTON. Seconded by HOUSTON. HOUSTON roll call: HOUSTON yes. EGLINTON yes. Passes unanimously.

DISCUSSION OF FIRST PROPOSALS FOR FULL CHARTER COMMISSION

HOUSTON opens discussion about committee proposals for a future full commission meeting.

- EGLINTON: Provides overview of his proposals to increase collaboration in the City of Portland and Portland School District annual budget and capital improvement plan (CIP) development process. Withdraws idea that would change the name of the Portland Board of Public Education to Portland School Board. Acknowledges information forwarded by HOUSTON on Trotwood, OH (see page 62 of *Municipal Leadership for Children and Families in Small and Mid-Sized Cities*, National League of Cities, Institute for Youth, Education & Families, 2013).
- HOUSTON: Asks if budget guidance would focus on tax levels. EGLINTON responds that the focus is on the priorities and constraints of the city and school district to set the context for the development of the budget. The guidance could highlight important initiatives and challenges, and perhaps a range of targets for city and school district tax levels, if the joint committee so chooses. The goal is to have these discussions before (or during) budget preparation, to reduce surprises and reworking of the budget at the end of the process.
- EGLINTON: Anticipates additional discussion on the committee, then revising the proposal once the public and commission weighs in.
- EGLINTON: Expresses interest in participatory budgeting. HOUSTON mentions that he is working with the Procedures Committee on a possible joint committee recommendation.

PUBLIC COMMENT

HOUSTON opens the public comment period.

- E. FIGDOR: As chair of the Portland Board of Public Education, provides preliminary reactions to the committee's ideas, including appreciation for efforts to establish parity in the roles of the Portland Board of Public Education and City Council. Suggests that any joint committee on budget guidance replace the current joint finance committee process, rather than add meetings to the schedules of both elected bodies. Asks that the process focus on programmatic needs, rather than only taxes.

WORK PLAN

HOUSTON asks Committee to discuss work plan and prioritizing proposals.

- EGLINTON: Suggests that the committee find a date for another meeting before February to replace the one canceled on January 19 to allow for full commission meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

- EGLINTON: Anticipate recommendations from the Portland Board of Public Education; include them in the packet for the next meeting.
- HOUSTON: Consider the impacts of proposals from other commission committees.

ADJOURN

EGLINTON motions to adjourn. Seconded by HOUSTON. Roll Call: HOUSTON yes. EGLINTON yes.

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MUNICIPAL LEADERSHIP FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES IN SMALL AND MID-SIZED CITIES

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MUNICIPAL LEADERSHIP FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES IN SMALL AND MID-SIZED CITIES

About the National League of Cities Institute for Youth, Education and Families

The National League of Cities (NLC) is dedicated to helping city leaders build better communities. Working in partnership with the 49 state municipal leagues, NLC serves as a resource to and an advocate for the more than 19,000 cities, villages and towns it represents.

The Institute for Youth, Education, and Families (YEF Institute), a special entity within NLC, helps municipal leaders take action on behalf of the children, youth, and families in their communities. NLC launched the YEF Institute in January 2000 in recognition of the unique and influential roles that mayors, city councilmembers, and other local leaders play in strengthening families and improving outcomes for children and youth.

Through the YEF Institute, municipal officials and other community leaders have direct access to a broad array of strategies and tools, including:

- Action kits and other publications that offer a menu of practical steps that officials can take to address key problems or challenges.
- Technical assistance projects in selected communities.
- Peer networks and learning communities focused on specific program areas.
- The National Summit on Your City's Families and other workshops, leadership academies, training sessions, and cross-site meetings.
- Targeted research and periodic surveys of local officials.
- The YEF Institute's monthly webinar series.

To learn more about these tools and other aspects of the YEF Institute's work, go to www.nlc.org/iyef.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

America's small cities and towns differ from the nation's big cities in countless ways, but some things hold true regardless of a community's size or scope. Children grow up with dreams of adventure and hope to accomplish great feats. Parents worry about whether their sons and daughters will be healthy and safe, with the chance to develop their talents on the road to college or a career. And municipal leaders in cities small and large want their communities to be great places to grow up, get an education and raise a family, because they know that these are attributes that will help their cities thrive and create a real sense of community for their residents.

Without question, city officials in smaller communities have unique opportunities and face numerous challenges in pursuing these goals. All too often, however, mayors and councilmembers in small cities and towns fail to realize that many of the most powerful levers of leadership exercised by big-city mayors are also within their reach. The ability to set forth a vision, to challenge the community and bring key stakeholders to the table to craft local solutions – and then to hold all parties accountable for their promises and actions – is the essence of effective municipal leadership for children and families and is a power shared by local officials in cities of every size. Some cities will start with more resources, others with less, but in the end it is the commitment to act that will make the lasting difference, not only for children and families but also for the broader communities in which they live.

The National League of Cities (NLC), through its Institute for Youth, Education and Families (YEF Institute), has produced this report to provide municipal leaders in small and mid-sized cities with new ideas and inspiration to guide local action on behalf of young people and families in their communities. The report combines in-depth case studies of comprehensive local initiatives with a wide range of promising practices gathered from cities across the nation, providing a starting point for exploring the various challenges and opportunities for municipal leadership in cities and towns with populations of 75,000 or less.* As the examples in this report make clear, small and mid-sized cities of all types have great potential to help children and families succeed.

Municipal leaders in cities small and large want their communities to be great places to grow up, get an education and raise a family, because they know that these are attributes that will help their cities thrive and create a real sense of community for their residents.

* While NLC defines a "small city" as one with 50,000 people or less, the YEF Institute adopted this report's designation of small and mid-sized cities as those with populations of up to 75,000 in order to provide a broader pool of examples for municipal officials representing communities that face similar conditions and challenges. Only one city (Bryan, Texas) highlighted in the report has a population slightly above this threshold.

Unique Opportunities for Quick and Effective Action

Small and mid-sized cities have many unique opportunities to seize and strengths upon which to draw.

Personal relationships. First and foremost, local officials from small cities recognize that strong personal relationships and a powerful sense of community shared by their residents are enormous assets in advancing collaborative efforts across local agencies, schools, colleges, community foundations, faith-based and civic organizations, PTAs, businesses and other organizations. Small cities often have less division across departments within local government, are frequently served by a single school district, and interact and partner with the nonprofit community on an ongoing basis. Some small-city leaders also believe that politics are less likely to hinder their collaboration efforts, making it easier to enlist support for community-wide initiatives. This sense of working together can be as simple as the commitment in Trotwood, Ohio, of city councilmembers, the mayor, the city manager, school board members, and school and city administrators to meet on a quarterly basis and discuss issues of mutual concern.

A culture of helping one another. In addition, close-knit communities can foster a more pronounced spirit of volunteerism. Many municipal officials in smaller cities and towns believe that they have more opportunities to interact with staff and volunteers and that local residents are often highly motivated to assist their neighbors. Large-scale mobilizations in St. Louis Park, Minn., and Rock Hill, S.C., illustrate the power of small cities to recruit volunteers from within local government and the larger community.

Frequent contact with residents. Local governments in smaller cities also have advantages in maintaining closer proximity to local residents. City leaders note that being "close to the ground" makes understanding local needs and conducting outreach to smaller populations more manageable. Through the neighborhood-based City of Promise initiative in Charlottesville, Va., the city and its partners have been able to survey all households with children in the target neighborhood and strengthen relationships between service providers and residents. Local officials in other small cities and towns have reported that small teams of youth service providers can work closely together and get to know young residents who are at risk, making it less likely that youth will fall through the cracks between different service systems.

More responsive government. Finally, small-city leaders note that stronger social capital and civic engagement can result in local governments that are able to respond more quickly to new or changing circumstances. For example, the development of the Police Involving Parents program in Highland Village, Texas, addressed resident concerns about law enforcement responses to juvenile misconduct, and the city included parents and youth in the development of the program. The small size of many towns can also enable them to move quickly. In Danvers, Mass., local leaders put together the Project Sunshine initiative – a six-week summer recreation program for homeless children – in a very compressed timeframe as the community stepped up with donations and support.

The Challenges of Smaller Size and Fewer Resources

While the opportunities described above represent key advantages for small cities and towns, their size also brings its own set of challenges. Topping the list are often concerns about inadequate resources and staff capacity to carry out new or specialized initiatives for children, youth and families.

While cities of all sizes have struggled with declining revenue in recent years, local officials from smaller communities believe that they are at a disadvantage in competing with larger cities for federal, state, and private grants due to the smaller scope of their initiatives or populations served. Smaller cities may also have fewer resources available to leverage external funding (e.g., grant writing staff, matched funding) and few if any staff to lead fundraising or program development efforts. In larger cities, the scale at which municipal governments operate frequently enables a high degree of specialization, to the extent that mayor's offices or city departments that coordinate the efforts of a broad range of child and youth service providers have become increasingly common. The opposite holds true for many smaller cities, in which one staff person may assume a broad range of responsibilities that in larger cities are shared among multiple individuals or departments. In a similar vein, most elected officials in small and mid-sized cities serve in a part-time capacity, and many of these officials go to great lengths to carry out their municipal responsibilities while also holding separate, full-time jobs.

Smaller cities frequently respond to these challenges by tapping local talent and human resources in every possible way. For instance, in Rapid City, S.D., representatives of many nonprofit partners have stepped up to lead issue-focused committees under the auspices of a larger Task Force for Strengthening Families facilitated by municipal staff. In Manchester, Conn., the city reassigned a parks and recreation assistant director to oversee a new Office of Neighborhoods and Families and work with a local coalition to implement the town's children, youth and families master plan. The Mayor's Youth Advisory Council in Durango, Colo., receives staff support from adult liaisons appointed by each of the two local high schools. Many cities rely heavily on volunteers to perform a variety of tasks, from tutoring students and walking children to school to preparing meals for afterschool program participants and helping families complete their tax returns. Youth themselves often volunteer to develop activities for younger students.

The limited staff capacity within small units of local government contributes to a tendency to define the core functions of municipal government very narrowly, in a manner that precludes a broader focus on outcomes for children and families. From this perspective, the city's mission and roles address only the basics, such as police, fire, roads, sanitation, and water and sewer, leaving responsibility for other aspects of child and family well-being almost fully under the purview of other entities, such as school districts, county governments, and nonprofits (or simply with the families themselves). Because federal and state funding for most education, employment, health and social services that help children and families in small cities and towns is distributed directly to schools or counties, municipal officials may be unaware that they can still pursue many important, low-cost strategies to improve child and family

outcomes, from making more efficient use of city resources to leveraging their power to convene diverse segments of the community. Yet there are also many notable exceptions. Cities such as Manchester, Conn., Rapid City, S.D., and Caldwell, Idaho, have recognized the need for municipal government as well as many other local stakeholders to share responsibility and accountability for child and family outcomes, and have brought diverse groups together to develop comprehensive plans for long-term progress.

A third major challenge for small cities and towns, particularly in rural areas, is reflected in a shortage of critical services – such as child care, physical and mental health care, grocery stores, out-of-school time programs, and educational resources – and poor accessibility for those that exist. Resource sharing between cities (e.g., teachers in Monticello, Iowa; parks and recreation programming in Cortland, N.Y.) and partnerships with nonprofit organizations can help mitigate some of these service gaps. The lack of public transportation options available to low-income residents, who have limited means to travel to jobs or appointments for medical care or social services, is another major problem in smaller communities. In Rapid City, service providers have explored pooling resources to support a shared van system for their clients.

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Finally, even when services are available and accessible, privacy concerns and a perceived stigma may dissuade residents from seeking help in communities where "everyone knows everyone." Municipal employees who provide social services may also be residents with children who attend the local public schools, and families in need can be reluctant to discuss their problems under such circumstances. Smaller cities have sought to develop creative solutions in response to these concerns. For instance, in Dedham, Mass., foreclosure prevention assistance was embedded within a larger community event to help residents reduce household costs, and town leaders worked closely with trusted local clergy to reach parishioners in need.

Municipal Roles in Small and Mid-Sized Cities

Given these opportunities and challenges, what is the nature of city involvement in promoting child and family well-being in small and mid-sized communities? The examples in this report highlight four key roles that municipal officials can play, usually requiring little or no allocation of city revenue:

- Convening stakeholders behind a shared vision and using data to track progress on measurable goals;
- Finding creative ways to leverage city resources, infrastructure, and policies;
- Forming innovative partnerships; and
- Mobilizing the community and engaging volunteers.

Pursuing a Shared Vision and Using Data to Track Progress

Municipal leadership for children and families in smaller communities often has less to do with city programs and funding streams than with how local elected officials exercise their ability to convene stakeholders, establish a shared vision, identify measurable goals and a mechanism for tracking progress, and develop comprehensive strategies that draw on the resources of many partners. By utilizing their unique, high-profile positions as community leaders, mayors, councilmembers, city and town managers, and other municipal officials can often accomplish a great deal while spending little or no money.

The two case studies in this report demonstrate the powerful role that city officials can play in bringing the community together around a common vision and set of priorities. Rapid City's Task Force for Strengthening Families, formed by the city's elected officials, provides an "infrastructure" for comprehensive cross-sector planning, information gathering, communication, and pooling of resources. In Manchester, the process of creating a children, youth and families master plan engaged several hundred youth and adult residents, including leaders from local government, education, law enforcement, business, and the faith community.

The Children First initiative in St. Louis Park, Minn., provides another excellent example of the power of a common vision to stimulate local action on behalf of children and families. The community's adoption of the Search Institute's Developmental Assets framework facilitates youth engagement in local government and incorporation of youth development principles into creative school-based programs. Trained "Asset Champions" promote the asset-building approach in key institutions throughout the community that touch the lives of children and youth.

Efforts in Delray Beach, Fla., and Charlottesville, Va., highlight the valuable support cities can provide to data-driven approaches. In Delray Beach, city and school district officials have taken a close look at three important factors that predict whether a child will read at grade level by the end of third grade: kindergarten readiness, chronic absence from school, and summer learning loss. Together with other stakeholders, they are using data to develop targeted strategies in each area. As a Promise Neighborhood planning grantee, the City of Charlottesville has analyzed neighborhood-level student and family data to inform its cradle-to-career City of Promise initiative.

Municipal leadership for children and families in smaller communities often has less to do with city programs and funding streams than with how local elected officials exercise their ability to convene stakeholders, establish a shared vision, identify measurable goals and a mechanism for tracking progress, and develop comprehensive strategies that draw on the resources of many partners.

Leveraging City Resources, Infrastructure and Policies

In addition to their policymaking and administrative authority, cities of all sizes have a variety of financial, physical, and human resources at their disposal. Local officials in small and mid-sized cities are finding many ways to maximize the resources available to them, such as agreements for shared use

of municipal facilities and strategic infrastructure improvements that expand educational options for children and youth.

City Funding: Most of the examples of municipal leadership in this report feature either low or no-cost actions on behalf of children and families in small and mid-sized cities. However, not to be overlooked are the efforts of several cities to leverage significant public and private funding with the allocation of modest amounts of local revenue. For instance, Burleson, Texas, has adapted the "Promise" model of raising money for a citywide college scholarship guarantee, using sales tax revenue dedicated for economic development as seed funding to attract donations from other organizations, businesses and residents. The City of Tukwila, Wash., contributes about one-fourth of the budget for a community schools collaboration that provides students with extended learning programs and wraparound health and family services. In the small, rural city of Petal, Miss., dedicated property tax revenue funds a part-time early care and education coordinator to staff the community's highly successful Excel by 5 initiative. With additional support and leadership from the school district, foundations and other local agencies, the coalition driving this initiative has enhanced support for new parents, child care providers and elementary school teachers.

City Infrastructure: Decisions about where to develop and improve roads, street lighting, water and sewer lines, parks, sidewalks, and other physical infrastructure can have a profound impact on children, youth and families. For instance, city-funded infrastructure improvements in Monticello, Iowa, made possible the development of the Jones Regional Education Center, through which a local community college offers high-quality career and technical education courses to high school students in partnership with the school district. Similarly, the opening of the first YMCA in Caldwell, Idaho, would not have happened without the dedication of urban redevelopment funds for construction, waiver of permitting fees, and street and landscaping improvements made by the city. In Lemoore, Calif., the city acquired and renovated property to create an intergenerational day care using federal Community Development Block Grant dollars and other city funds.

City-funded school renovations and neighborhood improvements in Delray Beach, Fla., laid the foundation for an expanded city-school partnership that now focuses on improving learning supports for students. Redevelopment of blighted properties in Walla Walla, Wash., and Aiken, S.C., has strengthened connections between neighborhoods and local government. In Decatur, Ga., parents and schools work with city engineering staff to develop and mark sidewalks and crosswalks that provide children with safe routes to school. A broader set of planning, transportation and economic development policies complement the Safe

Routes to School initiative to make Decatur a healthier and more walkable city for local residents.

Other City Resources and Personnel: Parks, libraries, recreation centers, and police athletic leagues are among the many other resources that cities can draw upon to improve outcomes for children and families. In Redlands, Calif., the city partnered with an innovative nonprofit organization called Music Changing Lives to offer high-quality music and arts programming at an underutilized community center, with the intention of keeping students engaged in school. Small and mid-sized cities have also developed creative joint use and other resource sharing agreements with school districts and other entities. For instance, city-school partnerships in Spartanburg, S.C., helped save a historic baseball field and enabled usage by local high school teams. In Mountain View, Calif., the public library made its digital resource collection accessible to high school students by providing them with a Virtual Library Resource Card through their schools. The card has increased students' utilization of the city library's electronic databases and generated savings for the school district.

Cities can also engage youth as interns or employees, as the Village of Romeoville, Ill., does through its High School Job initiative. In Oregon City, Ore., the parks and recreation department works with a high school advanced construction class to design and implement annual projects that both provide students with job skills and improve local park facilities. In addition, municipal leaders and employees in many communities are serving as mentors, tutors, and volunteers. The City of Rock Hill, S.C., asks department staff to make specific commitments for how they will be engaged in supporting children and youth.

City Policies: Municipal officials in small cities are also considering how the development and enforcement of local policies affect the prospects for children and youth. Police departments in Winchester, Va., and Highland Village, Texas, are making a conscious effort to reduce juvenile offenders' likelihood of involvement in the justice system. The City of Germantown, Tenn., has conducted a policy audit to strengthen child protection at all city facilities. Local policies affecting young people are often most effective when youth have a voice in their development. Youth in Durango, Colo., Westwood, Mass., and other cities serve on municipal boards and commissions that provide oversight to local government agencies.

Forming Innovative Partnerships

No city can go it alone in its efforts on behalf of children and families. Partnerships with the wide range of entities that help children and youth become responsible, productive adults are essential, and nearly every example in this report highlights one or more local partnerships. Particularly important are city-school collaborations that enhance educational opportunities and children's readiness to learn. In Holyoke, Mass., the city and school district have established family literacy centers that parents can visit to help their children become proficient readers. In West Bend, Wis., the city works with schools to secure federal funding for meals served at a summer program that helps students retain the learning gains they made during the school year. The development of an Education Advisory Board and appointment of a city education coordinator to serve as a liaison to the school district in Delray Beach, Fla., offers one possible mechanism by which cities and schools can formalize their partnership.

No city can go it alone in its efforts on behalf of children and families. Partnerships with the wide range of entities that help children and youth become responsible, productive adults are essential.

Nonprofit and faith-based organizations, county and state agencies, colleges, United Ways, community foundations, chambers of commerce, businesses, workforce boards, judicial and health system representatives, parents, and youth are among the other stakeholders frequently at the table for child and family initiatives. Small cities that have their own social service agencies, such as Petersburg, Va., rely on broad networks of providers and other partners for both referrals and service delivery.

City officials can also find ways to engage atypical partners in contributing to family strengthening efforts. In Bryan, Texas, financial institutions participating in Bank On Brazos Valley not only offer unbanked residents access to low-cost bank accounts but also provide a safe and affordable alternative to short-term, small-dollar payday loans. The City of Tupelo, Miss., has encouraged convenience stores to display healthier foods more prominently in an effort to reduce obesity rates.

Regional partnerships are often critical to addressing local challenges that cross jurisdictional boundaries and using resources more efficiently. In Rapid City, a coalition of 30 agencies has developed a plan for preventing and reducing homelessness in the Black Hills region of South Dakota. The Community Schools Collaboration that originated in Tukwila, Wash., now serves schools in neighboring communities throughout South King County.

Mobilizing the Community and Engaging Volunteers

The final category of municipal roles is related to cities' priority-setting and partnership-building functions, and involves galvanizing local residents in pursuit of a common cause. To meet a number of different goals, small and mid-sized cities are encouraging their residents to contribute time, expertise, and donations that complement the resources and efforts of professional service providers.

Cities are tapping many potential sources of volunteers. For instance, Cortland, N.Y., and Northfield, Minn., recruit college students to tutor youth after school. The Town of Wentzville, Mo., gives parks

and recreation program discounts to residents who volunteer. In many communities, some of the most dedicated volunteers are youth themselves. Youth advisory council members in Tualatin, Ore., and mentoring program participants in Westwood, Mass., help organize programs and serve as positive role models for younger students. Some of the best contributions can also come from residents who have certain unique skills. In Dedham, Mass., local attorneys and real estate brokers provided valuable financial counseling and foreclosure prevention advice to struggling families through an initiative coordinated by the town.

Many of the cities in this report have engaged a broad cross-section of their communities through the development of comprehensive youth master plans (e.g., Manchester, Conn.; Caldwell, Idaho; Durango, Colo.), neighborhood-based initiatives (Charlottesville, Va.; Aiken, S.C.; Walla Walla, Wash.), or other citywide mobilization strategies (e.g., Rock Hill, S.C.; Rapid City, S.D.; St. Louis Park, Minn.). Other notable community engagement efforts include Project Sunshine in Danvers, Mass., in which banks, civic organizations, schools, seniors and other residents pitched in to provide donations and in-kind support, and Petersburg, Va., where an array of employers, health care providers, and foundation and community partners participated in a summer job and health fair for youth and their parents organized by a local coalition of public and nonprofit agencies.

Small and mid-sized cities are encouraging their residents to contribute time, expertise, and donations that complement the resources and efforts of professional service providers.

INTRODUCTION: CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND CITY PRIORITIES

Nearly all of the challenges faced by small cities and towns, from transportation infrastructure to policing to recreation programming, in some way touch the lives of children, youth and their families. By the same token, the strength and vitality of small communities depend on whether children and families have opportunities to thrive. No city can prosper when many of their youth fail to graduate from high school or when parents are unable to meet their children's basic needs. As members of the National League of Cities Council on Youth, Education and Families have observed, "the costs of not investing in our children, youth and families are enormous. Many of these costs land squarely on the doorsteps of our city halls."[1]

Yet municipal leaders in small and mid-sized communities often wrongly assume there is no role they can or should play in efforts to improve outcomes for children and families. With K-12 education overseen by independently governed school districts and health and human services often delivered through county and nonprofit agencies, many city officials continue to share the perception that "youth issues" or "family services" are someone else's responsibility.

New evidence, gleaned from both research and the experiences of city officials, is challenging that perception and shining a spotlight on the stake that cities of all sizes have in ensuring a bright future for children, youth and families. Municipal leaders from smaller communities are increasingly finding that the priorities they care about most – such as economic development, public safety, and neighborhood quality of life – are inseparable from the outcomes of children and families in their cities and towns.

> "The costs of not investing in our children, youth and families are enormous. Many of these costs land squarely on the doorsteps of our city halls."
>
> **– National League of Cities, *A City Platform for Children and Families*, 2012**

Economic Development: The ability to provide employers with a skilled workforce has long been a critical factor in the success of local economic development strategies. In recent decades, however, opportunities to receive a high-quality education have almost become a prerequisite for residents and communities pursuing living wage jobs in an ever more competitive, global economy.

An individual's predicted lifetime earnings and likelihood of being employed increase substantially with their educational attainment.[2] Organizations such as the Alliance for Excellent Education and Fight Crime: Invest in Kids have estimated equally significant benefits of high school completion on state and local tax revenue and state crime rates, respectively.[3,4] Moreover, the earnings premium for obtaining a college degree has continued to rise over the last decade, prompting many cities to focus not only on increasing high school graduation rates, but also expanding college access and boosting postsecondary completion rates.[5]

Municipal leaders are well aware of the relationship between good schools, the ability to attract and retain families and businesses, the health of the real estate market, and the local tax base. For instance, in the late 1980s, Delray Beach, Fla., city leaders recognized that poor school conditions were a drag on home values in the surrounding neighborhood. Through a sustained partnership with the county school district, the city invested in a series of infrastructure improvements over the last two decades and recently launched new efforts to improve students' reading proficiency.

Because home and community factors have an enormous influence on students' ability to learn inside the classroom,[6] municipal officials in cities of all sizes can be vital education partners that help public school board members and administrators achieve their mission. Leaders of small cities are finding a variety of ways to improve education, even though virtually none of them directly govern their school districts. Among other strategies, cities featured in this report are supporting learning by expanding access to high-quality preschool (e.g., Petal, Miss., Lemoore, Calif.); enhancing the quality and availability of afterschool enrichment programs (Northfield, Minn.); ensuring that students receive school-based health care (Tukwila, Wash.) and adequate nutrition (West Bend, Wis.); providing mental health counseling and other services that support students and their families (Westwood, Mass.); recruiting tutors and mentors (Caldwell, Idaho); helping students afford college tuition (Burleson, Texas); enabling high school students to obtain early career exposure and college credit (Monticello, Iowa); reengaging out-of-school youth (Ocala, Fla.); and helping to lead comprehensive, neighborhood-based efforts to strengthen the cradle-to-career educational pipeline (Charlottesville, Va.).

Because home and community factors have an enormous influence on students' ability to learn inside the classroom, municipal officials in cities of all sizes can be vital education partners that help public school board members and administrators achieve their mission.

Public Safety: Nothing is more important to city leaders than the safety of children and other residents, to which a wide array of city policies and services contribute. In particular, the ways in which police officers interact with children and teens can make a powerful impact on their attitudes and behaviors.

Several cities featured in this report have adopted results-driven community policing strategies that have successfully curbed illegal activity among youth. In Highland Village, Texas, city leaders have credited a police department initiative to engage parents of first-time youth offenders who commit minor infractions for contributing to a declining recidivism rate. Other cities have established partnerships among courts, law enforcement, and social service agencies that provide youth offenders with alternatives to juvenile detention. In Winchester, Va., referrals to a youth reporting center operated by the police department connect juvenile offenders and reentrants with caring adults and positive, prosocial supports, which an extensive body of research has shown to be more effective in preventing future criminal activity than more punitive, control-oriented sanctions.[7]

Just as schools do not control all of the factors that determine a student's academic achievement, police cannot be held solely responsible for crime prevention and safety. Many other social and environmental factors are at play. For instance, a wealth of evidence emphasizes the public safety benefits of investments in early education and parent support.[8] National studies also show that the hours between 3:00 and 6:00 p.m. are "prime time for juvenile crime" and that participation in afterschool programs can reduce crime, violence, drug use and other risky behaviors.[9] Local leaders in Caldwell, Idaho, believe the expansion of afterschool activities for youth has played a role in the sharp decrease in the city's juvenile crime rate over the past decade.

Small cities draw on many other resources to enhance child and youth safety. For example, fire, police, public works, and Active Living Division staff in Decatur, Ga., all participate in the city's Safe Routes to School initiative, which encourages youth to walk or ride their bikes to school. In Trotwood, Ohio, fire department personnel teach fire safety lessons at the school district's Early Learning Center. The City of Germantown, Tenn., has made a child sexual abuse prevention training available to municipal employees who work with children and reviewed its child protection policies for all city properties and programs. In Tualatin, Ore., the Mayor's Youth Advisory Council has developed a day-long bullying prevention workshop for middle school students.

Neighborhood Quality of Life: Neighborhoods are only as strong and stable as the families who live in them. The vitality of a neighborhood is undermined when families struggle financially, youth feel disengaged from their community, and neighbors are disconnected from each other and their local government.

For instance, the national foreclosure crisis that began in 2007 should allay any doubts that the health of household balance sheets can determine the future of entire neighborhoods and cities. The crisis also demonstrated that there are many low-cost steps that small and mid-sized cities can take to enhance family economic success and protect them from financial disaster. For instance, in Dedham, Mass., town officials collaborated with local clergy and a broad range of agencies and partners to stem the tide of foreclosures and also connect families with affordable health insurance, home heating assistance, and

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other opportunities to reduce household costs. In Gaithersburg, Md., and Bryan, Texas, city leaders have helped residents claim the federal Earned Income Tax Credit and collaborated with banks and nonprofit organizations to expand access to financial education and mainstream financial services.

Other cities have partnered with resident-led groups to revitalize neighborhoods. In Walla Walla, Wash., the city has dedicated police, parks and recreation, and public works resources to restore blighted properties and crime-ridden parks to the benefit of local families. In Manchester, Conn., a new Office of Neighborhoods and Families engages youth and other residents through community-based education courses, the establishment of neighborhood resource centers, and creation and expansion of local neighborhood organizations.

Does One Size Fit All?

AMONG CITY EFFORTS to promote child and family well-being, high-profile innovations in large cities such as New York, San Francisco, Boston, Chicago, Philadelphia and San Antonio receive the lion's share of attention, a situation magnified by the larger media markets surrounding central cities. In addition, efforts by national foundations and federal agencies to seed best practices and bring them to scale often target large urban centers, overlooking the diversity of circumstances and resources across large and small municipalities, as well as the countless ways in which smaller communities are working to strengthen families and improve outcomes for children and youth.

While municipal officials in many small and mid-sized communities have borrowed ideas from larger cities, they have often expressed keen interest in promising practices that have been tested in cities and towns of comparable size that are facing similar conditions. The examples featured in this report show that, even across smaller cities, local officials are working to address unique local needs.

Many rural areas have been grappling for years with declining populations and the question of how to encourage young adults to stay in or return to their home communities.[10,11] In Monticello, Iowa (population 3,796), a partnership among the city, school district and community college to offer Career Academy courses providing skills demanded by local employers is strengthening city efforts to attract and retain families.

Small cities that are the hub of their own metropolitan areas, such as Rapid City, S.D., and Charlottesville, Va., have launched bold new approaches to improve outcomes for the most disadvantaged neighborhoods or segments of their populations.

Witnessing rapid population growth, development and demographic shifts, suburban cities such as Manchester, Conn., have responded with proactive approaches to engage and serve a larger and more diverse community. In addition to changing populations and increasing service demands, other common challenges facing many first-tier suburbs include aging infrastructure, housing stock, and school facilities.[12] Many of these communities are also on the front lines of the "suburbanization of poverty,"[13] in which the population living below the poverty line has grown faster in suburbs than in other types of cities.

ABOUT THE REPORT

Although the vast majority of Americans live in metropolitan areas,[14] more than half of us still reside in small cities, towns and other communities with less than 50,000 people.[15] In each of these communities, municipal officials understand that they have a special responsibility to respond to the needs of their local residents. Even as researchers and policymakers properly focus attention on the growing economic interdependence of jurisdictions within metropolitan regions, the leaders of our cities and towns nevertheless remain accountable for addressing the numerous distinct challenges within their city limits.

This report provides a starting point for exploring the ways in which municipal leaders in small and mid-sized cities can take action on behalf of children, youth and families – a topic in which there has been little systematic documentation of promising local practices to date. The report contains two case studies of comprehensive family strengthening efforts in Rapid City, S.D. (population 67,956), and Manchester, Conn. (population 58,241), each of which participated in a four-city learning community facilitated by the National League of Cities Institute for Youth, Education and Families (YEF Institute) between 2007 and 2011.

Both cities made remarkable progress in building and sustaining new collaborations that are making a difference in the lives of children, youth and their families. In Manchester, the town developed a new "infrastructure" for neighborhood engagement and implementation of a children, youth and

family master plan, with guidance from youth development consultant Richard Goll, one of the key players involved in developing the renowned civic engagement model in Hampton, Va. In Rapid City, a Task Force for Strengthening Families has been the catalyst for improved mental health and substance abuse services, innovative poverty reduction approaches, truancy and dropout prevention efforts, and much more.

Complementing these city profiles is a set of more than 40 shorter examples sorted by topic area that offers a broader picture of the various opportunities for municipal leadership in small and mid-sized cities. These examples highlight city action in communities with populations of 75,000 or less in areas such as early childhood development, education, health and wellness, family economic success, and youth civic engagement.

NLC gathered information for the report in several ways. The case studies draw upon conference calls, materials, and other input gathered from Rapid City and Manchester through the learning community, as well as interviews and correspondence with senior municipal staff. The shorter, issue-focused city examples were identified separately, through a survey of NLC member and non-member cities,[16] a scan of promising practices gathered by YEF Institute staff, and a review of state municipal league award programs, as well as follow-up interviews with city officials and/or staff in each community. The survey not only asked respondents to nominate innovative city efforts on behalf of children, youth and families, but also asked about the unique challenges, opportunities and needs for support and assistance experienced by small and mid-sized cities and towns.

Survey respondents identified three primary areas of support needed to advance their efforts on behalf of children, youth and families: financial resources, access to best practices and peer learning opportunities, and training and technical assistance. Local officials and staff expressed interest in having access to a central repository of ideas and proven strategies from similar communities on issues such as identifying funding sources; conducting needs assessments and developing action plans to address those needs; gathering and using data; strengthening multi-sector partnerships; developing community engagement methods; placing youth in leadership roles; and building public and political will for allocating resources to child, youth and family services. This report is designed to provide an initial set of examples upon which NLC will build as it unveils a new and expanded database of city practices later this year. NLC will also explore new opportunities to connect peers from small and mid-sized cities around the country who are concerned about the well-being of children, youth and families in their communities.

10 Thought-Provoking Ideas for Supporting Children, Youth and Families

1) Help Parents Promote Early Literacy

To reach a goal of having 85 percent of third grade students reading proficiently, the City of Holyoke, Mass., Early Childhood Literacy Task Force has begun to establish family literacy centers at local elementary schools. Each center offers literacy activities and resources at no cost to families.

2) Expand Students' Access to Digital Public Library Resources

The City of Mountain View, Calif., has created a Virtual Library Resource Card that makes the public library's digital resource collection accessible to high school students through their schools. The card maximizes use of public library resources and generates cost savings for both the schools and the city.

3) Sponsor a Youth-Led Bullying Prevention Program

The Mayor's Youth Advisory Council in Tualatin, Ore., works with teachers and principals to sponsor a day-long bullying prevention workshop for fifth grade students. Drawing on materials developed by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and other national resources, the program helps prepare these students as they make the transition to middle school.

4) Partner with Colleges that Offer Career Academy and Early College Programs

A collaboration among the City of Monticello, Iowa, Kirkwood Community College, Monticello Community School District and a local property owner led to the establishment of the Jones Regional Education Center. This state-of-the-art facility provides high school students with opportunities to take college-level courses and participate in Career Academy programs offering skills in high demand by local employers.

5) Reengage Out-of-School Youth through Work-Based Learning Opportunities

In partnership with the local workforce investment board, a job training provider, Habitat for Humanity, local businesses and churches, and other city departments, the Ocala, Fla., Police Department plays an instrumental role in coordinating a workforce training and community development initiative modeled on the national YouthBuild program. Phoenix Rising is a 16-week program that provides out-of-school youth with opportunities to work toward their GED or high school diploma while building affordable housing.

6) Engage Parents in a "Less than Strict Enforcement" Option for First-Time Youth Offenders

The Police Involving Parents (PIP) program in Highland Village, Texas, provides for a "less than strict" enforcement option for addressing minor youth misbehavior, such as curfew violations and alcohol possession, by involving parents in the resolution process at the time and place of the infraction.

7) Give Transferable Parks and Recreation Credits to Local Volunteers

The Town of Wentzville, Mo., provides "Park Bucks" to residents who volunteer with the parks and recreation department. Volunteers can use their Park Bucks to receive discounted fees for park and recreation programs or donate their credits to a scholarship fund that enables youth from low-income families to participate.

(continued)

10 Thought-Provoking Ideas for Supporting Children, Youth and Families

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8) Support a Community Schools Partnership

Community schools serve as neighborhood hubs that stay open beyond traditional school hours and provide a range of integrated services to students and their families, including educational support, youth development programs, health and social services, and community engagement opportunities. The City of Tukwila, Wash., is a key partner and supporter of a Community Schools Collaboration that serves students in 20 schools throughout South King County.

9) Work with Local Clergy to Help Homeowners Avoid Foreclosure

Upon learning that the national foreclosure crisis had affected many residents, town officials in Dedham, Mass., partnered with faith community leaders to connect struggling homeowners with foreclosure prevention counseling and other opportunities to reduce household costs (e.g., home heating assistance, affordable health insurance). An array of local partners, including banks, legal services providers, food pantries, and government agencies, stepped up to share resources and expertise at a day-long public information session held at a local church.

10) Offer a Continuum of Opportunities for Youth Participation in Local Government

The City of Durango, Colo., has developed a Youth Engagement Program modeled on the award-winning Hampton, Va., youth civic engagement initiative. Youth in Durango have various pathways for involvement in city government, from short-term volunteer and service opportunities to participation on city boards and commissions to leadership as members of a Mayor's Youth Advisory Commission.

CASE STUDIES

Rapid City, South Dakota

Overview

Since 2007, the Rapid City Task Force for Strengthening Families has made steady progress in its efforts to improve the lives of children, youth and families throughout the city. Some of the most notable achievements are a new 24/7 mental health and substance abuse crisis center, a pilot initiative to expand access to high-quality pre-kindergarten, a model youth civic engagement initiative, South Dakota's first "Bank On" program to reduce reliance on high-cost check cashers, new reentry services to reduce recidivism among formerly incarcerated residents, and a sharpened focus on the root causes of truancy and failure to graduate from high school.

Even more impressive is the Task Force's ability to foster these achievements on a shoestring budget as it coordinated the work of eight committees that each set goals for their chosen topic areas. The extraordinary dedication of elected officials and senior municipal staff, close collaboration with local foundations and community organizations, and consensus around a common family strengthening vision are among the key ingredients for the Task Force's success. Rapid City's experience reveals the vast potential for local governments in small cities – working hand-in-hand with other community institutions – to make a difference in the lives of children and families.

Some of the most notable achievements of the Rapid City Task Force for Strengthening Families are a new 24/7 mental health and substance abuse crisis center, a pilot initiative to expand access to high-quality pre-kindergarten, a model youth civic engagement initiative, South Dakota's first "Bank On" program to reduce reliance on high-cost check cashers, new reentry services to reduce recidivism among formerly incarcerated residents, and a sharpened focus on the root causes of truancy and failure to graduate from high school.

What Challenges Motivated City Leaders to Act?

With a population of 68,000, Rapid City is the second largest municipality in South Dakota. It serves as a gateway for South Dakota's most visited tourist attractions, including Mount Rushmore, Crazy Horse Memorial, the Black Hills and the Badlands. Major employers in this metropolitan community's largely service-based economy include Ellsworth Air Force Base, Rapid City Regional Hospital, the Rapid City School District, city, state and federal government, and the South Dakota National Guard. Local citizens elect the mayor separately from the rest of the Common Council, which is composed of two aldermen representing each ward; all officials serve two-year terms. The mayor presides at Common Council meetings but only votes to break a tie, has the power to veto Council ordinances, resolutions and budget line items, and appoints agency heads with Council approval as the city government's chief executive officer.

In its application for an NLC technical assistance initiative, municipal officials highlighted several unique demographic and socioeconomic challenges that affect the community and its families, particularly among the city's Native American minority. Currently, eight of the nation's 32 poorest counties fall within the community's market service area, including the Pine Ridge, Eagle Butte and Rosebud Indian Reservations. With few employment opportunities available on the reservations, many of these residents move to the city, but find themselves unable to afford relatively high housing costs on low-wage jobs. City leaders described a "revolving door" cycle in which families move back and forth between Rapid City and the reservations, with some children pulled out of school or transferred to new schools up to five or six times per year. Families' lack of transportation and communication breakdowns between Rapid City and reservation school districts have also contributed to interruptions in schooling.

Economic conditions have exacerbated many of these challenges in recent years, as an increasing number of individuals and families in Rapid City have struggled to find stable housing. The Black Hills Regional Homeless Coalition, which conducts an annual homeless count, found that the region's homeless population swelled between 2007 and 2010. Many of the homeless are children. Out of a school district with about 13,500 students, more than 600 children were homeless during the 2010-11 school year. That number grew to more than 700 in the 2011-12 school year.

Rapid City's poverty rate was nearly 16 percent between 2007 and 2011, according to U.S. Census data.[17] Within Rapid City proper, Native Americans comprise 12 percent of the population but a disproportionate number of residents who lack homes, jobs, and high school educations. Nearly half of Native American students do not graduate from high school on time. Drug and alcohol addictions, higher suicide rates, and discrimination impose additional hardships on this segment of the community.

City leaders had already begun to focus more attention on children, youth and family outcomes before the recession occurred. Alderman Lloyd LaCroix, whose uncle served as Rapid City's first Native American mayor for five terms between 1975 and 1987, took the first step in initiating the city's family strengthening agenda after participating in NLC's Congressional City Conference in March 2007. There, Alderman LaCroix interacted with youth delegates from cities across the country who participate in this annual convening, learning of the many positive youth engagement activities in their communities. Motivated by a deep commitment to ensure that Rapid City youth have more opportunities than he had when he

was younger, Alderman LaCroix asked then-Mayor Alan Hanks to form a Task Force for Strengthening Families and Improving Outcomes for Children and Youth. Guided by NLC's *City Platform for Strengthening Families*, which was adopted by the Rapid City Common Council in July 2007, and led by Alderman LaCroix and Alderman Malcom Chapman, the Task Force would determine what services were available for children and youth, identify gaps, set priorities, and develop a plan for achieving annual goals.

"My personal experience is that many people in our community struggle with the pressures of work, family and addictions that affect their home life and their children's development," said LaCroix at the time. "It is crucial that we provide the community with the information and resources necessary to assist parents and children in strengthening their family bonds and developing the skills needed to set personal goals and achieve them."

Local leaders described some of the most pressing problems at several forums held throughout the spring. At an annual community "listening session" hosted by United Way of the Black Hills, State Circuit Court Judge Merton Tice, Jr., expressed concern about new state legislation affecting local youth. Emphasizing that truancy is often a symptom of deeper problems such as bullying or mental health issues, Judge Tice directed attention toward a South Dakota law that would take effect in 2009 requiring young people to be in school until age 18 or graduation. To prevent more young people from entering the juvenile court system for truancy charges, he urged stronger collaborative action to keep these youth in school. During an early task force meeting, Circuit Judge Janine Kern noted that children were being brought to juvenile court for truancy and drug charges at younger ages. Social service agency leaders underscored the higher dropout rates for Native American children, a lack of awareness of existing programs combined with service gaps in other areas, and the need for better cross-agency communication and city and community involvement in developing solutions.

Another primary source of information was a community needs assessment conducted by the local Chiesman Center for Democracy's Institute for Educational Leadership and Evaluation in 2006 at the request of a consortium that included the city, United Way, school district and nonprofit agencies. The foundation designed separate questionnaires for local residents and service providers. By working together to support a single, comprehensive needs assessment, the city and agencies saved money in identifying unmet local needs and developing long-term plans. To delve deeper into housing issues, the

Mayor's Task Force on Affordable Housing and Black Hills Regional Homeless Coalition developed its own separate assessment. Strategic plans for the city, school district and the Youth Serving Organizations Alliance, as well as ongoing meetings of the Judicial Education Truancy Task Force and other existing groups, further informed the local goal-setting process.

The information gathered by these entities provided a basis for early discussions, but Task Force priorities evolved over time. Ultimately, Task Force members decided that the most urgent concerns included truancy and dropout rates, mental health and substance abuse, early childhood development and child care, youth involvement in the community and government, affordable housing and homelessness, asset building and poverty reduction, reentry from incarceration, and access to transportation for high-need residents. By concentrating on these areas, the Task Force would strive to improve outcomes for youth and better equip parents to meet their families' needs.

> "My personal experience is that many people in our community struggle with the pressures of work, family and addictions that affect their home life and their children's development. It is crucial that we provide the community with the information and resources necessary to assist parents and children in strengthening their family bonds and developing the skills needed to set personal goals and achieve them."
>
> **– Former Rapid City Alderman Lloyd LaCroix**

What Steps Did the City Take to Get Started and What Partners Did It Bring to the Table?

The Task Force used NLC's *City Platform for Strengthening Families* as a framework for its activities and exemplified the "essential infrastructure" for sustained progress on behalf of children, youth and families that the Platform calls on cities to develop. The Task Force itself represented the first plank of this infrastructure by bringing together leaders from the public, private and nonprofit sectors – as well as parents and other residents – to identify needs and priorities. Rapid City staff also transformed the Platform into a self-assessment tool to create a snapshot of progress to date in each of the Platform's action areas.

Building on strong working relationships across these sectors, local officials and foundation directors secured commitments from several key leaders to participate in the Task Force Board as the city applied for an NLC technical assistance initiative. Early board members included Mayor Hanks, Aldermen LaCroix and Chapman, Judge Kern, the school board president, United Way and foundation leaders, a retired police chief and state legislator, a county commissioner, school district administrators, the chamber of commerce president and CEO, the state's attorney office, and community organizations. Alderman LaCroix reached out to the community by giving presentations to other stakeholder groups. As word of the initiative spread, more people began asking to join the Task Force, which grew to 46 members by January 2008.

Barb Garcia, the city's community development manager, also served on the Task Force and played the central coordinating role for its family strengthening work. In addition to overseeing Rapid City's

affordable housing, homelessness and community development programs and its code enforcement services, Garcia convened Task Force meetings as well as most of the early committee meetings focused on individual topic areas. After narrowing down the list of priority issues, the Task Force established five committees (later expanded to eight), with agency partners asked to lead each committee's work. For instance, South Dakota Voices for Children spearheaded the early childhood group's efforts. Lifeways, a nonprofit alcohol and drug prevention program serving area schools, led the charge in engaging adolescent youth. Each committee agreed to implement evidence-based practices, avoid duplicating services, and set and accomplish one major goal per year.

In deciding how to approach specific issues, Rapid City leaders worked with NLC to learn from other cities throughout the country. For instance, LaCroix and Garcia brought back ideas from San Antonio, Texas, after attending NLC's biennial National Summit on Your City's Families in September 2007 with a community team. They were joined by a state representative, city and school district staff, and the director of a local philanthropy called the John T. Vucurevich Foundation. At the Summit, the team learned about various strategies, such as a "poverty simulation" developed by the Missouri Association for Community Action that cities such as San Antonio and Savannah, Ga., have used to build public support for poverty reduction initiatives. The simulations help local officials, the business community and residents gain a better understanding of the day-to-day economic and bureaucratic barriers that families in poverty must overcome to make ends meet.

On many issues, Task Force committees first sought more information. When the newly-formed Rapid City Area Council on Early Care and Education worked with employers to survey working parents, they found that concerns about the cost and quality of child care were most prominent. They also found that the city's lowest-income residents were much more likely to rely on family, friend and neighbor care arrangements compared with other families, and that three out of five respondents had missed work due to lack of child care. Focus groups of child care and pre-kindergarten education providers shed additional light on local needs.

Chaired by Lifeways Executive Director Paula Wilkinson-Smith, the youth engagement committee discussed ways to elicit direct input from young people through the schools. The transportation committee surveyed various transportation and social service agencies to assess the feasibility of creating a common van system so that counseling staff would not have to transport clients themselves to work sites and appointments for services.

In other cases, collaborative efforts that had emerged in isolation were brought under the

auspices of the task force. Jeff Norris, the deputy chief of court services for the state's Seventh Circuit Court, was one of several key players who had launched the Abolish Chronic Truancy Now (ACT-Now) program and worked with the police department, sheriff's office, Pennington County State's Attorney Office and Juvenile Diversion Program, schools, and social service agencies to form a truancy court. Deepening collaboration with elementary school principals, earlier reporting and intervention, and efforts to engage older youth in mentoring students who are making the transition to high school presented new opportunities to better understand and address the truancy problem.

Coalition work on affordable housing, homelessness, reentry of former offenders and poverty reduction were also added to the Task Force agenda. For several years, the 30-agency Black Hills Regional Homeless Coalition had been conducting annual homeless counts and sponsoring Project Homeless Connect days, in which agencies brought a range of services – health screenings, eyeglasses, dental exams, haircuts, family portraits, and access to housing and employment programs – to one location.

Foundation and government grants enabled the Task Force to build new capacity for staffing some of the work. With a $100,000 planning grant and staff resources from the John T. Vucurevich Foundation authorized in May 2008, the foundation led a multi-partner collaborative to develop a community plan by breaking into smaller working groups on service infrastructure, service collaboration, prevention, and family advocacy. The Bush Foundation, which serves communities in Minnesota, North Dakota and South Dakota, contributed nearly $250,000 to build the collaborative's infrastructure through data gathering, evaluation, training, coordination and community engagement. In contrast, the Task Force's reentry work got off the ground with public funding. In 2009, South Dakota received a $750,000, three-year grant through the federal Second Chance Act. Half of the grant went to support reentry efforts in Rapid City, and these new funds enabled the city to hire a reentry coordinator focused on reducing adult recidivism. The city provides supervision and space under its Community Development Division to support the reentry work.

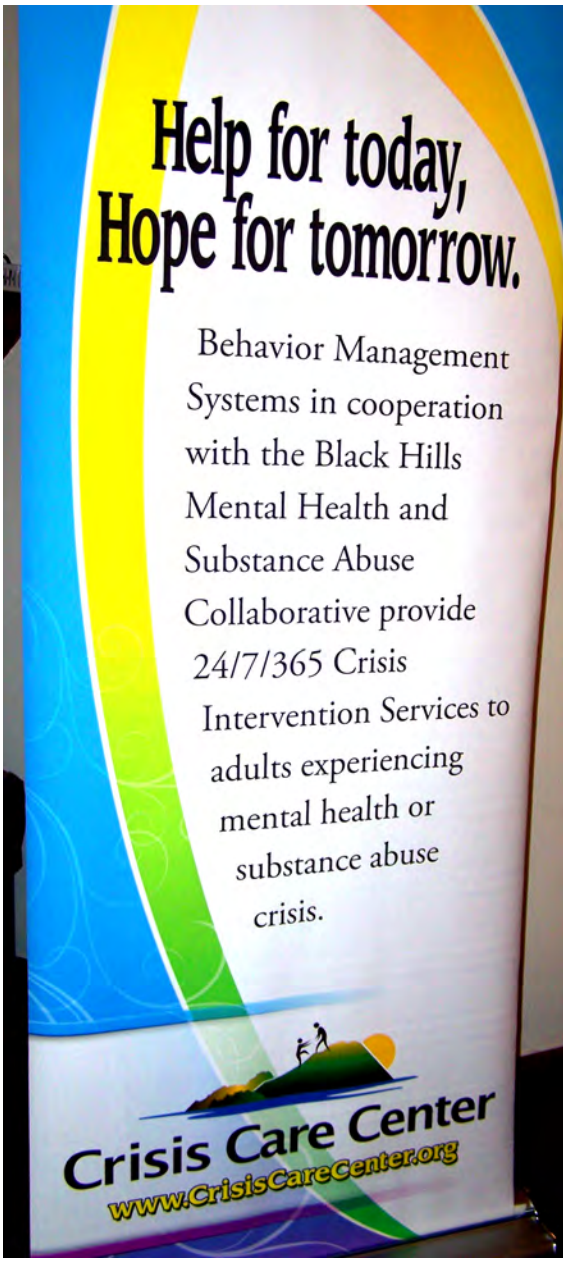
What Goals and Strategies Did the City and its Partners Develop?

Initially, different committees were able to move forward at different speeds, with some groups making more progress than others. The larger Task Force fostered accountability by working with committee chairs to ensure that each group set one goal per year, along with specific action steps and deadlines.

Mental Health and Substance Abuse

Mental health, substance abuse and suicide prevention were among the top immediate priorities. In particular, Task Force members saw mental illness as an important root cause of family instability and the multitude of problems that can result. Improvements in substance abuse and access to mental health treatment would also benefit Task Force efforts to help the homeless and formerly incarcerated populations. Although work in this area was among the most difficult to advance, the hiring of a coordinator helped the new Black Hills Mental Health/Substance Abuse Systems Change Collaborative – chaired by John T. Vucurevich Foundation Executive Director Sandy Diegel – take concrete steps to build a coordinated, family-centered system of care.

The foundation brought together 36 agencies in October 2008 to create a Community Plan focused on empowering and strengthening families in Rapid City. Drawing on a service integration model used in Larimer County, Colo., and a crisis intervention system model from San Antonio, Texas, the collaborative sponsored regular networking and strategic planning meetings among service providers and sought to implement a community crisis system. They also reached out to the community to raise awareness of prevention resources and began offering a 12-hour mental health first aid training course. Training participants reported that it was useful for family members, service providers, school district staff, police, and others who may come into contact with people with mental illness. The city's police department has been heavily involved in the collaborative as one of the main sources of referrals, and officers have been trained to work more effectively with mentally ill residents when in the field.



The collaborative's most ambitious project was the development of a mental health and substance abuse assessment and crisis intervention center that is open 24 hours per day and seven days per week. The center helps residents receive urgently needed crisis stabilization support as well as counseling, case management services and referrals for post-crisis, follow-up treatment. It saves money by diverting patients from admission to inappropriate – and more expensive – hospital emergency rooms and psychiatric units, jails and detox facilities. In 2008, 82 percent of the nearly 1,400 individuals held through involuntary commitments were released in less than 24 hours, according to a John T. Vucurevich Foundation report. In 2012, there were 1,300 involuntary commitments but only 47 percent were released within 24 hours, reflecting progress in connecting residents in crisis with appropriate services.

The collaborative had hoped that their proposal to a national foundation for a three-year, $1 million grant would enable the Crisis Care Center to begin operating, but in May 2010, they were notified that Rapid City did not make it past the second round of the application process. However, collaborative members were determined to press forward. They were ultimately successful when the city stepped in to contribute vital start-up funding. With unanimous support, Rapid City officials allocated $500,000 in revenue from the city's Vision 2012 program, an existing, half-cent sales tax add-on approved by voters in 1992 to support long-range planning and infrastructure projects.

Youth Engagement

In 2008, adult representatives of the youth engagement committee began meeting with youth involved in student councils at school. These youth became part of an advisory council to offer feedback on efforts to include youth voices in local government and community decisions. Grants from the Chiesman Center for Democracy and the South Dakota Community Foundation helped the committee survey teens in public and private schools and conduct focus groups at high schools to review the survey results. Local leaders reported the survey results – including top youth concerns such as alcohol and drug abuse, violence and bullying, and the various protective factors in their lives – at a city hall event in October 2009. During the event, city officials publicly introduced the Task Force for Strengthening Families to the community and local media.

Youth engagement efforts gathered increasing momentum when Lifeways hired Richard Goll, a consultant at the Hampton, Va.-based Onsite-Insights who played a vital role in creating the nationally-recognized Hampton Youth Civic Engagement initiative and facilitating development of the Manchester, Conn., Children, Youth and Family Master Plan described in the next chapter. Goll worked with youth and adults in Rapid City to develop a plan for promoting "authentic" youth civic engagement (AYCE). He also gave presentations to 75 different groups in the community, including the Common Council, to explain the AYCE concept, which goes beyond token youth participation to give young people a genuine leadership role in decision-making. AYCE not only seeks to promote positive youth development and skill-building, but is also intended to help communities make better decisions on a range of issues. Seventy-seven individuals representing the city, school district, businesses and youth attended a kickoff event in the spring of 2010. During that event, three youth-adult teams formed to design an AYCE framework that would encourage youth participation in local government, the schools and the community. With more than 13,000 students in the Rapid City Area Schools, all youth will have an opportunity to be heard. The youth who participated in the 2010 event were recruited from the YMCA, church groups, Lifeways programs in the schools, and Partnership Rapid City, which is a collaboration among Rapid City Area Schools, Rapid City Public School Foundation and the community. Partnership Rapid City creates alliances between businesses, nonprofit organizations, the city and schools to expand the walls of the classrooms.

Because of strong community support, the AYCE initiative was recently funded by the St. Paul, Minn.-based Bush Foundation as well as the John T. Vucurevich Foundation. The latter foundation facilitated a conversation with key people in the community including city council representatives, school

officials, and chamber of commerce and United Way leaders to determine priorities and next steps for AYCE. Through this convening, stakeholders identified Partnership Rapid City as the appropriate organization to guide the development of AYCE, as it aligns closely with their goals.

Early Childhood Development

As the Rapid City Area Council on Early Care and Education was learning more about child care and pre-kindergarten needs in the community, it also sought to build public will for affordable, high-quality early care and education through public service announcements and presentations to businesses and civic groups. The publication of the survey results and the creation of the Bridge to Benefits website by South Dakota Voices for Children and the Children's Defense Fund both helped raise awareness. This website offers an online tool for screening residents' eligibility for child care assistance and an array of other benefits, including the Earned Income Tax Credit, Children's Health Insurance Program, energy assistance and federal nutrition programs.

The Council also formed a subcommittee staffed by South Dakota Voices for Children called the Rapid City Pre-K Pilot Task Force. This group has pushed for a Starting Strong Rapid City pre-kindergarten education pilot program for three- and four-year old children from low-income families. In promoting this initiative, the task force has emphasized the success of a three-year pilot program in Sioux Falls, S.D., in improving children's literacy, math and language skills, as well as the extensive research on the high returns on investment from early childhood education. The Sioux Falls initiative received funding from the governor's economic development fund, the local United Way and an economic development partnership supported by the Sioux Falls chamber of commerce.

When the pre-K task force was unable to convince state legislators to back a statewide pre-K pilot program, it responded by turning to the community for support. Recently, the John T. Vucurevich

> "Giving children at risk the opportunity to start school ready to learn makes the difference in their lives, the lives of families and our community."
>
> **– Rapid City Mayor Sam Kooiker**

Foundation provided a three-year grant that will match funds raised from local businesses and residents on a dollar-for-dollar basis. By the fall of 2012, the Starting Strong task force was offering the pre-K program at no cost to 36 children through seven existing child care facilities that agreed to meet certain quality benchmarks, including staff education levels. The goal is to serve 50 students in the first year and 100 the following year, making a big dent in reaching the 150 Rapid City children on a Head Start waiting list. The task force has also partnered with professors at the University of South Dakota and Black Hills State University to track children's academic progress as they move from the pre-K program into the school system.

The program has been endorsed by city leaders including current Mayor Sam Kooiker. "Giving children at risk the opportunity to start school ready to learn makes the difference in their lives, the lives of families and our community," said Mayor Kooiker.

Truancy and Dropout Prevention

Consistent with a focus on reaching children at earlier ages, the ACT-Now collaboration among the courts, law enforcement, schools and social service agencies has reoriented the community's truancy abatement efforts toward a more preventive approach tailored to different age groups. ACT-Now is working more closely with elementary schools to identify children who are chronically absent from school, and connecting families with juvenile diversion staff to address barriers to attendance. The county is also partnering with Big Brothers/Big Sisters to provide at-risk elementary school students with mentors. Liaison officers from the police department and sheriff's office placed within middle and high schools engage students and connect individual families with counseling. In turn, schools are working with police to refer students with excessive absences to ACT-Now before they reach the court system.

One of the most significant changes has involved earlier reporting and intervention with truant students. In 2011, Rapid City Area Schools established a policy that five unexcused absences would result in a referral to the ACT-Now Task Force. Previously, principals might not begin working with families until the student missed 25 or 30 days of school. Earlier reporting has enabled the Task Force to assist students before they fall so far behind that failing their classes becomes inevitable.

The ACT-Now collaboration has reoriented the community's truancy efforts toward a more preventive approach tailored to different age groups.

With a jump in caseloads for the diversion truancy coordinator, it became necessary to change procedures for working with students. Currently, truant students and their parents are required to attend a Truancy Intervention Workshop where they hear from and meet individually with diversion staff and sign a contract agreeing there will be no more unexcused absences until the end of the school year. Students who continue to miss school unexcused are referred to a Truancy Intervention Conference (truancy court) for a hearing with a judge, school administrators, liaison officers, diversion staff, and parents. Together, they develop a plan to keep the student in school. If this plan is not successful, juvenile diversion staff provide extensive case management and daily monitoring to try to keep the case from going to the formal court system.

Other efforts have included an informal probation truancy class for truant students who have received diversion services in the past, a pilot program led by the Society for the Advance of Native Interests-Today (SANI-T) and the Center for Restorative Justice, and an attempt to change legislation to allow alternative education options for students who have dropped out. The city and school district have also partnered to enable students to ride city buses using their student ID cards, with the district covering the cost. The committee's goal is to reduce truancy rates by one percentage point per year over five years by addressing the underlying causes of school absence, which may include lack of transportation, a need for academic support, parental attitudes, and bullying.

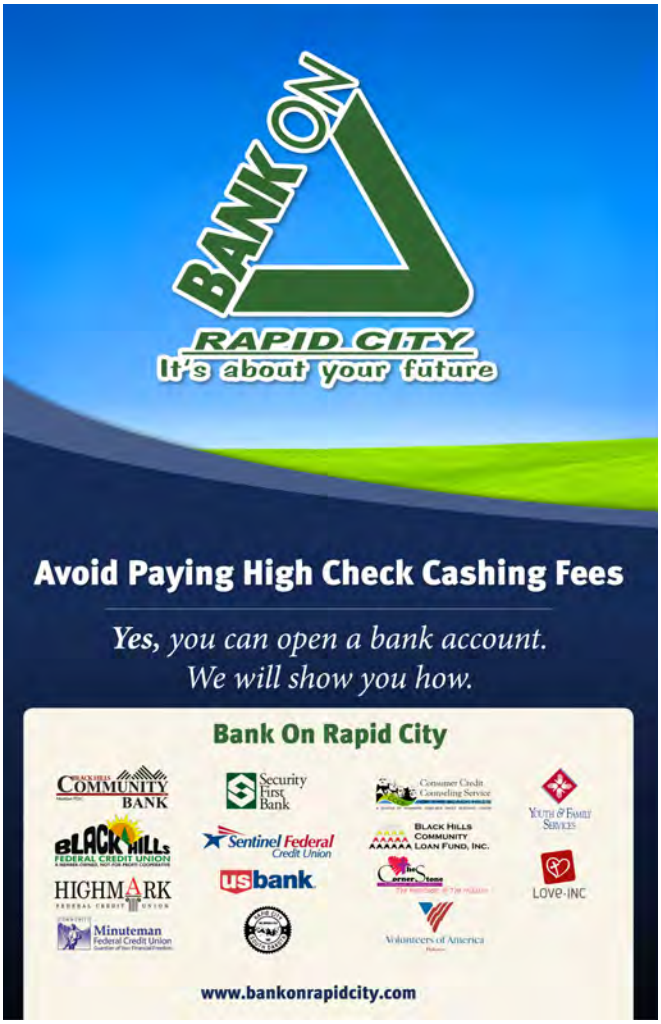
Reentry

Coordinated by the city's community development office and conceptualized by Rapid City Police Chief Steve Allender, the Rapid City Reentry Program set an ambitious goal of reducing recidivism rates of formerly incarcerated residents by 50 percent over five years. Like other Task Force groups, the program emphasizes the cost savings of its work – in this case enhancing public safety by preventing repeat offenses. Program leaders estimate that South Dakota spends nearly $61,000 per day per individual housing the 45 percent of people released from state correctional facilities who reoffend and return to prison. These figures only reflect incarceration expenses; total costs are even higher when other impacts on public safety and victims of crime are taken into account. Nearly one in five inmates is from Pennington County, meaning that the Rapid City area bears a disproportionate cost of recidivism relative to its population.

With federal Second Chance Act grant funding via the state, the Reentry Program has offered comprehensive case management to ensure that adult residents transitioning back to the community from correctional facilities lead productive lives and do not continue to engage in criminal activity. The program currently connects participants with mental health and drug abuse treatment, housing, education, employment, and faith-based and parenting programs in the community. The city is also working to establish a mentoring component to serve at least 20 participants per year.

Poverty Reduction through Asset Building

Rapid City's first poverty simulation attracted 45 participants, two aldermen and 25 business executives. After participating, one of Alderman LaCroix's colleagues told him that the simulation was an eye-opening experience that offered a better appreciation of the stresses that low-income families encounter daily. The simulation boosted donations and community support for local anti-poverty initiatives that had been created prior to the formation of the Task Force. Among these initiatives is a collaboration between the AARP and other organizations to assist eligible families in claiming the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) at local Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) sites. Funding from the John T. Vucurevich Foundation and coordination by Consumer Credit Counseling Service of the Black Hills (CCCS) and the local AARP coordinator helped increase promotion of the VITA sites. The Bridge to Benefits website gives local agencies a new tool to further expand access to the EITC. Consumer Credit Counseling Service (CCCS) of the Black Hills provides financial education and counseling and a matched savings program.



After conducting a survey showing that 15 percent of residents lack bank accounts, the poverty reduction committee began work on creating a "Bank On" program. More than 50 cities across the country have replicated the innovative Bank On San Francisco model to steer low-income residents away from high-cost check cashers, payday lenders, and pawn shops. These fringe financial service providers can take a large bite out of workers' paychecks through high fees and high-interest loans. Through a Bank On program, cities negotiate with financial institutions and community organizations to create new, free or low-cost checking accounts and financial education opportunities that give unbanked residents an opportunity to store their money safely, save for the future, and build credit.

Rapid City was one of 18 communities that participated in NLC's Bank On Cities Campaign in 2008-09. The Annie E. Casey Foundation and Ford Foundation supported this technical assistance initiative, which served large and small communities throughout the country. Seven local banks and credit unions, the FDIC, a community loan fund, CCCS, and other nonprofit organizations and financial education providers joined the city as partners in developing Bank On Rapid City.

Homelessness and Affordable Housing

In the fall of 2010 – the depths of the nation's worst economic downturn since the Great Depression – an annual count of the region's homeless population found that the number of homeless individuals had doubled from the year before to more than 800, adding new urgency to ongoing homelessness prevention efforts. Building on previous work, the Black Hills Regional Homeless Coalition hired a consultant to help complete a five-year plan to prevent and end involuntary homelessness. The plan draws on the evidence-based Housing First model that many cities have adopted in recent years to connect families and individuals with permanent housing and support services. The coalition's plan incorporates ideas from its 30 member organizations and takes a three-pronged approach of creating an adequate supply of affordable housing, boosting family incomes and establishing emergency prevention programs. Coalition members recently amended the plan to focus more deeply on the needs of homeless youth.

Recent efforts include developing a strong referral system with agencies throughout the community, partnering with the Department of Veterans Affairs to provide information on assistance available for veterans, and creating a mobile food bank. Currently, the coalition, which has merged with a nonprofit health services organization called the Community Services Connections of the Black Hills to improve service delivery and expand their reach, is seeking to hire a coordinator to keep projects moving forward.

Transportation

The city's five-year transportation plan facilitated better coordination between schools and the city bus service. Previously, many students could not ride the bus without arriving at school too early or after the bell. In addition, as noted above, the partnership to allow student IDs as city bus passes has contributed to truancy prevention efforts. However, the transportation committee continues to explore options for better coordinating transportation for residents who have trouble getting to appointments or jobs.

What Did the City Accomplish?

On March 23, 2010, Mayor Hanks hosted a large press event at the civic center highlighting progress made by the Task Force for Strengthening Families. Members of the Common Council, the chamber of commerce and the larger Rapid City community participated, with Richard Goll invited as a guest speaker. Goll underscored the importance of youth-adult partnerships in making Rapid City a better place for youth to live and used the opportunity to actively recruit new participants for the youth engagement work.

While many cities interested in promoting youth participation in local government initially set up a mayor's youth advisory council, Rapid City took a different route. The youth engagement committee's "city team" chose to first build its reputation by working with the police and fire department, the civic center board and the state fair board. Recently, the civic center board agreed to give youth a voice in its process of expansion. The city team has also created a Community Policing and Youth Partnership to decrease juvenile crime and increase trust between young people and police. Ultimately, the team plans to establish a youth council and ask the city to appoint youth to municipal boards and commissions. The schools team is providing input into decisions by principals and the superintendent, and the community and neighborhoods team is working to place youth on United Way and nonprofit boards, promote volunteer opportunities, and get involved with the chamber of commerce. Taken together, the AYCE teams offer a choice of numerous shared leadership, input, and community service and engagement activities. Recently, the Task Force administered a citywide youth survey showing that a high percentage of young people want to stay in Rapid City.

In February 2011, city and county leaders celebrated the opening of the Crisis Care Center within the Regional Behavioral Health Center. The center offers access to 24/7 mental health crisis services as a more appropriate response to service needs than access through jails, detox facilities, or hospital emergency rooms and psychiatric units. In its second year of operation, the Crisis Care Center diverted almost 800 admissions from these services. In addition to on-site services by the Crisis Care Center, referrals for 597 individuals for follow-up care from the Crisis Care Center were made to partnering organizations for treatment and case management. Using its Vision 2012 sales tax add-on, the city

In the Crisis Care Center's first year, mental health professionals helped 700 residents access needed care, services and post-crisis treatment. The number of residents served increased to almost 1,000 by the second year and is on track to reach 1,400, or around 120 individuals per month, by the end of the third year.

joined Regional Hospital, Pennington County, the John T. Vucurevich Foundation, South Dakota Community Foundation, and other foundations, businesses and individuals to assemble $3.6 million in funding for three years to support the center. Chief of Police Allender serves on the Center's steering committee with the Pennington County sheriff and representatives of Regional Health, Community Health Center of the Black Hills, Cornerstone Rescue Mission, Pennington County Health and Human Services, the John T. Vucurevich Foundation, and Behavior Management Systems, the Crisis Care Center's managing agency.

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center demonstrates the benefits of cross-city peer exchange. Since 2010, Rapid City police officers, physicians and other stakeholders have visited San Antonio to learn from the Bexar County, Texas, Jail Diversion Program and a Crisis Intervention Training International Conference to learn how to foster collaboration among law enforcement and mental health agencies. Bexar County leaders visited Rapid City in early 2011 to further advise the collaborative team. Discussions around funding sustainability are currently underway with relevant agencies. In addition to the work to sustain the Crisis Care Center, the Mental Health/Substance Abuse Collaborative is working in conjunction with the Juvenile Diversion Alternatives Initiative (JDAI) Task Force and a Mental Health Systems of Care for Youth and Families Committee to establish a youth crisis system. Other next steps for the collaborative will be to work toward implementing a community case management system.

BANK ON RAPID CITY
It's about your future

Bank On Rapid City was unveiled on November 14, 2011, at the Dahl Fine Arts Center. Residents can now open free or lower-cost checking and savings accounts at seven local banks and credit unions, providing an alternative to check cashing outlets. By opening Bank On accounts at participating financial institutions, residents can cash checks for free, saving hundreds of dollars per year. The program helps them save and build assets to invest in their future and weather financial emergencies. Even those who had banking difficulties in the past can open a second chance account if they complete the national CheckWise financial education program offered by CCCS.

Led by South Dakota Voices for Children, the Pre-K task force was successful in launching Starting Strong Rapid City, a scholarship program coordinated by Early Childhood Connections to provide three and four-year olds with high-quality pre-kindergarten at no cost to their families. After qualifying community providers and raising funds for scholarships, the task force began enrolling children in the fall of 2012. Thirty-six children currently participate, and partnerships with universities are in place to measure the impact of the program.

Launched in 2010, the Rapid City Reentry Program served 60 high-risk offenders in its first year – 30 from local jails and federal prison and 30 from state correctional institutions. The program has been helping these individuals obtain jobs, housing and other services to get their lives on a more positive path. As of

October 2010, only two had been reincarcerated. Since then, the state has only shared recidivism data for all of South Dakota, measured as the share of formerly incarcerated individuals sent back to prison within one year. From a baseline recidivism rate of 28.7 percent in 2009, the rate fell to 25.9 percent in 2010, surpassing expectations. The state's and city's goal is to reduce recidivism by 50 percent in five years.

The Pre-K task force was successful in launching Starting Strong Rapid City, a scholarship program that currently provides 36 three and four-year olds with high-quality pre-kindergarten at no cost to their families.

The ACT-Now Task Force has been reaching chronically absent students at younger ages and intervening with older truant students when there is still time to help them get back on track. The school district's new policy of referring students to the task force after five unexcused absences led to a large increase in the number of referrals to juvenile diversion between 2010-11 and 2011-12. At the same time, Pennington County and Rapid City leaders have folded the truancy efforts into broader reforms to the juvenile justice system. The county hired a coordinator to adopt the juvenile detention alternatives initiative (JDAI) model in April 2011. Launched by the Annie E. Casey Foundation in 1992 and replicated in more than 100 jurisdictions throughout the country, JDAI has helped communities reduce the number of youth detained by providing more effective – and less expensive – alternative sanctions. The model has lowered average daily detention populations while also decreasing juvenile crime and racial disparities in the justice system. In Rapid City, JDAI will not only seek to reduce the negative impact of secure confinement on youth, but will also enable them to receive behavioral health treatment and other services to prevent future delinquency.

While struggling to move forward until a coordinator is hired, the homeless coalition has been successful in completing and beginning to implement its five-year plan to end homelessness; broadening its reach through the merger with a local health care services organization; and strengthening partnerships to assist homeless veterans. Other successes include continuing to sponsor Project Homeless Connect days that serve nearly 300 people per year and opening a new homeless drop-in center at a local church that provides afterschool programming for youth, referrals to services, mailboxes, and assistance in getting needed documentation to an average of 70 residents per day. However, the total number of homeless individuals remains high.

Task Force partners have also been working to bring services closer to their intended recipients. Staff from some government and nonprofit service providers now meet with clients at the Cornerstone Rescue Mission homeless shelter, which is more accessible for residents without transportation. The Community Health Center of the Black Hills has opened clinics at sites serving low-income and homeless clients, including the Rescue Mission and General Beadle Elementary School.

What Factors Contributed to the City's Success? What Challenges Did the City Face and How Were They Overcome?

Exercising Municipal Leadership

While municipal governments do not directly oversee many of the systems that impact children and families, the Rapid City Task Force shows why top-down support from municipal leaders is nevertheless essential for promoting cross-system collaboration and progress. In addition to convening the Task Force, the mayor and city aldermen brought credibility and energy to the family strengthening work. Local partners noted that "community members want to know the city supports and is behind the project." The mayor convened key stakeholders, who are generally reluctant to say no to a mayor's request for participation. Aldermen led Task Force board meetings, presented the initiative to civic groups throughout the community, and lobbied state legislators for supportive policies. Regular monthly meetings of the Common Council and school board members, county commissioners and other leadership groups helped foster a spirit of collaboration that bolstered Task Force planning. City staff played an integral role by organizing meetings, sharing information and ensuring committees moved forward in setting and achieving goals.

Setting Goals, Using Data, and Sharing Accountability

Although cities are often in a unique position to be a catalyst and coordinator, they can rarely go it alone in efforts to strengthen families. In Rapid City, an elected school board oversees education, and county and nonprofit agencies manage health and human services, juvenile diversion, and other youth-serving programs. Encouraging shared responsibility was an initial challenge for Rapid City since all agencies were stretched thin and Task Force facilitation was an additional duty for existing city staff. However, once other organization leaders agreed to co-chair each committee and report back to the Task Force, the initiative gathered momentum. The high-level officials on the Task Force Board accelerated this momentum by serving as the "mother ship" in addressing concerns raised by committees on funding, policy and legislation, and publicity.

Rapid City leaders chose to set aggressive one-year timetables for identifying and completing goals to build a sense of urgency and momentum. Task Force organizers recognized that "setting a five-year goal means no one will work on it until the fourth year" and that it is human nature to let other priority issues interfere with long-term objectives, however well-intentioned. This process was successful in energizing committees, some of which have attracted between 30 and 50 participants to their meetings.

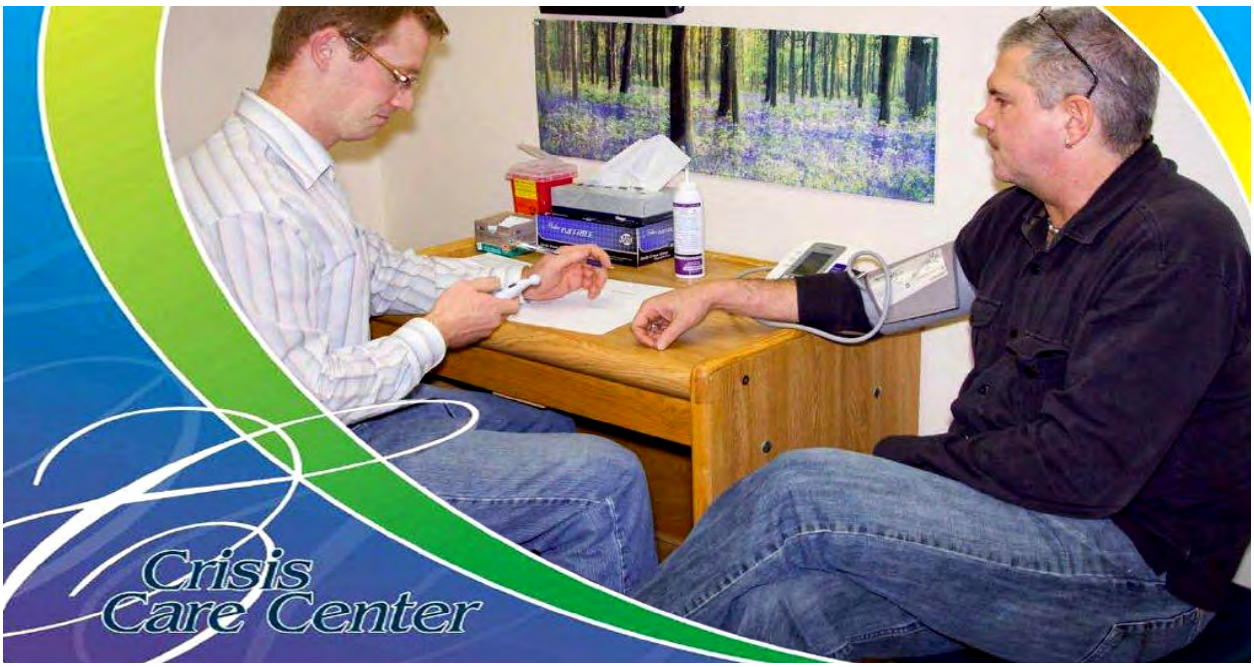
Rapid City has also sought ways to gather and use data more effectively. The Black Hills Community Needs Assessment compiled by the Chiesman Center for Democracy's Institute for Educational Leadership and Evaluation helps keep everyone on the same page and saves money, and local universities are assisting with evaluation of the pre-K pilot program. One key challenge is that state and local data systems are disconnected from each other and have different reporting requirements, making it difficult to identify realistic baseline measures and share cross-system information on individual

families. For example, it is possible to track recidivism rates but difficult to measure whether reentry program participants are maintaining stable housing. Going forward, local agencies are exploring ways to conduct intake for certain services through a shared database.

Developing a Financing Strategy

With limited funding and declining federal and state resources, Rapid City has been careful to emphasize fiscally responsible – and in many cases cost-saving – strategies that add little to the city's bottom line. The Task Force benefited from in-kind staff support through the community development department. Foundation, state and federal grants have supported the mental health collaborative, youth civic engagement initiative, Starting Strong prekindergarten pilot program, and reentry program. The critical Task Force leadership provided by the John T. Vucurevich Foundation and United Way from the very beginning speaks to the importance of close collaboration between cities and major philanthropic partners to achieve community goals for children and families. The leadership and guidance foundations can provide goes well beyond funding. In Rapid City, they also helped avoid funding duplicate services, gather community input and break down silos across agencies. Funders are currently planning to be more targeted and collaborative in their support of key priorities such as mental health, housing and homelessness.

In addition, all of the Task Force efforts are designed to use existing resources more efficiently and reduce larger long-term costs borne by the community and the state through enhanced preventive measures. Agencies are co-locating services at local nonprofits and schools. The city's Vision 2012 investment in the Crisis Care Center diverts residents with mental health crises from more expensive settings. By reducing recidivism, the reentry program will save money on public safety and incarceration. Early education, truancy prevention, and anti-poverty initiatives have the potential generate large returns on investment by enhancing self-sufficiency and strengthening families.



Leveraging Staff Capacity

The most successful Task Force groups – including the mental health collaborative, early care and education council, truancy task force, and the adult reentry and youth civic engagement initiatives – have benefited from staff capacity provided by existing organizations or newly hired coordinators. However, resource constraints affecting both public and private agencies have made lack of staff capacity one of the most significant obstacles to the ongoing progress of the Task Force.

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Learning from Other Cities

Cities save time and money when they do not try to "reinvent the wheel." Rapid City sought ideas from Manchester, Conn., and other members of the Platform for Strengthening Families Learning Community on the issues of curfews, truancy and bullying prevention. The Platform itself – created by city officials serving on NLC's Council on Youth, Education and Families – provided a valuable framework for assessing strengths and areas of need. San Antonio, Texas, and Larimer County, Colo., served as models for the mental health collaborative. The city also learned about innovative housing programs in Denver that could be adapted in Rapid City. NLC's Bank On Cities project and information sharing opportunities reduced the amount of time Rapid City needed to launch its Bank On initiative. According to city officials, "being able to learn from the efforts and ideas of other communities was and continues to be invaluable."

Youth and School District Involvement

Finally, Rapid City learned that youth and schools must be part of the early planning process for youth-focused initiatives to succeed. Sharing ownership with youth was difficult at the beginning of the AYCE effort, and getting youth involved required understanding their motivations for participating as well as the competing demands on their time. Cities and schools must also show students that they are serious about giving youth a voice to overcome skepticism that youth engagement is inauthentic or that adults' expressions of commitment are insincere. For Rapid City, early accomplishments by the city, school and community teams are keeping the AYCE initiative on track.

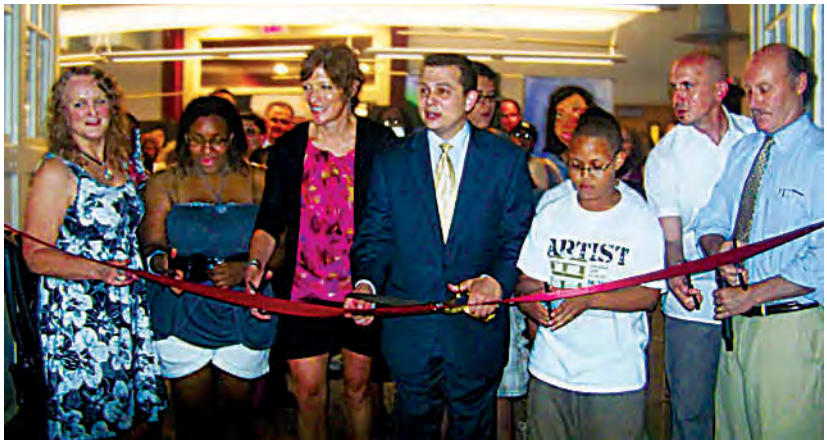
Looking Ahead

The Task Force for Strengthening Families had made substantial progress since it was formed, but many challenges lie ahead. For instance, the issue of aging and substandard housing has emerged as a growing concern for city leaders. With nearly half of the housing stock being more than 40 years old, the city is exploring strategies for identifying and improving properties with deteriorating water and sewer pipes, lack of running water, mold, needed sidewalk repairs, and other problems. Housing affordability and supportive services also remain high priorities, particularly with regard to single-occupancy residencies for homeless individuals. In addition to finding the staff capacity needed to coordinate multi-agency partnerships around issues such as homelessness, the city is also considering next steps for improving its use of data to measure outcomes for children, youth and families.

CASE STUDIES

Manchester, Connecticut

Overview



In 2009, the Town of Manchester, Conn., completed a comprehensive Children, Youth and Family Master Plan, marking the culmination of an inclusive process that began with the Town Board of Directors' adoption of NLC's *City Platform for Strengthening Families* in July 2007. Town leaders have since used the plan as a roadmap to reorganize town structures and services and to engage residents at the neighborhood level. A new Office of Neighborhoods and Families works with other departments and agencies along with the Better Manchester Coalition to facilitate the plan's implementation. The first of several one-stop, neighborhood-based resource centers recently opened in a repurposed firehouse in the town's southeast quadrant. Residents can visit the center to access services and participate in community-based education courses on leadership development, neighborhood organizing and town government 101 offered by the new Manchester Neighborhood Academy. The first Livable Neighborhood Group is empowering residents at the grassroots to improve their communities. The development of *Better Manchester Magazine* is further strengthening the bonds that connect citizens and their municipal government.

The Town has also established new opportunities for youth leadership and input through the creation of the Manchester Youth Commission, and has created resources to help disconnected youth reenter the classroom or the workforce. All of these actions have been taken at minimal expense through the creative reassignment of municipal staff, a focus on system-level change and more effective community-wide collaboration. With inclusiveness as a guiding principle, local leaders are building on the many existing strengths of the town and its youth to fulfill a vision that "all children, youth and families thrive" in Manchester.

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What Challenges Motivated Town Leaders to Act?

Manchester is a growing, first-tier suburb located east of Hartford, the state capital and third-largest city in Connecticut. More than 58,000 residents call Manchester home, and major employers in 2011 included local government, Manchester Memorial Hospital, GE Aerospace, and the J.C. Penney Catalog Logistics Center. The local economy thrives on a mix of businesses that include manufacturing, retail, warehouse distribution, commercial printing, health care, and professional services. Every two years, Manchester voters elect a nine-member Board of Directors, which elects a mayor from its membership for each two-year term and appoints a professional general manager to oversee municipal agencies.

Several emerging challenges prompted town leaders to develop a family strengthening agenda. As Manchester has become more urbanized – with dramatic growth in housing and commercial development and increases in renter-occupied housing – it has also experienced rapid demographic change. The number of students receiving free or reduced price meals in Manchester public schools rose from 21 percent in 1994 to more than 37 percent in 2005, far outpacing the average statewide increase. The town's youth population has also become more diverse: 44 percent of public school students were from racial and ethnic minority groups in 2005, up from 20 percent in 1993.

The town's application for an NLC technical assistance project in 2007 cited increased crime and deteriorating property conditions in older, lower-income neighborhoods, along with increased gang and drug activity and several high-profile, criminal incidents involving youth gangs as motivators for local action. Municipal and law enforcement officials were aware that they would not simply be able to arrest their way out of the problem and that they would need to engage youth, families and neighborhoods in finding solutions.

In July 2007, Town Director Jason Doucette encouraged his colleagues to formally adopt NLC's *City Platform for Strengthening Families* and use it as a framework for developing a comprehensive, results-driven youth master plan. In doing so, the town would build on many existing assets and substantial progress that it had already made in the platform's seven key action areas. For instance, the community's School Readiness Council had been successful in obtaining federal funding for a Manchester Early Learning Opportunities Project and brought together town directors and local school board members at a policy meeting on early care and education, which led to joint funding for an early childhood coordinator to improve transitions between preschool and kindergarten. The town had also partnered with the school board and state agencies to fund the construction of a new Head Start facility that resulted in a 45 percent increase in the number of children served. In addition, the school district and town worked together to share use of school facilities for recreation programming and assign school resource officers from the police department to the schools.

The Manchester Youth Service Bureau (YSB) is one of the 99 bureaus operated by one or more municipalities in Connecticut that receive matching state funding to coordinate services for children, youth and families. Youth serve on the YSB's Youth Advisory Board and participate in its strategic planning process. The YSB offers a broad range of positive youth development programs for young people ages 0-18, including youth leadership, summer and year-round youth employment, mentoring and tutoring, service learning and volunteering opportunities, diversion programs for first-time juvenile offenders, a teen center, a strengthening families program and a "youth in transitions" program

for teens in alternative education settings. The YSB, recreation, library and police departments sponsor additional school- and community-based afterschool opportunities for children and youth.

With no county governments in Connecticut, Manchester's municipal human services department directs important local funding toward community-based agencies offering mental health and substance abuse treatment, child care, emergency assistance and services for people with disabilities. It also oversees the YSB and School Readiness Council. The human services department has been a key player in local family economic success initiatives, including the Manchester Earned Income Tax Credit Coalition and establishment of a Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) site. Finally, the town health department has been at the center of many local collaborative health initiatives. For instance, it sponsors a reduced fee dental program for residents without dental insurance and collaborates with the recreation department on the community-based Healthier U initiative to promote nutrition and active living.

A cross-departmental team representing town police, human services, youth services, recreation and library departments had been providing leadership on youth service coordination and planning. Then-Mayor Josh Howroyd noted that the town's youth master plan would build on a long history of cooperation among town departments, the Board of Directors and local organizations. However, despite this track record of collaboration, town leaders, led by Director David Sheridan, believed that a comprehensive youth master plan could reduce remaining fragmentation among youth service providers. Through a close association with NLC, they took note of other communities that had successfully completed youth master plans to accomplish a similar goal.

At the same time as town leaders were developing and implementing a Children, Youth and Family Master Plan, the State of Connecticut's adoption of a results-based accountability (RBA) framework was encouraging a similar RBA focus in town governments, particularly among Youth Service Bureaus. Manchester leaders decided to institute a town-wide performance measurement system beginning with a few municipal agencies. The human services department was the first department to institute the performance measurement system. This shift fostered an emphasis on clear outcomes, indicators of success and lines of responsibility in plan implementation.

The Town of Manchester's children, youth and families master plan builds on a long history of cooperation among town departments, the Board of Directors and local organizations.

What Steps Did the Town Take to Get Started and What Partners Did It Bring to the Table?

As Manchester's initial lead representative in NLC's Platform for Strengthening Families Learning Community, Human Services Director Mary Roche Cronin participated in the learning community's bimonthly conference calls alongside members of her cross-departmental team. General Manager Scott Shanley, Parks and Recreation Director Scott Sprague, Library Director Doug McDonough and former Chief of Police James Berry were among the town staff who regularly joined the calls.

Early on, the team requested that NLC provide examples of comprehensive youth master plans created by other communities, as well as a list of consultants who had facilitated the development of these plans. They recommended, through the General Manager, that the Board of Directors hire a consultant and prepared to issue a request for proposals to potential candidates. Town Directors Kevin Zingler, Cheri Pelletier and Matthew Peak, along with Human Services Director Mary Roche Cronin, had the opportunity to explore the youth master planning idea in more depth at a March 2008 learning community meeting sponsored by NLC at its annual Congressional City Conference in Washington, D.C.

In July 2008, the town hired Richard Goll of the Hampton, Va.-based Onsite-Insights. In addition to being a key architect of Hampton's award-winning Youth Civic Engagement initiative with more than 40 years of experience in the youth development field, Goll had worked with Brighton, Colo., and La Plata County, Colo., to use the *City Platform for Strengthening Families* as a framework for comprehensive local children, youth and families master plans. Mary Roche Cronin and Assistant Director of Recreation Chris Silver were designated to work closely with Goll to conduct a similar process in Manchester, each allocating 50 percent of their time to the project over the course of one year. Together they helped Goll become more familiar with the Manchester community, including key players within town and school district departments and other local organizations.

The town's plan would build on the Platform's recommendations to establish the "essential infrastructure" needed for sustained progress on behalf of children, youth and families, including a task force or coordinating body to identify needs and priorities, effective city-school collaboration, youth engagement and leadership, and a mechanism to measure progress. It would also address the Platform's seven action areas: early childhood development, youth development, education and afterschool, health and safety, youth in transition, family economic success, and neighborhoods and community.

Throughout the summer and fall, planning process leaders collected information to gain a better understanding of the town's strengths, weaknesses and opportunities for additional progress in supporting children and families. In October, the town partnered with the school board and two private schools to administer the Developmental Assets Survey developed by the Search Institute and America's Promise Alliance to 671 randomly selected students in grades six through 12. The survey assesses the extent to which young people have the experiences and qualities that enable them to make positive choices and become responsible adults. Survey results showed that in many areas, Manchester youth have more assets than their peers in other communities who have taken the survey. However, it also highlighted several areas for improvement, including a perceived lack of useful roles in the community.

Also in October, members of the town's cross-departmental team and other YSB staff visited Hampton, Va., to learn about the city's youth commission and youth civic engagement structure. Meetings with Hampton's mayor, city manager, city staff and youth leaders provided the team with information that would help build public will for a similar initiative in Manchester. One of the first steps taken by the Manchester Board of Directors was to pass an ordinance creating a new Manchester Youth Commission, whose founding members were sworn in at a December 2008 Board of Directors meeting.

The establishment of the youth commission reflected several guiding principles for the planning process. Most importantly, the process would be as inclusive as possible, with proactive efforts to encourage all Manchester residents, including youth, to contribute to the plan. The town would also amend policies and reinvent systems to ensure there was an infrastructure that could sustain the work over time. Local partners would seek to build on existing resources and use them more efficiently rather than spending additional money. In addition, the plan's recommendations would focus on building on young people's existing strengths rather than treating youth as collections of problems to be "fixed." Town leaders would evaluate progress on "thriving" indicators, not just "deficit" indicators. Finally, town leadership established an overall vision for what they hoped to achieve through the planning process: "The Town of Manchester: where all children, youth and families thrive."

In addition to the survey and youth commission, the town used several other methods to gather information and engage residents. Goll and many of the committees that would be formed organized focus groups and interviewed 200 community leaders and residents, including elected officials, municipal staff, business leaders, school district officials and staff, law enforcement professionals,

nonprofit organization leaders, faith-based organizations and youth. The town updated its website and utilized local media to deliver a continuous flow of information to the community on the planning process.

Seven committees composed of youth and adults were formed to direct the planning for each of the Platform's action areas. Goll and town staff identified committed residents and staff who were willing and able to chair each committee. They used a December kick-off meeting and other public events and media communications to recruit a diverse group of members. The town also asked its youth commissioners to help recruit other youth for the initiative. As a result of these efforts, more than 120 youth and adult residents committed to serve on a committee for six months. Town staff and interns then helped organize and monitor committee meetings and worked with Goll to ensure each group had access to the Developmental Assets Survey results and other key data. Each committee was assigned one or two trained facilitators and asked to look at the current realities for its issue of focus, establish its own vision, determine the gap between the reality and the vision, identify one major recommendation and propose several associated strategies.

After the planning groups submitted their recommendations, the town formed a Core Team of elected officials, the general manager and town staff, committee chairs, faith-based organizations, community college representatives, and youth commissioners. This team was responsible for reviewing the committees' recommendations and identifying changes to the local "infrastructure" that could support implementation in the areas of policy, structure and organization, and connectivity and citizen coalitions. The team also ensured that committees did not duplicate existing services and connected the groups to each other's work. In consultation with committees, the Core Team completed the final planning document.

What Goals and Strategies Did the Town and its Partners Develop?

The Manchester Children, Youth and Family Master Plan was presented to the Board of Directors and the public on September 30, 2009. The Board's involvement in the planning process helped pave the way for their endorsement of a policy in support of the plan. To promote accountability, the document also contains an implementation scorecard identifying who is responsible for carrying out each recommendation, and which outcomes and indicators will be used to measure success.

Core Team and Planning Team members were invited to join the transition team called the Better Manchester Coalition. This transitional team engages 90 service providers and residents in implementing the plan, with three leadership teams focused on clusters of committee recommendations: 1) youth development, youth in transition, and education and afterschool; 2) early childhood development, health and safety; and 3) family economic success and neighborhoods and community. The most significant changes in the first two years of implementation involved the development of a new town infrastructure for neighborhood engagement and leadership.

Neighborhood Engagement

In July 2009, the Town established a new Office of Neighborhoods and Families (ONF) to continue engaging residents and neighborhoods in all aspects of the Children, Youth and Family Master Plan

without being burdened by other departmental missions or infrastructure. This helped to ensure a dependency on cooperation and leveraging of existing resources. The 2009-10 town budget recommended by the general manager and approved by the Board of Directors reallocated existing resources to fund the ONF director position. The town reassigned Assistant Director of Recreation Chris Silver to direct the new office and employed additional resources for a part-time assistant and operating budget. The office reports directly to the general manager. Its responsibilities include:

- Ensuring that the approved recommendations of the Children, Youth and Family Master Plan are implemented and revised accordingly;
- Providing access to timely and appropriate information, connections, support, skills and guidance to Manchester citizens;
- Increasing the ability of public and private citizen-related services to be fully coordinated and complementary;
- Creating or coordinating services, supports and opportunities to allow Manchester citizens to become increasingly more knowledgeable, skilled and capable of self-sustainability, and more capable and willing to act as positive resources to the overall vitality of their neighborhood and the community;
- Building the capacity within the neighborhoods to ensure that citizens can play a greater role in the management of their neighborhoods; and
- Bringing together professionals and citizens to build positive and proactive relationships and partnerships.

In partnership with the Youth Service Bureau, ONF works with the Better Manchester Coalition to facilitate the plan's recommended strategies. The ONF director also makes public presentations regarding the plan to town agencies, faith-based organizations, businesses, schools and other groups to continue raising awareness about the plan, encourage organizations to connect their strategies to the plan, and recruit new members of the coalition. Additionally, the ONF look for and promotes opportunities for collaboration between departments and agencies that serve the ONF mission. For instance, in the first year of implementation, ONF began working with the Manchester School Readiness Council to align the early childhood recommendations in the Children, Youth and Family Master Plan with the council's Early Childhood Community Plan. By infusing the plan into the fabric of the community, ONF has generated widespread support and buy-in, with residents now calling town offices to learn how to get involved.

One of the office's primary initial objectives was to build neighborhood capacity and leadership through the development of a new, volunteer-based Manchester Neighborhood Academy offering a wide range of free, community-based education courses. The Academy brings together and consolidates several existing opportunities for residents to learn about municipal government, including a Citizens' Government Academy, Youth Government Academy and Police Academy. Academy partners provide opportunities in the areas of early childhood development, family economic success, community engagement, health, and safety. Through these programs, residents meet and interact with local officials, who discuss how they make policy decisions and how town agencies operate. In addition

to teaching residents about "local government 101," the Neighborhood Academy offers new skill sets to youth and adults on financial education, leadership development, and neighborhood organizing. For instance, the Academy incorporates the Step Up to Leadership curriculum used to educate residents serving on local boards and commissions. Some of the skills taught through this and other classes include meeting facilitation, public speaking, working with diverse individuals, grant writing and building youth-adult partnerships. The ONF piloted the Academy's first program on financial literacy 101 for both youth and adults in February 2010, which are now consistently full.

In addition to teaching residents about "local government 101," the Manchester Neighborhood Academy offers new skill sets to youth and adults on financial education, leadership development, and neighborhood organizing.

Another major ONF objective was to engage local residents in leading the development of four neighborhood-based resource centers that would provide meeting space for community groups to build neighborhood capacity and offer one-stop access to various town government and community services. At each site, neighborhood youth and adult residents and service providers would guide each center's activities. Local leaders explored the concept of using the centers as a hub for many of these services, with satellite locations offering additional supports and opportunities. Town officials also envisioned using the first neighborhood-based center as a future location for both ONF and the Neighborhood Academy. With federal, state and local funding ($200,000 from federal economic development incentives and $500,000 from the Connecticut State Department of Social Services, in addition to local funding), the town began renovating the vacant Spruce Street Firehouse to open the initial resource center in the town's diverse and high-need southeast quadrant. Only when the pilot center is operating at full capacity would the town extend the resource centers to existing buildings in other neighborhoods, one quadrant at a time.

ONF was also given responsibility for developing a single catalog to more efficiently inform residents about the various community services, programs and opportunities available to children, youth and families in Manchester. In collaboration with other town agencies, ONF would help redesign the existing Manchester parks and recreation catalog into a more comprehensive *Better Manchester Magazine*. Finally, ONF would support the creation and expansion of neighborhood organizations. Livable Neighborhoods groups would help residents organize at the grassroots level and partner with town government, businesses and service providers to identify and address community concerns. Priority projects would focus on health and safety, neighborhood beautification and greening, resource sharing, and community building. Official town support of neighborhood organizations would add legitimacy to these groups, and ONF and the Neighborhood Academy would train them to solve neighborhood problems more effectively. Through all of its various neighborhood engagement efforts, ONF aims to strengthen the social capital that holds communities together.

Youth Engagement

Prior to the completion of the Children, Youth and Family Master Plan, the YSB and the recreation department began organizing and facilitating the Manchester Youth Commission. ONF provides additional support by connecting commission members to town agencies, businesses, committees and coalitions to help them share their perspectives on issues that affect youth. Yet the youth commission is also part of a broader Authentic Youth Civic Engagement (AYCE) initiative contained within the plan. An AYCE model goes beyond symbolic forms of youth participation in local government to ensure that youth are seen as valuable participants in the work of local government, are prepared (i.e., with appropriate training) to take on meaningful roles in addressing relevant issues, and work in partnership with adults who respect, listen to, and support them.[18] AYCE offers all youth in a community a continuum of options for service and involvement, consultation, representation and shared leadership.

Although some town leaders initially struggled with the AYCE concept, the introduction of youth-adult partnership trainings – beginning with a March 2010 training for youth commissioners and town employees led by consultant and youth engagement expert Adam Fletcher of the Olympia, Wash.-based CommonAction – have transformed youths' and adults' perceptions of each other. Youth commissioners have since shared their input on the hiring of a new police chief, gave formal presentations to the Board of Directors, took a position regarding library expansion, and offered ideas on the town's conservation and economic development plans. The town has also appointed youth to local boards, commissions and committees. Youth continue to play leadership roles in both the Better Manchester Coalition and the neighborhood-based resource center. In the meantime, youth-adult partnership trainings have been incorporated into the Neighborhood Academy's course options and brought to existing community organizations.

To expand opportunities for youth voice and engagement, the youth development committee has explored several other potential strategies, including: a centralized, online database of all youth engagement opportunities; a school-centered service project competition; a micro-grant program in which youth allocate donated funds for youth-led local service projects; and the adoption of the Project Citizen civic education and service learning program by schools and community groups.

Disconnected Youth

Like Rapid City, Manchester was selected to receive technical assistance under a separate NLC initiative that ran concurrently with the town's participation in the Platform for Strengthening Learning Community. Manchester was one of four cities chosen to join both phases of a project supported by the U.S. Department of Labor that focused on reengaging disconnected youth ages 16-24 in the workforce through creative use of American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds. The town's Disconnected Youth Coalition – organized by ONF and the Humans Services Department and composed of municipal, school district, community college, workforce investment board and faith- and community-based organization staff – emerged from this project and sought to align its work with the youth in transition committee formed during the Children, Youth and Family Master Plan process.

Northeastern University's Center for Labor Market Studies estimated that approximately 900 youth ages 16-24 in the community and the broader region surrounding Manchester were "disconnected" from school and work. To help more of these youth get back on track, the Disconnected Youth Coalition created a Results-Based Accountability Plan focused on education, social services and employment.

Early in the initiative, NLC contracted with Northeastern University's Center for Labor Market Studies to estimate the number of youth ages 16-24 in the four project sites who were neither in school nor working. The Center estimated that approximately 900 youth in the community and the broader region surrounding Manchester were "disconnected" from school and employment. To help more of these youth get back on track, the Disconnected Youth Coalition created a Results-Based Accountability Plan, facilitated by Youth Services Director Erica Bromley, focused on education, social services and employment to reconnect youth. A Career Pathways Guide for the youth, service providers and the

business community was also created. This resource guide offers a handy roadmap featuring local organizations that offer job readiness classes, vocational training and job and internship placement. In addition, a Memorandum of Agreement was signed by the key stakeholders.

Early Childhood

At the other end of the age spectrum, the early childhood committee aligned its work with the Early Childhood Community Plan led by the Manchester's School Readiness Council to ensure that young children enter school ready to learn and read at grade level by the end of third grade. The committee focused its attention on increasing the quality of care provided by family, friend and neighbor (FFN) caregivers – the most common child care arrangement used by low-income families. After obtaining input from caregivers and key stakeholders, the committee's goal was to expand FFN care providers' access to educational information and professional networking and training opportunities at the neighborhood-based resource centers. Another first-year priority was to determine the type of early childhood courses that could be offered at the Neighborhood Academy.

Education and Afterschool

While town directors and school board members had worked together in many areas, there remained points of friction over local budgets, after-hours use of school facilities and other issues. The education and afterschool committee's focus on out-of-school learning opportunities and the administration of the Developmental Assets survey helped strengthen relationships between the town and schools. Underlying these actions was a shared understanding that the entire community is responsible for the educational development of its youth. The committee recommended creating a town-wide network of afterschool providers and volunteer mentors, tutors, interpreters and translators. Committee members also explored the development of a centralized online database of youth and family services and programs (similar recommendations were made by the youth engagement and early childhood committees) available in schools and the community.

Health and Safety

The Healthier U program run by the town health and recreation departments aims to improve the health and wellness of local residents. The health and safety committee recommended increasing the scope of the initiative by expanding the Healthier U Committee to include youth, parents, neighborhood leaders, town employees, businesses, and other local leaders, with meetings facilitated by ONF. The committee also shared ideas for reinstating, improving and aligning health education curricula in local schools in collaboration with the Healthier U initiative and the Early Childhood Community Plan.

Family Economic Success

The Manchester Human Services Department's existing volunteer income tax assistance program helps residents file their tax returns, claim the Earned Income Tax Credit if they are eligible and improve their financial knowledge. The family economics committee considered ways to broaden youths' and

adults' access to financial education resources in conjunction with the town's EITC committee. Their recommendations were closely intertwined with the development of the neighborhood-based resource centers and the Manchester Neighborhood Academy. ONF worked with local youth to see if high school students could receive academic credit for participating in Neighborhood Academy financial education classes. The office also partnered with local banks to open savings accounts with a $25 credit for youth who completed the Academy's pilot financial education 101 course with perfect attendance.

What Did the City Accomplish?

By the end of 2011, ONF, Youth Services Bureau, the Youth Commission, local partnering agencies and organizations and the Better Manchester Coalition had been actively carrying out the Children, Youth and Family Master Plan for more than two years. Each of the coalition's three leadership teams were focusing on their top priorities, including the town's emerging AYCE initiative. The town's most prominent achievement was the successful creation of a neighborhood-based infrastructure for community engagement upon which to build in future years.

A wide array of town agencies and local organizations collaborate to offer skill-building opportunities through the Manchester Neighborhood Academy. The Academy's 2011-12 course offerings include an extensive selection of community education programs to strengthen neighborhood capacity and leadership, organized by the areas of the Children, Youth and Family Master Plan:

The town's most prominent achievement was the successful creation of a neighborhood-based infrastructure for community engagement.

- ***Family economic success:*** ONF and a local bank sponsor financial education 101 for youth in grades 7-12, and ONF partners with the EITC coalition to offer financial education 101 for adults. Both courses use the FDIC's Money Smart curriculum.

- ***Community engagement:*** The Manchester Human Resources Department leads the very popular Manchester Government 101 course for residents interested in learning more about municipal operations and services. ONF sponsors the Step to Leadership course for citizens who want to play leadership roles in neighborhood organizations and other local groups, and works with the East Side Livable Neighborhood Group (see below) to share its experiences with other residents on how to organize neighborhood projects. The Office of Emergency Management sponsors the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) trainings. The Police Department sponsors the Citizens' Police Academy.

- ***Youth development:*** YSB now facilitates many of its existing skills groups through the Academy, including Mother-Daughter Circle, Girls Circle, and Boys Council, and partners with ONF to offer the Project Citizen civic education program to students in grades 6-9.

- ***Early childhood development:*** Parents of young children can take part in programs such as the Bright Start workshop on healthy child development sponsored by Building Healthy Families, Inc., a motor skills development program for preschoolers offered at the Lutz Children's Museum by the School Readiness Council and Eastern Connecticut Health Center (ECHN) Family Resource Center, and a fitness program for preschool children.

- ***Health and safety:*** The town health department uses Neighborhood Academy to offer AED/CPR classes, asthma self-management classes for elementary school children, a Safe Patient Boot Camp to help health care consumers make informed choices, and a Kid Fit class for parents of children of all ages. Conscious Choice Life Coaching and a Manchester High School student group co-present a bullying prevention class for parents.

In June 2011, then-Mayor Louis Spadaccini joined more than 100 town residents at a ribbon-cutting ceremony to celebrate the opening of Manchester's first neighborhood-based resource center, the East Side Public Safety Youth Center. Abandoned and used as storage space for more than a decade, the repurposed firehouse offers a new space for ONF headquarters, Neighborhood Academy courses, Better Manchester Coalition and East Side Livable Neighborhood Group meetings, afterschool programs, block watch meetings, the police athletic league, and other opportunities that bring together town government, organized community groups and neighborhood residents. According to town leaders, the redevelopment of the building "symbolizes hope for a region of town that has faced lingering challenges in recent years."

Town efforts to repurpose a vacant firehouse in order to create the East Side Public Safety Youth Center "symbolizes hope for a region of town that has faced lingering challenges in recent years."

The East Side Livable Neighborhood Group – the first of several neighborhood organizations that ONF is helping get off the ground – is another important building block in the revitalization of Manchester's southeast neighborhood. The group has three core area teams that work on beautification,

property maintenance, and health and safety. One of the group's first projects was to clean up the grounds and paint murals for a vacant building that used to be a NAPA Auto Parts store and had become a target for graffiti. The group commissioned a team of artists to paint the building through partnerships with ONF, Manchester Community College and the Manchester Art Association.

ONF published the first issue of *Better Manchester Magazine* in the winter of 2010. The office worked with the recreation department to build on the existing parks and recreation guide that it mails to every household in the community three times per year. The new magazine still contains a listing and description of all recreation programs, but also highlights local action to promote early childhood development, neighborhood revitalization, community engagement, youth development, health and safety, and family economic success. The revamped publication draws attention to a broader set of existing resources that many families may not have been aware of before the Children, Youth and Family Master Plan was created. In addition, the magazine not only highlights town government services, but also connects readers to community-based organizations and neighborhood groups and the ongoing implementation of the plan. Thanks to partnership with the local newspaper, the town only needs to work on content, design and layout. The newspaper handles advertising, printing and mailing, with the town covering postage costs.

Beyond the neighborhood engagement infrastructure, the Children, Youth and Family Master Plan has resulted in many less tangible accomplishments. Town directors, the general manager, department heads and staff, and school district leaders have all expressed their support and buy-in – a direct consequence of their participation in the planning process. The Board of Directors' formal adoption of the plan and policy changes creating ONF and the youth commission embed the work deeply into the way the town does business.

In turn, ONF lays the foundation for sustained resident engagement, organization and awareness of existing local resources through public forums and presentations to the community, local media, the town website, *Better Manchester Magazine*, the neighborhood resource centers, Neighborhood Academy and Livable Neighborhood Groups. Youth-adult partnerships are increasing the level of youth and adult engagement in the community and changing their perceptions of each other. Ultimately, the plan seeks to permanently enhance Manchester's social capital by strengthening relationships among neighbors, town government, schools, community organizations, businesses and faith communities.

What Factors Contributed to the City's Success? What Challenges Did the City Face and How Were They Overcome?

Exercising Municipal Leadership

Town directors, the general manager, agency heads serving on the cross-departmental team, and the director of ONF played central roles in leading the planning process from start to finish. The Children, Youth and Family Master Plan would not have become a reality if the Board of Directors had not adopted the *City Platform for Strengthening Families*, approved the hiring of a consultant, reassigned staff, and modified policies and town infrastructure to support the initiative. Early on, there was even some concern that the high level of enthusiasm of some directors would rush the process. By the fall of 2008, however, electoral politics at the state level and a set of referenda to amend the town charter had created some obstacles to setting a firm timetable – a cautionary message that other cities embarking on a youth master planning process must be sensitive to the timing of the political calendar.

Town officials exercised their power to convene key stakeholders and raise awareness of their planning goals through the media. They encouraged and empowered the cross-departmental team to lead early efforts. The town also chose not to bury the initiative too far down within a single town department, but instead to have ONF report directly to the general manager. The ongoing involvement of local elected officials, the general manager and town agency staff in crafting the plan guaranteed their support for its implementation over many years.

An Inclusive and Adaptive Process

Manchester's guiding principle was inclusiveness. According to ONF Director Chris Silver, "Because our plan is an adaptive plan, it requires the community's willingness to change, both the organization and the citizens. To do this, you have to have buy-in from both. They both must be included in the process of planning and implementation. They must have a clear understanding of what the change is, what the change requires, and how the change will affect them and how the community will benefit from the change. Both must feel supported and empowered to make change happen. There needs to be a consitency of leadership over the long term and capacity-building efforts to grow new leaders both within the organization and in the community."

> "Because our plan is an adaptive plan, it requires the community's willingness to change, both the organization and the citizens. To do this, you have to have buy-in from both. They both must be included in the process of planning and implementation."
>
> **– Chris Silver, Director of the Manchester Office of Neighborhoods and Families**

As the work progressed, town leaders recognized that promoting inclusion and adaptation would be an ongoing challenge. In particular, local leaders would have to be proactive in securing the participation of non-town employees in coalition activities, training new leaders, and keeping momentum going after each summer when participation tends to sag. However, the neighborhood-level infrastructure that ONF oversees enhances the town's ability to cultivate new neighborhood leadership and capacity over time. In addition, the Better Manchester Coalition and Livable Neighborhood Groups are each charged with ongoing recruitment of new members as one of their core tasks. ONF took the plan "on tour" in its first year to connect other local groups to the work.

Youth and School District Involvement

At the outset, the town had underestimated the ability of youth to participate in the process. Local leaders benefited from Richard Goll's perspective and experience working with other communities that had created meaningful opportunities for youth involvement in youth master planning. It also took time for people in Manchester to learn what authentic youth civic engagement means and how it should be structured. There was a need to change perceptions among both young people and adults. Many adults saw youth as recipients of services rather than resources who could improve the community's quality of life.

Several strategies helped the town address these challenges. First, youth were involved in every step of the process, from the planning committees to the Better Manchester Coalition. Their participation proved that youth had valuable input to contribute. Second, the town sponsored trainings to help youth and adults work in partnership more effectively. When they realized it would be difficult to encourage both youth and adults to register, they brought the training to existing community-based programs to benefit from a captive audience. Third, the youth commission is a permanent, visible presence in giving youth a voice in local government. Finally, the town government continually looks for opportunities for youth engagement. ONF and the human services department employ youth directly when funding is available and the YSB connects youth with useful summer and year-round employment opportunities.

The Manchester school system connects with the plan through committees, coalitions, programs and initiatives which include, but are not limited to, school-based youth services programs, collaborative out-of-school time (OST) programming, a Coalition to Connect Youth, OST meal programs, College Exposure Initiative, a community-wide youth art initiative, facility sharing and neighborhood-based parent/teacher conferences.

Developing a Financing Strategy

In creating the Children, Youth and Family Master Plan, town leaders communicated a funding principle that the plan should not increase the town government's bottom line. Instead, one purpose of the plan was to better coordinate and maximize existing resources and systems, and build partnerships to reinforce what already works and address what needs improvement. The Neighborhood Academy is a prime example of this principle in action. Through the Academy, town agencies and nonprofit partners bring free educational programs to the community, with volunteers teaching the courses. The town's reassignment of staff made ONF possible. Its renovation of an underutilized, vacant building paved the way for the East Side Public Safety Youth Center. *Better Manchester Magazine* builds on and enhances the existing parks and recreation catalog.

Learning from Other Cities

Like Rapid City, Manchester benefited from ideas from other communities facing similar challenges and used NLC's *City Platform for Strengthening Families* as the framework for its plan, as well as the Neighborhood Academy and *Better Manchester Magazine*. Richard Goll shared his knowledge and experience using the Platform to facilitate comprehensive planning initiatives in Colorado and elsewhere. He also organized the site visit to Hampton, Va., which was instrumental in shaping Manchester's AYCE initiative. The learning community enabled an ongoing exchange of ideas between Manchester and Rapid City. NLC shared best practices from other cities, including examples of youth master plans and its 2010 AYCE guide for municipal leaders. The NLC project on reengaging disconnected youth helped Manchester officials and staff network and learn from peers in Dubuque, Iowa, Rochester, N.Y., and Tucson, Ariz.

Setting Goals, Using Data, and Sharing Accountability

Because the town intended to implement various elements of the Children, Youth and Family Master Plan over a period of 10-15 years, a strong infrastructure was needed to make sustained progress. ONF and the Better Manchester Coalition share responsibility for moving this work forward so that the plan remains a living document. The plan contains an implementation scorecard that offers a blueprint for future actions, and the Developmental Assets Survey and state benchmarks for early childhood development are among the baseline measures that will be used to assess results. Town government itself has embedded a focus on outcomes into the way it does business by adopting a performance measurement system. In addition, the Coalition to Connect Youth developed a Results-Based Accountability Plan and human services staff adopted an RBA-based plan for their department.

Looking Ahead

Over the next few years, the Town of Manchester plans to build on its early accomplishments. Town leaders seek to sustain the Better Manchester Coalition and increase the number of Livable Neighborhood Groups. They will continue to increase the number of educational programs at the

Neighborhood Academy and will apply lessons from the East Side Public Safety Youth Center to establish additional neighorhood-based resource centers in the town's three other quadrants. The town also plans to create an out-of-school time (OST) network to better coordinate and promote existing OST opportunities for children and youth. It will continue moving forward on its AYCE initiative through community youth mapping, new program development and creation of a structure for maintaining the initiative over the long term.

CITY EXAMPLES

EARLY CHILDHOOD

Support Parents of Young Children

Enfield, Connecticut (population 44,654) – Key Initiatives to Early Education (KITE)

Key Initiatives to Early Education (KITE) is a local coalition that works to ensure that all families with young children in Enfield have knowledge of and access to quality early care and educational opportunities both in and outside of the home. Town officials, along with leaders from the school district and United Way, child care and health care providers, parents, and business representatives, meet regularly to promote an ongoing dialogue about the importance of early childhood development throughout the community.

To promote early learning, KITE partners provide parents and other caregivers with developmentally appropriate educational materials for children and support several initiatives to prepare young children for kindergarten. Projects include a community-wide Early Learning Matters campaign, collaboration among early education providers and schools to support smooth transitions to kindergarten, and a parent leadership academy. With initial grant funding from a prominent local business and subsequent funding from a state grant, the parent leadership academy has been a notable success. Participants in

the academy learn leadership skills that help them become more effective advocates for their children. An alumni group of graduates from this program now sponsors local projects and trains other parents.

In addition, KITE recently completed a two-year early childhood community plan in which the coalition partners identified specific goals, strategies, and indicators of success for three overarching areas of focus: healthy children, thriving and interconnected families, and children succeeding in school and life. The plan puts an emphasis on collecting and sharing data as an important component of the coalition's work.

As a result of the planning process, KITE partners – including the mayor and school district leaders – garnered support from a local business to develop a much needed second family resource center in the community. Enfield's first center was funded by the state and town. The town's social service department staffs and administers both centers, which provide families and their children with services and referrals for physical and mental health care and educational, and recreational programs.

For more information, visit http://www.enfieldkite.org.

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Expand Access to Child Care and Preschool

Lemoore, California (population 24,531) – Generations Project

Facing a shortage of child care services and day care services for seniors and residents with disabilities, the City of Lemoore used Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds to acquire and renovate a formerly vacant building to house a new intergenerational day care facility. Dubbed the Generations Project, the day care offers preschool services, access to dental and medical exams, immunizations, and vision and hearing screenings for children living below the poverty line, while seniors are offered meals, recreation and social activities, and opportunities to interact with the children.

During the initial phase of the project, the Lemoore City Council held a series of study sessions to identify the level of need for day care services in the community. A thorough site selection process followed in which the city assessed the strengths and weaknesses of various facilities, eventually submitting a scope of work for the acquisition and renovation of an acre of land that included a building that had fallen into disrepair. To fund the project, the city secured $500,000 from CDBG, $279,415 in CDBG program income, $90,546 from the Lemoore Redevelopment Agency, $33,000 in city labor, and other funding sources for a total acquisition and construction cost of just over $900,000. The local Rotary Club and residents of Lemoore donated additional funds and equipment for the facility.

Opening its doors in 2007, Generations day care is operated by the Kings Community Action Organization (KCAO), which offers Head Start, preschool, and child care services, as well as emergency food distribution, utility assistance, youth services, and crisis support. Twelve full-time employees, two off-site support staff, and one part-time crisis support person serve approximately 100 children between the ages of three and

five. Generations also offers child care provider training, assistance with furbishing toys and other supplies for child care providers, and parent education classes. KCAO partners with the Kings County Commission on Aging to provide adult day care services to 15 individuals, most of whom are low income. Participants' ages range from 50 to over 100. In addition to receiving three full meals per day and snacks, adult participants engage in exercise, crafts, music, and other activities.

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Align Early Education and K-12 Systems

Petal, Mississippi (population 10,454) – Excel by 5 Coalition

The rural community of Petal has earned national recognition for the work of its Excel By 5 Coalition, a broad-based community partnership working to ensure all children in the community enter school healthy, happy and ready to succeed. Convened and supported by Petal's recent mayors, the coalition was instrumental in making Petal the first community to be certified by Mississippi's Excel By 5 initiative for meeting standards in parent support, community involvement, child care, and health. With Petal School District as the lead agency, the coalition engages the mayor and other city officials, the district superintendent and administrators, parents, and representatives of the chamber of commerce, child and family service providers, foundations, faith-based organizations, law enforcement, health and judicial systems.

The rural community of Petal has earned national recognition for the work of its Excel By 5 Coalition, a broad-based community partnership working to ensure all children in the community enter school healthy, happy and ready to succeed.

The city dedicates substantial resources to the initiative, including allocating funds for a part-time early care and education coordinator. Through quarterly meetings and professional development opportunities, the coordinator connects child care and Head Start providers and elementary school teachers to foster better alignment of early childhood services. For instance, the coordinator has organized joint trainings on implementation of the state's Early Learning Guidelines, secured funding to foster alignment between early education programming and elementary school curricula, and worked with early education providers and district administrators to link and examine data on young children's readiness for school and their academic progress in the elementary grades. The city and school district collaborate to facilitate smooth transitions to kindergarten through early registration, visits to public schools, parent cafés and newsletters with information for parents of younger children entering school.

Among the coalition's other major accomplishments is the relocation and expansion of the school district's Center for Families and Children within a school district facility. Partnerships with organizations such as the state health department and a local community college make a range of services available at the resource center, including:

- Head Start and Early Head Start programs;
- Developmental screenings and early intervention services;
- Parent workshops and parenting resources;
- A home visiting program for new parents;
- Referrals to family support agencies;
- A Kids' Health Fair and child safety programs;
- A resource lending library and children's book club;
- GED preparation classes;
- Assistance with enrollment in the Children's Health Insurance Program and Medicaid;

- A computer lab and community workroom for developing learning materials;
- A Big Brothers/Big Sisters Mentoring Program for school-age children; and
- Resources and training for child care providers.

Petal's Excel by 5 Coalition has increased the proportion of child care centers receiving 20 or more hours of professional development training per year from 16 percent to 68 percent. Additionally, five early childhood centers have increased their average environmental rating after receiving training and technical assistance. Funding sources for the Excel By 5 Coalition include a dedicated portion of local property tax revenue, as well as funding from the school district, a local education foundation, and private grants.

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CITY EXAMPLES

EDUCATION

Convene City and School District Leaders on a Regular Basis

Trotwood, Ohio (population 24,431) – Joint City Council-School Board Meetings

Building on an already strong collaborative relationship, the Trotwood City Council and the Trotwood-Madison City Schools Board of Education began holding quarterly joint meetings in 2012 to more systematically discuss items of mutual interest, share information, and coordinate and align policies and practices. In addition to city council and school board members, attendees include the school district's superintendent, treasurer, and administrators, along with the mayor, city manager, and the city's executive team. Each meeting begins with a discussion of specific, goal-oriented challenges, opportunities, and progress made on assigned action items, followed by discussions that fall into two categories: student-focused and operations-focused.

Branded "Ram Pride" after the local high school's mascot, the student-focused subcommittee works to develop initiatives that enhance the safety and human capital of the community's children and youth. Projects launched by the committee include a service-based internship program in which students learn new skills by volunteering at city offices, fire safety lessons at the city's early learning center taught by fire department personnel, and anti-bullying sessions conducted by the police department at the local high school.

> "The city's strategic plan states that municipal agencies will reach out to other government entities. We want to institutionalize working with other public institutions to share resources, save money and provide our citizens with high-value, low-cost services."
>
> **– Trotwood City Manager Michael Lucking**

The operations-focused subcommittee works to develop cost-savings through creative partnerships, as well as create an environment of mutual support among the city's policymakers. For instance, as a result of the subcommittee meetings, the city and the school district have begun to coordinate, bulk office supply purchasing, resulting in a 25 percent reduction in the cost of supplies. In addition, at the beginning of 2013, the city and school board decided to hold their joint meetings at a new location. The location space – which is provided by the school board – has allowed the city to close an outdated facility it previously used for city council meetings. In addition to benefiting from a nicer location with better amenities, the city estimates annual savings of $22,000 in energy costs.

City and school district leaders report that the meetings are creating more community connectedness and enhanced coordination and delivery of services. With each meeting, Trotwood leaders are coming closer to achieving the vision shared by city and school district policymakers. "The city's strategic plan states that municipal agencies will reach out to other government entities," said Trotwood City Manager Michael Lucking. "We want to institutionalize working with other public institutions to share resources, save money and provide our citizens with high-value, low-cost services."

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Support a Community Schools Partnership

Tukwila, Washington (population 19,107) – Tukwila Community Schools Collaboration

Community schools serve as neighborhood hubs that stay open beyond traditional school hours and provide a range of integrated services to students and their families, including educational support, youth development programs, health and social services, and community engagement opportunities. Tukwila, Wash. – a diverse community located adjacent to Seattle's southern border – has sustained a citywide community schools initiative since 2000. The Community Schools Collaboration (CSC) was established as a partnership among the city, Tukwila School District, Washington State Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS), Puget Sound Educational Service District, and Casey Family Programs and has since become an independent, nonprofit agency serving 20 schools across South King County. The city contributes $100,000 of the CSC's $430,000 annual budget.

Through both direct service provision and contractual partnerships, CSC provides extended day learning, health, and family-based services. Teachers, school counselors, case workers and other community members refer students to extended day learning programs, which operate at all of Tukwila's public schools. Participating students receive access to a wealth of free services, including recreational, science, arts, music and technology programs, tutoring and homework help, college and career preparation, and opportunities to give back to their community as volunteers. Through these efforts, CSC seeks to ensure that children:

- Are informed about and prepared for postsecondary educational options;
- Have a well-rounded education;
- Achieve academic success;
- Are motivated to engage in and attend school;
- Have families who advocate for their school success; and
- Are healthy and ready to learn.

Each CSC partner makes a unique contribution to the community schools initiative. In addition to keeping school facilities open after the bell and making in-kind contributions through use of classrooms and equipment, the school district has modified bus routes to ensure that students have transportation home after participating in the extended day program. Coordinated by CSC, other agencies offer services such as dental screenings and health care to students at the school. In addition to funding, the city provides referrals through its human services department. Other partners are brought in by CSC to provide recreation programs, outreach to Tukwila's diverse population, and academic supports.

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Partner with Schools to Promote Grade-Level Reading and Close Achievement Gaps

Delray Beach, Florida (population 60,522) – Education Advisory Board

For nearly 25 years, the City of Delray Beach and Palm Beach County School District have sustained a durable partnership that has led to measurable improvements in educational outcomes for local students. The city and district currently work together to address a host of community-wide priorities, from promoting grade-level reading proficiency in elementary school to offering civics education programs for middle and high school students.

In 1989, a citywide visioning process engaged local officials, businesses and residents in developing a plan to address some of the core challenges facing the community and its schools. Homebuilders expressed concern that poor conditions and overcrowding in some schools were depressing home values and sales. In several neighborhoods with large minority populations, children were being bused to nine different elementary schools within and outside of the city limits, yet schools serving disadvantaged students still struggled with a lack of diversity and lagging performance. In response, a city-appointed committee developed a comprehensive Sharing for Excellence in Schools plan recommending a broad range of policy changes and school improvements.

Throughout the 1990s and 2000s, the city spent more than $10 million upgrading sidewalks, parks, lighting, and other infrastructure around the schools. It made renovations to the city's oldest elementary school and revitalized the neighborhood in which it is located. Since then, the school has improved its academic performance and opened a renowned Montessori Magnet program. The city also helped relocate the local high school and began dedicating city resources and personnel to support the high school's career academy programs in criminal justice, first response, and construction.

One of the key outcomes of the Sharing for Excellence in Schools plan was the creation in 1990 of a permanent Education Advisory Board appointed by the Delray Beach City Commission to help support and advocate for local schools. A decade later, the city hired a full-time education coordinator to serve as a liaison between the county school district and Education Advisory Board. The board and city staff have spearheaded a number of successful partnerships with the schools to close academic achievement gaps within Delray Beach schools.

Much of the city's focus has been to provide wraparound services that support student learning. For instance, the city and Children's Services Council fund Beacon Center programs at the Village Academy, an innovative school model that serves children from Head Start through 12th grade. Beacon

Center services include before and afterschool programs, tutoring and literacy development, and adult education classes. Plans are underway to connect an Early Head Start program to the school and add a prenatal intervention program to provide a continuum of educational supports.

Village Academy students score high on kindergarten readiness measures, and Delray Beach's high school graduation rate has increased significantly in recent years. Yet the city remains focused on further closing the achievement gap and improving outcomes for at-risk and English Language Learner students. In 2010, the city, school district and other partners developed a Community Solutions Action Plan to ensure more children read at grade level by the end of third grade. As part of the national Campaign for Grade-Level Reading, more than 100 communities across the country developed these comprehensive action plans, which focus on three major barriers to reading proficiency: lack of school readiness, chronic absence from school, and summer learning loss.

City and school district leaders analyzed data for these three areas as they crafted a plan for Delray Beach. In addition to identifying disparities in reading proficiency based on Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test scores, they found that many students not only had high rates of absenteeism but were also chronically late to school. In response, local partners developed the Perfectly Punctual Campaign, rewarding students who consistently attend school on time. They also plan to encourage reading and school attendance through a Mom-to-Mom peer support strategy in Title I schools and by engaging sports program coaches and clergy in echoing this message.

To enhance school readiness, local agencies plan to target health services to Head Start students and pregnant mothers in the Early Head Start program at Village Academy and replicate the Village Academy model at another Title I school. As part of a strategy to help students retain learning gains over the summer, the plan calls for incorporating a reading component into existing summer programs, developing a summer tutorial program for at-risk second graders, and providing children at Title I schools with backpacks full of books. These various initiatives draw funding from the city, school district, private donations, and foundation grants.

Another notable city-school partnership is Delray Beach's civics education programs, recognized in 2011 with a Florida Citizenship Award by the Florida League of Cities. Building on a residents' academy that engaged adults in learning more about local government, the city and schools developed a High School Student Residents Academy with field trips and presentations led by city staff. Students can also earn community service hours required by their schools by attending meetings of the city commission or planning and zoning board. At the middle school level, the parks and recreation department has helped sponsor a before-school civic brain bowl and mock local elections and city commission meetings. "Elected" students have the opportunity to sit on the dais with commissioners and open a meeting at city hall.

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Help Parents Promote Early Literacy

Holyoke, Massachusetts (population 39,880) – Family Literacy Centers

"With an emphasis on community engagement, a focus on research-based instructional literacy practices, a concerted drive for improved, consistent school attendance, and sustained family involvement in literacy from birth, the Holyoke community is working to improve the literacy skills of children so that they will become proficient, lifelong readers."

– Mary Curro, Director of Early Childhood Education, Holyoke Public Schools

Drawing on promising efforts from as nearby as Springfield, Mass., and as far away as Kennewick, Wash., the City of Holyoke's Early Childhood Literacy (ECL) Task Force has set a goal of having 85 percent of third grade students read proficiently at grade level by 2014. The ECL Task Force plans to achieve this ambitious goal by promoting the importance of early literacy to new parents, supporting literacy intervention programs for struggling readers, supporting an ongoing district-wide campaign for students to read 25 books over one year, and establishing family literacy centers at local elementary schools. The mayor in particular has placed a high priority on family literacy and has joined the public school superintendent, the United Way, and a Springfield-based foundation in serving as a champion of the task force, which is composed of principals, city and business leaders, school reading coaches, and other community members.

Recognizing that parents are their children's first and most important teachers, the family literacy centers are designed to provide families with an environment that is rich in the language and literacy interactions that are essential for promoting reading proficiency. The first of eight planned centers opened with a community-wide kickoff in February 2012. The Kelly School Family Literacy Center offers families a variety of free resources and programs two evenings per month, including a large selection of books, resource materials, computers, puzzles, games, and other literacy activities available in both English and Spanish. In addition, children receive snacks and juice so they can stay focused on learning.

To promote utilization of the center, the school district employs a family liaison who engages parents by mailing flyers, posting informational materials on doors, and meeting parents before and after school when they drop off and pick up their kids. An early literacy coordinator who reports directly to the mayor works with school district officials to ensure the centers are contributing to the goals outlined in the Early Childhood Literacy Task Force's strategic action plan.

The center was made possible in part by a local office furniture outlet, which partnered with the ECL Taskforce to design a comfortable café-style space for the center and donated furnishings free of charge. Program costs are covered by the Kelly Elementary School budget. In addition to expanding the centers to other schools, the school district plans to extend the center's availability to four evenings per month.

"With an emphasis on community engagement, a focus on research-based instructional literacy practices, a concerted drive for improved, consistent school attendance, and sustained family involvement in literacy from birth, the Holyoke community is working to improve the literacy skills of children so that they will become proficient, lifelong readers," said Mary Curro, director of early childhood education for the Holyoke Public Schools.

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Provide All Students with Access to Digital Public Library Resources through their Schools

Mountain View, California (population 74,066) – Virtual Library Resource Card

Home to the headquarters of several major technology companies, the City of Mountain View found an innovative way to make digital public library resources more readily available to local high school students through their schools. The city partnered with the Mountain View-Los Altos Union High School District to provide students with a Virtual Library Resource Card that increases utilization of the public library's digital subscription and lowers the cost per user. Previously, both the school and city libraries were increasingly investing in electronic databases, but neither was experiencing desired levels of use. The new partnership helped maximize existing resources and generated savings that the high school district could use for other purposes. The public library also saved money by not having to print plastic cards or assign staff to visit each school in order to reach students.

In contrast to the existing application for a standard library card, students obtain the Virtual Library Resource Card by having their address verified by their school and do not have to present a photo identification. Students can use the Virtual Card number to access all of the city library's digital resources, including subscription databases, magazines, newspaper articles, encyclopedias, reference books, and e-books, as well as library computers. Through additional subscriptions, schools can expand the collection of library resources to which students have access. The city piloted the Virtual Library Resource Card at one high school in March 2012, giving families of 1,800 students the opportunity to opt out before card numbers were issued. According to local officials, minimal staff time was required to attend joint meetings, create a student database, share it with the public library, have the library assign card and personal identification numbers to each student, and return the enhanced database to the school, although the process required sufficient technical expertise. To help students remember their card numbers, the school produced stickers that students could place on their binders and encouraged them to enter their card numbers into their phones.

CITY OF MOUNTAIN VIEW

"In our world where more students are going online for academic research and support, having access to quality sources is key. The Mountain View Public Library was a great partner in getting more students online to access their valuable online resources. As a result, more students use our local library and are better prepared for college and beyond."

– Dr. Barry Groves, Superintendent, Mountain View Los Altos High School District

A durable city-school partnership laid the foundation for this effort. The city's youth resources manager and staff from various departments work closely with

the school district and other youth service providers throughout the city of Mountain View. The city and schools have collaborated to share the use of parks, fields, and gyms for many years. In addition, for more than 20 years, a collaborative called Challenge Team made up of 50-60 senior administrators, including city staff, school superintendents, and nonprofit leaders has met monthly to build relationships, address common challenges, reduce duplication of services and explore opportunities to collaborate and share resources.

Since the launch of this project, the city has spent the same amount of money on its digital resource databases (which is based on city population size), but saw usage of one database double last spring, reducing the cost per user dramatically. With successful implementation at one high school, the city and school district plan to make the Virtual Library Resource Card available at a second high school to cover a total of 4,000 students.

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Partner with Community Colleges that Offer Career Academy and Early College Programs to High School Students

Monticello, Iowa (population 3,796) – Jones Regional Education Center

City leaders in Monticello were instrumental in working with Kirkwood Community College, the Monticello Community School District and a local property owner to open the Jones Regional Education Center. The Center is a state-of-the-art facility where high school juniors and seniors from Monticello and surrounding communities can take advanced high school and college-level courses and participate in high-quality Career Academy programs.

The Center generates multiple benefits for Monticello as an economic development tool, a valuable asset for attracting families to the city, and a strategy for using resources more efficiently. Opened in August 2009 at a new commercial park located off of a highway bypass, the Center offers pre-college coursework and technical education for industries located in Monticello, which, for a small community, has a particularly strong industrial base. Students can earn college credits at no cost in a diverse range of disciplines, from pre-engineering, computer networking, and computer software to math, literature and history.

These course offerings help defray postsecondary tuition costs when high school graduates enter college having already accumulated a substantial number of credits. Owing to a partnership between Kirkwood Community College and the four-year Mount Mercy University in Cedar Rapids to automatically transfer credits from Kirkwood, the Center opens pathways to both associate and bachelor's degrees. Monticello officials note that approximately 75 percent of high school graduates stay in the Kirkwood Community College's seven-county area after graduation. The technical training they can receive at the Center in welding, construction, advanced manufacturing, automotive technology, nursing, and other fields gives them skills that are in high demand by local employers.

"The regional approach and collaboration that made this Center a reality must be the model for small rural community growth and continued existence. This project was a necessary step in meeting the educational demands of future students, citizens, workers and industry. These educational opportunities will not only allow the community to attract new residents who are interested in their children having the best education, but will also provide necessary talent and relevant education and training to our workforce, putting the area in a great position to maintain and attract business and industry. The presence of a trained and available workforce is critical."

– Douglas D. Herman, City Administrator, City of Monticello

The Center serves as a catalyst for economic development in other ways. Kirkwood Community College is an important and visible anchor for the commercial park, at which several businesses have recently invested nearly $2.5 million to open or expand in the midst of the nation's recent economic downturn. It has also boosted the retail sector by drawing more than 200 students, staff and other individuals per day (including adults who have the opportunity to take personal interest classes in the evening) who would not otherwise visit Monticello.

In addition, the classrooms and labs at the Jones Regional Education Center not only improve learning opportunities for Monticello students, but also generate efficiencies by serving students in eight school districts throughout the region. Teachers from Monticello Community School District teach in both the local public schools and at the Center, enabling districts to share teachers for courses on complex topics that would be difficult to support financially for smaller groups of students. To track the progress of its students who attend classes at the Center, the Monticello school district measures how many college credits they earn and how well they perform on college entrance exams.

The decision of Kirkwood Community College to open the Center in Monticello resulted from a collaboration with and support from the city, school district, and a civic-minded local family that agreed to take valuable farmland out of production in order to donate property for the commercial park. By paying for 44 percent (approximately $500,000) of infrastructure development costs through its infrastructure improvement fund – including grading and street construction, extensions of sewer and water mains, street lighting, and electric and gas line extension – the city made the project financially viable for the family and college. The college spent $6.6 million on improvements and the property owners contributed additional funding.

Each of the key institutional partners in this collaboration has seen positive results from their innovative and collaborative efforts on behalf of young people. The school district is able to offer a wider array of learning opportunities and exposure to diverse career choices. Kirkwood Community College is expanding the successful Jones Regional Education Center model to communities throughout eastern Iowa in partnership with other school districts and the University of Iowa. Bucking the trend for cities in Iowa with less than 5,000 residents, the city of Monticello has seen healthy population growth in recent years, and city leaders believe their partnerships to support education and families are an important contributing factor.

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Establish a College Scholarship Fund

Burleson, Texas (population 36,690) – Burleson Opportunity Fund

Through the Burleson Opportunity Fund, students who graduate from a Burleson high school or reside in the city and graduate from a nearby high school can receive a scholarship that fully covers tuition and fees for two years of attendance at Hill College at Burleson. The fund traces its roots to conversations held in 2007 through the city's Strengthening Families initiative, in which local leaders from a variety of sectors discussed strategies for improving services to children, youth and families. These leaders established a college scholarship fund to raise the expectation that all high school graduates in Burleson will have the opportunity to obtain a postsecondary education and to promote local economic development by building a more educated workforce. Initially, the Burleson Opportunity Fund covered one year of tuition and fees, and its Board of Directors recently approved funding for two years of tuition and fees for current and future scholarship recipients.

In establishing the fund in 2008, the city and Burleson Independent School District each provided $25,000 in seed money, and since 2009, the city has contributed $60,000 on an annual basis. Local businesses and individuals make additional contributions to the fund. City, school district and college staff time is contributed in-kind. The city is responsible for administrative duties, a project coordinator from the school district handles the fund's application process, and Hill College representatives organize an orientation for incoming scholarship recipients.

Students are eligible to receive scholarships if they enroll in Hill College full-time during the fall semester after graduation, apply for other available grants through the FAFSA, maintain a minimum GPA

and earn credits in all enrolled courses, and participate in a community service or mentoring project. Through the fall of 2012, 181 students have been awarded scholarships. For those who wish to pursue a four-year degree, the satellite campus for Texas Wesleyan University in Burleson works hand-in-hand with Hill College to enroll students. The Hill College campus in Burleson itself is a product of city leadership and collaboration. The city acquired a former church campus and then contracted with Hill College and Texas Wesleyan University to renovate and lease the property for use as a college campus.

For more information, visit http://www.burlesonoppfund.com.

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CITY EXAMPLES

OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME PROGRAMMING

Form a Network of Out-of-School Time Program Providers

Northfield, Minnesota (population 20,007) – PRIMEtime Collaborative

Created in 2007, the PRIMEtime collaborative is a network of afterschool programs and schools that work to provide a continuum of free, year-round, out-of-school time programs to more than 1,000 children and youth through the rural and increasingly diverse community of Northfield. The local school district and nonprofit organizations operate the six PRIMEtime sites, which offer homework help provided by college students and other volunteer tutors, skill-building workshops, one-on-one mentoring, cultural and gender-specific groups, college and career exploration, recreation, service learning, and youth leadership opportunities.

PRIMEtime partners meet at least once per month to discuss shared gaps and needs across the program sites, assess funding levels, and identify collaborative solutions to better serve the needs of children in the community. The Northfield Healthy Community Initiative (HCI), a nonprofit youth coalition, convenes the PRIMEtime collaborative. HCI provides assistance in training program staff, collecting data to evaluate program impact, raising funds, planning community events, and building public will for OST programming. PRIMEtime also coordinates an afterschool bus route to all of the participating sites, which has significantly increased program participation among children living in low-income areas of the community.

Of more than 400 youth who attended PRIMEtime programs 20 or more times in 2011, 93 percent improved their standardized school test scores and/or grade point averages. In 2010, average school absences dropped nearly 40 percent

for youth attending PRIMEtime programs compared with the previous year. At most PRIMEtime sites, more than two-thirds of participants receive free or reduced-price school lunches.

The collaborative received initial funding through a two-year Minnesota Department of Education grant. In 2009, the collaborative received a two-year Justice Assistance Grant funded by the federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. PRIMEtime members continue to raise funds to support the collaborative's ongoing work.

For more information, visit www.primetimekids.org.

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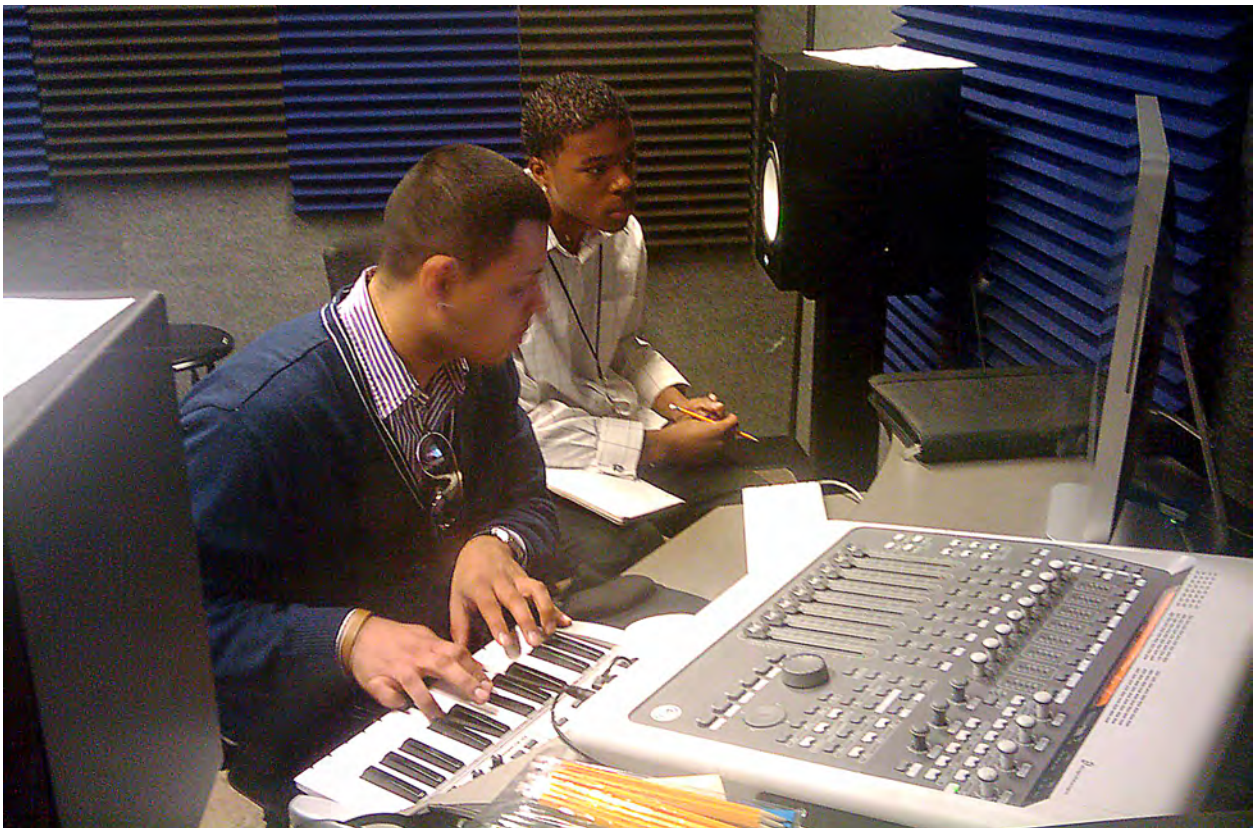
Contract with Innovative Nonprofits to Offer Music and Arts Programming at City Facilities

Redlands, California (population 68,747) – Music Changing Lives

The City of Redlands partners with an innovative nonprofit organization called Music Changing Lives (MCL) to offer high-quality music and arts enrichment programs at city facilities to underprivileged and at-risk youth between the ages of eight and 18 years old. MCL aims to reduce dropout rates by helping these youth "connect with their passion and purpose in life" and receive mentoring and tutoring from trusted adults. The idea for MCL began in 1998 when social entrepreneur Josiah Bruny developed a home studio to teach young musicians how to record and own the copyright for their music. Incorporated as a nonprofit organization five years later, MCL offered students free access to the studio if they had a grade point average (GPA) of 2.5 or higher and completed five hours of community service per month.

In 2008, the City of Redlands was struggling with program cuts as the fiscal fallout of the Great Recession disproportionately affected communities throughout California's "Inland Empire." In an effort to maintain music and arts programming, the city contracted with MCL to host its activities at the Redlands Community Center. The city collects a portion of MCL's participant fees and, in turn, MCL saves money on the cost of renting a facility. Locating the program in the community center



generates additional synergies by connecting youth with community police officers who are housed in the same building. Youth can get to know the officers and have positive interactions that might not occur in other community settings.

To teach young people not only music and arts but also financial and business skills, MCL taps the abilities of volunteer instructors and students from the University of California-Riverside and the University of Redlands who are either volunteers or are in the federal work-study program. Redlands youth who participate in MCL receive one hour of tutoring, followed by two hours of music, art or drama programming, with visits by occasional guest speakers from local symphonies and theaters. In addition to the tutoring, MCL seeks to reduce dropout rates by continuing to make good grades a condition of participation. The program also helps youth identify talents and interests they may not be able to fully explore in school settings that increasingly emphasize math, reading and science.

High school students who were on the verge of dropping out have received support from MCL tutors that helped them graduate and go to college. Overall program results are measured more formally with data on students' school attendance, achievement and discipline. MCL leaders also attempt to track youth outcomes over time by encouraging new participants to write down their goals and aspirations and following up with the students three to four years later.

New technologies have enabled MCL to expand its reach to serve approximately 4,000 youth throughout Riverside and San Bernardino Counties. Instructors bring a mobile studio to school and community locations across the region through partnerships with school districts, Riverside County, and the San Bernardino Housing Authority. Students then mix and master their recordings at the state-of-the-art studio in the Redlands Community Center and receive their works on a CD or online.

A diverse range of funding sources support MCL, including the earned income the program receives by selling merchandise, including water bottles, t-shirts, bracelets, and skateboard decks. The city offers critical in-kind support through staffing, maintenance and operations of the community center, and has leveraged federal grant funds to enhance the facilities that host MCL's programs. Other funding sources include parent fees and grants from county, tribal, state, and federal government agencies; local foundations; universities; businesses; and residents. The city helps fund scholarships for students who cannot afford the full program fees on the condition that these students perform volunteer work. However, collaboration between the city and MCL extends beyond financing and facility partnerships. Bruny, MCL's president and CEO, recently helped launch a Common Vision Coalition that brings together local elected officials, city agencies and other nonprofits to work collectively on solutions for creating healthy neighborhoods in Redlands.

For more information, visit www.musicchanginglives.org.

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Establish Agreements for Shared Use of City and School Facilities

Spartanburg, South Carolina (population 37,013) – Duncan Park Stadium

Throughout the country, cities and school districts have developed formal agreements to share use of their facilities, from sports fields and gyms to classrooms, theaters, libraries, and playgrounds. Joint use agreements outline each party's access and responsibilities, including maintenance, repairs, liability insurance, security, and supervision. In the absence of these contracts, municipal and school properties often sit idle despite high community demand for recreational opportunities and educational programs.

In Spartanburg, S.C., an exciting joint use partnership between the city and Spartanburg School District 7 (SD 7) helped save and increase utilization of a historic baseball field called Duncan Park Stadium. Built in 1926, the city-owned stadium had fallen into disrepair and needed major renovations by 2007. At the same time, SD 7 lacked sufficient space for its high school baseball and softball teams.

Spurred by grassroots efforts to preserve the stadium, the city opened Duncan Park fields to the high school teams during their baseball and softball seasons between late January and early May after the city and school district jointly invested in significant improvements, particularly to the stadium's outfield wall. While the district has exclusive use of the stadium during baseball season, a local American Legion league team continues to use the baseball field during the summer and the public has access

to the adjacent softball field. Also as part of the agreement, the high school cross-country team is able to use nearby trails, and SD 7 provided the city and the public with access to its athletic facilities for soccer, football, tennis and track.

In addition, the City of Spartanburg recently developed new agreements to use playgrounds, courts, fields, and trails owned by SD 6 and SD 7, which will be announced in the spring of 2013 at community play days at each facility. A community-based nonprofit organization called Partners for Active Living has been a key supporter of and advocate for these efforts. Partners for Active Living has worked with city and school leaders on a variety of strategies to promote community health through physical activity, including a marketing and communications plan to raise residents' awareness of expanded public access to school playgrounds. Signs will be placed at each location to highlight the partnership between the three entities and to display the hours when the playgrounds are accessible.

The city received funding from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to carry out these marketing plans as a component of the work of a Childhood Obesity Task Force, and Partners for Active Living contributed additional funding through grants from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the South Carolina Cancer Alliance. The ballpark renovations were made possible through the city and school district capital project funds.

Local leaders cite a shared commitment to building a healthier community and being responsible stewards of taxpayer money, bolstered by positive city-school relationships, as major factors motivating their development of joint use agreements. They also point to ChangeLab Solutions' NPLAN (http://changelabsolutions.org/childhood-obesity/joint-use) as a valuable source of information on joint use that helped them understand and address issues such as liability. With limited funding, Spartanburg's joint use agreements are enabling the city and school districts to more fully utilize available resources as they seek to meet the community's demand for parks and recreation programming.

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Offer Programs and Services at a Local Youth Center

Cortland, New York (population 19,204) – Cortland Youth Center

The Cortland Youth Center offers a wide variety of recreational, educational, cultural and employment services to young residents in Cortland, a large proportion of whom live below the poverty line. Sponsored by the Cortland Youth Bureau, these programs provide youth with a safe environment, connect them with healthy role models, and encourage them to stay in school and give back to the community.

This City of Cortland established the Youth Bureau in 1946 as the first in an extensive system of youth service bureaus that are now present in 107 communities throughout New York State. In addition to organizing teen activities through its youth services division, the bureau manages and maintains the city's seven parks and offers 118 recreation programs. A mayor-appointed advisory body composed of about a dozen residents guides the bureau's operations. In 1972, the bureau established the Youth Center, which moved to its current downtown location in 1994. The city raised $300,000 in donations from the community and secured state funding to renovate and convert a vacant former auto parts store into the current teen center, which is in close proximity to the local high school.

The center offers both structured activities and drop-in programs six days per week for youth between the ages of 11 and 18. Youth participants, many of whom visit the center almost daily after school, determine the program content, which includes music and arts, movie nights, field trips, workshops

with guest speakers, and volunteer and service opportunities. Among the center's most popular initiatives is a healthy dinner program that teaches teens how to prepare meals on a budget and stretch that budget by tending a community garden located in a city park. Another successful program is the Cortland Prom Closet, which collects and distributes free formalwear to students. Over the four years of the program's existence, the Prom Closet has distributed more than 195 dresses, saving families roughly $19,000. This initiative requires little funding and benefits from generous community support and youth volunteerism.

The center also helps students achieve their education and employment goals. College students from the State University of New York (SUNY)-Cortland offer homework help and tutoring at the youth center on a nightly basis. To assist young job-seekers, the center hires youth interns and helps teens with resume development, interview preparation, and job search efforts.

As the city's lead youth-serving organization, the Youth Bureau collaborates with numerous other human service agencies and provides young people with referrals to other partners when appropriate. For instance, the bureau is one of 20 members of the Cortland Area Communities that Care Coalition formed to combat youth alcohol and drug abuse by promoting positive youth development. The center has also forged a strong partnership with SUNY's physical education program, as well as the YMCA and YWCA, to enhance recreation activities for youth. In turn, the Youth Bureau contracts with the Town of Cortlandville – which encircles Cortland – to share parks and recreation services.

City councilmembers have been visibly supportive of the Youth Bureau and Youth Center, attending their events and the Cortland Youth of the Year award program. The city is also the bureau's primary funder. Additional funding comes from the state's Office of Children and Family Services, and special programs such as field trips depend entirely on fundraising efforts by youth center participants. Looking ahead, city leaders are taking steps to build on the bureau's work through a Mayor's Youth Initiative. Cortland Mayor Brian Tobin has brought together nonprofit agencies, schools, SUNY officials, and teens to identify key issues and priorities for improving youth outcomes and to establish a mayor's youth council in Cortland.

For more information, visit www.cortland.org/youth.

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Provide High-Quality Summer Recreation Programming for Homeless Children and Youth

Danvers, Massachusetts (population 26,493) – Project Sunshine

Facing shortages of shelter space and permanent housing, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts has contracted with motels to house homeless families for more than two decades, with fluctuations in the number of placements spurred by changes in the health of the economy. In June 2011, the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development placed more than 100 of these families in three motels located along a major state highway in Danvers, generating concern among town leaders for the well-being of the families' children. One particularly troubling issue was the lack of recreational activities available to these young people over the summer. Isolated from the rest of the town, they had few places to play but parking lots and few places to walk other than the highway.

With only two weeks' notice and no funding available in the town budget, local officials and staff mobilized the community to develop Project Sunshine, a six-week long summer camp offering a wide variety of enriching activities for children between the ages of six and 14. The town raised $30,000 from civic organizations, residents and businesses (including two local banks that each provided $10,000), secured school buses and facility space at a local elementary school, hired staff and volunteer counselors in training (CITs), and began planning a calendar of exciting programs and events to avoid simply "warehousing" the children. This community-wide effort was no small feat given that the recreation department typically plans its summer programs eight months in advance.

To raise awareness of the program and reach out to homeless families, recreation staff went door-to-door at each of the motels. While it took 45 minutes to get everyone on the school bus the first day, children were lining up for the buses by the end of the first week. Programs offered daily from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. throughout the summer included field trips to the beach, Fenway Park, Gillette Stadium, the Franklin Park Zoo, and town police and fire stations. On many of these trips, Project Sunshine participants joined groups of youth in Danvers' traditional day camp, enabling a seamless integration of homeless children into the town's mainstream programs and helping them stay connected to friends at the schools they were temporarily attending.

Residents throughout the community found ways to contribute to Project Sunshine. For instance, the Council on Aging solicited donations and brought together elderly volunteers at the town's senior center to make and deliver breakfast, lunch and snacks for the 40 youth participants each day for the full duration of the program. During the program's second year, the fire department picked up and washed towels used by youth during a beach day in the nearby town of Marblehead. Civic organizations hosted cookouts, with one group providing backpacks filled with back-to-school supplies at the end of the summer. With more time for preparation, the recreation department was able to raise more money, hire more staff and volunteers and extend the program to eight weeks during the second year.

While the town has little control over the underlying statewide problem of family homelessness – more than 1,700 homeless families lived in motels across Massachusetts as of October 2012,[19] with nearly 200 families placed in Danvers – it has been successful in providing homeless youth with a fun and safe summer. One of the greatest achievements of Project Sunshine was that its participants did not feel in any way singled out. Many were unaware the program had not existed one year earlier; their summer camp experience seemed no different than the experience of their peers. Youth also developed strong bonds with staff and teenage CITs, for whom the opportunity to volunteer made a strong impact on their lives.

Recognizing the many drawbacks of sheltering families in motels – the high cost, lack of cooking appliances other than microwaves, isolation and overcrowding, public safety risks, and long distances to school for some students – the state has increased investments in homelessness prevention and programs that move homeless families toward more stable and permanent housing.[20] Yet progress has been gradual, and the town has committed to continuing Project Sunshine if the need remains. In 2012, Project Sunshine earned statewide and national recognition as a model program, receiving the Massachusetts Municipal Association's Innovation Award and being featured in the City Showcase at NLC's Congress of Cities and Exposition.

For more information, visit http://www.mma.org/municipal-services/6241-summer-program-created-for-homeless-kids.

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Give Transferable Parks and Recreation Credits to Local Volunteers

Wentzville, Missouri (population 29,070) – Park Bucks

Residents who volunteer for the Wentzville Parks and Recreation Department's recreation host program can earn "park bucks" that offer discounted fees for the department's classes, events, memberships, and activities. The program matches the interests and skills of residents with parks and recreation staffing needs, awarding volunteers five park bucks per volunteer hour. Credits sit in the volunteers' account until they participate in a program or, alternatively, donate their park bucks into a youth scholarship fund that enables low-income families to participate in parks and recreation programs. The department asks volunteers to commit to a minimum of 10 hours of service per year to ensure program costs are covered, which include shirts for volunteers and criminal background checks.

Residents who volunteer for the Wentzville Parks and Recreation Department's recreation host program can earn "park bucks" that offer discounted fees for the department's classes, events, memberships, and activities.

Developed in 2003 in response to increased demand for park services from the city's growing population, the program's volunteers work on a wide range of events such as the annual Easter egg hunt and July 4th celebration. They also contribute to maintenance and beautification efforts by cleaning up streams, planting trees, and mulching. Participation in the recreation host program has grown steadily since its inception. In 2003-04, the program resulted in only 200 volunteer hours. By 2008, participation grew to 837 hours, totaling $4,185 in park bucks – the equivalent of $7,708 in entry-level staff time. The program continues to grow on a yearly basis, with 56 individuals currently in the program.

Due to its success, a spinoff to Park Bucks has been made available for youth. "Junior" volunteers between the ages of 16 and 17 can apply for the program by submitting three recommendations from community leaders or school officials. In addition to helping where needed, youth carry out small group projects, receive mentoring, and learn new skills.

Wentzville received an Innovation Award for the program from the Missouri Municipal League in 2009.

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CITY EXAMPLES

YOUTH AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Offer a Continuum of Opportunities for Youth Participation in Local Government

Durango, Colorado (population 16,887) – Youth Engagement Program

In its Children, Youth, and Families Master Plan, the City of Durango commits to creating meaningful opportunities for youth to engage in decisions that directly impact their lives. To meet this goal, the city has developed a Youth Engagement Program that offers youth the chance to become more involved in city government depending on their interests and needs. Implementing a modified version of Hampton, Virginia's nationally-recognized youth engagement model, the program offers three "pathways" for youth to make an impact on the community:

- A service pathway in which youth engage in short-term volunteer opportunities, such as park maintenance, developing flyers and brochures, and event staffing;
- An influence pathway in which youth participate in advisory roles on city boards and commissions; and
- A shared leadership pathway in which youth take an active leadership role in policy and procedural decisions through the Mayor's Youth Advisory Commission (MYAC).

With existing staff coordinating the effort, the youth engagement program receives an annual appropriation of $2,000 from the city to cover professional skill development, travel expenses, supplies, and administrative costs. In addition, two local high schools provide representatives to serve as liaisons between the program and their respective schools. School coordinators help to recruit a diverse pool of applicants for the MYAC and other city boards and commissions.

MYAC consists of nine high school students appointed by the city council

to abbreviated one-year terms concurrent with the school year. Youth appointees to other city boards and commissions attend MYAC work sessions, giving them a chance to learn about and discuss projects and initiatives within the city. Since its inception, MYAC has had several successes, including drafting a resolution in response to an instance of racism at a local university, developing a set of internal rules and procedures, crafting formal presentations for the city council, and organizing the community's first youth expo. Hosted in the local discovery museum, the youth expo featured school programs, music, sports programs, and volunteer opportunities. It was well received by youth and parents alike, and will become an annual event coordinated by the MYAC. City staff report that the youth engagement program has generated enthusiasm among local elected officials and across city departments.

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Elevate Youth Voices in Planning City Strategies

Caldwell, Idaho (population 46,237) – Mayor's Youth Advisory Council and Caldwell Youth Master Plan

Under the leadership of Mayor Garret Nancolas, the City of Caldwell has embraced the notion that strong families and abundant opportunities for children and youth to thrive are fundamental to the success of a community. Reflecting its commitment to youth development and authentic youth civic engagement, the city has formed an active Mayor's Youth Advisory Council (MYAC) that was involved in the design of and fundraising for the city's first YMCA; expanded afterschool programming and public safety initiatives that have helped bring gang and juvenile crime to record lows; and recently developed a Caldwell Youth Master Plan in partnership with a broad coalition of youth and adult leaders. This comprehensive plan builds on more than a decade of progress in making Caldwell a youth-friendly community.

Mayor Nancolas formed the MYAC in 1999, shortly after taking office. Discussions with high school students the previous year revealed pent-up demand for involvement in local decision-making processes and opportunities to give back to the community. While the city made an initial investment in the MYAC, the group quickly became self-sustaining through its own fundraising efforts. It now raises more than $20,000 each year through events such as a golf tournament and the annual series of "Mayor's Old Guys Basketball Games," in which the mayor leads a team of "old guys" against the varsity boys basketball teams at local high schools. Composed of more than 30 members, the MYAC organizes community service projects and helps guide local decisions on issues that affect youth. For instance, the MYAC was involved in every stage of the design and construction of the popular Pipe Dream Skate Park.

Prior to the skate park's development, collaboration among youth, the school district, property owners, and the city led to the opening of the Caldwell Family YMCA in 2006. A survey of youth and parents demonstrated overwhelming support for developing a recreational facility, but the project would not have been financially sustainable without city improvements that reduced startup costs. According to the mayor, "The whole community came together on this project." The Caldwell East Urban Renewal Agency dedicated seed money for the fundraising process and covered 40 percent of construction costs for the facility through the city's urban renewal plan. City crews made improvements to streets and landscaping, and the City Council waived some permitting fees. A local family donated the land that would be used for the site of the facility. The school district and MYAC helped raise additional funds, and the MYAC also provided input on site location and facility design. In a community of only 46,000 residents, the YMCA currently has 17,000 members.

"The whole community came together on this project."

– Caldwell Mayor Garret Nancolas on the opening of the city's first YMCA

Both municipal leaders and youth cite the expansion of afterschool programs as one of many key factors that have made the city safer. When Mayor Nancolas first began holding conversations with high school students in 1998, more than half said they did not feel safe in Caldwell. Gang activity among teens and a lack of afterschool and job opportunities contributed to a high juvenile crime rate. Since 2002, however, plummeting juvenile crime and a 50 percent drop in the overall crime index have coincided with new partnerships to increase the number of structured youth activities and the police department's launch of new gang prevention, enforcement, and neighborhood policing efforts. The city and school district have also placed school resource officers in schools and partnered with a Mentoring Network that has helped reduce truancy and increase graduation rates. Unique among cities in Idaho, Caldwell municipal employees are authorized to mentor at-risk students in schools during work hours. Building on these efforts, the recently-launched P-16 Caldwell Education Project is strengthening the continuum of supports for learning from early childhood through postsecondary education, with funding from the city, United Way, and local foundations and businesses.

In developing its youth initiatives, Caldwell has benefited from the exchange of ideas and best practices with local officials and youth from other cities, and these communities have also learned a great deal from Caldwell. For instance, Mayor Nancolas has advised surrounding communities in Idaho as they developed their own youth councils. As a member (and later as chair) of NLC's Council on Youth, Education and Families, the mayor also helped develop NLC's *City Platform for Strengthening Families* and learned about the youth master planning concept being applied in cities across the nation.

Caldwell's Youth Master Plan reinforces the community's commitment to equipping young people with the skills needed to become successful adults. The city and school district initiated the planning process in 2010, bringing together a coalition of 25 youth, college students, and leaders of public, nonprofit, and private sector agencies to create a roadmap for better educating children and youth and helping them

make positive choices. The coalition drafted the plan after reviewing responses to a survey of more than 1,000 parents and students in elementary, middle and high schools. The final plan, approved by the city council and school board, contains two goals for each of six areas: safety, out-of-school time, health and wellness, education and workforce readiness, community involvement, and community relationships. An implementation committee is currently working to carry out the plan's recommendations. One early success is a new collaboration among the state, city, school district and regional transit authority to increase funding for transportation of youth to and from afterschool programs.

City leaders credit partnerships – with youth, the school district, state agencies, the business community, local colleges, nonprofits, and foundations – for enabling the progress that has made Caldwell a safer and more supportive community for young people. Municipal leaders in cities throughout the country continue to benefit from Caldwell's knowledge and experience, and national organizations such as America's Promise Alliance have recognized Caldwell for its collaborative efforts on behalf of children, youth and families.

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Mobilize the Community to Build Young People's Developmental Assets

St. Louis Park, Minnesota (population 45,250) – Children First

Emerging from a partnership formed in 1993, Children First was the first-ever Healthy Communities-Healthy Youth initiative – a community-wide mobilization for youth that embraces the Minneapolis-based Search Institute's developmental assets framework. Since then, more than 600 communities across the U.S. and Canada have adopted this approach. Under the larger umbrella of the Children First network, local partners in St. Louis Park each plan their own strategies to help youth build the 40 Developmental Assets – defined by the Search Institute as the positive experiences and qualities that influence young people's choices and help them become responsible, caring, successful adults. An executive committee composed of city, business, health care, education and faith leaders engages the entire community in establishing connections with young people and helping them identify their positive attributes and passions rather than defining youth by their problems and deficits.

> "Our main job as adults is to train and educate our replacements. We owe them our support, our time, our wisdom. We owe them a good education, opportunities to do good for their community and to teach them to respect each other and to nurture their sparks in this world because one day very soon we will have to trust them with everything."
>
> **– Mayor Jeff Jacobs, City of St. Louis Park, Minn.**

A network of more than 200 trained Asset Champions promotes Children First's asset-building philosophy through city agencies, businesses, schools, health clinics, faith communities, neighborhoods, service providers and community organizations. Among the group of Asset Champions are many local elected officials and city department heads and staff. The city manager and police chief are standing members of the Children First executive committee.

With municipal leaders incorporating Children First into a citywide strategic visioning process and emphasizing its utility as an economic development tool, the city manifests its commitment to youth engagement and well-being in numerous ways. Local officials invite young people to serve on city advisory boards and commissions on parks and recreation, human rights, police, and telecommunications; provide input on park and playground development; and help plan neighborhood block parties. Police sponsor a pick-up basketball league to get to know youth who live in local neighborhoods, and officers have reported palpable improvements in trust and cooperation with residents. The fire chief regularly speaks to students at alternative high schools about making positive decisions. City and school district leaders collaborate to support a single office that oversees volunteering opportunities in local government and public schools.

Other notable efforts driven by the Children First philosophy include a St. Louis Park High School transition program for ninth grade students that incorporates asset-building principles. All ninth graders are

assigned to 80-student cohorts that share the same teachers for science, English, and social studies, and spend some homeroom time each week working on a social competency and asset-building curriculum. Their teachers have common prep time to discuss individual students and address problems, and are able to refer students to a social worker who focuses exclusively on the ninth grade class. With funding from a federal Investing in Innovation grant funneled through the Search Institute, St. Louis Park opened full-day learning labs staffed by qualified teachers who can help students with math and English. In addition, the Park Nicollet Foundation partners with the school district to support a clinic that provides no-cost physical, dental and mental health services to children and teens in St. Louis Park. Reflecting the community's commitment to youth leadership, high school students co-chair the Children First initiative alongside the president of a local parochial school, and some youth have been trained as Asset Champions.

Foundation grants and individual donations support the initiative's $75,000 annual budget, along with an additional $30,000 of in-kind services. The Park Nicollet Foundation serves as the initiative's fiscal agent.

While not intended as an evaluation of the Children First initiative, a longitudinal study conducted by the Search Institute in 2003 showed an increase in the developmental assets of St. Louis Park students between 1997 and 2001 and a decrease in high-risk behavior. In addition, an evaluation conducted by the Minnesota Institute of Public Health found that the Ninth Grade Program coincided with reduced academic failure rates, improved school attendance, and reduced use of alcohol, tobacco, and marijuana during the first three years of implementation. Perhaps most remarkable is the sustainability of the Children First partnership over two decades.

For more information, visit http://www.children-first.org/.

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Incorporate a Focus on Children into City Department Planning and Staff Development

Rock Hill, South Carolina (population 66,154) – The #1 Question: Is It Good for the Children?

The City of Rock Hill and more than 25 other local agencies and businesses have collaborated to infuse their strategic planning and decision-making processes with an awareness of the needs of children. The #1 Question initiative calls on these partners to ask, "Is it good for the children?" when deciding if their plans are in the best interests of children in the community. Each entity has developed its own approach to ensure that children and youth remain a high priority. The volunteer-led and city-sponsored Commission for Children and Youth provided the spark for this initiative when it launched an awareness campaign in 2006. The Commission appoints a group of civic-minded individuals to serve as the Ambassadors for the #1 Question initiative. With city funding, the Commission and Ambassadors host an annual summit on issues affecting children and produces a biannual newsletter and an annual report on the state of children in Rock Hill.

To bring the #1 Question close to home, the City of Rock Hill formed a task force charged with developing a training module for all 800 city employees to encourage decisions that improve children's outcomes. The training highlights indicators of child well-being in Rock Hill, introduces the #1 Question initiative, and concludes by asking each department and employee to make specific commitments, such as volunteering in the community, being involved in a Career Day at local schools, or participating in mentoring or job shadowing programs.

Representatives from each department, ranging from administrative to supervisory staff and those who work in offices and in the field, participate in the task force that developed the training. This group produces additional programming opportunities for employees and their families. For example, program topics have included "lunch and learn" sessions on childhood obesity, child psychology, and mentoring opportunities within the community. The city has also hosted a #1 Question Expo where 40 vendors – including the Department of Social Services, school board, and local nonprofit organizations – answered questions for employees and their children.

The task force's Change from the Heart program encourages employees to deduct the change from their payroll to youth-serving nonprofit organizations, going beyond what they give through United Way.

In addition to raising thousands of dollars annually, Change from the Heart raises awareness of community efforts in Rock Hill to help families struggling to pay utility bills and afford nutritious food; protect children from abuse; provide shelter and transitional housing to homeless families; offer alternative education programs to help students graduate high school; and provide low-income children with scholarships to participate in afterschool activities.

The #1 Question initiative has increasingly shaped the actions of city departments and their staff in ways large and small. For instance, the housing and neighborhood services department, which offers assistance to first-time homebuyers, developed a child-friendly waiting area at its offices. In the course of organizing food supply drives for four area emergency children's shelters, employees of the utility and public works departments volunteered to fix sidewalk and plumbing problems at the shelter on their own time. A summit focused on childhood obesity prompted greater dialogue between the Commission for Children and Youth and the school district on changes to school lunch policies to ensure that students have access to nutritious food.

Rock Hill has also gained national recognition from organizations such as America's Promise Alliance for creating a range of opportunities for youth participation in local government and community service. A strong local youth council raises funds to provide grants for youth service projects that benefit children and families throughout the city and works with the police department and community organizations to sponsor forums on youth issues. The city's CareerX job shadowing program exposes older youth to career options in local government. Members of the city's youth council have also surveyed their peers to provide input to the city's Vision 2020 Plan. Only a limited amount of city general funding is needed to support the wide variety of youth programming.

Local elected officials have played important leadership and convening roles to sustain the city's focus on children. The mayor actively promotes the training for city employees, and the city council appoints the Commission for Children and Youth. The mayor's wife chairs the Ambassadors for the #1 Question initiative.

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CITY EXAMPLES

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

Employ High School Students in Local Government Jobs

Romeoville, Illinois (population 39,680) – High School Job Initiative

For the past three years, the Village of Romeoville has worked with Romeoville High School to provide youth with paid summer jobs in local government, financed with village funds. The high school's Applied Academics Department Chairperson/ Cooperative Work Training Coordinator collects student applications, which are then screened by a high school committee to evaluate students on skills and academics. The committee shares this list with a team of village officials who interview applicants for various departments and make recommendations on where students would find the best fit.

For the past three years, the Village of Romeoville has worked with Romeoville High School to provide youth with paid summer jobs in local government.

Each year, between 10 and 12 students ages 16-18 are hired part-time (20 hours per week) for six weeks, working in recreation, parks, village hall, and public works positions. Additional recreation jobs are available to other students, including those with special needs. The students benefit from the work experience they gain and the mentoring relationships they develop with village staff. Youth who will be attending college have the option to continue working part-time throughout the year after high school.

Positive relationships and open lines of communication between the village and school district make the job program possible. Partly motivating the establishment of the summer job program is an interest in encouraging local youth to consider a career in village government. Since the initiative was launched, some participants have returned from college during each summer to continue working in village departments and recreation programs.

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Host a Summer Job and Health Fair

Petersburg, Virginia (population 32,420) – Summer Work and Health Guidance Expo

Supporting Alternatives for our Valued Youth (SAVY), a local coalition of government and nonprofit agencies, recently sponsored Petersburg's first annual Summer Work and Health Guidance (SWAHG) Expo for Teens and Parents. The Expo connected youth and families with summer job opportunities and other employment, education and health resources. Participants also attended workshops on social networking strategies for finding jobs, a mobile computer lab, and physical fitness activities. The city financed the SWAHG Expo with a grant from a local philanthropy called the Cameron Foundation, and the Southside YMCA provided space for the event.

Under the direction of the city manager's office and the Petersburg City Council, the SAVY coalition includes all city agencies that provide services and programs for youth: parks and leisure services, social services, Petersburg Public Schools, the juvenile court, the office on youth, the police and fire departments, the sheriff's office, the United Way, and the local health department. It serves as a clearinghouse of information on youth programs and activities. Other partners in planning the SWAHG Expo include the YMCA, Virginia Health Department, Virginia State University, local providers of health, mental health and dental care, and local employers from both the private and public sector. In addition to showcasing employment opportunities in local government, the city worked with local churches and schools to market the Expo to youth and exhibitors throughout the community.

Eighty teens and 68 parents attended the first Expo held in March 2012. Based on surveys, the city realized that parents had been unaware of available employment and health resources for teens. City staff also reported that teens who participated in the Expo were better prepared for interviews with city agencies offering summer jobs, and 25 youth participants were employed by the parks and recreation department and office on youth. Eight teens who attended the Expo were employed with private employers such as Lowe's, Walmart and Old Navy.

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Reengage Out-of-School Youth through Work-Based Learning Opportunities

Ocala, Florida (population 56,315) – Phoenix Rising

After years of increasing unemployment and incidences of petty crime among youth on the city's west side, the Ocala Police Department convened a group of concerned community leaders in 2010 to forge a multifaceted solution modeled after the national YouthBuild program. The resulting project, Phoenix Rising, is a 16-week community development and workforce training initiative that provides Workforce Investment Act (WIA) eligible out-of-school youth with opportunities to work toward their GEDs or high school diplomas, learn new skills, and serve their communities by building affordable housing.

In partnership with local nonprofits, businesses, churches, and other municipal officials, the Ocala Police Department coordinates Phoenix Rising with support from a combination of public and private resources. Workforce Connections, the local workforce investment board, along with youth training partner Henkels & McCoy, provide funding for job skills training, applicant screening, and follow-up services. Habitat for Humanity provides the housing plans and a construction supervisor and develops criteria for teaching construction skills onsite. The City of Ocala donates land, waives fees, and expedites the permitting process. Local businesses, churches, and residents donate additional funds to cover construction and classroom materials, dumpster and related waste management services, and shirts for the participants.

While in the program, participants spend half a day in the classroom and the other half building a home. Youth learn what will be expected of them in the job market, including how to prepare for an interview and fill out a resume. They also have the opportunity to tour local businesses. Upon completion of each project, volunteers work with the youth to prepare for and schedule job interviews. In its first three builds, Phoenix Rising has enrolled 51 youth, 37 of whom have completed the program, two of whom have completed their GED, and 34 of whom are employed or attending a postsecondary institution. In addition to the impact of the program on youth, Phoenix Rising has resulted in three new, affordable houses. The city reports that Phoenix Rising is cost-efficient compared to similar programs, averaging $9,000 per youth per build.

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Work with Schools to Engage Students in City Construction Projects

Oregon City, Oregon (population 31,859) – Oregon City High School Construction Program

Since 2003, Oregon City High School has offered an advanced construction class that works on projects throughout the city – particularly at local parks – during class time, after school and on weekends. Students have helped build or refurbish city park bridges and walkways, volleyball courts, stairs at the municipal pool, and an outdoor event center.

The program teaches students new skills and helps them give back to the community as they participate in every stage of the construction process. A teacher guides them in planning the concept and design, creating models of the proposed project, developing a business plan, and leading onsite implementation in partnership with contractors. In addition to obtaining in-kind donations from local architects and engineers, students apply for grant funds to pay for materials and conduct presentations to potential donors, city staff and the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee. Project ideas originate from both the parks department and students, who choose one major project to complete each year.

The students have completed a number of parks projects that the city might not otherwise have had the funds and capacity to support. Initially, these were small projects such as birdboxes and bench covers, but over the years projects have become increasingly sophisticated, requiring students to seek planning

and building permits. Recently, students helped design and build a large picnic shelter with built-in utilities that has an estimated value of more than $200,000. Last year, students built a restroom and concession building at a local park.

The city's parks manager works closely with the high school to provide significant staff support and oversight for each project. Councilmembers have also demonstrated support, and a city commission that oversees a community enhancement grant process has provided some of the construction program's funding in recent years. Among the results reported by the city are more people using the parks and a decline in vandalism, not to mention the valuable, practical work experience that students gain from participating. In 2008, the Oregon City High School Construction Program and the teacher who leads it received a Voluntary Service Award from the Oregon Recreation and Park Association.

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CITY EXAMPLES

CHILD AND YOUTH SAFETY

Train City Staff and Strengthen City Policies to Protect Children from Sexual Abuse

Germantown, Tennessee (population 38,844) – Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Initiative

In May 2011, Germantown Mayor Sharon Goldsworthy joined leaders from across Shelby County to learn about the Memphis Child Advocacy Center's (CAC) child sexual abuse prevention initiative. The program derives from an evidence-based child sexual abuse prevention training called Stewards of Children developed by the Charleston-S.C.-based nonprofit organization, Darkness to Light.

Partnering with community leaders, the CAC set a goal to train five percent of all Shelby County adults to reach a "tipping point" in the number of people adequately equipped to protect children in their care. While many agencies have committed to a tipping point goal, Germantown stands out for being the first city in the U.S. to make the training widely available to a critical mass of city employees and other local organizations.

Germantown is the first city in the U.S. to make the Stewards of Children sexual abuse prevention training widely available to a critical mass of city employees and other local organizations.

Stewards of Children focuses on multiple facets of child sexual abuse: the problems and prevalence; risks of placing children in environments lacking appropriate policies; ways to improve the availability of safe spaces for children; guidance for parents on how to talk to children about the issue; and ways to recognize and react to signs of abuse.

After the mayor participated in the three-hour training, she and her administrative staff arranged for the CAC to train all Germantown employees who have direct contact with children in the course of their job duties, as well as other staff. By April 2012, 274 city employees had participated in the training, including personnel in the police, fire, library and parks and recreation departments. CAC has covered all training expenses except for a $10 per person workbook fee. Moving beyond city government, the mayor has identified and contacted agencies serving special needs youth as the next tier of adults for training. City staff reached out to local media about Germantown's status as the first city to receive a "Partner in Prevention" designation by Darkness to Light.

Additionally, city legal counsel worked with the CAC to conduct a policy audit to ensure that all city properties and programs have a thorough, enforced child protection policy in place. Key components

include discouraging circumstances in which only one adult and one child are present, mandated periodic training and enforcement of background check requirements, and addressing more specific needs of individual departments. While the departments serving children already have strong policies in place, the audit enhanced those safeguards. Separately, local law enforcement agencies are part of a countywide child protection investigation team coordinated by the CAC. The team responds to all reports of suspected child sexual abuse with coordinated investigation and intervention.

The CAC uses pre-test, post-test and six-month follow-up evaluations to measure the training's impact on participants' knowledge and behavior. Results show that many participants take specific actions after the training, such as talking with children about personal boundaries and asking other child-serving agencies if they have protective policies for children.

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Sponsor a Youth-Led Bullying Prevention Program

Tualatin, Oregon (population 26,054) – Project F.R.I.E.N.D.S.

In 2006, the City of Tualatin's 21-member Youth Advisory Council (YAC) developed a day-long bullying prevention workshop for fifth grade students called F.R.I.E.N.D.S. (Finding Relations In Every New Diverse Student). Since then, the YAC has offered the workshop on a biennial basis to help students address bullying and stereotyping behavior while also preparing them for the upcoming transition to middle school. During years when it is not sponsoring this workshop, the YAC has organized Project P.E.A.C.E. (Providing Each Adolescent with Courage and Empathy), a similar program for middle school students composed of 10 lesson plans taught by homeroom teachers that build conflict resolution skills and help students identify and respond to bullying.

To launch Project F.R.I.E.N.D.S., members of the YAC reached out to and garnered the support of principals of three public elementary schools in Tualatin and then began working with teachers to develop an introductory lesson plan for students. They conducted online research to craft the lesson plan and workshop, drawing upon materials from the Southern Poverty Law Center, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and other national resources. After YAC members make a pre-workshop visit to each classroom, they hold the workshop itself off-site at a local church auditorium. More than 300 fifth grade students participate. While the church donates the space and the YAC recruits additional volunteers from the high school, other costs are covered by funds raised from the Washington County

Commission on Children and Families, a Target Youth Engagement grant and additional donations.

The YAC uses pre- and post-workshop surveys to evaluate the success of Project F.R.I.E.N.D.S. They look for changes in attitudes toward bullying and stereotyping and assess how comfortable participants are about getting to know students from diverse backgrounds. They have also reported increases in the proportion of participants who are confident they will make new friends in middle school (from six percent to 67 percent) and are excited about attending middle school (from 34 percent to 53 percent). Parents, teachers, and the local school district have strongly endorsed the program, manifesting their commitment by dedicating a full school day for the workshop.

Like all of the YAC's activities, the project would not be possible without the support of the mayor, city councilmembers, and the city manager, which creates a welcoming environment for youth that permeates local government in Tualatin. Mayor Lou Ogden created the YAC in 1999 after learning about the concept through the National League of Cities. The city supports the YAC with resources and dedicated staff time, enabling its participants to serve as liaisons between youth and city government, advocate for youth interests, and plan events and activities on issues of important to youth. This support was strengthened at Mayor Ogden's request for the Tualatin City Council to pass a resolution adopting NLC's *City Platform for Strengthening Families* and *Improving Outcomes for Children and Youth*, which it did in May 2006.

The YAC has thrived with this support and it is not unusual for members of the YAC to volunteer 100 hours per year. Many of the youth participate throughout their high school years, taking advantage of this unique opportunity to develop skills in leadership, planning, organization and public speaking.

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Engage Parents in a "Less than Strict Enforcement" Option for First-Time Youth Offenders

Highland Village, Texas (population 15,056) – Police Involving Parents

The City of Highland Village's Police Involving Parents (PIP) program provides for a "less than strict" enforcement option for addressing minor youth misbehavior, such as curfew violations and alcohol possession, by involving parents in the resolution process at the time and place of the infraction. Through this program, police contact parents, encourage them to arrive at the location of the offense committed by their children, and engage both parents and youth in preventing future illegal activity and identifying a resolution in the best interests of youth and the community. PIP has contributed to a sharp and sustained reduction in repeat offenses among teens.

The city developed PIP in 2004 in response to resident concerns that strict penalties for minor youth infractions would have detrimental long-term effects on young people's college options and future employment. The city also found that its traditional enforcement model cast too wide a net. For instance, police would issue citations to all youth at a party where alcohol was present whether they were drinking or not. Juvenile courts would then refer youth to counseling sessions through its First Offender Program. After conducting an internal review of its policies, the police department found its "strict enforcement" approach toward teens – all of whom attend high school in a neighboring community – to be out of step with the department's community-oriented policing model and ineffective in reducing recidivism rates.

With guidance from municipal and school district officials, the city manager's office, municipal court administrators, teens, and parents involved in local PTAs and civic organizations, the department established a set of objectives for improving police interactions with youth ages 13-19 and involving parents in the resolution of minor violations. While the department launched a number of outreach initiatives in 2004 – including placement of school resource officers in local schools and sponsorship of a Teen Academy – PIP is the primary problem-solving mechanism for achieving these objectives.

The department has developed a set of standard operating procedures to guide officers in implementing PIP. Officers first screen youth for eligibility based on their age and offense and then contact parents to

ask them to arrive at the scene within 30 minutes. Parents, youth, and officers complete an electronic PIP form using the department's handheld E-Citation equipment, which captures information on the agreed-upon resolution (e.g., grounding, loss of privileges, counseling). Parents who cannot arrive within the specified period of time speak on the phone with supervising officers. If parents cannot be reached, school resource officers follow up to make contact the next day. The process substitutes parental control for the more expensive and less effective regulation of teens' behavior through the legal system. To embed the program in the department's method of doing business, the successful implementation of PIP is part of patrol officers' performance reviews and training. The department generates community-wide support for the program through multiple means, including its E-Watch technology, which enables instant communication with more than 4,000 residents and businesses.

Initially, city leaders were concerned about the amount of officers' time used in waiting for parents to respond, compared with the previous routine enforcement approach. Yet even as the community's population grew rapidly, PIP helped stabilize the amount of officer time and vehicle miles on patrol cars dedicated to addressing minor juvenile offenses by substantially reducing the overall number of interactions. Of the 783 youth meeting the eligibility requirements of the program, only 26 (3.3 percent) were cited for committing new offenses. The youth recidivism rate declined by 25 percent between 2003-04 and 2005-06. The total number of incidents per year involving juveniles has declined by about 21 percent since 2004 as teens respond more positively to their interactions with police and parents become more involved in supervising their children. The city also reports an increase in resident satisfaction with the police department through its random weekly citizen surveys and is developing a more formal feedback process for families involved in PIP. Highland Village has been ranked among the safest cities in North Texas and throughout the state, and the city has received a Municipal Excellence Award from the Texas Municipal League and a Community Policing Award from the International Association of Chiefs of Police in recognition of PIP.

The Highland Village City Council, city manager, and chief of police have demonstrated unified leadership and support for the city's approach to community policing – as both an expression of concern for youth and a commitment to fiscal responsibility. This support and the implementation of PIP have been essential in shifting the police department away from traditional approaches that have been less effective and changing the way officers work with the community.

Juvenile Interaction Involving Minor Offenses

TRADITIONAL APPROACH (INDUSTRY STANDARD)	HVPD "SERVICE MODEL" APPROACH
Reactive in nature	Proactively seeking positive interactions
Strict enforcement mode	Resolution mode
Black and white, narrow parameters	Discretionary
Limited to no "root cause" determination	Underlying theme sought
Disciplinary in nature	Non-confrontational, resolution driven
US versus THEM mentality	Partnership
Bitterness and resentment	Thankful and appreciative
Enforcement driven (STATS)	Absence of infractions driven (STATS)
No parental involvements	Parent(s) on scene
Negative in nature	Always seeking positive resolution

Source: IACP/Motorola 2010 Webber Seavey Award Application, Highland Village Police Department, Texas

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Expand Alternatives to Detention for Juvenile Offenders

Winchester, Virginia (population 26,203) – Timbrook House Youth Reporting Center

The Timbrook House Youth Reporting Center (YRC) provides alternatives to detention for juvenile offenders, including youth who violate terms of probation or who commit new crimes while on probation, as well as a step-down mechanism to help youth exiting the juvenile detention center to reintegrate back into the community. Highly structured and supervised group activities conducted between 4:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. help youth develop skills that support pro-social behaviors, engage them in community service opportunities, and build positive relationships among youth, police officers, schools, and community leaders. The YRC is a collaborative effort of the Winchester Police Department, Winchester Public Schools, Winchester Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court, Juvenile Probation and Parole, the Winchester Department of Social Services, and CLEAN, Inc., a local nonprofit organization offering a wide range of prevention and intervention programs to youth and families.

Referrals to the YRC largely derive from the school system or juvenile court, and many of the referred youth are significant but nonviolent offenders with serious truancy or behavioral problems who would have been sent previously to detention facilities or expelled from school. Court orders generally require daily attendance by referred youth, and police officers work closely with probation or parole officers to supervise youth who are subject to a curfew. Officers bring youth who are already in detention centers to the YRC to help them stay on track academically, and make home visits to the families of other YRC participants.

Cross-sector collaboration also enhances the services available through the Timbrook House. The city police department assigns two officers to run the YRC, which involves monitoring attendance, managing behavior, and scheduling alternative programs. City and school district leaders successfully partnered to secure a federal 21st Century Community Learning Center grant that enables teachers to provide tutoring and remedial education. The teachers tailor their instruction to meet student needs by not only focusing on core academic subjects but also assisting youth in developing job search and interviewing skills. In addition, the staff receive support from a clinician from the local Community Service Board to assist youth and their families with behavioral issues. Youth also participate in CLEAN's drug prevention and anger management programs; and work with mentors from Big Brothers Big Sisters. Local churches contribute by providing meals three nights per week, and the

law enforcement foundation provides additional funding for activities, clothing, and food as needed.

In its first 18 months, the YRC served 17 youth, with roughly four or five in the program at any given time. The police department uses pre- and post-program assessments and a six-month follow up to track results on a range of indicators, and has reported a number of promising outcomes:

- The number of contacts between the police department and youth referred to the YRC declined by 36 percent by the end of the program and 58 percent after six months.
- The number of court appearances declined 69 percent by the six-month follow-up.
- By the end of the program and after six months, there was a substantial decrease in days in which youth were absent from school.
- The average student grade point average increased by .09 points by the end of the program and .22 points after six months.

The city initially funded the police officers assigned to the YRC through a federal Community-Oriented Policing Services grant as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. With the expiration of the grant and the recovery of the local economy, the city now funds those positions out of general revenue. Other stakeholders, including the law enforcement foundation, local businesses and local service organizations such as the Rotary Club, provide additional funding and supplies. The YRC building originally belonged to the parks and recreation department before the Winchester City Council approved its conversion to an evening reporting center.

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CITY EXAMPLES

FAMILY ECONOMIC SUCCESS

Empower Families through Financial Counseling and Asset Building

Bryan, Texas (population 76,201) – Money Week Brazos Valley and Financial Fitness Center

In an effort to help local families achieve financial stability and reduce the number of residents who use fringe financial services, the City of Bryan and its community partners have developed an array of innovative financial empowerment strategies within an overall framework of economic and social inclusion. These strategies include supporting local sites that offer free tax preparation, establishing a Bank On Brazos Valley initiative to connect residents with low-cost bank accounts, switching to direct deposit of city paychecks to promote mainstream banking, providing free financial education and counseling, and increasing low-income families' savings through Individual Development Accounts.

In addition, the financial institutions participating in Bank On Brazos Valley offer small dollar loans with fair interest rates that help consumers build credit and avoid higher-cost payday loans.

The city's neighborhood and youth services manager and its Community Development Services Department – which serves low and moderate-income families and special needs populations – have worked with several community entities to forge a coordinated set of asset-building strategies. The community development services manager co-chairs United Way of the Brazos Valley's Financial Stability Committee, which also brings together leaders from the City of College Station, Bank On Brazos Valley, the regional workforce investment board, local businesses, universities, the IRS, food banks, and other nonprofit organizations. This committee meets regularly to plan efforts that leverage the influence and resources of each partner. The committee's goals include:

- Promoting and advocating for a healthy financial environment;
- Responding to community members in crisis by providing safety net services;
- Promoting coordination among providers of services that promote financial stability; and
- Increasing awareness of and access to effective financial education.

Among the partnership's many achievements is the first annual Money Week Brazos Valley held in April 2012. This public awareness campaign connected residents to free financial education seminars and local service providers that help families manage their money. Course topics included basic budgeting and financial management, savings and investing, homebuyer education, and retirement planning. The event culminated with a financial fitness fair in which participants attended seminars and listened to presentations from financial experts.

With financial support from a local bank, the committee also recently launched a new Financial Fitness Center that provides free financial coaching on issues such as credit repair, debt reduction, and saving. Participants learn how to develop healthy financial habits and money management techniques, build savings, acquire assets, and plan for the future. In order to boost resident participation, a part-time United Way employee conducts ongoing marketing and outreach and meets with clients for financial coaching.

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Connect Residents with Low-Cost Bank Accounts and the Earned Income Tax Credit

Gaithersburg, Maryland (population 59,933) – Bank On Gaithersburg and VITA Sites

The City of Gaithersburg is among a handful of smaller cities that have developed "Bank On" initiatives linking unbanked residents with free or low-cost checking accounts and financial education – an approach first developed by the City of San Francisco in 2006. Access to mainstream financial services enables residents to reduce their reliance on high-cost check cashing outlets, keep their money safe, and build savings and credit. In 2009, the city launched Bank On Gaithersburg in collaboration with local financial institutions and community organizations as a natural extension of the city's economic development agenda. With a minimum deposit between $5 and $25, participants can open a bank account with no monthly fee or minimum balance.

Managed by the city's Community Services Division, the Bank On coalition consists of five financial institutions and more than 60 nonprofit service providers. The coalition meets on a quarterly basis to assess progress and identify new strategies. In addition to increasing access to banking services, the coalition partners with Family Services, Inc., and the Maryland CASH Academy to make it easier for Bank On customers to attend free financial education classes, which are offered in both English and Spanish. Classes are taught by volunteers – often bank managers – on topics such as basic banking, creating spending plans, choosing among credit and loan options, avoiding scams, and protecting against identity theft.

The city also partners with the Montgomery County Community Action Agency, social service providers, and banks participating in Bank On Gaithersburg to help residents file for the EITC at local Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) sites. The federal Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) is one of the nation's largest and most important anti-poverty programs, providing a refundable credit that supplements the earnings of working families whose income falls below a certain threshold. However, many eligible residents do not claim the EITC, either because they are not aware they qualify or do not know how to claim the credit. In response, cities such as Gaithersburg have launched EITC outreach campaigns to ensure that residents claim tax credits for which they are eligible and attract these federal dollars into their local economies.

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Ensure that Children Receive Healthy Meals at Out-of-School Time Programs

West Bend, Wisconsin (population 31,078) – Summer Picnic and Playground Program

More than 35 percent of West Bend Joint School District students receive free or reduced price meals during the school year, with eligibility rising to 50 percent in the schools located within the City of West Bend boundaries. However, before city and school leaders partnered to continue providing nutritious food during the summer, children would lose access to these meals at the end of the school year. In 2011, with a grant from the Walmart Foundation and National Recreation and Park Association, the city and school district began co-sponsoring a Summer Picnic and Playground Program (SPPP) at two playgrounds where children could receive healthy lunches. The program's meal costs are covered by the federal Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), which provides funding to local governments, nonprofit organizations, and other community institutions to feed low-income children ages 18 and under when school is not in session.

In addition to healthy meals, SPPP provides a variety of programming, integrating traditional outdoor playground activities such as trail hunts, relay races, and dodgeball with educational and wellness activities. For example, the Wisconsin Nutrition Education Program, Washington County 4-H, and area dental professionals incorporated health and nutrition education into the program's curriculum. The program also promotes literacy to prevent the loss of academic skills and knowledge over the course of summer vacation. One day per week, staff from the West Bend Community Library read to the children, culminating with students choosing a book to take home at the end of the summer.

With these partnerships and grants programs, city and district overcame limited budget and staff capacity that hampered the development of a summer feeding program prior to creation of the SPPP. Federal reimbursement made it possible to serve more than 2,200 nutritious lunches by the end of the summer 2011. The following year, the city expanded the program to include the local Boys & Girls Club and an additional playground location in an effort to double the number of lunches served to children, resulting in 6,750 lunches served over the course of eight weeks during the summer of 2012.

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CITY EXAMPLES

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Encourage Local Convenience Stores to Display Healthy Foods Prominently

Tupelo, Mississippi (population 34,546) – Health on a Shelf

Launched by the City of Tupelo in 2011 with a $25,000 Healthy Hometown grant from Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi, the "Health on a Shelf" initiative encourages local convenience stores to group and display healthy foods in one prominent section of the store. The purpose of the initiative is to help store customers make healthier choices when looking for "on-the-go" eating options.

A representative of the Health Task Force sponsored by Mayor Jack Reed, Jr., visits participating stores to explain the program and help label healthy items with a sticker indicating that they meet certain nutritional requirements pertaining to calorie, fat, carbohydrate and sodium content. Participating stores also receive signs that they can display to highlight their involvement in "Health on a Shelf." Each store is eligible to receive up to $250 in signs and stickers, paid for by the Blue Cross & Blue Shield grant. Reflecting the city's important place in American musical history, the initiative logo is a guitar filled with fruits and vegetables.

Chaired by the director of the North Mississippi Medical Center's Community Health Department, the task force consists of community volunteers from multiple sectors working to make Tupelo the healthiest city in Mississippi. Other initiatives of the task force include the Mayor's Marathon, an educational program that teaches children about the nutritional value of fruits and vegetables, and a farmer's market. Health on a Shelf is now partnering with eight stores throughout the city. In addition, the city's parks and recreation department is making healthier snacks available at concession stands in local parks. Due to Tupelo's success in fostering healthier living, NLC recognized Health on a Shelf at the City Showcase at its 2011 Congress of Cities and Exposition.

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Develop Safe Walking and Biking Routes to School

Decatur, Georgia (population 19,335) – Safe Routes to School Program

For more than three decades, Decatur's neighborhoods and downtown have become increasingly accessible to pedestrians and bicyclists as a result of city zoning, economic development and transportation policies that support healthy and active living. A case study developed by the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) highlights many of the innovative local efforts that have promoted walkability, including a requirement that health impact assessments be developed to estimate the effect of transportation plans on residents' health as well as the creation of the city's Active Living Division. This division used to be the city's Recreation and Community Services Department, and its name change reflects the extent to which a belief in the value of healthy communities permeates local government in Decatur.

In 2008, the Active Living Division assumed responsibility for Decatur's renowned Safe Routes to School (SRTS) initiative. Launched three years earlier with federal funding and initially coordinated by parent volunteer groups at each participating school, the SRTS program has facilitated the development of traffic calming measures, helped the city improve street crossings, and supported other projects that have made it safer for children to walk or ride their bikes to school. These projects are designed to limit traffic congestion and improve air quality around schools and encourage students to engage in physical activity.

The Active Living Division partners with school principals and bus drivers, crossing guards, police and fire department officials, public works and engineering department staff, and parents to plan recommended safe routes and address safety concerns. For instance, parent volunteers work with schools and the city to organize Walk and Roll to School Days and "walking school buses," in which adults walk children to school, with more students joining the group as it passes by their homes along the way. Parents also contribute to sidewalk inventories conducted by public works and engineering personnel by identifying "hot spots" where repaving or crosswalks are needed. Recognizing that students at a new fourth and fifth grade academy needed some type of marker to identify the recommended routes, SRTS partners placed decals that point the way on sidewalks at major intersections, and the city and school district have posted route maps on their websites. In addition to the 4/5 Academy, all four K-3 elementary schools, the middle school and one private school participate in the SRTS program.

Decatur's SRTS program also includes a week and a half-long bike training for all fourth graders offered by the Active Living Division in partnership with school physical education instructors and volunteers, including parents, biking champions, police and fire officials, and other city staff. Students

who participate in the training learn about bike mechanics, rules of the road, and safety, and are encouraged to make a habit of biking. The Active Living Division provides equipment and funding for the training and partners with a local bike vendor to repair city bikes as an in-kind service.

While the initial federal grant (channeled through the state to the school district) made many infrastructure projects possible, municipal leadership and funding from the city's operating budget now sustain the SRTS program. The initiative makes an important contribution to the city's active living goals, helping residents move around the city without always having to rely on cars and promoting fitness among children and youth. Decatur's SRTS program has earned plaudits from local, state and national organizations, and was featured in the City Showcase at NLC's 2011 Congress of Cities and Exposition.

For more information, visit http://www.decaturga.com/index.aspx?page=347 or http://www.decaturga.com/Modules/ShowDocument.aspx?documentid=644.

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Help Families Obtain Affordable Health Insurance

La Mesa, California (population 57,065) – Ready…Set…Live Well Initiative

The City of La Mesa has partnered with San Diego County, La Mesa-Spring Valley School District, and a nonprofit health services provider called Neighborhood Healthcare to connect parents and children with affordable health insurance through Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). Local officials utilize existing community and school events to raise awareness of the programs and refer families to certified application assistants.

These outreach efforts stem from a broader community health and wellness program launched by a multi-sector task force and endorsed by the city council in 2006. The program focused on promoting active lifestyles (e.g., by making neighborhoods more walkable) and ensuring children were covered by health insurance. The following year, the "Ready…Set…Live Well" initiative incorporated these program elements into a more formalized strategic plan.

With a pass-through grant from the Institute for Local Government (ILG) through its Communities for Healthy Kids project, the La Mesa Community Services Department produced informational pamphlets on how to apply for Medi-Cal and Healthy Families (the state's Medicaid and CHIP programs, respectively). The city has distributed these pamphlets through a number of venues, including a popular Kids Care Fest sponsored by the department and Grossmont Healthcare District. This event

offers more than 1,200 families a variety of children's activities as well as free health screenings and other child safety, health and education resources. Partnering with Neighborhood Healthcare, which runs several community health clinics in the region, made it possible to connect families with application assistants during and after the event. The city has also disseminated health insurance information at:

- community center and recreation facilities;
- tables staffed by municipal and county staff at back-to-school nights;
- the city's annual intergenerational games event;
- senior centers visited by grandparents who are raising their grandchildren; and
- the city newsletter and website.

The county health and human services agency, city community services department, and school district leverage each other's resources and expertise to expand their collective reach. For instance, the county has used its data capacity to identify underserved neighborhoods that city staff have targeted in their outreach through neighborhood watch groups and other local meetings. In addition, about half of individuals enrolled in La Mesa's recreation programs are not city residents, and half of district schools are located outside of city limits, broadening opportunities to connect county residents in unincorporated areas with affordable coverage.

While it has been difficult to track the impact of local outreach strategies, city staff estimate that approximately 200 individuals were referred for application assistance, not including families referred through their children's schools. With tight budgets constraints, La Mesa officials stress the importance of local partnerships and utilization of existing resources and opportunities in helping them achieve these results. They note that small cities are often on the front lines in helping residents obtain access to critical services, even when those services are provided by other levels of government.

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Partner with Schools, Police and Social Services to Address Mental Health Needs

Greenbelt, Maryland (population 23,068) – CARES Youth and Family Services Bureau

Established in 1972, the Greenbelt CARES Youth and Family Services Bureau is a city agency that focuses primarily on providing mental health services to residents of Greenbelt, the surrounding county and nearby areas in order to "promote responsible behavior and appropriate family management skills utilizing existing community resources wherever possible in response to social needs." It is part of a network of 19 nonprofit and governmental youth service bureaus developed in the 1970s and sustained by a state Children's Cabinet Interagency Fund and matching local government funds. The Greenbelt bureau also receives grants from the surrounding county and other sources.

The bureau provides individual, marital and family counseling, as well as school-based counseling groups and parent support programs, GED preparation, educational tutoring, and vocational counseling, largely free of charge to local residents. Crisis counselors also work with the police department to provide follow-up support to victims of crime. A majority of referrals come from the local schools. The bureau works with school guidance counselors to identify youth who are in need of counseling, with the permission of their parents. Other sources of referrals include families or individuals who have used services in the past, as well as the county social services and juvenile services departments.

City councilmembers have been strongly committed to making mental health services available to residents, as demonstrated by greater matched funding in Greenbelt, which enables the bureau to offer its services at no cost to residents. The city council also helped cultivate the partnership between the bureau and the police department.

Recipients of bureau services have reported high levels of satisfaction of between 85 and 90 percent on a six-week follow-up survey that asks if they would refer other residents and use the bureau again. The bureau also works with the juvenile division to identify outcomes for youth who are either truant or whose parents are having trouble with them at home and who receive bureau services. Although these youth show signs of being high risk, between 95 and 100 percent have not been adjudicated delinquent two years after receiving treatment.

For more information, visit http://www.greenbeltmd.gov/budget/social_services.pdf.

The Greenbelt CARES Youth and Family Services Bureau "promotes responsible behavior and appropriate family management skills utilizing existing community resources wherever possible in response to social needs."

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Stabilize At-Risk Families

Petersburg, Virginia (population 32,420) – Family Stabilization Initiative

The Petersburg Department of Social Services recently piloted a Family Stabilization Initiative (PFSI) that helps families achieve financial stability, improve education and health outcomes, and promote independent living skills for youth. Participating families had to meet one of the following eligibility criteria to participate in this voluntary program:

- be a single-parent household;
- be a household where a parent did not graduate high school;
- be a household where a child has been abused or neglected at some point in their lives;
- be a household with no medical home;
- be currently enrolled in the state welfare program; or
- be in a family with a teenage parent.

Families were referred through the city's department of social services, as well as the parks and leisure department, schools, members of the faith community, and self-referrals.

PFSI assigns a social worker to develop trusting relationships with participating families and complete a multidimensional assessment. With PFSI's support, the family develops long-terms goals and a plan for achieving them. An extensive network of service providers helps make these goals attainable. For instance, Virginia Cooperative Extension Services offers financial education workshops and coaching for residents who receive rent or mortgage assistance through a family strengthening program sponsored by Downtown Churches United Hope Center. Families can also receive financial assistance to pay for uniforms and YMCA memberships so that children can participate in afterschool programs, or for transportation to jobs until the family situation stabilizes.

Social workers also provide educational and health assessments and make referrals to mental health service providers, child and maternal health programs run by the local health department, and tutoring programs. In addition, PFSI connects families to fatherhood and relationship building programs and domestic violence intervention services. Youth have opportunities to volunteer, work with mentors, visit college campuses, and attend life skills programs.

To support PFSI, the city matched funding from a federal Promoting Safe and Stable Families Grant administered by the Virginia Department of Social Services (DSS) for the first two years of the program and provided in-kind support over the entire program period. The mayor, city directors, city manager, police chief, fire chief, and other partners all participated in a meeting with the state commissioner of social services and health to support the city's grant application, and the mayor and city manager also helped secure funds from the Cameron Foundation. The United Way provided additional funding. Currently, local leaders are exploring options to continue serving families in the future.

The state DSS funded PFSI to create a best practice model. Virginia State University conducted an evaluation of the program. Staff collected baseline data at the program's inception and tracked progress for each family. The evaluation results showed that in the first year, 78 percent of families had a financial plan upon exiting the program, up from 18 percent upon enrollment. The proportion of families current on their bills rose from 20 percent to 85 percent. There were also declines in the percentage of students with unexcused absences from school (from 21 percent to 11 percent) and increases in the number of parents employed or in a work-related, full-time education or training program (from 37 percent to 52 percent). PFSI served 61 families in its first year, 55 in its second year, and 30 in its third year.

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Support Healthy Youth Development through Counseling and Community Engagement

Westwood, Massachusetts (population 14,618) – Youth and Family Services Department

The Town of Westwood's Youth and Family Services Department provides clinical and supportive services that promote the healthy social and emotional development of children ages 4-18 and their families. These services include short-term, problem-focused individual and family counseling; resource referral; group programs for children and parents; tutoring and mentoring; youth civic engagement programs; afterschool recreation; bullying prevention; and financial aid to families. Most residents who receive crisis stabilization services are referred by school personnel, police, or area mental health professionals, or are self-referrals. The department connects families with long-term mental health issues to case workers employed by local offices of the state mental health department and supports them throughout the process.

The Town of Westwood's Youth and Family Services Department provides clinical and supportive services that promote the healthy social and emotional development of children ages 4-18 and their families.

Westwood established its Youth and Family Services Department in 1986 as the Westwood Youth Commission, one of more than 60 commissions formed by towns across Massachusetts since the 1960s. A group of concerned residents in Westwood wanted to ensure there were community engagement programs available for youth and support for struggling families and children. The town successfully obtained startup funds from the state, and town selectmen voted to make the department a permanent part of the town budget and charter. Town funding currently supports three full-time department staff and 80 percent of program costs, with the remaining program expenses covered by local grants and donations. The department also hires two graduate interns each year who are supervised by department staff as they gain clinical experience and provide services at no cost.

Like other communities with the most active youth commissions, the Westwood department has a strong partnership with the public school system, including a drop-in satellite office at the high school. When the school closes for the summer, children and families know they can still contact the department if they were previously receiving support through the school-based office. The department's presence on the school campus enables it to engage older youth in mentoring younger students and organizing a sexual abuse prevention program for third grade students and parents. Students who assist with department programming can also earn volunteer hours, which are required by some local private schools.

These and other department programs support the work of other town agencies. For instance, youth who participate in the Mentor Program help staff town-wide events and recreation department afterschool activities for elementary and middle school students. The department also works with the

local early childhood council on a Families with Infants drop-in program that connects new parents with information on vaccinations, working mothers' groups, library resources, and other services. In addition, the council leverages Youth and Family Services Department funding and other local grants to pay for child care and food for a single parents' support group. A group of department heads responsible for human services promotes ongoing interagency coordination of town services. Partnerships also extend beyond the town to neighboring communities with youth commissions that run similar programs and provide crossover trainings.

Town selectmen have provided ongoing support to the department and engaged its staff in other boards and committees, including a human rights committee and a Westwood Community Chest that responds to confidential applications for emergency assistance from residents. A 17-member Youth and Family Services Board, composed of residents who are appointed by the town administrator with approval by town selectmen, oversees the department itself. A number of seats on the Board are reserved for student representatives from the local schools who are full voting members.

The department measures its impact primarily in terms of service hours, with 987 hours of clinical and consultation work in fiscal year 2011, up 100 hours from the previous year. The two graduate social work interns provided an additional 300 hours of clinical service at no cost to the town. High school students participating in the mentoring program accumulated more than 2,000 volunteer hours and served 900 younger children, primarily in kindergarten through eighth grade.

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CITY EXAMPLES

STRONG NEIGHBORHOODS

Target a Continuum of Learning Supports Toward Children in High-Need Neighborhoods

Charlottesville, Virginia (population 43,475) – City of Promise

In December 2011, the U.S. Department of Education selected Charlottesville as one of only 15 communities to receive the second round of planning grants for its highly competitive Promise Neighborhood program. The $500,000 federal grant helped Charlottesville continue to advance the City of Promise initiative, which will establish a cradle-to-career, aligned continuum of services and supports for children in several of the city's most disadvantaged neighborhoods. City of Promise stands out among similar place-based strategies for the strong leadership role played by municipal officials in partnership with neighborhood residents.

Vice Mayor Kristin Szakos, one of the initiative's principal champions, likens the development of City of Promise to a "river with several tributaries." Residents participating in study circles through the City Council's Dialogue on Race in 2009 had expressed concern about the persistent racial achievement gaps within local schools. Several of these groups recommended replicating the Harlem Children's Zone, the prominent place-based model in New York City that inspired federal officials to develop the Promise Neighborhood program. To help mobilize support for this recommendation, Vice Mayor Szakos in the spring of 2010 brought together leaders representing city government, the school district, nonprofit service providers, the public housing residents association, and faith communities who were excited about the Children's Zone concept. The group applied for the 2010 round of Promise Neighborhood funding to create a citywide initiative, but was unsuccessful. Determined to apply again, they decided to focus on the area of the city with the most severe academic and economic challenges for the second round, and secured a federal Justice Department grant in early 2011 to begin the work. Local officials gained additional ideas following Charlottesville's selection in January 2011 as one of five communities to receive training in the Forum for Youth Investment's Ready By 21 framework through the Virginia Cities Challenge.

The City of Promise initiative is designed to improve academic, health, safety and family outcomes for children in the city's Westhaven public housing complex and two surrounding neighborhoods. Approximately 80 percent of residents live below the poverty line in these predominantly African-American communities, which are located in the attendance zones of three of the city's lower-performing public schools.

The federal planning grant enabled local leaders to embark on an extensive information gathering process to better understand the factors contributing to low graduation rates and academic achievement of the neighborhoods' students. Throughout 2012, City of Promise organizers, with the help of researchers from the University of Virginia's Curry School of Education, surveyed all households with children in the target neighborhoods (identified by the school district), with supplemental information gathered by neighborhood residents and university students trained in motivational interviewing techniques. By combining this information with student data shared by the district, the local health department, after-school programs, and other agencies in a central database, a university-led data management team was able to conduct a comprehensive needs assessment. These data also informed a "segmentation analysis" of children's needs, disaggregated by characteristics such as gender and age.

Recognizing that children spend less than 20 percent of their waking time in school, City of Promise partners plan to use the collected data to target evidence-based interventions more effectively as they build a continuum of wraparound services to enhance student learning. One major component of the city's implementation plans will involve expanding access to preschool and other supports for young children and their parents. Other planned efforts include establishing a neighborhood-based parenting program and strengthening tutoring and mentoring. The initiative also involves a creative strategy for offering universal free, Internet access in the community so that students can take advantage of the tablet computers provided as a learning tool by the school district.

City of Promise partners plan to use data to target evidence-based interventions more effectively as they provide wraparound services that enhance student learning.

The City of Charlottesville is a key entity within the City of Promise governance structure. The vice mayor and director of human resources serve on the Steering Committee alongside neighborhood youth and adult residents, school district officials, state and local agency directors, and nonprofit leaders. The Promise Neighborhood Action Team continues to operate as a semi-independent subcommittee and engages a large number of individuals from the neighborhoods. Within city government, a "gang of five" – which includes the vice mayor, city manager, human services director, a school board member, and the Commission on Children and Families director – has helped align the city priorities to support City of Promise approaches and prepare for expansion of the initiative and other efforts to provide needed community supports for children. This new emphasis on children led councilmembers to allocate funding for the City of Promise effort to match funding from a four-year U.S. Department of Justice grant disbursed through the city to hire a City of Promise director and community organizer. Their offices will be housed in a building located in the target neighborhood that is being built by the Charlottesville Department of Neighborhood Services.

A wide range of partners contribute additional financial and in-kind support and help coordinate City of Promise. The nonprofit Children and Family Services, which sponsors programs for at-risk parents and

children, is the fiscal agent for the federal planning grant. Charlottesville City Schools plays a central leadership role, which includes housing a City of Promise data expert to work closely with the University of Virginia on the needs assessment and ongoing data sharing. Other key partners include local health and mental health agencies, faith community leaders, Boys and Girls Club, the Monticello Area Community Action Agency, the Charlottesville Redevelopment and Housing Authority, Computers for Kids, and Virginia Organizing, which trains staff and residents on community organizing methods.

These organizations share leadership with neighborhood residents, who comprise one-third of the steering committee's members. Neighborhood representatives on the committee receive training that empowers them to work on complex issues with community leaders and department heads and share their experience of what has worked at the neighborhood level. The committee also opens its meetings at the Westhaven Community Center to the public in order to maximize resident involvement. Further opportunities for youth participation are available through the City of Promise youth council, while a parent council is currently being formed.

In addition, City of Promise sponsors community dinners and other events that regularly bring together residents and organizational staff. One program that exemplifies efforts to build relationships among city leaders and the community is "Spades Night." Residents team up with service providers and teach them how to play competitive spades, a card game that requires trust and cooperation for teams to win. Held at the community center, the event "changes the game" by putting residents on a level playing field with organizational leaders, who learn to appreciate the knowledge and capabilities of those who live in the neighborhood.

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Work with Local Clergy to Help Homeowners Avoid Foreclosure

Dedham, Massachusetts (population 24,729) – Neighbors Helping Neighbors

In 2008, Dedham town officials began hearing from local clergy that the national foreclosure crisis had ensnared many of their parishioners. These residents – reluctant to discuss personal financial challenges in public and sensitive to the stigma associated with foreclosure – often confided in their pastors as trusted sources of guidance and support. Local foreclosure data confirmed that the anecdotes of individual financial trouble shared by clergy represented a community-wide problem. According to a database on foreclosure activity to which the town subscribed through its membership in a statewide, nonprofit affordable housing organization, 14 percent of residential loans were subprime and more than 100 properties were in some stage of the foreclosure process. Moreover, the data appeared to show that subprime lenders targeted certain geographic areas and demographic groups, particularly low-income families and seniors.

To keep as many residents as possible in their homes, Town Selectman James McDonald worked with the pastor at his church, Reverend Stephen Josoma, to engage other clergy in initiating and supporting a foreclosure prevention initiative. Together with Town Administrator William Keegan, Economic Development Director Karen O'Connell, and pastors from other parishes, they developed Neighbors Helping Neighbors, a public information session and awareness campaign that leveraged the resources of local banks, legal services providers, financial advisors, utilities, food pantries, and government agencies.

Held at a local church, the day-long session offered residents a "one-stop shop" for reducing household costs. Participants had the opportunity to receive financial advice and foreclosure prevention counseling, enroll in affordable health

insurance through Massachusetts' Commonwealth Connector, and learn about home heating assistance programs. One nonprofit organization, Accion USA, offered small, short-term loans to help homeowners avoid falling behind on their mortgages. The town and its partners also prepared a detailed information packet for attendees. These materials included a foreclosure prevention guide developed by a local law office, as well as resources on employment services, the rights of tenants affected by foreclosures, and the energy assistance program. By highlighting a variety of ways to save money, Neighbors Helping Neighbors helped remove the stigma felt by those seeking help to avoid foreclosure.

Both before and after the launch event, town and faith community leaders advertised Neighbors Helping Neighbors through local churches and direct outreach to at-risk homeowners. Clergy spread the word by publicizing and distributing flyers about the initiative to their congregations. Residents could also learn about the program at intake for services (e.g., fuel assistance) offered by the town's economic development department. Media coverage of the information session by National Public Radio and local media outlets helped generate additional requests for assistance in the weeks following the information session.

Other than some staff time and low-cost informational materials, Neighbors Helping Neighbors had little impact on the town budget. Instead, local elected officials took advantage of their convening power to assemble in-kind resources from organizations across the community and partnered with churches to establish welcoming points of entry for residents in need of assistance. Because delays in requesting help can deepen homeowners' financial problems until they have few positive options available, the early intervention provided through Neighbors Helping Neighbors is critical to the financial recovery of at-risk borrowers who are behind on their mortgages. While numerous factors contributed to a decline in the number of distressed properties over the next two years, town leaders note that the high percentage of subprime loans did not lead to an increased foreclosure rate over that same time period. The Massachusetts Municipal Association recognized Dedham's Neighbors to Neighbors program with an Innovation Award in 2010.

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Engage Residents in Neighborhood Revitalization

Aiken, South Carolina (population 29,524) – Crosland Park

Crosland Park is one of four neighborhoods that the City of Aiken has worked to revitalize as part of its 10-year "North Side Plan," which seeks to ameliorate inequities in the community's economic growth patterns. Developed by the Aiken City Council and championed by the city manager, the plan addresses years of neglect and crumbling infrastructure that has led to vacant and dilapidated housing, low population and housing growth, and declining public safety in areas of the city's north side. The city formed a new division to specifically focus on dealing with these issues. The Neighborhood and Development Division has assisted community leaders in forming 10 new neighborhood associations to spur grassroots solutions to community problems, developed and refurbished single-family housing, and worked with private developers to encourage new development projects.

In 2011, with the use of Community Development Block Grant funds, an EPA Climate Showcase Communities grant, $1.5 million in general revenues, and other funding sources, the city purchased several blighted houses in the Crosland Park neighborhood and through a summer jobs program hired unemployed workers to renovate the homes and make them energy efficient. The city provided efficient light bulbs to residents, weather-stripped homes, and changed HVAC filters, among other improvements. Residents were also offered educational workshops on reducing home energy consumption.

With various funding sources, the City of Aiken purchased several blighted houses in the Crosland Park neighborhood and through a summer jobs program hired unemployed workers to renovate the homes and make them energy efficient.

In addition, the city installed new streetlights and has received Safe Routes to School funding to develop sidewalks and walking paths to a local school. A coalition of faith-based organizations, volunteer groups and neighborhood associations assisted the city in surveying residents and engaging them in town hall meetings to identify top priorities for the neighborhood. The city and coalition also partnered to sponsor youth leadership and afterschool programs, street parties, and other activities to strengthen ties among neighborhood residents.

The efforts of the city have sparked much-needed economic development. A total of 30 homes have been bought and refurbished, lowering residents' energy bills and improving quality of life. Residents have since reported that the neighborhood has become safer and more stable. The Municipal Association of South Carolina presented Aiken with a Municipal Achievement Award in 2010 for this initiative.

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Support Neighborhood Organizing and Capacity Building

Walla Walla, Washington (population 31,731) – Commitment to Community

The City of Walla Walla contracts with a grassroots neighborhood support organization that strengthens residents' capacity to take ownership of important local issues and achieve collective goals. As a community organizing initiative of the Blue Mountain Action Council funded by private foundations, businesses, hospitals and the city, county, and port (a local economic development agency), the Commitment to Community (C2C) process builds relationships and trust among residents and helps them work with the city and other agencies and institutions to improve their neighborhoods.

Through C2C, neighborhood outreach organizers engage residents in identifying priorities, planning and implementing projects – from neighborhood clean-ups to revitalizing local parks and playgrounds – and celebrating accomplishments. This civic engagement process is designed to build trust among residents in local neighborhoods. C2C also partners with other community agencies to act a gateway to services for residents. For instance, C2C has worked with the city's parks and recreation department

and the local YMCA to bring youth activities into neighborhoods after school. Currently, both organizations operate activities in C2C neighborhoods.

Since it was launched in 2006, C2C has helped residents achieve a number of tangible objectives. One of its first major accomplishments was to restore a deteriorating local park by bringing together neighbors the police, and the parks department. Neighbors raised funds and volunteered to renovate Jefferson Park and build a new playground. A stepped up police and neighbor presence – through increased patrols, community policing, and block watch groups – made the park safer and free of drug activity.

Another key milestone was the revitalization of blighted properties in the isolated Edith-Carrie neighborhood, some of which were being used as havens for the manufacturing, dealing and use of methamphetamines. The neighborhood, which is located near the Washington State Penitentiary, is not only cut off from the rest of the city through zoning, but also lacked a public park or other community spaces at the time C2C was formed. With a foundation grant, Blue Mountain Action Council purchased the lots and worked with neighbors, the city and a nonprofit consulting firm called the Pomegranate Center over a two-year period to create a neighborhood vision with residents and eventually redevelop the area as a park. Built gradually over time, the park now contains an amphitheater, basketball court, and playground, with materials and labor donated by local concrete companies. Neighbors volunteered to build a storage shed for garden tools that they use to maintain the park, and also created a new community garden down the street.

In addition to the new amenities and the empowerment of residents, C2C measures its success by analyzing police service and code enforcement calls. For instance, the revitalization work in Edith-Carrie contributed to a sharp drop in calls to police. C2C also tracks changes in median home value assessments and compares changes in their target neighborhoods with the city as a whole. It has gathered other qualitative and quantitative information through surveys and anecdotes from residents that show improvements in neighborhood capacity and more parents reporting that they feel better supported by their community.

Municipal officials – including the city council, city manager, police and fire chiefs, and parks and recreation and public works directors – serve as vital resources to C2C staff and neighbors and help them troubleshoot city-related issues. Their cooperation and support have been instrumental in engaging residents and building more livable neighborhoods.

For more information, visit http://www.c2cwallawalla.org/.

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[15] U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census of Population and Housing. *Population and Housing Unit Counts*. CPH-2-1. United States Summary. U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC, 2012. https://www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/cph-2-1.pdf, p. 16. Of the 228,457,238 Americans who live in either an incorporated place (i.e., a city, town, or other municipality) or a Census-designated place, 109,229,648 – or 47.8 percent – lived in places with less than 50,000 people, according to the 2010 Census. Of the remaining 80,288,300 Americans who do not live in a "place," 48,973,203 – or 61 percent – live in rural areas or in urban clusters with less than 50,000 people. Of the total population of 308,754,538 Americans, 158,202,851 – or 51.2 percent – live in places of under 50,000, rural areas, or urban clusters of less than 50,000.

[16] The survey was distributed between the fall of 2011 and the spring of 2012 to NLC member and non-member cities through the print and online versions of NLC's *Nation's Cities Weekly* newspaper (circulation 30,000), as well as the NLC website and the monthly e-newsletter of NLC's Institute for Youth, Education and Families, which reaches approximately 6,000 city leaders, municipal staff, and community partners. Forty-seven municipal officials, staff and local partners responded to the survey and nominated local initiatives from their cities. Among that group, 18 city examples were selected for inclusion in the report.

[17] U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey. 2011 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. American FactFinder. http://factfinder2.census.gov.

[18] Carlson, Cindy. *Authentic Youth Civic Engagement: A Guide for Municipal Leaders*. National League of Cities, 2010. http://www.nlc.org/Documents/Find%20City%20Solutions/IYEF/Youth%20Civic%20Engagement/authentic-youth-engagement-gid-jul10.pdf.

[19] Goonan, Peter. "Massachusetts' Efforts to House Homeless People Triggers Praise, Concern." *The Republican*. October 18, 2012. http://www.masslive.com/news/index.ssf/2012/10/expanded_effort_to_house_the_h.html.

[20] McCabe, Kathy. "State Reforms, Adds Dollars, For Homeless Prevention." *The Boston Globe*. July 29, 2012. http://www.bostonglobe.com/metro/regionals/north/2012/07/28/state-reforms-adds-dollars-for-homeless-prevention/GSTVHgdbHxsoVyL2sR5pCM/story.html.

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Draft Language for Charter Provisions Governing Budget Collaboration Between the City of Portland and Portland Public Schools

FROM: Peter Eglinton
TO: Portland Charter Commission Education Committee (Commissioners Houston, Chann, and Eglinton)
DATE: January 21, 2022
RE: Communications between City Staff and Elected Officials

PROPOSAL 1

Amend Article III (Board of Public Education) as follows:

Section 5. School budget.

Prior to the submission of a school budget, the school board and city council shall establish a Joint Committee on Budget Guidance, with four city councilors and four school board members. The purpose of the joint committee is to develop guidance for the city and school district on budget priorities and constraints, covering a two-year period and updated annually. The joint committee shall obtain public comment on the guidance prior to submitting the guidance as a non-binding joint resolution to the city council and school board for approval. Although the resolution is non-binding, the intent is to agree on budget guidance at a sufficient level of detail so that the city council can approve the school budget without amendment should the school budget follow the guidance.

Not later than three and one-half (3.5) months before the end of the fiscal year, the superintendent shall submit to the school board budget estimates of the various sums required for the support of public schools for the ensuing fiscal year and shall thereafter provide the school board with such information relating to such estimates as the school board shall require.

~~During the thirty (30) days following submission of the superintendent's proposed budget to the school board, the school board and the city council, or their designated~~

~~subcommittees, shall meet jointly at least twice to review the proposed school budget, focusing on its underlying assumptions and supporting data and the ability of the city to raise the necessary funds for the support of such proposed budget. The superintendent and the city manager shall provide information regarding such proposed budget as reasonably requested by the school board and the city council, or their designated subcommittees.~~

The budget submitted by the superintendent ~~to be reviewed jointly by the school board and the city council~~ shall provide a complete financial plan of all school funds and activities for the ensuing fiscal year. In organizing the school budget for joint review, the superintendent shall utilize the most feasible combination of expenditure classification by fund, organization, unit, program, purpose or activity, and object. The budget shall begin with a clear general summary of its contents; shall show in detail all estimated income and all proposed expenditures, including debt service for the ensuing fiscal year; and shall be so arranged as to show comparative figures for actual and estimated income and expenditures of the current fiscal year and actual income and expenditures of the preceding fiscal year. The total of proposed expenditures shall not exceed the total of proposed income.

Not later than the last Monday in April of each fiscal year, the school board shall submit to the city council a budget of the various sums required for the support of the public schools for the ensuing fiscal year in the format provided above, and shall thereafter provide the city council with such information relating to such budget as the city council shall require.

A budget hearing on such budget estimates shall be held prior to final action by the city council. The city council in its appropriation resolve for the ensuing year shall, in addition to amounts appropriated for other general city City of Portland Charter Code of Ordinances

Article III Rev. 12-6-12 purposes, appropriate one gross amount for the support of the public schools, which amount shall not be less than the sum required to be appropriated for such purposes by the general laws of the state. Such gross amount shall not be less than the sum requested by the school board except by a vote of at least six (6) members of the city council. Such appropriation shall be expended under the direction and control of the school board but no such appropriation shall be exceeded except by consent of the city council.

Note that additional amendments may be necessary under the city council's section of the Charter to further specify its role.

PROPOSAL 2

At the appropriate location(s) in the Charter, specify that the city manager and superintendent must jointly prepare and submit to a joint meeting of the council and school board a multi-year capital improvement CIP before submission of the budget, and must publish a general summary of the CIP. The CIP must be revised and extended each year with regard to capital improvements pending or in process of construction or acquisition.

The Education Committee recognizes that changes in the city's governance structure may affect the roles of city officials in the CIP process. If no changes are made to the governance structure, the following amendments to the Charter appear to capture the intent of this proposal:

ARTICLE VI. ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICERS
…
Section 5. Appointment; qualifications; powers and duties of the city manager.
…
The city manager's powers and duties shall be as follows:
…
(i) To jointly prepare with the Portland Public Schools superintendent a five (5) year rolling capital improvement plan for annual presentation to a joint meeting of the city council and school board, which plan includes the following:
1. A one (1) year plan of specific projects and their cost;

2. A two (2) through five (5) year plan of specific projects and general categories, and amounts of proposed spending and funding sources; and
3. A discussion of the basis for the plan and the factors which went into its development or amendments.
…