

Supportive and Engaged Neighborhoods



COMPREHENSIVE NEIGHBORHOOD INITIATIVE DESIGN TEAM ROSTER

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VISION

People live in safe, affordable housing. They have access to positive educational and cultural experiences. Recreational centers are conveniently located and staff serve as positive role models, especially for the children. All aspects of the environment—e.g., air, water, soil—are safe and healthy. The community values the unique attributes of each neighborhood, whether rural or urban.

SUPPORTIVE AND ENGAGED NEIGHBORHOODS OUTCOME TEAM REPORT

In September, the FCFC Executive Committee approved a proposal for creation and implementation of a Comprehensive Neighborhood Initiative (CNI). The CNI is designed to work with distressed neighborhoods and to see if it is possible to make a positive impact on the community outcomes and indicators in these neighborhoods.

The proposal stemmed from the work of the Supportive and Engaged Neighborhoods Outcome Team over the last few years and was further developed in consultation with the Stable Families Outcome Team and the Economic Self-Sufficiency Outcome Team. Together, these three Teams brought the proposal to the Champions' Committee who endorsed it and forwarded it to the Executive Committee. A Design Team was assembled and began its work in the fall.

THE COMPREHENSIVE NEIGHBORHOOD INITIATIVE

The Design Team believes the Comprehensive Neighborhood Initiative should possess the following characteristics:

★ **Focused:** The CNI should address the problems of distressed high poverty neighborhoods. In most, if not all, of these neighborhoods, the trendlines of the indicators

used in measuring the community

outcomes are well

below the trendlines for

Montgomery County. By focusing on high poverty neighborhoods, the CNI can make a critical difference in the lives of people in the County.

★ **Comprehensive:** The CNI should be comprehensive, i.e., it should involve all of the community outcomes. Figure 1 suggests how all of the outcomes contribute to the life of a neighborhood.

★ **Collaborative:** The CNI should engage neighborhood leadership in partnering with all levels of government, with not-for-profit agencies, with schools, with community foundations, with businesses, with faith-based communities, and with higher education.

★ **Sustainable:** The CNI will require a long term commitment by all of the partners. This commitment must be made in a resource-constrained urban environment. For the CNI to be successful, it will have to demonstrate how resources can be restructured to sustain the Initiative for a six to ten year period.

★ **Accountable:** The CNI must demonstrate that it is making steady progress in promoting the success of children and families.

The purpose of the CNI is to develop a number of collaborative efforts in Montgomery County's distressed neighborhoods that work to create conditions where youth succeed and families thrive. To create these conditions will require an integrated effort that addresses



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all of the desired community outcomes in the targeted neighborhoods: Healthy People, Young People Succeeding, Stable Families, Positive Living for Special Populations, Safe and Supportive Neighborhoods, and Economic Self-Sufficiency. To be successful, the Initiative must develop an engaged neighborhood, i.e. a neighborhood where multiple roles of leadership exist that are capable of mobilizing the neighborhood to solve problems, set goals, and undertake programs so that children succeed and

families thrive. The agenda of these collaborative efforts must be community-driven with broad input from the residents of the neighborhood.

WHAT THE COMPREHENSIVE NEIGHBORHOOD INITIATIVE IS NOT

As the concept of a Comprehensive Neighborhood Initiative was evolving, it was clear that there are several misconceptions about the purpose of the Initiative. It is important to clarify these misconceptions.

To be successful, the CNI will benefit from the collaboration of all of the FCFC Outcome Teams, but the Initiative is not intended to be the only effort of the Outcome Teams. Each of the Outcome Teams has developed other projects that are critical to addressing the desired community outcomes in Montgomery County. These projects will continue and will provide important learning for the CNI. For example, projects on prisoner reentry or on early childhood learning can make important contributions to building outstanding neighborhoods of choice and opportunity.

It is also not the intent that the CNI be the sole focus of the FCFC. The Family and Children First Council in Montgomery County has an overarching and important role in promoting collaboration among county, city, not-for-profit agencies, faith-based organizations, public and private education, universities, and neighborhood organizations to provide a comprehensive network of human services that enhances the well-being of families, children, and

adults all across the county, not just in select neighborhoods. Nevertheless, the CNI will afford the FCFC and its partners an “up-close” opportunity to learn how their service delivery systems operate in certain neighborhoods.

SELECTING THE NEIGHBORHOODS

Because the Dayton Foundation, Montgomery County, the City of Dayton, Dayton Public Schools, and a number of not-for-profit agencies are collaborating on the



Neighborhood School Centers project, the Champions' Committee recommended to the FCFC that the initial implementation of the Comprehensive

Neighborhood Initiative be with two neighborhoods involved in the Neighborhood School Centers project, if possible. The Neighborhood School Centers (NSC) project began when Dayton Public Schools asked the Dayton Foundation for help in attracting community resources for a handful of its newly built schools. With public and private funding from a number of sources, the project started in the 2006-07 school year (after a planning year in 2005-06) and has three goals:

1. Young people in these schools are succeeding.
2. The NSC is the top educational choice in the neighborhood.
3. The NSC is a welcoming, supportive, and convenient hub for positive educational and cultural experiences and opportu-



nities for community involvement.

Currently five schools are part of the NSC project:

Cleveland, Edison, Fairview, Kiser and Ruskin. The collaborative nature of the project, plus the fact that it has most of the other characteristics listed above, suggest that neighborhoods involved with the NSC project are excellent candidates for the CNI. The Design Team plans to make the neighborhood selection in early 2009.

SUSTAINING THE COMPREHENSIVE NEIGHBORHOOD INITIATIVE

One of the key factors for long-term success of the CNI will be the quality of the neighborhood leadership that drives the project. Toward that end, once the neighborhoods are selected residents will be involved in

developing and updating the specific plans. FCFC resources will be used to support collaboration as well as to leverage investments

from existing and new partners and stakeholders. Clearly, if the CNI is to be sustained and expanded, the FCFC must find a way to engage neighborhood residents, service providers, and other collaborative partners in a meaningful way that supports their mutual goals.



Figure 1:
FCFC COMPREHENSIVE NEIGHBORHOOD INITIATIVE



Safe Neighborhoods



SAFE NEIGHBORHOODS OUTCOME TEAM REPORT

In 2006, the FCFC, acting on a recommendation from the Safe Neighborhoods Outcome Team, approved start-up funding for the first two years of operation of a Safe Neighborhood Court. Project implementation began in October of that year and involved participation of both the Dayton and Vandalia Municipal Courts. The effectiveness of this program was dependent on a highly motivated and independent thinking probation officer that could establish close bonds with the clients of the program. The Dayton Municipal Court agreed to hire a special probation officer to work in affected areas of both of the participating courts. Due to circumstances beyond the control of the Dayton Municipal Court, two probation officers were separately assigned to the program and neither remained as employees of the Dayton Municipal Court. The loss of two probation officers between the end of October 2006 and March 2008 greatly impacted the success of the program. As a result, the Dayton Municipal Court declined further participation and the program was terminated.

In September 2008, the FCFC, based on a recommendation of the Safe Neighborhoods Outcome Team, approved funding over a twenty-four month period to provide services in support of the Community Initiative to Reduce Gun Violence (CIRGV) program. These funds will provide case and service program management, employment assistance, education, and other supportive services to offenders seeking to leave a violent lifestyle who are identified through the Initiative. CIRGV is a multi-faceted program initiated and coordinated by the City of Dayton. The Safe Neighborhoods Outcome Team's role is limited to the services component of the program.

Homicides and gun-related violence are at an unacceptable level in the City of Dayton and neighboring communities such as Trotwood and Harrison Township. Many of the perpetrators are group member involved (GMI). Implementing a strategy that is known to affect these kinds of crimes and reduce homicides and gun violence is clearly a critical step to making our community a safer place.

CIRGV is a multi-jurisdictional, multi-agency, mutual effort intended to reduce gun-violence and associated homicides quickly and effectively, and to sustain the reductions over time. This Initiative is a focused deterrence strategy, modeled after the Boston Gun Project of the 1990's and using the 2007 Cincinnati Initiative to Reduce Gun Violence Best Practices as a guide, with variations tailored to meet our local community. The City of Dayton Police Department, Montgomery County Sheriff's Office, and the City of Trotwood Police Department are collaborating with state and federal law enforcement agencies, social service providers, and the community to present a clear message that gun violence must stop. This message, targeted toward violent offenders who are group member involved, is disseminated by call-in sessions with GMI probationers and parolees and via direct contact from street workers. Those individuals seeking to leave a violent lifestyle are provided streamlined access to assessment, support services, training, education, and employment opportunities. Street workers are the first point of contact for individuals requesting services. The street workers serve as advocates helping individuals to navigate the human services system, working with the agencies to assess client needs; developing a life change plan with the clients, and coaching them to stay the course for change. Similar projects either have been or are being developed in cities across the country.

Additionally, the Safe Neighborhoods Outcome Team, along with the Supportive and Engaged Neighborhoods Outcome Team and the Juvenile Court, are currently working to develop a pilot project whereby identified children or siblings of individuals who have been recognized as part of the criminal element are provided interaction with an advocate in an effort to prevent future involvement with the criminal justice system. This project is in its infancy and remains under development.

The Honorable Jeffrey E. Froelich
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