

# Mecklenburg Livable Communities

At-Risk Residents Think Tank: Meeting 1

## Represented Partners & Their Current Initiatives Report-Outs

### **Ada Jenkins Center:**

- Learn Works program – afterschool program that service kids in local schools and have programs related to reading and math, exposure to leadership program.
- Human Services Program - Work with people to find access to jobs or to further stabilize their situation.
- Free medical clinic/dental clinic, mobile medical bus. Have large need for getting customers from Davidson to Charlotte

**Cardinal Innovations:** Behavioral health services, mental health, substance abuse, etc. Path grant: program alternative to supporting homeless population. Work with case management for homeless population. Business agreement with MEDIC – data sharing, focus on frequent users, prevent the frequent use of MEDIC for not really needing the ambulance. Refugee programming.

**Charlotte Mecklenburg Food Policy Council:** Community food assessment – a study done in 2010 that looked at Mecklenburg County food deserts, communities no access to healthy food. Want to have it updated. FoodCorps members work in high poverty CMS schools promoting school gardens and healthy eating

**Community Care Partners of Greater Mecklenburg** – funded by state to do care management for Medicaid recipients. High risk prenatal care programs all the way to end of life and everything in between, work with entire population. Appropriate care for uninsured program – also work with MEDIC. Program is administered through Carolinas health care. Open to partnering. Working with housing agencies/food pantries/medical homes – looking for pediatric partners. Children and teens in foster care – 800 kids in custody with DSS, partner with youth and family services to address different issues like health care services.

**Habitat for Humanity:** home-buyer education – people who have been approved for a habitat home. Offer classes related to home maintenance, diversity, conflict management. Collaborate with many partners for these classes – looking for partners to collaborate with to teach these classes.

**Homeless services network:** 40 member agencies that meet monthly. Prevent homelessness.

### **Mecklenburg County Department of Social Services:**

- Child/adult protective services – in home services for adults and catch them before adult protective services can be involved.
- Placement for nursing homes – aging adults and disabled populations.
- People that don't reach the threshold for needing child protective services, they help with that.
- Human trafficking – help identify and target victims of trafficking.

- Identify 4 major themes with clients – substance abuse, mental health, domestic violence, homelessness.
- Partnership with CMS schools – 5 full time employees that help identify students that need assistance, and help with program planning.

**Mecklenburg County Community Support Services:** connections to representatives with different organizations, housing programs to help homeless population.

- Meckfuse – identify those who use shelters and place them in apartments. Housing programs with apartments through partnerships with landlords.
- Criminal justice advisory group – ways to improve interactions with at-risk residents and justice system.
- Economic mobility initiative – address lack of social mobility of residents in charlotte.

**Charlotte center city partners:**

- Work with Urban Ministry Center
- Ending homelessness in 2016 – collaboration of 20 partners including education, medical, non-profit organizations. End homelessness across the community. Still looking for partners to collaborate.
- Economic and community development in historic West-End. Still formulating what to do with the project, want to partner with people who are working in historic west end.

**Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation:** reach out to at-risk community. Rec. centers that offer programs in areas that would be considered to be at-risk.

- Took over senior center, working with senior population. Therapeutic rec. program to address residents with certain needs. Special events and different parks available for all residents.
- Offers free swim lessons
- Rec. mentee program – take kids that are considered to be at-risk, have them work in the rec. centers and teach them basic job skills. Take about 20 kids a year.
- Urban outdoor connection – work with Title I schools, and take kids in science classes and give them exposure to nature i.e. Camping, fishing, etc.
- Scholarships for summer camps – 100 scholarships for at-risk kids to come to summer camps for free.
- Deer hunts in nature preserves – work with refugee support services because deer is important in certain cultures.

**Community Link:** home buyer education for first time home buyers. Financial literacy, financial coaching for customers.

**Charlotte Works:** work force innovation and grants. Career coaching, help residents find jobs. Serve at-risk youth.

**Health and Human Services:** work with disabled population during December to help them find shelter.

**Male's Place Program:** for African American men 18-20 to help in development and address difficult social issues; use gardening to teach lessons on farming and to grow more black farmers to address chronic health issues and food access, food scarcity and food justice issues

**CSS Youth and Family Services, Family Unification Program (FUP):** Family vouchers are available to families for whom the lack of adequate housing is a primary factor in their separation, threat of imminent severance, or prevention of reunification. The vouchers enable clients to obtain housing in the private market.

## Gaps & Root Cause Discussion

### What gaps exist?

- In minority communities, there are gaps in services (African American, Hispanic, etc.) such as transportation and communication and language
- Focus on townships—not just Center City
- Lack of collaboration on specific issues such as refugees and human trafficking
- Lack of affordable, full-day summer programming in townships
- Lack of affordable child care, day care, preschool services
- No place for kids who are having problems with their parents to go (runaway risks)
- Lack of affordable housing
- Lack of employment opportunities for at-risk residents
- Funding gap or lack of funding coordination
- Funding restrictions (very specific guidelines for how funding is spent)
- Sustainability of programming/Continuity of programming (especially with chronically mentally ill, special needs, etc.)
- Access to affordable healthy food
- Transitioning across gaps (i.e. decrease in food stamp dollar amounts)

### Why do those gaps exist?

- Lack of Funding from federal sources, local, state, and regional sources—especially lack of sustainable funding and competition for same dollars
  - Every funding source wants unique data and that is too human-capital intensive
- Agencies not responding to how the community is changing, being resistant to change
- Change in staffing (turnover, leadership); lose momentum with the loss of that person
- Lack of common goals between partners to rally around
- Affordability is not just for the poor—not just a matter of offering free programs, a matter of offering affordable programs to the middle class
- Intentional oppression of minority groups, trapped in the cycle of social services
- Residents are unable to navigate the variety of resources available

## Ideas for New Collaborative Initiatives

**Initiative:** Network of Service Providers for “At-Risk” Residents (similar to Homeless Services Network)

**Initiative:** Homelessness Informational Portal that allows users to search on agency and *need*

**Initiative:** Disaster Emergency Response Plan that addresses how we will protect/support elderly and medically-needy

**Initiative:** Mechanism that allows organizations to easily come together and jointly apply for grants

**Initiative:** Centralized Informational Portal containing descriptions and contact information for service providers, volunteer opportunities, and funding sources

**Initiative:** Establish a set of common and standard outcome measures for at-risk residents services (could be applied to social services throughout the community)

**Initiative:** Focused Work Groups to Address Community Issues (i.e. refugee resettlement and human trafficking)

## Ideas for Expanding Current Initiatives

**Current Initiative:** Charlotte-Mecklenburg Food Policy Council

**Current Initiative Owner:** Charlotte-Mecklenburg Food Policy Council

**Collaboration Opportunity:** Partnership Charlotte Center City Partners and Ada Jenkins Center

**Current Initiative:** Life-Skills Development for Young Men 10-18 Years Old

**Current Initiative Owner:** Male's Place

**Collaboration Opportunity:** Partnership with Ada Jenkins Center

**Current Initiative:** Job Training/Job Readiness

**Current Initiative Owner:** Charlotte Works

**Collaboration Opportunity:** Partnership with Mecklenburg County Department of Social Services and Ada Jenkins Center

**Current Initiative:** Mentee Program, Therapeutic Recreation Programs, Urban-Outdoor Connection Programs, Summer Camps

**Current Initiative Owner:** Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation

**Collaboration Opportunity:** Partnerships with Mecklenburg County Department of Social Services

**Current Initiative:** Youth Development

**Current Initiative Owner:** Charlotte Works

**Collaboration Opportunity:** Partnerships with The Relatives, Mecklenburg County Department of Social Services, City of Charlotte Neighborhood and Business Services, Males Place

**Current Initiative:** Reducing Prevalence of Food Deserts in Charlotte-Mecklenburg

**Current Initiative Owner:** Charlotte-Mecklenburg Food Policy Council

**Collaboration Opportunity:** Partnerships with Mecklenburg County Community Support Services, Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation