

Southside Taskforce on Workforce Development

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CED: Final Project

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## **B. Abstract**

The Southside Taskforce on Workforce Development is a group of Ten community-based, employment service providers and community development corporations organized to “link residents of stable affordable housing developments with existing training and employment opportunities; to increase the likelihood of self-sufficiency.” Upon completion of this project the outcomes will include a high quality training grid that would coordinate all of the available programs and list the requirements and contact information for the various programs. In addition, the Taskforce will facilitate four (4) information programs at affordable housing facilities in South Minneapolis.

## **C. Executive Summary**

### *1. Identify/Define the Target Community that your project will primarily benefit (See section D.I. below)*

- ❖ The primary target group for this project is approximately 230 families living in member Community Development Corporations housing units. There are a myriad of social maladies disrupting this community, including chemical dependency, mental illness, poor work history, low education skills, and poverty. The most recent census data defines the poverty threshold for a family of three as \$13,290. 70% of the targeted families receive Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), and are therefore living at the poverty level. The racial breakdowns of these families are African/Black – 40%, European/White – 21.5%, Mixed/Biracial – 21%, Native American – 14%, Hispanic – 2%, Asian – 1.5%.

## 2. *Problem Statement.*

- ❖ According to the Center for Community Change, [www.communitychange.org](http://www.communitychange.org), in an article called, *Making Connections: A Study of Employment Linkage Programs*, "Getting a job is a function of who you know as well as what you know. For inner city residents who typically lack contacts with mainstream labor markets, while having less education and fewer skills, finding a job can be an elusive goal."

-The problem in Minneapolis is that the employment system in South Minneapolis is fragmented. Service providers (including support services to marginally employable applicants) tend to focus on a targeted community or industry, but service providers do not have established links with each other. In fact, typically they are in constant competition with each other, at least in funding their programs. Funding competition leads to maximizing service delivery to the organization instead of maximizing service delivery to the client by integrating complementary programs. This dramatically reduces the ability of the system as a whole to provide comprehensive service to a potential employee. If this fragmentation continues, South Minneapolis will continue to lead the city in unemployment rates, concentration of poverty, and high use of social services.

## 3. *Goal Statement*

- ❖ The Project will provide a more comprehensive delivery system of employment and training service to residents of the CDC Housing Development involved in the project.

## 4. *Describe the current condition(s) of the Target Community*

- ❖ Currently economic development, housing and employment training programs are not linked. Those seeking employment find multiple, often confusing, entry points into these systems as well as few re-entry points if their efforts are unsuccessful. Job progression

through technical training and job laddering is weak. Stable workers seeking better opportunities have few easily accessible resources. Businesses often have difficulty finding stable and skilled workers. We determined that entry level employment often does not provide enough income for self-sufficiency. Workers need opportunities to “ladder up” their employment. Much of the publicly funded programming only targets first or entry level jobs. Current programming is often controlled in a way that inhibits cooperation among agencies. Residents of affordable housing units often need better jobs (income) in order to move out and make room for new residents.

5. *Describe the desired conditions for the Target Community*

- ❖ Improved coordination can bring improved social and economic impacts, such as, family stability, educational stability for children, working adult role models for children, home purchases, crime reduction, business, economic and community development.

6. *Project purpose statement*

- ❖ The Southside Taskforce on Workforce Development was formed to investigate possibilities for Minneapolis Consortium of Community Developers (MCCD) members to cooperate in workforce development programs and link them with their existing housing and economic development programs.

7. *List and Describe the major outputs that would exist if your project were successfully completed*

- ◆ Best Practices regarding employment linkages around the country.
- ◆ Community involvement in the planning process, through forums and surveys.
- ◆ A high quality “Training Grid” that would coordinate all of the available training programs and list the requirements and contact information for the various programs.
- ◆ A functioning network of employment service providers and Community Development Corporations and the residents who live in the affordable housing units

8. *Identify those major outputs which have been fully achieved*

- ❖ We have completed the funding proposal to obtain an intern, who will coordinate the design of the “Training Grid”, as well as other aspects of the project. (See Appendix).
- ❖ We have completed the rough draft design of the “Training Grid”.

9. *Identify those major outputs that have been partially achieved. Describe the remaining tasks that are required to fully achieve these specific outputs.*

- ❖ We had a goal of completing 100 resident surveys, and to date, we have 74 returned.
  - Activity: Continue to provide opportunities for residents to complete surveys.
- ❖ We had an additional goal of hosting four (4) community forums - at the time of this writing, we have only completed one.
  - Activity: Plan and host three community forums.

10. *Identify those major outputs for which no tasks have been initiated.*

Not applicable.

11. *Conclusion/Recommendations*

- ❖ Obtain a collaboration agreement in the early stages of the project - to determine the assets of each agency as well as their expectations.
- ❖ Seek involvement from local and state government to insure program continuity and longevity. Fundamentally, public officials must believe in the link between economic development and poverty alleviation that creating job ladders helps fight poverty.

**D. Definition of the problem**

1. *Problem Statement*

According to the Center for Community Change, [www.communitychange.org](http://www.communitychange.org), in an article called, Making Connections: A Study of Employment Linkage Programs, “Getting a job is a function of who you know as well as what you know. For inner city residents who typically

lack contacts with mainstream labor markets, while having less education and fewer skills, finding a job can be an elusive goal.”

The problem in Minneapolis is that the employment system in South Minneapolis is fragmented. Service providers (including support services to marginally employable applicants) tend to focus on a targeted community or industry, but service providers do not have established links with each other. In fact, typically they are in constant competition with each other, at least in funding their programs. Funding competition leads to maximizing service delivery to the organization instead of maximizing service delivery to the client by integrating complementary programs. This dramatically reduces the ability of the system as a whole to provide comprehensive service to a potential employee. If this fragmentation continues, South Minneapolis will continue to lead the city in unemployment rates, concentration of poverty, and high use of social services.

## 2. Identify/Define the Target Community

The primary target group for this project is approximately 230 families living in member Community Development Corporations housing units. There are a myriad of social maladies disrupting this community, including chemical dependency, mental illness, poor work history, low education skills, and poverty. The most recent census data defines the poverty threshold for a family of three as \$13,290. 70% of the targeted families receive Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), and are therefore living at the poverty level. The racial breakdowns of these families are African/Black – 40%, European/White – 21.5%, Mixed/Biracial – 21%, Native American – 14%, Hispanic – 2%, Asian – 1.5%.

## 3. Major Assumptions

We assume that program participants are interested in stronger linkages to jobs and training. We also assume that program participants are interested in participating in the

development of effective linkages to jobs and training. Another major assumption made is that employment counselors will be able to make more referrals using the Workforce Grid that the Taskforce will develop.

## **E. Project Goals**

### *1. Goal Statement*

The Project will provide a more comprehensive delivery system of employment and training service to residents of the CDC Housing Development involved in the project.

### *2. Describe current conditions*

Currently economic development, housing and employment training programs are not linked. Those seeking employment find multiple, often confusing, entry points into these systems as well as few re-entry points if their efforts are unsuccessful. Job progression through technical training and job laddering is weak. Stable workers seeking better opportunities have few easily accessible resources. Businesses often have difficulty finding stable and skilled workers. We determined that entry level employment often does not provide enough income for self-sufficiency. Workers need opportunities to "ladder up" their employment. Much of the publicly funded programming only targets first or entry level jobs. Current programming is often controlled in a way that inhibits cooperation among agencies. Residents of affordable housing units often need better jobs (income) in order to move out and make room for new residents.

### *3. Describe the desired condition(s) for target community.*

Improved coordination can bring improved social and economic impacts, such as, family stability, educational stability for children, working adult role models for children, home purchases, crime reduction, business, economic and community development.



## **F. Project Purpose**

### *1. Project Purpose Statement*

The Southside Taskforce on Workforce Development was formed to investigate possibilities for Minneapolis Consortium of Community Developers (MCCD) members to cooperate in workforce development programs and link them with their existing housing and economic development programs.

### *2. List and describe the major outputs that would exist if your project is successfully completed.*

- ◆ Best Practices regarding employment linkages around the country.
- ◆ Community involvement in the planning process, through forums and surveys.
- ◆ A high quality “Training Grid” that would coordinate all of the available training programs and list the requirements and contact information for the various programs.
- ◆ A functioning network of employment service providers and Community Development Corporations and the residents who live in the affordable housing units.

### *3. Background*

Traditionally, members of the Minneapolis Consortium of Community Developers (MCCD) have focused on housing development and business developments as community-based strategies. In recent years, some have also added training and employment services to their agencies. However, experience indicated that work-force strategies were not integrated with traditional strategies in a manner that would be of benefit to the community. It seemed apparent that unified workforce development strategies were needed and would not only support the two traditional foci, but also be another avenue to overall community

stability and development. As a result, the MCCD formed a Taskforce on Workforce Development in the fall of 1999.

*A. How did your organization get involved with this project?*

I represent Hennepin Powderhorn Partners, which is a community-based social service agency. We provided coordinated county services such as The Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP); this is Minnesota's version of TANF, employment services, children and family social workers, probation officers both adult and juvenile, public health services. We focused those services on one community in South Minneapolis called Powderhorn Park. In addition to spending 70% of our time on the above issues, we were committed to spending 30% of work enhancing the existing organizations in the community. Because of my position as Vocational Counselor and my interest in Community Development, I joined the Taskforce.

*B. Identify the other major players, groups, institutions or individuals associated with this project. Briefly describe their roles, concerns and expectations of these other players, groups, institutions or individuals.*

There are ten (10) organizations that make up the Taskforce on Workforce Development. They are: Whittier CDC, who provides pre-employment training (including chemical dependency and felons), they operate a temp to perm employment agency as well as a Business Development Loan Program. Goodwill Easter Seals, provides work readiness programs, training programs, job placement, and retention services to low-income and disabled adults. The Green Institute is a local environmentally-friendly business incubator and office building, which provides technical training focused on environmental careers. Project for Pride in Living (PPL), an affordable housing provider that also provides training, placement, and job retention. The Minneapolis Consortium of Community Development is an organization of representatives from all of the CDC's in Minneapolis. Their goal is to be an advocate for

community development both statewide and nationally. The consortium has been the source of financial and administrative support for the Taskforce. The sixth organization is Seward Redesign, a community development corporation focusing primarily on commercial development and community organizing. They began 25 years ago as a housing CDC, but recently sold much of their housing interests. The seventh partner is Hope Community, Inc. They provide advocacy and policy development as well as affordable housing units. Exodus CDC, Inc. is an affordable housing provider that integrates personal/family support (including mental health, counseling and interpersonal skills). The ninth organization is Central Community Housing Trust (CCHT), the largest housing CDC in the city, managing and owning over 8,000 units of affordable housing. Lastly, Hennepin Powderhorn Partners which was described earlier. Most of the members are concerned about greater outreach opportunities and promoting their individual programs, while the housing developers are concerned about increasing the wages and skills of their residents.

### *C. Other Interesting Information.*

Throughout the planning process, there was tension between planning a clear, testable, and expandable model and participating in coordinating activities only. Ideally, coordinating activities can provide support and information for a realistic model. However, there was reluctance on the part of some members to commit to the structure of documentative evaluation and fundraising.

## **G. Results**

1. *List and describe the major outputs that would exist if your project were successfully completed.*
  - ❖ Best practices regarding employment linkages around the country.
  - ❖ Community involvement in the planning process, through community forums and surveys.

- ❖ A high quality “Training Grid” that would coordinate all of the available training programs and list the requirements and contact information for the various programs.
- ❖ A functioning network of employment service providers and Community Development Corporations (CDC’s) and the residents who live in the affordable housing units.

2. *Identify those major outputs that have been fully achieved.*

- ❖ We have completed the funding proposal to obtain an intern, who will coordinate the design of the “Training Grid”, as well as other aspects of the project. (See Appendix).
- ❖ We have completed the rough draft design of the “Training Grid”.

3. *Identify those major outputs that have been partially achieved. Describe the remaining tasks that are required to fully achieve these specific outputs.*

- ❖ We had a goal of completing 100 resident surveys, and to date, we have 74 returned.
  - Activity: Continue to provide opportunities for residents to complete surveys.
- ❖ We had an additional goal of hosting four (4) community forums, at the time of this writing, we have only completed one.
  - Activity: Plan and host three community forums.

4. *Identify those major outputs for which no tasks have been initiated.*

- ❖ All tasks for major outputs have been initiated.

## H. **Conclusions/Recommendations**

1. *Has your project purpose and/or goal changed since you began this project? If so, how and why has the project purpose and/or goal changed?*
  - ❖ No, the project purpose and goal have remained the same.
2. *Identify any two factors or conditions that if they had been different would have increased your ability to complete the project.*
  - ❖ About 2/3 of the way through the project period, the funding ran out for the project consultant. If the coordinator would have been able to continue, we could have accomplished much more. We also had a change in leadership of the Taskforce, which resulted in myself becoming co-chair. So consequently my focus shifted to a more organizational/administrative role.
3. *Identify one unexpected thing that occurred that significantly affected your ability to complete the project and achieve the stated goal(s).*
  - ❖ In addition to the aforementioned factors, the single most significant event to affect the success of the project was September 11<sup>th</sup>. Ironically, we hosted our first community forum on that fateful Tuesday evening. We had no idea at the time of the dramatic impact this tragic event would have on the nation's and ultimately the world's economy. That event underscored the need to be adaptable and to have a working knowledge of the local economic conditions, resources, and leadership.

4. *What two things would you suggest to someone doing similar projects?*

- ❖ Obtain a collaboration agreement in the early stages of the project - to determine the assets of each agency as well as their expectations.
- ❖ Seek involvement from local and state government to insure program continuity and longevity. Fundamentally, public officials must believe in the link between economic development and poverty alleviation that creating job ladders helps fight poverty.

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