

## Coordinated Community Plan for Supporting Children, Youth and Families in Madison

### Introduction

According to *Race to Equity – A Baseline Report on the State of Racial Disparities in Dane County*, published in 2013 by the Wisconsin Council on Children and Families:

...our whole community faces a major challenge in pulling together a more comprehensive and collaborative strategy that is powerful enough to attack the root drivers of the disparity crisis we face. The strategy has to be a “two-generation” approach that focuses on increasing health, developmental readiness, motivation, academic achievement, graduation and post secondary training for all of our at risk children and youth, while at the same time addressing the income, employment, housing security, child care, health and parenting information needs of their families.

The report goes on to state:

To move meaningful numbers of historically disadvantaged and under-resourced men and women into productive, family supporting roles in the workforce will require a long term joint effort by employers, job placement and training providers, child care resources, family support workers, along with a lot of informal help from volunteers, neighbors and kin. In a growing number of places across the country, communities are creating place-based resources called “centers for working families” that bring together, in an accessible location, all of the diverse resources and supports needed to move the most disadvantaged families from the economic margins to the economic mainstream. It is an approach that warrants exploration of its applicability to the challenges we face here in Dane County.

In the end, the willingness of the city, county, school districts, business, non-profit providers, and funders to come together and sustain this kind of targeted two generation strategy may determine whether we in Dane County undo our deep racial disparities, or whether they undo us.

### What: The Recommendation

- Explore: Develop a coordinated and collaborative model of practice that integrates “all” of our efforts from the public, private, independent and informal sectors to create household stability and meaningful, viable, sustained educational and employment opportunities for low income individuals and families. The time period necessary for this exploration is anticipated to be between 6-9 months.
- Install and evaluate: Pilot the model in a targeted geographical area for 2 years with rigorous evaluation.
- Implement, scale and sustain: Expand effective model design to additional geographical locations in Madison and Dane County.

### Why: The Statement of Need

Major emerging and persistent challenges in Dane County entail increasing poverty and inequality, and significant disparity issues including disproportionate minority confinement, a growing achievement gap, and a housing and employment crisis for low income people among others.

A significant subset of families has a nexus of issues related to AODA, mental health, trauma, and domestic violence against the back drop of severe poverty. This presents huge barriers to succeeding in parenting, obtaining a good education and employment and sustaining a stable household. Many of these families have intergenerational involvement in formal systems and consume a significant amount of resources. A significant proportion of the families we serve are concentrated in relatively small neighborhood areas. Service capacity in many areas is outstripped by demand (e.g. housing, mental health). Application processes to obtain resources are often confusing and cumbersome. A silo approach to delivering services and resources is still predominant which is complicated by a lack of coordination among service providers and systems. Collaboration is decreasing in many areas due to different priorities and reduced staff. Many organizations are retreating from neighborhood-based personnel and decentralized service delivery. Our collaborations are less extensive and significant than they once were. Families with multiple issues living in isolated neighborhoods are not served well within this service context. A piecemeal approach to enhancing programs and systems will not have a significant positive impact on the problem.

The following question then frames the proposal focus:

***How might we coordinate and integrate our collective services to best meet the needs of our most vulnerable populations?***

**How: Dedicated Facilitation and Coordination**

**Action Steps:**

- Contracted facilitation – independent of city, county and schools
- Brief comprehensive community study to identify high leverage model components and pilot location
- Implement model in selected geographical location
- On-going and rigorous evaluation
- Resource redirection and services integration strategy to support sustainability and scaling to other parts of Madison and Dane County

**Resources Required:**

- Funding of model development and pilot will be sought through local and national foundations with some investments coming from key institutional funders.
- Cost of model development and pilot implementation estimated to be \$\_\_\_\_\_ for the first year, and X number of dollars for years 2 and 3. Funds would cover the following:
  - Salary and benefits for independent facilitator/coordinator for year one. Discussion is needed to determine level of investment in staff time for this purpose.
- Continue supporting facilitator/coordinator role and purchase additional prioritized services to support implementation for years 2 and 3 (please see addendum for anticipated priority components). The dollar amount for the cost of the model will depend upon the outcomes of the brief community study: what resources are required to support effective coordination of existing services?; What resources can be repurposed or redefined to best support stabilization? And, what additional services may need to be developed?

- Preliminary representation on Community Plan Leadership Group
  - City of Madison
  - Community Representatives
  - County of Dane
  - Madison Metropolitan School District
  - United Way of Dane County

References:

- Joining Forces for Families City Education Document April 9<sup>th</sup>, 2014, submitted by Ron Chance
- Race to Equity – A Baseline Report on the State of Racial Disparities in Dane County, Wisconsin Children and Families, 2013. Pp. 22-23

Addendum:

Anticipated priority components of the pilot response may include:

- AODA/MH/Trauma/Domestic Violence response capacity
- Housing response with an approach targeted on eviction prevention
- Employment response
- A community based school social worker
- An integrated services platform and consumer evaluation of services offered
- Coherent, integrated service continuums (e.g. employment, housing, education)
- Planning and training to enhance collaboration and service coordination
- An array of “core services” addressing basic human needs that are accessible and decentralized
- Implementation of a relational service and networking model among providers and community members
- Resource clusters such as Allied Partners, the DeForest Area Needs Network (DANN) or Oregon’s Neighbors in Need (NINA) where private citizens, faith-based organizations, and business provide dollars and other resources to support their neighbors
- Key investments in housing, education, training and employment to get people out of poverty
- Linkages to faith-based and other organizations for resources and volunteers
- Resource mobilization strategies such as Timebanking, Schools of Hope, etc.
- Early Childhood Programing and Early Childhood Zones

*These components are not necessarily comprehensive and are not listed in any particular order of priority or preference.*