

# WHAT WORKS!

in the Empowerment Zones and Enterprise Communities

Volume IV



The President's Community Empowerment Board • Vice President Al Gore, Chair

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development • Andrew Cuomo, Secretary  
U.S. Department of Agriculture • Dan Glickman, Secretary



**“M**ore communities than ever are on the road to recovery, creating new businesses, neighborhoods, housing, and tens of thousands of jobs. The 135 Empowerment Zones and Enterprise Communities we have designated are now flowing with the lifeblood of commerce and capital. Federal seed money has leveraged more than \$14 billion in public and private investment in just these 5 years. The return on this investment is more than financial; as we rebuild our communities we restore the American Dream for many who thought it was out of reach.”

(Remarks at Fifth Annual White House Community Empowerment Conference, University of Texas–Pan American, Edinburg, Texas, May 25, 1999)

*President William Jefferson Clinton*



**“F**or all our progress, we know that too many Americans never get into the winner’s circle of this new economy. We need to do more...I believe we must use today’s prosperity to expand that winner’s circle—by closing the opportunity gap in our schools, by closing the opportunity gap in our workplaces, and by building stronger families and communities all across the United States of America—to include everyone in the winner’s circle.”

(Remarks as prepared for delivery, NAACP Annual Convention, July 16, 1998)

*Vice President Al Gore*

**“**In large and small communities throughout America, the success of the Empowerment Zone/Enterprise Communities Initiative is plain to see: carpenters and masons building and remodeling homes and apartments, local entrepreneurs opening the doors to new businesses and welcoming new customers, happy children in the playgrounds of new schools, and the smiling faces of thousands of new wage earners who’ve just taken home their first paychecks. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development plays a major role in this unique community revitalization initiative, but its success is a direct result of well-crafted local plans and the hard work of the families who live in and want to transform their neighborhoods.”

***Andrew Cuomo***  
***Secretary, U.S. Department***  
***of Housing and Urban Development***



**“**In Empowerment Zones and Enterprise Communities throughout the country, Americans are working together to build and rebuild housing, businesses, schools, and community spirit. The EZ/EC Initiative supports a bottoms-up approach to renewal. The inspirational stories in *What Works! Volume IV* illustrate concrete examples of a unique approach to assisting communities in improving and revitalizing America’s urban landscape.”

***Cardell Cooper***  
***Assistant Secretary for***  
***Community Planning & Development***  
***U.S. Department of Housing and***  
***Urban Development***

“The EZ/EC program works throughout rural America. It puts people back to work, creates safer neighborhoods and schools, houses families, and energizes communities in small towns across the country. The stories in *What Works! Volume IV* illustrate the dedication that rural Americans bring to their communities.”

***Dan Glickman***  
***Secretary, U.S. Department of Agriculture***



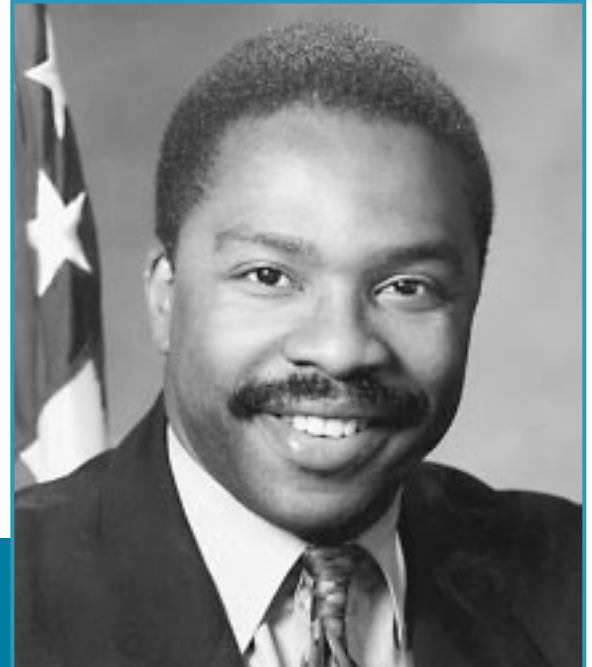
“Volume IV of *What Works!* tells many exciting stories of development and renewal in rural communities throughout the country. Communities are partnering through the EZ/EC Initiative to create new jobs, new houses, and new businesses, improving the new lives of thousands of underserved Americans. These inspiring stories need to be told and the successes they chronicle replicated nationwide.”

***Jill Long Thompson***  
***Under Secretary for Rural Development***  
***U.S. Department of Agriculture***



**“** **W**hat Works! Volume IV showcases the EZ/EC initiative and the Community Empowerment Board’s vision for empowering people and communities. The EZ/EC initiative is helping to revitalize America’s communities by bringing capital, jobs, and opportunities to underserved areas. *What Works!* highlights successful efforts to create jobs, reduce crime, provide more affordable housing for families, and clean up the environment. The Vice President’s Community Empowerment Board is committed to this effort to empower communities to ensure that no one is left behind.”

***Alvin Brown***  
***Executive Director***  
***Community Empowerment Board***  
***Office of the Vice President***



## Urban Empowerment Zones

Atlanta, Georgia  
Baltimore, Maryland  
Boston, Massachusetts  
Chicago, Illinois  
Cincinnati, Ohio  
Cleveland, Ohio  
Columbia/Sumter, South Carolina  
Columbus, Ohio  
Cumberland County, New Jersey  
Detroit, Michigan  
El Paso, Texas  
Gary/Hammond/East Chicago, Indiana  
Huntington, West Virginia/Ironton, Ohio  
Knoxville, Tennessee  
Los Angeles, California  
Miami/Dade County, Florida  
Minneapolis, Minnesota  
New Haven, Connecticut  
New York, New York  
Norfolk/Portsmouth, Virginia  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania/Camden, New Jersey  
Santa Ana, California  
St. Louis, Missouri/East St. Louis, Illinois

## Urban Enhanced Enterprise Communities

Houston, Texas  
Kansas City, Kansas/Missouri  
Oakland, California

## Urban Enterprise Communities

Akron, Ohio  
Albany, Georgia  
Albany, New York  
Albuquerque, New Mexico  
Birmingham, Alabama  
Bridgeport, Connecticut  
Buffalo, New York  
Burlington, Vermont  
Charleston, South Carolina  
Charlotte, North Carolina  
Dallas, Texas  
Denver, Colorado  
Des Moines, Iowa  
East St. Louis, Illinois  
Flint, Michigan  
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania  
Indianapolis, Indiana  
Jackson, Mississippi  
Las Vegas, Nevada  
Los Angeles, California  
Louisville, Kentucky

Lowell, Massachusetts  
Manchester, New Hampshire  
Memphis, Tennessee  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin  
Muskegon, Michigan  
Nashville, Tennessee  
New Orleans, Louisiana  
Newark, New Jersey  
Newburgh/Kingston, New York  
Ogden, Utah  
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma  
Omaha, Nebraska  
Ouachita Parish, Louisiana  
Phoenix, Arizona  
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania  
Portland, Oregon  
Providence, Rhode Island  
Pulaski County, Arkansas  
Rochester, New York  
San Antonio, Texas  
San Diego, California  
San Francisco, California  
Seattle, Washington  
Springfield, Illinois  
Springfield, Massachusetts  
St. Paul, Minnesota  
Tacoma, Washington  
Tampa, Florida  
Waco, Texas  
Washington, District of Columbia  
Wilmington, Delaware

## Rural Empowerment Zones

Desert Communities, California  
Griggs-Steele, North Dakota  
Kentucky Highlands, Kentucky  
Mid-Delta, Mississippi  
Oglala Sioux-Pine Ridge, South Dakota  
Rio Grande Valley, Texas  
Southernmost Illinois Delta, Illinois  
Southwest Georgia United, Georgia

## Rural Enterprise Communities

Accomack-Northampton, Virginia  
Allendale County, South Carolina  
Arizona Border Region, Arizona  
Beadle/Spink Dakota, South Dakota  
Blanding, Utah  
Bowling Green, Kentucky  
Central Appalachia, West Virginia  
Central California, California  
Central Savannah River Area, Georgia  
Chambers County, Alabama  
Clare County, Michigan  
Clinch-Powell, Tennessee  
Deming, New Mexico  
East Prairie, Missouri

Eastern Arkansas, Arkansas  
Fayette, Pennsylvania  
Fayette County/Haywood County, Tennessee  
Fort Peck Assiniboine and Sioux Tribes, Montana  
Four Corners, Arizona (Navajo Nation)  
FUTURO, Texas  
Greater Portsmouth, Ohio  
Greene/Sumter Counties, Alabama  
Halifax/Edgecombe/Wilson, North Carolina  
Imperial County, California  
Jackson County, Florida  
Josephine County, Oregon  
La Jicarita, New Mexico  
Lake County, Michigan  
Lewiston, Maine  
Lock Haven, Pennsylvania  
Lower Yakima County, Washington  
Macon Ridge, Louisiana  
McDowell County, West Virginia  
Metlakatla Indian, Alaska  
Mississippi County, Arkansas  
Molokai, Hawaii  
North Delta, Mississippi  
Northeast Louisiana Delta, Louisiana  
Northwoods Nijjii, Wisconsin  
Robeson County, North Carolina  
Scott-McCreary Area, Tennessee-Kentucky  
Southeast Oklahoma, Oklahoma  
Southwest Florida, Florida  
Town of Austin, Indiana  
Tri-County, Washington  
Tri-County Indian Nations, Oklahoma  
Upper Kanawha Valley, West Virginia  
Watsonville/County of Santa Cruz, California  
Wichita County, Kansas  
Williamsburg-Lake County, South Carolina

# Table of Contents

<b>Introduction</b> .....	1
<b>Business Participation in the EZ/EC Initiative</b> .....	3
Loan Funds .....	5
<b>URBAN COMMUNITIES</b> .....	5
<b>RURAL COMMUNITIES</b> .....	15
Business Incubators in the EZ/EC Initiative .....	17
<b>URBAN COMMUNITIES</b> .....	17
<b>RURAL COMMUNITIES</b> .....	21
One-Stop Capital Shop .....	23
<b>URBAN COMMUNITIES</b> .....	23
Business Assistance in the EZ/EC Initiative .....	29
<b>URBAN COMMUNITIES</b> .....	29
<b>RURAL COMMUNITIES</b> .....	37
Large Job-Creation Projects .....	41
<b>URBAN COMMUNITIES</b> .....	41
<b>RURAL COMMUNITIES</b> .....	45
Business Participation on EZ/EC Governance Boards .....	49
<b>URBAN COMMUNITIES</b> .....	49
<b>Workforce Development</b> .....	53
Job Training .....	55
<b>URBAN COMMUNITIES</b> .....	55
<b>RURAL COMMUNITIES</b> .....	65
Job Match .....	69
<b>URBAN COMMUNITIES</b> .....	69
Regional Job Linkage Efforts .....	73
<b>URBAN COMMUNITIES</b> .....	73
<b>Technology</b> .....	77
Use of the Internet for Community and Economic Development .....	79
<b>URBAN COMMUNITIES</b> .....	79
<b>RURAL COMMUNITIES</b> .....	85



Development/Growth of Technology-Based Businesses in the Community.....	89
<b>URBAN COMMUNITIES</b> .....	89
Networking Academies.....	91
<b>Assisting Families</b> .....	93
Improving Access to Healthcare.....	95
<b>URBAN COMMUNITIES</b> .....	95
Improving Childcare.....	99
<b>URBAN COMMUNITIES</b> .....	99
<b>RURAL COMMUNITIES</b> .....	107
Homeless Services.....	109
<b>URBAN COMMUNITIES</b> .....	109
<b>Assisting Youth</b> .....	113
Youth Opportunity Grants (Partnering With the U.S. Department of Labor).....	115
<b>URBAN COMMUNITIES</b> .....	115
At-Risk Youth.....	119
<b>URBAN COMMUNITIES</b> .....	119
<b>RURAL COMMUNITIES</b> .....	123
YouthBuild.....	125
<b>URBAN COMMUNITIES</b> .....	125
Youth Business Programs.....	129
<b>URBAN COMMUNITIES</b> .....	129
School-to-Work.....	133
<b>URBAN COMMUNITIES</b> .....	133
<b>RURAL COMMUNITIES</b> .....	137
<b>Public Safety</b> .....	139
Community Policing.....	141
<b>URBAN COMMUNITIES</b> .....	141
Public Awareness/Safety Programs.....	143
<b>URBAN COMMUNITIES</b> .....	143
<b>RURAL COMMUNITIES</b> .....	145
Weed and Seed Program.....	147
<b>URBAN COMMUNITIES</b> .....	147

<b>Housing</b> .....	149
First-Time Homebuyer Assistance.....	151
<b>URBAN COMMUNITIES</b> .....	151
Low-Income Housing .....	153
<b>URBAN COMMUNITIES</b> .....	153
<b>RURAL COMMUNITIES</b> .....	159
New and Rehabilitated Housing .....	161
<b>URBAN COMMUNITIES</b> .....	161
<b>RURAL COMMUNITIES</b> .....	167
Officer Next Door Program .....	169
<b>URBAN COMMUNITIES</b> .....	169
HOPE VI.....	171
<b>URBAN COMMUNITIES</b> .....	171
Lead-Based Paint Program.....	173
<b>URBAN COMMUNITIES</b> .....	173
<b>Building Communities</b> .....	175
Community Leadership .....	177
<b>URBAN COMMUNITIES</b> .....	177
<b>RURAL COMMUNITIES</b> .....	181
Organizing/Accessing Grants and Other Resources .....	183
<b>URBAN COMMUNITIES</b> .....	183
<b>RURAL COMMUNITIES</b> .....	187
Using Volunteers .....	189
<b>URBAN COMMUNITIES</b> .....	189
<b>RURAL COMMUNITIES</b> .....	191
Using Partnerships Effectively.....	193
<b>URBAN COMMUNITIES</b> .....	193
<b>RURAL COMMUNITIES</b> .....	201
Building Programs That Operate on a Sustainable Basis .....	203
<b>URBAN COMMUNITIES</b> .....	203
<b>Improving Neighborhoods and the Environment</b> .....	207
Local Museums .....	209
<b>URBAN COMMUNITIES</b> .....	209
<b>RURAL COMMUNITIES</b> .....	211

Promoting Local Culture To Increase Tourism and Community Pride .....	213
<b>URBAN COMMUNITIES</b> .....	213
<b>RURAL COMMUNITIES</b> .....	217
Walking Trails and Tours .....	219
<b>RURAL COMMUNITIES</b> .....	219
Environment Efforts, Including Showcase Communities (Partnering With the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency) .....	221
<b>URBAN COMMUNITIES</b> .....	221
<b>Bettering Schools and Education</b> .....	227
Improving Local Schools .....	229
<b>URBAN COMMUNITIES</b> .....	229
<b>RURAL COMMUNITIES</b> .....	231
Qualified Zone Academy Bonds (QZAB) .....	233
<b>URBAN COMMUNITIES</b> .....	233
21st Century Community Learning Centers .....	235
<b>URBAN COMMUNITIES</b> .....	235
<b>RURAL COMMUNITIES</b> .....	237
<b>Looking to the Future: Regional Development Initiatives</b> .....	239
The Mississippi Delta 2000 Initiative .....	239
Leading the Border Into the 21st Century .....	243
<b>Index of Stories by Community</b> .....	247
<b>Available Publications</b> .....	255
Available Publications for Urban Communities .....	255
Available Publications for Rural Communities .....	256
Other Resources .....	256
<b>Resources</b> .....	257
<b>EZ/EC Main Contact List</b> .....	259
<b>URBAN COMMUNITIES</b> .....	259
<b>RURAL COMMUNITIES</b> .....	273
Terms and Definitions .....	Inside Back Cover

# Introduction



On December 21, 1994, President William Jefferson Clinton and Vice President Al Gore launched an initiative that would dramatically improve the landscapes of many impoverished American communities. The initiative designated 104 distressed communities across the Nation as Empowerment Zones (EZs) and Enterprise Communities (ECs). In January 1999 the Federal Government expanded the EZ/EC Initiative through a second round of designations for 20 new urban and rural EZs and for 20 new rural ECs. The proposed Federal budget for 2001 includes funding for 10 new EZs.

Since its inception, the EZ/EC Initiative has been a catalyst for change and has improved the lives of thousands of people in America's most distressed rural and urban areas. The EZ/EC Initiative recognizes that neighborhood communities, working together, can best identify and develop local solutions to the problems they face. The initiative brings communities together through public and private partnerships that attract the investment necessary for sustainable economic and community development.

The EZ/EC Initiative is directed by Vice President Gore through the Community Empowerment Board. By providing tax incentives, technical assistance, and direct grants, the initiative helps to spur entrepreneurial excitement and private investment in communities that have experienced severe economic hardship.

The EZs and ECs have used Federal seed money to create partnerships that have leveraged more than \$14 billion in public and private investment. Strategies resulting from these partnerships have generated jobs; provided business assistance and services; trained and educated youth and families; improved access to childcare, healthcare, and transportation; and increased residents' safety and involvement in their neighborhoods.

*What Works! in the Empowerment Zones and Enterprise Communities: Volume IV* celebrates many of the programs and projects that exemplify the principles of the EZ/EC Initiative. *What Works!* incorporates many themes. These themes are highlighted in bold in the following paragraphs and also are used to organize the *What Works!* stories.

A number of stories attest to economic development within the EZ/ECs. These stories are grouped under themes such as **Business Participation in the EZ/ECs**, **Workforce Development**, and **Technology**. Under these



themes you will find exciting stories about innovative loan funds, successful business incubators, large job-creation projects, and job-training and match programs. It is possible that some of these empowering programs could be started in your community.

Reaching out to EZ/EC residents and extending the means to foster positive change in their own communities remain integral to the EZ/EC Initiative. Community residents often serve as driving forces behind programs that seek to **Assist Families and Youth**, enhance **Public Safety**, and upgrade **Housing** in their neighborhoods. Stories about access to healthcare, improving childcare and homeless services, and YouthBuild and youth business programs, as well as community policing, low-income housing, and the HOPE VI program, all can be found under these themes.

You will find many stories under the theme of **Building Communities**. This theme complements the additional topics of **Improving Neighborhoods and the Environment** and **Bettering Schools and Education**. In these stories, you will learn about exciting ways to promote local culture to increase tourism and community pride, to organize and access grants and other resources and use partnerships effectively, and to use 21st Century Learning Centers to cultivate the leaders of tomorrow. You also can learn how Showcase Communities partner with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to turn vacant wasteland into productive areas for business redevelopment and public recreation.

We hope you enjoy this fourth volume of *What Works!* We also hope that the successes outlined in this volume encourage you to replicate these efforts in your own communities.



# Business Participation in the EZ/EC Initiative





# Loan Funds

## Loan Guarantee Program Helps Businesses, Creates Jobs

Las Vegas, Nevada, EC

When J.C. Fuller, owner of Triple “J” Trucking, wanted to expand his business by purchasing an additional truck, he went to the Southern Nevada Enterprise Community (SNEC) Loan Guarantee Program. “The Enterprise Community helped me obtain my goal,” he says.

Launched in 1997 with \$750,000 in Social Services Block Grant funds, the program is designed for small business owners who might not qualify for a conventional loan. Items eligible for loans include business startup and expansion, improvements, working capital, inventory, and equipment. Thomas B. Caldwell, owner of Tom Caldwell Marketing, created a publishing division. “We have been able to roll out our first title, now distributed by the world’s largest book distributor,” he says.

The program is composed of a partnership of 11 participating financial lending institutions, a community action agency, two EC credit unions, and the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA). The SBA provides an 80-percent guarantee on the loans and SNEC funds guarantee 20 percent. Through the Enterprise Community Federal Credit Union, the loan fund leveraged an additional \$300,000 from the National Credit Union Administration.

The Economic Opportunity Board of Clark County administers the loan program and is responsible for verifying residency and information on loan documents. A loan committee reviews applications and makes recommendations on funding. The stringent process ensures that applicants are well qualified. As Valencia Burch, owner of Studio 702, The Hair and Nail Gallery, says, “It was not an easy process, but in the end, I received a loan for \$50,000 and have since remodeled and expanded my salon. Not only have my dreams come true, I’ve created five new positions for other hairstylists.” The loan program has created a total of 10 jobs.

Thirteen loans varying from \$5,000 to \$100,000 and averaging \$50,000 have been approved. Other businesses assisted include merchant services, a pest control company, a job-training agency, a podiatrist practice, and a bicycle manufacturer.

For more information contact Jennifer Padre, Coordinator, Southern Nevada Enterprise Community, at 702-455-5025.







## Minigrants Help Existing Businesses Increase Economic Opportunity for Zone Residents

### Bridgeport, Connecticut, EC

The Bridgeport EC's minigrant program has spurred the expansion of three existing businesses and two startup companies. Using \$180,000 in EC resources, the EC's administrative body, Bridgeport Enterprise Development Corporation (BEDCO), will leverage more than \$2 million in private investment in the city's central neighborhoods, add approximately 85 jobs, and retain nearly 200 more.

"We first sought to target particular industries and bring new businesses to the EC," said Carolyn Gonzalez, Director of Economic Development for BEDCO. "But with this program, we found that we could also help existing businesses who have long been good employers."

The awards, ranging from \$5,000 to \$50,000, were made in June 1999. The program requires a 3-to-1 match in investment from participating enterprises. The awardees—Nantucket Collections, a crafts and giftware manufacturer; Pequonnock Enterprises, a corrugated container factory; Josephson Bag & Canvas, a small manufacturer; Norwalk Vault, a storage company; and Banjo Works, a startup video production company—are located throughout the expanding EC.

The owner of Pequonnock Enterprises had been tempted to move its Bridgeport plant to a neighboring suburb, Gonzalez recalls. "When I called to tell him he had been selected for the grant, he replied, 'I have been waiting for 30 years for your phone call.' It was the first time that this significant local employer had been truly recognized by the city for his contributions."

BEDCO did extensive outreach for its awards process, developing a database of more than 100 business associations and nonprofit organizations. It distributed a request for proposal to more than 2,200 businesses and individuals through a regional business newsletter. A review committee, broadly representative of stakeholders in the local business community, reviewed and scored 19 proposals and chose 6 finalists. BEDCO staff conducted onsite interviews with the finalists and made final funding recommendations for committee approval.

Recipients of the minigrants are purchasing underutilized land for building, buying old commercial facilities for renovation, and otherwise expanding. Nantucket Collections has already "done a lovely renovation of an old corner building," according to Gonzalez.

For more information contact Carolyn Gonzalez, Director of Economic Development, BEDCO, at 203-335-3800.

# Innovative Loan Guarantee Program Helps Small Firms Get Capital

## Pulaski County, Arkansas, EC

Small businesses in rural areas face a particular challenge in finding capital. The Pulaski County EC is meeting this need for the firms in its region with its innovative Business Loan Initiative For Empowerment, known as Business LIFE.

Business LIFE seeks to enable small firms whose risk is too great for standard bank loans to get loans for fixed assets or working capital. The EC has just launched a \$500,000 set-aside loan-guarantee program after 2 years of developing an approach that fits with the State's financial systems. The State-related development finance authority, along with the local U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) office and the University of Arkansas at Little Rock, are partners in the effort. Through March 2000 3 firms with a total of 14 employees have received loans: a startup cosmetics manufacturer, a high-technology services firm, and a company that provides services to small businesses.

“The most important part of this loan-guarantee program is the technical assistance that we give to the small businesses to help them define their capital needs,” notes EC Coordinator Henry McHenry. “We link their loans to a certified business plan that we and our partners help them develop.” With primary assistance from the small business development center at the university, the firms develop their plans and then are able to begin negotiations with the eight EC-area banks that have signed agreements to participate in Business LIFE. The \$500,000 set-aside serves as collateral for the banks, which in turn make the loans. The program guarantees the loans for 5 years. Additional support comes from the State finance authority, which donates its management services.

A key feature of the Business LIFE program is the Loan Loss Reserves Program, which uses resources from a 3-percent fee charged each borrower and matched by a 3-percent contribution from the finance authority to provide initial funds to be used if a loan defaults. The SBA, in partnership with the EC, guarantees loans for other needs such as real estate purchases and existing debt payment.

McHenry foresees the program's expansion through the marketing efforts that accompany the services provided by the small business development center. Also, Business LIFE is on the cutting edge of advanced financing techniques. Through its cooperation with the Arkansas Enterprise Group, a venture capital fund located 60 miles away from the EC, it can increase the resources available to its customers.

For more information contact Henry McHenry, Coordinator, Pulaski County EC, at 501-340-5675.





## Microentrepreneurs Team Up To Maximize Resources

### Denver, Colorado, EC

Denver's efforts to awaken the spirit of free enterprise in its EC neighborhoods is bearing fruit for the entire State of Colorado. Searching throughout the State, EC researchers found 12 microenterprise lenders and business support organizations, each of which filled a niche in the economic spectrum (for example, childcare, housecleaning, restaurants, print shops, and window-well manufacturing). The EC staff brought them to the table and helped them to establish the Colorado Alliance for Microenterprise Initiatives (CAMI). CAMI promotes the microenterprise concept and guides prospective microentrepreneurs to the appropriate resource group.

"The various firms have really benefited from their access to credit," explains Kersten Hostetter, who heads CAMI. "For example, thanks to a microloan, a woman in Denver has become only the third African American in the State's history to own two licensed daycare centers." CAMI itself was started with only a modest infusion of approximately \$35,000 in mostly in-kind funding from the EC and four partner foundations. These funds enabled CAMI's members to participate in the Metro Denver Chamber of Commerce's Annual Business Expo. CAMI's debut was a smashing success, garnering television and newspaper marketing exposure that has since been enhanced by CAMI's Web site.

CAMI organizations provide very low-income entrepreneurs with business training through the U.S. Small Business Administration, microloans, and technical assistance. During 1999 a total of 1,057 individuals received training. Five of the founding microenterprise practitioners have offices in EC neighborhoods, where they offer residents the chance to become part of "lending circles," a peer support method for small business development. With such support, some microentrepreneurs have progressed so well in their ventures that they have been able to obtain traditional financing.

For more information contact Kersten Hostetter, President, Colorado Alliance for Microenterprise Initiatives, at 303-308-8120.

## Revolving Microloan Program Offers Shot in the Arm

### Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, EC

Even the best efforts at assisting minority-owned businesses in the Oklahoma City EC still resulted in some businesses falling through the cracks. The EC decided it needed to spread the word about available resources, create a physical presence in the target area, and provide more teamwork to complete a job already in progress. Identification of these three concerns led

to the development of a revolving microloan program operating in the heart of the community.

OKC Northeast, Inc., a nonprofit community development organization, stepped up to administer a program that funds small business loans for low- and moderate-income residents of the EC. New or existing businesses with five or fewer employees who live in the EC or the larger Affiliated Benefit Area are encouraged to apply if their services benefit the target areas or if they employ EC residents. Loan proposals involving private lenders leveraging additional funds through the Community Development Financial Institutions program receive priority.

The revolving loan fund was capitalized with a \$200,000 EC grant along with an additional \$25,000 from Oklahoma City for setup and first-year operating expenses. The interest rate for the microloans is set at a minimum of 4 percent or the prime interest rate as reported by the *Wall Street Journal*. Interest earned provides monies for additional loans and yearly operating expenses. To help the program reach traditionally “passed-over” communities, exceptions are considered for applicants who may not have conventional properties available for collateral.

The program has been running for more than a year and has assisted 15 businesses and created 16 jobs. Individual case management is a large part of its success. The program provides ongoing training and followup to ensure success and compensate for the risks associated with unconventional collateral.

Marjorie Young brings 14 years of community development to her position as Executive Director of OKC Northeast. She says, “It gives me a good feeling to help these businesses who don’t need a large capital investment but simply a shot in the arm to keep going. The stable businesses and extra jobs are wonderful for the community.” More than \$137,800 has been put back into the area community, with 90 percent of the loans granted to minority-owned businesses. Two daycare facilities, a security company, and a medical education service are among the businesses receiving financial support.

For more information contact Marjorie Young, Executive Director, OKC Northeast, at 405–235–0415, or the Oklahoma City Planning Department at 405–297–3838.

## **EZ BOP Loan Provides Opportunity to Small Businesses**

### **Cleveland, Ohio, EZ**

When Addie and Larry Gibson first heard about EZ Business Opportunity Program, they might have thought it sounded like a new product line for



their Cleveland-based snack food distribution business. Instead, EZ BOP is a catchy name for a small business loan program that helped Gibson's Distributors purchase new computers and a new, computer-based inventory tracking system during 1999. The system has allowed Gibson's to double the number of its delivery routes from 4 to 8 and the size of its workforce from 5 to 10 employees.

EZ BOP stands for "Empowerment Zone Business Opportunity Program," and opportunity is just what the program offers small businesses through two separate loan products. The Gibsons used what is called EZ BOP II, through which they borrowed \$30,000 to purchase six computers and six printers. The microloan program, designed to help companies access working capital or to finance improvements, carries a 4-percent fixed-interest rate and a 10-year term.

Another EZ BOP loan—EZ BOP I—is available to small businesses embarking on interior, exterior, parking lot, and/or landscaping improvements. EZ BOP I recipients can borrow up to \$155,000, depending on the type of activities they pursue. The loans carry a 6-percent interest rate and a 10-year term. Upon completion of a project, the EZ provides a 40-percent rebate to the borrower.

Concerned that small businesses were not using Section 108 loans, Cleveland's EZ created EZ BOP in spring 1997 to help family businesses like Gibson's. Drawing on \$2.5 million in HUD Section 108 loans and \$2.5 million in Economic Development Initiative grants, EZ BOP has loaned more than \$1 million to 16 small businesses, says EZ Director Valarie McCall. The loan program covers 90 percent of a borrower's costs and requires the borrower to contribute 10 percent in cash.

Gibson's now distributes snack foods to 300 commercial customers. In addition to selling brand-name food items, the company also distributes its own line of snack foods. McCall has great hopes that the company will continue to grow and continue to improve the economy of the entire EZ community.

"We see supporting small businesses as a way to employ neighborhood people," says McCall. "If I own a corner store and I need dedicated employees, I am going to hire the young man who lives across the street before I hire someone from the suburbs. And as my business grows, I'm going to hire even more local residents, which creates self-sufficiency in the neighborhood. We can't afford to lose these small businesses because they play a vital role in neighborhood development."

For more information contact Valarie McCall, Director, Cleveland EZ, at 216-664-3083.

## New Community Lender To Energize Philadelphia EZ

### Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, EZ

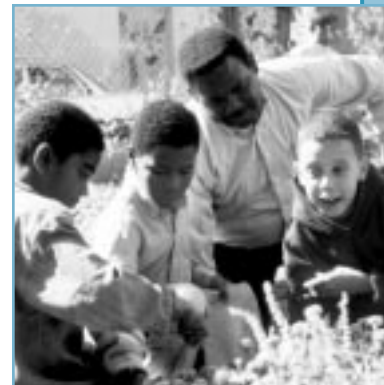
The American Street Financial Services Center (ASFSC) is making a difference for entrepreneurs and small business owners in Philadelphia's EZ. Nancy Santana, owner of Santana's Cleaning and Maintenance Services, says, "If it wasn't for the Empowerment Zone's ASFSC, I would have never had the chance to buy this building or to expand my business. I didn't know how to go about getting a loan for my business, but now I do. The whole community benefits from the programs in the Zone." Jose Toledo, owner of Lawrence Bakery, and Ignacio Morales, owner of Second Street Laundromat, both agree; their businesses have also benefited from ASFSC loans and technical assistance.

Just 3 years ago in 1997, Philadelphia's American Street Empowerment Zone (ASEZ) economy was struggling against a seemingly insurmountable obstacle: Commercial banks had withdrawn branches once located within its boundaries. As a result resident entrepreneurs and small business owners were left without financial service choices and lacked access to capital. Community leaders and Zone officials recognized that financial and technical assistance would be essential for the establishment, stabilization, and expansion of businesses that would lead to the creation and retention of jobs.

ASEZ's Economic Development Committee and the Community Trust Board responded to the need by benchmarking \$7.25 million in Zone funding for the creation of a permanent community-lending institution. ASFSC is a 501(c)(3) corporation that serves as a one-stop financial services shop for entrepreneurs and small business owners. It works in conjunction with, and leverages the resources of, other financial and quasi-public institutions to provide loans ranging from \$400 to \$500,000. The center also provides technical assistance to entrepreneurs who are starting, expanding, or locating businesses within the ASEZ.

Since 1996 ASFSC has leveraged \$6.8 million from other lenders and owner equity. Through March 2000 the center has processed more than 32 loans totaling more than \$6.8 million. These transactions have, in turn, generated 120 new jobs for EZ residents. As of spring 2000, ASFSC was serving 50 businesses with its capital/credit access. ASFSC customers represent a wide range of businesses, including construction and related trades, cleaning and vending services, food distribution, recycling, social service providers, and community developers.

In an effort to expand its activities, in 1998 ASFSC developed the Entrepreneurial Training Program (ETP). The program trains EZ residents and business owners in business development, expansion, and access to capital through a combination of classroom instruction and individualized technical



assistance. Participants who successfully draft business plans during the final stage of the program can apply for ASFSC loans to open or expand their EZ businesses. Through March 2000, \$300,000 in EZ funds have been allocated to ETP and seven EZ residents and three EZ businesses have graduated from the program. ASFSC plans to continue working with graduates through 2001 to finalize their business plans and provide technical assistance and financing.

For more information contact Luis Mora, Executive Director, American Street Financial Services Center, at 215-426-3882.

## **Investing in Small Businesses Makes a Huge Impact**

### **Springfield, Massachusetts, EC**

There is no better way to help a community grow than by investing in its small businesses, and that is exactly what the Technical Assistance Program (TAP) does in the City of Springfield. Through March 2000, 25 minority-owned businesses in 10 neighborhoods throughout the EC have received grants ranging from \$2,000 to \$5,000. The \$300,000 program should assist between 60 and 100 small businesses in the Springfield EC by the completion of the program. The region as a whole has benefited from the creation of new jobs and increased employment opportunities.

“It is an exciting time in the City of Springfield,” says Roberto Nieves, Director of Business Development at the Affiliated Chambers of Commerce of Greater Springfield. “We have brought together an educational, professional, and financial support system for small business and we are creating an exciting entrepreneurial spirit in our enterprise community.”

Cosponsored by the Affiliated Chambers of Commerce, the grant program serves all existing businesses located within the EC. Among the neighborhoods served by the initiative are Bay, Brightwood, Hill-McKnight, Lower Forest Park, Lower Liberty Heights, MapleHigh/Six Corners, Memorial Square, Old Hill, South End, and some areas of Metro/Central Springfield. The only criterion for receiving a grant is that the existing business must have at least 1 year of federally filed financial records.

Each grant is intended to help small business owners obtain professional services to improve their businesses. “If you can show us some professional services needed by your specific business, we will listen,” says Nieves. Professional services used have included legal, accounting, book-keeping, marketing and advertising, business planning, and architectural. Anything else the owner may think is essential to small business growth will be considered.

Once an application has been approved by the EC Board's Economic Development Committee, the business owner receives a list of participating vendors and the grant recipient proceeds to interview them. Once a decision is made, a voucher is signed, beginning a financial agreement among the vendor, the recipient, and the local chamber of commerce. The chamber monitors the process and pays the vendor only after the recipient is satisfied with the professional services.

Working in collaboration with the Springfield Peer Lending Program—Working Capital Group and the Springfield Technical Community College's Enterprise Center, TAP offers preliminary training for local business owners such as Pre-Venture training for startup businesses and Venture (Fast Trac I) for established businesses. For startup businesses, completion of the training is a prerequisite for receiving a technical assistance grant.

Other partners in the program include the Massachusetts Small Business Center, the U.S. Small Business Administration, Mason Square Community Development Corporation, Brightwood Development Corporation, and the Western Massachusetts Enterprise Fund Micro-Lending Program.

For more information contact Roberto Nieves, Director of Business Development, Affiliated Chambers of Commerce of Greater Springfield, at 413-755-1368.







## Revolving Loan Fund Helps Small Businesses Start and Grow

### Northeast Louisiana Delta, Louisiana, EC

In May 1997 the Northeast Louisiana Delta EC used \$270,000 in Social Services Block Grant funds from their EC designation to leverage approximately \$1.5 million in direct government funding to establish a revolving loan fund. The EC's revolving loan fund and microloan fund provided 15 loans to local businesses from 1997 to 1999.

The Northeast Louisiana University Small Business Development Center (NLUSBDC) assists the Northeast Louisiana Delta EC in local business development efforts. NLUSBDC provides management and technical assistance to current and potential small business owners and entrepreneurs, and it periodically conducts workshops and seminars to assist small business owners.

For more information contact Moses Junior Williams, Director, Northeast Louisiana Delta EC, at 318-574-0995.

## USDA Grants Nurture Growth of Rural Arizona Businesses

### Arizona Border Region, Arizona, EC

The Nogales Practical, Portable, Educational Preparation (PPEP) Micro-Business Development, Inc., has received USDA funding for a rural business enterprise grant. PPEP has used the grant funding to provide expanded and enhanced access to business training and capital opportunities for more than 20 area businesses. PPEP also provided loans to some of these businesses; the average loan was \$250,000. PPEP opened a new office on July 20, 1999.

PPEP staff and Maria Jesus Gaxiola, a PPEP client from San Luis, were honored by President Clinton and U.S. Treasury Secretary Rubin on February 5, 1999, with the Access to Capital Award for best practices as a high-impact, credit-oriented model for promoting microenterprise in low-income, rural Arizona communities. PPEP has local offices in each of the three Arizona Border Region ECs.

For more information contact Joel Viers, Director, Arizona Border Region EC, at 520-432-5301.





# Business Incubators in the EZ/EC Initiative

## The Frogtown Entrepreneur Center Nurtures Small Businesses

St. Paul, Minnesota, EC

To increase employment and economic opportunities for low-income residents in St. Paul, the Frogtown Entrepreneur Center was established as a business incubator for startup and young microbusinesses owned by local residents. There, they can learn the skills needed to start and operate a business successfully.

Located in a renovated 7,800-square-foot commercial building, the center provides affordable space, entrepreneurship training, business retention assistance, marketing techniques, and startup business support. Opened in August 1997, the center houses 11 small businesses and has provided an estimated 20 to 30 jobs for EC residents. A recently acquired adjacent building will house four offices and two retail businesses.

“Providing a high-quality, flexible space for these entrepreneurs gives their business a real chance,” said Mike Temali, Executive Director of the Neighborhood Development Center (NDC). “Combined with the support they get from their neighbors in the building and from our technical assistance staff, their prospects for growth are excellent. Finally, they become visible role models in this low-income community due to being in the building.”

NDC is a nonprofit agency created by metropolitan area neighborhood organizations and Western Initiatives for Neighborhood Development (WIND), a community development corporation subsidiary of Western Bank. NDC works in conjunction with the Frogtown Action Alliance, a local community development corporation, to develop, own, and administer the center.

Most tenants are graduates of NDC’s Frogtown Neighborhood Micro-Entrepreneur Training and Support program. Since 1993 this NDC-sponsored program has trained more than 1,200 entrepreneurs. Nearly 350 program graduates have begun small businesses in a wide variety of professions, including landscaping, childcare, graphic design, catering, auto repair, and translation. Seventy percent of these businesses are owned by persons of color, and most are located in their own inner-city neighborhoods.

Both the center and the training program result from a strong collaboration among public and private investors from the community. Through March 2000 EC funds totaling \$150,000 have leveraged \$316,000 in city funds and \$32,000 in private grants.

For more information contact Mike Temali, Executive Director, Neighborhood Development Center, at 651-291-2480.

## **Akron Industrial Incubator Hatches More Successes in EC**

### **Akron, Ohio, EC**

Founded in 1983 the Akron Industrial Incubator (All) exists to ensure that businesses in the startup phase have access to the information and support necessary for success. Entrepreneurs can rent space from All at below-market rates and access a wide variety of administrative, management, technical, and professional services. Such services may include assistance with business planning, operations, marketing, financing, accounting, legal issues, employee issues, and loan and grant pre-applications. All clients may also take advantage of a Service Corps of Retired Executives mentoring program and are eligible to participate in group insurance.

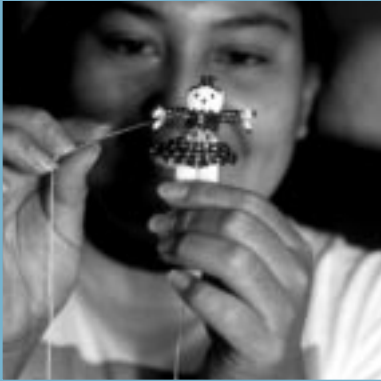
Through March 2000 All clients have created more than 500 jobs with \$30 million in annual payroll. Recognizing the important contributions All provided to the business community, the Akron EC decided to help finance a new business incubator space and services in downtown Akron. Through a consortium of banks, the EC, the U.S. Small Business Administration, and the City of Akron, \$1 million in financing was made available in 1 year alone to 92 firms located in the EC or employing EC residents.

For more information contact Michael Lehere, General Manager, All, at 216-375-2173.

## **Restored Historical Site Now Home to EC Businesses**

### **Tampa, Florida, EC**

The Tampa-Hillsborough Urban League is restoring the historic El Centro Español, a major architectural monument in the Tampa EC, to house corporate offices and to serve as a community skills training and cultural center. "While renewing a historic building, it will increase the community's social harmony and act as a catalyst to bring the entire community together and renew the viability of businesses," says Tampa Mayor Dick Greco of the \$5 million project.



El Centro Español, with its ornamentation of dark red brick and yellow terra cotta and its Moorish spires, was the heart of the Tampa Hispanic community from its opening in 1912 until the 1950s. Immigrant families of Spanish heritage from Cuba, Spain, and New York City—drawn by opportunities in the local cigar industry—built it as a *palacio* for sports programs, musical performances, ballroom dancing, banquets, citizenship programs, and mutual aid programs such as health and burial insurance. As the Hispanic community left West Tampa for the suburbs in the 1960s and 1970s and the neighborhood developed a reputation for drugs and prostitution, the grand old building declined and the city purchased it in 1983.



The Urban League took ownership of the 23,219-square-foot facility in 1998 through a fundraising campaign that received support from State and local governments, the Kellogg Foundation and other private philanthropists. Business and government leaders also assisted, including George Steinbrenner of the New York Yankees; Greco; and U.S. Representative Jim Davis, who was instrumental in obtaining a special congressional appropriation of \$900,000. The EC made a grant of \$150,000.

The new facility will provide training in clerical work, computer skills, and customer service taught through Hillsborough Community College. A local business will provide training in plumbing. The former ballroom, converted into offices, houses approximately 30 Urban League employees operating programs such as youth development, crime prevention, family counseling, general equivalency diploma preparation, and employment services that served more than 4,000 Tampa residents in 1999.

“This is a community treasure for the entire City of Tampa and the Hillsborough County area,” says League Development Director Shirley Foxx-Knowles. “Tampa will have the Super Bowl in 2001, and we are only a mile or two away from Raymond James Stadium. This is a good time to build West Tampa up.”

For more information contact Shirley Foxx-Knowles, Development Director, Tampa-Hillsborough Urban League, at 813-229-8117.



# Airport Business Park Achieves Keystone Opportunity Zone Status

## City of Lock Haven, Pennsylvania, EC

The State of Pennsylvania designated the Piper Airport Business Park in Lock Haven as a Keystone Opportunity Zone (KOZ) in 1999. This designation provides for certain tax advantages for businesses that locate in the KOZ. In addition to waiving all real estate taxes for a period beginning in 1999 and continuing for 12 years, the designation exempts businesses from State sales and use taxes.

The City of Lock Haven began planning the development of a business park at the William T. Piper Memorial Airport in 1996. A 1998 feasibility study pinpointed 24 acres of the south side of the airport for the development.

That same year, the city secured a \$500,000 grant from USDA's Rural Business Enterprise Program to conduct an archeological investigation of the site and prepare engineering designs. The Phase I and II archaeological investigation was completed in 1999 and engineering design began.

For more information contact Maria Boileau, Director, City of Lock Haven EC, at 570-893-5907.





# One-Stop Capital Shop

## One-Stop Capital Shop Energizes South Florida Community

### Miami/Dade County, Florida, EZ

Miami-Dade County received a Federal EZ designation to implement a Strategic Plan for economic opportunity that would generate small businesses within the designated zone. The Miami-Dade County Office of Community and Economic Development set up the EZ Center to serve as a one-stop capital shop. Under one roof the center offers everything a new entrepreneur needs to develop or improve a business in a central downtown location. It provides a full array of technical assistance and financial services for clients throughout the county.

The center houses representatives from public lenders, banks, and local development agencies as well as a small business administration resource library. In addition, the county has provided Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding to support various organizations in undertaking activities that would meet the Strategic Plan goals.

The EC Center has instituted microlending to new businesses in the EZ, which has led to increased sales for member businesses. These new businesses generate additional economic growth within the target areas and create new jobs and employment opportunities within the community. During the 1999 reporting period, the Miami-Dade County EZ achieved the following:

- Created 30 new businesses.
- Provided 5 loans for new businesses.
- Improved the appearance of dozens of businesses.
- Provided technical assistance to 414 businesses.
- Created 1,054 new jobs and retained 300 at-risk jobs.
- Provided 4,176 referrals, information group events, and tours.

The county committed \$2.8 million, or approximately 12 percent of its CDBG entitlement grant, to these ongoing activities.

The Miami-Dade County EZ planning process and the consolidated planning process produced a strategic vision of linking areas of growth with areas of distress. This approach of investment in education, training, and

capital helps to nurture and maintain healthy neighborhood businesses and entrepreneurial activity.

For more information contact Tony Edward Crapp Sr., Director, Miami-Dade County EZ, at 305-375-3431.

## **Business Empowerment Center Provides Critical Resources for Small and Medium-Sized EZ Businesses**

### **Baltimore, Maryland, EZ**

In Baltimore and other EZ cities, the majority of businesses are small or minority-owned and often need assistance accessing resources and opportunities. In an effort to focus on the needs of underserved businesses, Empower Baltimore Management Corporation (EBMC) allocated \$4.2 million in 1996 to establish a Business Empowerment Center (BEC) to link Zone businesses to capital, land, a skilled workforce, growth opportunities, and professional development workshops.

One business that received assistance from the BEC is Charm City Signs. Owner Joe Maruschak says, "My business was just a dream until I contacted the Empowerment Zone. They guided me through the financing and found a business location that is the envy of my competitors. In the 2 years since opening my business, the Zone has continually provided networking and procurement opportunities."

In partnership with several in-house organizations, the BEC has become a critical resource for EZ businesses. The U.S. Small Business Administration's One-Stop Capital Shop, Bank of America, and Professional Training Services (a technical assistance provider of business management, workforce, and marketing assistance) all are located in the BEC. In 2000, Morgan State University, Development Credit Fund, and Carrollton Bank also will locate in the BEC to broaden the range of services, resources, and opportunities available to EZ residents. Through the resources of the BEC and its partners, including the Baltimore Development Corporation and the Maryland Department of Business and Economic Development, more than 100 companies have opened or expanded in the EZ and created more than 3,200 new jobs.

For aspiring business owners, entrepreneurial training is available through the BEC. Since May 1998, more than 50 EZ entrepreneurs have received training in developing a business plan, starting and operating a business, marketing, and recordkeeping.

For more information contact Michael Preston, Chief of Public Information and Marketing, EBMC, at 410-783-4400.

## Shop Encourages El Paso Community Partnerships

### El Paso, Texas, EZ

Formerly, when prospective business owners wanted to open new businesses in the El Paso EZ, they had to travel to various locations around the city to fulfill their technical assistance and lending needs. In 2000 the El Paso EZ has brought together lenders and technical assistance professionals from all over the city to establish a one-stop capital shop (OSCS). The El Paso Business Resource Center provides a number of services such as business development assistance, financial planning help, and even a development design shop. With the new center, the EZ plans to promote the growth of entrepreneurship in the community and provide greater access to capital.

Located in the Center for Workforce Preparedness, the OSCS is equidistant from the two noncontiguous parts of the EZ. This area is not only convenient but also provides a place where residents feel comfortable. The 10,000-square-foot facility provides space for approximately 30 offices that surround a common area with training and conference space, a comprehensive business resource library, 10 computer workstations, administrative support, and a reception area.

The center includes a small business development center, a procurement technical assistance center, a business information center, the local Service Corps of Retired Executives, and ACCION Texas (a microlender). Additional programs located in the facility include the local U.S. Small Business Administration, the Business Resource Division of the Greater El Paso Chamber of Commerce, representatives of the City and County of El Paso, La Mujer Obara (Center for Displaced Women), the University of Texas at El Paso College of Business, Franchise Business Center, Family-Owned Business Center, the El Paso Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, the El Paso Black Chamber of Commerce, and the Upper Rio Grande Certified Development Company. The organizations are complemented by two offices devoted to bank and nonbank lending agencies.

The Greater El Paso Chamber of Commerce is donating the office space. The development cost of the facility, approximately \$200,000, is also being paid by the chamber of commerce. The monthly operating costs of the facility are covered by the chamber but will be offset by monthly fees paid by the tenants.

For more information contact Blake Fry, Grants Coordinator, City of El Paso, at 915-541-4265.



## Louisville's Nia Center Creates Pathways to Opportunities

### Louisville, Kentucky, EC

Imagine a centrally located landmark building that combines all the resources needed to enhance economic opportunity—capital, training, professional advice, even space for small and emerging businesses to begin operations—with a major transit center. Add a major marketing campaign to publicize those resources and watch the number of people who use the center grow.

*Nia* means *purpose* in Swahili. The purpose of the Nia Center is to create pathways of economic opportunity for Louisville residents. Because of the wide array of services this one-stop center offers, it has succeeded beyond expectations. Beginning in January 2000, says Carolyn Gatz, Lead Staff Representative for the EC, Mayor David L. Armstrong invested \$50,000 of city funds in a radio and bus advertising blitz for the center that is attracting 1,000 people a month (often more than 100 a day) to the center.

The Nia Center, located in the middle of the Louisville EC, is a beautiful building with a soaring glass front that will add an important piece of public art—a 15-foot stone sculpture of clasping hands—in spring 2000. Purchase and renovation of the building—a transportation hub for major Transit Authority of River City (TARC) routes in western Louisville—was financed with a Federal Transit Administration Livable Communities grant. Getting to the center is easy because it is a major transit hub for buses, including the Nia Night Owl, a door-to-door service for reverse-commute workers on late shifts that averages more than 80 riders each night.

The Nia Center's mission is to provide a seamless, one-stop environment that builds on the strengths of area residents to enhance business growth and development, to cultivate a marketable workforce, and to improve mobility through increased access to public transportation. "Marketing our services is essential," says Gatz. "We've proved it works."

The Nia Center is home to Career Resources, Inc., a one-stop career resource center that combines information on all public agencies and funding streams in one major center with a computer lab for job searches. Across the hall is the Workforce Skills Academy, a customized training program for selected growth sectors, funded with an EC grant and currently providing training in data entry, construction, and certification for nursing assistants. There is also an adult education center. Career Resources, Inc., is attracting more than 1,000 people to the center each month for career counseling, skill assessments, and job placement. The Workforce Skills Academy will provide customized training in certified nursing assistance to a new class each month, and recently added monthly sessions on data entry, in partnership with a local bank.

The Nia Center also offers business incubator space that can be leased to emerging and startup businesses, operated by the Louisville Community Development Bank (LCDB)-Enterprise Group. During its first 3 years of operation, LCDB, located across the street, provided more than \$17 million in loans to more than 137 businesses and created or saved more than 700 jobs. The LCDB-Enterprise Group, a nonprofit affiliate of the bank, specializes in established firms that are ready to move up. Its goals this year include developing relationships, expanding its business loan portfolio, and tripling the number of tenants in its business incubator.

The third floor houses the Louisville Business Resource Center, which hosts a small business development center, the Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE), and the U.S. Small Business Administration and offers professional guidance and Internet access. During February 2000, the Louisville Business Resource Center had more than 400 client visits, working with people to explore their business ideas and linking them with counselors.

Business development partners have implemented a shared assessment and referral system and created a tracking system for all business development services to avoid duplication.

The consensus of the Nia Center's business service providers is that aspiring entrepreneurs often focus on acquiring capital without considering the skills they need to successfully operate a business. Their goal is to increase the number of business loan applicants who come with those skills already in place.

For more information contact Carolyn Gatz, Special Assistant to the Mayor, City of Louisville, at 502-458-6813.



## **Enterprising Storeowner Shows the Way for Central-City Retailing**

### **Oakland, California, EEC**

Central cities' dearth of retail stores tends to be one of their most intractable problems. But in West Oakland, there is hope for solving this problem, and it is as easy to see as the steady stream of customers entering the new branch of The Athlete's Foot. The store was opened in late 1999 by a local entrepreneur with strong financial and technical support from the EEC.

The store's owner, Michael Wilhite, is a West Oakland native who had worked in finance for Silicon Valley software firms. He decided it was time to get involved as an entrepreneur back in his home neighborhood, and he looked at the City of Oakland's Web site for clues to the kind of business to pursue. He noticed there did not seem to be much retail activity, exactly

what West Oakland needed. The EEC neighborhood has a population of approximately 30,000 lower middle-income people and few stores of any kind, although it is well located near the port and developers have shown signs of interest as the city's prospects in general improve. Persuading The Athlete's Foot to allow a franchise in such a neighborhood took Wilhite some time, so he also started talking with the EEC and successfully applied for seed financing for the store.

"Once I got through the approval process, the EEC's really been there for me with whatever I've needed," Wilhite explains. "I simply call the one-stop small business center and know that I'm going to get a helpful response." The one-stop center is an arm of the city's economic development agency, which offers comprehensive services and referrals for people like Wilhite. In his case, the one-stop center committed \$150,000 in EEC funds for upfront financing for the store, which Wilhite supplemented with \$50,000 of his own funds and a \$32,000 construction grant from the city's redevelopment authority. Several of the one-stop center's strong national and local bank partners have helped the store with financing and ongoing technical assistance. One partner, Community Bank of the Bay, has extended the store a line of credit. The city council has also been very supportive.

After a few months, the store was prospering. Wilhite was able to hire a staff of four full-time and three part-time employees and pay them more than the minimum wage. Given the increasing residential developer interest in West Oakland, he forecasts a "huge economic benefit in the future" as the store serves a growing number of local homeowners. In the meantime, the store's business was growing through word of mouth from satisfied customers, and Wilhite was planning an advertising campaign. When the store opened, the *Oakland Tribune* ran a laudatory front-page story headlined "Major Shoe Chain Shows Faith in Native Son's Business Dream."

For more information contact Michael Wilhite, Owner, The Athlete's Foot, West Oakland, at 510-465-4675.

# Business Assistance in the EZ/EC Initiative

## Contractor Support Program Supports Portland Businesses

### Portland, Oregon, EC

Located in the Portland EC, the Contractor Support Program (CSP) was created in 1995 to develop the capacity of minority, women-owned, and emerging construction firms and to strengthen economic development in the communities served by the Housing Development Center (HDC). Recognizing that these firms face challenges that prohibit them from successfully completing their portion of construction contracts, the agency has assisted 30 firms since 1995. The estimated impact on the local economy is \$6.75 million since 1997.

One of the key components of CSP is contractor education. Business owners receive training in business management, estimating, bidding, accounting, and contract negotiation. Program clients are eligible for relevant courses at Portland Community College to strengthen their businesses.

The principal funders of CSP have been the EC and the City of Portland's Bureau of Housing and Community Development. Other partners include the Black United Fund, Portland Community College, Portland Development Commission, Oregon State Economic Development Department, and other community development corporations.

"The CSP has consistently informed us of construction opportunities that are appropriate for the capacity of our firm," says Michael A. Hall, owner of CRH Construction Company. CSP has provided good recommendations to owners and general contractors about their capacity, which has enabled them to increase their volume by 150 percent since 1998, Hall adds.

Program Manager Tony Jones says, "The CSP works in partnership with contractors to develop sound business frameworks and in achieving their business goals. We view our role as part of a comprehensive effort in community revitalization."

For more information contact Tony Jones, Program Manager, HDC, at 503-335-3668.







## Working Smart Program Offers Business Assistance in Enterprise Community

### Nashville, Tennessee, EC

The Metropolitan Development and Housing Agencies' Working Smart is an 8-week entrepreneurial course that provides classroom training on topics ranging from accounting to taxes to sales. Working Smart, with oversight from the Southside Enterprise Center, contributes to successful entrepreneurial development in the Nashville EC. The program provides students with opportunities to prepare business plans to use in their entrepreneurial efforts. If a graduate's plan proposes a business that is needed in the community, a revolving loan fund is available to provide help with initial financing of equipment and inventory. The loans (up to \$6,000) are repaid over a 3-year period.

"To reduce the likelihood of defaulting, and to promote good business practices, we provide assistance as long as the owner needs," says Tera Hambrick, Loan Manager for the Southside Enterprise Center. The center offers services such as bookkeeping, marketing assistance, publications development, and identification of additional funding sources. Business owners are able to use these resources and learn from other business owners during periodic meetings held at the center.

The center maintains contact with business owners as long as they need assistance. In many cases this relationship continues for years, with some former clients serving as board members. "The staff is committed to helping the owners, and we interact with them on a daily basis to ensure their success," Hambrick adds.

Since the program's start in 1992, the center has helped to facilitate 34 loans for business development in areas such as hair care, landscaping, baked goods, auto detailing, computer services, and retail clothing. The center continues to make loans available for new business development and now approves approximately 12 loans per year to assist in providing needed goods and services to the community.

For more information contact Benita Davis, Executive Director, Southside Enterprise Center, at 615-726-0181.

## EZ Loans Help Two Woman-Owned Businesses Get Established

### Bronx, New York, EZ

Through separate small business loans, the Bronx Overall Economic Development Corporation (BOEDC) has helped two woman entrepreneurs establish themselves while providing valuable services to the Bronx EZ.

“We continue to welcome businesses to the Zone and to help the ones that are already here to succeed. These two women have carved their own niche in the marketplace and are now able to capitalize on it—all they needed was just a helping hand,” says Bronx Borough President Fernando Ferrer.

A \$25,000 loan to Luz Elena Gomez in June 1999 enabled the Peruvian immigrant to overcome a family crisis and maintain her popular Caribbean and Spanish-American restaurant in the Bruckner Arts and Antique District in the EZ. A February 1998 BOEDC/EZ loan of \$30,000 allowed Patricia Holbrook to move NY Level, Inc.—a stenographic legal reporting business—to larger quarters and update her equipment and furnishings.

“We saw the need for a restaurant down here,” says Gomez of her decision to locate a “home cooking” restaurant in the EZ. “The workers here do not get real food except for fast food places. We were also told that other businesses and homes are soon to come.” Gomez, who came to the United States in 1995, made a start in the food business by preparing daily lunch specials for on-duty doormen employed in apartment buildings along Central Park West and taking telephone orders from her apartment in Upper Manhattan. In May 1998, stretching her personal credit to the limit, she opened El Punto del Sabor (The Flavor Point) in a storefront on Lincoln Avenue (just off Bruckner Boulevard), serving breakfast and lunch. The restaurant was immediately popular but it was undercapitalized. Complications after the birth of her second child in March 1999 forced Gomez to close it for 6 weeks. The loan from the EZ enabled her to pay off her creditors and reopen with better cash flow and plans to expand her hours.

“Business has been good since we put our faith in the hands of the BOEDC,” says Gomez. “It took a while for the people to know we were here. Before, we only cleared \$150 a day after expenses. Now it is approximately \$700 a day. I have a better business plan and I am part of a changing community.”

Another assisted business, NY Level Reporting, is the only stenographic reporting agency based in the Bronx. It is also the only such firm in New York City certified by New York State as a minority- and woman-owned business.

“My niche is that there were no other full-service court reporting agencies in the Bronx,” says President and sole proprietor Patricia Holbrook, a trained stenographer since 1975. “When I opened in 1995, the phone



directory only carried one such company.” NY Level provides convenient facilities across the street from the Bronx courthouse where law firms can take depositions—up to three can be accommodated at the same time—for upcoming court cases. Since the Bronx courthouse has no separate room available for this purpose, depositions previously were taken at crowded tables in the county clerk’s office or in public hallways of the courthouse.

“We at BOEDC/EZ have a serious commitment to and understanding of the instrumental role that women play in their communities,” Maria Canales, Director of the Bronx EZ, says. “The Bronx EZ has been established to promote economic development by growing entrepreneurial models of success. These two woman-owned businesses provide us with exactly that.”

For more information contact Maria Canales, Director, BOEDC, at 718-590-6034.

## Developer Group’s Coaching Helps Bring Back Retail Services

### Milwaukee, Wisconsin, EC

Once known as Milwaukee’s second downtown, the northside commercial corridor of Martin Luther King Drive in the Milwaukee EC has suffered disinvestment for decades. Retail services that most people take for granted have been unavailable, and the community development corporations most likely to take on a pioneering retail development in the EC often are inexperienced and lack the technical skills needed to pull the deals together.

“We had heard the barrier is money,” says Rich Warren, President of the Community Marketplace Development Institute (CMDI). “In our estimation, there is investment money out there for the inner cities. The primary problem is the expertise gap.”

In 1999, CMDI, a consortium of developers, provided technical assistance (TA) on retail projects in the EZ or EC of seven cities: Albany, Atlanta, Des Moines, Milwaukee, Oakland, Tacoma, and Washington. CMDI helped them evaluate sites, prepare appropriate packages of information, and attend the annual meeting of the International Council of Shopping Centers in Las Vegas to meet with potential retail partners. In 2000, the City of Milwaukee is extending the TA program with private foundation funding and Community Development Block Grant funds.

“We show them the ABCs of how to put a development project together,” says Randy Roth, Director of the Martin Luther King Drive Business Improvement District (BID) and a local consultant to CMDI in Milwaukee. BID has recruited eight national retailers to the Milwaukee EC during the

past 5 years. The retail projects, four of them within the EC, range from a Ponderosa family restaurant to a Hollywood Video store and vary in budget size from \$350,000 to \$15 million. Roth is currently guiding five community groups, including Lisbon Avenue Neighborhood Development Corporation and La Causa, Inc.

“There is a lack of infrastructure for development in distressed, inner-city neighborhoods,” Roth explains. “Community development organizations are being asked to create the infrastructure, but they don’t have the experience or the specialized skills.” To put a commercial development deal together requires staff with expertise in reading financial statements, access to predevelopment funds and sources of equity financing, and familiarity with national organizations that can help such as Fannie Mae, the National Cooperative Bank, the Enterprise Foundation, and Local Initiatives Service Corporation. These national organizations have financial products designed for inner-city revitalization that are not being fully utilized, according to Roth, “CMDI is bridging it, making it work between institutional products and those users out there.”

Roth characterizes the inner-city retail market, with its density and large, multigenerational families, as underserved and full of potential. Milwaukee inner-city residents typically drive 20 minutes or ride a bus to the suburbs to rent videos or purchase groceries or clothing.

There is a natural progression of retail businesses returning to the city, Roth points out. First come the fast food stores and the drugstores. These are followed by groceries, videos, discount apparel, and then middle-income apparel. National fast food chains and pharmacies have recently opened stores in the EC. The groups that CMDI is assisting are negotiating with the other types of retail stores mentioned.

“It is tough to develop in a few months all the necessary skills to put these deals together,” Roth says. “But over time they will build their internal capacity, because these are learned skills that can be picked up through TA.”

For more information contact Randy Roth, Director, Martin Luther King Drive BID, at 414-331-1939.

## **Moving and Storage Company Takes Advantage of SBA HUBZone Program**

### **Santa Ana, California, EZ**

Alex Uribe, owner of Alex Moving & Storage and a resident of Santa Ana, permanently established his business in the Santa Ana HUBZone with the purchase of a new facility in the City of Santa Ana’s EZ. Alex Moving & Storage employs more than 115 EZ residents and expects to add 75 new jobs over the next 2 years as a result of the move. The \$4.7 million relocation was financed partially through the U.S. Small Business Administration’s (SBA’s) 504-loan program.



Uribe started the company in 1984 with one truck; by 2000 he owned more than 100 vehicles. As an owner-operator for North American Van Lines, Uribe operates North American's largest hauling fleet in California and its third largest in an 11-State western region. The company offers relocation services, including packaging, storage, hauling, and setup.

Uribe sponsors several local baseball and soccer teams. The company also generously supports children's charities in Mexico that assist underprivileged families. During the holidays Uribe delivers food, clothing, and toys to several small towns in Mexico. He also has volunteered the company's resources to assist the Community Development Council, a nonprofit corporation that provides a variety of services to low- and moderate-income individuals.

Recently, Bank of America and Southland Economic Development Corp nominated Uribe for the 1999 SBA Small Business Person of the Year Award. Uribe is also a finalist in this year's competition and was recognized at a recent SBA Small Business Award Luncheon as part of a nationwide salute to small business.

The HUBZone Empowerment Contracting program provides Federal contracting opportunities for qualified small businesses located in distressed areas. Fostering the growth of these Federal contractors as viable businesses helps to empower communities, create jobs, and attract private investment.

The SBA regulates and implements the HUBZone Program. It certifies firms for eligibility to receive HUBZone contracts and maintains a list of qualified HUBZone small businesses that Federal agencies can use to locate prospective vendors. To search for eligible HUBZone businesses, contracting officers can use SBA's Procurement Marketing and Access Network (PRO-Net). SBA also adjudicates protests of eligibility to receive contracts.

For more information contact Sandy Sutton, District Director, U.S. SBA, at 714-550-7420.

## Cleveland EZ Partner Assists Fast-Growing Companies

### Cleveland, Ohio, EZ

Three businesses in the Cleveland EZ have been named to a prestigious list of the 100 fastest growing private companies in America's inner cities. The national ranking, published in the May 1999 issue of *Inc. Magazine*, was compiled by the magazine in partnership with the nonprofit Initiative for a Competitive Inner City (ICIC) in Boston.

"Last year, the City of Cleveland had more companies on the list than any other city in the United States," says EZ Director Valarie McCall. "And, out of six companies, three were EZ companies."

All three EZ companies appeared in the upper half of the *Inc. Magazine* list. Ranking 26th on the list was Complete Personnel Management (CPM), a

9-year-old company that administers retirement plans, health insurance, employee recruitment, and workers' compensation claims for client companies. Colormatrix of Cleveland, which has manufactured liquid colorants for the plastics industry since 1978, was ranked 37th. Ullman Electric, which placed 50th, is an electrical contracting company established in 1987.

While none of the recognized companies have received business loans through the EZ, McCall says that all received technical assistance from the MidTown Cleveland Development Corporation (CDC), an EZ partner that operates in the city's MidTown neighborhood, a 55-block area just east of downtown Cleveland. The corporation receives \$70,000 each year from the EZ and employs development specialists that work with local businesses, says McCall.

MidTown Cleveland Development Corporation was established in the early 1980s by 46 corporate, small business, and institutional leaders who banded together to address problems caused by a deteriorating commercial district along Prospect Avenue.

"Prospect Avenue was plagued by blight and neglect," says McCall. "Businesses couldn't afford to pick up and move out to the suburbs, so they got together to clean up the neighborhood. Now, MidTown is the most successful and independent of the CDCs in the Empowerment Zone."

According to a 1998 report by the Brookings Institution, the corporation's revitalization efforts resulted in measurable successes between 1983 and 1997. Assessed real estate values in the neighborhood have risen 55 percent for commercial property and 47 percent for residential land, according to the report. Investment activities have resulted in the establishment of 425 new companies that employ between 2 and 100 workers. The area has retained 6,000 jobs due to expansion, substantial capital investment, and/or relocation of existing companies within MidTown. It also gained 5,500 new jobs from expansion and/or relocation.

For more information contact Valarie McCall, Director, Cleveland EZ, at 216-664-2804.



## **Business Mentors Provide Guidance, Increase Economic Competitiveness for Small Businesses**

### **Houston, Texas, EEC**

Business LINC (Learning, Information, Networking, and Collaboration) is an innovative organization that pairs small businesses in mentoring relationships with larger, more successful ones. The large businesses provide practical business advice to their smaller counterparts and focus on mentoring small businesses located in distressed areas. Interested small businesses

may register through the Internet to find a potential mentor. Intermediaries that help bring together protégé companies with potential mentors also may be contacted for help through this Internet service, located at [businesslinc.sba.gov/](http://businesslinc.sba.gov/).

Diva Garza, founder of ITC Personnel Services in Houston, benefited from three different corporate mentoring relationships, each undertaken with a specific goal for her company and the mentoring company. ITC is a temporary placement agency that was purchased by a larger company in September 1998. ITC had 34 employees and revenue of approximately \$17 million at the time of the sale.

In 1994 Garza partnered with Exxon through a formal mentoring program offered by the Houston Minority Business Council. Exxon helped Garza establish three different core units (information technology, administrative, and bilingual and training) within ITC and provided staff training for each unit. Exxon also developed an advertising campaign endorsing ITC as an Exxon supplier. Most significantly, Exxon helped ITC plan and develop a training center, which provides computer training to the personnel that ITC places with other companies.

In 1995 Garza established a Dallas office and participated in a mentoring program sponsored by the North Texas Commission and the Dallas/Fort Worth Minority Business Development Council. Mentoring company EDS helped ITC gain expertise in providing staff with information technology skills.

In 1998 ITC became the onsite prime supplier of temporary employees to the GTE Texas/New Mexico Regional Headquarters. GTE included ITC in internal business development functions, providing ITC with exposure to other GTE decisionmakers. Garza notes that “GTE took a small minority firm and, through the efforts of an entire department devoted to minority business development, positioned ITC to prime contractor status.”

Under GTE’s mentorship program with minority companies, four GTE employees assist a small company. An executive partner provides personal counseling and introductions to buyers from other GTE divisions and three subject-area experts offer technical advice. At the start of the relationship, potential small business partners list the top three areas where they need assistance. GTE then surveys its personnel to find the in-house resources that address those needs. Subject area experts often come from LAN management, financial planning, accounting, and marketing. Through its Mentor-Protégé program, GTE builds relationships that reach current and future customers. GTE’s customer base is composed chiefly of small businesses, and GTE’s fastest growing market is composed of minority- and women-owned small businesses. Therefore, GTE wants to ensure that its supplier base more closely replicates the customer base.

For more information contact Donet Graves Jr., Executive Director, Business LINC, at 202-833-7349.

## Small Business Development Center Offers Technical Assistance to Local Businesses

### City of Lock Haven, Pennsylvania, EC

Lock Haven University's Small Business Development Center (SBDC), funded in part by the City of Lock Haven EC, offers one-on-one technical consulting to startup businesses. The SBDC also offers high-quality, low-cost training seminars to the local business community. All services provided are customer oriented, and the staff consultant's work schedule is based on client need. Small business training seminars continue to expand as demand for training increases.

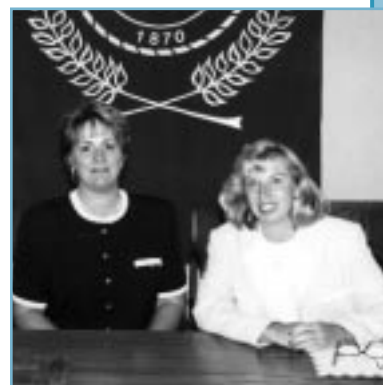
SBDC and its director "have been key components of the economic revival in Clinton County," says Wes Grand, Chief Operating Officer of the Clinton County Economic Partnership. Dawn Datt, who recently received the Sam Walton Business Leadership Award, is in her fourth year as SBDC Director.

"For a long time the missing link in our Economic Development process was having someone who could work with our small businesses," says Grand. "Dawn was the perfect choice. Her background in the banking industry coupled with her commitment to customer service was a winning combination."

The SBDC has reported tremendous success over a 4-year period. The center has provided 1,850 hours of technical assistance and consulting to small and startup businesses since it opened its doors in March 1996. It has served 173 clients and has assisted them in obtaining \$3.3 million in financing. One-on-one consulting has helped to create and retain more than 100 jobs. The SBDC, in conjunction with the West Branch Technology Center, also has presented 24 seminars to more than 250 attendees.

Although the SBDC's EC allocation will be depleted by June 2000, the center has leveraged additional funding through a USDA Rural Business Enterprise Grant and the small business programs of the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development.

For more information contact Maria Boileau, Director, City of Lock Haven EC, at 570-893-5907.



## EC Leaders Attend Academy for Economic Development

### Central Savannah River Area, Georgia, EC

The Academy for Economic Development is a program developed by the State of Georgia to train economic development leaders. The academy program provides an understanding of the critical processes, strategies, and solutions involved in improving communities and achieving success in today's global economy.



Participants from the Central Savannah River EC can return to their community and serve as catalysts for change. They have a better understanding of the opportunities for regional collaboration and public/private partnerships. They also have a better understanding of Georgia's economic development vision, strategy, and legislative objectives.

Since the program's inception in 1998, 86 participants have started training, with 76 graduating. The academy has trained participants in all aspects of economic development. These individuals have received exposure to best practices and to Georgia's economic development resources.

The program is sponsored by the Association of County Commissioners; the Georgia Chamber of Commerce; the Georgia Corporation for Economic Development; the Georgia Department of Community Affairs; the Georgia Department of Industry, Trade and Tourism; the Georgia Department of Technical and Adult Education; the Georgia General Assembly; Georgia Power Company; Georgia Tech University; MEAG Power; Oglethorpe Power Corporation; the University of Georgia; and Wachovia Bank.

For more information contact Grady Sampson, Director, Central Savannah River Area EC, at 706-554-0342.

## **Entrepreneurship Center Promotes Business Startup and Expansion**

### **Kentucky Highlands, Kentucky, EZ**

The Jackson County Entrepreneurship Center seeks to foster the free enterprise system through economic development activities and to encourage an entrepreneurial environment in Jackson County. The center provides classes and technical assistance to local entrepreneurs to assist them in starting their own businesses.

The center, located in McKee, conducts ongoing recruitment and instruction on how to start a new business or expand existing ventures. It provides follow-up consulting assistance to ensure the success of its clients. The Jackson County EZ Community, Inc., sponsors the center through a contract with Eastern KY University and provides funding through an EZ grant.

In October 1999, Barbara Collins, along with her son Larry, purchased machines and began her own sewing business. This Jackson County native, an accomplished seamstress with considerable knowledge and skill, took advantage of the entrepreneurship classes to learn about business ownership. She then used her training to start Collins Manufacturing.

Her business already has three full-time employees. Products on which they are working include straps for a missile protector (a military contract), cushion tops for stools, and camouflage hunting clothes. Collins sells some of the camouflage clothes locally as well. She also provides support and technical assistance to other local residents trying to establish sewing businesses.

Collins' success illustrates the importance of the business entrepreneurship classes and the support of the EZ program.

For more information contact Jerry Rickett, President and CEO, Kentucky Highlands Investment Corporation, at 606-864-5175.

## **Businesses, Jobs Come to Luna County** City of Deming, New Mexico, EC

During the past year, Luna County successfully attracted two new businesses: Solitaire Homes and Southern Perfection Fabrication. In addition to receiving special incentives from USDA Rural Business Programs and the EC Social Service Block Grant, both businesses were encouraged to locate in Luna County by incentives offered under the New Mexico Local Economic Development Act. This State designation allows the sale of land to incoming businesses at \$1,000 per acre, well below standard market price.

Solitaire Homes produces upscale manufactured homes. This business opened its doors in Deming in fall 1999. The new plant will employ 200 semiskilled construction workers.

Southern Perfection Fabrication, a Georgia-based manufacturing company, discovered Luna County when the EC designation on the county Web site caught the eye of the company's owner. This plant will employ 25 workers at startup and another 40 in the near future.

For more information contact John Strand, Director, City of Deming EC, at 505-546-8848.

## **USDA Chooses La Jicarita for Enterprise Facilitation Demonstration Project** La Jicarita, New Mexico, EC

The USDA National Office of Community Development has funded Enterprise Facilitation Demonstration Projects in six communities, including the La Jicarita EC (LJEC). An Enterprise Facilitation Project helps provide technical assistance and training for private enterprises. Its sole function is to support the development of small and emerging businesses. Substantial employment improvement, value-added wealth, sustainability, and an improved quality of life are the goals of the LJEC Enterprise Facilitation Project.



LJEC believes that local communities must own and operate an economic development model for it to become sustainable. Enterprise facilitation is a proven model for developing new jobs and new wealth from within communities that can help start new businesses. This model serves as an implementation mechanism for for-profit business creation.

A technical service contract between New Mexico State University (Rio Arriba County Extension Service) and LJEC focuses on helping businesses to develop and on establishing relationships with the community. This facilitation process reaches deep into communities to identify and support people who are in the inspirational and creative stages of business development.

LJEC provides focused, long-term, quality technical assistance to small and emerging private businesses in underserved and underrepresented communities. The program also provides a caring and cooperative atmosphere that nurtures new business, new jobs, and new wealth.

For more information contact Ron Martinez, Director, La Jicarita EC, at 1-800-458-7323.

# Large Job-Creation Projects

## Crosstown Center Project Creates 740 Jobs, Pays for Employment Training of EZ Residents

### Boston, Massachusetts, EZ

Since 1998 Crosstown Associates LLC and the Boston EZ Community Advisory Board have been planning the development of the Crosstown Center, a mixed-use project that will house a 12-screen cineplex with stadium seating, a limited-service hotel, a 300-car parking garage, 70,000 square feet of retail and office space, and a food court. The project, located on the site of the former Digital Equipment Corporation in the Boston EZ, will cover 800,000 square feet on 6.7 acres of land. The total development cost is \$90 million; EZ tax-exempt bond financing will account for \$48 million of the construction money.

The center is projected to create 350 construction jobs and 740 permanent jobs for EZ residents. Employment opportunities will be available in the hotel, theater, retail, garage, and office buildings and will cover a variety of job categories ranging from entry-level to managerial, both full- and part-time.

“What is unique about this project is that the EZ has been able to work with the developer to get them to allocate \$1.5 million for employment training money. Without the training funds, EZ residents would not have as great an opportunity to connect to this economic opportunity,” says Reginald Nunnally, Executive Director for the Boston EZ. The funds will be paid to a consortium of five community-based job training and social service providers and two of their neighborhood affiliates to promote employment, retention, and career development for local EZ residents.

Service providers include Morgan Memorial Goodwill Industries, Action for Boston Community Development, Inc., South End Neighborhood Action Program, Asian American Civic Association, Crittenton Hastings House, La Alianza Hispana, and Julie’s Learning Center. These partners will provide outreach and publicity, individual assessment and referral of job candidates, education and training services, and ongoing case management followup.

The training program, called Transitions to Employment, will provide entry-level job-readiness training to prepare unskilled individuals for employment opportunities at the Crosstown Center. The program will also

offer targeted, job-specific training, including a hospitality training program linked with the Crosstown Center Hotel. Other services that will be available include adult basic education, occupational skills training, case management, family support, childcare, and job placement. Training will begin in fall 2000 and will be ongoing.

“Because this has been so successful, we look forward to replicating this type of training program and its funding on other EZ projects. We think that it could be used as a model for other communities as well,” says Nunnally.

For more information contact Reginald Nunnally, Executive Director, Boston EZ, at 617-445-3413.



## Manhattan Initiative To Place 1,600 EZ Residents in Jobs

### New York, New York, EZ

At the recent grand opening of the Upper Manhattan EZ's (UMEZ's) East Harlem Career Center, Representative Charles Rangel, D-NY, stated that given the Nation's current prosperity, this generation could rightly be criticized if it did not put the vast majority of people to work. Rangel was addressing the audience at the opening celebration for the second of three UMEZ Career Centers to open throughout Upper Manhattan as part of a \$6.9 million UMEZ Workforce Development Initiative.

On January 21, 2000, the East Harlem Council for Community Improvement (EHCCI) opened the East Harlem Career Center to provide job training and placement services to East Harlem residents. With an \$800,000 grant from UMEZ, EHCCI will train and place 400 persons in positions in the fields of customer service and home healthcare. Raul Rodriguez, founder and Executive Director of EHCCI, states, “For over 20 years EHCCI has acknowledged that skills development, training, and job placement [are] the best social service[s] we could provide. In partnership with UMEZ, the EHCCI East Harlem Career Center will be first in ensuring that people who wish to work will always have a place where employment can become a reality.”

In Washington Heights, the Northern Manhattan Improvement Corporation (NMIC) is ensuring jobs for residents in the Washington Heights and Inwood communities. NMIC received a \$310,000 grant from UMEZ in fall 1999 to provide customer service training and placement for 155 residents. According to Julie Levine, Director of Workforce Development, “The Washington Heights Career Center has made a major difference in our ability to help residents find employment at a living wage.”

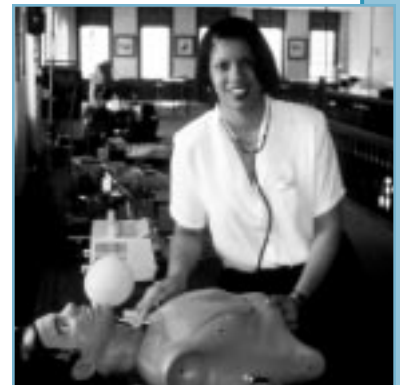
The third UMEZ Career Center, located in Central Harlem, is administered by Harlem Congregations for Community Improvement (HCCI). This center

provides office skills, customer service, media technology, and building maintenance training and placement services for 725 residents of Central and West Harlem. Paul Dunn, Vice President for Human Services at HCCI, believes that from the perspective of Central and West Harlem residents, “our career center is probably the most important opportunity for them and their families to become real stakeholders in the community.”

Altogether, the Workforce Development Initiative will train and place 1,600 EZ residents in jobs. In addition to intake, assessment, training, and placement (all standard aspects of workforce development programs), UMEZ’s initiative requires agencies to provide social services to make employment an attainable and sustainable goal as residents deal with housing, childcare, or general education issues that often create barriers to unemployment. All program participants are monitored for 2 years after initial job placement and placed in new jobs as needed during this period to ensure that they maintain employment.

According to Terry C. Lane, President and Chief Executive Officer of UMEZ, “The greatest barrier to employment is a lack of knowledge of the work environment and a lack of basic skills and education that are needed for job readiness. In response to this situation, UMEZ has identified target industries that are growing and in which jobs will be created by UMEZ investments. Through the UMEZ Workforce Development Initiative, providers will offer training for occupations in industries where specific job opportunities can be found, thus putting into action the goals of the Empowerment Zone.”

For more information contact Terry C. Lane, President and CEO, UMEZ Development Corporation, at 212-410-0030.



## City’s Development Bank Helps Small Firms Create 1,500 Jobs

### Los Angeles, California, EZ

While the Los Angeles economy has been booming overall in recent years, small businesses still have a tough time getting the money they need to survive and grow. The City and County of Los Angeles, spurred by the EZ/EC Initiative’s incentives, decided in 1995 that the time had come to literally bank on these small businesses—by capitalizing the Los Angeles Community Development Bank with \$435 million of the city’s Community Development Block Grant and Economic Development Initiative funds through 2004.

The bank’s work is bearing fruit. So far, 121 borrowers have used \$117 million in loans and investments to create 1,500 jobs. “We’re helping businesses that haven’t been able to access capital, so we’re creating a host of opportunities for both the businesses and residents,” explains Caroline Kim, the bank’s Marketing Manager. While both large and small businesses in the EC are eligible, most of the loans have gone to small firms. Approximately

75 percent of the loans have been for \$500,000 or less. Some have been microloans ranging from \$1,000 to \$25,000; the rest have been what the bank calls indirect business loans for \$25,000 to \$500,000. The remaining 25 percent of the loans have been for more than \$500,000. Not all of the bank's fundings are loans; some are venture capital investments. One example of the latter is eStyle.com, an e-commerce maternity wear and baby clothes retailer that created 45 jobs through March 2000 and recently signed supermodel Cindy Crawford as its spokesperson.

For loans of \$500,000 or less, potential borrowers apply to intermediary organizations, a group of approximately seven faith-based, community-based nonprofit, or other private organizations. Firms seeking loans for more than \$500,000 apply directly to the bank. For both kinds of borrowers, a "big draw," Kim notes, is the free technical assistance offered, which can include valuable assistance in marketing and other important areas. The bank sends consultants to assist borrowers with general business challenges as well as more involved financial management tasks.

The bank markets its loans and business assistance services through its staff of 36 specialists, who attend regular meetings and work closely with the bank's private-sector partners (especially the city's business associations). The intermediary organizations also constantly market the bank within their communities.

For more information contact Caroline Kim, Marketing Manager, Los Angeles Community Development Bank, at 323-759-7759.

## **Harlem USA Brings 800 Jobs to New York EZ** New York, New York, EZ

The New York EZ is getting a major boost with the opening of the Harlem USA Retail and Entertainment Complex. In June 2000 the ribbon will be cut for this 275,000-square-foot complex, the first mall to open in Manhattan in approximately two decades. Disney, Old Navy, and a nine-screen Magic Johnson Theater complex will be the major anchors, and approximately 100 other retailers, including HMV Music and another major department store, will open for business. More than 600 permanent jobs will be created, 350 of which will go to EZ residents. An additional 200 shorter-term jobs were filled during the construction process.

While Harlem has a thriving retail base, few national stores currently have a presence in the area, and there is a dearth of entertainment retail establishments. Harlem USA will provide a large venue where EZ residents can shop for quality goods and services in their own neighborhood. The mall is part of a larger revitalization process that includes both commercial and residential development throughout the corridor.

For more information contact Marion Phillips III, Chief Administrator Officer, New York EZ Corporation, at 212-803-3239.

## Development Venture Fund Commits \$16 Million in Loans, Creates 2,400 Jobs

### Kentucky Highlands, Kentucky, EZ

Betty Neeley came first, then came Katherine Cox, Sheila Hartsock, and Brenda Gabbard. Through March 1999, more than 2,400 others followed in their path. When these four Jackson County residents took that first step, they did not know they would be the first of many. Neeley, Cox, Hartsock, and Gabbard were the first employees hired by Specialty Plastic Products in April 1995 and became the first EZ residents to benefit from the Kentucky Highlands EZ's Development Venture Fund.

"The Empowerment Zone is by far the best thing that has happened to Jackson County," Hartsock says. "In the past, the greatest worry a family had was keeping employment. Now, we have jobs for anyone who wants to work. And these are jobs that pay well and offer good benefits to the employees."

Opening its doors on May 1, 1995, Specialty Plastic Products (now Specialty Defense Systems) was the first company to receive financing through the Development Venture Fund. The company took over an occupied facility after another factory closed and put 110 people out of work.

Specialty Defense Systems has undergone four expansions in McKee since 1995, including construction of a second plant, and now employs more than 200 people. The Development Venture Fund has provided nearly \$2 million in loans to the company. "It has helped the community and helped families get off welfare," Cox says. "People who had no hope of jobs now have good jobs."

In its initial years of operation, the EZ's Development Venture Fund has provided more than \$16 million in loan commitments to EZ businesses. These companies already have created more than 2,400 jobs, with an additional 1,000 positions expected to be generated in 2000 by the same firms. Most significant, the unemployment rate in the EZ has fallen below both the State and national averages for the first time in history because of a remarkable 20 percent growth in total employment in the EZ.

"The success of the businesses financed through the Development Venture Fund is a tribute to the entrepreneurial spirit that exists in these communities," says Jerry Rickett, President and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Kentucky Highlands Investment Corporation, which serves as the lead entity in the EZ. "Of the 30 investments approved through the fund, 22 loans have been to locally owned enterprises. And more than half of these have been startup ventures. We recognize that, to be successful, we must invest in the talent within the Zone."

For additional information contact Jerry Rickett, President and CEO, Kentucky Highlands Investment Corporation, at 606-864-5175.





## Food Company Provides 1,000 Jobs, Bright Future for Clinton County Residents

### Kentucky Highlands, Kentucky, EZ

Wade Flowers' story is a familiar one in rural areas. After graduating from college, he wanted to return home to work and eventually raise a family. Unfortunately, his home area held no job opportunities for him in 1990.

Today, Flowers has returned to his roots—bringing his wife and two children—because the job outlook has changed.

The Clinton County EZ Community, Inc., has focused on worker training to boost the quality of life in the area. The Cagle's-Keystone Foods plant in Clinton County is a direct result of those plans and is why Flowers moved back home in 1998.

"I've always wanted to come back to the family farm in Cumberland County, but I thought it would only happen after I retired," says Flowers, a production shift manager. "I never thought the opportunity to build a career would be available at home."

"The plant provides jobs to an area that sorely needed them. There are more people staying in the area because of jobs at Cagle's-Keystone Foods," he adds.

Cagle's-Keystone Foods has meant:

- More than 1,000 new jobs.
- More than 500 additional positions to become open in 2000.
- An increase of \$30 million in retail sales.
- Annual grower payments of \$18 million and the purchase of 130,000 tons of soy from production at the approximately 175 farms that support the plant.

The EZ has given Cagle's-Keystone Foods \$1 million in worker training loans. "Without a doubt, it's the most significant accomplishment of the first 5 years of operation," says Bennie Garland, Executive Director of the Clinton County EZ. "This project had brought Clinton County unemployment rates down to approximately the State and national averages. Employees have health and life insurance plus paid vacations and holidays."

Cagle's-Keystone Foods has been pleased with the workers and with everything else in Clinton County. Douglas Cagle, Sr., Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Cagle's, Inc., told the Lexington Herald-Leader that the labor force attracted the company to the area. "I'm very, very impressed with the people of Clinton County and their work ethic," he says.

For more information contact Jerry Rickett, President and CEO, Kentucky Highlands Investment Corporation, at 606-864-5175.

## Feed Mill Brings Jobs, New Markets to Rural Kansas

### Wichita County, Kansas, EC

Since its designation as a Round II EC in January 1999, the Wichita County EC has successfully recruited Seaboard Farms, Inc., to construct a \$10 million to \$12 million feed mill that will employ 35 to 40 people.

The feed mill (now under construction) will have a 500,000-bushel storage capacity, a truck maintenance shop, and space for offices. In addition to creating jobs and producing a facility investment, the feed mill also will create new markets for area grain producers.

Seaboard Farms plans to purchase approximately 14 million bushels of grain each year. This will create a market for milo (an early-growing, usually drought-resistant grain sorghum resembling millet) that currently does not exist. A December 1998 economic impact study indicates that annual sales from the mill operation will be approximately \$58.24 million. Economic benefits from mill operations include an estimated \$62 million increase in net sales in the county and approximately \$1.78 million in new wages.

For more information contact Sharla Krenzel, Director, Wichita County EC, at 316-375-2182.





# Business Participation on EZ/EC Governance Boards

## Grassroots EC Board Develops Local Leadership

### Lowell, Massachusetts, EC

The direction of Lowell's EC is in the capable hands of a new generation of leaders who, with the benefit of training and professional staff, are already becoming an important catalyst for developing ideas and partnerships.

As conceived by the city's Interim Governance Committee during the planning stage of the initiative, the Lowell EC is administered by a 15-member board, which is composed of both elected and appointed members drawn entirely from EC residents and small business owners. A majority of the board's members are selected by EC residents through a full-scale public nomination and election process, with one member representing each of the EC's eight census tracts. In addition to the elected representatives, the city government appoints seven board members to ensure ethnic, gender, and age diversity. Representatives of key public and private institutions—whose support is also crucial for achieving the community's goals—are invited to serve on EC advisory committees.

The EC board receives advice and aid from other quarters as well, making it particularly fertile ground for training grassroots leaders. From the time of its first meeting in May 1996, HUD-funded consultants were on hand to provide training and capacity-building assistance. On a day-to-day basis, the board is assisted by an experienced EC project manager and a community organizer whose work has been particularly important to Lowell's large Latino and Cambodian communities as well as to other minority populations.

The Lowell EC board has made the most of the talent and creativity of its members. It plays a dynamic role in designing and implementing major community partnerships such as the new Business Assistance Center, which has 23 partners. The board awarded the project a seed grant and worked with its partners to hire a director, set a budget, and leverage funds. The board's public-private grant review working committee has used the EC's new database and integrated communications system to disseminate Notices Of Funding Availability and explore new partnerships that have helped bring approximately \$65 million in investment from 36 sources into the Lowell EC. The mantra of the EC board is partnership, leverage, and sustainability in all of its funding decisions. Many of Lowell's EC-funded projects were part of the City of Lowell's winning a 1999 "All American City" designation.

For more information contact Sue Beaton, Lowell Department of Planning and Development, at 978-446-7150.

## New EZ Moves Quickly To Boost Employment

### New Haven, Connecticut, EZ

“What works? What worked here is that the transition and governance happened in a few months,” comments Sherri Killins, President and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the New Haven EZ in Connecticut. “We created a structure and moved from an EC to an EZ in 5 months.” Killins formerly served as CEO of the Baltimore EZ.

Although designated an EZ in January 1999, New Haven did not complete its formal reorganization process until August of that year. A few months later, the decisionmaking and implementation apparatus for the new EZ was in place and functioning. By February 2000 the EZ Program Council had recommended five major projects and Empowerment New Haven, Inc.’s board of directors had approved them.

Three of the grants are aimed at boosting employment in the EZ. The largest provides \$200,000 for outreach, job readiness, and placement. Funds also have been made available for employment programs, including \$60,000 for direct training and an additional \$36,000 for stipends and supportive services such as transportation. The EZ worked with a partnership that includes the city, the State of Connecticut, local unions, the board of education, the housing authority, and the regional workforce board to establish the Construction Workforce Initiative. The initiative has used a grant of \$50,000 from the EZ to leverage more than \$328,000 in local funding.

The board of directors has also approved providing laptop computers to fifth-graders in an elementary school in the EZ (still to be selected) and support for community organizers to help them develop neighborhood plans for each of the six areas in the EZ. A grant of \$150,000 from the EZ has leveraged \$100,000 from the Greater New Haven Community Foundation and \$40,000 from the city toward the plans. The EZ will provide \$400,000 to support a dedicated neighborhood worker for each area plus a manager for the program.

For more information contact Sherri Killins, President and CEO, New Haven EZ, at 203-776-2777.

## Tangible EZ Programs Attract Committed Partners

### Cincinnati, Ohio, EZ

Within 30 days of Cincinnati, Ohio’s, EZ designation in January 1999, 21 local organizations had mobilized to appoint 33 members to the Cincinnati Empowerment Corporation (CEC) board. The board oversees EZ activities and gives residents, private businesses, government entities, and non-profit organizations an equal voice in EZ decisionmaking. According to

Paul Wolgin, Board Chairman, a majority vote of either 70 percent of board members in attendance or 17 members of the board (whichever is larger) is required for action on policy and program issues. This process ensures cooperation among the stakeholder groups.

The Cincinnati EZ encompasses a 7-square-mile area north of the city. Approximately 50,000 people live in the Zone's nine neighborhoods.

Equal representation on the CEC board was only one strategy Cincinnati used to ensure that EZ programs would be successful and sustained. Creating partnerships and making sure partners had an equal stake in EZ programs were the goals of the city's strategic planning process, maintains EZ Coordinator Susan Paddock. The city reached those goals in many program areas, assembling \$2.2 billion in local contributions to match EZ funds. Collaboration among stakeholders is particularly evident in programs that address employment issues, according to Paddock.

Community leaders wanted EZ programs to be tangible and help improve residents' lives. The EZ therefore designed programs to train residents for jobs, help them find jobs, and assist them in finding transportation to and from jobs.

Local businesses, in need of qualified workers, were very interested in the job-training programs. Two hundred employers will use EZ residents as a first source to be interviewed for 10,000 available jobs.

The CEC board appointment process brought together many EZ partners who had not worked together previously. Three stakeholder groups representing the community, private businesses, employers, government, and community nonprofit organizations each appointed 11 members to the board. Each of the EZ's nine neighborhood councils appointed one member to the board, but all nine council presidents had to work together—for the first time—to appoint two at-large members. Executives from 7 government entities and nonprofit organizations chose 11 board members to represent them. Four major business organizations selected 11 board members to represent private businesses and employers.

For more information contact Susan Paddock, Coordinator, Cincinnati EZ, at 513-352-4648.



# Workforce Development







# Job Training

## Denver Employment Program Gives Hope to Young Fathers

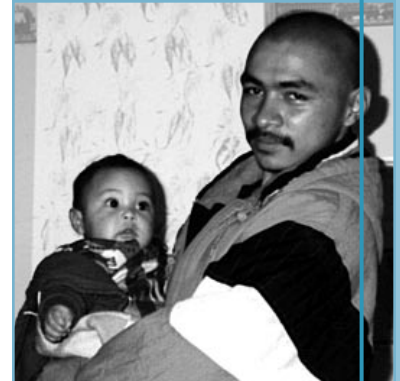
Denver, Colorado, EC

An EC-funded program in Denver that helps young fathers meet their parental obligations has been tapped by the Ford Foundation to participate in a national demonstration project. Partners for Fragile Families, which is designed to connect or reconnect fathers with their children, focuses on hard-to-employ, underemployed, and never-employed noncustodial fathers 16 to 26 years of age.

“I have found that the stereotypical notion that young men are deadbeat dads is dead wrong,” says Program Manager Robert Brady. “They are dead-broke dads with little or no skills, education, or experience.” The program provides employment opportunities for participants through partnerships with employers and vocational, rehabilitation, and apprenticeship programs throughout the city. Partners range from nonprofit organizations such as Habitat for Humanity and Goodwill Industries to for-profit entities such as the Adams Mark Hotel and local construction companies. Government agencies such as the Denver Metropolitan Transportation District are also partners. Once participants complete job-readiness training, they receive simulated-work and job-placement assistance to help them get entry-level positions that pay livable wages and provide job advancement opportunities. Participants also receive postemployment support.

Partners for Fragile Families is a program of the nonprofit Human Services, Inc., and builds on the organization’s 6 years of experience in connecting men with their children through its Young Fathers Program (YFP). Denver committed \$200,000 in EC funds to YFP to expand its work in EC neighborhoods through Partners for Fragile Families. In addition to helping young fathers support their children economically, the program also helps them to understand child development better and to nurture their children. The program includes a Rites of Passage component, in which mentors help the young fathers learn to assume responsible roles in their communities.

To help the fathers better connect with their children, Partners for Fragile Families works with YFP to enlist the aid of the city’s Child Support Enforcement Division. In some cases, the program has been able to reduce child support orders, abate orders, renegotiate orders, and arrange for forgiveness of some arrearages. The programs continue to work with the Child Support Enforcement Division and the men to ensure that each





father provides appropriate financial support as his income grows. The programs are promoted through public schools, social service agencies, clinics and hospitals, parenting programs, civic groups, and faith-based organizations.

For more information contact Robert Brady, Manager, Young Fathers Program, at 303-561-1246.

## Building Tomorrow's City—Building Tomorrow's Workforce

### City of Indianapolis, Indiana, EC

Drive through downtown Indianapolis and you will see EC residents working on some of the biggest building projects in the city. “EC residents are building the infrastructure of our community while they build their future through viable careers in the construction and maintenance industry,” says Neva Hagedorn, Executive Director of Technical Training Services (TTS), a community-based workforce development provider for the Indianapolis EC. Working closely with union and nonunion employers, TTS has assisted more than 100 EC residents, completing job placements for more than 70 of them. Job-retention tracking shows that 55 of those placed have maintained employment (at an average wage of \$9.30 per hour) for more than 3 months.

TTS services include a 12-week program designed to teach entry-level skills for the building maintenance and construction trades. The curriculum effectively combines training in both technical skills and career development. Students participate in four skills-training modules that focus on plumbing, carpentry, electrical wiring, and HVAC (heating, ventilation, and air conditioning) basics. Career development includes workshops that teach interviewing skills, résumé writing, conflict resolution, and public speaking. For interested students, there are additional opportunities for math instruction, computer learning, and continuing education.

TTS students participate in community service projects during each 12-week cycle. Working closely with neighborhood associations, local community development corporations, and the EC, the students work to complete construction projects in the neighborhood. TTS provides the labor and onsite supervision; community groups are responsible for any necessary materials. The community service projects are integrated into the actual training. The outcomes include an increase in technical hands-on experience, increased awareness of civic responsibility, and enhancement of the EC infrastructure. Through March 2000, TTS has worked on tax-credit projects in the EC, as well as with local church organizations, individuals, and area youth organizations.

In 1999 TTS added a youth construction training initiative. While not directly funded with EC dollars, the EC support leverages the other public and private funding necessary for the implementation phase. Young Urban Builders of Indianapolis focuses on the building trades, incorporating ground-up

construction training, apprenticeship opportunities, and industry exposure with classroom technical, academic, and life-skills instruction. The goal is to prepare out-of-school youth in the Indianapolis area for the pursuit of continuing education and employment. In creating this youth initiative, TTS has leveraged community collaboration by partnering with the Indianapolis Public School System’s Vocational Education Program, the Builders Association of Greater Indianapolis, Associated Builders and Contractors, the Martindale Brightwood Community Development Corporation, and the Local Initiatives Support Corporation.

“The success of this program is due to results-oriented organizations that are connected and that are supportive of each other’s efforts,” says Hagedorn. The City of Indianapolis, local HUD representatives, and the local EC Advisory Board have worked diligently to ensure this connection. Also instrumental in providing technical support and connecting TTS with various alliances, the Indianapolis Private Industry Council (IPIC) has greatly strengthened the capacity of services offered. IPIC works with a variety of workforce development providers citywide, and, as a result, networks have been developed to strengthen the continuum of services offered to EC residents.

For more information contact Neva Hagedorn, Executive Director, Technical Training Services, at 317-931-0559.

## **Machinist Training Institute Gives EZ Residents the Tools To Be Hired**

### **Detroit, Michigan, EZ**

“Prior to 1981, minorities, women, and the economically disadvantaged living in Detroit had very little opportunity to train as machinists,” says Brian Meriweather, Contract Manager for Focus: HOPE. Machining, a trade that involves the designing and creating of parts from blueprints, is a very technical and skills-based occupation that can be very lucrative. Focus: HOPE, a nonprofit organization with a goal of bringing the community together by overcoming racism, poverty, and injustice within the city and its suburbs, recognized the need to provide community residents with the skills to get machining jobs. In 1981 the nonprofit created the Machinist Training Institute (MTI). From this beginning Focus: HOPE has originated a series of nationally and internationally recognized training and education programs with the potential to take a high school graduate with eighth-grade reading and sixth-grade math skills to a bachelor’s degree in manufacturing engineering through their Center for Advanced Technology Program.

Located in a Central Detroit industrial zone, MTI is a key component of Focus: HOPE’s industry mall, which includes a just-in-time materials handling company, a tier 1 automotive supplier, and a machine shop. The mall, once home to the Ex-Cell-O Corporation, has housed MTI since 1981 and, in response to industry leaving the area, has created hundreds of machinist jobs.



MTI offers a single basic machining program that lasts 31 weeks. Classroom instruction covers shop mathematics, shop theory, blueprint reading, drafting, computer theory, communication skills, and career development. The program is designed to simulate the workplace. Class days begin at 7:30 a.m. and end at 4 p.m. Timecards are used and students' clock hours are logged. Half of the students' time is spent in hands-on training in MTI's 30,000-square-foot shop laboratory, a facility equipped with more than 120 major machine tools, and half is spent in the classroom.

To date, 1,800 individuals have graduated from MTI's basic training program. During the past 4 years, the trade school has actively recruited students from the Detroit EZ. Since 1996, 189 EZ residents have entered the various programs. While students are responsible for their tuition, the EZ offers grants of up to 100 percent of the tuition cost to eligible students.

For more information contact Brian Meriweather, Contract Manager, Focus: HOPE, at 313-494-4211.

## From Six Computers to Flourishing Career Training

### Kansas City, Kansas/Kansas City, Missouri, Bi-State EEC

More than 7 years ago, before the current welfare-to-work initiative began, single mothers in Kansas City faced the quandary of caring for their children while maintaining their households and while earning low wages at dead-end jobs. Then a local TV station gave six computers to El Centro, Inc., a job-placement agency for these women.

For a while, the computers sat unused in the evening after being used to tutor children during the day. El Centro staff then noticed that many of the women they had helped, although working in warehouse jobs, had some typing ability. However, one of the primary things holding them back was very slow typing. With seed funding from the local power company, job-training money, and eventually a 2-year, \$227,000 grant from the Kansas City Bi-State EEC, the Keyboards to Success program was created. The program's goal was to teach these women better computer skills in the evening.

"The program setting feels like a real business," notes Richard Ruiz, El Centro's Executive Director. "Its virtue is that, while we value diversity, the classroom is organized in a businesslike way to represent the real world." As El Centro has grown into a complete employment services agency, Keyboards to Success has likewise developed. The program offers underemployed and unemployed people (who tend to be single women with children) a variety of technology-related training, from secretarial skills to data entry to customer service. These technical courses are complemented by training in world-of-work skills. An average of 70 people participate annually, and 90 percent of them get and keep good jobs with career potential.

The program's strong support services are crucial to its success. "We work hard at advocating for our graduates to help them find good employers with benefits and some kind of career ladder," explains Ruiz. Participants join groups that help with everything from managing personal finances to auto loans to childcare to dressing for success. The seven members of the program staff serve as permanent advocates for these groups.

The program's partners support its services. Partners include City Vision Ministry, the Consumer Credit Council, the Kansas City Neighborhood Association, Heart of America Family Services, local school districts, and the local Catholic archdiocese. Several locally based foundations provide funding. Although the EEC grant has ended, the U.S. Department of Labor continues funding through the local Private Industry Council. Staff advocates leverage these partnerships by attending job fairs and partners' regular meetings.

For more information contact Sister Linda Roth, Director, Keyboards to Success, El Centro, Inc., at 913-677-0100.

## Manhattan Initiative Prepares Residents for Technology Jobs

### New York, New York, EZ

In May 1999, as part of the \$6.9 million Upper Manhattan EZ (UMEZ) Workforce Development Initiative, Xincon Technology School was contracted to train and place 50 unemployed and underemployed residents in full-time positions in the lucrative, high-technology field of computers. Through Xincon's intensive programs, participants are trained in A+, Microsoft Office Professional, and/or Microsoft System Engineer courses and provided with opportunities to become certified after completing each course. In addition to providing training, Xincon offers placement services for jobs that require students' newly acquired computer skills and 2 years of ongoing support and monitoring to ensure job retention. Robert Daniel, Director of Government Contracts at Xincon and a Harlem native, sees the program as an opportunity "to empower the people with the necessary skills to succeed in today's technology job market."

Xincon has already placed many of its trainees in full-time positions at prestigious companies such as Pitney Bowes, Morgan Stanley, and Leon Fidel, Inc., at average starting salaries of more than \$30,000. These placements have changed the lives of at least two residents: Lakeshia Edwards and Gary Cole.

Edwards, a mother of three, progressed from welfare to work through her own dedication and perseverance in the Xincon program. After completing the Microsoft System Engineer training, the EZ resident acquired a job with Pitney Bowes earning \$40,000 per year. Pitney Bowes has also hired several other EZ residents from the Xincon program who are earning similar salaries.



Cole, a native of Harlem, knew that in order to provide a better quality of life for himself and his two children, he needed to stop “hustling on the streets” and make some real changes. Cole enrolled in the training program and on completing the A+ training course was accepted for an internship at the Young Adult Institute, a nonprofit organization specializing in providing services to persons with disabilities. Within 6 weeks, Cole was hired as a full-time PC technician earning \$30,000. For Cole, the learning process has not ended. He attends General Education Development and advanced computer classes in the evenings after his workday ends.

For more information contact Terry C. Lane, President & CEO, UMEZ Development Corporation, at 212-410-0030.

## **Superior Walls Provides Superior Opportunities**

### **City of Springfield, Illinois, EC**

When Superior Walls of Central Illinois, Inc., opened for business in the Springfield EC, it created job opportunities for 42 low- to moderate-income neighborhood residents. The manufacturing company produces precast concrete walls and foundation systems for commercial builders in Chicago and St. Louis. “These employees show great pride in producing a quality product,” says Springfield developer Mike Suhadolnik, owner of Superior Walls and another Illinois company, Construx of Illinois.

Suhadolnik’s enthusiasm is matched by that of the new employees, who often are able to walk to work to a variety of jobs that include plant managers, equipment operators, carpenters, excavators, form setters, mechanics, finishers, sales representatives, and office staff. Wages range from \$8 to \$19 per hour.

Superior Walls expects to hire up to 100 employees from the neighborhood as the manufacturing facility moves to full production capacity. The State of Illinois recently awarded Superior Walls \$52,780 to train workers in assembly and production techniques. The award was part of the State’s Industrial Training Program, which expects to upgrade the skills of more than 22,000 workers by awarding \$2.3 million to 200 companies.

In spring 1999 construction was completed on the company’s new 31,500-square-foot facility, located on a 2-acre site in the Springfield EC. Part of the funding for the new construction came from a partnership between the City of Springfield and the EC, which teamed up to provide a \$250,000 deferred loan to help with startup costs. The city contributed \$125,000 in Community Development Block Grant funds, which the EC matched. The total cost of building the manufacturing facility came to \$3.1 million.

For more information contact Cleatia Bowen, Division Manager, Community Development, at 217-789-2377.

## Grocery Wholesaler Invites EC Residents To Work

### Newburgh/Kingston, New York, EC

“Residents of East End Are Invited To Apply,” and EC residents did just that when this advertisement for jobs appeared in Newburgh’s *Times Herald Record*. C&S Wholesale Grocery Distributors, a company that supplies Grand Union, Pathmark, and other supermarkets, plans to hire almost twice as many residents of the Newburgh/Kingston EC as originally anticipated. C&S expects to employ more than 300 people when fully staffed. Of EC residents who responded to the original invitation, 50 had been hired through March 2000. The jobs at C&S involve packing, stacking, and operating a forklift at a distribution facility in North East Industrial Park.

To solve potential transportation problems, the EC Board requested that the Newburgh-Beacon Bus Company reinstitute a bus line that had operated when the C&S building was a Caldor warehouse. The Newburgh/Kingston EC board of directors is supplying \$25,000 for on-the-job training for 25 EC residents. The Orange County Private Industry Council is providing another \$25,000 in job-training funds—enough to reimburse C&S fully for the costs of wages and training for 3 months. The State of New York has approved a grant to defray some of the costs of the reinstated bus service for the first year, and Newburgh-Beacon now provides transportation from the city to businesses in the North East Industrial Park. EC residents who are eligible for subsidies and Work Opportunity Tax Credits are identified through a screening system.

For more information contact Allison Lee, President, Newburgh/Kingston EC, at 914-569-1680.

## Los Angeles Program Empowers New Entrepreneurs

### Los Angeles, California, EZ

The Entrepreneurial Training Program of Los Angeles has been a boon to EZ citizens and businesses. This program provides business management training to low- and moderate-income (LMI) individuals seeking to become self-employed. Training also is offered to owners of fledgling businesses seeking to expand and thereby create jobs to be filled by LMI individuals. The program addresses all aspects of successful business planning, including marketing, accounting, cash-flow analysis, personnel management, sales, inventory control, legal issues, and licensing. Eight local organizations, including economic development corporations, a church, a community college, and a major university, provide the training. Clients who complete training then are linked with other business technical assistance and financing programs that will facilitate continued business development.





A unique feature of this program is its capacity to assist individuals and business owners from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Several training courses are offered entirely in Spanish, and one provides business management training for owners of small retail operations in very ethnically diverse LMI areas.

The Entrepreneurial Training Program has resulted in the establishment of 180 businesses and the creation of 250 full-time and 30 part-time jobs. Program clients and beneficiaries are located in areas such as the Los Angeles EZ and in redevelopment areas that contain more than 51 percent LMI residents or that meet HUD criteria for slum and blight conditions. Los Angeles has received more than \$2.5 million in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding for this program; no portion of the CDBG allocation has been used to pay city staffing costs. An additional \$100,000 in HUD technical assistance funding also has been allocated to this project.

City officials, in partnership with local economic development organizations, churches, and education organizations, have taken a proactive role in developing economic ownership and empowerment in disadvantaged communities. This has brought business opportunities and self-sufficiency to city residents and business owners from a wide range of ethnic and cultural backgrounds. This effort also has increased awareness of the contribution that small business owners make to the local community.

For more information contact Parker C. Anderson, General Manager, Community Development Department, Los Angeles EZ, at 213-485-1617.

## Recycling Waste Creates Jobs

### Providence, Rhode Island, EC

Creating new jobs in an EC can be a difficult task, but in Providence, a group of individuals collaborating with local businesses and the South Providence Development Corporation (SPDC) has found one solution. With assistance from the Providence Plan, SPDC helped develop CleanSweep, Inc., a private for-profit company that provides a local recycling program to save money, promote stewardship of the environment, and employ neighborhood residents.

Edward Connelly, who formerly ran the recycling operation at the Rhode Island Central Landfill, wanted to create a recycling company that would apply principles of sustainable development in a systematic and innovative way. He now heads CleanSweep.

First, CleanSweep starts by identifying current recyclables the customer is throwing away. Then, findings are discussed with company officials and a training program is implemented to train employees about the new program. CleanSweep's bins (modified hospital linen carts) occupy a space twice the size of standard trash cans but hold three times as much.

CleanSweep picks up the full bins weekly and replaces them with empty ones. Employees transport the bins to a sorting facility located on Prairie Avenue in Providence.

The EC invested \$50,000 in the project that was used to leverage an additional \$530,000 in equity and debt from local partners, including the City of Providence Community Development Block Grant program, the Cooperative Fund of New England, and Fleet Community Development.

CleanSweep provides not only a much-needed recycling service but also jobs. The company currently employs 11 people; 7 are full-time employees and 4 work part-time. Nine of the employees live in the EC. Each can earn at least \$9 per hour and any employee who works 16 hours or more per week is eligible for benefits.

The company has secured a customer base of 25 organizations, including a local hospital, a new regional mall, and several neighborhood hotels. From this base, CleanSweep plans to expand to a profitable position in 2001.

For more information contact Joseph Newsom, Executive Director, South Providence Development Corporation, at 401-831-5070.

## **Trainees Gain Job Skills, Confidence Through EC Program**

### **Manchester, New Hampshire, EC**

For 3 months in early 1999, Renie Denton made a point each morning to greet the 12 women who usually stood in the doorway of the Manchester Community Resource Center (MCRC) in New Hampshire, chatting and smoking cigarettes. The women, who were waiting for the Electronic Assembly Industry Specific Training class to begin, usually responded simply by glancing at the pavement.

“After a couple of weeks, our morning routine started to change,” reports Denton, who is director of MCRC. “At first, they would lift their heads when I greeted them. Then, after a while, they started talking to me as I passed. By the time they finished the training, they were coming to my office to tell me they needed the keys to the storage cabinet because we had just run out of toilet paper. I mean, they were taking charge. It was wonderful to see their self-esteem grow.”

The women, recipients of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), were at the center to learn skills that they hoped would help them earn jobs in the electronics industry. The classes were sponsored by a welfare reform partnership that includes the State of New Hampshire Health and Human Services, New Hampshire Employment Security, and the New

Hampshire Job Training Council (NHJTC). NHJTC provided the training at an estimated cost of \$3,000 per participant. MCRC, an EC-supported community center that opened in 1998, provided free space and free access to its walk-in childcare center and its staff case manager.

“Some of the individuals in the program had been stay-at-home moms for 10 years, so having someone on our staff to assist them through the transition made perfect sense,” says Denton. “There was constant barrier resolution, whether it was over a childcare problem, a broken-down car, or even the electricity at home being turned off.”

The Industry Specific Training Program has three components. For the first 3 weeks, participants attend a Life Skills Training Program, presented by the University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension, that teaches them how to manage work, family, finances, and other day-to-day issues. Participants then attend a 1-week Job Readiness Training, presented by a local agency called Second Start Step by Step, which covers topics such as appropriate dress, résumé preparation, interviewing skills, and job retention.

During the final training stage—an 8-week course presented by New Hampshire Community Technical College—trainees learn the ins and outs of a particular local industry in which they hope to find full-time work. While the 1999 classes focused on electronics assembly, a similar training held in early 2000 taught TANF recipients the skills they need to become office assistants. Nine of the 12 women enrolled in the 1999 class received full-time jobs paying \$8.50 an hour plus benefits after completing the course.

For more information contact Renie Denton, Director, Manchester Community Resource Center, at 603-647-8967.

# Economic Development Training Center Opens in Dooly County

## Southwest Georgia United, Georgia, EZ

The Dooly County Economic Development Training Center is a dream come true for county leaders and for the Southwest Georgia United EZ. Dooly County is located in Southwest Georgia in one of most economically depressed areas in the State.

In early 1997 this community began to seriously address the need for increased education and training for Dooly County citizens. With a 57-percent illiteracy rate, Dooly County had a clear need for a facility to provide adult literacy training. At the Dooly County Economic Development Training Center, students can acquire their general equivalency diplomas, receive technical training, and even earn college credit. An immediate benefit has been computer classes, in which students can learn the basics of programs such as Microsoft Word and Excel.

The training center is the product of a cooperative effort among many local, regional, State, and Federal agencies, in conjunction with several colleges and Middle Georgia Technical Institute. County funds in the amount of \$156,800 were used in conjunction with a \$500,000 Community Development Block Grant for the construction of the center. On completion of construction in December 1999, USDA awarded the training center a \$60,000 Rural Business Enterprise Grant to help furnish needed equipment. Middle Georgia Technical Institute donated \$52,500 in furnishings to outfit the computer lab and provided chairs for several classrooms.

The Dooly County Office of Economic Development operates its office at the training center and facilitates operations. This creates a close partnership among the Office of Economic Development and the colleges and technical institute to coordinate classes. "This facility has the potential to have the greatest impact on citizens in Dooly County," says Director Robert Jeter, "and virtually everyone can be served by our center."

Plans include partnering with local entities to offer more educational opportunities for Dooly County residents, such as connecting with the local medical community to offer distance-learning telemedicine. In addition, job-specific training for new and existing industries is being planned cooperatively with Middle Georgia Technical Institute.

For more information contact Bambi Hayes, Director, Southwest Georgia United EZ, at 912-273-9111.



## Partnerships With Educational Institutions Train Workers for Jobs

### Northeast Louisiana Delta, Louisiana, EC

In 1998 the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services awarded the Northeast Louisiana Delta Community Development Corporation, in partnership with Grambling State University, a \$350,000 grant for workforce development. Funds from a Historically Black Colleges and Universities grant, awarded through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, will be used to assist in the development of a business incubator. The incubator will support new and emerging microbusinesses in the Northeast Delta. Together, funds from these two grant programs will provide economic opportunities and promote self-sufficiency for low-income residents of the area.

During the period from 1998 through 2000, these grants should:

- Develop 60 full-time jobs, 75 percent to be filled by low-income residents.
- Create new small businesses.
- Expand and establish employment and career development opportunities for low-income residents.
- Establish business incubator services for the economically distressed community.
- Expand opportunities for public-private partnerships in real estate, business development, and job-creation projects.

The EC is also partnering with the University of Louisiana at Monroe's Small Business Development Center to provide technical and management assistance to potential and existing small businesses and entrepreneurs.

For more information contact Moses Junior Williams, Director, Northeast Louisiana Delta EC, at 318-574-0995.

## Moving Rural Pennsylvania Residents From Welfare to Work

### City of Lock Haven, Pennsylvania, EC

Making the transition from dependency to self-sufficiency has been a unique personal experience for each of the 71 participants of the Lock Haven Intensive Case Management Program. For all of the families who have participated in the program, the movement toward self-sufficiency has been a process of self-examination, goal setting, large and small successes, and building trust in a program that allows families to review alternatives and make decisions about their futures.

For some families, it meant confronting domestic, social, and economic issues that had impeded self-sufficiency. Families with limited resources began examining ways to balance work and family needs. Employment failure often was the result of an inability to cope with the stresses of managing both a family home and the work needed to collect a weekly paycheck.

All families receive individual attention, support, and recognition for their achievements. The most significant outcomes of the program in 1999 were that 55 percent of participants obtained employment, 30 percent successfully addressed income management issues and initiated debt repayment processes, and 23 percent secured affordable living quarters.

For more information contact Maria Boileau, Director, City of Lock Haven EC, at 570-893-5907.



# Job Match

## Program Trains EC Residents as Bank Tellers

### Manchester, New Hampshire, EC

A Sudanese immigrant named Mayol strolled into the Manchester Community Resource Center (MCRC) one day last year, disheartened by his lack of success in finding work. When the center's case manager discovered that Mayol had worked as a bank teller in his native country, she immediately suggested that he enroll in MCRC's newest job-training program, a partnership with Citizens Bank to train and employ entry-level tellers. Today, Mayol is employed at Citizens Bank and has become, according to MCRC Director Renie Denton, one of the center's most dedicated volunteers.

The affiliation with Citizens Bank is not unusual for MCRC, which depends on community partners for its very existence. The center was established in 1998 by three local agencies that wanted a central place in the EC where residents could find employment, education, and information/referral services. The three agencies—Southern New Hampshire Services, New Hampshire Catholic Charities, and The Hope Resource Center—received a 5-year, \$1.5 million funding commitment from the EC, which they have leveraged with more than \$500,000 in private contributions. In addition, the center provides space to various agencies that use their own funds to provide programs to EC residents.

Citizens Bank, which maintains a branch just 2 blocks from MCRC, has been an active center partner since 1998, when the bank donated \$100,000 to support MCRC's childcare services. Center staff have prescreened applicants for three separate teller training sessions, evaluating both the individuals' qualifications for jobs and their general employment skills.

“We are looking for applicants who have had experience working with the public and can manage stress,” says Denton. “But during our screening process, we also check out applicants' body language, their eye contact, and how they present themselves. If these areas are weak, we might place the person in another training program first that would help them build those skills. Then they will be better prepared to go into the bank teller training the next time around.”



Once they are prescreened by MCRC and successfully interviewed by Citizens Bank, trainees become temporary bank employees and attend a 5-week training program conducted by the bank. On successful completion of the training, participants can apply for a permanent bank position. All six EC residents trained through the program since 1999 now work for Citizens Bank, making at least \$7.50 per hour with full benefits.

For more information contact Renie Denton, Director, Manchester Community Resource Center, at 603-647-8967.

## **Charlotte EC Trains Workers for Real City Jobs**

### **Charlotte, North Carolina, EC**

Twenty-three formerly unemployed or underemployed residents of Charlotte's EC are now operating equipment, reading meters, and working as laborers for the city's utilities department, thanks to an EC-sponsored program designed to train participants for existing city jobs. Every EC resident who participated in the Customized Job Training Program during 1999 was offered a full-time job making at least \$8 an hour plus benefits within hours after completing the 3-week course.

The Customized Job Training Program is cosponsored by the Northeast Charlotte EC, the West Charlotte EC, and the City of Charlotte, each of which contributed one-third of the program's \$10,000 budget in 1999. EC staff designed the program's job-training curriculum after consulting with staff in city departments, who identified available jobs and the skills these jobs required. When the utilities department hired every member of the program's first graduating class in spring 1999, EC staff decided to work exclusively with that department in designing the second training session, held in the fall.

"Participants in the first session knew that this training program was something tangible because we stressed that we had an employer on board who was looking for employees," says Preston McClain, Executive Director of the Northeast Charlotte EC. "During the second session, we could say that we had done this before and all our participants had been hired by the utilities department. This helped to motivate people. They knew that this was for real."

EC staff and representatives of city departments prescreened program applicants to ascertain their interest in, and compatibility with, available jobs, says McClain. Trainees received a \$300 stipend, free bus passes, and help with childcare to ensure that they finished the program.

During the sessions, participants received employability skills training, became familiar with the city's employment policies, learned basic safety regulations, and were certified by Central Piedmont Community College in

the use of hand and power tools. Sessions were taught in an EC community center by private facilitators, city personnel, and community college faculty. Participants also took field trips to the utilities department to experience firsthand the type of jobs available there.

“We wanted to give them some hands-on experience and a feel for various positions so they would know what each job was all about,” says McClain.

Program partners plan to use the Customized Job Training model to develop future training sessions that will prepare EC residents for jobs with other city departments as well as the area’s private employers.

For more information contact Preston McClain, Executive Director, Northeast Charlotte Enterprise Community, at 704-376-7374.

## **Construction Workforce Initiative Offers Access to Trade Careers**

### **New Haven, Connecticut, EZ**

The Construction Workforce Initiative is an important new partnership that includes Empower New Haven, Inc. (the New Haven EZ), the City of New Haven, local businesses and educational institutions, the State of Connecticut, and building trade unions.

“These arrangements are creating a demand and an opportunity for new entrants into the trade unions,” says Sheri Killins, Chief Executive Officer of Empower New Haven. “Outreach, orientation, recruitment, intake, assessment, testing, referral, industry-specific training, life skills, placement, and followup and retention services included in the program are all critical to our success.” The initiative also includes the Building and Construction Trades Council (BCTC), the regional workforce development board, the Regional Growth Partnership, the Connecticut Department of Labor, Yale University, and the New Haven Board of Education.

Through access to 14 trade unions, the partnership aims to move 70 unemployed and underemployed EZ residents into career-path jobs. The unions need more skilled workers to meet local demands.

The city and Yale University both have entered into project labor agreements with contractors and BCTC, with requirements for hiring not only minorities and women but also city residents. In most cases, agreements specifically include first-year apprenticeships. Entrance into the union provides access to trade-specific training for up to 5 years.

The Construction Workforce Initiative has created an infrastructure and is gathering funding from a variety of partners. The program began in fall 1999, a slow season for construction work in New England; however, the project has enjoyed some early successes. By March 2000, 299 residents



of New Haven, 72 of them EZ residents, had been screened. By that date, 18 participants had joined the bricklayers', tile setters', sheet metal workers', or roofers' unions and had begun to work.

For more information contact Sherri Killins, President and CEO, Empower New Haven, at 213-776-2777.

# Regional Job Linkage Efforts

## **Bridges to Work Program Links EZ Residents With Suburban Jobs**

### **Baltimore, Maryland, EZ**

Affluent Howard and Anne Arundel Counties in Maryland have trouble attracting workers for low-and moderate-income jobs. Residents of the nearby Baltimore EZ are eager to fill these jobs but have no way to get to work. Most EZ residents do not own vehicles and the Mass Transit Administration offers limited service within these counties.

To solve this problem, Baltimore recently applied for and received a HUD Bridges to Work grant of \$1.6 million to create a van pool for East Baltimore residents who work in Howard and Anne Arundel Counties. This opened a window of opportunity for EZ residents to look for work outside the city. The van pool serves 400 people and operates mainly in the business corridor near Baltimore-Washington International Airport.

In March 2000, 54 people rode the van pool daily to jobs paying an average of \$7.50 per hour with benefits. Baltimore is negotiating with the Mass Transit Administration to expand its service to surrounding counties.

For more information contact Michael Preston, Public Information Coordinator, Empower Baltimore Management Corporation, at 410-783-4222.

## **Access to Jobs: Transportation, Employment, and Self-Sufficiency**

### **Lowell, Massachusetts, EC**

The State of Massachusetts and the Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority (MBTA) have implemented a \$5 million program called the Access to Jobs Initiative. As a part of this initiative, the Lowell, Massachusetts, region instituted a unique approach to addressing the transportation needs of welfare recipients transitioning off public assistance. The program provides up to 12 months of transportation services to work and/or childcare on a daily basis.

To fully integrate this program into the community, the Lowell Regional Transit Authority placed a Transportation Coordinator at the One-Stop Career Center in the Lowell EC to work collaboratively with case managers,

job-placement counselors, employers, and numerous community-based organizations. The program provides a coordinated system of information, trip planning, problemsolving, travel training, and transportation services to work and/or childcare—solving the transportation barriers faced by residents looking to find and keep jobs.

“At the heart of the program is the development of transportation policy that encourages self-sufficiency and serves a wider group of the working poor,” says Dr. Toye Brown, Deputy Secretary of the Executive Office of Transportation and Construction. “In fact, with Access to Jobs, every employer and every job is accessible. With a broader job market from which to choose, more suitable jobs become available, increasing the individual’s chance of success. For an employer, steady and reliable workers translate into a higher retention rate.”

Access to Jobs transportation coordinators use a variety of modes such as public transit, carpools, vanpools, taxis, and shuttle services to get people to work and their children to childcare. There is also a contingency plan for emergency trips in the event of an illness or family crisis, using a toll-free dispatch number and a network of taxi companies.

“The Access to Jobs program is an unqualified success,” says Department of Transitional Assistance Commissioner Claire McIntire. “Since its inception a little more than 14 months ago, the transportation coordinators have processed 4,705 requests for transportation and provided 612,838 trips. Most important, the program has provided solutions for individuals who want to work but for whom transportation has been a barrier.”

In 1998 the Lowell EC helped to gather the initial set of partners interested in addressing the transportation needs of disadvantaged residents. The result is the Access to Jobs Center in the heart of downtown Lowell, which has provided 37,668 trips for EC residents.

For more information contact Cindy Frené or Gretchen Ashton, Project Managers, TransAction Associates, Inc., at 781-895-1100. For EC information contact Sue Beaton or Shirley Alejandro at 978-446-7239.

## **Federal Transit Authority Grant Funds Reverse Commute Program**

### **Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, EZ**

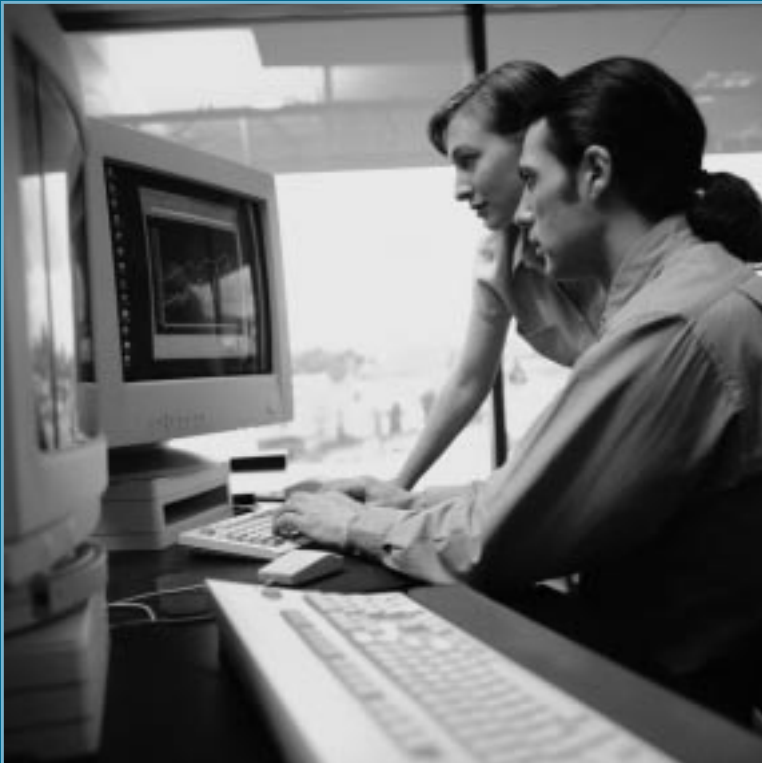
The Philadelphia EZ has received a \$97,305 grant from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to support its Access to Transportation program. The FTA grant has attracted State matching funds for the program, which helps unemployed or underemployed residents of the Philadelphia EZ’s American Street neighborhood commute to better paying jobs in neighboring New Jersey. An EZ service provider will purchase vans to use in implementing

the reverse- and emergency-commute program. This program will work closely with American Street’s Job Bank initiative, which provides comprehensive assistance with both job placement and transportation for EZ residents. The vans also will be available to support recreational and cultural activities during nonwork hours.

For more information contact Eva Gladstein, Executive Director, Philadelphia EZ, at 215-683-0462.



# Technology







# Use of the Internet for Community and Economic Development

## EC Internet Network Links 100+ Agencies

### Wilmington, Delaware, EC

The Wilmington EC has created its own Internet network that provides self-help for residents and links more than 100 agencies for referral and client tracking.

“It helps people,” says Olivia West, a wheelchair-bound senior citizen who works part-time in an EC community center. “It’s one-stop shop. You used to have to run to this agency and that agency when you needed help, but now you go to one place and find out everything you need to know.”

The EC’s Family Support Partnership (FSP) Web site has three areas: a public area ([www.ec-fsp.org](http://www.ec-fsp.org)), a secure area for the use of participating agencies, and a third area reserved for training participating agency staff. The system, developed by the Catalyst Project and six other local organizations, went online in January 2000. The University of Delaware supplies free e-mail through its DiamondNet system. The EC has been training partnership agencies in using the online system since summer 1999.

The Web site’s public area operates like a community bulletin board. The feedback received from users has been positive, according to EC-FSP Program Manager Edwina Bell. “The public finds it to be user-friendly, less frustrating, convenient, and better coordinated, with improved quality of service,” she reports. Participating agencies post information on their services, staff, location, and upcoming events online, where it is accessible to anyone with a computer. Drop-down menus help users locate services or find specific agencies by name. The site lists phone numbers and e-mail addresses of agency staff. A link takes visitors to the State’s Virtual Career Network to look for jobs online.

Using the secure area of the Web site, FSP agencies can work together in a new, more collaborative way. Staff from an agency enter basic information on a client using an online universal intake and referral form, or access an existing record. The online record contains basic identifying information such as gender, education, race, veteran status, marital status, Social Security number, and date of birth. If desired, a client can request that the information be held confidential to one agency. Staff make referrals to other agencies and appointments by e-mail, following up with a phone call. The online records show what services the client has received to date.

“Agencies like the collaboration,” Bell reports. “They have more information at hand. They are developing closer relationships with other agencies.” Although at this point approximately 80 percent of users are agency staff in the secure area, this proportion will diminish as the public becomes more familiar with it, Bell believes. Agencies can also generate reports for funders on clients served and agencies with which they have worked.

For more information contact Edwina Bell, Program Manager, EC-FSP, at 302-573-5742.

## **JOBnet Uses the Internet To Link EZ Residents With Employment Training and Jobs**

### **Detroit, Michigan, EZ**

In 1995 a group of staff from the City of Detroit’s Employment and Training Department and the State of Michigan’s Employment Service Agency got together to discuss the need to more effectively link EZ residents to training and employment opportunities leading to lasting, well-paying jobs. As a result, the group formed JOBnet, an Internet-based labor exchange system that matches qualified jobseekers living in the Detroit EZ with employers throughout metropolitan Detroit.

The goal is to form and strengthen electronic bridges between jobseeking EZ residents and Metro Detroit employers. Elliot Halberg, Area Manager for Detroit’s Employment Connection 2000 (DEC2K) and Manager of JOBnet, says, “Employers that use JOBnet to locate qualified employees find that the project improves the quality and efficiency of the labor search process and can lead to significant tax credits.”

JOBnet started with 20 partners, including employment placement offices, vocational training organizations, human service agencies, and community-based organizations. In early 2000 more than 30 partners are linked to more than 600 JOBnet-participating employers electronically through the Michigan Talent Bank at [www.michworks.org](http://www.michworks.org). The site, which allows for nonbrokered labor exchange services, provides employers with direct access to EZ residents 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

In 1999 EZ funds were used to purchase 33 computers for JOBnet partner agencies that use the equipment to help EZ residents to prepare résumés and cover letters and to search for prospective employers online. The EZ Development Corporation also handles dissemination of JOBnet reporting to program monitors and other stakeholders.

JOBnet also assists in the expansion of the labor force by providing access to a network of pretraining and training programs that produce skilled,

competitive, and upwardly mobile employees. Specific training initiatives in the manufacturing, healthcare, construction, and “green” industries address industry needs for a skilled workforce that will remain competitive in a technologically changing world.

The impact of the JOBnet program is clear. Take, for example, the story of Cathy Davis. She wanted to get a job but did not have the computer skills to be employable in today’s job market. Thanks to JOBnet, Davis was trained for a technical career so successfully that the organization that trained her actually hired her. She now works as an Employer Service Liaison for DEC2K/JOBnet, communicating to employers the benefits of hiring EZ residents with similar backgrounds.

JOBnet recently acquired a Management Information System (MIS) that will be accessible by all JOBnet partners so they can provide timely and comprehensive reporting of job placements, retention, and related data. The client/server-based MIS is being tested for possible JOBnet implementation later in 2000. DEC2K/JOBnet will also launch a Web site that will contain information to assist EZ residents with up-to-the-minute transportation, childcare, and postemployment training assistance information.

For more information contact Elliot Halberg, Area Manager, DEC2K, and Manager, JOBnet, at 313-876-5830.

## **High Technology Ensures Basic Services** Waco, Texas, EC

By connecting human service providers through the Internet, the CareLinc Network attempts to ensure that services are provided in the location needed and to reduce overlap of service providers. The CareLinc Network is the result of a grassroots effort by the Waco Enterprise Community Development Commission (ECDC) to address the lack of adequate information and referral services in the McLennan County area.

In 1998, 80 representatives from local agencies, churches, and social service providers came together in response to a survey analyzing perceptions of levels of service provided to low-income persons. The resulting discussion pointed the committee toward the creation of the CareLinc Network.

The committee established several goals for the network. First, CareLinc provides timely, accurate, and relevant information and referral services for the area. “We anticipate that most of the services will be used in the Waco Enterprise Community,” says Lisa Jaynes, Executive Director. Second, the network encourages collaboration among organizations in order to reduce the barriers to finding appropriate and timely information. The network also aims to provide a greater awareness of available services and to recognize existing gaps and fill them without duplicating services.

CareLinc furnishes a centralized database accessible to service providers over the Internet. The information on the network assists providers in meeting a particular human service need in the area. Currently the program covers only McLennan County, but it will eventually cover a six-county region.

In addition to expanding its service area, CareLinc plans to develop a client-tracking module that will allow service providers the opportunity to build a historical record for each client served. According to Jaynes, this record will show items such as requested service, date of request, provided service (if any), and any followup action. Information in the system is kept confidential and included only with the client's approval. This statistical information will provide socioeconomic and demographic data crucial to obtaining additional grants to increase services provided.

The ECDC provided a \$60,000 matching grant for the project. Local foundations, churches, and businesses have provided funds that have exceeded the amounts that HUD has granted.

For more information contact Lisa Jaynes, Executive Director, CareLinc Network, at 254-299-1123.

## **Chicago Develops High-Tech Tool for EZ Monitoring and Management**

### **Chicago, Illinois, EZ**

Big-city EZs and ECs typically are large, diffuse operations with many subgrantees carrying out various projects. Their very nature makes it a challenge to manage programs, make required reports, and keep the public informed about their activities. That is why the Chicago EZ, with 150 active projects (and 115 planned or proposed projects), decided in summer 1999 to develop the Chicago Performance Measurement System (CHIPERMS).

"The public wants to know what is going on in the Zone," explains Ron Carter, Special Assistant to the Mayor and Executive Director of the Chicago EZ. "With CHIPERMS, we will be able to collect and put forward accurate, reliable, current performance information on all our projects." EZ staff will use CHIPERMS to perform monthly contract compliance monitoring and, should subgrantees fall behind, initiate remediation steps in a timely manner. CHIPERMS complements an internal system called SunTrack Case, used by EZ staff to store project activity data, correspondence, payment information, deliverables, and audit findings.

CHIPERMS is a user-friendly, online monitoring and reporting tool designed to feed into HUD's Performance Measurement System (PERMS). The application's first job is to capture the performance data regularly required by HUD, the State of Illinois, and the City of Chicago. However, by summer 2000, anyone with a computer will be able to visit CHIPERMS

on the Internet to access detailed performance information about Chicago's EZ grantees. The Chicago EZ developed the application through a partnership with Positive Change, a small Chicago-based community technology consulting firm. Once operational, the application could be made available to other EZs and ECs at a very low cost, Carter believes.

To develop the application, the EZ team reached out to all stakeholders—those who live in the EZ, serve people in the EZ, or in any way feel a part of the EZ—and asked about their informational needs. As a result of this community feedback, CHIPERMS will be available over the Internet at [www.chiperms.com](http://www.chiperms.com). Within a year, Carter believes, a wide variety of EZ stakeholders—Federal, State, and local government offices; nonprofit and business subgrantees; EZ residents; and community institutions—will use CHIPERMS to communicate with each other and share information.

CHIPERMS will centralize information and resources pertaining to stakeholders, including subgrantees and community-based EZ organizations, and provide direct links to their e-mail, Web sites, and contact phone numbers. Small businesses or service organizations in the EZ will be able to post information on who they are and what they do or publicize upcoming events. A neighborhood skills bank (or workforce development module) will help residents publicize their talents and qualify for job-training and placement services. One potential module would handle some of the paperwork involved in processing tax credits for hiring EZ residents and another may allow visitors to the Web site to purchase goods and services directly from businesses in the EZ via e-commerce. A link from the City of Chicago's Web site will make this information accessible to an even wider audience.

For more information contact Ron Carter, Special Assistant to the Mayor and Executive Director of the EZ, at 312-744-9623.



## Technology Center Puts Local Businesses on Information Superhighway

### City of Lock Haven, Pennsylvania, EC

In September 1994 the West Branch Technology Center opened in downtown Lock Haven. Located in a 104-year-old elementary school, the center was established to meet the needs of area businesses, industries, and individuals for access to technology information training and support. The completely refurbished, state-of-the-art technology center offers flexible training schedules for software applications training for local firms and industry groups. It also offers an extensive schedule of daytime and evening courses and workshops, which are open to the public at very affordable rates.

In 1999 the center was approved as a provider of continuing education and training programs. The continuing education program, added to the center's curriculum for spring 2000, is a joint effort between the center and Lock Haven University. Classes will be held at both sites.

Through March 2000, 1,682 employees from local businesses and government have completed business development and job-training programs offered through the center. More than 1,700 members of the public also have attended technical and computer training classes. Eighteen staff members help to oversee this program.

Earlier in 2000, Debra Burrows, Director, was presented with the Outstanding Adult Educator Award by the Pennsylvania Association for Adult and Continuing Education.

For more information contact Maria Boileau, Director, City of Lock Haven EC, at 570-893-5907.

## Internet-Enhanced Literacy Tutor Training a Pennsylvania First

### City of Lock Haven, Pennsylvania, EC

During the fall 1999 semester, 32 students enrolled in the Lock Haven University Literacy Corps Program. This is the highest number of students ever to have enrolled during a single semester. During that same semester, a Web site that serves as a resource for students made this the first Web-enhanced literacy tutor training course in Pennsylvania.

Lock Haven University staff presented information about the READ 210 course and the Web site to college and university professors and adult literacy program practitioners at a statewide technical assistance workshop in November 1999. (The course Web site can be viewed at [www.lhup.edu/~dburrows/read210](http://www.lhup.edu/~dburrows/read210).) Students enrolled in the course learn skills needed





to become volunteer tutors for clients of the Central Intermediate Unit Development Center for Adults. In addition to class work, students participate in training at the center to prepare them to serve as tutors in reading, writing, mathematics, general equivalency diploma preparation, and life-skills training.

Because Literacy Corps is a practicum, students spend most of their time tutoring rather than participating in a classroom. The class meets as a group only at the beginning, middle, and end of each semester. The balance of class time is spent providing tutoring.

For more information contact Maria Boileau, Director, City of Lock Haven EC, at 570-893-5907.

## **Residents, Business Owners Hone Skills at New Computer Lab**

### **City of East Prairie, Missouri, EC**

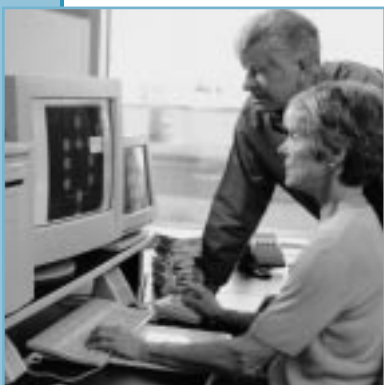
The City of East Prairie EC has received a Neighborhood Assistance Grant from the Missouri Department of Economic Development to establish a computer lab at the Susanna Wesley Family Learning Center. There, community residents and business owners can acquire computer skills and access the Internet.

Approximately 300 unemployed adults have obtained basic computer skills through the center. The facility is open Monday through Friday during business hours, and Saturday and Sunday afternoons.

The East Prairie School District recognizes the need for technology education and has partnered with five other area school systems to support this effort. East Prairie has received a technology grant to provide students with interactive learning options. An interesting development is that East Prairie natives who no longer live in the area as well as local residents visit in a chat room each Friday evening through the City of East Prairie Web site.

The Missouri Department of Economic Development spent \$199,708 to ensure the success of this program. The State Department of Job Development and Training/JTPA Adult provided \$85,133 and JTPA Summer Youth contributed \$332,192.

For more information contact Dr. Martha Ellen Black, Director, City of East Prairie EC, at 314-649-3731.



# Computer Technology Centers To Open in Five EC Counties

## FUTURO, Texas, EC

The FUTURO EC has begun a program to establish Community Technology Centers in each of the EC's five counties. Residents of the Middle Rio Grande Valley thus will be provided with access to distance learning and the Internet.

The community has received a \$197,926 U.S. Department of Education grant to enhance regional educational opportunities for children in grades K-12 and to ensure community access to adult basic and continuing educational opportunities. The Community Technology Centers program offers several phases of learning, including:

- Literacy and computer education for adults.
- Business development.
- Afterschool assistance for students doing research.
- Preschool reading.
- Job search and referral.

The program will incorporate a train-the-trainer volunteer component in the near future.

A total of \$714,202 in financing for this program included the \$197,926 from the U.S. Department of Education, \$366,135 from local and regional governments, \$136,472 from the Texas Workforce Commission, and \$13,666 in Social Service Block Grants from the USDA EC grant.

For more information contact Tammye Carpinteyro, Director, FUTURO EC, at 830-278-6817.





# Development/Growth of Technology-Based Businesses in the Community

## **EZ Helps Recruit Giant E-Commerce Company to the Zone**

### **Huntington, West Virginia/Ironton, Ohio, EZ**

On January 13, 2000, Amazon.com announced plans to build an East Coast customer service center in Huntington, West Virginia. The West Virginia Development Office, in conjunction with the City of Huntington, the Huntington Area Development Council, the Huntington/Ironton EZ, and Marshall University, had worked together to recruit Amazon.com to West Virginia.

Amazon.com will establish initial operations in a 26,000-square-foot area of the Jean Dean Municipal Safety Building located in the EZ. This location will serve as a temporary home while a state-of-the-art facility is constructed in the Huntington Business and Technology Park, one of the EZ's development sites. The company will be the anchor tenant for the new business park.

Amazon.com was attracted to the EZ for various reasons. According to Executive Director Cathy Burns, factors such as the availability of labor and a preplanned site helped the partners form their proposal. Economic incentives (such as wage credits and tax-exempt bonds) available in the EZ also were crucial factors in the bid's success.

Employing as many as 375 full-time workers, Amazon.com's first customer service center on the East Coast will respond to a growing global customer base. The center will support customers from around the world who shop at Amazon.com. Jeff Bezos, Founder and Chief Executive Officer of Amazon.com, says, "We are obsessive about our customers and we want to provide them the best shopping experience at Amazon.com."

For more information contact Cathy Burns, Executive Director, Huntington/Ironton EZ, at 304-696-5533.



# Networking Academies

## **Cisco Systems Commits Capital, In-Kind Support Through Networking Academy Program**

The Networking Academy Program, developed by Cisco Systems, is a complete four-semester program on the principles and practices of designing, building, and maintaining computer networks capable of supporting national and global organizations. The Networking Academy Program is tailored to high schools' and colleges' local needs and features hands-on, project-driven training in high-demand job skills. Cisco Systems donates equipment needed for these Academy Networking Labs to educational institutions located in EZs, EECs, and ECs to establish Cisco Networking Academies.

Through March 2000, Cisco has invested more than \$5 million and donated networking lab equipment to 46 educational institutions in 15 EZs, EECs, and ECs. These numbers are expected to grow considerably in 2000.

For an educational institution to receive donated lab equipment, it must be located within the boundaries of an EZ, EEC, or EC or serve students from an EZ, EEC, or EC community. The general guideline is that 50 percent of the students should be from an EZ, EEC, or EC to receive a donation.

The following EZs, EECs, and ECs have at least one Cisco Networking Academy: Baltimore, Maryland; Boston, Massachusetts; Chicago, Illinois; Cleveland and Columbus, Ohio; Detroit, Michigan; El Paso and Houston, Texas; Kansas City, Kansas/Missouri; Kentucky Highlands, Kentucky; Los Angeles, California; North Delta, Mississippi; New York City, New York; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; and Washington, D.C.

For more information contact Stephanie Heier, Cisco Systems, Inc., at 408-527-6750.



# Assisting Families







# Improving Access to Healthcare

## Clinic Provides Ready Access to Healthcare

### Charleston, South Carolina, EC

In May 1999 the City of Charleston EC opened a state-of-the-art healthcare facility in the heart of the Union Heights neighborhood. Until then, EC residents had to visit other facilities as far as 10 miles away.

In the works for 3.5 years, the clinic serves an EC population of 22,500 low-income residents in 19 EC neighborhoods. The majority of adult residents are single parents. EC Coordinator Geona Shaw Johnson says, “The clinic will certainly fill a gap. Transportation is a barrier for many EC residents who are dependent on public transportation or their feet.”

The first of its kind in the area, the clinic will provide residents with specialized healthcare in the treatment and prevention of hypertension and diabetes. These two illnesses lead the list of health concerns for African Americans, who comprise 80 percent of the EC population.

The Mobile Dental Van and the Hollings Cancer Center Mobile Health Van offer changing sites for easy access to dental care and healthcare. The Hollings Cancer Center Van will be stationed at the clinic 2 or 3 days per week. Residents will be able to obtain exams, mammograms, and cancer screening.

One of the clinic’s goals is to empower residents, especially in prevention, early diagnosis, and treatment of chronic diseases. Evening classes will be held on preventive healthcare, diet and exercise, and obstetrics and gynecology. The clinic also features interactive health information kiosks for residents’ use.

The health clinic would not have happened without the committed partnership of the Greater Charleston Empowerment Corporation, the City of Charleston, the Medical University of South Carolina, the City of North Charleston, and EC residents. These partners have leveraged more than \$3 million to ensure that the clinic is a success, and continue to pursue other funding opportunities to promote long-term sustainability.

For more information contact Geona Shaw Johnson, EC Coordinator, City of Charleston EC, at 843-973-7285.

## EC Grant Enables Local Clinic To Provide Job Physicals, Chronic Care

### Washington, District of Columbia, EC

“We had been operating at capacity, having to concentrate on emergencies and turn away people who needed chronic disease management and employment physicals,” says Sharon Zalewski, Executive Director of the Washington Free Clinic. A 1998 grant of \$44,000 from the District of Columbia EC has enabled the clinic to take on more than 100 EC residents as new patients.

The nonprofit Washington Free Clinic serves people who are uninsured and not eligible for Medicaid or Medicare. Established in the 1960s to provide medical care for student activists and transients, the clinic is supported by a diverse group of local funders and relies on donated time from health professionals to stretch its annual budget of \$850,000 to provide services worth \$1 million. The clinic is located in the heavily immigrant, working-class Columbia Heights neighborhood, which lies within the EC.

The grant has enabled the clinic to reach out and offer comprehensive care to its EC neighbors. It is trying to fill some gaps in the healthcare safety net in a city where more than 100,000 people are without health insurance. The District of Columbia leads the Nation in 6 of the top 10 causes of death, including heart disease, cancer, homicide, stroke, liver disease, and lung disease, according to Zalewski. Most of these conditions are either preventable or can be controlled with appropriate medical treatment, education, and support.

Physical exams are often a requirement for taking a job in food service work, cosmetology, and many other fields—creating “a huge need” for the service, because “employers will not pay,” Zalewski explains. The clinic receives referrals for physicals from Change, Inc., Neighbors Consejo, and other EC employment development services. These job physicals often turn up evidence of chronic illnesses. Although most of these conditions would not forestall employment, they require prescription medicines, treatment, and ongoing management.

“This grant helped a lot. It paid for diagnostic testing and part of the salary for a clinician,” says Zalewski. “We took on 140 new patients and members of their families from the neighborhood within 9 months.”

For more information contact Kimmarie Jamison, EC Coordinator, EZ/EC Urban Task Force, at 202-442-7203 or Sharon Zalewski, Executive Director, Washington Free Clinic, at 202-667-1106.

# A New Life Program Combines Drug Treatment and Rehabilitation With Family Preservation

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, EZ

In Philadelphia in 1993, drug-addicted mothers with children faced a major obstacle when seeking treatment: Outpatient programs would not let women keep their children during treatment. This placed a huge burden on the mothers by forcing them to choose between treatment and their families. A New Life, a program housed in the R.W. Brown Community Center in the North Central Philadelphia EZ (NCEZ), was designed to address this issue.

A New Life's strategy combines drug treatment and rehabilitation with family preservation and housing services to help families conquer addiction and move toward self-sufficiency. The women undergo comprehensive outpatient drug treatment throughout the program. In the first phase, families are placed in mentor homes within the community for 3 to 6 months. In the next phase, families move into one of three transitional housing units, sharing a home with two other families. During this stage, participants take part in life-skills, vocational, and educational training offered through the Welfare to Work Initiative. A New Life staff also make home visits. Finally, women pursue continuing education or employment opportunities while continuing to receive support ranging from daycare to ongoing drug treatment.

Although it began as a federally funded drug treatment program, A New Life is now locally funded by the Philadelphia EZ, the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services, the Office of Emergency Shelter and Services, and the Coordinating Office of Drug and Alcohol Abuse Programs. The NCEZ has joined forces with A New Life by providing funding for a street outreach campaign and the purchase and maintenance of a van to help women get to the treatment center.

The program, which has the capacity to serve 35 women at one time, currently treats 70 to 90 women per year. Ruth Edwards, Outreach Coordinator for A New Life, concludes, "When you see someone in the program succeed, when you see them do something with their life, when you see women realize the problem of drug addiction and learn how to deal with it, when you see the sense of relief that children feel when they know that Mommy is safe and you see them go back to being children, that is the greatest benefit."

For more information contact Janet Keyser, Program Director, A New Life, at 215-763-0900, ext. 111.



## **Komed Center Offers Low-Cost Health Services to Low-Income Chicago Residents**

### **Chicago, Illinois, EZ**

Komed Health Center, located at 4230 South Greenwood in the Chicago EZ, sits amid the largely African-American community of Bronzeville. The center was created to make healthcare more accessible to residents of the area and to neighboring communities such as Grand Boulevard, Kenwood, New City, Oakland, Washington Park, and Woodlawn. It is a general health clinic that also offers dental services. Komed's average patient fee, at approximately \$15, is very reasonable. Fees are kept low in part because volunteers (whose assistance at the clinic is highly welcome) provide some services. Komed, in addition, accepts public aid for children under age 20. Through this now fully operational center, the Chicago EZ hopes to serve more than 35,000 patients annually.

EZ and health center personnel plan for the Komed facility to expand from 63 exam rooms to a projected 80 by mid-2000.

EZ staff also anticipate the availability of at least 10 full-time positions in the near future as well as referrals for at least 25 residents for on-the-job training.

The center also intends to conduct at least 10 health fairs annually and even plans to conduct voter registration at each health fair.

For more information contact Ron Carter, Special Assistant to the Mayor and Executive Director, Chicago EZ, at 312-744-9623.

# Improving Childcare

## Community Solves a Childcare Puzzle

Santa Ana, California, EZ

Religious and community leaders in the Latino neighborhoods of Santa Ana have long been concerned with caring for the city's children. Now these leaders have joined their resources, like pieces of a giant puzzle, to create Hands Together—A Center for Children in a leased medical building in the heart of Santa Ana. Hands Together provides high-quality preschool care and childcare as well as vision, speech, and hearing screening for children who live in the lowest income neighborhoods of Orange County.

“What is exciting about the project is the extensive partnership of different agencies that has made it happen—thus its name, Hands Together,” notes the Rev. Bradford Karelius, President of the nonprofit corporation that administers Hands Together and the rector of the Episcopal Church of the Messiah, one of the center's prime partners. The center provides an optimal environment where children can learn and play, and accommodates 84 children and a staff of 19, most of whom are bilingual. Hands Together provides an opportunity for young families to move from welfare to work, supporting themselves while their children are cared for in a neighborhood setting.

The idea for the center originated when two priests from the Church of the Messiah and the nearby Sisters of St. Joseph of Orange—who had already cooperated in serving local children—together decided to see what they could do with a vacant medical building across the street from the church. They organized a nonprofit corporation with a community board, hired a local childcare expert to manage the center they envisioned, and arranged to renovate the building to fit their vision. The final piece of the puzzle was a grant of \$250,000 from the Santa Ana EZ toward the \$300,000 cost of remodeling the building. Early in 2000, the Hands Together center opened.

Hands Together is a collaborative effort. Partners include the Church of the Messiah, which has contributed \$250,000; the Noah Project Learning Centers, which provide tutoring and computers to 300 neighborhood children; the Sisters of St. Joseph of Orange, who have given \$10,000; Taller San Jose, a job skills and education program for local at-risk youth, which has given \$5,000; St. Joseph Hospital and Health System, which has donated \$42,000 and extended a \$400,000 line of credit; the Orange County Superior Court; the



City of Santa Ana EZ; and the John Tracy Clinic. Other donations include \$2,500 from First American Title and \$50,000 from the nearby Lincoln-Mercury World Headquarters.

For more information contact the Rev. Bradford Karelius, President, Hands Together, Inc., at 714-543-9389.

## **Innovative Childcare Program Removes Barriers to Employment for Public Housing Residents**

### **Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, EC**

Historically, public housing residents have had difficulty finding and maintaining living-wage jobs outside their communities. Access to jobs has been a major problem, and the migration of major employers to suburban locations has increased this problem. Public transportation has limited service in the suburbs and restricted evening and weekend hours. Many individuals working flextime or evening schedules have difficulty retaining their positions unless they have their own transportation.

Childcare is another issue confronting employees. Most licensed, quality childcare providers close at 6 p.m. This forces many families to search for first-shift positions, which restrict their employment options and earning potential.

In response to these issues, Community Action Commission (CAC) developed simple, yet realistic, solutions when community members identified the need for second-shift childcare and evening transportation services in the Hall Manor public housing community.

In July 1998 CAC's fully licensed childcare center, The Growing Center, began offering second-shift childcare until midnight. The Harrisburg Housing Authority provided additional space and assisted in the implementation of an upgraded security system. "Parents can now go to work during the evening hours knowing that their children are cared for in a safe and healthy environment," states Deborah Gochenour of CAC.

A pilot transportation program was developed through a partnership among CAC, Capital Area Transit, the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, United Way, the Center for Community Building (CCB), and the Harrisburg Housing Authority. This program provides transportation to residents when public transportation is not available. CAC's Family and Community Center is the coordinating entry point. A customized transportation plan is developed for each individual, using a combination of Capital Area Transit bus routes, Share-A-Ride, and private service provided by CCB.

CCB has vans and taxi services that provide around-the-clock transportation to documented job interviews, employment sites, and childcare. There is no fee for rides up to the 30th day of employment. This allows the worker

to receive at least one paycheck before beginning payment for services. Eighty-one riders used CCB's services between April and September 1999.

For more information contact Deborah Gochenour, Community Action Commission, at 717-232-9757.

## **Schools + Family Resource Centers = Strong Families**

### **Memphis, Tennessee, EC**

Five public schools in the Memphis EC offer comprehensive supportive programs for children and their parents through onsite Family Resource Centers (FRCs). The FRC is "like a hub for the coordination of support services for children and families," according to Beverly Johnson, Special Project Coordinator for the Memphis City Schools, who administers the program. "We don't have everything in each location, but we know how to get families what they need to have that child [be] successful."

Occupying as few as two rooms or as much as an entire wing of a school building, these centers provide tutoring and homework assistance, help parents find jobs, sponsor recreation programs for children and families, and operate clothes closets and nutrition programs. Programs differ according to neighborhood needs, but all centers include five core components: parent involvement, service coordination for families, life-skills training and education for parents, support of local child advocacy efforts, and early childhood intervention programs. There are seven such centers across the city.

"The bottom line is academic achievement, but there are so many influences that determine if a child is ready to learn," says Johnson. "We build on the strengths that families already have and work to make them more self-sufficient. Some families are involved in all five program components," she explains, "some in just a few."

Established by the Danforth Initiative of the St. Louis-based Danforth Foundation in 1995, the resource centers in the Memphis EC are made possible by unusual community partnership. The FRC program is operated by the Division of Family Support and Home Involvement of the Memphis City Schools' Department of Student Support. The EC fully funds two of the centers at \$50,000 per year for each center and provides \$16,700 each for the other three. Other partners include State and local governments and Memphis corporations, which donate goods and services and reach out to hire FRC parents. Parents are also partners, since it is part of the centers' basic mission to involve mothers and fathers as participants and volunteers, helping to plan activities and share their expertise. Parents make up 51 percent of the membership of the advisory committees that guide the centers.

For more information contact Beverly Johnson, Special Project Coordinator, Memphis City Schools, at 901-775-7264.



## McClennan County Childcare Association Raises the Bar

Waco, Texas, EC

There are 9,137 children in daycare in the McClennan County area, but only 123 are in the only nationally accredited program. In response to children's needs and the desire of childcare providers to ensure that they offer the best quality service, the McClennan County Childcare Association was formed with EC funding. The association establishes standards, develops criteria to assess individual centers, trains staff, and provides ongoing technical assistance to raise the professional level of the centers.

Jane Doosey, Project Coordinator for the association, feels it is important for staff to realize that they are not simply babysitting but are playing a vital role in early childhood development. "Providing proper in-house, onsite, one-on-one training is the most effective way to motivate staff to implement proper techniques and incorporate age-appropriate materials into the classroom," states Doosey. The voluntary association provides the technical assistance needed to help directors achieve national accreditation for their facilities.

The association provides an initial assessment of each center and illuminates strengths and weaknesses. Using the Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale and the Infant and Toddler Rating Scale, the association provides a clearer picture for each center's director and encourages the centers to correct any deficiencies. Corrective measures include providing training for staff to understand what is age-appropriate and offering the centers' directors curriculum recommendations.

Doosey encourages parents to look beyond factors such as price and location when choosing a facility. "These are important formative years in childhood development," she says. She encourages parents to drop in to their children's centers to see what types of activities are taking place.

Doosey realizes there is a public perception that childcare workers are babysitters, but her association is attempting to raise the level of professionalism and increase the pay of workers to reduce the 40-percent turnover rate.

The McClennan County Childcare Association has leveraged \$90,000 in Waco EC funding into additional money to provide program services. Additional resources are provided by local foundations and matching funds from the Texas Department of Workforce Development.

For more information contact Jane Doosey, Project Coordinator, McClennan County Childcare Association, at 254-752-1003.



# “Town-Gown” Child Development Academy Opens

Huntington, West Virginia/Ironton, Ohio, EZ

The Child Development Academy at Marshall University opened its doors in August 1999, welcoming more than 55 children. The Academy, located at 520 22nd Street in the Huntington/Ironton EZ, serves children from infancy to preschool.

The Academy was jointly developed by Marshall University and the City of Huntington to provide high-quality childcare, particularly for university students with children. It was built from the ground up to meet the needs of, and withstand the wear caused by, very young children. The design includes short counters, low sinks, and tiny toilets to shorten the learning curve of life’s most basic lessons.

Construction costs of \$1.7 million were provided by Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds, the Appalachian Regional Commission, the Huntington Foundation, the Gannett Foundation, Marshall University, and the Huntington/Ironton EZ. Marshall University students voted to raise their student fees to assist with the Academy’s operational costs.

“The Academy will provide university students with child development field experiences,” says Cathy Burns, Executive Director of the EZ. “Family and consumer science majors will have internship opportunities beginning in the summer of 2000 and will assist in all aspects of the center’s operations including food service, classroom management, and administration.”

Elementary education majors seeking a certification in pre-kindergarten and kindergarten education will observe and perform a practicum at the center. Communication students will participate in the classroom, gaining experience in language stimulation as well as conducting complete speech and hearing screenings.

Since 1994 the City of Huntington has assisted with the construction of three new childcare facilities and the expansion of four existing centers. Appreciating the changing workforce, Mayor Jean Dean has led the effort to make childcare a top priority of her administration. Emphasizing the availability of state-of-the-art childcare has been an economic tool in job-creation efforts in the area.

For more information contact Cathy Burns, Executive Director, Huntington/Ironton EZ, at 304-696-5533.



# Task Force Creates Childcare Solutions for Working Families

## Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, EC

In 1998 Echostar, a large satellite communications company, located a major customer service site in McKeesport, Pennsylvania. Area residents hoped that Echostar would hire up to 2,000 people who lived in the region. The firm did hire hundreds of employees and began training; however, it became clear once training had begun that significant barriers to employment still existed. One of the most difficult to overcome was a lack of access to childcare during nontraditional working hours.

The People's Building Family Support Project, a resource and referral center created as part of the Pittsburgh EC program, brought together local agencies, businesses, and childcare providers to discuss the dilemmas faced by working families who need childcare. The project created a task force that surveyed local businesses, childcare providers, and families in 1998 and 1999 about their childcare needs. It also met with local businesses to make them more aware of childcare opportunities available to their employees.

The task force mission is to ensure that no families lose employment opportunities due to an inability to resolve childcare issues. Task force members receive calls from families with childcare problems at the Family Support Project to resolve problems. The task force refers families to the local office of Child Care Information Services, which administers childcare subsidies. Child Care Information Services, established in part through the Family Support Project's EC funding, provides the only site for crucial childcare information and subsidy service in the Pittsburgh suburbs.

The task force recognizes that persons seeking employment often must resolve complicated childcare matters. It is planning a childcare information fair in spring 2000 to help families with these issues. This fair will introduce families to local childcare providers and to ways of finding quality childcare, accessing childcare subsidies, and creating childcare plans to address their individual needs. The task force will coordinate this fair with the Mon Valley Providers Council's Annual Career Expo, attended by more than 300 job-seekers in 1999. The task force understands that both the fair and the Expo will provide significant benefits to families, local childcare providers, and businesses. The Family Support Project and the task force hope to continue to build bridges among economic development agencies, social service providers, and area families.

For more information contact Sonya Chambers or Lynn Miklos of People's Building Family Support Project, at 412-673-7134.

# Burlington Community Builds Sustainable Care Center on Former Brownfield

Burlington, Vermont, EC

The McClure Multi-Generational Center, an innovative community development project in Burlington, Vermont, celebrated its first anniversary in spring 2000. Located in the heart of Burlington's Old North End, the center provides senior and childcare services for the community. The project, which raised \$1.2 million from the private sector, redeveloped and cleaned up a former brownfield site. The reception of the community and the success of the facility has proven to be a great asset for the city.

The McClure Center houses the Burlington Children's Space and the Champlain Senior Center. The nonprofit childcare center offers day, evening, weekend, and second-shift childcare services for children ranging from infancy to age 12. The Champlain Senior Center provides an activity-based program for persons age 60 and up and serves more than 600 seniors.

Interaction between seniors and children is encouraged and includes regularly scheduled activities such as reading, cooking, and artwork programs. There are also times for casual interaction between seniors and children. "One of the most interesting times is when they have lunch together," says Lori Pinard, Volunteer Coordinator for the center. Additional planned activities include field trips to pick apples and tours of a local garden center.

Working with a staff of 35 that includes both volunteers and paid personnel, the childcare center fills a crucial need in the community. The evening, second-shift, and weekend childcare has provided adults with opportunities to attend evening classes and pursue employment options otherwise unavailable to local residents.

The project was funded from a variety of sources, including the EC, Community Development Block Grant funds, a tax-exempt bond, and substantial private-sector contributions. This effort marks the commitment of community members to improving the quality of life in their city.

For more information contact Angela Irvine, Executive Director, Burlington Children's Space, at 802-658-1500.





## Latchkey Kids Find Afterschool Home

### Lower Yakima County, Washington, EC

Grandview, a town with lots of energy, is home to Kids First, a public latchkey program supported by funds from local service clubs, the Salvation Army, and a local fundraising drive. Its home is a downtown storefront leased to the program by the City of Grandview for \$1 a year.

The effort to develop the program began in May 1996, in response to the closure of the local YMCA. More than 300 people representing 50 organizations came together in a series of community forums to discuss afterschool childcare issues facing residents. Lower Yakima County Rural EC (REC) staff helped facilitate the development process, which involved community leaders, families, and youth joining together for a common goal—creating a safe place for kids. The program’s name emerged from the slogan that became the focus of these community forums: Kids First.

The community forums sparked enthusiasm among these local small business owners and discussion and identification of assets already available in the community such as the availability of downtown space. With these assets identified, the community began developing a latchkey program.

In March 2000 the Kids First program served more than 60 children every week. Children age 6 to 12 must have written parental permission to participate in the program. A small group of volunteers and a program director work one-on-one with the children. The volunteers, age 18 to 80, help with activities that promote discipline, confidence, and stability.

The Kids First program includes a required reading activity for all children. Each child must sign up to read with one of the volunteers each day. “We are learning new ways to motivate children to read every day,” says Program Director Andrea Ybarra. The program also has play time, which includes games that introduce social skills and prepare youngsters for dealing with daily life. The driving goal for the Kids First program is to keep children occupied and active while helping them build life skills.

For more information contact Vanessa Cerzantes, Director, Grandview Kids First Program, at 509-882-2584.





# Homeless Services

## New Creations Offers Transitional Housing and Drug Rehabilitation

### Omaha, Nebraska, EC

The Rev. Jeremiah McGhee, pastor of the Mount Sinai Baptist Church in Omaha, Nebraska, began looking for a way to provide housing for homeless individuals and families in the North Omaha EC area in 1995. “As we did our work, we continued to meet individuals who were unemployed, who lacked an adequate education, and who were, in many instances, chronically addicted to alcohol and drugs,” states McGhee. Many of these individuals were homeless, so McGhee set out to help them find work, treatment, and affordable housing for themselves and their families.

McGhee met with city planning officials involved in the Omaha Area Continuum of Care, a consortium of agencies providing housing and supportive services to homeless individuals and families primarily living within Omaha’s EC. City planning staff proposed a partnership with Siena/Francis House, a highly regarded emergency shelter. Siena/Francis House, under the direction of Paul Koch, became the sponsor for what McGhee already called “the New Creations Transitional Housing Program.” As sponsor, Siena/Francis House, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation, submitted a Supportive Housing Program (SHP) grant application, which, if funded, would permit New Creations to become a reality. This grant, submitted in June 1996, was awarded later that year, permitting New Creations to open its doors in July 1997.

Early in this process, as McGhee was searching for housing and long before he met with city planning officials, he discovered an apartment complex in a run-down neighborhood with acceptable rents and units in poor to moderate condition. He rented several units and in the process cultivated a relationship with the owner, Colonial Hotels, Inc. The owner was interested in selling the complex and recognized the value to the community of a transitional housing facility for chronically addicted homeless persons.

The strategy, written into the SHP grant application, was to lease the apartment complex from Colonial Hotels, Inc., and provide chemical dependency counseling, case management, and, through other channels, job-training and job-placement opportunities. In November 1996 HUD approved a grant for \$348,886 for the project.

Recognizing the need for long-term transitional housing in the North Omaha EC, city planners devised a plan under which the now-leased



apartment complex would be purchased, renovated, and operated as transitional housing. A HUD technical assistance provider worked with Siena/Francis House to develop a Low-Income Housing Tax-Credit project.

City planning staff then worked with local HUD officials to revise the SHP grant so that leasing funds could be used to help acquire the apartment complex. However, as the project moved forward (and despite the fact that SHP funds now were available for the purchase of the apartment complex), it became evident that the City of Omaha needed to be involved financially if the project was to succeed. The final step was the city's decision to contribute more than \$217,000 in HOME funds for the purchase of the apartment complex.

Implementing this strategy added to the success of the program. First, 28 units of transitional housing were made available to help homeless individuals transition to a life of greater self-sufficiency. This transition is aided by the fact that each unit, once rehabilitated, offers a comfortable, attractive place to live. The entire complex, once rehabilitated, turned a neighborhood that had been becoming a pocket of criminal activity into a healthy and safe community.

While New Creations helps homeless individuals and families make the difficult transition from emergency shelter to permanent housing, its particular focus is on homeless individuals who have a long history of drug and alcohol abuse. Before New Creations, the Omaha area lacked a transitional housing facility devoted to this subpopulation.

To enter New Creations, a client must complete a short-term substance abuse recovery program and have 90 days of sobriety. "While enrolled in New Creations, clients are required to maintain their own personal recovery program, which includes attending peer group meetings, individual and group therapy, and steady employment," says McGhee. Clients must also be employed or actively seeking employment. New Creations provides a therapeutic community anchored to chemical dependency counseling and case management in which individuals maintain their sobriety and continue their progress toward self-sufficiency and permanent housing.

Since New Creations opened its doors in mid-1998, the results—although preliminary—are encouraging. In that time, 33 individuals or families have made the transition from New Creations to permanent housing. In addition, the neighborhood has benefited. "According to our mayor, the number of calls to police reporting criminal activity in our neighborhood [has] dropped dramatically since New Creations assumed its place in the community," says McGhee.

For more information contact Mike Saklar, Coordinator, Omaha EC, at 402-444-5381.

# Heart and Home Mentor Program Helps To Reduce Homelessness

## Huntington, West Virginia/Ironton, Ohio EZ

The Heart and Home Mentor Program is a pilot program designed to respond to the need for a homeless prevention program in the Huntington/Ironton area. Funded through the EZ with oversight provided by the Cabell-Huntington Coalition for the Homeless, the program's goal is to address the factors that most frequently cause homelessness—before homelessness occurs. The most common of these factors are eviction because of inability to pay rent, mismanagement of personal finances, and major or cumulative minor disruptions from dysfunctional family life and poor housekeeping skills.

In late July 1999, Betty Rodgers began work as Homeless Prevention Specialist for the Homeless Prevention program (now the Heart and Home Mentor Program). She met with various agencies and private low-income housing managers to seek referrals for EZ households at risk of homelessness. After several months of receiving very few, if any, referrals, Rodgers decided that homeless prevention was an upsetting term and thus residents were not enthusiastic about participating. Changing the name of the program to Heart and Home Mentor Program and Rodgers' title to Family Mentor increased the likelihood of response.

The Family Mentor provides one-on-one or group support for at-risk individuals or families. This support may be in areas such as parenting, money management, housekeeping, or job search, with an emphasis on strong decisionmaking and goal-setting skills. The program provides family members or individuals with the knowledge, skills, and resources necessary to improve their quality of life in an increasingly complex and difficult world.

“Heart and Home's goals are to promote economic independence, support family and parental growth, improve life management and home maintenance skills, and encourage community awareness and interaction,” Rodgers says.

In addition to processing referrals from housing managers, Rodgers conducted parenting classes for eight families residing at Project Hope, a transitional housing facility for families jointly operated by the Huntington City Mission, Pretera Center, and the Cabell-Huntington Coalition for the Homeless. Those tenants who have participated in the program have all benefited.

For more information contact Cathy Burns, Executive Director, Huntington/Ironton EZ, at 304-696-5533.



# Assisting Youth





# Youth Opportunity Grants (Partnering With the U.S. Department of Labor)

## Youth Opportunity Grant Promotes Youth Development

### Cleveland, Ohio, EZ

The Cleveland EZ includes the midtown area of Cleveland and the east side neighborhoods of Fairfax, Hough, and Glenville. An estimated 4,900 youths between the ages 14 and 21 reside in the EZ and are more likely than not to grow up in households with incomes below the Federal poverty line. The dropout rate in high schools serving the areas is nearly 70 percent.

Using a \$7 million U.S. Department of Labor grant, the EZ will execute an aggressive recruitment plan to train and place 800 out-of-school and inschool students in entry-level jobs each year. The program will also provide advanced training for at least 50 percent of the students who are placed and remain in their jobs and attempt to increase the graduation rate from the four EZ high schools by 40 percent over a 5-year period.

Recruitment and training will take place at the new Youth Opportunity Center to be located at 540 East 105th Street, with four neighborhood satellite offices serving as gateways. A Youth Opportunity (YO) system aspires to meet the individual ambitions, curiosity, and needs of each individual youth with an array of services that is richly varied, readily accessible, comprehensive in scope, and delivered by adults committed to youth development.

Youth will be assessed in five areas and an initial interview will be conducted to determine eligibility. A series of tests will determine factors such as barriers to success, individual learning style, academic and technical skill mastery, and occupational and work readiness. Assessment information will be computerized, allowing individuals to use interactive technology and receive immediate feedback.

Participant youth will be assigned career coaches who will serve as their primary adult contacts for at least 2 years. The YO project and training programs will focus on four career clusters: manufacturing/engineering, information technology, bio-science/healthcare, and municipal careers linked to current labor market demands. Career coaches will direct participants to four major training vehicles: the Cleveland Job Corps, the Department of Adult and Continuing Education, the Center for Employment and Training, and the YO Center.

Every participant will be encouraged to master four foundational skill areas: basic academics, information technology, citizenship, and financial management. The YO Center hopes to combine a systematic approach to youth development, career preparation, and career placement with a flexible system that meets changing community needs and market conditions. The City of Cleveland, the Cleveland Municipal School District, and nearly 40 employer networks, educational institutions, community-based organizations, and social service agencies will design the infrastructure and processes needed for success.

Among the 37 partners in this grant program are organizations such as Big Brothers/Big Sisters, Case Western Reserve University, Catholic Charities Service Corporation, and 101 Black Men.

For more information contact Valarie McCall, Director, Cleveland EZ, at 216-664-2804.

## **Project Empower Establishes Youth Opportunity Centers**

### **Louisville, Kentucky, EC**

Using a \$7 million Youth Opportunity grant from the U.S. Department of Labor, Project Empower will provide a broad range of education, career preparation, and job-placement services for young people ages 14 to 21 living in Louisville's EC. Working with the Jefferson County Public Schools (JCPS), the project will focus on dropout prevention for inschool youth while helping out-of-school youth obtain academic and vocational education and work experience.

The EC includes 10 mainly African-American neighborhoods in western Louisville as well as 3 neighborhoods east of the central business district. Poverty rates in these neighborhoods range from 24.6 percent to 83.9 percent, with a 54-percent high school dropout rate. The project will serve 1,600 youth in these neighborhoods.

Project Empower plans to establish two Youth Opportunity Centers in the EC. These will be known as "Empowerment Centers" in the community, with the larger center located in the eastern part of the EC. The second center uses combined facilities at three sites in the western part of the EC, including Louisville's One-Stop Center, the Park DuValle Education Center, and a site operated by the City of Louisville. Each center will be staffed by career agents, talent recruiters, and job developers, who will help youth develop employability plans. They also will conduct outreach and referrals and provide ongoing placement assistance.

Young people will run Youth Business Teams, working closely with EC staff to conduct recruitment, marketing, fundraising, tutoring, and facilities operation functions. In the first month of the program, each participating youth will be required to volunteer at the center and participate in activities focusing on conflict resolution, anger management, and cultural diversity.

Project Empower will work closely with the JCPS' dropout and truancy prevention programs, including the Louisville Education and Employment Partnership (LEEP), the Alternative High School, and Linking Instruction with Neighborhood Kids (LINK). A special effort will be made to serve a portion of Jefferson County's 500 homeless youth.

Partners in this grant program include the area's largest employers such as UPS, General Electric, and Ford Motor Company.

Partnerships will also be formed with community-based organizations such as the Metro United Way, Louisville Urban League, and the Archdiocese of Louisville. Educational institutions supporting this endeavor include JCPS and Kentucky Community and Technical College System. The public-sector agencies involved with the project are the Transit Authority of River City, Job Corps, Welfare to Work, the Kentucky Department of Vocational Rehabilitation, the Kentucky Department of Juvenile Justice, and the Mayor's Office of Youth Development.

For more information contact Pamela O. Anderson, Director, Louisville EC, at 502-574-2500.







# At-Risk Youth

## One-Stop System Enables Youth To Aim for Dream Jobs

San Diego, California, EC

San Diego's unemployed and underemployed youth are finding new hope thanks to the San Diego Youth@Work (SDY@W) program, which uses an innovative system to empower them to move toward stable employment and self-sufficiency. The model program, sponsored by the San Diego Workforce Partnership, attacks the cycles that could lead youth to poverty and despair with a one-stop system enabling them to use the latest technology (along with ongoing personal service from advocates) to find jobs, get training, retain jobs, and use supportive services.

This one-stop service-advocacy system is based on an effective community-wide partnership—built with the EC's strong support—of local employers, educators, religious groups, government departments, youth advocates, and service providers. The program also follows the *work-first* approach: First place participants in a job, then assist them with their other problems. As a result, in its first 2 months of operation, SDY@W placed 38 youth in jobs. The program's staff of 14 youth advocates is helping approximately 180 initial participants to aim for not just a job, but for a position that can lead to their "dream job." For example, one participant was offered and accepted a job at the San Diego Historical Museum, itself a dream job for her. In spite of her unstable work history, her SDY@W job-readiness training paid off.

"One exciting aspect of San Diego Youth@Work is that we're fast becoming San Diego's Youth Employment Network, which will enable us to expand and be permanently sustainable," explains Liz Faddis, the program's Community Outreach Specialist. SDY@W was initially funded with a \$2.25 million Department of Labor (DOL) Youth Opportunity grant for 1.5 years. The expansion to become a network is being financed with a new grant of \$7 million in DOL funds. As it grows, the program is targeting 1,200 out-of-school youth in the disadvantaged southeastern area of the city. The staff advocates work closely with the youth to enable them to make the most of a job and to use the one-stop system to benefit from program partners' resources. "And if they fail," notes Faddis, "we help them get another job and continue the process."

SDY@W advocates using the resources of one partner, the Metro United Methodist Urban Ministry, to recruit participants door to door and on the street. Because the city has more jobs available than SDY@W has participants, the advocates emphasize placing the youth in jobs, then working with them to develop their work skills. Staff members also promote the program among employers through open houses and presentations. An outreach plan, including a presence on local cable television, is forthcoming.

For more information contact Liz Faddis, Community Outreach Specialist, San Diego Youth@Work, at 619-266-3658.

## **Successful Youth-Run Sidewalk-Cleaning Business Continues To Expand**

### **San Francisco, California, EC**

Formerly troubled youths in the Mission, a multiethnic San Francisco neighborhood, continue to find new hope as entrepreneurs running Sunrise Sidewalk Cleaners, Inc. Sunrise has turned the city's stringent sidewalk-cleaning law into a business opportunity—a thriving one that also teaches the youths to run a business. Sunrise's revenues doubled in 1999, so the firm's success story still unfolds.

With strong support from the EC, Sunrise started approximately 4 years ago when a group of teenagers and the Columbia Park Boys & Girls Clubs decided to create not just another job-training program but a self-sustaining business firm. The City of San Francisco's unusually strict law requiring businesses to clean the sidewalks in front of their facilities provided the opportunity. The project targeted kids who had fallen through the cracks; 80 percent had been kicked out of high school. But with its leaders' vision and the kids' energy, Sunrise now serves firms throughout the Bay Area with a growing staff. More former participants are going on to college or other jobs.

"Sunrise is giving youths the opportunity to acquire real-time business skills," explains Marisa Jaunakais, the program's head. "The youths gain confidence and respect for themselves. They learn how to take responsibility for their lives. This translates into finishing high school, going to college, and obtaining jobs." This success is being recognized more and more by the business community and the world at large.

Sunrise and Gap, Inc., have developed a plan to replicate Sunrise, working with children's clubs in Tustin, California; St. Louis, Missouri; and Las Vegas, Nevada. Sunrise's youth staff have been closely involved with this plan and have teleconsulted to offer their expertise to the three clubs. As Sunrise works to replicate itself, it also pursues expansion at home. It took over

Soma Steam Cleaners, an exciting process for the youth participants, who negotiated the contract, measured a lot of sidewalks, polished their sales skills, and nurtured relationships with new clients. They also worked with the city's Adopt-A-Street Program to beautify a blighted section of town. These efforts were supported by a \$75,000 yearlong contract from the city's Redevelopment Agency.

In the past year, Sunrise has served 62 youths and expanded its operations with more equipment, clients, and participants. The program's success has been recognized in a Washington Post article, on cable television shows, and with an award from Catholic Charities to Columbia Park Boys & Girls Clubs as the outstanding organization of the year, with Sunrise as the focus program.

For more information contact Marisa Jaunakais, Youth Enterprise Director, Columbia Park Boys & Girls Clubs, at 415-861-8202.

## Youth and Families Find Support and Resources in Springfield's EC Springfield, Massachusetts, EC

The Springfield EC Strategic Plan proposes many initiatives to stabilize the social, physical, and economic efforts of the community. However, it cannot pretend to be able to rear children in the absence of strong families. What it can do is provide support to schools, parents, mentors, clubs, associations, community centers, and concerned individuals who in turn can become powerful resources for children and families.

Recent formal reports about Springfield underscore the precarious conditions of its young people. Studies by the Community United Way, Community 2000, the Springfield Alliance of Youth, and the Mayor's Task Force on Children's and Youth Needs provide examples. EC public testimony corroborates their findings. Increasing numbers of youth and families have fallen into poverty with little hope of owning homes, having careers, or believing that their children can escape the burden of poverty and the lack of opportunities.

Poverty and lack of hope often lead youths to drop out of school, experiment with drugs and alcohol, have early unprotected intercourse possibly resulting in teen pregnancy or sexually transmitted diseases, and engage in a host of other behaviors that effectively interfere with healthy youth development.

The Springfield EC plan points out actions that form a movement to change these conditions. The term *movement* was chosen for emphasis and contrast to traditional program and project approaches to community change.



Specific initiatives include:

- Training youth for community service.
- Support to community centers involved in mentoring and youth development.
- Support for the redesign of social services for public school students.
- A major health planning effort.
- Partnerships with local HIV/AIDS coalitions.
- Family planning, prenatal care, and nutrition program expansion.
- Expansion of Healthy Start and Head Start.
- Involving parents and healthcare providers in broad school-based health clinics.
- School dropout prevention programs.
- Reorganization of public health services.

For more information contact Miguel Rivas, Director of Neighborhood Programs, Springfield EC, at 413-750-2240.

# Youth Center Encourages Youth Involvement

## Kentucky Highlands, Kentucky, EZ

Youth in Wayne County have found a new afterschool home—one that provides supervised recreational, educational, and social activities. The ASPIRE Center, a \$1.35 million youth center funded by the EZ, opened last summer on a 5-acre site near Wayne County and Monticello schools. The center currently averages approximately 80 students on weekdays and more than 100 participants on Saturdays. “It gives you a chance to see everyone,” says Ashley Kinnett, 14, who frequents the ASPIRE Center. “Before the center, you didn’t get to see your friends unless you hung out on the streets.”

ASPIRE has held several major social events, including a back-to-school cookout, a dance for the city and county school districts to foster unity, a Halloween party for more than 1,200 trick-or-treaters, and a concert performed by the Christian group Forever After.

Shortly after it opened, a youth advisory board was created to encourage involvement and incorporate youth ideas for future activities. “This center is really for the kids,” ASPIRE Director Tony McCracken says. “Who better to determine the activities and programs than those who will actually participate? This year will be big for us. We’re going to be doing a lot of different things here at the center.”

Some of the planned activities include:

- Youth basketball and indoor soccer leagues. Participants will pay a small fee.
- An afterschool program that offers tutoring sessions with retired teachers as well as arts and crafts activities.
- Community Kids, a program targeted primarily toward teens. This community service and mentoring program pairs groups of kids with individuals or civic organizations to perform community projects.
- Swimming at the pool, which is scheduled to open in 2000.

“It’s a great idea to have a place like the ASPIRE Center because it keeps kids off the streets and out of trouble,” Kinnett says. “The center is a very positive influence.”

In addition to these youth recreational programs, ASPIRE also features programs such as CenterNet, which offers free computer technology classes, SAT preparation courses, and résumé-building courses. CenterNet also enables Wayne County residents to take distance learning classes from the University of Kentucky.

For more information contact Jerry Rickett, President and CEO, Kentucky Highlands Investment Corporation, at 606-864-5175.



## Recreational Programs Serve At-Risk Youth Northeast Louisiana Delta, Louisiana, EC

The Northeast Louisiana Delta EC Strategic Plan calls for the development of a comprehensive recreation program for youth, specifically at-risk youth, in the EC. The EC has allocated \$15,000 of its Social Services Block Grant toward this goal and has leveraged an additional \$2,500 in funding from the City of Tallulah and \$2,500 from the Madison Parish Police Jury.

Since June 1998 the EC has provided four training sessions each year on sports safety, sportsmanship, teamwork, and goal setting. It has also provided equipment and insurance for 350 at-risk youths to participate in recreation programs.

For more information contact Moses Junior Williams, Director, Northeast Louisiana Delta EC, at 318-574-0995.



# YouthBuild

## Florida YWCA Program Welcomes First YouthBuild Grant

### Miami/Dade County, Florida, EZ

The YWCA of Greater Miami and Dade County, Inc., will receive a \$300,000 YouthBuild Implementation Grant, its first YouthBuild funding. The new YouthBuild program will provide a comprehensive and integrated effort to increase the academic, leadership, and vocational skill levels of 15 selected participants. The trainees will also learn onsite construction skills by working to rehabilitate five low-income apartment units owned by the Miami-Dade Housing Agency (MDHA). The units all are located in the recently designated Miami-Dade County EZ. Key participants in this effort include the Miami Skills Center and MDHA.

The YWCA's participant recruitment efforts target young people between the ages of 16 and 24; 75 percent of participants are high school dropouts and also members of very low-income families. The recruitment area is the Overtown community of Miami.

For more information contact Eileen Maloney-Simon, Executive Director, YWCA, at 305-377-9922.

## Youth Get a Real Second Chance To Join the World of Work

### Los Angeles, California, EZ

The YouthBuild program gives inner-city young people in Watts-South Central Los Angeles a second chance to learn work skills and trades and to find jobs. They can engage in community service as well as return to school or go to college. By participating in YouthBuild, young adults can even rebuild their communities while they rebuild their lives.

“What’s great about this program is simple—those two words *second chance*,” states Jim Smith, Program Chair. “Everybody agrees that kids need a second chance, but there has to be an agency that really gives them that chance, and that’s YouthBuild.” Watts-South Central Los Angeles YouthBuild, which has





been operating since the 1992 civil disturbances in Watts, gives young adults in the neighborhood the attention as well as the nuts-and-bolts skills they need to pursue that second chance.

Using the resources of program partners in the community, the program staff of 15 advocates enables once-hopeless and unskilled youth to learn construction trades, build low-income housing, operate computers, get jobs, pursue community service, obtain a general equivalency diploma or high school diploma, enter college or the military, set up a bank account, and/or get a driver's license. Approximately 100 youth have graduated successfully, and the program currently has 34 participants. YouthBuild operates with a HUD grant of more than \$3 million for a period of 5 years and collaborative city, county, and State funding.

The EZ's role as a partner in YouthBuild is to funnel information and funding support from other agencies in the EZ. The numerous other partners include Youth Opportunities Unlimited, Inc., Los Angeles Unified School District, Habitat for Humanity, Building-Up L.A.-Americorps, the Kedren Community Center, Nickerson Gardens Community Service Center, the City Housing Authority and Community Development Department, Kenyon Juvenile Court, Amer-I-Can-Gang Intervention Program, Community Build-Youth Employment & Training Program, Watts Labor Community Action Council, and the Girls Club of L.A.

The YouthBuild model is so successful that it is being implemented in four other communities throughout Los Angeles County. Elsewhere in California, 15 YouthBuild sites provide alternatives for more than 3,000 young people statewide. The concept for the Los Angeles program itself came from the successful original YouthBuild program in Harlem, New York City, which started in 1978.

For more information contact James P. Smith, Chair, Los Angeles YouthBuild Collaborative, at 213-473-3713.

## **Portland YouthBuild Program Promotes Construction Skills**

### **Portland, Oregon, EC**

The Portland, Oregon, Bureau of Housing and Community Development will receive a \$650,000 YouthBuild Implementation Grant to provide academic, leadership, and job skills training for youth in the Portland EC area. Approximately 100 sources have made commitments of cash and other resources totaling \$765,300 in support of this program. Key supporters of the program include Heald College, DePaul Treatment Center, Portland Public Schools, YouthBuild USA Americorps, and Alternative Pathways.

Approximately 40 youth participants in the City of Portland will benefit from this program. They will learn and acquire on-site construction skills in the building of affordable housing. This housing includes two single-family row houses for qualified homebuyers and two single-family homes for rent to low-income households. The program is designed to provide a comprehensive and integrated effort to increase the academic, leadership, and vocational skill levels of the young trainees.

For more information contact Jill Walters, Executive Director, Portland YouthBuilders, at 503-286-9350.

## YouthBuild Programs Certify Construction Success

### San Antonio, Texas, EC

Wheels of Learning, a program of Associated Builders and Contractors (ABC), Inc., has created a series of internationally recognized professional certification courses in all building trades. The courses nearly guarantee successful students high-wage, high-quality jobs in the construction field anywhere in the United States or Canada. The ABC Wheels of Learning certificate course in carpentry is offered to all YouthBuild trainees in San Antonio. Upon successful completion, graduates receive professional certificates for job placement in carpentry positions.

YouthBuild San Antonio is also an AmeriCorps education awards site. This means that all youth trainees who complete 900 hours of professional community service learning (including building, mentoring children, performing service chores for the elderly, or completing horticulture and landscaping around public areas in San Antonio) earn scholarship awards of \$2,363 toward the college, university, or vocational/technical trade school of their choice.

YouthBuild San Antonio has a number of other successful program components:

- Area Juvenile Protection Courts and Texas Youth Commission (TYC) parole officers provide referrals of at-risk, dropout youth who are in trouble with the law. These law enforcement officials also provide YouthBuild San Antonio with case-management assistance. In addition, TYC has provided YouthBuild San Antonio with a complete hand tool pack for each young adult referred to the program.
- The George Gervin Youth Center, Inc., runs its own construction company. The George Gervin Community Construction and Management Company provides full-time construction jobs with benefits to qualified graduates from the YouthBuild San Antonio program. The company



also manages its own housing sites ranging from single-family to fourplex apartment buildings. Twenty percent of YouthBuild graduates work at these sites.

- Alamo Workforce Development has awarded a contract to George Gervin Youth Center for customized carpenter's helper training, with successful graduates obtaining full-time jobs at \$8 per hour with benefits. This program is open to all successful YouthBuild graduates who want to continue in the construction field.
- Home Depot and YouthBuild USA provided a \$5,000 grant to YouthBuild San Antonio that allowed the program to purchase state-of-the-art hand tools, power tools, and other construction equipment. Home Depot and YouthBuild San Antonio are also establishing an afterschool jobs and training program at Home Depot for interested YouthBuild San Antonio trainees.
- The City of San Antonio awarded the YouthBuild San Antonio program a \$5,000 grant to build a public park and a playground at 511 Yucca Street. The site will be designed and built by YouthBuild trainees under the supervision of YouthBuild staff and city planning staff. YouthBuild trainees leading the project and YouthBuild staff also attended a playground safety course, and all received certificates of completion as playground safety inspectors.
- YouthBuild San Antonio's Housing Coordinator is a certified Homebuyer Counseling Instructor who gives an 8-hour Homebuyer Counseling certification course to all trainees. YouthBuild graduates who qualify are eligible to purchase homes built in the program.

For more information contact Curley Spears, EC Coordinator, San Antonio EC, at 210-207-6600.



# Youth Business Programs

## **Mission, EC Youth Launch Own San Francisco Credit Union**

### **San Francisco, California, EC**

Young residents (ages 6 to 18) from the Mission District and South of Market areas in the San Francisco EC are operating their own credit union. With required opening deposits at \$2 for 6- to 9-year-olds and \$5 for ages 10 and older, young EC residents are joining the credit union, opening accounts, and working in the facility.

The San Francisco Youth Credit Union Program (YCUP) started with the energy of 25 young people from the two neighborhoods and help from the Mission Economic Development Association and the Mission Area Federal Credit Union (FCU). The youth developed a business plan and opened for business in May 1997 adjacent to FCU, which acts as a parent organization. A corporate donation paid for the printing of a colorful brochure that the young people designed.

YCUP members have the opportunity to train as tellers and to learn basic money management skills and elementary accounting. There are 12 teller positions in the credit union, which opens for business on Wednesday and Saturday afternoons. Teller trainees handle deposits, withdrawals, and new accounts, balancing their cash drawers at the end of the day. They also count out the day's transactions, maintain a cash count form, update individual member account forms and passbooks, and write out receipts for transactions. Youth managers open the credit union for business and make sure that sufficient staff are present. An administrative director and other adult staff supervise and guide the youth managers. Experienced FCU tellers take time from their own duties to help their young colleagues. Youth board members oversee both management and teller staff, enforcing transaction policies and ensuring smooth operations. An adult supervisor has final responsibility for maintaining the operation.

Credit union membership has grown to 80, with total assets of \$7,000. YCUP had its heaviest day of business the day after Thanksgiving in 1997 when a record level of transactions—more than \$1,200 in 1 hour—was recorded. That same month, through a \$500 grant from the Filene Educational Foundation, 10 young people represented YCUP at the annual meeting of the California Credit Union League in San Francisco, where the enterprise was officially recognized by the professional organization.

YCUP received an EC startup grant of \$40,000, along with \$10,000 from the Friedman Family Fund and \$10,000 from Citibank to capitalize a small loan fund. The Mission Economic Development Association, South of Market Foundation, and Arriba Juntos, all neighborhood nonprofits, supply oversight. The program has received an additional \$60,000 in EC funding.

For more information contact Raquel Medina, Executive Director, Mission Economic Development Association, at 415-282-3334.

## Employment Initiative Helps Ogden Youth Ogden, Utah, EC

Ogden overall is experiencing an economic boom with unemployment at less than 4 percent, but unemployment in the inner city remains at more than 16 percent. Moreover, adults with low educational attainment remain drastically underemployed, unable to support their families and dependent on government programs and local charities. Furthermore, Ogden's inner city has one of the highest teen pregnancy rates in the country, adding to the number of dropouts and those on public assistance.

The problems of high unemployment and high dropout rates in the Ogden EC, where the unemployment rate for out-of-school youth is as high as 50 percent, prompted the EC to assist in the formation of an employment focus group. The group's mandate was to identify gaps in service and design a holistic program to address the most pressing issues leading to high levels of unemployment, low postsecondary enrollment among graduating seniors, and the increasing number of idle youth in the community.

The Employment Focus Group, a partnership of various community representatives, met for 6 months to develop a comprehensive matrix of services and recommendations for the Ogden City Citizen Advisory Committee. "The group recommended providing one-on-one assistance to high school students to help them to restructure their Student Educational Occupational Plan to reflect their personal aspirations," says Karen Thurber, EC Coordinator. Thurber adds that "the group also recommended students obtain direct work experience in their chosen field to provide them experience outside of the academic world and to help them make more informed educational decisions."

The recommendations of the committee, and their later approval by the Ogden City Council, resulted in a \$150,000 seed grant for development of a comprehensive Youth Employment Initiative. In October 1999 Ogden City, the Ogden-Weber Applied Technology Center, and the Ogden City School District were awarded an Urban Rural Opportunity Grant (UROG) of \$509,413 to implement the program and outcomes designed by the focus group. The program, launched in March 2000, will serve more than 1,000 in-school



youth and more than 150 out-of-school youth annually with individual assessment, barrier removal, job-coaching, and job-placement and retention activities, and will assist with developing and accomplishing pathways to postsecondary education and job training. More than 200 employers have joined forces with the UROG partnership to provide job opportunities for every student and out-of-school youth wishing to participate.

The partnership plans to sponsor the Second Annual Summer Job Fair and Outstanding Employer of Youth Awards. In 1999 the job fair attracted more than 500 students who met with 32 employers offering more than 400 jobs. More than half of the participants received job offers because of the event. The Outstanding Employer of Youth Awards recognize the efforts of local employers who hire and mentor youth.

For more information contact Karen Thurber, EC Coordinator, Ogden EC, at 801-629-8943.

## **RENEWAL Gives Hope to Young Louisiana Entrepreneurs**

### **Ouachita Parish, Louisiana, EC**

The banner at the Lighthouse Church in Monroe, Louisiana, reads, “Everyone Dreams Dreams. Few Live Them. Welcome To Ours.” Nowhere is the spirit of hope and purpose more apparent than in the residents who live in Monroe’s EC. These feelings are all due to the insight and leadership of one person who had faith in his community.

“Greater Monroe used to be an area overwhelmed by the spirit of poverty,” says the Rev. Alvin Walker, Executive Director of RENEWAL, a faith-based community development corporation. To change this atmosphere, he got together a group that decided to form a nonprofit organization, RENEWAL, Inc., with the mission of bringing people out of poverty. “RENEWAL’s main focus is entrepreneurship,” says Walker. “There is a small business support group and youth entrepreneurship training.”

In March 2000 the small business support group had more than 30 members interested in starting their own businesses. Twelve members had businesses already up and running. In addition to providing overall direction, Walker offers holistic support, both spiritual and material, to each member. By working in collaboration with the Ouachita EC business team and the University of Louisiana at Monroe Entrepreneurship Studies Center, hands-on assistance is offered to each business owner. According to Walker, “In effect, RENEWAL and its partners are operating a full-service incubator without walls.”

Equally important in RENEWAL's mission are youth entrepreneurship training camps for residents age 17 to 30. In 1999 16 residents completed the camp with outlined business plans, and 8 of those 16 residents have begun "sideline sales" (businesses conducted on the side, such as home sales of kitchen products). Thanks to funding from partners such as the EC, Guide Corporation, the Gannett Foundation, Hibernia Bank, CenturyTel, the Kellogg Foundation, and the University of Louisiana, the camps continue to be successful. Enrollment for the February 2000 camp increased to 27 youth. (An additional 22 youth completed this camp session.) The camps have been so well received that not only has the University of Louisiana in New Orleans secured funds to replicate them in other faith-based settings, but RENEWAL's work also has been spotlighted in print and on television news.

For more information contact the Rev. Alvin Walker, RENEWAL, at 318-387-0686.

# School-to-Work

## **Project R.E.A.C.H. Provides Skills and Maps Career Paths for EZ High School Students**

### **Detroit, Michigan, EZ**

Project R.E.A.C.H., a Detroit EZ school-to-work initiative, helps EZ high school students develop a career path and then provides them with the academic and technical skills needed to realize their career goals. Thus, the acronym R.E.A.C.H.—Ready to Excel and Accept the Challenge after High School—was chosen. Dr. Margaret Posch, Principal Investigator for Project R.E.A.C.H., says, “There is a growing need to assist the Detroit Public School System to prepare students for the workforce. This is especially true in the EZ, where new and anticipated projects require a much-needed skilled workforce.” Working in conjunction with the city’s Strategic Plan to improve Detroit’s deteriorating public schools, Project R.E.A.C.H., initiated by the City of Detroit and Wayne State University in November 1996, has a goal of providing a transition from school to work and/or higher education for 100 EZ resident students annually.

For 2000 Project R.E.A.C.H. has exceeded its goal by serving 237 high school students, 126 residing in the EZ, through a variety of hands-on project activities. Students begin by completing a self-assessment that helps them develop a career path. Next, students visit postsecondary occupational or educational sites where they can ask questions about the types of jobs available and about the business or school. Program participants then work with a community or business mentor who guides them in activities that prepare them for the work world. Students shadow employees at job locations that support their career interests and participate in internship programs that provide opportunities to train with area business partners. Finally, students are placed into paid work experiences.

In addition to Wayne State University’s College of Education and the Detroit Public Schools, the growing list of partners involved in Project R.E.A.C.H. includes the Daimler Chrysler Corporation, Blue Cross/Blue Shield, Wayne County Community College, and JobNet. Project R.E.A.C.H. also collaborates with New Detroit, a nonprofit organization that offers a program called the Youth Entrepreneurship Initiative. In March 2000 three Project R.E.A.C.H. participants were enrolled in the entrepreneurship training program.



Through March 2000, 262 EZ resident students have entered the program and 54 have gained paid employment thanks to experience gained through Project R.E.A.C.H. While the program is operating in only Western International High School at this time, Posch is promoting its inclusion in a model for citywide school reform. Program components match State career preparation initiatives and the goals of the regional chamber of commerce.

Project R.E.A.C.H. is also in the process of integrating a technology component into the program. Forty-five personal computers have been acquired to equip two computer labs at the high school. The software being installed covers everything from portfolio assessment to career exploration. Project R.E.A.C.H. staff members also hope to organize an annual career fair. Students who attend will take part in real interviews with employers.

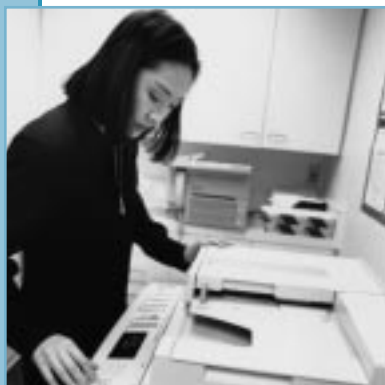
For more information contact Dr. Margaret Posch, Principal Investigator, Project R.E.A.C.H., at 313-577-3126.

## School-to-Work Partnership Plays Key Role in Changing EC's Educational Landscape

### San Francisco, California, EC

Mission Accomplish is an EC School-to-Work (STW) collaboration located in the Mission District of San Francisco. Only one-third of the students speak English, half come from low-income families, and 87 percent are minorities. Mission Accomplish will use its U.S. Department of Labor grant and STW concepts to reach out to at-risk youth. Goals include making stronger connections between the San Francisco STW system and alternative high schools in the area and connecting STW to the middle schools that feed Mission High. Approximately 800 at-risk students and out-of-school youth will benefit directly from Mission Accomplish. As a new program component, Mission Accomplish will become integrated into San Francisco's STW operational framework. This infrastructure connects students, employers, parents, labor, community-based organizations, and schools.

In the 2000-01 school year, Mission Accomplish plans to expand its current career pathways to include healthcare. Hands-on experience will include pairing Mission High School students with students enrolled in the City College of San Francisco's healthcare programs. Mission Accomplish also plans to expand career awareness activities to 9th- and 10th-grade students. Work-based learning experiences also will link directly back to classroom work to create full integration of the STW system.



The San Francisco Partnership plans to increase:

- The number of ninth-graders participating in career awareness by 130 percent.
- The number of students participating in Pathway activities by 130 percent.
- The number of students enrolled at a local college by 100 percent.
- The number of students participating in an employment program by 100 percent.
- The number of students participating in STW activities by 100 percent.
- The number of out-of-school youth participating in STW activities by 50 percent.
- The number of 10th-graders being mentored by 50 percent.
- The number of students participating in work-based learning by 25 percent.

It also plans to lower the dropout rate at Mission High by 50 percent.

Key partners include Arriba, the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce, City College of San Francisco, Instituto Familiar de la Raza, Mission Hiring Hall, San Francisco Labor Council, the San Francisco Mayor's Office, San Francisco State University, Unified School District, and local employers.

San Francisco's STW Partnership has played a key role in changing the city's educational landscape. In 1999 the partnership increased the number of employers actively participating by more than 100. In addition, approximately 200 students job-shadowed with local employers, 261 students had structured mentorship experiences, and 338 students participated in internships.

For more information contact Robert Anyon, Executive Director, San Francisco School-to-Career Partnership, at 415-242-2597.

## **Cleveland School-to-Work Grant Extends Youth Opportunities**

### **Cleveland, Ohio, EZ**

Under the leadership of Mayor Michael R. White and Cleveland Municipal Schools Chief Executive Officer Barbara Bryd-Bennett, local stakeholders have been drawn together to form the Cleveland School-to-Work (STW) Partnership. With a 1999 STW Urban/Rural Opportunities Grant of \$600,000, the partnership is ready to invest its resources, its experiences, and its expertise in STW programming in a strategy aimed at creating a comprehensive STW system in the Cleveland EZ. This strategy will coordinate existing

STW initiatives, link them to the regional community, introduce compelling standards-driven career pathways, and extend opportunities to all youth.

The Cleveland STW Partnership area comprises the midtown area of Cleveland as well as the Fairfax, Hough, and Glenville neighborhoods of the city's east side. It includes 18 elementary schools, 4 middle schools, and 4 high schools. This urban community within Ohio's largest metropolitan area is challenged by high poverty rates, increasing rates of teen pregnancy, and a districtwide graduation rate of only 38 percent.

The proposal builds on a strong base of STW activities already taking place through individual schools, community-based organizations, and local partnerships. A key building block is professional development, an essential element for systemic change. The strategy will incorporate training of pre-service and inservice educators to ensure that they use innovative teaching and learning practices, first within the EZ and ultimately throughout Cleveland. The Cleveland State University's Advanced Manufacturing Center, which has an excellent track record in math, science, engineering, technology, and technical writing, will facilitate this process. Ohio's Region 8 STW staff will work within EZ schools to ensure that STW principles are incorporated into day-to-day teaching and learning delivery systems, that data are being developed and used in a way that drives results, and that core abilities are incorporated throughout the curriculum.

Additional activities the partnership plans to conduct during the first year of the grant include:

- Delivery of new work-based learning experiences, including internships, job shadowing, and field trips for more than 2,500 students.
- Recruitment of at least 200 new employers to provide work-based learning activities tied to the classroom.
- Advice to instructors about curricula that prepares students for challenging careers.
- Provision of indepth professional development to more than 100 administrators, teachers, and counselors who will increase the level of instruction by introducing and adhering to the National Industry Skill Standards.

Key partners include organizations such as the Advanced Manufacturing Center, the Center for Employment and Training, Cuyahoga Community College, the Educational Development Center, Glenville Development Corporation, Hough Area Partners in Progress, Midtown Cleveland, the United Labor Agency, and the Urban League.

For more information contact Chris Warren, Director, Economic Development, City of Cleveland, at 216-664-2406.



## Training Program Creates Jobs for EC Residents

### Arizona Border Region, Arizona, EC

The Cities of Douglas and Nogales have had great success in providing job training for EC residents. Through a partnership with the Nogales Unified School District, Douglas and Nogales have established the Community Vocational Training Center, which provides a community-responsive vocational trade program.

The center offers training in building trades, the hospitality industry, diesel mechanical skills, warehouse management, and electronics repair. Associated support programs include job-skills and life-skills training, applied math, general equivalency diploma, English as a second language, and reading.

Center staff have seen an increase in the number of youth moving directly into the workforce. In 1999, 13 youth from the EC participated in a job-skills training course sponsored by the Nogales Housing Authority. They assisted with the construction of 18 storage sheds and also rehabilitated 5 housing units for low-income families.

During this summer program, the youth participate in on-the-job training, school-to-work programs, job-readiness training, construction skills, elderly housing, employment opportunities, and economic development. EC funds were used mainly for construction materials.

For more information contact Laura Ornelas, Director, Arizona Border Region EC, at 520-287-6571.



# Public Safety





# Community Policing

## Community Police Find Permanent Solutions to EC Problems

### Manchester, New Hampshire, EC

Community police working in the Manchester EC are fighting crime by attending community meetings, working with young people in neighborhood schools, and riding mountain bikes down streets and alleyways. Their efforts seem to be paying off. Since the community policing program began in 1995, overall crime in the EC has decreased by 47 percent, according to Sergeant Michael DiSabato, who supervises the unit.

“The EC was our troubled area,” recalls DiSabato. “We had kids pushing drugs on street corners, and we had had a couple of drive-by shootings.” Now, he reports, thefts have decreased by 48 percent while drug activity is down by a significant 63 percent.

The Manchester Police Department created the community policing program with a 5-year, \$731,000 funding commitment from the EC. The special crime-prevention unit consists of three patrol officers who are assigned permanently to the EC, unlike other city police officers who rotate regularly from one cruiser route to another. The officers also patrol a smaller geographic area than do other Manchester police officers, says DiSabato, so they have time to listen to the concerns of EC residents and take steps to address those concerns.

In addition to enforcing the law, community police officers are expected to determine the cause of neighborhood crimes and take action that will bring about permanent change. For example, when officers discovered that drug dealers preferred to conduct business on the EC’s darker street corners, they worked with the city’s highway and public works departments to install better lighting. To reduce drug dealing around a neighborhood bar, the officers began working the late shift every Friday night so their presence would put a damper on criminal activity in the area.

When reviewing the EC’s crime statistics, DiSabato says he was particularly impressed by the area’s 48-percent drop in trespassing since 1995. Outsiders do not trespass in the EC as easily as they used to, he explains, because police officers know residents well enough to recognize who belongs in





the neighborhood and who does not. The officers, who have no patrol car at their disposal, get to know neighborhood residents by walking or biking through the EC. In addition, they run the local school's Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) program, attend Neighborhood Concerns meetings sponsored by Manchester Neighborhood Housing Services, present safety classes at the Manchester Community Resource Center, work with the Kiwanis Club to sponsor recreational activities for neighborhood youth, and provide security surveys for local businesses.

"Forming partnerships with the community is a big part of the community policing process," says DiSabato. "These partnerships are important because when it comes to crime prevention, you can't have just the police do it all."

For more information contact Sergeant Michael DiSabato, Manchester Police Department, at 603-668-8711.

## Community Policing Strategy Reduces Crime Rate

### Baltimore, Maryland, EZ

The Washington Village/Pigtown Neighborhood Planning Council (WPNPC) is one of six village centers coordinating and facilitating EZ strategies at the neighborhood level. WPNPC has instituted community policing with a mobile police van serving as a local police station for its area. WPNPC also has upgraded lighting in the area, fenced vacant lots, gated small alleyways, and installed surveillance cameras at neighborhood trouble spots.

In addition, the village center has designed a program that brings residents sentenced to community service back into the community to provide meaningful work. These offenders are also enrolled in the Washington Village/Pigtown Family Support and Career Center. WPNPC has also developed a "one-stop shop" that includes the offices of community organizers, probation and parole officers, community police officers, and State's Attorneys, along with substance abuse treatment, career counseling, and job-placement services. The crime rate in the WPNPC area has dropped 17 percent in a 2-year period.

For more information contact Michael Preston, Public Information Officer, Empower Baltimore Management Corporation, at 410-783-4413.

# Public Awareness/Safety Programs

## **The Neighborhood Violence Prevention Collaborative: Getting to the Root of the Problem**

### **Flint, Michigan, EC**

As a way of reducing violence in Flint, the Neighborhood Violence Prevention Collaborative (NVPC) was established to assist local neighborhoods and community residents in addressing the underlying causes of violence and creating an environment that promotes peace.

In 1992 representatives of dozens of local organizations formed the Genesee County Violence Prevention Coalition (GCVPC). The organizations included City of Flint Genesee Intermediate School District; Flint Community Schools; Mott Children's Health Center; the Genesee County Departments of Public Health, Community Mental Health, and Substance Abuse Services; and 38 community organizations, businesses, and concerned citizens.

NVPC, an offshoot of this partnership, allows representatives of GCVPC, The Community Foundation of Greater Flint, neighborhood residents, and young people to be involved in making decisions about resource allocation in their own neighborhoods. Initial funding came from the National Funding Collaborative on Violence Prevention and the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation.

"From the beginning, the NVPC knew it wanted to hear from the residents," says Pete Hutchison, Project Director of NVPC. "In order to include as many Genesee County voices as possible, staff and partners conducted 9 town hall meetings and a community conference at which 450 community residents participated." Community opinion was reinforced by indicators from formal assessments, gaps in service, and available community resources. Data analysis revealed a wide diversity of primary prevention priorities and needs among the neighborhoods. "It also highlighted the fact that a single strategy would neither meet the needs of all the neighborhoods nor empower neighborhood residents in a meaningful way," says Hutchison.

The collaborative decided to undertake the innovative approach of building the capacity of small neighborhood groups by allowing residents to make decisions about activities in their own areas. This strategy has been accomplished by adopting a four-level approach:



- Increasing the public's awareness of violence through a coordinated media campaign.
- Developing links with existing violence prevention initiatives, neighborhood community organizations, local community agencies, and Genesee County human service agencies.
- Providing funding and technical assistance to local neighborhood groups to assist in the development and implementation of prevention activities and initiatives.
- Developing a pool of trained technical assistants to provide support to selected neighborhood groups, especially those applying for funding.

The success of NVPC has been evident:

- Through March 2000 NVPC has provided a total of \$408,665 in funding to 123 neighborhood groups. This includes 54 groups in the EC that received a total of \$211,563. These EC groups consist of more than 600 volunteers who have provided 15,000 hours of service to more than 1,000 people.
- Through a partnership with The Community Foundation of Greater Flint, the University of Michigan–Flint, and the Community Coalition, NVPC developed the Technical Assistant Training Institute to provide their technical assistants with necessary training. Seventy-one students have already graduated from this program.
- The collaborative has designed and implemented the “Hands for Peace” communication program, which provides press releases and public service announcements for television, radio, and print media.
- NVPC has sponsored or cosponsored more than 20 communitywide workshops and events and established working relationships with 100 local agencies and 260 neighborhood groups in an effort to create an environment that will promote peace.

Faculty from the School of Public Health at the University of Michigan are conducting a local evaluation of these efforts.

For more information contact Pete Hutchison, Project Director, NVPC, at 810-235-7210.

## EC Partnership Aids Domestic Violence Victims

### City of East Prairie, Missouri, EC

A partnership between the City of East Prairie EC and the East Prairie Department of Public Safety has led to the formation of the Community Collaborative Against Domestic Violence Program. This program encompasses participation from local private citizens and the Mississippi County Sheriff's Reserves.

The collaborative provides direct services to victims of domestic violence. It includes the State Department of Public Safety, the Missouri Coalition of Domestic Violence, and the Missouri Department of Social Services. Victims have access to legal services, a crisis shelter, and a local transition house.

The Mississippi County Sheriff's Reserves provide training and support for adult victims as they move from sheltered living or from welfare to work. During 1998 the program provided direct services to more than 236 adult victims of domestic violence as well as more than 230 children.

The domestic violence program has been very successful in assisting victims, and it continues to experience a high level of community support. Because of the program quality and the demonstrated collaborative partner support, the Domestic Violence Coordinator was featured at the recent 1999 State meeting for the Missouri Coalition Against Domestic Violence.

For more information contact Dr. Martha Ellen Black, Director, City of East Prairie EC, at 314-649-3731.

## Lock Haven Advocates Help Crime Victims

### City of Lock Haven, Pennsylvania, EC

The Victim Empowerment Project provides advocates who assist clients in making the transition from victim to survivor. This program recently has been enhanced to meet the changing needs of clients within the EC and its surrounding community by sending its Victim Empowerment Advocates to Temporary Assistance for Needy Families training. This training provided the advocates with important information that will help them deal with clients who must work within the welfare system. During the training, caseworkers learned methods of identifying victims of domestic violence and ways to offer their support.

Each advocate received a workbook during the training, which they can subsequently use to facilitate support group sessions for their clients. These materials help increase participation and assist group members' efforts to support each other.

Through the Safe Child/Legal Advocate Program, the advocates also have succeeded in securing protection from abuse orders for clients and in training police officers about these orders and about various aspects of domestic



and sexual violence. Workshops and support groups on parenting, self-esteem, and safety continue to be valuable resources to help reduce violence.

For more information contact Maria Boileau, Director, City of Lock Haven EC, at 570-893-5907.

# Weed and Seed Program

## Weed and Seed Program Provides Safer Neighborhoods for EZ Residents

### Miami/Dade County, Florida, EZ

Weed and Seed is a U.S. Department of Justice program to revitalize distressed communities. The four components of the Weed and Seed strategy are:

- Law enforcement.
- Community policing.
- Prevention, intervention, and treatment.
- Neighborhood restoration.

Partnerships between EZs and Weed and Seed sites make perfect sense. Why? Because community economic development cannot thrive in a place where people do not feel safe. The Miami/Miami-Dade County Weed and Seed has demonstrated great success in its implementation of its public safety strategy, as outlined in the remainder of this article.

Led by the U.S. Attorney's Office, Miami/Miami-Dade County's Weed and Seed law enforcement strategy focuses on an innovative and high-technology task force operation that includes 10 Federal, State, and local law enforcement agencies. The task force successfully issued 26 Federal indictments that effectively dismantled Liberty City's 2 most violent and notorious drug organizations. The indictments and subsequent convictions have resulted in a significant reduction in homicides in the Weed and Seed area.

The community policing element includes an ex-offender re-entry program, jail/street/school outreach, a seal and expunction program, and the deployment of Weed and Seed's Mobile Police Stations.

Miami's prevention, intervention, and treatment strategies are led by a group of 76 social and economic agencies that focus on the following areas: community economic development and housing, educational achievement, elderly affairs, environmental affairs, faith leadership and moral development, family development and self-sufficiency, health concerns (e.g., HIV/AIDS and teen pregnancy), information technology, and youth leadership and empowerment.



The pillars of the neighborhood restoration strategy are Weed and Seed's Community Development Corporation of Liberty City, the Weed and Seed Urban Land Use Institute, and the Weed and Seed Community Development Federal Credit Union, which seeks to create wealth from within Miami's emerging inner-city market.

The Miami/Miami-Dade County Weed and Seed Program has helped secure an EZ designation, a \$35 million HOPE VI housing grant, and a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Brownfield Showcase Community designation.

For more information contact Wayne Rawlins, Executive Director, Miami/Miami-Dade County Weed and Seed program, at 305-751-1295.

## **“Safe Haven” Only a Part of Weed and Seed Agenda**

### **Akron, Ohio, EC**

The Akron EC is involved in a special initiative called Safe Haven, occurring through a U.S. Department of Justice Weed and Seed grant. Safe Haven is a violence prevention strategy targeting at-risk youth within and around the EC. Prevention activities include afterschool recreation programs, summer recreation activities, monthly Family Nights, weekly coffee hours, and an annual community celebration. Educational opportunities such as information fairs and seminars (on a variety of topics including employment, homeownership, and health and wellness), in-school and afterschool tutoring programs, and substance abuse prevention programs for students “plant the seed of learning.” Safe Haven aims to provide both a safe social climate and a fun learning environment for Akron residents.

Operation Weed and Seed is a multiagency strategy that “weeds out” violent crime, gang activity, drug use, and drug trafficking in targeted neighborhoods, then “seeds” the target area by restoring these neighborhoods through social and economic revitalization. The Weed and Seed strategy recognizes the importance of linking and integrating law enforcement and criminal justice efforts with social service, private sector, and community efforts to maximize the impact of existing programs and resources. Community residents must be empowered to assist in solving problems in their neighborhoods.

For more information contact Thomas A. Tatum, City Planner III, Akron Department of Planning and Urban Development, at 330-375-2090.

# Housing







# First-Time Homebuyer Assistance

## Homeownership Made a Reality for 450 EZ Residents Through \$5,000 Grants Baltimore, Maryland, EZ

Homeownership has long been considered the American dream, but for many low-income individuals it is just that—a dream. In Baltimore, the EZ is helping to make that dream come true for hundreds of residents. Bill Toscano is one of them; he was able to purchase a home in the EZ's Washington Village-Pigtown neighborhood. Toscano says, "It's very exciting to be a new homeowner in a nice, quiet neighborhood near downtown. I could not have purchased this home without the assistance of the Empowerment Zone." Since 1996 Empower Baltimore Management Corporation (EBMC) has provided grants of up to \$5,000 through its Housing Venture Fund (HVF) to help EZ residents pay closing costs. Through March 2000 a total of 458 individuals and families have received grants to cover downpayments and other settlement costs.

The HVF is funded with \$3.5 million in Title XX funds and administered in partnership with Baltimore City's Department of Housing and Community Development, Fannie Mae, and local lenders. Through November 1999, \$1.9 million in EZ funds used as closing cost grants have leveraged \$23 million in mortgages for EZ residents.

A look behind the numbers shows that HVF is meeting its goal of providing homeownership opportunities for everyone in the community. Eighty-four percent of the homebuyers are first-time homeowners with an average income of \$24,000, and nearly half are single women with children. With its current funding, this program is projected to assist 700 additional new EZ homeowners.

For more information contact Michael Preston, Chief of Public Information and Marketing, EBMC, at 410-783-4400.





# Low-Income Housing

## Shorebank Enterprise Helps To Revive Residential Development

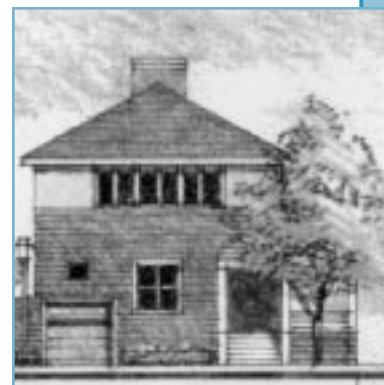
Detroit, Michigan, EZ

It is no secret that during the past 40 years, the City of Detroit has suffered from severe depopulation and a declining tax base. As a result, there was virtually no residential development in the city for decades. In the EZ, where the median income in a number of its census tracts is less than \$20,000, it is not uncommon for whole blocks to be nearly vacant. Shorebank Enterprise, Detroit (a nonprofit affiliate of the Shorebank Corporation, the Nation's oldest community development bank holding company), is headquartered in the EZ and is dedicated to reviving residential development there.

Alicia M. Díaz, Executive Director of Shorebank Enterprise, Detroit, says, "While it is an incredible challenge, it is also an incredible opportunity for Shorebank Enterprise to work in a joint venture with the City of Detroit to prepare a large site within the EZ for residential development." Designated as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit in 1997, Shorebank Enterprise, Detroit, has received slightly more than \$2 million in EZ funds to prepare 20.5 square blocks in the eastern part of the EZ for residential development. The funds have provided for land acquisition and will pay for all predevelopment activity required for the site. Detroit's in-kind commitment to the Title XX funds includes upgrading the infrastructure of the development site. Thus, the EZ's funding has added substantial leveraging to the value of the project.

"What makes the project particularly unique is that the costs of the land acquisition and infrastructure improvements are not included in the construction costs and therefore not passed on to the homebuyer. Thus, the homes will remain affordable for residents in the Empowerment Zone [and for] Detroiters at large," says Díaz. The project, named Chalmers Heights after one of the original subdivisions in the area, will be completed in phases. Site preparation is due to begin in fall 2000 and construction will begin in spring 2001.

In addition to the real estate development activities, Shorebank Enterprise, Detroit, offers homeownership support and small business development assistance. Homeownership classes include 8 to 10 hours of instruction and are taught at various sites within the EZ community. First-time homebuyer grants of up to \$2,500 are also available to those who need assistance with closing costs, while a joint program with Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) provides low-interest loans to EZ residents for home improvements. EZ residents preparing for homeownership can also take advantage of free



credit counseling. Through February 2000, more than 750 families and homeowners have been assisted through these efforts. In December 1999 Shorebank Enterprise received \$1 million from the Ford Foundation to help small businesses grow within the EZ. Loans will range from \$25,000 to \$100,000. The Ford Foundation has also underwritten a research and development grant for Shorebank Enterprise, Detroit, to devise a labor force development program.

For more information contact Alicia M. Díaz, Executive Director, Shorebank Enterprise, Detroit, at 313-642-5220.

## **Neighborhood Collaborates To Improve Housing Conditions for People With Most Needs**

### **San Francisco, California, EC**

In San Francisco's multiethnic Mission neighborhood, more than 50 dilapidated single-room occupancy (SRO) hotels, originally intended for single working adults, are serving more and more as housing of last resort for many low-income adults with special needs and families shut out of the housing market. With funding from the EC of \$162,580 for approximately 2.5 years, the Mission Housing Development Corporation, Mission Agenda, and St. Peter's Housing Committee together established the Mission SRO Collaborative in late 1996. The goal was to develop comprehensive innovative programs to stabilize these privately owned SROs by building up tenant-community participation.

"We bring low-income SRO tenants who are directly affected by the issues to the table as advocates, as experts, and as leaders," explains Amie Fishman, who heads the Mission SRO Collaborative. "We effectively bring together the unique resources of each member agency. Then the Collaborative staff and SRO tenants organize together to come up with solutions to improve the terrible conditions of the SRO hotels."

The Collaborative empowers tenants through community events and organizing, leadership development, and citywide outreach and organizing campaigns. These campaigns have reached thousands of people living in SRO hotels, put SRO issues on the map, and received high-profile media coverage. Project staff members meet regularly with city officials and have developed a network of community-based organizations and SRO tenants who demand changes. The Collaborative also serves SRO tenants through individual counseling and case-work, referrals, and advocacy for needed services. Since its inception, the project has helped approximately 1,000 people.

The Collaborative was recently awarded \$36,822 in additional EC funds for 2000. This funding will enable it to strengthen its leadership training programs

by setting up an office to serve as a meeting space for tenants and staff, a site to develop the Mission SRO Tenants Association, and a place to conduct educational and skills-building courses for tenants.

Beginning in December 1998, the Collaborative—with its expertise and ties with tenants—responded to a series of devastating SRO hotel fires throughout the city with an aggressive campaign to address their complex causes. In 1999 the city funded the Collaborative to start a pilot fire-prevention program, which the city hopes to replicate in the South of Market, Tenderloin, and Chinatown neighborhoods.

For more information contact Amie Fishman, Director of Supportive Housing, Mission Housing Development Corporation, at 415-864-6432.

## **Tenant-Landlord Cooperation and Homebuying Assistance Improve Columbus EZ**

### **Columbus, Ohio, EZ**

Landlords and residents living in three neighborhoods along Livingston Avenue in Columbus, Ohio, have not always seen eye-to-eye on the causes of, and solutions to, the area's declining standard of living. Residents complain that the neighborhoods' quality of life is weakened by absentee landlords who are not maintaining their properties or addressing the drug-related activity that takes place there. Conversely, landlords complain about the high cost of screening prospective renters and the difficulty they have monitoring tenant activities at scattered sites.

Since June 1999 the Columbus Compact Corporation (CCC) and the United Way have been working together to provide both landlords and residents with the tools they need to improve their neighborhoods. The Livingston Avenue Initiative targets the neighborhoods of Livingston Park, Old Oaks, and Driving Park. All three have high levels of narcotics trafficking and high proportions of rental housing (65 percent in the largest census tract). The initiative, funded with a \$30,500 United Way grant, includes a training program for landlords and a Neighborhood Investors Series for residents. Both programs are administered by CCC, which is the official board of the Columbus EZ.

CCC has held seven 3-hour sessions to teach 100 landlords how to prevent, recognize, and stop criminal activity at their properties. At the end of each session, participating landlords receive a \$100 credit with the Federal Adjustment Bureau (FAB), a national screening agency. Several landlords have already used the service to screen prospective tenants, says Robinson.

“One of the major issues in the neighborhood is getting landlords to understand that they have to do good screening and they have to monitor their

properties,” he says. “Private owners just weren’t doing that. Many of them just didn’t have the tools, so we partnered with FAB to get them the tools.”

During a 6-day Neighborhood Investors Series held in November 1999, 35 local renters and homeowners learned how to purchase neighborhood property either for resale or rental income. Bank executives, real estate brokers, the Franklin County Tax Auditor, and retired police officers presented sessions on investing in residential and commercial properties, tax implications of investment property, financing options, and property management. CCC hopes the series will inspire residents to invest in their own neighborhoods, says CCC staff member Adero Robinson.

“When residents see a property that is all boarded up, they know it’s an eyesore,” he says. “We want to encourage them to acquire that property, fix it up, and then either sell it to a homeowner or keep it as an investment property. People talk about neighborhood reinvestment but they don’t know how to go about doing it. Now these EZ residents have some tools to get started.”

Both the landlord training and the Neighborhood Investment Series will be repeated several times during 2000.

For more information contact Adero Robinson, Columbus Compact Corporation, at 614-251-0926.



## Participants Construct Service-Enriched Residence for Youth

### Milwaukee, Wisconsin, EC

The innovative Corps House, opening in summer 2000 in the Milwaukee EC, will provide 10 two-bedroom units to help young adults who have aged out of children’s services get a good start in adult life. The program represents a “new national model for the reintegration of adjudicated youth,” according to Chris Litzau, Development Coordinator of the Milwaukee Community Service Corps (MCSC), a 10-year-old youth development, community service, and job-training program.

The Corps House will shelter single parents with their children as well as single youth living in roommate arrangements for up to 2 years, providing a round-the-clock supportive environment. “We are able to offer them soft services that serve as incentives,” says Litzau, “including pizza parties, basketball games, inservice learning opportunities, and recognition ceremonies.” The program will provide a bridge to independent adulthood for 18-year-olds leaving foster care. A resident caretaker will live onsite. The program offers stipends of nearly \$700 per month and, with additional support

from the Federal Home Loan Bank, the Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority, and local foundations, MCSC will be able to subsidize the rent and create individual development accounts.

The construction work is being carried out primarily by participants in MCSC's YouthBuild and AmeriCorps programs and is one of several MCSC initiatives in the EC. Participants in all MCSC youth programs receive stipends and spend time in the classroom improving their general education skills, completing a high school equivalency diploma, or preparing for college or trade union entry exams. More than 70 percent of the approximately 100 young people who complete MCSC programs each year go on to "decent-paying jobs," according to Litzau.

In other MCSC programs:

- Several crews of five to eight young people blazed the first phase of the Hank Aaron State Park Trail along the Menomonee River Valley in 1999, creating a greenway for the EC. The project, part of the National Millennium Trail, was carried out through a grant from the Milwaukee Foundation. It had been in planning for 10 years.
- An EPA-funded Brownfields Remediation Job Training Pilot Program, with additional funding from the EC, provides a 40-hour Occupational Safety and Health Administration HAZMAT certification; certification for lead and asbestos abatement; a week of hands-on field experience in monitoring groundwater, wastewater, soil, and air contaminants; and on-the-job internships. The training provides an entry into the well-paying environmental remediation industry, where wages are at least \$10 per hour. One recent graduate, an African-American woman, is now making nearly \$30,000 per year. Another recent graduate earns more than \$50,000 per year.
- An AmeriCorps group is doing rehabilitation work on both a charter school and a bilingual partnership school.
- An AmeriCorps program called Clear Corps, in partnership with the University of Maryland Schriver Center, educates EC residents about lead paint hazards and remediates problems in approximately 70 households each year. The group also creates urban gardens on vacant lots.
- The Cityscape program, in partnership with the Downtown Riverwalk District, operates a skimmer boat that sweeps the river daily.
- In 1999 youth helped landscape 15 front yards of Habitat for Humanity homes in the EC.

For more information contact Antonio M. Perez, Executive Director, Milwaukee Community Service Corps, at 414-276-6272.



## Old Cotton and Bag Mill Becomes Cornerstone of Development

### Atlanta, Georgia, EZ

An ambitious public-private partnership in the Atlanta EZ is converting a 100-year-old cotton and bag mill into a mixed-use development that includes what may be the largest loft development in the country. The Fulton Cotton and Bag Mill is a three-phase, 15-acre, \$35 million project to produce 510 loft apartments, 160,000 square feet of office space, and 13,250 square feet of retail space in the disinvested Cabbagetown neighborhood.

“Not only are we converting a deteriorating eyesore into modern, affordable apartments, we are also creating [more than] 500 construction-related jobs and making significant reductions in crime,” comments Ron Diamond, Economic Development Manager for the Atlanta EZ.

The Atlanta EZ Corporation (AEZC) provided a \$1 million loan as seed money for the project. In exchange, the developer made the commitment to price 40 percent of the units for low- to moderate-income families and to make its best effort to recruit EZ residents for construction jobs. The project has been the impetus for major commercial and residential revitalization in the Cabbagetown neighborhood and other communities adjacent to it.

Phase One of the project has been completed and all 83 available loft apartments have been leased. Plans include converting some of the lofts into condominiums to bring more homeownership into the area.

For more information contact Ron Diamond, Economic Development Manager, AEZC, at 404-853-7611.

# S.A.F.E. Provides Low-Cost Housing for Victims of Domestic Violence and Homeless Families

## McDowell County, West Virginia, EC

Stop Abusive Family Environments (S.A.F.E.) makes a difference for women and families who live in the McDowell County EC in rural southern West Virginia. (The program serves residents of McDowell County as well as those living in Wyoming and Mercer Counties.) These rural communities have strong traditions and family connections but have been hit hard by the declining coal economy and the subsequent loss of hundreds of jobs.

During the late 1990s, S.A.F.E. raised more than \$2 million to renovate the former Hemphill School into West Virginia's first transitional housing facility for domestic violence victims and homeless women and their children. The shelter was built with financial assistance from the Federal Home Loan Bank, the McDowell County EC's McDowell County Action Network (McCAN), the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, and the West Virginia Housing Development Fund. The shelter opened in January 1997 and in 1999 alone provided more than 10,000 shelter nights to women leaving domestic violence situations, homeless persons, and children.

Following the opening of the shelter, S.A.F.E. took on the more ambitious task of providing permanent housing for women leaving the transitional housing facility and for other members of the community. This task was especially ambitious given that roughly 77 percent of the county's housing units are more than 50 years old and nearly 50 percent are substandard. Housing development opportunities are limited, since suitable land for development is either owned by the coal or railroad companies or located in the floodplain.

In 1995 S.A.F.E. successfully applied to become the only Community Housing Development Organization in the area and began purchasing and rehabilitating scattered-site homes, which it then sold to new homeowners. The goal for the first phase of this work was to purchase, rehabilitate, and sell 10 homes. In 1999 four houses were rehabilitated and sold; one of the new homeowners was a former transitional housing resident.

Collaborations and partnerships are the hallmark of S.A.F.E.'s work. To support the housing efforts, S.A.F.E. brought together resources from the following funding partners: Affordable Housing Program from the Federal Home Loan Bank/Pittsburgh, through the local Pioneer Community Bank in Iaeger; Rural Local Initiative Support Corporation; Self Help Opportunity Program from Housing Assistance Council; USDA Rural Development; and West Virginia Housing Development Fund. The Federation of Appalachian Housing Enterprises, McAuley Institute, and West Virginia Community Works also work closely with S.A.F.E.





S.A.F.E. plans to purchase and rehabilitate 40 rental duplex units and 26 single-family homes. S.A.F.E. also is working with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in McDowell County to assist in relocating 780 families from the floodplain into apartments or their own homes.

S.A.F.E. has received local and national recognition for its work. In 1997 the organization was recognized as Business of the Year in Welch, West Virginia. In 1998 S.A.F.E. was a finalist for a Fannie Mae Maxwell Award, the Points of Light Foundation award, and HUD's Best Practices in Community Development award.

For more information contact Dr. Clif Moore, McDowell County Action Network EC, at 304-448-2118.

## **Chicanos Por La Cause Makes New Low-Cost Housing Available**

### **Arizona Border Region, Arizona, EC**

Families may participate in "Chicanos Por La Cause," a program funded through USDA's Rural Development Section 525 Self-Help Housing Program. Grants from this project will help to build 44 homes in the Nogales, Arizona, area in 2000 and 2001.

Prospective property owners provide an average of \$28,000 in sweat equity. Families who participate in the program and who will live in the homes provide an average of 66 percent of the total labor required to build the homes. The mission of Chicanos Por La Cause is to help individuals and families improve their quality of life by providing them with quality affordable housing and opportunities for better education and employment.

For more information contact Laura Ornelas, Director, Arizona Border Region EC, at 520-287-6571.

# New and Rehabilitated Housing

## EC Plans To Build 100 Homes on Vacant Lots Albuquerque, New Mexico, EC

The Albuquerque EC has embarked on a \$1.3 million infill housing project that eventually will bring 100 affordable homes to 3 EC neighborhoods. The first phase of the building project will get under way in mid-2000 when the city chooses a nonprofit developer to oversee construction of the project's first 30 homes.

Albuquerque's Infill Housing Project has been in the planning stages since 1998, when the United South Broadway Corporation (USBC), an EC partner, conducted a survey of vacant properties in the San Jose, South Broadway, and Barelás neighborhoods. USBC identified 450 vacant lots in a 2-square-mile area, then proceeded to map the lots, determine their zoning, and identify any impediments to development such as lack of sewer and water. At the same time, architecture students from the University of New Mexico held two design charrettes with local residents to develop guidelines with which builders and developers participating in the program will have to comply.

Vacant parcels vary in size. Some are large enough for only one house while others might support as many as 25 new homes, says EC Coordinator Sylvia Fettes. The city plans to build only 100 homes, she says, because it doubts that all of the 450 vacant properties will be appropriate for development.

"We assume that some of the property owners will be unwilling to sell," Fettes says. "There may be title problems on some properties that cannot be resolved in a reasonable period of time. There may also be some environmental problems that could take a little more time to work out."

Two developers submitted proposals in spring 2000 to build the first 30 infill housing units. The selected developer will receive a \$650,000, zero-percent interest loan to cover the costs of lot acquisition and environmental analysis. This money, which comes from the city's Housing and Neighborhood Economic Development Trust Fund, must be repaid when the homes are sold but could be withdrawn if the developer does not acquire the properties and contract with a builder within 12 months. The developer also is responsible for making sure that all the new homes will be affordable to households with incomes at 80 percent or less of the area's median income.

While developers are free to choose the lots on which they propose to build, Fettes says she expects the first 30 homes to be concentrated in two of the three targeted neighborhoods.

“One of our goals, in addition to affordable homeownership, is to create a positive, revitalizing impact on these neighborhoods,” she says. “By building these first homes in just a few neighborhoods, we expect to get that positive impact and, at the same time, to achieve economies of scale that will help make these homes affordable.”

For more information contact Sylvia Fettes, EC Coordinator, Albuquerque EC, at 505-768-2860.



## **New Housing Development Sparks Community Enthusiasm**

### **Minneapolis, Minnesota, EZ**

Working in collaboration with the Minneapolis Public Housing Authority, the Minneapolis EZ has developed plans for a vibrant mixed-income community on a 73-acre site formerly used for public housing. This transformation will include a new park amenity, a boulevard linking north and south Minneapolis, and a job park.

The Near Northside Redevelopment Project is designed to create a landmark transformation of the city’s near northside. “The vision for this project is focused on rebuilding a community that will create a healthier, more livable, vibrant, and economically diverse neighborhood,” said Chuck Lutz, Project Manager of the Near Northside Implementation Committee. “In doing so, this once-isolated neighborhood will be linked with the rest of the community, connecting south and north Minneapolis for the first time in decades.” McCormack Baron & Associates has been hired by the City of Minneapolis to be the lead developer for this project.

Key redevelopment components include:

- A total of 800 housing units, both rental and owner occupied.
- At least 25 percent of these units will be public housing. The remaining units are priced to serve a broad range of incomes and include design standards that will make the public housing indistinguishable from other housing.
- In addition to the creation of a park, the project offers a parkway-style greenway connecting north and south Minneapolis with linkages to downtown, the Walker Guthrie area and Loring Park, educational systems, and the parkway system.
- Restoration of Bassett Creek.
- Easily accessible commercial uses and community services.

As part of the 6-month process, the development team sponsored three community meetings. They also held more than 23 roundtable discussions with various groups, including public housing residents, northside agencies, educational institutions, and churches. At North High School, students played an active role in the design process and presented their work at a December 1999 community meeting.

More than 700 people have learned about the master planning process and shared their vision for the area with the design team.

The ultimate goal of the Near Northside Redevelopment is to transform four former public housing developments into a mixed-income neighborhood that draws on Minneapolis tradition in its design. Construction is anticipated to begin in summer 2000.

For more information contact Chuck Lutz, Project Manager, Near Northside Implementation Committee, at 612-342-1471, or Kim W. Havey, Director, Minneapolis EZ, at 612-673-5444.

## Developer Strategizes Against Urban Deterioration

### Newburgh/Kingston, New York, EC

George Washington kept the headquarters of the Continental Army in strategically located Newburgh longer than anywhere else. Like Washington, Drew Kartiganer of Dwelling Group Associates has a strategy: "I want to attack the problem of urban deterioration at its source before it occupies more ground."

With \$42,000 from the Kingston-Newburgh Enterprise Corporation, funding from historic renovation tax credits, low-income housing tax credits, and other sources, Kartiganer renovates buildings, houses local people, and hires local laborers and subcontractors. The EC money is "the honey that attracts the bee," he says, because it is essential in leveraging funding from other sources.

As a developer, architect, and contractor, Kartiganer has been involved in the war against urban deterioration for 10 years. The city's historic district, the largest in the United States, centers on Washington's Headquarters, which the Daughters of the American Revolution saved from demolition in the 1850s. Major portions of the historic riverfront district were torn down in the 1960s, however, and more than 250 abandoned shells litter the historic district.

The apartment buildings Kartiganer renovates "have basement skylights," he says, meaning that little remains above the foundation. One site had been open to the elements for 15 years and had a 15-foot tree growing out of it. "It cost \$9,000 just to haul away the debris," he notes.



Kartiganer creates open living spaces out of apartments that previous owners had subdivided into substandard units. This renovation also ensures that residents have homes free of toxins such as lead paint. The lower number of apartments reduces demands on local services and creates a more sustainable urban environment.

Kartiganer often designs popular two-bedroom units, which other developers find too expensive and time consuming. He is currently renovating 11 apartments: two 4-bedroom units, four 3-bedroom units, four 2-bedroom units, and one 1-bedroom unit. Project Life, a transitional homeless center, will place at least two of its clients in these apartments.

Kartiganer operates 28 apartments: 27 have women as heads of household, and 26 of those are single mothers. The apartments are home to approximately 60 children. The Dwelling Group, Inc., has invested more than \$2.5 million in Newburgh buildings since 1992.

Another benefit to the city is employment. Born and raised in Newburgh, Kartiganer believes in using local systems, laborers, and subcontractors. "I'm your classic case of a local guy trying to do the right thing," he says. He is looking forward to stabilizing the building across from Washington's Headquarters, developing riverfront housing overlooking the Hudson, and watching historic Newburgh develop tourism.

For more information contact Sharon Hyder, Director of Operations, Kingston-Newburgh Enterprise Corporation, at 914-569-1680.

## Rehabilitated Rentals Provide New Horizons for Homeowners

### Knoxville, Tennessee, EZ

Deteriorated housing plagues Knoxville's inner city. "Hundreds and hundreds of units are substandard, with whole neighborhoods going downhill," says Ed Perry, Project Manager for the Knox Housing Partnership (KHP). KHP, a developer, is under contract with Knoxville Housing Development Corporation to renovate houses in a development called New Horizon Homes. This is a 2-year, \$6.8 million neighborhood revitalization project that has, through early 2000, put 146 renovated single-family homes on the market.

The Knoxville Housing Development Corporation purchased the rental properties from the Florence Monday Estate in April 1998. KHP will complete the construction work in 2000 and help current tenants and other buyers to purchase the homes. Ninety-seven homes are in east Knoxville;



the other 49 are in west Knoxville. Of the 146 homes, KHP has kept 34 houses as long-term rentals to avoid displacing current residents. Sixty others will be sold at fair market value on the open market, and 40 homes are expected to be sold to current tenants.

The homes total 850 square feet, with two bedrooms and one bath. Some homes have received third-bedroom and second-bath additions. New central gas heating and air conditioning units, replacement windows, and attic and wall insulation will result in lower utility bills for residents.

A consortium of eight lenders—BankFirst, First American National Bank, First Tennessee Bank, First Vantage Bank, Home Federal Bank, NBC Bank, SunTrust Bank, and Union Planters Bank—provided acquisition and construction financing at below-market interest rates. The Affordable Housing Trust Fund provided a grant to write down the interest rate to acquire and rehabilitate the properties to 5 percent.

Grant funds of \$975,000 are available to eligible homebuyers in the form of purchase loans ranging from \$2,600 to \$25,000. Downpayments will range from \$750 to \$1,500, with monthly house payments ranging from \$250 to \$450. Twenty-six homes already have been sold and others are under contract.

KHP will educate potential homebuyers and help them obtain mortgage loans. The Florence Monday Estate has provided a \$75,000 grant for neighborhood beautification, with the East Tennessee Community Design Center assisting with planning and design. The Center for Neighborhood Development will help homebuyers organize neighborhood organizations.

For more information contact Jeanette Kelleher, Administrator, Department of Community Development, at 423-215-2116.





# New Housing Comes to the Valley

## Rio Grande Valley, Texas, EZ

The Rio Grande Valley EZ (RGVEZ), in partnership with the Community Development Corporation of Brownsville, recently broke ground on the new Tarpon Field subdivision. The subdivision, one of the largest housing developments ever undertaken in the EZ, features brick homes that will attract new homeowners.

Calvin Byrd, a member of the Laguna Madre Subzone Board of RGVEZ and former mayor of Port Isabel, says that “affordable housing was identified as a major need during development of the EZ Strategic Plan in 1994. Five years of hard work and cooperation to overcome the obstacles associated with affordable housing will now make homeownership a reality, instead of a mere dream, for 65 families.”

RGVEZ is providing downpayment assistance and principal reduction services to qualifying families in the amount of \$9,000 per home. The Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs gave a \$500,000 housing infrastructure grant to Cameron County to further improve housing affordability. The Greater Brownsville Multibank Community Bank Corporation and the USDA Rural Development Home Loan Program also provided assistance.

For more information contact Yvonne “Bonnie” Gonzalez, Director, Rio Grande Valley EZ, at 956-514-4000.





# Officer Next Door Program

## Officer Next Door Program Assists DC Neighborhood

Washington, District of Columbia, EC

Irene Hughes, her husband Reginald Hughes (a U.S. Postal Service employee), their daughter Charisma (6), and son Reginald (3) moved into a three-bedroom home in Northeast Washington in August 1999. The family purchased the home for just \$51,000—half the listed price of \$102,000—as a result of the Officer Next Door Program. “I wanted to be a police officer since I was a little girl, because I like working with the community, helping people, and just being there for them when they have problems,” says Hughes, 28. “The Officer Next Door program will help me do that even more.”

Hughes, a patrol officer in the Washington, D.C., Police Department for 8 years, spoke about her experience with the Officer Next Door program at a 1999 Vice Presidential news conference announcing improvement and expansion of the program.

Hughes’ home is directly across the street from an elementary school in a neighborhood with many elderly residents. She is letting her new neighbors know she lives in the neighborhood and plans to become involved in volunteer activities at the school and elsewhere in the area.

“My neighbors tell me it’s really good to have an officer in the neighborhood,” Hughes says. “They’re really happy because they think I will make this a safer area. Having an officer in the neighborhood definitely prevents crime.”

Hughes said her new home is the first she has ever owned. It is located just a 10-minute drive from her police precinct station. She and her family previously lived in Laurel, Maryland, approximately a one-half hour drive from her precinct station, in a two-bedroom apartment.

For more information on the Officer Next Door Program, contact HUD at 1-800-217-6970 or visit HUD’s Web site at [www.hud.gov/ond/ond.html](http://www.hud.gov/ond/ond.html).



# HOPE VI

## **Baltimore To Use HOPE VI To Promote Employment, Economic Development**

### **Baltimore, Maryland, EZ**

The Housing Authority of Baltimore City will receive a \$21 million HUD HOPE VI revitalization grant to revitalize the Broadway Homes public housing development as well as other housing units throughout the Zone. A total of 429 severely distressed units will be replaced with 84 units of public housing, 20 affordable homeownership units, and 12 market-rate rental units.

An additional 600 homeownership units are targeted in the Sandtown/Winchester neighborhood. The Empower Baltimore Management Corporation, the group responsible for oversight of the city's EZ, will use \$2 million of Baltimore's \$100 million EZ funding to provide up to \$5,000 in downpayment costs for hundreds of low- and middle-income homebuyers. Baltimore has pursued HOPE VI resources aggressively for use in combination with private and State funding to demolish existing high-rise public housing projects and redevelop the sites with low-rise rental and for-sale housing, public facilities, and business.

The revitalization plan includes an 8,500-square-foot community center that will be a coordinating hub for community and supportive services. It also includes a mixed-use facility that will provide a 15,000-square-foot, state-of-the-art library and technology training center; 10,000 square feet of neighborhood retail space; a hotel; and a 1,600-space parking garage. Broadway residents will thus become linked to numerous community service providers offering job-readiness training; employment opportunities; and education, recreation, economic, health, and other human services.

Community partners include Johns Hopkins University (Baltimore's largest employer), the EZ, the city's public library and public schools, the Boys & Girls Clubs of Central Maryland, Head Start, the Baltimore American Indian Center, and a variety of grassroots neighborhood and community organizations including the Historic East Baltimore Community Action Coalition and the Southeast Community Organization/Southeast Development Initiative.

Overall site layout plans incorporate design principles that include defensible space (areas whose physical design offers an approach to crime prevention) and integrate employment and economic development opportunities. An additional \$70 million in public and private funds will be invested in the project.

For more information contact Daniel P. Henson III, Executive Director, Housing Authority of Baltimore City, at 410-396-3232.

## EZ Revitalizes Public Housing Through HOPE VI Program

### Gary/Hammond/East Chicago, Indiana, EZ

The Housing Authority of the City of Gary will receive a \$19.8 million HOPE VI revitalization grant to enable the revitalization of the Duneland Village public housing development. A total of 163 severely distressed units will be replaced with 152 tax-credit rental units, 91 units of public housing, and 13 affordable homeownership units.

The housing authority plans to develop in the downtown Gary portion of the EZ in an area beginning adjacent to the transportation center, then moving westward to include the existing Jackson Park. This area is centrally located and has a distinct visual identity. The development plan includes construction of retail space adjacent to the train station, significant street improvements, and major park refurbishment. It will feature attractive public space, distinctive architectural features, a location within walking distance to neighborhood retail stores and public transportation, and nearby well-landscaped parks. The development will surround mainly single-family housing with a few intermingled multifamily structures. An additional \$25 million in public and private funds will be invested in the project.

For more information contact Jewel Ross-Brown, Executive Director, Housing Authority of the City of Gary, at 219-883-0387.



## HOPE VI Grant Will Revitalize Distressed Housing

### Columbia/Sumter, South Carolina, EZ

The Housing Authority of the City of Columbia will receive a \$25.8 million HOPE VI revitalization grant for the 47-year-old Saxon Homes public housing development in Columbia's EZ. The housing authority and its partners will undertake a \$46 million effort to demolish 400 units of severely distressed public housing at Saxon Homes and build 225 affordable homeownership units, 100 tax-credit units, 93 new public housing units, and 38 market-rate rental units in the new mixed-income Celia Saxon Neighborhood.

The development team will revitalize Drew Park and upgrade other community facilities in the neighborhood. HOPE VI funds also will be used to strengthen supportive services and help residents move from welfare to work. The housing authority projects that the number of households with primary income from work will double over the grant period. The HOPE VI investment will leverage an additional \$21 million in other funds.

For more information contact Rodney H. Fauser, Executive Director, Housing Authority of the City of Columbia, at 803-376-6103.

# Lead-Based Paint Program

## Model Program Targets Lead Paint Hazards Phoenix, Arizona, EC

The possibility of children being poisoned by lead-based paint in their homes is one of the most insidious yet curable ills of modern urban life. The City of Phoenix has been at the forefront of efforts to attack lead paint hazards. Its Lead Hazard Control Program became a national model when HUD invited Phoenix program employees to help train staff of new lead hazard programs from other cities. With support from the EC and \$2.9 million in HUD lead hazard control funds for a 2-year period, the Phoenix program continues to build on its successful record of making more than 400 houses safe.

“We’ve been able to accomplish quite a bit with the program dollars,” notes Victor Morrison-Vega, who coordinates the city’s role. “It is especially gratifying, for example, to work on housing units that are used for daycare, where our efforts can help protect even more children from long-term health problems.” The program began in 1996, when the city first targeted neighborhoods with older houses, most in or near what is now the EC. Now the EC’s support enables the program to work more effectively with organizations in the EC to identify potential participants. A staff of seven reaches out the residents of the target communities by making presentations at neighborhood organization meetings and PTA meetings, by sending letters home to parents in cooperation with schools, and by going door to door.

Each participating house is thoroughly tested by certified contractors. Maricopa County screens the residents of each house for blood lead levels. If work is required, the house’s inhabitants are temporarily relocated to housing provided by the program while another group of contractors does the lead-abatement work. After the work is complete, each house is tested to make sure it is safe before the residents move back in.

Along with the county and the EC, other primary program partners include the contractors who test for lead and do the work. Staff are now engaged in developing systematic ways to integrate lead hazard abatement into the city’s other housing rehabilitation programs. The program is promoted, with EC and county help, through ads in various media and presentations at community meetings.

For more information contact Cecile Fowler, Coordinator, Lead Hazard Control Program, City of Phoenix, at 602-534-2528.







# Building Communities





# Community Leadership

## Task Force Earns Award for Civic Empowerment

### Buffalo, New York, EC

The Greater Buffalo All America City Committee has selected the International Gateway District Task Force, chaired by the Federal EC of Buffalo (FECB), Inc., as a recipient of its 2000 Civic Empowerment Award. The award was presented at a special awards dinner on April 6, 2000, to acknowledge the task force's outstanding service to the City of Buffalo.

The International Gateway District Task Force has been facilitated by FECB since the EC began operations in 1995. It is an open leadership forum consisting of citizens from both the public and private sectors, with a goal of advancing the economic revitalization of Buffalo's lower west side to provide an international gateway from Canada to the United States. FECB has coordinated the work of this open leadership forum and produced a variety of quantifiable economic revitalization results.

The task force has successfully included more than 100 participants from key parts of the community—architects, block clubs, businesses, churches, colleges and universities, community-based organizations, economic development agencies, elected officials, and individual residents.

Through its annual needs assessment, mailed to more than 200 interested parties, key projects have been identified. Results include:

- Street banners for Niagara Street, the lower west side's primary commercial corridor.
- Repaving Niagara and adjacent streets.
- Improved housing through HOPE VI, the Prospect Avenue housing development, and La Casa de Los Tainos.
- Niagara Street sidewalk replacement.
- Development of a position paper on the expansion of the Peace Bridge, based on feedback from task force participants.
- Endorsement of the expansion of the Tops Supermarket on Niagara Street.
- Establishment of Niagara Street as a commercial retail district, part of a master retailing plan for the lower west side.

Paula Alcala Rosner, Chairperson of the task force and FECB Executive Director, says she found it gratifying to work with such a broad-based, diverse group of people in an environment that is open, fair, objective, and ultimately viable. “It is a privilege to accept this award on behalf of the task force. Many, many people have earned it,” she says. “That, in my opinion, is what EZs and ECs are all about.”

For more information contact Paula Alcala Rosner, Chairperson, International Gateway District Task Force, and Executive Director, FECB, at 716-851-5032.

## **EZ Encourages Residents To Be Good Neighbors**

### **Columbus, Ohio, EZ**

The Good Neighbor Initiative encourages renters and homeowners in the Columbus EZ to get to know one another and work together with their civic associations to improve the safety, physical conditions, and self-sufficiency of their neighborhoods. The initiative was launched in 1999 with \$50,000 in EZ funds.

“We’re trying to encourage a better sense of community among EZ residents,” says Adero Robinson, Community Development Specialist with the Columbus Compact Corporation (CCC), the official board of the EZ. “We want renters to feel that they are part of the community so they will take ownership of their property even though they don’t literally own it. The overall, idealistic goal is to convince EZ residents that the central city is a good place to live.”

The Good Neighbor Initiative officially began in February 1999 when Robinson and a team of volunteers began assembling and delivering welcome baskets to new neighborhood residents, most of whom are renters. Robinson obtains the names of new arrivals from local property management companies including the Broad Street Management Company, the largest provider of subsidized housing in Franklin County. Through March 2000, 200 baskets have been delivered.

Typically, volunteers pack baskets with various community resources, including emergency telephone numbers, trash pickup schedules, and information about neighborhood civic associations. The baskets also include common household items, such as flashlights, cleaning supplies, and batteries, that might be useful in setting up a household. Finally, says Robinson, each basket contains a copy of an 8-minute video (produced by CCC) that discusses how to be a good neighbor.

CCC is also trying to encouraging a sense of ownership among EZ residents by working with individual neighborhoods to develop community codes that will guide residents’ behavior and property management habits.



“These codes set requirements for how residents should maintain their homes or keep their lawns,” says Robinson. “They talk about keeping trash or litter under control, they set standards for noise, and they address the kind of behaviors that won’t be tolerated. The codes put all this in writing so residents can actually look and see that people are serious about making sure that their neighborhood looks good and is safe.”

Four neighborhoods are now working to develop the codes, which will be enforced by Area Commissions (city-recognized neighborhood organizations that exist throughout Columbus). In addition to guiding neighborhoods in adopting these codes, CCC is also encouraging smaller landlords to participate in the Good Neighbor Initiative by adopting neighborhood codes for their own properties and by informing CCC when new residents move to their buildings.

For more information contact Adero Robinson, Community Development Specialist, Columbus Compact Corporation, at 614-251-0926.



## Conference Addresses Race Relations

### North Delta, Mississippi, EC

On March 4, 2000, the North Delta, Mississippi EC sponsored a race relations conference in Marks, Mississippi, with the theme “Can We Come to a Consensus?” U.S. Senator Thad Cochran of Mississippi, the keynote speaker, noted in his address that “the major impediments to progress in race relations are ignorance and apathy.”

Cochran quoted extensively from the speeches of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and the works of Mark Twain. He told his audience that it is time to come to consensus about racial equality and equal opportunities. Cochran also addressed the need to bring more economic and educational opportunities to the Delta. Professor William Harris, Chair of the Department of Urban Development at Jackson State University, also spoke on the inequality of “equal opportunity” and encouraged the building of community, capacity, and courage in the Delta.

Bishop Jack Meadors of the United Methodist Conference of Mississippi and Rev. Leroy Wadlington of the National Baptist Association addressed the morning session, titled “The Religious Imperative.” Both religious leaders laid out Biblical requirements for racial justice and provided illustrations from their own life experiences. The information in the session crossed denominational and sectarian lines, establishing moral and ethical standards for all persons.

The conference also featured Gerald Taylor of the Industrial Areas Foundation and Bill Simpson, State Director of Rural Development, in a session on “Approaches That Work.” In addition to describing programs that have worked, the speakers encouraged interaction and participation from the audience, including a positive discussion of “next steps” necessary to make real progress in local and national race relations.

Valley Bank and the Delta Race Relations Consortium co-sponsored the event.

For more information contact Stuart Guernsey, Director, North Delta, Mississippi EC, at 601-487-1968.





# Organizing/Accessing Grants and Other Resources

## Donated Computers Increase Literacy in West Virginia Community

Huntington, West Virginia/Ironton, Ohio, EZ

The Cabell County Public Library, located in downtown Huntington, received \$46,262 from the Gates Foundation to place computers in the main library and both of its branches. Located in the Huntington/Ironton EZ, the library used the funding to install computers for public Internet access and establish a computer lab for public use and training purposes. In addition to the hardware, numerous software programs were also furnished as part of the grant. After receiving training on how to use these new computers and software, the library staff began offering instruction and classes to the public.

The computer lab is used daily by children and their parents to access various educational software programs and the Internet. Classes cover basic Internet, advanced Internet, e-mail, Microsoft Word, and Introduction to Windows. Three additional computers dedicated to the Internet have been installed at a cost of \$6,393, with funding furnished by the library.

Through the generosity of the Gates Foundation, approximately 400 individuals in the community have received free computer training since July 1999. “The majority of these computer users had little or no previous computer experience,” says Cathy Burns, Executive Director of the EZ. “The availability of training sessions and the increased availability of computers for public use has greatly contributed to the lessening of the fear of new technology to a traditionally underserved population of adults.”

The West Huntington and Guyandotte branch libraries had four Gateway computers installed in each branch to serve EZ residents. All three libraries provide informal training to the public as needed. Informal topics might include how to point and click with a mouse, how to access the Internet and type in a Web address, how to use Microsoft Word, or how to access the résumé function.

For more information contact Cathy Burns, Executive Director, Huntington/Ironton EZ, at 304-696-5533.

## Shopping Plaza Revitalizes Neighborhood Rochester, New York, EC

When Bell's Supermarket in northeast Rochester closed in 1989, area residents were forced to shop for food at local convenience stores or supermarkets outside the city. Fewer than half of households own vehicles, so the closing created hardships. In addition, the abandoned building became an eyesore.

Through the 1996 Neighbors Building Neighborhoods initiative, residents "formed steering committees, wrote action plans, and then moved to implement them," says Tymothi Howard, EC Coordinator. The request for a grocery store "had a snowball effect and soon the government, investors, and other stakeholders were involved," he adds.

The City of Rochester and the Rochester Economic Development Corporation (REDCO) undertook an aggressive development project to provide local grocery and retail shopping options to help revitalize the neighborhood. REDCO raised \$11.3 million for the project: more than \$3 million in grants and loans from the City of Rochester through the EC program, more than \$2.8 million in private investment, a \$2.3 million REDCO equity investment, \$2.2 million in Urban Renewal Trust Funds, and \$980,000 in Community Development Block Grant funding.

Access to low-interest loans allowed REDCO to develop a package that drew a reputable business called Tops Markets, Inc., to act as anchor tenant in the renovated shopping plaza. REDCO retains ownership of the project and works closely with the supermarket operator, offering assistance if necessary to ensure the survival of Tops Friendly Market.

The Upper Falls Shopping Center, a 9.9-acre full-service retail plaza, also includes the Clinton Section police station, which brings added security to tenants and customers. The plaza has been modernized with the addition of parking for 420 vehicles, loading areas, entrances and exits, lighting, utilities, pylon signs, and landscaping.

REDCO offered space to qualified, locally operated commercial tenants that would generate new jobs rather than relocate existing ones. McDonald's constructed a 3,800-square-foot facility in the plaza. Other tenants include Dollar Tree, a national single-price retailer; Beauty Supply Warehouse, a regional beauty supply store; and ViaHealth, a subsidiary of Rochester General Hospital. ViaHealth leases space for a neighborhood doctor's office that primarily serves the local Hispanic community.

Another tenant, the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) supplemental nutrition program, distributes nearly \$2 million worth of food vouchers annually through this center, with the plan that WIC clients will use their vouchers at the Tops Friendly Market.



Rochester received a John J. Gunther Award from HUD for Blue Ribbon Practices in Housing and Community Development in 1998 for this project. Phase II includes the retail development of a 22,000-square-foot parcel on the site. REDCO hopes to begin work in summer 2000.

For more information contact Tymothi Howard, EC Coordinator, Rochester EC, at 716-428-6919.

## **Private Financing and EC Assistance Revive Historic Harrisburg Bank**

### **Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, EC**

Knezic/Pavone Advertising, a full-service advertising agency, moved into its new headquarters in a former Dauphin Deposit Bank building in Harrisburg's EC in late 1999. The agency had nearly doubled its staff in the previous year and needed more space.

"The building was vacant for 4 years but structurally solid," said Michael Pavone, President of the agency. "These old buildings have tremendous character, and we saw this particular building as offering the potential for the perfect environment for an ad agency."

In addition to the distinctive qualities of the building, its location within the EC appealed to the agency. "The City of Harrisburg is one of our clients, and we have been active in promoting the Enterprise Community," said Joseph Knezic, partner and Co-Creative Director of the agency. "Yes, there are significant benefits to businesses locating here, but we're also pleased to play a part in the revitalization of the area."

Mayor Stephen R. Reed said the project is another boost to the Paxton Commons area of the EC on the edge of the downtown area. "Business investment and corporate expansions are increasingly finding Harrisburg as the place to be. We salute Knezic/Pavone for making a conscious decision to remain in Harrisburg and locate in the Enterprise Community. From here, they can conveniently service the region and State from a splendidly restored facility."

The \$700,000 project was largely privately financed, but the city provided a second mortgage. The agency received \$87,500 in EC funds from the City of Harrisburg. Knezic/Pavone also received financing from the Small Business First program offered through the Capital Region Economic Development Corporation (CREDC) and the new Legacy Bank of Harrisburg.

The adaptive reuse preserved the characteristic features of the old bank—the 20-foot Corinthian pillars; the original skylight; and ornamental plaster, bronze, and mahogany trim—while adding unique design features such as a 1,360-square-foot mezzanine, translucent polygal walls, and mosaic walls using marble from the teller areas.

Knezic-Pavone employs a staff of 21. With local, regional, and national clients, the agency executes a complete array of creative functions in-house, including strategic planning and marketing, innovative public relations, media planning and placement, and creative solutions in print, TV, radio, and outdoor media.

For more information contact Terri Martini, Director, City of Harrisburg Department of Building and Housing Development, at 717-255-3011.



## **Investments Reinvigorate Capital Hill Business District**

### **Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, EC**

“Restoring the historic Capital Hill neighborhood of Oklahoma City has been a mission of Oklahoma City for a long time,” says Steve Rhodes of the Oklahoma City Planning Department. Tireless efforts by city planning staff and neighborhood residents have led to a rebirth of this area. Once a thriving business area south of the central business district, Commerce Street was lined with retail stores, banks, churches, a post office, a fire station, a hospital, a newspaper printing facility, and numerous other businesses. Using a Section 108 loan and private investment, the Oklahoma City EC is taking a giant step to reverse the deterioration of the Capital Hill Business District.

During the 2.5-year revitalization process, the city leveraged \$125,000 in HUD funding into \$2.7 million, which includes private investment. Programs that promoted façade restoration and building rehabilitation accounted for 50 percent of the projects. The EC spent additional resources on business attraction and retention programs to fill and maintain the retail district.

As with many older business districts, the Capital Hill Business District has a small number of buildings once occupied by large retailers. The Capital Hill area has two large, hard-to-fill spaces where the city has been successful in attracting one new tenant. Using a Section 108 loan, the city is converting the former John A. Brown building for its new occupant, the Oklahoma and Canadian Counties Community Action Agency. The agency, which employs 130 people, will help accelerate the revitalization project. As of March 2000, the city was seeking a new occupant for the J.C. Penney building.

The community’s efforts have paid off with a net gain of 17 new businesses and the creation of 66 additional jobs. New employers include various retailers, a Spanish radio and television station, and the city Emergency Medical Maintenance Facility.

For more information contact Steve Rhodes, Associate Planner, Oklahoma City Planning Department, at 405-297-2232.

# Downtown Revitalization and Beautification Project Revives Decaying Commercial District

## Arizona Border Region, Arizona, EC

The City of Nogales, located in the central part of the Arizona Border Region EC, recently secured \$235,000 from the Arizona State Department of Transportation Enhancement Act (TEA-21) program. The project's goal is to provide an aesthetic, historic downtown commercial district conducive to international commerce. Proposed renovation encompasses an area known as Morley Avenue, which starts at the United States-Mexico border and proceeds north and west to Beck Street.

Revitalization efforts will include improving streets and sidewalks. The addition of street lighting, handicapped-accessible sidewalks, decorative crosswalks and walls, ramadas (open porches), and benches is anticipated.

This renovation is key to turning a decaying downtown commercial district into a vibrant international business center and tourist mecca. More than \$700,000 in grants, technical assistance, and in-kind contributions have been dedicated to revitalizing the commercial sector of Nogales' historic Main Street area.

For more information contact Laura Ornelas, Director, Arizona Border Region EC, at 520-287-6571.



# Using Volunteers

## SuitAbility Dresses Women With New Look and New Outlook

Lowell, Massachusetts, EC

“SuitAbility bridges a very real gap to employment by building the self-esteem and working wardrobes of disadvantaged women in the Greater Lowell area,” says Kathy Hayes, Executive Director of SuitAbility. Take a 34-year-old mother who, after being on public assistance for more than a decade, had secured an interview for a nursing position with a healthcare company. She did not feel comfortable with her casual attire and worried that her appearance would affect her chances of being hired. Then she heard about SuitAbility, a nonprofit agency partially funded by the Lowell EC, which outfits women with interview apparel and a week’s worth of work clothes. In addition to two suits, two silk blouses, a dress, a pair of slacks, a sweater, shoes, pantyhose, and cosmetics, SuitAbility gave her a gift certificate for a free haircut at a partnering salon.

Since August 1998 SuitAbility has served women who need assistance with their professional appearance. Along with interview and work clothes, hair styling, and cosmetics, SuitAbility also provides winter coats, boots, scarves and gloves, and, when available, briefcases and planners. Trained volunteers provide one-on-one counseling and stress the importance of professional appearance and what it can mean in terms of securing and keeping a job. Hayes says, “Women leave their appointments with not only a new look, but also a changed outlook about themselves.”

Since its opening SuitAbility has received more than 300 referrals for its services and has served 275 women. Referrals come from a number of agencies in the Greater Lowell and Boston areas. Former clients are now employed in a variety of industries, including accounting, hospitality, and banking. Both American Express and a major airline have employed SuitAbility clients. Hayes says that SuitAbility is pleased that former clients now volunteer as models in SuitAbility’s annual fashion show. One past client served as a board member in 1999.

In an effort to raise additional funds for its transition-to-work program, SuitAbility volunteers make custom jewelry pins called Clothes Pins. The pins, which resemble women’s suits and other work clothes, are mounted on cards and sold at community stores and events. SuitAbility currently is looking to take its Clothes Pin project nationwide as a fundraising tool for local organizations with the same goals.

For more information contact Kathy Hayes, Executive Director, SuitAbility, at 978-934-8898.





## Tax Program Helps EC Residents Get Quick Returns

### Manchester, New Hampshire, EC

EC residents, carrying W-2 forms and other financial papers, lined up at the Manchester Community Resource Center (MCRC) in New Hampshire in the winter of 1999, eager to file their tax returns and get a quick refund. The residents paid nothing for the tax service, which was offered as part of Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA), a nationwide Internal Revenue Service program that offers free tax filing assistance to individuals with low or moderate incomes.

Six IRS-trained volunteers worked at the center for 6 hours each week throughout the tax season. During February alone, volunteers filed 146 tax returns. The center was the only VITA site in Manchester where bilingual volunteers worked evenings and weekends.

Through the tax program, IRS-trained volunteers filed tax returns either manually or electronically. One center staff person volunteered her time to file all the center's electronic returns, which provided EC residents with refunds more quickly, says MCRC Director Renie Denton.

"Finding a place to get their tax returns filed quickly and at no expense is one of the barriers that EC residents face each year," says Denton. "We were here to help them overcome whatever barriers might be in their way."

Denton says that MCRC staff members were surprised at the enthusiastic community response to the tax-filing service, which was available 3 days a week. While MCRC distributed flyers about VITA throughout the community, the best advertising turned out to be word of mouth, she says.

"If you do a family member's taxes today, he is going to go home and tell the rest of his family about it," says Denton. "Before you know it, they're telling somebody else and that person is telling someone else. We have gotten very close to many families through this process."

MCRC was established in 1998 by Southern New Hampshire Services, New Hampshire Catholic Charities, and The Hope Resource Center as a single location where EC residents could find employment, education, and information/referral services. The center has received a 5-year, \$1.5 million funding commitment from the EC, which it has used to leverage more than \$500,000 in private contributions. In addition, the center provides space to various agencies that use their own funds to provide programs to EC residents.

For more information contact Renie Denton, Director, Manchester Community Resource Center, at 603-647-8967.

## Community Days Promote Volunteer Care for Neighborhoods

### City of Lock Haven, Pennsylvania, EC

In spring 1999 the City of Lock Haven sponsored its first Community Days event with a goal of creating an awareness of the many EC-funded projects in the community. It also engaged more people in community service and in caring for community resources.

The event turned out to be a success for the sponsors and the community as a whole. Held during National Volunteer Week and National Youth Service Days, Community Days brought more than 500 residents into the community as they volunteered at 18 sites throughout the city.

Volunteers raked leaves at area parks and painted and cleaned offices of nonprofit agencies. Community Days sites included the American Red Cross, Clinton County Women's Center, Dickey and McGhee Elementary Schools, Hanna Park, Infant Development Program, Lock Haven Area YMCA, Lock Haven Day Care, Ross Library, Triangle Park, William T. Piper Memorial Airport, and downtown Main Street.

Participating volunteer organizations included Keystone Central School District, Lock Haven High School, Lock Haven Kiwanis Club, Lock Haven Rotary Club, Lock Haven University sororities and fraternities, Mill Hall Kiwanis Club, Mill Hall Rotary Club, parent organizations, "Team USDA," Vo-Tech School, schoolchildren from the elementary schools in the EC, and a host of families living in Lock Haven.

For more information contact Maria Boileau, Director, City of Lock Haven EC, at 570-893-5907.





# Using Partnerships Effectively

## Partnering To Build a Healthier Community

### Waco, Texas, EC

Established in November 1998 by a group of local community leaders, Community Haven seeks to create partnerships that provide services to meet otherwise unmet needs. Working with schools, healthcare providers, and businesses, Community Haven has developed a broad range of programs to help the youth of the Belle Meade and Lacy Lakeview neighborhoods succeed. Programs include homebuilding, afterschool tutoring, computer training, and in-school healthcare.

In conjunction with local high schools, Community Haven provides area youth with opportunities to become involved in building new homes for area residents. Youth from the local high school Air Force and Navy Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps and students enrolled in construction trade courses use these projects as opportunities to apply knowledge, build leadership, and develop interpersonal skills. In 1999 students completed construction of a one-story, three-bedroom home in the Lacy Lakeview neighborhood. In the 2000–2001 school year, using profits from the Lacy Lakeview project, the organization plans to build a home in the Belle Meade community.

Community Haven reaches beyond building to healing. Collaborating with the Hill Crest Health System, the program has established a basic health clinic in a community school. Staffed by a nurse practitioner, the clinic offers a wide range of healthcare services within walking distance for area families. The extended hours of the clinic, Mondays and Wednesdays from noon to 8 p.m., offer convenience for parents and children. “The greatest satisfaction is hearing from residents who have been served by the facility,” says Alvin Patterson of Community Haven. Patterson adds that Hill Crest has been a wonderful partner, providing services at reduced rates and helping families meet their healthcare needs.

Community Haven also provides youth programs. Afterschool tutoring sessions, staffed by teachers, are held from 4 to 6 p.m., giving students the opportunity to obtain additional help with their homework. These sessions have helped increase the academic achievements of many students. “Most of the kids only need to spend some extra time on their homework,”

says Patterson. “We are able to attract kids into the sessions by offering some snacks and sports activities.” Kids who want to participate in the sports activities, run by Baylor University students, must first spend approximately 45 minutes doing homework. According to Peterson, the program has also helped to reduce juvenile crime in the neighborhood.

Working with local foundations, government agencies, and schools, Community Haven has leveraged a \$180,000 EC grant to serve a number of community needs. Since November 1998 Patterson estimates that 650 people have been affected in some positive way by the programs.

For more information contact Alvin Patterson, Project Coordinator, Community Haven, at 254-867-8334.

## **Public/Private Partnerships Continue To Show Success**

### **Dallas, Texas, EC**

Building on its innovative and successful economic development program, the Dallas EC continues to focus on public and private partnerships to encourage community development. Since the economic development program’s inception in 1996, the EC has leveraged \$1 million for new business projects totaling more than \$12 million.

The innovative approach used by the EC allows \$1 of public investment for every \$4 of private investment. To be awarded this money, a company must agree to locate in the EC and create one job for every \$15,000 in public money received. The jobs created must pay a minimum of \$6 per hour and provide employee benefits. This requirement is significant because 40 percent of the Dallas EC’s population lives below the poverty line. Companies make no financial concessions over and above normal hiring practices, making this arrangement attractive to new and expanding businesses. The program’s initial commitment was to create 67 jobs, but it has created 161 positions through spring 2000.

In addition to creating new businesses, a microloan component has stimulated and assisted new business development. The Business Micro Lending program provides microloans of \$200 to \$5,000 to help startup businesses with short-term borrowing needs; the City of Dallas authorized \$50,000 to match the \$50,000 in EC funds for the program. To ensure success of these startups, the program provides the new businesses with technical assistance and credit repair. ACCION Texas, the microlender, uses a bank credit line to underwrite and service loans. Once the borrower has satisfied the terms of the initial bank loan, the borrower establishes not only a credit line with

the bank but also a positive payment history to assist with additional lines of credit with lenders and suppliers of goods and services. ACCION Texas provides this service in partnership with Chase Bank, BancOne, and NationsBank.

Since the inception of the program, 21 new businesses have been developed in the EC.

For more information contact Mark Obeso, Empowerment Zone Manager, Dallas EC, at 214-670-4897.

## Helpful Partnerships for Family Intervention

### Houston, Texas, EEC

The Houston EEC has developed a program to provide assistance to parents of children with special needs to ensure access to appropriate educational and case management services. The program, Helpful Interventions, has formed a partnership with Partners/5 West to assist families in Houston's Fifth Ward.

Helpful Interventions' mission is to assess, educate, and support families who are helping themselves. The program benefits parents of children with special needs ranging in age from 3 to 21. Its goal is to help parents understand their child's educational rights and how the special education system can serve them. Educational advocates act as liaisons among families, schools, and other organizations to develop an Individual Educational Plan (IEP) for each child with special needs. Ensuring that families of children with special needs receive assistance from appropriate community resources is an additional responsibility.

Family success in this area is often difficult due to a high poverty rate and the socioeconomic conditions that make it a challenge for families to meet their basic needs. The services provided by Helpful Interventions help prevent at-risk situations from occurring or worsening. No other organization in Houston's Fifth Ward provides these critical services free of charge.

Helpful Interventions provides advocacy and case management services to more than 100 clients. The organization helped 28 children ages 8 to 17 attend Camp of the Hills, a 7-day overnight Christian summer camp for inner-city youth, in 1999. Also in 1999 the agency sponsored the Adopt-a-Family project for Thanksgiving and Christmas, providing food baskets and gifts for 70 families with approximately 250 children.

Established in May 1999, Helpful Interventions is a longtime dream of Founder and Director Jerrilyn Hays. "We are actively serving as community leaders and members of community collaboratives to assist families," says Hays. Hays and Assistant Program Director Crystal Reid-Sophus, staff the agency and act as advocates, case managers, and administrators.





Helpful Interventions' services are publicized through the United Way Resource Directory, Community Youth Services Directory for Harris County, and the *African American News Digest*. The organization also conducts an introductory meeting with affiliated service providers and hosts an open house to publicize its services.

The program's accomplishments have gained local recognition. A feature in the *Houston Chronicle* prompted several community inquiries, leading to the addition of a volunteer bilingual assistant.

For more information contact Jerrilyn Hays, Director, or Crystal Reid-Sophus, Assistant Program Director, Helpful Interventions, at 713-237-8071.

## **YWCA Enhances Community Health and Well-Being**

### **Minneapolis, Minnesota, EZ**

In September 2000 residents in the Minneapolis EZ will have a chance to improve their health more conveniently than ever when the Midtown Community and Urban Sports Center is completed. This \$21 million project has been hailed as a model of public and private investment that builds on innovative partnerships among the YWCA, the EZ, the Minneapolis Public School System, and local government agencies.

Located at 21st Avenue and East Lake Street, the facility lies in the heart of an underserved community in south Minneapolis. "Our goal is to truly make a difference in the East Lake Street area," says Nancy Hite, Chief Executive Officer of the YWCA of Minneapolis. "We are so grateful to reach this stage of the project with the help of all our public- and private-sector donors and partnerships. It truly is a community effort to change the face of East Lake Street."

The YWCA Midtown Community and Urban Sports Center is a 90,000-square-foot, state-of-the-art facility, which will offer childcare and health and fitness programs to youth and other residents living in the Minneapolis EZ. The Urban Sports Center features a 4-lane, 200-meter indoor running track and boasts the largest indoor field house in the city. During school hours, the facility will accommodate students of nearby Edison Project for Pride in Living Elementary and South High School for health and physical education classes. The space will also be used for sports practices, clinics, camps, and community recreation events. Community programs will be available evenings, weekends, and throughout the summer.

Funding for the facility includes a \$100,000 grant from the EZ and a \$2.1 million grant from the Minneapolis Public School System. In exchange, all public school students will be able to use the facility at no cost for the next 20 years. "The Minneapolis Empowerment Zone governing board

granted funds for the new YWCA recognizing the importance of promoting the health and wellness of all of the city’s residents,” says Kim W. Havey, Director of the Minneapolis EZ. “The midtown facility will provide the opportunity for both young and old to improve their health and lead healthier and longer lives.”

For more information contact Nancy Hite, Chief Executive Officer, YWCA, at 612–215–4135 or Kim W. Havey, Director, Minneapolis EZ, at 612–673–5415.

## Welcoming Urban Landscape Program Cleans and Greens Up West Philadelphia EZ Neighborhood

### Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, EZ

In 1995 the West Philadelphia EZ’s Community Trust Board (CTB), made up of residents, local business owners, and representatives from city agencies, began to address the issue of economic development in the West Philadelphia EZ (WPEZ). One of the board’s top concerns was how the community could thrive amidst a backdrop of blight and deterioration. Aware of the effects of a dilapidated urban landscape on neighborhood residents and businesses, and motivated by the belief that a pleasant environment would attract new businesses, create jobs for residents, and contribute to the overall stability of the community, the CTB designed the Welcoming Urban Landscape Program. The multi-initiative program includes six components designed to transform urban blight into a “welcoming urban landscape”:

- Graffiti abatement.
- Public art.
- Minigrant program to assist residents’ efforts with beautification.
- Vacant land management.
- Block captain organizing.
- Maintenance of commercial corridors.

Partners in the effort include the Philadelphia More Beautiful Committee and five City of Philadelphia departments: Streets, Licenses and Inspections, Recreation, Commerce, and the Anti-Graffiti Network. The partners have helped with tasks ranging from cleanup of short-haul dumping sites to supplying residents with cleanup tools.

In 1997 the initiative created Graffiti Abatement Teams made up of 147 volunteers who removed graffiti from buildings in the WPEZ. In 1998 a partnership with the Anti-Graffiti Network created a new Zero-Tolerance Zone in which graffiti is removed from all WPEZ properties on weekdays within 48 hours after being reported to the city’s graffiti hotline. Results have





been impressive. At this time Graffiti Abatement Teams have cleaned graffiti from nearly 500 WPEZ buildings.

Philadelphia's Mural Arts Program, another part of the Welcoming Urban Landscape Program, will complete five new murals in the WPEZ in 2000. The community will choose the designs and murals, and art workshops will be held for neighborhood children. In the future the program will also establish a Beautification Voucher Program that will provide community groups with funding for beautification projects, including lot and sidewalk beautification, community gardens, and play lots. The voucher program will be implemented in conjunction with the vacant land management component of the Welcoming Urban Landscape Program to help residents reclaim vacant lots in the EZ.

Finally, to engage residents in reshaping the landscape, a block captain organizer will be hired to work with block captains and other residents in the 105 blocks of the WPEZ. Clean Teams will also be organized to manage major thoroughfares and commercial corridors where volunteer efforts would be overwhelmed. These teams will create entry-level employment opportunities for WPEZ residents.

For more information contact Ayanna Brown, Project Manager, Neighborhoods, Philadelphia EZ, at 215-683-0489.

## **Creating Partnerships To Provide Better Service**

### **Providence, Rhode Island, EC**

Matching services with the residents who need them is the motivation behind the latest Providence Plan initiative. Providing these services in an effective, efficient, and comprehensive way requires coordination and information that are often not available. Many community-based organizations offer services within the EC but do not integrate their services with other providers to address the full range of needs comprehensively. Service providers often do not have sufficient information about the communities in which they operate and the populations they intend to serve, so they are unable to plan their services adequately.

The Providence Plan, the administrator of the Providence EC, recently received a \$540,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Commerce under its Technology Opportunities Program to establish a Community Opportunity Zone Information Network (COZIN) to respond to this problem. This type of grant requires the EC to raise matching monetary or in-kind contributions. "We are trying to drum up additional support as the program progresses," says Jim Vandermillan of the Providence Plan. This project grew from an identified need for more effective communication expressed by the West End/Elmwood Community Opportunity Zone (COZ) Collaborative (a group

effort of community partners working together to service one of the EC neighborhoods). The collaborative includes the Providence Public Library, the Providence School Department, the Providence Plan, and multiple service providers within the Providence EC.

The COZ Collaborative is working to establish a seamless, integrated system for the delivery of services to residents of the West End/Elmwood community, who are among those with the greatest needs in the city. COZIN will enable service providers, schools, and libraries to access and share information about services offered by members and outside agencies, thereby streamlining the delivery of services to the clients of all agencies within the collaborative. COZIN will also serve as a valuable planning tool for agencies by providing information about Providence's population and neighborhoods, and as an educational tool by providing information about health, education, and social services topics relevant to COZ and its constituents. COZIN will enable community members to access this vital information directly through neighborhood libraries, school family centers, and community-based service providers.

For more information contact Jim Vandermillan, Policy Director, Providence Plan, at 401-455-8880.

## **CDCs, Community Partners Develop Cleveland Projects**

### **Cleveland, Ohio, EZ**

A \$10 million loan fund administered by the Cleveland EZ is being leveraged by four of the Zone's community development corporations (CDCs) to produce housing and commercial projects that otherwise would not be developed because of the high cost of purchasing and remediating property.

Through the program, the EZ is providing loans of \$2 million each to the Glenville Development Corporation, the Hough Area Partners in Progress, the Fairfax Renaissance Development Corporation, and MidTown Cleveland Development Corporation. To qualify for a loan, each CDC must form a limited-liability corporation with a community partner. The \$2 million, no-interest loan is made to the partnership and must be repaid in 5 years. As an added bonus, the loan carries a 40-percent rebate, a grant that can be used to acquire or remediate property.

“Some of the CDCs are using that money as working capital that they need up front to do the development plan and attract a developer,” says EZ Director Valarie McCall, who suggests that having a \$2 million commitment has helped CDCs speed up that process. “Most times, if a developer knows that you have the city involved, they come to the table.”

Each of the four CDCs is in a different stage of development on its particular project. Furthest along is V.W. Associates Limited, a partnership that includes the Fairfax Renaissance Development Corporation, local developers Zaremba, Inc., and Black Economic Union, and private investor Russell Adrian. The partnership broke ground in spring 2000 on an \$18 million housing project that will include 64 town homes and coach houses and 16 single-family homes. The market-rate development, financed with conventional loans and private investments, is designed primarily to attract suburban homebuyers to the EZ.

Other projects supported by acquisition and development loans were in the predevelopment stage in March 2000 as CDCs worked to attract partners and assemble acreage. They include a MidTown Commerce Park that eventually will house high-technology and biotechnology enterprises; a housing development in the Hough neighborhood; and rehabilitation of the Faith Building in Glenville. The Faith Building, an abandoned medical building, will eventually house the Glenville Development Corporation, the EZ’s Job Match offices, and several private businesses.

“Because the cost associated with remediating land is so astronomical, most developers won’t touch it,” says McCall. “This loan pool is so significant because it allows the CDCs to assemble the clean, clear land that they need to attract major developers to the EZ.”

For more information contact Valarie McCall, Director, Cleveland EZ, at 216-664-2804.

## Food Bank Feeds Needy Families

### Central Savannah River Area, Georgia, EC

Golden Harvest, a locally supported, nonprofit charitable food distribution center, provides grocery products to the hungry through its member agencies. Its service area encompasses 24 counties in Georgia and South Carolina.

The Golden Harvest Food Bank serves all types of families, including the elderly and low-income families, and was established because of the high poverty and unemployment levels following many recent manufacturing industry closings. The Central Savannah River Area EC helps to fund the food bank.

The food bank also operates five service programs that feed the hungry: the Master's Table Soup Kitchen serves a free noon meal to more than 260 people each day, the Brown Bag Program provides a free 17-pound bag of groceries to senior citizens, the Kids Café offers an afterschool tutoring and meal program for inner-city children, the Homebound Program delivers a free 25-pound box of food to ill or elderly homebound people, and the Manna Truck, the newest outreach service, allows agencies to distribute 5,000 pounds of food to the needy at one time through a mobile food distribution program.

In 1999 The Golden Harvest Food Bank served 499 agencies, assisted 146,139 families, and distributed 4.8 million pounds of food.

For more information contact Grady Sampson, Director, Central Savannah River Area EC, at 706-554-0342.





# Building Programs That Operate on a Sustainable Basis

## Teaming With VISTA To Establish Newark Residence Councils

Newark, New Jersey, EC

When the City of Newark asked residents to help it prepare a 1994 application requesting EZ designation, many responded by attending public meetings and complaining about local problems ranging from drug trafficking to adult illiteracy, according to Carolyn Wallace, Executive Director of the International Youth Organization (IYO). Wallace attended many meetings and noticed that few speakers were actively working to solve the problems they cited.

“What everyone was really complaining about, but what they didn’t realize they were complaining about, was the absence of neighborhood, the absence of community, the absence of working together,” says Wallace.

That EZ application process, which helped Newark gain EC designation, sparked a community organizing effort that is now getting city residents more involved in doing something about neighborhood problems. Through this effort, VISTA volunteers are working to establish seven resident planning councils that will take charge of two EC neighborhoods, says Wallace.

“The volunteers are basically knocking on doors and asking people to come out and talk to one another,” she says. “It is very labor intensive. They are letting people know about the need for the councils, they are facilitating meetings, making phone calls, and using community organizing efforts to make something happen.”

The community organizing effort is spearheaded by the Neighborhood Three Steering Committee, a group of community-based organizations (including IYO) located in one of the project’s targeted neighborhoods. The other neighborhood—Neighborhood Five—has been included in the project because it is part of an Urban Coordinating Council area recently designated by New Jersey Governor Christine Todd Whitman. The project is supported by \$300,000 in Community Development Block Grant funds, \$70,000 from the CREST Community Development Corporation, and more than \$160,000 from the Corporation for National Service, which has agreed to fund 16 VISTA volunteer slots. The volunteers, nine of whom have been hired to date, each receive a \$10,000 annual stipend as well as special service awards and college tuition.



Volunteers established one resident planning council during 1999 and are working on a second, according to Wallace. The first council is now discussing neighborhood problems and developing an action plan that will include establishing a volunteer mentoring program in a local school. Future councils will take their own approaches to solving neighborhood problems, she says.

“Maybe a council will look at drug trafficking and say there’s nothing they can do about that,” says Wallace. “But at least someone is paying attention to the issues. Up until now, there has been a lot of just giving up. This project has been a lot of work, but at least people are talking to each other.”

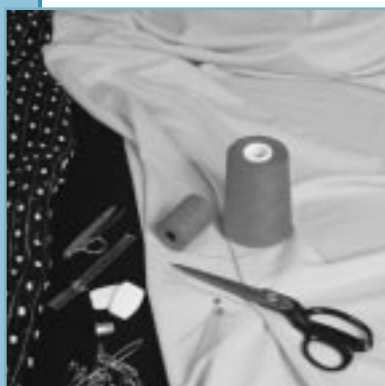
For more information contact Carolyn Wallace, Executive Director, IYO, at 973-621-1100.

## **Collaborative Provides Recent Immigrants With Living Wage and Many Vital Services** Albuquerque, New Mexico, EC

Southwest Creations Collaborative (SCC) pays women living in the Albuquerque EC up to \$15 an hour to sew garments and other items for its clients across the country. The women, most of whom immigrated to Albuquerque from Mexico, are pleased with the pay as well as with their 10 days of sick leave and vacation each year. But what impresses them most, says Director of Operations and Training Andrea Plaza, is the enclosed area at the corner of the factory floor where, for 25 cents an hour, the women can pay someone to supervise their children while they work.

“Before we opened, many of these women didn’t work at all because they had no way to pay for childcare,” says Plaza. “The fact that we can offer them a living wage and childcare at \$10 a week is a very important benefit.”

SCC was established in 1994 when Albuquerque resident Susan Matteucci, newly arrived from Chicago, began seeking local women who knew how to sew and were interested in getting paid for their skills. Matteucci, now SCC’s Executive Director, was following through on a request from a friend at the Chicago-based Marketplace catalog, which wanted to carry a line of garments and other items made by cooperatives in the Southwest. Sixty women responded to Matteucci’s invitation and began working 2 days a week in a makeshift factory set up in the EC’s San Jose Parish Hall.



In 1996 SCC received \$12,000 in EC funds to move down the street into the warehouse building that it occupies today and expand its operations. Twenty women now work full time. In 1999, they helped SCC earn an income of \$200,000. The collaborative provides a variety of manufacturing services to 23 small companies.

SCC works hard to achieve a balance between its quest for profitability and its mission to provide a living wage to its employees. As of March 2000, only 40 percent of the collaborative's annual revenue comes from business contracts. SCC also received \$35,000 from the EC in 1999 to pay its rent and purchase equipment, along with a \$50,000 loan from the New Mexico Community Development Loan Fund and \$140,000 in grants from local foundations.

In addition to daycare, SCC offers training in math, English, and business management to help its employees become more involved in the collaborative's decisionmaking. Six of the company's eight board members are employees.

"We have tried to create an environment of support here," says Plaza. "I think our employees feel this is a safe place where they can ask for something and get a response, or some direction, or some resources. I think they see it as a place that they can mold, instead of just a job. We offer a lot to these women that cannot be documented."

For more information contact Susan Matteucci, Executive Director, or Andrea Plaza, Director of Operations and Training, SCC, at 505-247-8559.





# Improving Neighborhoods and the Environment





# Local Museums

## Mexican Museum Offers Youth Programs

### Chicago, Illinois, EZ

The Yollocalli (meaning *House of the Heart* in the Aztec language) Youth Building, at 18th and Blue Island Streets in the Pilsen area of the Chicago EZ, houses a radio station and a youth museum. These new programs are available thanks to the Mexican Fine Arts Center Museum, the only Latino museum in the country accredited by the American Association of Museums, and its \$2.8 million EZ grant.

WRTE 90.5 FM is run by youth ages 14 to 21. The young disc jockeys and technicians broadcast from a clear glass booth and are visible to people passing by the station. WRTE reaches the Pilsen, Little Village, Back of the Yards and Bridgeport neighborhoods, and even some suburbs to the southwest. In addition to music and news programming, weather, and sports, the young people also produce Chicago's only Spanish-language children's radio program as well as documentaries on topics such as AIDS and Afro-Mestizo issues.

"When we talk about the Empowerment Zone, I always tell people we forget the word *Empowerment*," says Carlos Tortolero, Executive Director of the Mexican Fine Arts Center Museum. "The number of minority radio stations has gone down in the last 10 years. Ours is the only Latino-owned radio station and the only youth-run radio station that's bilingual. What's more empowering than having access to the media? Here we have 80 kids working on the radio station, from technicians to on-air. That's positive and that's empowering." Of the Youth Museum, which opened in October 1998, Tortolero says, "The kids learn everything about running a professional museum, including how to hang a show. We teach them all aspects of running a museum.

"Imagine the economic impact we are having. We know that of the 100,000 [listeners], 20,000 to 25,000 of them go to Pilsen restaurants. In terms of impact, it's a great project. The numbers speak for themselves," he adds.

For more information contact Ronald Carter, Director, Chicago EZ, at 312-744-9623.



# History Museum Opens in Rio Grande Valley

## Rio Grande Valley, Texas, EZ

Thanks to the efforts of the Laguna Madre Historic and Preservation Committee of the Rio Grande Valley EZ, a historic museum has opened in Port Isabel, Texas. The museum is housed in the historic Champion Building (one of the oldest structures in the area), which dates back to the 1890s.

Children can learn about and absorb the rich history of the Mexican-American culture of South Texas at the museum. Exhibits include push-button displays, interactive audiovisual films, and professionally crafted and lighted cases containing original artifacts. The collection includes rare documents from the United States-Mexico War and the U.S. Civil War.

Partners in the museum effort include the Port Isabel Economic Development Corporation, the Rio Grande Valley Private Industry Council, the Texas Community Development Program, the Texas Department of Transportation, and Texas Parks and Wildlife.

For more information contact Yvonne “Bonnie” Gonzalez, Director, Rio Grande Valley EZ, at 956-514-4000.



# Promoting Local Culture To Increase Tourism and Community Pride

## **Project Row Houses Restores Lives Through Art and Sustainable Development**

Houston, Texas, EEC

Project Row Houses was founded in 1992 as a result of discussions among African-American artists who believed in a vision to restore 22 abandoned shotgun-style houses in Houston's Third Ward community. (The shotgun house is an African-American vernacular architecture. The form was brought from West Africa to Haiti and then to New Orleans and the rest of the South.) The African origin of the houses provided a unique environment for the creation of works that engaged the community in the creative process, celebrated African-American culture and history, and addressed educational and community issues. Using these founding principles, the artists have led thousands of volunteers in restoring abandoned, crime-infested sites originally slated for demolition by the City of Houston. In 6 years Project Row Houses has secured and restored sites and completed renovation of all 22 houses. A concentrated effort was made to restore the houses as teaching tools for the community rather than demolishing them.

At the heart of Project Row Houses are the Artists Installation Projects, consisting of eight houses used as gallery spaces for the exhibition of installation art. Local, regional, national, and international artists are commissioned to work within the community to create artwork highlighting one specific house on a 6-month rotating basis. Every 6 months a new group of seven artists is invited to transform one house into the next round of installations. The eighth house is devoted to the written and spoken word, where writers and performance artists share their work with young people in the community through arts and education programs. Project Row Houses works intensively with 30 neighborhood children ages 5 to 14 and their families through a daily afterschool and summer program. The interdisciplinary curriculum includes creative writing, visual arts, literacy through photography and video, drumming, violin, dancing, foreign languages, and gardening.

Project Row Houses has nurtured The Young Mothers Residential Program to provide young single mothers and their children with beautifully redesigned, fully furnished shotgun houses. In 1-year residencies, under the guidance of a mentor who lives onsite, young mothers ages 18 to 26 are provided with housing while they work and further their education. A consortium of agencies works with the young families to develop skills for





independent, self-sufficient lives. This investment in human capital has produced young mothers who are pursuing graduate school and artistic careers and serving as volunteers for the next class.

In 1999 Project Row Houses acquired additional properties to expand its role in the development of the Third Ward community. One nearby site consists of seven additional shotgun houses and is being developed as affordable housing and cultural facilities in collaboration with a group of middle and high school students. A second acquisition is the historic Eldorado Ballroom and 16 adjacent vacant lots slated for cultural and commercial development. Adjacent tax-delinquent parcels are being targeted by the City of Houston for foreclosure and subsequent conveyance through a publicly driven land assemblage program intended to foster affordable housing. Project Row Houses intends to secure the adjacent parcels to replicate a prototype 800-square-foot, two-bedroom house designed and built by the Rice University School of Architecture. Striking a balance between the past and the future ensures the sustainability of the neighborhood by balancing adaptive technology with new construction.

Project Row Houses is featured in the *Houston Corridor Guide to Sustainable Development for Enhanced Enterprise Community Corridors in Houston, Texas* (April 1999). The *Corridor Guide* was funded through a grant awarded by the Center for Excellence in Sustainable Development of the U.S. Department of Energy to Houston's EEC. It was prepared by the Center for Global Studies/Houston Advanced Research Center, Community Design Assistance Center, Inc., Texas Engineering Extension Service, and the city of Houston's Planning and Development Department. The document serves as an innovative tool to address issues in inner-city neighborhoods and transportation corridors relevant to sustainability. A free copy of the *Corridor Guide* can be downloaded at [www.harc.edu/download/SusDevGuide.pdf](http://www.harc.edu/download/SusDevGuide.pdf).

For more information contact Rick Lowe, Founding Director, Project Row Houses, at 713-526-7662, or Judy Butler, Assistant to the Mayor, Coordinator EEC, City of Houston-Office of the Mayor, at 713-247-2666.

## Historic Homes Play Role in EC Revitalization

### Jackson, Mississippi, EC

The historic homes of an industrious former slave and her midwife daughter are playing an important role in a multiyear effort to revitalize the Jackson EC. The homes, built in 1892 by Mary Scott and her daughter, Virginia Ford, were occupied by Scott-Ford descendants until 1994, when Scott's great-granddaughter donated them to The Farish Street Historic District Neighborhood Foundation. The foundation hopes that its efforts to restore the homes will spur additional housing rehabilitation in the EC and bring tourist dollars to the area.

A widow, Mary Scott moved to Jackson in 1870 to join other former slaves who had established a settlement there in the 1860s. Like many 19th-century African-American women, she worked as a domestic, but was able to secure her future by purchasing stock in the Jackson Savings and Loan Association. Scott used the proceeds from her investment to purchase land and build a home in 1892. Her daughter built an adjacent home the same year and went on to become a successful teacher, midwife, and business owner.

When Mary Scott moved to Jackson's Farish Street district, it was a thriving African-American community and remained so until the 1960s, when the 125-block neighborhood experienced its share of disinvestment. The street's designation as an historic district in 1994 has helped turn things around by sparking a revitalization effort—spearheaded by the foundation—that aims to restore the area's historic buildings and jump-start its economy.

In 1998 the foundation renovated 35 historic shotgun homes through an EC-supported project to preserve Jackson's history and provide affordable housing to local residents. In 1999 the foundation began what could be a \$650,000 project to restore the Scott and Ford homes and create a museum and visitors' center onsite. The 2-year project already has attracted contributions of \$110,000 from the National Trust for Historic Preservation, including a \$50,000 grant from the trust's Save America's Treasures Preservation Planning Fund and \$90,000 from State and local funding sources. The City of Jackson supports the project indirectly through its \$100,000-a-year contribution to the foundation.

In addition to showing EC residents that they have a rich and rewarding heritage, the Scott-Ford Historic Site is expected to bring economic activity to the Jackson community, as museum visitors eat, shop, and visit other local points of interest, says Beatrice Cotellis, Director of Historic Sites for the foundation. The restored homes also are expected to have a positive impact on housing conditions in the EC neighborhood.

"The overall condition of housing in the Farish Street district has been overlooked for some time and many of the housing units are abandoned or deteriorated," says Foundation Executive Director Michael Herve. "This project will have a ripple effect as we focus on additional restoration efforts in the area. We know that in order for this project to be successful, we will have to strengthen the housing stock in that neighborhood."

For more information contact Beatrice Cotellis, Director of Historic Sites, The Farish Street Historic District Neighborhood Foundation, at 601-949-4000.





## Visitors' Guide Helps Attract Tourists

### City of East Prairie, Missouri, EC

The East Prairie Tourism Council, in partnership with the East Prairie Chamber of Commerce, has developed a visitors' guide to the city. This guide provides a city map and information about the local historical museum, government and service agencies, the riverboat ferry, the Mississippi River Trail, and various local events. The publication has promoted subsequent interest and support for tourism in the community.

The tourism council's biggest success occurred during the spring when Wiersema Tours brought in a busload of visitors from Indiana and Ohio. Representatives from the tourism council met the bus in New Madrid and gave an onboard tour as the bus traveled to East Prairie.

While in town, the visitors were provided with lunch by the James Bayou Cookers, given gift bags of products and mementos from the area, greeted by the city government, and served lunch by members of the East Prairie Garden Club. Visitors and representatives of the tour company say that the guests "left their hearts in Missouri."

For more information contact Dr. Martha Ellen Black, Director, City of East Prairie EC, at 314-649-3731.

## Cultural Arts Center Promotes Local Artists

### Wichita County, Kansas, EC

The Wichita EC has worked diligently to develop art, culture, recreation, and tourism programs to meet the needs of its citizens. In an effort to address the need for both performing and visual arts, the EC Cultural Arts Sub-Committee decided to function as an ad hoc committee. It applied for 501(c)(3) status and formed subcommittees in the areas of grant writing, fundraising, and event planning.

Committee efforts have paid off. Land was donated recently to develop the Cultural Arts Center. Construction began in spring 1999. The center will be operated by volunteers, who will also plan activities and performances.

The newly formed Wichita County Arts Alliance has sponsored its first event, a December 1999 studio tour. The tour featured the work of eight local professional artists and provided information about the objectives and dreams of the Arts Alliance.

For more information contact Sharla Krenzel, Director, Wichita County EC, at 316-375-2182.



# Walking Trails and Tours

## Infrastructure Improvements Help Tourism Grow

### Southeast Oklahoma, Oklahoma, EC

New transportation and other infrastructure improvement projects are having a positive effect in southeastern Oklahoma. Construction projects at Hugo Lake and improvements along Highway 70 have helped the community reach its goal of attracting tourists.

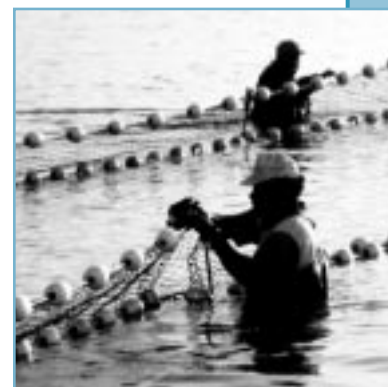
More than \$5 million in U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) funds provided for redevelopment of Highway 70, a major highway that stretches from one end of the EC to the other. Construction included widening the highway and resurfacing or adding sidewalks. The USDA also has funded several road and sewer projects in the area.

The Little Dixie Community Action Agency, which serves as the EC lead entity, has received a DOT Historic Preservation Grant in the amount of \$50,000. This will help establish a walking trail between the Choctaw chief's house in the historic district and the Fort Towson Historic Site.

In addition, Hugo Lake will be developed to include recreation and lodging facilities. This project will include the development of a lodge, cabins, a marina, boat ramps, a comfort station, fishing piers, and docks. AmeriCorps workers, in their third year at this location, are building housekeeping cabins. In addition, AmeriCorps participants also work on self-help housing projects located in the EC. An estimated \$450,000 has been contracted to businesses in the Counties of Choctaw, McCurtain, and Pushmataha, with the bulk staying in Choctaw County, the largest area of the EC.

Other partners in this effort include the Choctaw County Board of Commissioners, the City of Hugo, Oklahoma Public Service Utilities and Corps of Engineers, Sarkey's Foundation, and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Community Services.

For more information contact Bob Yandell, Director, Southeast Oklahoma EC, at 580-326-3351.





# Environment Efforts, Including Showcase Communities (Partnering With the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency)

## Portland Showcases Brownfield Site Efforts

### Portland, Oregon, EC

Portland has more than 1,000 brownfields properties throughout the metropolitan area. The Brownfields National Partnership has selected Portland as a Brownfields Showcase Community, and the city is pursuing a development strategy that combines aggressive business recruitment and job creation with long-term growth management and environmental protection. This includes investigating 484 known contaminated sites and another 600 with suspected or threatened contamination.

Brownfields are abandoned, idled, or underused industrial and commercial properties where expansion or redevelopment is complicated by real or perceived contamination. Since 1994 public and private partnerships have cleaned up and recycled hundreds of acres of contaminated property and created thousands of jobs while promoting brownfields redevelopment, pollution prevention, and greenspace protection. In May 1997 Vice President Al Gore announced a Brownfields National Partnership to bring together the resources of more than 15 Federal agencies to address local cleanup and reuse issues in a more coordinated manner.

Portland has received a Brownfields Assessment Demonstration Pilot grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and has leveraged those funds to provide increased awareness of, and interest in, brownfields issues and redevelopment opportunities. Pilot program activities include development of an Internet Web site ([www.brownfield.org](http://www.brownfield.org)) for outreach and creation of Brownfields Roundtable workshops. Other highlights of Portland's brownfields redevelopment program include:

- Partnering with the U.S. Departments of Housing and Urban Development and Transportation on the Central City Streetcar Project, an urban rail-based transit system that already has helped to leverage support for two other planned redevelopment projects.
- Partnering with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the U.S. Geological Survey, and the Port of Portland to investigate contaminated sediment along a stretch of the Willamette River adjacent to the EC.



- Redeveloping the South Waterfront Redevelopment Area (former home of a power station, lumber mills, and scrap yards) into a commercial, office, and residential site with plans for a greenway trail.
- Converting a former power station into the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry.
- Converting a former automotive fueling center into the Rose Garden Arena, home to the Portland Trailblazers basketball team.

Portland will continue to use its Showcase Community resources to leverage investments from public and private sources and further its mission of creating a Livable Showcase Community that can build a model of sustainability through brownfields renewal.

For more information contact Robert Alexander, Portland Regional Brownfields Team, at 503-823-3248. For specific information on the Brownfields Showcase Communities, visit the EPA Brownfields Web site at [www.epa.gov/brownfields/showcase.htm](http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/showcase.htm).

## Lowell Showcase Community Revives Contaminated Sites

### Lowell, Massachusetts, EC

In May 1997 Vice President Gore announced a partnership among many Federal agencies to address cleanup and reuse issues regarding brownfields, which are abandoned, idled, or underused industrial and commercial properties where expansion or redevelopment is complicated by contamination. This Brownfields National Partnership pledged support to 16 “Brownfields Showcase Communities”: models demonstrating the benefits of collaborative activity on brownfields.

With almost no vacant land available for development, Lowell, a Showcase Community, targeted 16 to 17 brownfields sites. Though the market for commercial office and manufacturing space in Lowell continues to improve, requests for industrial space cannot be satisfied because of limited supply. Returning the city’s brownfields properties to productive use is critical to Lowell’s industrial development and job-creation efforts.

The city recently has achieved great success in redeveloping its old mill properties, ash dumps, and other disposal sites into new facilities that create jobs for local residents. Lowell identified its priority brownfields sites for assessment and testing, and attracted several large experienced developers to redesign and market several of these properties. The city has developed creative approaches to attracting investors for brownfields cleanup and redevelopment, including use of the Lowell Development and Finance Corporation (a consortium of local stakeholder banks) and tax-increment financing. Community members; private businesses; and Federal, State,

and local agencies all play an integral part in the planning and implementation of city-based redevelopment projects. The city's redevelopment efforts have leveraged more than \$100 million in funding.

Highlights of Lowell's brownfields redevelopment program include:

- Completing an inventory of 52 vacant or underused industrial properties within the city.
- Developing a \$30 million sports arena and a \$12 million professional baseball stadium on the former Lawrence Mills site, which has a 170-year history of industrial use.
- Supporting an \$8 million bond to initiate the Lawrence Mills redevelopment project and raising \$1.6 million in private donations. This site could now accommodate as many as 2,450 new jobs.
- Attracting developers who have invested more than \$10 million in the 400,000-square-foot Wannalancit Mills project and \$36 million into the 700,000-square-foot Boott Mills project.
- Leveraging \$9 million in funding from the U.S. Department of Transportation for a Riverwalk Project that will connect Lowell's National Historic Park (the Nation's first urban national park) by a walkway to the University of Massachusetts and the two new sports facilities.

On average, for every \$1 of public funding, Lowell has leveraged \$12 of private investment.

For more information contact Carol Tucker, Regional Brownfields Team, City of Lowell, at 978-970-4274. For specific information on Brownfields Showcase Communities, visit the EPA Brownfields Web site at [www.epa.gov/brownfields/showcase.htm](http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/showcase.htm).



## Teaming With Private Industry To Revitalize a Brownfield Development

### Miami/Dade County, Florida, EZ

A 1980 civil disturbance in Liberty City, Florida, left a large industrial park destroyed by fire. Not only were businesses destroyed and jobs lost, but the destruction of a petrochemical plant left the area contaminated. Seeking a solution to restore this site and return jobs to the neighborhood, Miami-Dade County, with assistance from the Federal Government, acquired the property. Located within the State of Florida EZ, the site was renamed the Poiciana Industrial Center (PIC). Consisting of 30 acres of land, the PIC is adjacent to Scott Homes, a Miami-Dade County public housing development.

The acquisition of the first 61 parcels of land within PIC resulted in the relocation of 10 families, 8 individuals, and 32 businesses. Three major

parcels were used for industrial purposes. One parcel was sold to Sunlite Industries for use as a light bulb manufacturing plant. The remaining two sites were leased to a recycling center and LEASE Industries, Inc., a plant incubator and food distributor firm. In early 2000 only LEASE Industries remained active. An additional resident in PIC is the Miami-Dade County Office of Community and Economic Development (OCED).

Cleanup of the contaminated sites in preparation for new industrial use has added more costs. Site remediation included the removal of approximately 10,000 cubic yards of solid waste and concrete and 3,000 tons of soil. A total of eight underground storage tanks, nine soakage pits, and four septic tanks were removed. The total cost of the work as of March 2000 is approximately \$1.89 million in Federal, State, and local funds.

Preparation for site use included the replacement and repair of PIC infrastructure. The multiphase project has included the addition of a new pump station, water distribution system, sewer collection system, drainage structures, paving, sidewalks, and lighting. OCED has renewed Miami-Dade County's lease agreement with the Florida East Coast Railway to ensure that existing access to tracks is maintained.

With the hope of revitalizing this area and returning jobs for nearby residents, the county is seeking a master developer for PIC. The developer's primary responsibility will be the development and implementation of a Strategic Plan to attract new business to PIC. "Ideally, we would like to see the area become a Technology Park," states Aundra Wallace, Vice President of the Miami-Dade Empowerment Trust, Inc., "but we would welcome any industry that helps add vital jobs to the area."

Since the project's inception in the early 1980s, OCED has spent more than \$10.2 million in Federal funds to acquire the land, relocate families, demolish unsafe structures, and perform environmental studies. Dade County has provided additional funding through a \$1.5 million EZ matching grant for continued environmental assessment and remediation of the PIC site.

For more information contact Aundra Wallace, Vice President, Miami-Dade Empowerment Trust, Inc., at 305-372-7620.

## **New Business Center Attracts Firms and Transforms Blighted Buffalo Area**

### **Buffalo, New York, EC**

The City of Buffalo has transformed a blighted area containing abandoned rail corridors and brownfield sites into a modern industrial park and parkway serving both business and residential communities. As part of this effort, in 1998 Buffalo Mayor Anthony Masiello and members of the Buffalo Economic Renaissance Corporation cut the ribbon on the \$7 million William Gaitor Parkway. Named in honor of a local civil rights leader, the parkway connects

two major thoroughfares along an abandoned rail corridor. This has sparked the local business climate and reduced truck traffic on residential streets.

The next step in this renaissance was to construct the landmark William Gaitor Business Center, which opened in October 1999. Built on underused land, the business center was immediately filled to capacity with five new light industrial, commercial warehousing, and distribution companies. The \$2.1 million project was funded with \$1 million from the U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration and \$1.1 million from HUD. The Erie County Industrial Development Agency is a joint funder and codeveloper.

The 25,000-square-foot business center houses American Rated Cable and Communications, American Window Creations, Gas Technology Energy Concepts, QTA Machining, and Quality Inspection Services. Three of these are women owned. QTA President Suzanne Pelezynski says, "I think it's great that they're taking steps to strengthen manufacturing in the city." She hopes to increase her staff from 6 employees to 12 in the next few years.

This activity has catalyzed the surrounding area. American Axle, at the south end of the parkway, has invested \$241 million in improvements at its plant and plans to invest an additional \$168 million over the next 3 years. This has resulted in the creation of 300 new jobs at the facility. Other businesses adjacent to the business center and along the parkway are also investing in cleanup, renovation, and construction.

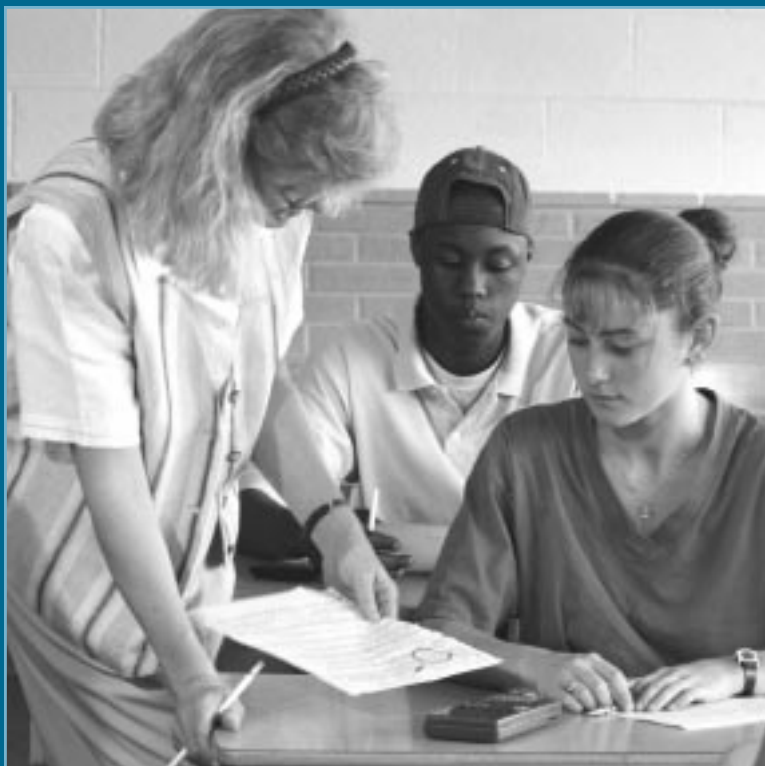
A spinoff has been renewed community spirit. The Delevan-Grider Block Club Council has adopted the parkway and provides maintenance and landscaping services with the help of a \$10,000 donation from American Axle. In reversing the trends of job loss and disinvestment, the parkway and business center project has become a point of pride for surrounding neighborhoods and local businesses.

For more information contact Paula Alcala Rosner, Executive Director, Federal Enterprise Community of Buffalo, Inc., at 716-851-5032.





# Bettering Schools and Education





# Improving Local Schools

## Program Transforms Troubled Schools Into Powerful Schools

Seattle, Washington, EC

With a goal of helping troubled inner-city schools face challenges, Powerful Schools organizes clusters of elementary schools and community organizations to better mobilize local Seattle assets. Its prime assets are people who can tutor, mentor, and provide access to the latest technologies for students and their families. The program, founded by a group of parents and staff in 1991, has helped make four local school-community clusters into beehives of learning, both during school hours and in the evening. As part of the program, religious organizations and local businesses run tutoring programs, neighborhood residents help in school technology labs, and parents with marketing and public relations expertise help schools create better images and attract even more help. The program has helped 4,500 families, enabling their children to reach grade-level skills.

“Even in the most devastated inner-city communities, we believe there are all the essential assets to help create schools,” says Greg Tuke, Executive Director of Powerful Schools. “The key is to identify and organize those assets.” The program first targets the lower performing children in a cluster school, then expands its focus to include the whole community. Along with helping the children, Powerful Schools encourages anyone in the local community to come to the school, meet their neighbors, and find ways, formally and informally, to increase their own learning and help others become engaged in improving the school. For example, this could include networking to create a babysitting service.

Powerful Schools is a nonprofit corporation with an overall annual budget of approximately \$500,000. Approximately 50 percent of this amount comes from contributions from local foundations and corporations. Another 25 percent is collected through fees such as tuition, and the final 25 percent comes from the EC through a 2-year, \$115,000 grant. This diversified funding reflects the program’s broad community participation. Program partners include the local schools and the city school district, local banks and corporations, the city’s public library, a local ballet company, and the city’s art museum. These partners enable the program to reach out to the larger community to leverage even more assets.

For more information contact Greg Tuke, Executive Director, Powerful Schools, at 206-722-5543.







## Partnership With University Prepares Students for College

### City of Lock Haven, Pennsylvania, EC

The Early Admissions Program in the City of Lock Haven school system provides Lock Haven high school students with college credit and positive learning experiences that encourage their enrollment in college.

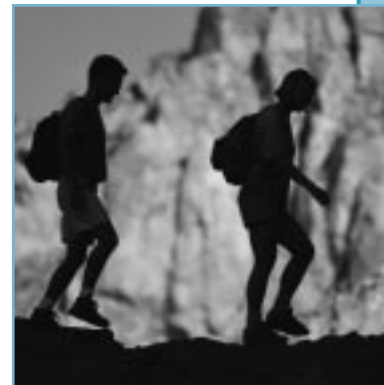
At the end of the spring 1999 semester, 11 participating students had a minimum 3.0 grade point average and were eligible for scholarships from the Lock Haven University Foundation Scholarship Fund. At the end of the fall 1999 semester, nine qualified for a renewal of these scholarships. Sixteen of 39 students (41 percent) participating in Cycles I, II, and III enrolled at Lock Haven University. All completed the fall 1999 semester and are still registered. In spring 2000 the program is running two more cycles of students.

Ten students completed their second year in the program by taking a Wellness for Life Course designed to introduce students to the interdependence of personal wellness and fitness. Emphasis was placed on developing a personal understanding of fitness appraisal techniques and aerobic exercise options and their relevancy to health risks. The course involved regular physical activity and meets Lock Haven's general education requirements for health and physical education.

Class field trips/activities have included indoor rock-climbing, assistance at Special Olympics, hiking at Rickett's Glenn, Adventure Challenge Experience (the students voted this the best activity), canoeing, and whitewater rafting. Chaperoned trips during leisure hours included movies, shopping, volleyball, swimming, and walking on the city's Riverwalk.

Eight students were enrolled for seven semester hours of course work in the Lock Haven University/Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) during summer 1999. Early-admission students attending the program received congratulatory letters signed by Vice President Al Gore at the EOP 1999 closing banquet and awards ceremony on July 30, 1999. Seven of these students entered Lock Haven University in fall 1999 and completed the fall semester.

For more information contact Maria Boileau, Director, City of Lock Haven EC, at 570-893-5907.





# Qualified Zone Academy Bonds (QZAB)

## Norfolk Public Schools Implement Qualified Zone Academy Bonds

Norfolk/Portsmouth, Virginia, EZ

In the early 1990s, the Clinton Administration initiated the Qualified Zone Academy Bond (QZAB) program to assist schools in EZ/ECs and other distressed areas. The QZAB financing technique provides K–12 schools with low-cost means to renovate facilities. A Qualified Zone Academy is a public school (or academic program within a public school) at the secondary level or below that meets certain requirements. The academy must be located in either an EZ or EC, or there must be a reasonable expectation when the bonds are issued that at least 35 percent of the school's students (or program's participants) will be eligible for free or reduced-cost lunches under the school lunch program established under the National School Lunch Act.

The QZAB allows the purchaser of bonds, typically a bank, to receive an annual Federal tax credit instead of an interest payment. In essence, the Federal Government pays the tab for interest costs. Before QZABs can be issued, the local educational agency must obtain written commitments from private entities for qualified contributions with a present value of not less than 10 percent of the proceeds of the bond.

Norfolk Public Schools and the City of Norfolk became the first partnership in Virginia to take advantage of the QZAB program in August 1999. Norfolk Public Schools serve approximately 36,000 students in grades K–12. The district's student population is 63 percent African American and 33 percent white; the remaining 4 percent come from other ethnic groups including Asian-Pacific Islander, Hispanic, and Native American. Approximately 65 percent of students qualify for free or discounted lunches.

The system consists of 35 elementary schools, 8 middle schools, and 5 high schools. Because every school in Norfolk qualified for the bonds, the Norfolk School Board designated all public schools as part of the Qualified Zone Academy. The school district is using \$1.5 million of the \$7 million in QZAB funding on small renovation projects throughout the district, where the buildings average 45 years in age. Projects include replacing roofs, doors, and windows. In addition, approximately one-half of the funds (\$3.7 million) were used to complete a major renovation and expansion project at Bay View Elementary School, built in 1922. QZAB proceeds were used to

upgrade the infrastructure to provide increased access to technology, improve all mechanical systems, and increase both the quality and quantity of available electrical power. The remaining funds (\$1.8 million) will go toward the next major renovation project on the district's approved capital improvement project list. The specific project will be determined later in 2000 after completion of architectural and engineering studies.

Several business partners are supporting the QZAB funds. They include Cox Communications, Electronic Systems Incorporated, Ford Motor Company, and Sentara Health Systems.

For more information contact Fred Schmitt, Chief Financial Officer, Norfolk Public Schools, at 757-441-2711.

## **Jefferson County Public Schools Receive \$2 Million Toward Creating QZAB**

### **Louisville, Kentucky, EC**

In Louisville the Jefferson County Public Schools (JCPS) have received a \$2 million gift from United Parcel Service (UPS) in the form of a business partner grant. The school system plans to use the grant for the maintenance and renovation of existing facilities at Shawnee High School Magnet Career Academy. This UPS gift allows the school district to qualify for the Qualified Zone Academy Bond (QZAB) program issued by the Federal Government through the Kentucky State Department of Education. QZABs require a 10 percent match of the face value of the bond from the local business community. This requirement obligates a school district to establish business partnerships.

"We are very grateful to UPS for their support of public education in our community," said Dr. Stephen Daeschner, JCPS Superintendent. "The quality of learning in our classrooms is directly related to the quality of the learning environment. Our facilities are among the best in the Nation, and we are committed to improving our schools even further so that our students continue to have clean, safe, warm classrooms and the most modern equipment available."

For more information contact Marty Bell, Community Development/Governmental Relations, Jefferson County Public Schools, at 502-485-3949, or Bill Smith, Empowerment Zone Coordinator, U.S. Department of Education, at 202-401-0504.

# 21st Century Learning Centers

## **Community CARES Expands Opportunities for Families in Ogden School District**

Ogden, Utah, EC

The 21st Century Community Learning Center Program is a key component of the Administration's efforts to provide expanded learning opportunities for children in safe, drug-free, and supervised environments. This program, administered by the U.S. Department of Education, enables schools to stay open longer and provide safe homework centers for children. Also as part of the program, participating students can receive valuable assistance in drug and violence prevention counseling; college prep course preparation; participation in recreation activities, chorus, band, the arts, and technology education programs; and services for children and youth with disabilities.

Congress has supported this initiative by appropriating \$450 million for afterschool programs in FY 2000 (up from \$200 million in 1999 and \$40 million in 1998).

Through a U.S. Department of Education 21st Century Learning Center Grant, the Community CARES Learning Center will expand opportunities for families in the Ogden EC. The Ogden EC has inner-city challenges that include a high crime rate, academic scores at 65 percent below grade level, and a 95-percent poverty rate.

The center will reach approximately 500 children in grades K–8 and their families during its first year of operation. The Community CARES Learning Center will consolidate the services of many community agencies at three convenient school locations. Its main goals are to provide high-quality afterschool programs, reduce the number of students experiencing academic failure, decrease juvenile crime and violence, increase English-language proficiency, involve students in educational projects, strengthen family relations, and improve parenting skills. Families will have access to afterschool care, summer care, English as a Second Language classes, tutoring, parenting classes, and family activities. The Community CARES Learning Center will have a positive impact on the lives of children, youth, and families in Ogden.

Community partners involved in this program include the Eccles Art Center, the Hispanic Women's Group, Ogden City Arts, the Ogden City Police Department, Ogden Juvenile Courts, the Ogden School District, Ogden-Weber FACT, Utah State University, and Weber State University.

For more information contact Marsha Prantil, Project Director, Community CARES Learning Center, at 801-627-7604.

## **Santa Ana Uses 21st Century Learning Center Grant To Meet Student Needs**

### **Santa Ana, California, EZ**

A 21st Century Learning Center Grant will provide services for the Fremont, Roosevelt, and Madison elementary schools. All are K-5 schools within the Santa Ana Unified School District, have Spanish-speaking populations of more than 90 percent, and operate on year-round schedules to accommodate the large numbers of students in attendance. The populations of these three schools' communities, which make up the core of the Santa Ana Youth Empowerment Collaborative, are characterized by limited English skills, low levels of education among adults, high poverty levels, and overcrowded homes occupied by multiple families, gangs, drugs, and violence.

Communities realize that by keeping schools open on afternoons, evenings, and Saturdays, they provide extended learning opportunities for the community at large as well as for students. All Learning Center activities are academically focused in the areas of science, technology, and the visual and performing arts. In addition to providing enrichment classes for students, an emphasis is placed on getting the whole family involved by offering classes in family science, family math, and family reading as well as English language and literacy acquisition through the visual and performing arts. Catholic Charities of Orange County, one of the main service providers in the area, will assist with forming community advisory boards and with setting up mentoring opportunities for intermediate and high school students and adults.

Community partners include organizations such as Bowers Museum, Catholic Charities of Orange County, Chevron Corporation, City of Santa Ana Parks and Recreation, CSU Fullerton, Discovery Science Center, Edison Company, the Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts of America, Mazda Corporation, Project "THINK," RICOH Electronics, Santa Ana College, Santa Ana Zoo, and UC Irvine.

For more information contact Marti Baker, Principal, Madison Elementary School, at 714-972-6400.



## East Prairie Students Move Onto Information Superhighway and Into 21st Century

### City of East Prairie, Missouri, EC

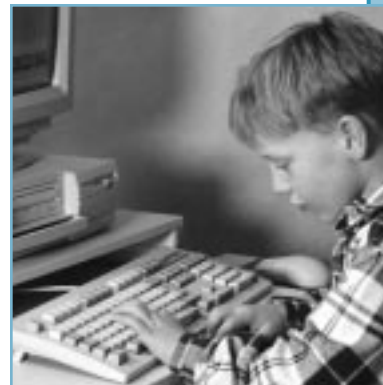
In recent years, job training and job development activities for youth and adults have increased more than 100 percent in East Prairie. Since 1997 nearly 200 community residents located in the EC have attended evening computer classes and have acquired basic computer skills.

Because of the efforts by the East Prairie EC (EPEC), the local school system has become involved in a variety of education technology and classroom computer skills-training efforts. Under the leadership of the EC, the East Prairie school district received U.S. Department of Education funding for a 21st Century Community Learning Center, which provides courses for youth and adults. This project, which included renovation and new buildings, enabled the school to provide separate campuses for grades 9–12 and for grades 7 and 8 for the first time. Students moved into new elementary school classrooms and into renovated school buildings in October 1998. This move was made possible in part by a \$1.7 million grant passed by a school bond referendum that had failed to gain approval in the past. The school campuses now have computer laboratories, and nearly every classroom is computer equipped.

Students can participate in an interactive television classroom and receive college credit from two area schools. This technology program, in partnership with five area schools, connects classrooms with those local colleges. The schools soon will have the capability to dial into other colleges and take additional courses.

The school system has received community support from a group called the Education First Committee. Five schools located in the EPEC also have received donated computers from the FBI. These computers came courtesy of Executive Order 12999, which encourages Federal agencies to donate excess and surplus Federal computer equipment to schools so that students can acquire skills they need to succeed.

For more information contact Dr. Martha Ellen Black, Director, City of East Prairie EC, at 314-649-3731.







# Looking to the Future: Regional Development Initiatives

## The Mississippi Delta 2000 Initiative

To demonstrate his ongoing commitment to development in the Mississippi Delta region, President William Jefferson Clinton directed Rodney Slater, Secretary of the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT), to lead the Mississippi Delta 2000 Initiative. This innovative initiative is aimed at promoting community and economic development in the Delta and has had the support of virtually all Federal agencies. The initiative updates and builds upon the work of the Lower Mississippi Delta Development Commission, which Congress created in 1988 to make recommendations regarding economic needs, problems, and opportunities in the 7-State, 219-county Delta region. Delta 2000 focuses on attracting attention to, and increasing resources for, development in this region.

The Delta region stretches from New Orleans northward through Mississippi, Arkansas, Tennessee, southeast Missouri, western Kentucky, and southern Illinois. When President Clinton was Governor of Arkansas, he chaired the Lower Mississippi Delta Development Commission, which held an extensive series of hearings on Delta development issues with grassroots organizations and leaders throughout the region. The Commission presented a 10-year economic development plan for the region to President George Bush in 1990.

As President, Clinton has continued the effort to implement many of the recommendations. The President and Secretary Slater have agreed that, while some progress has been achieved, much more work remains to be done if the region is to participate fully and fairly in the unprecedented nationwide prosperity that began during the 1990s.

The President and the Secretary will convene a major conference in Washington, D.C., in spring 2000 to give Delta grassroots leaders a unique opportunity to meet the leaders of the Federal Government, including the President, the Vice President, members of the Cabinet, and members of Congress from throughout the region. In his 2000 State of the Union Address, President Clinton singled out the need to devote more attention to the Delta: "I also ask you to make special efforts to address the areas of our Nation with the highest rates of poverty—our Native American reservations and the Mississippi Delta. My budget includes a \$110 million initiative to promote economic development in the Delta . . . ."

This amount of funding will supplement the extensive Federal investments already being made in the region. Along with its efforts to increase funding for the region, the Delta 2000 Initiative focuses on promoting the activities of the Clinton-Gore Administration in the region. In addition, during fall 1999, Secretary Slater created a Web site devoted entirely to Delta issues ([www.dot.gov/delta](http://www.dot.gov/delta)) and published the *Mississippi Delta Beyond 2000: Interim Report*. This report presents a comprehensive view of economic development and quality-of-life issues in the region.

During the 1990s, the Federal Government promoted and initiated activities on several fronts in the Delta to advance development in the region, including the following:

- **Community development.** The Empowerment Zone/Enterprise Community (EZ/EC) Initiative has promoted innovative efforts to develop the Delta region. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) designated locations for Round I rural EZs and ECs in 1994; approximately one-quarter of these were located in the Delta. Five urban EZ/ECs also were designated in the Delta region. In January 1999 a Round II Empowerment Zone was designated in southern Illinois in the Delta. These communities have suffered economic distress. Due to receiving the EZ/EC designation, the communities received funding from U.S. Department of Health and Human Services block grants, and EZ employers gained a number of tax incentives. A highlight of the EZ/EC initiative is the success it has created for communities through leveraging Federal funds with commitments from State, county, and local governments; private businesses; faith-based organizations; and nonprofit foundations. For example, the rural communities drew down slightly more than \$10 million from their EZ/EC funds but used that money to leverage roughly 10 times that much, or approximately \$107.4 million. The Delta 2000 Initiative supports expansion of the program in the Delta. The President proposed new funding for the EZ/EC program in his 2000 State of the Union Address.
- **Transportation.** Many of the 1990 Commission recommendations have been either entirely or substantially fulfilled. The Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 and the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century of 1998 dramatically increased Highway Trust Fund investment in highways and transit in the region. Other improvements have been made in the region's rail, aviation, and other transportation services. DOT also recognizes that important challenges remain, such as improvements to Interstate 69 and construction of the Great River Bridge over the Mississippi River between southeast Arkansas and northwest Mississippi.
- **Employment.** From 1993 to 1998, the average annual unemployment for the entire 219-county region declined from 7.5 to 5.7 percent. Job growth took place in 184 of 219 counties during this period. However,

the Delta 2000 Initiative also emphasizes that many rural counties have been left behind during this dynamic period of job creation. For example, in Arkansas, St. Francis County's unemployment fell from 13.4 to 9 percent from 1993 to 1998, but the lower figure is still far higher than the national average. Job growth in rural counties remains a crucial challenge.

- **Natural resources and the environment.** The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Departments of Agriculture, Commerce, Defense, and Interior have pursued a number of policies to preserve natural resources and the environment in the Delta. For example, approximately 300,000 acres of wetlands have been protected in the region through a variety of programs, including the Wetlands Reserve Program.
- **Tourism.** Tourism continues to grow in the region. In 1998 tourism brought approximately \$13 billion in revenue to the region. Such activities as the President's designating the Lower Mississippi River as an American Heritage River in 1998 are designed to preserve the natural splendor of the river for tourism and to preserve natural resources.
- **Rural Development.** USDA invested more than \$3 billion in the region from 1993 through mid-1999 for housing, utilities, water and waste programs, community facilities, and rural small business and cooperative development. More than 43,000 Delta households were able to buy or improve their homes through assistance from the Rural Housing Service.
- **Housing.** The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development has engaged in a series of energetic policies to expand homeownership, fight housing discrimination, attack homelessness, and improve opportunities for rental housing. HUD works in partnership with the USDA Rural Housing Service and many important nonprofit organizations, including the Housing Assistance Council and the Delta Local Initiatives Support Corporation. Despite evidence of progress in many areas, Delta 2000 recognizes that many residents of the Delta region still lack access to adequate housing.

Following the example of the 1990 Commission, the Delta 2000 Initiative placed great emphasis on consulting with grassroots leaders from throughout the region. The initiative received a powerful impetus from an agreement signed at a meeting of local leaders and Federal officials—led by Vice President Al Gore, Secretary Slater, and USDA Secretary Dan Glickman—in New Orleans in April 1998. A number of grassroots organizations, including all the EZs and ECs in the region, the Lower Mississippi Delta Development Center, the Enterprise Corporation of the Delta, and the Foundation for the Mid-South, joined with Federal officials in supporting a Delta Partnership Agreement to work cooperatively for sustainable community and economic development in the region.

Secretary Slater followed up by organizing a Delta Memorandum of Understanding, whereby 10 Federal agencies pledged to work together for the economic revitalization of the Delta. The Memorandum was signed at a meeting of local leaders and Federal officials in Memphis in July 1998. Secretary Slater and USDA Undersecretary for Rural Development Jill Long Thompson organized that meeting. In 1999 another 10 agencies signed the agreement, so that it now includes nearly all agencies in the Federal Government with any domestic policy responsibilities. During fall 1999, Secretary Slater held a series of listening sessions with grassroots leaders throughout the region. In summer and fall 1999, the President held meetings in rural Delta towns in Mississippi and Arkansas in a continuing effort to focus attention on issues related to the Delta's future.

The Delta 2000 Initiative will publish a report later in 2000 focusing on the future of the region. The Delta Compact, a partnership that includes USDA and the Housing Assistance Council, was a key partner in Delta 2000 and the Compact again is working closely with Secretary Slater in planning the 2000 Washington conference. Among the key issues to be discussed at the conference are the following:

- Creating a permanent commission to promote regional planning and economic development.
- Expanding technical assistance to the smallest and poorest communities, which do not have the personnel and resources to compete with larger and more affluent areas for Federal funding. Delta 2000 is in the process of developing a "circuit rider" project to send Federal employees out to the poorest communities to provide them with this type of technical assistance. USDA Rural Development is the lead agency for the circuit rider project.
- Channeling greater resources into policies that have proven to be sound investments.

As President Clinton and Secretary Slater repeatedly have emphasized, the Federal Government is only one partner in the dynamic coalition needed to move the region forward. Federal, State, and local governments; private businesses; faith-based organizations; and nonprofit foundations must all play key roles. The Federal Government can provide technical assistance and resources, but ultimately, empowerment and lasting change flow from leadership at the grassroots level. Much more must be done if the Delta region is to become a full partner in America's future. This will require Federal, State, and local governments as well as many private-sector groups and the community at large to work together in a spirit of dedication and innovation.

## Leading the Border Into the 21st Century

Since 1993 President William Jefferson Clinton and Vice President Al Gore have followed through on a commitment to assist underserved urban and rural communities in meeting their plans and objectives for long overdue revitalization. This Administration has been instrumental in strengthening the economy and much of the country has benefited—but not all of it. Some regions, cities, and rural communities have lagged behind the rest of the Nation, with their potential for growth and prosperity unrealized. They still must overcome years of neglected infrastructure, unplanned development, poor transportation systems, and disparities associated with a changing global economy.

The Southwest Border Region clearly is one of those areas that remains severely distressed. A strategy for investing in and empowering this region to meet the challenges of the 21st century is vital not only to the people and communities along the Southwest Border but to the entire country. It is a critical component in strengthening America's economic infrastructure and in creating jobs, hope, and opportunity. This is what the President had in mind with the signing of Executive Order 13122 to create the Interagency Task Force on the Economic Development of the Southwest Border. Its mission is to search for, analyze, present, and coordinate workable solutions and policy options for revitalizing the border area.

In April 1997 at the White House Community Empowerment Conference, the Vice President emphasized the importance of taking a regional approach to developing community-driven solutions that embody four key principles: economic opportunity, sustainable development, community-based partnerships, and a strategic vision for change.

### Origins of the Task Force

The creation of the President's Interagency Task Force on the Economic Development of the Southwest Border cannot be traced to a single event. Rather, the task force represents the culmination of a collective effort aimed at raising awareness of the many serious issues faced by the people who live in this region.

- At the April 1997 White House Empowerment Conference in Detroit, Michigan, Vice President Gore, as Chair of the Community Empowerment Board (CEB) challenged Empowerment Zones (EZs), Enterprise Communities (ECs), and Champion Communities (runners-up in the application process for EZ/EC designation) to combine their efforts and adopt a regional approach to revitalization. The Southwest Border Partnership was created in response to the Vice President's challenge. This regional organization aims to build a sustainable economy in concert with a sustainable environment.

- Congress and the Congressional Border and Hispanic Caucuses have participated significantly in discussions surrounding the Federal Government's role in addressing the numerous problems that plague the Southwest Border Region. In June 1998 the Congressional Border Caucus submitted a request to the General Accounting Office (GAO) for a study of the nature of these problems that provides information on efforts undertaken by the United States and Mexico to address them. A report outlining GAO's preliminary findings was released in July 1999. GAO continues to examine the many transportation and environmental infrastructure issues affecting the Southwest Border Region.
- In October 1998 the U.S. Department of the Treasury released a study titled *The Southwest Border Region: A Profile of the Regional Economy*. This study served as the catalyst for the creation of the National Economic Council Working Group on the Southwest Border. Members of the working group met several times in spring 1999 to discuss ways in which the Federal Government can partner with community leaders to foster economic development. Based on these discussions, the working group (which included representatives from Treasury, the Department of Agriculture, and the Department of Labor) developed options for a more comprehensive and coordinated Federal response to border communities' problems.
- These efforts culminated on May 25, 1999, when President Clinton signed the Executive Order creating the Interagency Task Force on the Economic Development of the Southwest Border. Through this Executive Order the President formally recognized the challenges confronted by many border communities on a daily basis. The President announced the creation of the task force while attending the White House Community Empowerment Conference in the Rio Grande Valley. He called on all Federal agencies to develop and implement comprehensive strategies to evaluate the Southwest Border Region's many problems and to coordinate a Federal response that helps alleviate those problems and simultaneously encourages sustainable economic development.

## Executive Order

### Vision for Economic Development

President Clinton and Vice President Gore see the Federal Government's role in community economic development as that of a catalyst, with the potential to forge short- and long-term change in the Southwest Border Region.

## Task Force

- The Interagency Task Force on the Economic Development of the Southwest Border reports to the Vice President as CEB Chair.
- The task force is composed of representatives from a number of Federal agencies including the Departments of Agriculture, Commerce, Defense, Education, Energy, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, Interior, Labor, State, Treasury, and Transportation; the U.S. Attorney General's Office; the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency; the Office of Management and Budget; and the U.S. Small Business Administration.

## Task Force Mission

The mission of the task force is to coordinate and better leverage existing Administration efforts aimed at the Southwest Border, in concert with locally led efforts. This joint endeavor is aimed at elevating the standard of living and overall economic profile of the region so that it is on a par with the rest of the Nation as it moves into the 21st century.

## Task Force Actions

- Analyze existing programs and policies of member agencies that relate to the Southwest Border to determine what changes and innovations should be considered.
- Consider data and studies related to the Southwest Border.
- Develop and recommend short- and long-term options for promoting sustainable development.
- Consult with and coordinate activities with State and local authorities, community leaders, members of Congress, and other stakeholders.
- Coordinate research and demonstration priorities.
- Establish a demonstration pilot to focus on an enhanced, coordinated Federal response to several communities in the Southwest Border.





# Index of Stories by Community

## URBAN COMMUNITIES

### Akron, Ohio, EC

- Akron Industrial Incubator Hatches More Successes in EC . . . . . 18
- “Safe Haven” Only a Part of Weed and Seed Agenda . . . . . 148

### Albuquerque, New Mexico, EC

- Collaborative Provides Recent Immigrants With Living Wage  
and Many Vital Services . . . . . 204
- EC Plans To Build 100 Homes on Vacant Lots . . . . . 161

### Atlanta, Georgia, EZ

- Old Cotton and Bag Mill Becomes Cornerstone of Development . . . . . 158

### Baltimore, Maryland, EZ

- Baltimore To Use HOPE VI To Promote Employment, Economic Development . . . . . 171
- Bridges to Work Program Links EZ Residents With Suburban Jobs . . . . . 73
- Business Empowerment Center Provides Critical Resources  
for Small and Medium-Sized EZ Businesses. . . . . 24
- Community Policing Strategy Reduces Crime Rate . . . . . 142
- Homeownership Made a Reality for 450 EZ Residents  
Through \$5,000 Grants. . . . . 151

### Boston, Massachusetts, EZ

- Crosstown Center Project Creates 740 Jobs, Pays  
for Employment Training of EZ Residents. . . . . 41

### Bridgeport, Connecticut, EC

- Minigrants Help Existing Businesses Increase  
Economic Opportunity for Zone Residents . . . . . 6

### Bronx, New York, EZ

- EZ Loans Help Two Woman-Owned Businesses Get Established . . . . . 31

### Buffalo, New York, EC

- New Business Center Attracts Firms and Transforms Blighted Buffalo Area . . . . . 224
- Task Force Earns Award for Civic Empowerment . . . . . 177

### Burlington, Vermont, EC

- Burlington Community Builds Sustainable Care Center on Former Brownfield . . . . . 105

### Charleston, South Carolina, EC

- Clinic Provides Ready Access to Health Care . . . . . 95

### Charlotte, North Carolina, EC

- Charlotte EC Trains Workers for Real City Jobs . . . . . 70

## Chicago, Illinois, EZ

Chicago Develops High-Tech Tool for EZ Monitoring and Management . . . . .	82
Komed Center Offers Low-Cost Health Services to Low-Income Chicago Residents . . . . .	98
Mexican Museum Offers Youth Programs . . . . .	209

## Cincinnati, Ohio, EZ

Tangible EZ Programs Attract Committed Partners . . . . .	50
---	----

## Cleveland, Ohio, EZ

CDCs, Community Partners Develop Cleveland Projects . . . . .	199
Cleveland EZ Partner Assists Fast-Growing Companies . . . . .	34
Cleveland School-to-Work Grant Extends Youth Opportunities . . . . .	135
EZ BOP Loan Provides Opportunity to Small Businesses . . . . .	9
Youth Opportunity Grant Promotes Youth Development . . . . .	115

## Columbia/Sumter, South Carolina, EZ

HOPE VI Grant Will Revitalize Distressed Housing . . . . .	172
--	-----

## Columbus, Ohio, EZ

EZ Encourages Residents To Be Good Neighbors . . . . .	178
Tenant-Landlord Cooperation and Homebuying Assistance Improve Columbus EZ . . . . .	155

## Dallas, Texas, EC

Public/Private Partnerships Continue To Show Success . . . . .	194
--	-----

## Denver, Colorado, EC

Denver Employment Program Gives Hope to Young Fathers . . . . .	55
Microentrepreneurs Team Up To Maximize Resources . . . . .	8

## Detroit, Michigan, EZ

JOBnet Uses the Internet To Link EZ Residents With Employment Training and Jobs . . . . .	80
Machinist Training Institute Gives EZ Residents the Tools To Be Hired . . . . .	57
Project R.E.A.C.H. Provides Skills and Maps Career Paths for EZ High School Students . . . . .	133
Shorebank Enterprise Helps To Revive Residential Development . . . . .	153

## El Paso, Texas, EZ

Shop Encourages El Paso Community Partnerships . . . . .	25
--	----

## Flint, Michigan, EC

The Neighborhood Violence Prevention Collaborative: Getting to the Root of the Problem . . . . .	143
---	-----

## Gary/Hammond/East Chicago, Indiana, EZ

EZ Revitalizes Public Housing Through HOPE VI Program . . . . .	172
---	-----

## Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, EC

Innovative Childcare Program Removes Barriers to Employment for Public Housing Residents . . . . .	100
Private Financing and EC Assistance Revive Historic Harrisburg Bank . . . . .	185

## Houston, Texas, EEC

Business Mentors Provide Guidance, Increase Economic Competitiveness for Small Businesses . . . . .	35
Helpful Partnerships for Family Intervention . . . . .	195
Project Row Houses Restores Lives Through Art and Sustainable Development . . . . .	213

## Huntington, West Virginia/Ironton, Ohio, EZ

Donated Computers Increase Literacy in West Virginia Community . . . . .	183
EZ Helps Recruit Giant E-Commerce Company to the Zone . . . . .	89
Heart and Home Mentor Program Helps To Reduce Homelessness . . . . .	111
“Town-Gown” Child Development Academy Opens . . . . .	103

## Indianapolis, Indiana, EC

Building Tomorrow’s City—Building Tomorrow’s Workforce. . . . .	56
---	----

## Jackson, Mississippi, EC

Historic Homes Play Role in EC Revitalization . . . . .	214
---	-----

## Kansas City, Kansas/Kansas City, Missouri, Bi-State EEC

From Six Computers to Flourishing Career Training . . . . .	58
---	----

## Knoxville, Tennessee, EZ

Rehabilitated Rentals Provide New Horizons for Homeowners . . . . .	164
---	-----

## Las Vegas, Nevada, EC

Loan Guarantee Program Helps Businesses, Creates Jobs . . . . .	5
---	---

## Los Angeles, California, EZ

City’s Development Bank Helps Small Firms Create 1,500 Jobs . . . . .	43
Los Angeles Program Empowers New Entrepreneurs . . . . .	61
Youth Get a Real Second Chance To Join the World of Work. . . . .	125

## Louisville, Kentucky, EC

Jefferson County Public Schools Receive \$2 Million Toward Creating QZAB . . . . .	234
Louisville’s Nia Center Creates Pathways to Opportunities . . . . .	26
Project Empower Establishes Youth Opportunity Centers . . . . .	116

## Lowell, Massachusetts, EC

Access to Jobs: Transportation, Employment, and Self-Sufficiency . . . . .	73
Grassroots EC Board Develops Local Leadership . . . . .	49

Lowell Showcase Community Revives Contaminated Sites . . . . .	222
SuitAbility Dresses Women With New Look and New Outlook . . . . .	189
<b>Manchester, New Hampshire, EC</b>	
Community Police Find Permanent Solutions to EC Problems . . . . .	141
Program Trains EC Residents as Bank Tellers . . . . .	69
Tax Program Helps EC Residents Get Quick Returns . . . . .	190
Trainees Gain Job Skills, Confidence Through EC Program . . . . .	63
<b>Memphis, Tennessee, EC</b>	
Schools + Family Resource Centers = Strong Families . . . . .	101
<b>Miami-Dade County, Florida, EZ</b>	
Florida YWCA Program Welcomes First YouthBuild Grant . . . . .	125
One-Stop Capital Shop Energizes South Florida Community . . . . .	23
Teaming With Private Industry To Revitalize a Brownfield Development . . . . .	223
Weed and Seed Program Provides Safer Neighborhoods for EZ Residents . . . . .	147
<b>Milwaukee, Wisconsin, EC</b>	
Developer Group's Coaching Helps Bring Back Retail Services . . . . .	32
Participants Construct Service-Enriched Residence for Youth . . . . .	156
<b>Minneapolis, Minnesota, EZ</b>	
New Housing Development Sparks Community Enthusiasm . . . . .	162
YWCA Enhances Community Health and Well-Being . . . . .	196
<b>Nashville, Tennessee, EC</b>	
Working Smart Program Offers Business Assistance in Enterprise Community . . . . .	30
<b>Newark, New Jersey, EC</b>	
Teaming With VISTA To Establish Newark Residence Councils . . . . .	203
<b>Newburgh/Kingston, New York, EC</b>	
Developer Strategizes Against Urban Deterioration . . . . .	163
Grocery Wholesaler Invites EC Residents To Work . . . . .	61
<b>New Haven, Connecticut, EZ</b>	
Construction Workforce Initiative Offers Access to Trade Careers . . . . .	71
New EZ Moves Quickly To Boost Employment . . . . .	50
<b>New York, New York, EZ</b>	
Harlem USA Brings 800 Jobs to New York EZ . . . . .	44
Manhattan Initiative Prepares Residents for Technology Jobs . . . . .	59
Manhattan Initiative To Place 1,600 EZ Residents in Jobs . . . . .	42
<b>Norfolk, Virginia, EZ</b>	
Norfolk Public Schools Implement Qualified Zone Academy Bonds . . . . .	233

## Oakland, California, EEC

Enterprising Storeowner Shows the Way for Central-City Retailing . . . . . 27

## Ogden, Utah, EC

Community CARES Expands Opportunities for Families  
in Ogden School District. . . . . 235

Employment Initiative Helps Ogden Youth . . . . . 130

## Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, EC

Investments Reinvigorate Capital Hill Business District . . . . . 186

Revolving Microloan Program Offers Shot in the Arm . . . . . 8

## Omaha, Nebraska, EC

New Creations Offers Transitional Housing and Drug Rehabilitation . . . . . 109

## Ouachita Parish, Louisiana, EC

RENEWAL Gives Hope to Young Louisiana Entrepreneurs . . . . . 131

## Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, EZ

Federal Transit Authority Grant Funds Reverse Commute Program . . . . . 74

New Community Lender To Energize Philadelphia EZ . . . . . 11

A New Life Program Combines Drug Treatment and  
Rehabilitation With Family Preservation . . . . . 97

Welcoming Urban Landscape Program Cleans and  
Greens Up West Philadelphia EZ Neighborhood . . . . . 197

## Phoenix, Arizona, EC

Model Program Targets Lead Paint Hazards . . . . . 173

## Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, EC

Task Force Creates Childcare Solutions for Working Families. . . . . 104

## Portland, Oregon, EC

Contractor Support Program Supports Portland Businesses . . . . . 29

Portland Showcases Brownfield Site Efforts . . . . . 221

Portland YouthBuild Program Promotes Construction Skills. . . . . 126

## Providence, Rhode Island, EC

Creating Partnerships To Provide Better Service . . . . . 198

Recycling Waste Creates Jobs . . . . . 62

## Pulaski County, Arkansas, EC

Innovative Loan Guarantee Program Helps Small Firms Get Capital . . . . . 7

## Rochester, New York, EC

Shopping Plaza Revitalizes Neighborhood. . . . . 184

## San Antonio, Texas, EC

YouthBuild Programs Certify Construction Success . . . . . 127

## San Diego, California, EC

One-Stop System Enables Youth To Aim for Dream Jobs . . . . . 119

## San Francisco, California, EC

Mission, EC Youth Launch Own San Francisco Credit Union . . . . .	129
Neighborhood Collaborates To Improve Housing Conditions for People With Most Needs. . . . .	154
School-to-Work Partnership Plays Key Role in Changing EC's Educational Landscape . . . . .	134
Successful Youth-Run Sidewalk-Cleaning Business Continues To Expand . . . . .	120

## Santa Ana, California, EZ

Community Solves a Childcare Puzzle . . . . .	99
Moving and Storage Company Takes Advantage of SBA HUBZone Program . . . . .	33
Santa Ana Uses 21st Century Learning Center Grant To Meet Student Needs . . . . .	236

## Seattle, Washington, EC

Program Transforms Troubled Schools Into Powerful Schools . . . . .	229
---	-----

## Springfield, Illinois, EC

Superior Walls Provides Superior Opportunities. . . . .	60
---	----

## Springfield, Massachusetts, EC

Investing in Small Businesses Makes a Huge Impact . . . . .	12
Youth and Families Find Support and Resources in Springfield's EC. . . . .	121

## St. Paul, Minnesota, EC

The Frogtown Entrepreneur Center Nurtures Small Businesses . . . . .	17
--	----

## Tampa, Florida, EC

Restored Historical Site Now Home to EC Businesses . . . . .	18
--	----

## Waco, Texas, EC

High Technology Ensures Basic Services . . . . .	81
McClennan County Childcare Association Raises the Bar . . . . .	102
Partnering To Build a Healthier Community . . . . .	193

## Washington, District of Columbia, EC

EC Grant Enables Local Clinic To Provide Job Physicals, Chronic Care . . . . .	96
Officer Next Door Program Assists DC Neighborhood . . . . .	169

## Wilmington, Delaware, EC

EC Internet Network Links 100+ Agencies . . . . .	79
---	----

## RURAL COMMUNITIES

### Arizona Border Region, Arizona, EC

Chicanos Por La Cause Makes New Low-Cost Housing Available . . . . .	160
Downtown Revitalization and Beautification Project Revives Decaying Commercial District. . . . .	187
Training Program Creates Jobs for EC Residents . . . . .	137
USDA Grants Nurture Growth of Rural Arizona Businesses . . . . .	15

### Central Savannah River Area, Georgia, EC

EC Leaders Attend Academy for Economic Development . . . . .	37
Food Bank Feeds Needy Families . . . . .	201

### Deming, New Mexico, EC

Businesses, Jobs Come to Luna County . . . . .	39
--	----

### East Prairie, Missouri, EC

East Prairie Students Move Onto Information Superhighway and Into 21st Century. . . . .	237
EC Partnership Aids Domestic Violence Victims . . . . .	145
Residents, Business Owners Hone Skills at New Computer Lab . . . . .	86
Visitors' Guide Helps Attract Tourists. . . . .	217

### FUTURO, Texas, EC

Computer Technology Centers To Open in Five EC Counties. . . . .	87
--	----

### Kentucky Highlands, Kentucky, EZ

Development Venture Fund Commits \$16 Million in Loans, Creates 2,400 Jobs . . . . .	45
Entrepreneurship Center Promotes Business Startup and Expansion . . . . .	38
Food Company Provides 1,000 Jobs, Bright Future for Clinton County Residents. . . . .	46
Youth Center Encourages Youth Involvement. . . . .	123

### La Jicarita, New Mexico, EC

USDA Chooses La Jicarita for Enterprise Facilitation Demonstration Project . . . . .	39
--	----

### Lock Haven, Pennsylvania, EC

Airport Business Park Achieves Keystone Opportunity Zone Status . . . . .	21
Community Days Promote Volunteer Care for Neighborhoods . . . . .	191
Internet-Enhanced Literacy Tutor Training a Pennsylvania First . . . . .	85
Lock Haven Advocates Help Crime Victims. . . . .	145
Moving Rural Pennsylvania Residents From Welfare to Work . . . . .	66
Partnership With University Prepares Students for College . . . . .	231
Small Business Development Center Offers Technical Assistance to Local Businesses . . . . .	37
Technology Center Puts Local Businesses on Information Superhighway. . . . .	85



<b>Lower Yakima County, Washington, EC</b>	
Latchkey Kids Find Afterschool Home . . . . .	107
<b>McDowell County, West Virginia, EC</b>	
S.A.F.E. Provides Low-Cost Housing for Victims of Domestic Violence and Homeless Families . . . . .	159
<b>North Delta, Mississippi, EC</b>	
Conference Addresses Race Relations . . . . .	181
<b>Northeast Louisiana Delta, Louisiana, EC</b>	
Partnerships With Educational Institutions Train Workers for Jobs . . . . .	66
Recreational Programs Serve At-Risk Youth . . . . .	124
Revolving Loan Fund Helps Small Businesses Start and Grow . . . . .	15
<b>Rio Grande Valley, Texas, EZ</b>	
History Museum Opens in Rio Grande Valley. . . . .	211
New Housing Comes to the Valley . . . . .	167
<b>Southeast Oklahoma, Oklahoma, EC</b>	
Infrastructure Improvements Help Tourism Grow. . . . .	219
<b>Southwest Georgia United, Georgia, EZ</b>	
Economic Development Training Center Opens in Dooly County . . . . .	65
<b>Wichita County, Kansas, EC</b>	
Cultural Arts Center Promotes Local Artists . . . . .	217
Feed Mill Brings Jobs, New Markets to Rural Kansas . . . . .	47

### Networking Academies

Cisco Systems Commits Capital, In-Kind Support Through Networking Academy Program. . . . .	91
---	----

# Available Publications

## Available Publications for Urban Communities

*Federal Programs Guide:* Provides a list of Federal Government programs available to distressed communities. Applicants can use this guide to identify current or prospective Federal Government programs that can be used to help revitalize their neighborhoods.

*Internal Revenue Service Publication 954, "Tax Incentives for Empowerment Zones and Other Distressed Communities,"* revised February 1999.

*Performance Measurement System Guide:* Provides communities with a "how to" approach to establishing and implementing a performance measurement system. Performance measurement systems provide an organized process for gathering information to track how well programs and projects are meeting their goals, then using that information to improve performance and report to interested stakeholders.

*Strategic Planning Guide:* Provides a comprehensive overview of how to prepare a Strategic Plan including a discussion of the planning process and the ways in which residents, community-based organizations, businesses, nonprofit organizations, government entities, and others come together to create a shared vision for the future.

*Empowerment Zone and Enterprise Community Tax Incentives: A Guide for Businesses:* Business is key to the EZ/EC Initiative. This practical guide is designed to provide information to businesses on the advantages and benefits of locating and expanding in EZs and ECs.

*The President's Community Empowerment Board:* The Community Empowerment Board (CEB) includes the heads of 26 Federal agencies. The CEB is responsible for the overall development of community empowerment efforts, with particular attention given to the implementation of the EZ/EC Initiative.

*What Works! in the Empowerment Zones and Enterprise Communities, Volumes I-IV:* A compilation of successful projects from current EZs and ECs (includes contact names and telephone numbers).

To request publications for urban communities, please call 1-800-998-9999.

## Available Publications for Rural Communities

*A Guide to Implementation and Benchmarking:* Helps rural communities turn their Strategic Plans into specific work programs and create performance measures to evaluate their own progress.

*A Guide to Strategic Planning for Rural Communities:* Leads communities through the process of establishing a vision, evaluating problems and opportunities, assessing their strengths and weaknesses, and setting goals and strategies.

*Federal Programs Guide:* Provides a list of Federal Government programs available to distressed communities. Applicants can use this guide to identify current or prospective Federal Government programs that can be used to help revitalize their neighborhoods.

*Internal Revenue Service Publication 954, "Tax Incentives for Empowerment Zones and Other Distressed Communities,"* revised February 1999.

*Empowerment Zone and Enterprise Community Tax Incentives: A Guide for Businesses:* Business is key to the EZ/EC Initiative. This practical Guide is designed to provide information to businesses on the advantages and benefits of locating and expanding in EZs and ECs.

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*What Works! in the Empowerment Zones and Enterprise Communities, Volumes I-IV:* A compilation of successful projects from current EZs and ECs (includes contact names and telephone numbers).

To request publications for rural communities, please call 1-800-851-3403.

## Other Resources

*Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance and Federal Assistance Award Data Systems:* Two CD-ROMs are available that detail information on Federal procurements valued at more than \$25,000 for an entire fiscal year: the *Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance* and the Census Bureau's *Federal Assistance Award Data Systems*. This information helps to identify who buys what, who gives grants and loans, and who gets Federal funding.

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### **Community Connections (HUD's Resource Center)**

For information on programs to help build communities:

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# Terms and Definitions

<b>CDBG</b>	Community Development Block Grant
<b>COPC</b>	Community Outreach Partnership Centers
<b>DoD</b>	U.S. Department of Defense
<b>EC</b>	Enterprise Community
<b>ED</b>	U.S. Department of Education
<b>EDI</b>	Economic Development Initiative
<b>EEC</b>	Enhanced Enterprise Community
<b>ESL</b>	English as a Second Language
<b>EZ</b>	Empowerment Zone
<b>GED</b>	General Equivalency Diploma
<b>HHS</b>	U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
<b>HOME</b>	HUD HOME funding program
<b>HUD</b>	U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
<b>JTPA</b>	Job Training Partnership Act
<b>NASA</b>	National Aeronautics and Space Administration
<b>SBA</b>	U.S. Small Business Administration
<b>SEZ</b>	Supplemental Empowerment Zone
<b>SSBG</b>	Social Services Block Grant
<b>TANF</b>	Temporary Aid to Needy Families
<b>USDA</b>	U.S. Department of Agriculture

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