

# HOPE VI Community & Supportive Services Best Practices Report – Resident Engagement Cincinnati Metropolitan Housing Authority

## Partnerships Aimed to Improve Girls' Health Achieve Positive Outcomes

The Cincinnati Metropolitan Housing Authority (CMHA) wanted to find new ways to provide residents with supportive programming and services and help families work toward economic self-sufficiency. With this goal in mind, the CMHA started a community-based participatory action research (CBPAR) program aimed at improving girl's health. CBPAR is premised on the belief that communities already have the local knowledge that is crucial to understanding and addressing its own social problems. Through CBPAR strategies, residents not only help identify and answer the specific needs of their community, but also become better connected to the community and provide a voice for otherwise marginalized populations.

For its CBPAR program, CMHA partnered with Harmony Garden, a local non-profit aimed at improving health outcomes for young girls. CMHA provided a year of wage support for a team of female residents who signed up to serve as researchers. Harmony Garden provided the office space, operational infrastructure and research training and supervision to teach the women how to use CBPAR strategies to conduct research that could be used to promote girls' health and reduce health disparities in the community. The researchers learned basic computer skills, database development, research ethics rules, and information about social inequality and health disparities. As a result of their research efforts, positive outcomes included the following:

### 1. Developing community-friendly surveys and focus group facilitation guides

CRRT members provided Harmony Garden researchers and researchers from other academic institutions in the greater Cincinnati region with significant input on the best manner to pose survey questions to community members so researchers can gather quality data in a culturally relevant and respectful manner.

### 2. Administering a community health needs assessment

To identify residents' top three health concerns for girls in the community and help focus their future activities, the researchers designed a purpose-built Health Assessment Survey. Researchers recruited residents to complete the survey voluntarily during two community events, an annual neighborhood reunion and the monthly resident council meeting. From a list of eleven possible health concern topics provided, residents endorsed three primary health concerns for girls in their community: teen pregnancy/STDs, drugs, and safety.

### 3. Collecting Data in Support of Youth Tutoring Programs for the West End Neighborhood

Researchers worked with a CMHA resident council group to help assess the education needs of youth in the community. The researchers then designed the needs assessment survey and provided data entry, data analyses and written summation of the findings to the resident council. As a result, the resident council will be able to use the findings to obtain additional funding for tutoring services and graphing calculators that will enhance college readiness skills for youth in their community.

**For more information on this Best Practice contact:**

Jackie Davis, [jackie.davis@cintimha.com](mailto:jackie.davis@cintimha.com) 513 977-5729