



## Choice Neighborhood Initiative Planning Grant

### Build Olneyville PEOPLE Task Force

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#### MINUTES

April 8, 2014 Meeting

#### 1) Welcome and introductions

Sorrel Devine, PHA Director of Resident Services, welcomed attendees and asked the group to introduce themselves.

#### 2) Update on CNI progress

Melissa Sanzaro, PHA Special Projects Office (SPO) Director gave a brief overview of the CNI - its history, principal partners, goals and objectives; Copies of the CNI Program Briefing document were distributed for reference.

#### 3) Key findings form the daft Manton Heights Needs Assessment

Kathy Carton from EJP Consulting Group referenced the Manton Heights Needs Assessment, which had been disseminated to attendees via email prior to this meeting, noting key findings.

#### 4) Discussion topics surrounding the PEOPLE Plan Matrix

Kathy took the lead on a discussion of the CNI PEOPLE Plan matrix:

- **Did we get the major "Goals/Outcomes" right ?**

The group seemed to be in agreement that the Goals/Outcomes and Metrics were realistic and represented the concerns of the community as reported in the Needs Assessment.

- **Are there additional partners, initiatives and/or strategies that can help us achieve these Goals/Outcomes?**

A great deal of discussion ensued from this question. Here are some highlights:

- **Providence Housing Authority** – Sorrel called attention to the various existing PHA-sponsored programs and services available to Manton Heights and Olneyville residents mentioned under *Strategies* including the Family Self Sufficiency (FSS) program, Family Success Center (FSC), Adult Education and Training Center (ETC) programs, and Computer Education, particularly the "Get Connected" pilot.

- ***Dorcas International Institute RI*** – new ED Kathleen Cloutier spoke about her agency’s work with immigrant populations and the many resources they could bring to the CNI plan including ESL, Income Asset Building, and job training through their Career Academy (in partnership with Stepping UP).
- ***URI Nutrition Program*** – Lorraine Keeney and Kate Balestracci explained that URI had backed off providing health and nutrition education programming in the Manton/Hartford neighborhoods in the last year or so out of courtesy to Brown University’s “Live Well/Viva Bien” research project. They are eager to get re-involved, however, now that the study has been completed. URI can offer a variety of health and nutrition programs including cooking classes targeted to youth, adults and families, as well as seniors. They are closely aligned with Farm Fresh RI and working to increase participation in local farmers markets. They also mentioned their senior companion program that pairs seniors without transportation with volunteers that assist with shopping and other daily needs.
- ***Children’s Friend and Service RI*** – former Head Start teacher Ellen Morey and current Head Teacher for the MH program, Nicole Botelho, both spoke about programs that CFSRI offer to Head Start families including “Dads Making A Difference” and “Project Connect” which provides case management services through home visits.
- ***RI Family Literacy Initiative and English For Action*** – Nancy Fritz (RIFLI) and Kimberly Kohler (EFA) called the group’s attention to a new initiative in which they (as well as PHA and the Institute for Labor Studies and Research) have recently become involved – NINA (Networks to Integrate New Americans). The goals of the NINA initiative are to improve linguistic, economic and civic opportunities for new immigrants in order to integrate them into local communities and improve all communities. Fund from the US Dept. of Adult Education provides technical assistance to prioritize goals and develop work plans over the next three years.

Kathleen Cloutier expressed interest in getting Dorcas International involved in the collaborative. She noted that they have some funding through Welcoming RI that might be available for events and/or outreach. She also noted that Dorcas International provides legal services related to citizenship, work visas and other immigration issues.

- ***Capital Good Fund*** – it was noted that Andrew Posner from Capital Good Fund is offering an array of services related to small business, asset development, technology and low interest loans to immigrants seeking citizenship to cover the cost of testing. Further follow-up is needed to determine exactly what is offered.
- ***Federal Hill House*** – it was also noted that FHH has a program that provides computers to CBOs in need. These computers are reconditioned as part of a training program at FHH.

- **Are there gaps in services?**

Manton Heights resident Mirza Miletty recently received certification as a Recovery Counselor and is working at the Anchor Community Center in Pawtucket. She suggested that on site or locally based recovery services be part of the CNI plan. Melissa Sanzaro mentioned that she participates in the Mayor's Substance Abuse Council. She offered to invite Mirza to the next meeting and agreed to raise the need for recovery services in the Olneyville to the group in an effort to identify additional partners and/or resources.

#### **5) Meeting Schedule**

The next meeting was scheduled for **Tuesday, April 29, 2014 at 11:00 am** in the Manton Height lower level multipurpose room. The topics for discussion at the next meeting will be Mental Health/Depression/Stress and "Engagement."