

Community Determined Housing Neighborhoods Project

A Concept Paper

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Overview:

This is a project to conduct and evaluate programs designed to reduce the human and financial costs related to alcohol and illicit drug abuse in housing developments. Leslie Korn & Associates (LK&A), a cross-cultural health and education firm, proposes to conduct a year-long project to reduce human and financial costs associated with alcohol and illicit drug abuse, the two more significant symptoms of individual and community trauma, in housing developments. LK&A will work in Massachusetts in cooperation with the Center for Community Recovery Innovations (CCRI), the Center for Women, a Division of the Center for Social Responsibility (Washington, D.C.) of The Union Institute Graduate School (Cincinnati, OH) and the Management Education Assistance Program (MEAP). This project applies an innovative Community-Determined research and program development methodology, where the working assumption is that a group of people, a community, has within itself a knowledge-base from which solutions to the most pressing social problems can be found. Attitudes and behaviour which perpetuate exposure to trauma and substance abuse may be changed through Housing Neighborhood intervention. Together, these elements describe the principle of *Community Determination*.

Housing Neighborhoods do not exist naturally. They are artificial constructs made from individual families that have only one thing in common: They all live in the same housing facility. A community or a Housing Neighborhood is a *process* of interactions between human beings. The essential process that goes to making a Housing Neighborhood is *mediation of differences and sharing power. Self-interested embrace of the success of others and respecting the knowledge-base of groups and families, serve as the underpinnings of the process of people living in a community together.* Individuals and families enter a housing facility as strangers. This sets them apart as different and in need of protective barriers. The extent to which individuals and

The Community Determined Housing Neighborhoods Project will be conducted at two sites in Massachusetts (i.e., Castle Square Apartments, Boston, MA - a Housing Neighborhood with 500 units and population made up primarily of African-American, Hispanic and Asian families, and a second site in western Massachusetts) The two sites will be chosen on the basis of receptivity to the Project, estimated degree of neighborhood dysfunction, diversity of populations and the extent of cooperation granted by facility owners and management.

Preliminary Organization Phase: (60 days) (123 Person Hours)

The Principle Investigators, Project Coordinator, Researcher will develop the specific Project Organizational framework for conducting the project during this period. Preliminary demographic information describing prospective sites will be gathered, meetings with Housing Managers and Owners will be conducted to arrange their cooperation, participation and support. Initial contacts will be made with Housing Neighborhood residents at several sites to determine the suitability of possible project populations. Project Organizational goals and overall goals will be reviewed and methodological approaches will be reviewed. An initial "external evaluation instrument" will be commissioned as the "preliminary survey" to establish base-line information against which subsequent inquiries will be measured. This *needs assessment* instrument will initially measure estimates of "identified problems and needs" as defined by the facility Owner, manager and residents.

Phase I: Planning (30 days) (243 Person Hours)

Community-Determined program development and evaluation flows directly from the knowledge-base of the community. This principle requires that early steps be taken to organize a means by-which that knowledge-base becomes accessible to the people who will be the prime beneficiaries of that knowledge. A planning period of thirty-days which defines a purpose, goals, and objectives for a year-long Housing Neighborhood Project will be initiated by the formation of a self-identified (multi-cultural and inter-generational) Neighborhood Discussion Group. The role of Project Coordinators in relation to the Group and within the overall Planning period is to:

- ◆ facilitate the definition and exposure of community knowledge, and
- ◆ help organize this knowledge within a practical framework that establishes and provides for the regeneration of Housing Neighborhood leadership

implementation phase. This over-lapping of phases will provide a natural and seamless change from one phase into the next.

Phase III: Implementation (300 days) (426 Person Hours)

The Principal Investigators, Coordinator, Researcher and Consulting Instructors will provide guidance, program instruction, evaluation, logistics and program coordination in support of up to twenty Housing Neighborhood leaders and up to 1000 Housing Neighborhood residents as they work to implement the Housing Neighborhood Compacts. In addition to coordination and instruction, research and evaluation interventions will be conducted to monitor developments and accomplishments on the road to achieving external project goals and internal Housing Neighborhood Compact goals. Phase III actually overlaps Phase II permitting "learning application" experience for Leadership Learners.

Phase IV: Evaluation (25 days) (162 Person Hours)

Two levels of evaluation are contemplated for this project beginning with the Preliminary Organizational Phase and running through the Evaluation Phase. External Project Evaluation will be conducted to determine the effectiveness and validity of Community Determined and Project Coordination techniques, methodologies and assumptions. Some of the measures that will be emphasized are those concerned with cost/benefit, trauma reduction, changes in incidence of violence, alcohol and/or illicit drug abuse related incidents, and incidence of vandalism. Internal Housing Neighborhood Project evaluation will be conducted to determine the effectiveness of Community Determined Compact purpose, goals and objectives. Measures will be defined by the conditions of defined goals and objectives and the extent to which these were achieved. Instruments will be defined by Principal Investigators, the Coordinator, Researcher, Housing Neighborhood Leaders, Facility Manager and Facility Owner.

Analysis will be performed by the Principal Investigators and Researcher, and critiqued by the Coordinator, Housing Neighborhood Leaders, Facility Manager, Facility Owner and Housing Neighborhood Residents.

The final analysis will be published and distributed with the intention of providing the substantive focus of a Housing Neighborhood Conference to encourage wider discussion and consideration of the Project's resulting findings and suggestions. The Conference would be outside the scope of this project, but should be considered a logical follow-up.

Conclusion:

This is an experimental effort aimed at applying well established