# The State of City Leadership for Children and Families

**2009**



National League of Cities
Institute for Youth, Education, & Families

## About the National League of Cities' Institute for Youth, Education, and Families

The Institute for Youth, Education, and Families (YEF Institute) is a special entity within the National League of Cities (NLC).

NLC is the oldest and largest national organization representing municipal government throughout the United States. Its mission is to strengthen and promote cities as centers of opportunity, leadership, and governance.

The YEF Institute helps municipal leaders take action on behalf of the children, youth, and families in their communities. NLC launched the YEF Institute in January 2000 in recognition of the unique and influential roles that mayors, city councilmembers, and other local leaders play in strengthening families and improving outcomes for children and youth.

Through the YEF Institute, municipal officials and other community leaders have direct access to a broad array of strategies and tools, including:

- Action kits that offer a menu of practical steps that officials can take to address key problems or challenges.
- Technical assistance projects in selected communities.
- The National Summit on Your City's Families and other workshops, training sessions, and cross-site meetings.
- Targeted research and periodic surveys of local officials.
- The YEF Institute's Web site, audioconferences, and e-mail listservs.

To learn more about these tools and other aspects of the YEF Institute's work, go to www.nlc.org/iyef or leave a message on the YEF Institute's information line at 202/626-3014.

# The State of City Leadership for Children and Families

*2009*

Julie Bosland and Michael Karpman

# Preface

America's children and families — and the cities and towns in which they live — are under intense pressure as the decade draws to a close. Even before the current recession began, new solutions were urgently needed to address a host of pressing challenges: deepening financial insecurity; violence-plagued neighborhoods; a childhood obesity epidemic; an enduring educational achievement gap; high dropout rates; and low youth employment rates. Now it seems that effective responses to these and other challenges — responses that are urgently needed to safeguard the future of our communities — will require more innovative and effective leadership at all levels of government.

Fortunately, mayors and other city leaders throughout the country are making important progress, pursuing promising ideas and developing bold, breakthrough solutions. By testing cutting-edge strategies to improve the lives of children, youth and families, cities are serving as key laboratories in the discovery of practical answers to many of our most vexing problems.

Through this groundbreaking publication, the National League of Cities (NLC) seeks to capture the "state of the art" in municipal leadership to help young people and families thrive. In describing the state of city leadership for children and families in 2009, the report highlights the broad range of innovations and trends gaining traction at the local level. It also provides municipal leaders with a valuable new tool that will strengthen city efforts and accelerate the spread of promising strategies across the nation.

City leaders remain determined to take action on behalf of children, youth and families despite the budget problems and constraints created by rising unemployment, high foreclosure rates, falling property values and declining income and sales tax revenues. In November 2008, a group of 26 mayors issued the Mayors' Action Challenge for Children and Families, calling on city leaders across the country to set bold, measurable goals for ensuring that every child has:

- Opportunities to learn and grow;
- A safe neighborhood to call home;
- A healthy lifestyle and environment; and
- A financially fit family in which to thrive.

In the first six months after the initiative was unveiled, a total of more than 100 mayors accepted this Challenge, making commitments to set goals and take action in each of these four areas.

NLC, through its Institute for Youth, Education, and Families (YEF Institute), has worked with municipal leaders in hundreds of cities and towns to spur innovation and support the spread of promising local initiatives. By providing practical information, advice and a range of technical assistance and peer networking opportunities, the YEF Institute is helping city officials better understand the problems faced by young people and their families, identify solutions that work for their communities and find the partners and resources to successfully implement and sustain these efforts. Many of the mayors that have joined the Mayors' Action Challenge have been key NLC partners and are often at the forefront of this important work.

Over the past decade, NLC and the YEF Institute have been in a unique position to learn about the most innovative ideas coming out of our cities and towns. Just as some of the most innovative ideas of a decade ago have now become widespread practices, we can expect today's innovations to become emerging trends, and emerging trends to become established over time. The YEF Institute can provide more information about these models, work with cities to adapt them to meet local needs and foster peer connections so that municipal leaders can learn from each other's experiences.

This publication also has important implications for state and federal policymakers. Many of the innovations and trends in this report have already captured the interest of state and federal officials as they draw policy lessons and seek to invest in effective local initiatives that can be replicated and brought to scale in other communities.

Finally, I want to close with an acknowledgment that some examples of city innovation may not be captured in this report, either because of space constraints or because local initiatives have not yet come to NLC's attention. I hope that this publication will encourage more cities and towns to share their efforts with the YEF Institute so that, as city leaders, we can all continue to learn and grow together as we seek to do "more with less" in these challenging economic times.



**Otis S. Johnson**
Mayor, City of Savannah, Ga.
2009 Chair, NLC Council on Youth, Education, and Families

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## Emerging Trends

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- Working with a citywide intermediary to improve youth services and opportunities.
- Dedicating a local revenue source for services to children and families.

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# Introduction

If necessity is the mother of invention, the leaders of America's cities and towns have ample reasons to develop and adapt innovations that help children and families thrive. Mayors and other municipal leaders are closer to residents than public officials at other levels of government, and have a firsthand understanding of the problems created and costs incurred when children and families fail. All too often, the personal tragedies and financial toll land directly on the doorsteps of city hall, making them virtually impossible to ignore.

The attempts of city leaders to respond to the pressing needs of children, youth and families are remarkably varied. Taken together, they constitute our nation's largest network of public policy "laboratories" — literally thousands of cities and towns across the United States that are continually testing new hypotheses and experimenting with creative approaches to complex, evolving problems. While highly decentralized, these city-led efforts frequently produce exciting results, and when they do, municipal leaders in other communities typically move quickly to replicate and adapt successful models. Effective innovations become emerging trends, drawing more widespread attention until they become commonplace elements of established practice in every state or region.

Many of today's innovations reflect the critical roles that municipal leaders play in promoting school readiness, supporting academic achievement and ensuring that students graduate prepared for postsecondary and career success. Failing school systems undermine the strength of a city's workforce and low-performing schools render the job of attracting and retaining families and businesses far more difficult. In contrast, innovative school improvement strategies, a community-wide focus on early literacy, high-quality afterschool programming and cross-sector collaborations to support college access and completion can add greatly to a city's economic vitality and quality of life.

Municipal officials choose to tackle other key problems affecting children and families because they recognize that the costs of prevention pale in comparison to the costs of inaction or neglect. For example, many city leaders understand that failure to check rising childhood obesity rates and promote a broader community ethic of health and wellness will translate into higher rates of chronic illness, premature deaths and skyrocketing health care costs for families, businesses and local governments. Similarly, elected officials in America's cities and towns increasingly see that interventions to help young people at risk of "falling through the cracks" — whether by dropping out of school, running away from home, or joining a gang — can enhance public safety and reduce the need for much greater public outlays for social services, law enforcement and income supports down the road.

Most mayors and city councilmembers know that the financial stability of municipalities and the economic well-being of families are inextricably linked. City officials are playing increasingly active roles in promoting financial education, boosting family incomes, helping families save and protect their assets and promoting economic self-sufficiency.

Finally, municipal officials increasingly are redefining city roles in improving outcomes for children and their families by building new city "infrastructure," from data-sharing protocols to creative financing strategies, to support and sustain their efforts. At the center of many of these new efforts are strong and far-reaching partnerships — with schools, colleges, businesses, faith communities, parents and youth themselves — to help identify needs and new approaches.

"The State of City Leadership for Children and Families" provides a snapshot of how far cities have come in developing and adopting new approaches that improve outcomes for children and families. Drawing on a decade of work by the National League of Cities' Institute for Youth, Education, and Families (YEF Institute), as well as an open call for nominations and targeted outreach to other national organizations in the field, the innovations and trends highlighted in this report cover nine major topics:

- Early childhood;
- Education;
- Afterschool;
- Youth in transition;
- Youth violence prevention;
- Family economic success;
- Community wellness;
- Youth civic engagement; and
- City infrastructure.

For each chapter, the report showcases three or four "innovations." These city initiatives are notable for the ground-breaking nature of their strategies, the scope of what a city seeks to accomplish and the scale of implementation. Some of the innovations described in this report have been tried by other levels of government or by community-based organizations, but nonetheless represent new approaches for cities. Other models have been around for years with significant local impact, but additional municipalities have not yet learned about and replicated them.

While this construct for selecting "innovative" practices is imperfect, the efforts highlighted herein provide a rich and thought-provoking set of policies and practices. For example, The Mind Trust in Indianapolis highlights how city leaders can help transform public education even when they do not control the school system. Boston's School-yards Initiative shows how a city can convert deteriorating, concrete school playgrounds into green spaces for physical activity and learning.

City innovations at times can quickly "catch fire," sparking a national trend as large numbers of mayors and other municipal leaders adopt a promising practice or approach within a relatively brief period. For instance, the Bank On San Francisco program, which connects families with mainstream financial services and products, has rapidly become an emerging trend as other cities concerned about families' lack of financial assets — and the wealth-stripping practices employed by check cashers and other fringe financial service providers — have implemented the "Bank On" model.

Although rigorous evaluation is not available for all of the city initiatives included in this report, outcome data is provided for each innovation whenever possible. Readers will find numerous examples of strategies that have yielded impressive results. Cities such as Chicago, Minneapolis, San José and San Bernardino have reduced incidents of violent crime (e.g., overall shootings, homicides and violent crimes by juveniles) by 40 percent or more in target neighborhoods. The City of Denver engages nearly 20,000 children and adults in the city's cultural institutions annually through its 5 by 5 program. Louisville's Every 1 Reads initiative has helped cut the proportion of students reading below grade level in half (from 18.6 percent to 9.4 percent).

The emerging trends described in this volume focus on approaches that are beginning to spread, but typically are still found in fewer than a dozen cities. For example, a growing number of cities have created online program locators to help youth and parents find afterschool programs in their neighborhoods via user-friendly websites. Other cities are preventing truancy through collaborations involving police, schools and social service providers. Each description of an emerging trend covers the common elements of the approach, while using city examples to high-light noteworthy variations.

A set of established trends — commonly known strategies that have taken hold in many cities across the country — are also included for each topic. Some of these approaches, such as municipal youth councils, have been well estab-lished in cities and towns for decades. Other models, such as outreach campaigns to connect eligible families with the federal Earned Income Tax Credit, are much newer but have spread rapidly in recent years. The descriptions of established trends provide an overview of core strategies while also illustrating variations on the general theme.

Finally, each chapter ends with a list of new ideas for municipal leadership. Focused on ongoing challenges identi-fied by city leaders, these sections invite readers to think "outside the box" about possibilities for a next wave of city-led innovation on behalf of children, youth and families. Current discussions and projects underway in research,

public policy, nonprofit and foundation networks as well as within federal, state and county governments have provided the impetus for many of these suggestions.

Given the diversity among cities and towns, it is unlikely that every model or initiative described herein will be a good fit for every community. Among the report's innovations, trends and new ideas, however, municipal leaders will find an abundance of examples and ideas that can help cities of all sizes and levels of current engagement. The report features innovations from small and midsized cities, such as Olathe, Kan., and Madison, Wisc., and trends that have found fertile soil in communities such as Gaithersburg, Md.; Rapid City, S.D.; and Woods Cross, Utah. In addition, many large-city models have already been adapted by smaller communities facing similar challenges, and others began by focusing on one or several neighborhoods before being brought to scale.

Going forward, much depends on the creativity of municipal leaders and the depth of their commitment. At the same time, policy changes at state and federal levels can play important roles in accelerating the pace of innovation and adoption of successful models. For example, a proposal by the Obama Administration, if enacted, would catalyze the formation of up to 20 Promise Neighborhoods modeled on "children's zone" initiatives that have achieved remarkable results in Harlem and Orlando. Similarly, with enactment of recent federal legislation allowing the use of foster care funds to continue to help youth after they have aged out of the foster care system, communities seeking to replicate Philadelphia's Achieving Independence Center for transitioning foster youth will have new options for financing their efforts.

Strong intergovernmental partnerships will continue to be needed if America's cities and towns are to sustain and deepen their efforts to strengthen families and improve outcomes for children and youth. All too often, policymakers, researchers and advocates — and at times city officials themselves — have a "blind spot" when it comes to municipal roles and leadership opportunities, overlooking the breadth and depth of city innovation as well as the great potential for mayors, city councilmembers and other municipal leaders to do more in this critical area. The innovations and trends in this report offer a pointed reminder of the valuable contributions that city leaders can make, providing a starting point for cities and towns that have not previously been deeply involved in children and family issues while offering new ideas to those leaders who have been at the forefront of past efforts. The National League of Cities, through its Institute for Youth, Education, and Families, stands ready to assist the nation's cities and towns as they move forward.

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# Early Childhood

## Key Goals:
- Help children enter school ready to succeed.
- Improve access to quality child care for working parents.
- Support and equip parents and other caregivers in their roles as teachers, nurturers and advocates.
- Provide young children with access to books and cultural venues that expose them to music, art, history and the natural sciences.

## Innovations:
- Offering support and training for informal child care providers.
- Using "cultural passports" to connect young children to museums and other cultural venues.
- Making high quality child care and pre-kindergarten affordable for all.
- Promoting early literacy through Mayor's Book Clubs.

## Emerging Trends:
- Educating parents through "welcome baby" kits.
- Empowering parents and boosting their leadership skills.
- Promoting family-friendly workplace policies.
- Using technology to improve access to early childhood programs and community resources.

## Established Trends:
- Promoting home visiting programs for new parents.
- Sponsoring ready-for-school campaigns.
- Supporting fathers and addressing challenges to father involvement.

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## Innovations

***Offering support and training for informal child care providers.***
In response to research clearly demonstrating the long-term return on investments in the early years, San Antonio created the Early ON School Readiness Project in 2000 as a core component of the city's Better Jobs for San Antonio economic development initiative. The Early Childhood Committee of the Better Jobs Initiative Task Force brought together community partners — school districts, early childhood education professionals, parents and community organizations, such as the Smart Start Corporate Collaborative, San Antonio Urban Systemic Initiative, Alamo Workforce Development and the United Way — to educate the San Antonio community about the

> *San Antonio's effort recognizes that many families are more likely to use family, friend and neighbor care than other forms of child care.*

importance of preparing San Antonio children to enter school ready to learn. One of the many innovative aspects of the city's highly acclaimed early childhood initiative is the more recent focus on supporting and training an often overlooked group of caregivers: family members; friends; and neighbors (FFN) who care for young children but generally do not consider themselves professional child care providers.

San Antonio's effort recognizes that many families — including working parents of very young children, families with low to moderate incomes, Latino, African-American, refugee and immigrant families and families who have children with special needs — are more likely to use FFN care than other forms of child care. Parents choose FFN providers for a variety of reasons, including trust, cost and convenience.

To improve the quality of informal care, the City of San Antonio contracted with community-based "delegate agencies" in all 10 city council districts to host a series of five workshops for FFN providers in 2006. The following year, San Antonio partnered with a variety of early education, cultural and family service groups, as well as a local television station, to host the first annual FFN Training Institute for delegate agency staff. With leadership from the city, the partners hosted tailor-made workshops on various topics related to early childhood development.

Seeking to dramatically expand the reach of this effort, San Antonio more than doubled the number of FFN workshops offered throughout the year in 2008. In addition, attendance at the second training institute rose to over 70 participants, including not only delegate agency staff, but also individual FFN providers.

Sessions addressing the needs of children with learning disabilities are a particular draw for FFN providers. Other workshops topics include: early brain development; social and emotional development; language and literacy; health and nutrition; and home and personal safety. Time is set aside for providers and representatives from delegate agencies to work in small groups to identify best practices and solutions to overcome challenges. Speakers are assigned to work and offer assistance during the small group time and participants are able to network with colleagues throughout the city.

To engage informal caregivers, community-based organizations conduct door-to-door outreach and distributed materials announcing the trainings in key public venues where families and providers naturally gather. As an added incentive to attend the trainings, San Antonio provides tote bags filled with age-appropriate reading and learning materials to participants, and offers the opportunity to win special prizes through raffle drawings.

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Since the launch of the FFN initiative, the city has been able to provide training and support to 3,600 caregivers. The city's Department of Community Initiatives has developed a questionnaire that is filled out by participants before and after the institute and an overall FFN survey instrument for program evaluation by the University of Texas at San Antonio.

Delegate agencies that contract with the city also conduct follow-up interviews with participants to ascertain the degree to which the training and learning materials impact activities in the home of FFN providers. Findings show that participants have gained a broader understanding of developmentally appropriate practices, more FFN child care providers and delegate agency representatives understand local and national best practices and participants strengthened their connections with each other. In addition to providing FFN providers with important information and resources directly, the city encourages participants to share what they have learned with others who care for children. Delegate agency representatives gained a broader understanding of the needs, strengths and presence of FFN providers in their assigned council districts; they utilized evaluation techniques presented during the evaluation and assessment portion of the day; and they strengthened connections across sites and with other national and local FFN experts.

*Related innovations:*
- In 2006, Fort Worth, Texas, created two Early Childhood Resource Centers to offer parents and FFN caregivers, as well as child care professionals, opportunities to receive training and peer support. Informal child care providers were encouraged to attend both parent education sessions and special monthly sessions for FFN caregivers, and FFN caregivers could request home visits from child care consultants to improve their caregiving. In the fist year of the program, 130 FFN caregivers participated in 260 hours of specialized training.

- Asheville, N.C., Kamuela, Hawaii, Boston and Seattle have launched (or partnered to provide) facilitated Play & Learn Groups where children learn through developmentally appropriate play with their FFN caregivers or parents.

***Using "cultural passports" to connect young children to museums and other cultural venues.*** Denver Mayor John Hickenlooper began laying the groundwork for a lasting investment in the city's young children when he took office in 2003. By 2004, the city launched Invest in Success, an early childhood initiative that seeks to ensure that high quality early care and education is available and affordable to working parents. At the same time, Mayor Hickenlooper recognized that early learning is not confined to child care centers and sought to increase utilization of the city's rich cultural resources by families with young children.

> *The 5 By 5 Project enhances learning for Denver's young children by offering free year-round family admission and educational opportunities at 12 of the city's award-winning cultural facilities.*

In May 2005, the Mayor's Office for Education and Children initiated The 5 By 5 Project to provide low-income children and their families with at least five cultural experiences by the age of 5 to spark kids' imaginations and learning through exposure to dance, theater, museums and nature, while strengthening families' connections to local cultural and educational resources.

The 5 By 5 Project enhances learning for Denver's young children by offering free year-round family admission and educational opportunities at 12 of the city's award-winning cultural facilities. The goal is to support school readiness and strengthen families by providing children with extended learning to expand their experiences and success in and out of the classroom. The 5 by 5 Project is administered by the Mayor's Office for Education and Children (MOEC) in partnership with 12 of Denver's cultural venues and is available to Denver Great Kids Head Start, Early Head Start and Early Excellence preschool students. Families receive a pass card and calendar through their child's center. The pass card allows for admission to the venues. The calendar provides an overview of the program and information about each of the participating cultural venues such as the children's museum, the art museum, the zoo, the aquarium, the theater, the ballet, the botanical gardens and a historic park. Families can also participate in educational programs at the venues such as free swimming lessons and ballet lessons. The program is funded through a Community Development Block grant, as well as in-kind and financial contributions from cultural partners and other sponsors.

The 5 By 5 Project works closely with participating programs to facilitate the cultural venue's learning experiences as an extension of the classroom and curriculum and provides teachers with age-appropriate lessons and classroom materials, as well as free access to cultural venues and professional development opportunities. Additionally, parents receive educational materials to use at home to further strengthen the learning experience.

More than 6,000 families have participated in the program with close to 100,000 visits to cultural venues. Evaluations show that participation in the project is providing benefits for everyone involved — the students, families, teachers and cultural partners. Roughly three-quarters of Head Start staff and parents said participation in the program improves family relationships by providing a positive opportunity for family time in a fun, engaging setting. Other benefits noted by staff and parents included: improved student learning (including vocabulary and verbal skills) and confidence; greater exposure to parts of the city that families had not previously experienced; and enhanced relationships among families and staff who went on group outings. Cultural partners have found a positive way to better serve a more diverse community. For more information, visit: www.denvergov.org/5_By_5

*Related innovations:*
- Tampa, Fla., created a "Passport to Enrichment" program, modeled on Denver's 5 by 5 initiative, for three schools participating in the Mayor's "Make the Grade" initiative.

- In Louisville, Ky., incoming kindergarteners receive a free "I'm Going to Kindergarten" T-shirt, which serves as their "ticket" to a variety of cultural and athletic events in the community.

- In Lynchburg, Va., children who attend Saturday literacy events hosted by the mayor and local librarians are rewarded with free entry into the local museum and other local cultural activities.

### *Making high quality child care and pre-kindergarten affordable to all.*

When the City of Madison, Wis., first linked child care assistance with strategies to promote high quality care, they were pioneers in what became a national movement to set quality standards and make early care and education more accessible. In 2009, the city's program, which pairs child care subsidies for low-income families with a requirement that subsidies be used at locally accredited providers, remains a unique and innovative city model for making quality care affordable to all.

Utilizing quality standards designed to promote optimal child development, the city established a local, voluntary accreditation process for both center- and home-based child care providers. This accreditation process goes well beyond the requirements for simple licensing, which are focused on basic health and safety standards. In doing so, the city sought to help local child care providers improve the quality of their services and make it easier for families to find and select high quality care.

The city employs trained professionals to observe child care centers in action. They assess the amount and quality of adult-child interactions, the appropriateness of activities, materials and language experiences, communication with parents, health practices and administrative procedures. Child care providers can access training, consultation and funding from the city to meet accreditation standards and accreditation is renewed annually.

*8* While accreditation, typically through the National Association for the Education of Young Children, is more widespread today, many parents frequently find it difficult to afford child care providers that meet these high quality standards. To ensure that quality care is available to all residents, the City of Madison's Child Care Assistance Program provides financial assistance based on income to eligible parents that can *only* be used for City of Madison accredited child care.

The city's support has remained strong through almost 35 years of operation. In 2009, the city is providing more than $2.4 million in financial support for the early care and education system, with a third provided in community agency contracts for activities such as family child care accreditation and more than a quarter of the total (roughly $700,000) going toward child care assistance for families.

During 2008, a total of 10,332 children were enrolled in child care programs in the city. Of these, 53 percent, or 5,476 children, were in City of Madison-accredited programs. Although the accreditation process is voluntary, approximately half of Madison children with working parents attend a City of Madison accredited child care program, demonstrating strong support among providers and parents.

While early care and education is not considered a core municipal function in most cities, studies in Madison — and elsewhere in the nation — show that these investments have a significant positive impact on economic development, which is undeniably central to cities. An analysis of the economic impact of the local early care and education system, conducted by the University of Wisconsin, the City of Madison and other partners, shows early care and education is a good economic development investment, both for its direct effects on employment and its relatively high linkage effects in the economy. The study revealed that in addition to the sector's support for working parents and critical investments in the healthy development of young children, early care and education services in Dane County employed 3,474 individuals in 2006, paid over $63 million in wages and salaries and purchased more than $57 million in inputs from other businesses.

For more information, see: http://www.cityofmadison.com/commserv/index.html

*Related innovations:*
- San Francisco and Denver have both established universal pre-K programs to expand access to quality early learning settings.

### *Promoting early literacy through Mayor's Book Clubs.*

In Jacksonville, Fla., Mayor John Peyton made early literacy and reading a top priority for his administration. To bring the community together around this goal, Mayor Peyton created RALLY Jacksonville!, a collaborative, community-wide initiative operated under the auspices of the Jacksonville Children's Commission, that seeks to increase the number of children who are ready for school at the beginning of kindergarten by making early literacy a core community value. The centerpiece of this initiative is a highly visible Mayor's Book Club that engages families and provides books and other learning materials to nurture a child's interest in reading.

The Mayor's Book Club was launched in 2004 to increase family awareness of the importance of reading to and with young children. All 4-year olds in Duval County are eligible to join the book club the year prior to entering kindergarten. Members of the book club each receive a book bag filled with a set of 12 books, uniquely written about local museums, bridges, libraries and other amenities in Jacksonville. In addition to the books, members also receive alphabet flash cards, a family reading blanket, T-shirt, book organizer, book mark and door hanger. All of these literacy components are branded with the Mayor's Book Club logo and logos of the program's key corporate sponsors.

> *The centerpiece of the RALLY Jacksonville! initiative is a highly visible Mayor's Book Club that engages families and provides books and other learning materials to nurture a child's interest in reading.*

Every Saturday morning, Mayor Peyton hosts a book club show on the local FOX television affiliate station, where he reads that month's featured book club book. The mayor engages school-age children in this reading effort as "student co-hosts" who help with the television show and sometimes travel with him to reading events around the city. Some of these older children serve as mentors and read to the younger children enrolled in the book club.

In 2008, the Mayor's Book Club incorporated an additional component, called the Great Outdoor Adventure, which focuses on conservation and the environment and encourages members and their families to enjoy Jacksonville's local natural treasures. The program features monthly activities, educational programming at local parks and story times hosted through a partnership with JaxParks and the Jacksonville Public Library. With the addition of the Great Outdoor Adventure, the book club started incorporating more "green" practices, such as putting the books in a reusable tote, printing all books and paper items locally on recycled paper, and adding a new book to the collection, called "We're Going Green." Additionally, a paperless online registration process has been in place since 2007, encouraging parents to conserve as well.

Each year, between 9,500 and 10,000 4-year-olds join the book club, reflecting community-wide enthusiasm for the program. Since the program's inception five years ago, almost 45,000 4-year-olds have participated.

This success reflects the community-wide enthusiasm for the program and is due in part to both Mayor Peyton's personal commitment to improving early literacy and the hard work of a large number of partners that collaboratively work together to promote early literacy. These partners include: Jacksonville Children's Commission; Early Learning Coalition of Duval; Duval County Public Schools; Episcopal Children's Services; Florida State College at Jacksonville; The Community Foundation; Jacksonville Public Library; the Urban League; Head Start; United Way of Northeast Florida; the University of North Florida; and Florida Institute of Education.

*Related innovations:*
- Charleston, S.C.; Longmont, Colo.; and Lynchburg, Va., have all launched modified versions of the Mayor's Book Club model.

# Emerging Trends

### *Educating parents through "welcome baby" kits.*

A parent is a child's first and most important teacher, but many parents enter this role without adequate information or support. "Welcome baby" kits, filled with parent education materials and lists of community resources, reach parents just after a baby is born when they are most eager for guidance. While hospitals and county health departments have sponsored such efforts in the past, a handful of municipal leaders in cities large and small are stepping in to ensure that all new parents in their communities have access to comprehensive, high-quality information right from the start. In some cases the messages in these kits are supported by public education campaigns that emphasize the importance of the early years and simple actions that can support healthy development.

> *"Welcome baby" kits, filled with parent education materials and lists of community resources, reach parents just after a baby is born when they are most eager for guidance.*

In 2003, the City of Chicago initiated a Born Learning campaign — in conjunction with the Irving Harris Foundation and a national organization called Civitas — to ensure that every parent understands the fundamentals of healthy child development. The city provides Born Learning packets to every new mother in the city with the baby's birth certificate, including information such as when young children need to get vaccinations, how to breastfeed, how to tell if a child is meeting major developmental milestones and how to cultivate a love of learning in children through daily activities.

Other "welcome baby" kits are more focused specifically on cultivating early literacy skills right from the start. Under the leadership of Mayor Joseph Riley, the City of Charleston, S.C., launched Born to Read in 2006. Prospective and new parents receive kits that encourage parents to read to their new baby. A private donor gave $20,000 to pay for the materials, and the city partnered with the public library, public health department and a children's hospital to launch the program. With support from the city, parents of newborn babies in Portsmouth, Va., receive parenting information packets at the hospital. Each packet contains a board book, a Raising a Reader Video on how to share books with children, a toy, a brochure on Portsmouth early childhood programs, the kindergarten readiness checklist and a handout on how to share books with infants. The materials are available for both Spanish- and English-speaking parents.

Finally, in Woods Cross, Utah, the "welcome baby" kits are provided by a volunteer home visitor through a collaborative program that the city helps coordinate. (See section on established trends for more information.)

*Selected cities providing "welcome baby" kits: Burlington, Vt.; Charleston, S.C.; Chicago; Portsmouth, Va.; Woods Cross, Utah; Greenville, S.C.*

### *Empowering parents and boosting their leadership skills.*

In addition to being a child's first teacher, parents must be the voice for children, advocating for their interests within the health care system, public school system and the larger policy world of local, state and federal government.

The Connecticut Commission on Children created the Parent Leadership Training Institute (PLTI) in 1992 to empower parents, strengthen their voice and enhance their leadership skills. Outreach to municipalities throughout the state yielded significant interest, with cities providing in-kind or financial support — and in some cases direct program management — to help ensure that parents can participate.

In cities such as Norwich, Middletown and Waterbury, Conn., in-kind support from the city bolsters parent leadership programs run by community organizations. Municipal leaders in the Town of Enfield, Conn., capitalized on the accessibility of a nearby program and focused their efforts on securing funding to help local parents attend. In 2006, they were able to garner support from the MassMutual Insurance Company to cover the cost of training for

15 parents through the Greater Hartford Leadership Institute. The Leadership Institute then agreed to allow an additional five parents to attend the sessions for free, for a total of 20 Enfield participants.

A few municipal governments are taking a direct lead in coordinating parent leadership trainings. In Stamford, Conn., the health department director and staff recognized the potential of parent leadership training to improve health and developmental outcomes for children and their families. After soliciting support from public, private and nonprofit sources, they successfully launched their first 20-week class in September 1996, with classes of 20-25 held every year since (except 2007). The city provides dinner and child care to address potential barriers to participation. A survey of graduates found that 65 percent applied the skills they learned, and nearly half found that these skills helped them advance their education or careers; 47 percent received promotions, approximately one quarter returned to school and another quarter changed careers. They also increased their civic involvement, with almost three-quarters reporting new participation in community organizations. PLTI graduates now serve in many high-level positions in the city, including the three-term president of the board of education and a member of the city council.

Based on growing interest in the model, the Connecticut Commission on Children began providing guidance to cities, counties and states outside of Connecticut in 2005. The Parent Leadership Training Institute of Alexandria, Va., for example, works with the City of Alexandria and a local nonprofit to provide a 20-week parent leadership development course. During the first 10 weeks, participants engage in community-building and leadership classes. The following 10 weeks focus on of civics and practical democracy skills, including public speaking and designing a community-based program benefiting children. Parents engage in learning activities with trained facilitators, local educators, child advocates, government leaders, policy makers, media representatives and their peers.

*Selected cities offering parent leadership training: Alexandria, Va.; Bridgeport, Conn.; Enfield, Conn.; Stamford, Conn.*

### *Promoting family-friendly workplace policies.*
Nearly two-thirds of all mothers with children under the age of 6 are working outside of the home. Employed parents with young children often struggle to balance work demands with the intensive needs of their infants, toddlers and preschoolers. Finding reliable, affordable, high-quality child care is also a tremendous challenge for many families. Employers who offer support to working parents not only help improve outcomes for children, but frequently find that their employees are more productive and more dedicated workers.

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> *Recognizing the dual benefit to the current and future workforce, some cities are seeking to address the needs of municipal employees who have dependent children. Other cities and towns are seeking to promote a more family-friendly work environment among employers throughout the community.*

Recognizing the dual benefit to the current and future workforce, some cities are seeking to address the needs of municipal employees who have dependent children. Common approaches include: child care information and assistance; on-site or emergency child care; supports for nursing mothers; job sharing or flex-time work options; and time off for specific activities to promote parent involvement in schools or early education. The District of Columbia, for instance, provides on- and near-site child care for its employees at six child care centers, including one that is available 24 hours, seven days a week to serve employees who operate the 911 fire and police call centers, emergency management and the city's general call center. As part of a larger work-life balance initiative, Greenville, S.C., created a lactation room for city employees who are nursing mothers and provides a "welcome baby" pack for expectant employees.

Other cities and towns are seeking to promote a more family-friendly work environment among employers throughout the community. In 2006, the City of Bryan, Texas, hosted its first-ever Family-Friendly Workplace Practices Conference to recognize how local businesses have helped their employees balance family and work demands and to encourage more employers to follow suit. Approximately 60 business executives, local officials, senior city staff

and community stakeholders gathered on the campus of Texas A&M University to discuss how employers can strengthen their ability to recruit and train the best talent, decrease turnover and training costs and increase overall employee productivity by making greater efforts to meet the needs of parents. In 2007, the city hosted a smaller, half-day conference to maintain enthusiasm for family-friendly efforts by local employers, and they are working with a local human resources organization and the Chamber of Commerce to plan another full-day conference and awards ceremony. These conferences raised the visibility of work-family conflicts, changing the way local businesses — and the city — think about supporting and retaining employees. One local business established an onsite daycare for employees and the local Chamber of Commerce now includes family-friendly policies in its criteria for recognition and awards.

*Selected cities with family friendly workplace initiatives: Austin, Texas; Bryan, Texas; Greenville, S.C.; Irvine, Calif.; Los Angeles; Louisville, Ky.; Washington, D.C.*

### *Using technology to improve access to early childhood programs and community resources.*
A growing number of cities are utilizing technology to better target services and help parents navigate the various child care and preschool options for young children, financial assistance with child care costs and additional services offered to parents and young children in the community.

Some cities are using technology to improve access to early childhood programs by providing better information to community organizations, businesses, schools, foundations and city and state officials, to help them target new or expanded programming to underserved areas. For example, Chicago's early childhood program locator (www.earlychildhoodchicago.org), a partnership between the Chicago public schools and the city's Department of Children and Youth Services, provides information on the need for and availability of early care and education programs for low-income children in the city. The locator is part of an ongoing effort to present up-to-date, relevant information about community conditions, assets and needs for all communities within Chicago.

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A larger number of cities are employing new technologies to help parents and other caregivers find appropriate child care and connect to other local programs or services. The City of Palo Alto, Calif., for instance, created a family resource website (http://familyresources.cityofpaloalto.org) in response to citizen input that they needed better ways of locating and accessing child care and other services in the community. Updated annually to provide reliable information, this website helps citizens sift through the vast array of available programs and services — including child care, emergency/crisis, basic needs, community resources, disability resources, education, health care and mental health counseling — to find those resources most appropriate to their particular needs. After learning about Palo Alto's model, Longmont, Colo., created a similar database and invested in 10 kiosks around the city to allow families to easily access this information.

Some cities focus exclusively on connecting families to early care and education programs. The City of Austin, Texas, funds a child care switchboard to help low-income families find child care through an extensive child care database and search tool, which is operated by the local child care resource and referral agency, and provides a listing of child care providers through the Austin City Connection website. In San Antonio, the KidFirst Web portal (kidfirst.sanantonio.gov) provides a single point of entry for child care assistance. The program is designed as an "electronic bridge," connecting parents seeking publicly funded care with child care subsidies, Head Start and school-district public pre-kindergarten programs. Using the online application, parents answer a few simple questions and receive information on which programs are available without having to apply separately to each program. This program has also helped caseworkers assist parents and collaborating agencies to more efficiently and effectively fill child care slots. In addition, like Chicago's locator noted above, the KidFirst Web portal helps the city and collaborating agencies analyze demand to plan for the future.

Another set of city websites, such as Jax4Kids.com in Jacksonville, Fla., help families, informal caregivers and educators find information focused on activities other than child care programs that are geared to young children, including current and upcoming events, classes, camps, field trips, resources for parents.

*Selected cities using technology to boost access to early childhood programs: Austin, Texas; Chicago; Jacksonville, Fla.; Longmont, Colo.; Morgantown, W.Va.; Palo Alto, Calif.; San Antonio.*

# Established Trends

***Promoting home visiting programs for new parents.***
Over the years, cities have utilized home visitors to support new parents and improve the health and development of young children. Home visiting programs offer one-on-one visits by trained nurses or other professionals in a client's home. Although a range of services can be offered during these visits, common elements include: parent education; health education for pregnant women emphasizing prenatal check-ups and nutrition; and connections to community resources, such as child care providers, health care, nutritional supports, counseling or other family supports.

> *Home visiting programs offer one-on-one visits by trained nurses or other professionals in a client's home.*

Rigorous evaluations of programs that utilize nurses as the home visitors have shown that they enhance child and family outcomes on a number of measures, including: lower levels of smoking during pregnancy; reductions in childhood injuries, abuse and neglect; dramatically increased workforce participation by low-income, unmarried mothers by the time their children were 4; and significantly lower rates of juvenile crime by the children as they grow up.

Cities support home visiting programs in a variety of ways. In larger cities, such as Milwaukee and Baltimore, nurse home visiting frequently is provided or coordinated through the Department of Health. In Milwaukee, the city offers three different home visiting models of varying intensity, including the Nurse-Family Partnership, Empowering Families Milwaukee and the Public Health Team Home Visiting initiative for teen parents, high-risk infants and children in need of additional assessments. The City of Baltimore's Health Department, through the Maternal and Infant Nursing Program, provides home visiting and case management services to high-risk pregnant women and infants based on referrals from prenatal caregivers, pediatric providers, hospitals, and in some cases, direct requests from the expectant or new mother.

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Many other cities, such as Lexington, Ky., Lansing, Mich., and Woods Cross, Utah, provide financial or in-kind support for home visiting programs operated through community organizations.

Finally, some cities have found ways to improve the efficiency of, and coordination among, local home visiting programs. In Richmond, Va., the city helped launch a home visiting work group to network five separate programs and develop a citywide screening and referral process for home visitation services.

***Sponsoring ready-for-school campaigns.***
The transition to kindergarten is a significant educational and developmental milestone for children and their families. Young children whose experiences with the local school system are positive right from the start are more likely to succeed and their parents are more likely to become — and stay — engaged in their education. Cities from Louisville, Ky., to Burien, Wash., host "ready for school" campaigns to engage families, educators and community members in a citywide effort to celebrate and support the transition to kindergarten.

"Ready for school" campaigns highlight how parents can prepare their children for school through everyday learning opportunities, such as reading to children regularly and utilizing trips to the grocery store to discuss numbers, colors and shapes. These campaigns frequently cover the logistics of registering for school, point parents to health resources for getting needed immunizations and even give children a chance to get on a school bus before their first day of school. Mayors also play a critical role in building key partnerships — with early care and education providers, local schools, libraries, health providers, museums and businesses — and raise awareness throughout the community about what everyone can do to help children enter school ready to learn.

In Boston, Countdown to Kindergarten, a partnership of the city, schools and 28 local organizations, sponsors a citywide campaign each year that instills confidence in children as they prepare to enter school, both through

> *Cities from Louisville, Ky., to Burien, Wash., host "ready for school" campaigns to engage families, educators and community members in a citywide effort to celebrate and support the transition to kindergarten.*

home activities and community events. It helps families actively participate in their children's education in the years before they start school, learn how to choose and register for Boston public schools and prepare to be advocates for their children. In a similar program in Charleston, S.C., the city combined a Countdown to Kindergarten program with a Mayor's Book Club for rising kindergarteners (see innovations section of this chapter for a description of the Mayor's Book Club model).

The Blast Off to Kindergarten program in Saint Paul, Minn., helps prepare children for the transition to kindergarten through month-by-month activities that support language and cognitive development. In addition, the city and community partner to provide backpacks with school supplies, along with a school bus ride and a classroom experience, for rising kindergarteners.

These efforts appear to be paying off. After the first year, of the Countdown to Kindergarten program launched by Baltimore's Leadership in Action Program (a collaborative effort with representatives of the mayor's office, Child Care Administration and Departments of Health and Social Services), the city witnessed a 50 percent increase in the number of young children entering school healthy and ready to learn.

### *Supporting fathers and addressing challenges to father involvement.*
Fathers can play a critical role in the successful development of their children, making unique contributions to their children's sense of confidence and security. Yet many fathers face barriers to full participation in their children's development. These challenges are most acute for fathers who do not have custody of their children, but other fathers face cultural norms deemphasizing the role of fathers in child rearing or lack the supportive networks that are more common for mothers. To address these issues, a wide variety of cities and towns operate or support fatherhood programs.

> *Fatherhood programs are supported by local governments ranging in size from Bryan, Texas, to New York City.*

Fatherhood programs are supported by local governments ranging in size from Bryan, Texas, to New York City. Despite significant variation in the structure of these programs, most address one or more of five strategic goals: preventing fatherhood until men are ready; preparing young men for the responsibilities of fatherhood; helping unmarried fathers establish paternity; involving fathers in the ongoing emotional and financial care of their children; and actively supporting father in strengthening their connections with their children. Some programs are open to all fathers in the community, while others focus on certain groups of fathers, such as non-custodial fathers, fathers parenting special needs or adopted children, teen fathers or fathers who are incarcerated.

There is no one "father involvement" model. Some cities bring the community together for a summit on fatherhood or provide a public education campaign about the importance of father involvement. Mayor Tom Barrett launched the Milwaukee Fatherhood Initiative, which includes an annual two-day summit and ongoing efforts throughout the year focused on five major areas: 1) education efforts focused on academic advancement, parenting skills and financial management; 2) public education efforts to highlight the benefits of fathers' involvement with their children; 3) men's health; 4) driver's license recovery for fathers; and 5) child support debt reduction.

Another common model is to provide support groups for fathers, which may range from informal gatherings at a community center to more structured, facilitated sessions. For example, in addition to an array of training sessions, the City of Philadelphia's fatherhood initiative allows participating fathers to support one another through open discussion of various topics ranging from anger management to healthy relationships to cultural norms that influence fathering styles.

Finally, cities often offer classes or provide more intensive supports to help fathers address behaviors and other factors that can affect their ability to support their children emotionally and financially. New York City provides approximately $3 million annually to community-based organizations to help fathers in low-income neighborhoods establish or strengthen relationships with their children and provide financial assistance for their families. Men in these programs have access to a range of services, including assistance with family court and custody issues, job training, supervised visitations and even a special Father's Day outing for noncustodial fathers and their children to attend the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Detroit's fatherhood initiative focuses on helping unemployed and low-income fathers of Head Start students improve their economic situation through job search, training and career advancement education.

# *FOUR NEW IDEAS TO CONSIDER*

## *Early Childhood*

**Support the health and education of children of immigrants through parent mentoring programs.**
Immigrant and non-English speaking children are the fastest growing segment of the child population in the U.S. A parent mentoring program can match immigrant parents with a bilingual volunteer or a paraprofessional who can enhance the parent's ability to navigate family services, such as child care, preventive health care and public benefit programs. Local governments can play a role in: securing volunteer parent mentors; identifying immigrant families that may need extra support; training volunteers; and hosting events that bring volunteer mentors and immigrant families together for joint learning and cross-cultural activities.

**Integrate the protection of young children into a city's overall homeland security plan.** While many cities have initiated important citywide plans for how to protect communities in the event of a national security threat or a disease epidemic, it is important to include as part of that plan how to ensure that young children in child care remain safe and supported. Cities can work closely with child care providers, schools, parents and other organizations that supervise or engage young children to assess the readiness of providers and develop coordinate citywide response planning. Plans can include how to: care for children who have lost their parents; meet the health and nutrition needs of children in the event of an emergency; reconnect children with their parents or other relatives; and protect children from highly contagious diseases.

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**Develop early education "learning stations" in public locations.** Parents of young children often spend many hours each week with their children in public spaces, such as supermarkets, laundromats, public benefit offices, the department of motor vehicles or even city hall. City leaders can help make these errands into learning opportunities for young children by placing learning stations — including books, coloring sheets and suggested activities — throughout the community to foster parent-child engagement. Cities can partner with local businesses and county agencies to include learning stations in locations beyond those that are managed by municipalities. Banks could have learning stations focused on numeracy skills, laundromats could provide family reading stations and parents could pick up activity sheets in grocery stores suggesting games related to identifying colors or counting food. Early learning stations could help businesses attract more families as customers, while supporting early learning among young children.

**Work to ensure that all young children have access to infant and toddler programs that meet the quality standards set for Early Head Start.** Working parents typically have more difficulty finding high-quality, affordable care for infants and toddlers than for any other age. Cities can set a local goal to bring a certain number or percentage of early care providers up to the same quality standards that have been set forth for the Early Head Start program. To help achieve this goal, a city can appoint a local infant/toddler specialist to provide guidance and support to help providers in the community to improve the quality of care for the youngest children. By building bridges with existing state- or regional-level infant/toddler specialists, as well as local Early Head Start programs, cities can improve access to resources and trainings focused on the needs of babies and young children. Local specialists can also provide support to family, friend and neighbor care providers to ensure that children in these settings are also receiving high-quality early care and education.

# Education

## Key Goals:

- Ensure that all students graduate prepared for college and the workforce.
- Expand access to and boost completion of postsecondary education and training.
- Engage residents in efforts to improve public schools.
- Draw upon the full range of community assets and resources to provide supports for learning beyond the K-12 classroom.
- Promote greater transparency and accountability for academic performance.

## Innovations:

- Promoting educational entrepreneurship through a nonprofit intermediary.
- Taking a business approach to school improvement.
- Increasing transparency and accountability by issuing school progress reports.

## Emerging Trends:

- Expanding college access through scholarship endowments and counseling.
- Creating community schools and offering school-based wraparound services.
- Offering teacher recruitment and retention incentives.
- Providing multiple pathways to graduation through alternative high schools.

## Established Trends:

- Promoting parent and community engagement.
- Establishing mayoral control of public school governance.
- Developing joint use agreements for city and school facilities.
- Convening city and school leadership.

## Innovations

***Promoting educational entrepreneurship through a nonprofit intermediary.***
Launched in 2006 and led by the city's former mayor and charter schools director, a city-based, 501(c)(3) nonprofit intermediary called the Mind Trust recruits successful education programs throughout the country to begin operating in Indianapolis and empowers education entrepreneurs to develop and implement new initiatives that have the potential to transform public education.

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By supporting the development of entrepreneurial education strategies, the creation of the Mind Trust builds on Indianapolis' nationally recognized mayoral charter schools' initiative. In 2001, the State of Indiana enacted a law that made former Indianapolis Mayor Bart Peterson the nation's first mayor with the authority to grant charters to nonprofit organizations seeking to open public charter schools — a power still held almost uniquely by current Mayor Gregory Ballard. Since then, 18 new charter schools serving more than 5,400 students have opened through a rigorous chartering process. This multi-step process includes a meticulous review of school finance and governance, televised hearings, review and approval by the mayor and ratification by the City-County Council.

According to a 2008 accountability report, pass rates on ISTEP+, Indiana's statewide assessment exam, increased by an average of nearly 6 percentage points in mayor-sponsored charter schools compared with less than 1 percent among all schools statewide. In addition, 94 percent of 2007-08 mayor-sponsored charter school graduates enrolled in college. While developing this initiative, Mayor Peterson and his charter schools director David Harris gained a deeper appreciation for the value that educational entrepreneurs can add to local schools. Together they launched the Mind Trust to expand transformative education initiatives. With Peterson as board chair and Harris as president and CEO, the Mind Trust employs two principal strategies to bring talented entrepreneurs and promising educational ventures to Indianapolis.

The Education Entrepreneur Fellowship cultivates innovative educational strategies by helping entrepreneurs develop and launch their ideas. Selected through a highly competitive application process, Education Entrepreneur Fellows receive nearly $250,000 in support over two years from the Mind Trust, providing them with a full-time salary, benefits, travel costs and customized training and support to bring their initiatives to scale. Fellows are also matched with a local "champion" — often a senior-level business or community leader — who provides guidance and support to the work. Mind Trust staff and board members offer ongoing feedback and support, and fellows can exchange ideas with a growing network of education entrepreneurs and other leaders throughout the city. Out of 488 applications received in 2008, the fellowship's first year, four fellows were selected. Since the project began, fellows have developed programs to help students become more engaged in their learning by creating and managing their own record labels; support talented teachers early in their careers to encourage them to stay in the profession; engage high school graduates in a "bridge year" of international service before college; and offer summer learning opportunities to disadvantaged elementary and middle school students.

The Mind Trust's second strategy is the Venture Fund, which recruits the nation's most successful education initiatives to serve Indianapolis students. The Mind Trust has provided nearly $3 million to date to bring Teach for America, College Summit, the New Teacher Project and the Alternative High School Initiative (AHSI) to the city. In 2008, 46 Teach for America corps members were working in Indianapolis Public Schools (IPS), and 47 more will be placed in IPS and charter schools for the 2009-10 school year. A pilot project to engage IPS Manual High School seniors in College Summit's intensive college preparation course helped 45 percent of participants attend college, representing a dramatic increase in enrollment. The New Teacher Project (TNTP) facilitates the transition of mid-career professionals into teaching subjects where teacher shortages exist, such as math, science, special education and Spanish. TNTP placed 51 teaching fellows in IPS schools in 2008-09 and 26 additional teachers in charter schools. Local philanthropies and national foundations have contributed more than $8 million to support the Mind Trust's work.

Since 2008, the City of Indianapolis and the Mind Trust have been working with AHSI to develop new schools that provide personalized support to students who struggle in traditional high schools (see "Multiple Pathways to Graduation" below). These new model schools include five Diploma Plus schools, a Big Picture Learning school and YouthBuild. Mayor Ballard recently hosted a resource fair to connect these schools with city agencies, community groups and college readiness organizations that offer wraparound services. For more information, see: www.themindtrust.org

### *Taking a business approach to school improvement.*
Since 2002, St. Petersburg, Fla., Mayor Rick Baker has expanded Mayor's Mentors and More into one of the nation's most robust city-led educational initiatives. As former chairman of the St. Petersburg Area Chamber of Commerce, Mayor Baker has drawn on his relationships with the business community to engage corporate partners and residents in local public schools and provided an array of incentives and accountability methods for improving

*Since 2002, St. Petersburg, Fla., Mayor Rick Baker has expanded Mayor's Mentors and More into one of the nation's most robust city-led educational initiatives.*

student achievement. Although built on several strategies that are now emerging as trends in other cities, Mayor's Mentors and More stands out as an innovation by linking these strategies together under one coordinated, results-oriented model.

Central to Mayor's Mentors and More are the school-business partnerships that support the city's mentoring and school improvement goals. Mayor Baker has recruited 98 corporate partners — at least one for each of the city's 42 public schools — to provide financial and fundraising support, equipment donations, mentors, tutors, internships and assistance with long-range strategic planning. Corporate partners' employees and other residents are engaged as mentors in the schools and in programs such as 5,000 Role Models, which matches young men with successful male mentors from throughout Pinellas County. As it seeks to enlist mentors from the community, the city leads by example with its own administrative policy that provides municipal employees with up to one hour of paid leave plus travel time each week to mentor students in their schools. More than 160 employees serve as mentors and additional city staff tutor students after school at city recreation centers through the St. Pete Reads program. Mayor Baker's "Cabinet Challenge" encourages his cabinet members to increase the number of city employees mentoring in schools through quarterly contests.

Through a second component of Mayor's Mentors and More, more than 3,000 students benefit from the Doorways Scholar program, and Mayor Baker has set an ambitious goal to award 1,000 new Doorways Scholarships to sixth graders by 2010. Students are eligible for one of these pre-paid four-year college scholarships — which cost approximately $11,600 in today's dollars — if they receive free or reduced lunch, attend a St. Petersburg public school, maintain at least a C grade point average in all classes, attend school regularly, complete homework and study for tests, remain crime and drug free and have a mentor. In 2008, 93 percent of Doorways Scholars graduated from high school compared with a 75 percent statewide average. The mayor has raised nearly $10 million from businesses and residents, matched by the Pinellas Education Foundation and the state, to pay for these scholarships.

Finally, in keeping with the overall business-model approach, a variety of city-sponsored incentive programs help foster school improvement. In order to recruit and retain the best teachers, the A+ Housing Initiative offers interest-free loans of up to $20,000 to help teachers buy a home if they commit to living and teaching in St. Petersburg. The city forgives 10 percent of the loan each year the teacher remains in the home and works in a city school. School principals also receive incentives to improve achievement through the Mayor's Top Apple Award, which recognizes and provides bonuses to principals and assistant principals whose schools earn an "A" or improve their overall letter grade on the Florida Comprehensive Achievement Test. The proportion of St. Petersburg schools with an A or B letter grade increased from 26 percent in 2001 to 64 percent in 2008.

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For more information on Mayor's Mentors and More, see: www.stpete.org/mentors/mentoring.asp

*Related innovation:*

> • Denver Mayor John Hickenlooper provided active support for a November 2005 voter-approved tax levy — supported by teachers unions, businesses and the school district — to fund a new compensation system for teachers that increases their pay if they participate in professional development, teach in high-need schools or hard-to-staff subjects or increase student performance.

### *Increasing transparency and accountability by issuing school progress reports.*
In November 2007, New York City launched an experiment in promoting transparency and holding public schools accountable when it became the nation's first municipality to grades schools on their progress in raising student achievement (Florida is the only state that grades schools in this way). These progress reports — which are not necessarily a commentary on the quality of a school but primarily highlight improvement over a given period of time — are made available online and distributed at parent-teacher conferences to inform parents and educators. Parents also receive guides for interpreting progress report results, which are available in eight languages. Schools' "grades" are determined based on scores in three categories:

- School environment (15 percent): Scores are based on learning environment surveys of parents, teachers and students, as well as attendance rates.

- Student performance (25 percent): Schools are assessed based on high school graduation rates and proficiency among elementary and middle school students in reading and math.

- Student progress (60 percent): This category measures year-over-year gains in reading and math proficiency, as well as credit accumulation and state exam pass rates among high school students. Schools that make significant progress in closing achievement gaps earn additional credit.

Schools are evaluated in each of these categories based on a comparison with 40 peer schools that have similar student demographics over a period of three years. Two-thirds of school scores are determined based on a school's "peer horizon," with the remaining one-third based on the "city horizon" for all schools serving the same grade level. These evaluations are complemented by in-depth Quality Reviews, in which experienced educators conduct two to three-day visits to schools, observe classes, speak with students, parents and staff and learn how schools use information to improve student learning.

> *In November 2007, New York City launched an experiment in promoting transparency and holding public schools accountable when it became the nation's first municipality to grades schools on their progress in raising student achievement.*

Schools that receive "A" grades and score well on Quality Reviews receive additional funding if they serve as demonstration sites for other schools. Schools receiving "D" and "F" grades, or scoring a "C" three years in a row, must work with the city's Department of Education (DOE) to develop detailed action plans for improving their performance. If these schools do not meet targets for improvement or receive low Quality Review scores, the city may close or restructure them or change their leadership. Schools that accept students transferring from failing schools receive additional funding. Thus far, progress reports have shown which districts and boroughs have the highest average school scores. The reports also demonstrate positive correlations between both high expectations for students and collaborative teacher-administrator relationships — as measured in the learning environment survey — and a school's overall grade. Although New York is one of just over a dozen cities that directly govern their school districts, the use of data to highlight and promote school improvement is applicable to many cities. For instance, Columbus, Ohio, leaders have used data on achievement gaps to build public will for reform strategies, while St. Petersburg posts a scorecard on its school system's progress on the city website (see the Infrastructure chapter).

Principals and teachers can also use the New York City DOE's Achievement Reporting and Innovation System (ARIS) to analyze both school and student-level data in areas in which they received low scores and compare their progress with similar schools to learn how they can improve. In addition to compiling real-time, aggregate data on school performance updated by nightly feeds from many DOE data systems, ARIS contains individual student profile data on enrollment history, credit accumulation, test scores, English Language Learner and special education status, grades, attendance, diagnostic assessments and family contact information. Principals and teachers can access information on any student enrolled in their school or class, respectively. Both school officials and parents can create customized reports analyzing individual students' progress. This data management system also offers a library of instructional resources and lesson plans contributed by educators across the city, and allows school staff to collaborate through a social networking site. DOE plans to train principals and teachers on how to use ARIS throughout the school year. For more information, see: http://schools.nyc.gov/accountability

*Related innovations:*

- A new Partnership for Los Angeles Schools formed by Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa and the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) has developed a School Report Card that shows parents the progress of each individual LAUSD school. In addition,

> the partnership has created a Web-based program called MyData to provide teachers with real-time data on student performance.

- The Indianapolis mayor's charter schools office produces an in-depth accountability report to measure the success of mayor-sponsored charter schools.

# Emerging Trends

***Expanding college access through scholarship endowments and counseling.***
Municipal leaders are playing new roles in expanding college access for youth in their cities. One of the most exciting leadership trends is the growth of city-sponsored scholarship endowments that seek to guarantee college affordability for all of a city's public school students. These initiatives follow the model set by San Antonio and Kalamazoo, Mich. Since 1989, the San Antonio Education Partnership (SAEP) has provided more than $14 million to more than 3,000 college graduates, 95 percent of whom still live and work in San Antonio. SAEP currently supports 3,300 college students with scholarships of up to $4,000 and provides support services and pre-college preparation to incoming students. Kalamazoo Promise is a scholarship endowment launched in 2005 with funding from anonymous donors that ensures every Kalamazoo Public Schools graduate who meets certain criteria can afford tuition at a public university or community college in Michigan. The scholarship has been cited for boosting public school enrollment, test scores, college enrollment and local property values in Kalamazoo.

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These college access initiatives share several common elements. One distinguishing aspect is their attempt at universality — a guarantee that all students who graduate from local public high schools, or a particular set of schools, will have the means to afford college tuition. A second key element is that these students must meet certain criteria to qualify, such as a minimum grade point average, a minimum number of years of residence in a local school district, consistent attendance, participation in community service, eligibility and application for federal financial aid, half-time or full-time enrollment in a state university or college and/or progress toward degree or certificate completion. The scholarship endowments often begin with city and private investments that leverage a much larger source of private funding from local businesses, philanthropies and individuals. Finally, collaboration among the city, school districts, local universities and colleges, businesses, foundations and community organizations helps make these cities' ambitious goals a reality.

Approximately a dozen cities have initiated scholarship programs. In November 2006, Mayor John Hickenlooper joined private donors in establishing the Denver Scholarship Foundation (DSF). The DSF Scholarship offers need-based aid of up to $5,000 per year that Denver Public Schools students can use at 39 state and private postsecondary institutions. The program also pays for admission and financial aid counselors at each of the district's 21 high schools. Combined with Pell Grants and university financial aid, the DSF Scholarship can eliminate many financial barriers to postsecondary education. DSF has successfully obtained $80 million from the business community in its goal to create a $200 million endowment that can support up to 6,000 students per year. Through a similar initiative in San Francisco, SF Promise Fund investments performed well enough last year to pay for every 10th grader in the city to take the PSATs. Since 2006, the Minneapolis Promise has provided more than 400 students with free tuition and fees for two years or 72 credits, along with career and college counseling and summer jobs.

Small cities such as Burleson, Texas, and West Hollywood, Calif., are also adapting the scholarship endowment model. Through a dedicated .5 percent sales and use tax that funds its Economic Development Board, the City of Burleson provided $25,000 in seed money to establish the Burleson Opportunity Fund, matched by the school

district and supplemented with private sector funds. Thirty students have been able to attend Hill College, which enrolls fund recipients at a reduced college district rate.

Several other cities have focused their attention on developing robust partnerships that provide high school students with college counseling and preparation. In 2007, Springfield, Ill., Mayor Timothy Davlin worked with a local public library to open the College Assistance Program Center that offers one-to-one scholarship advice to low-income and minority students who would be the first in their family to attend college. Students also receive assistance in applying to colleges and choosing a career and a major. Similarly, Atlanta Mayor Shirley Franklin works in partnership with the Atlanta Workforce Development Agency, businesses and Atlanta Public Schools (APS) to sponsor the Mayor's Youth Program. Since 2005, the program has provided more than 2,000 students with mentoring and counseling about post-graduation options, including college, technical school, the military and the workforce. In 2008, more than 600 APS graduates received help with tuition, laptops, supplies and other assistance. Over the past four years, Mayor Franklin has met individually with hundreds of APS seniors on scheduled Saturdays to discuss their post-graduation plans.

*Selected cities that have helped create college scholarship endowments or programs: Burleson, Texas; Denver; El Dorado, Ark.; Hammond, Ind.; Hickory, N.C.; Minneapolis; Peoria, Ill.; Philadelphia; Pittsburgh; San Antonio; San Francisco; West Hollywood, Calif.*

### *Creating community schools and offering school-based wraparound services.*

Using public schools as neighborhood hubs, community schools bring together many partners to offer a range of supports and opportunities to children, youth and families, according to the Coalition for Community Schools. These partnerships provide an integrated focus on student learning and family well-being and bring health and social services, out-of-school time programs and adult education into school buildings. Cities throughout the nation have applied this model to turn local public schools into centers of learning and community that keep their facilities — including computer rooms, gyms and classrooms — open during the non-school hours. Each community school is run differently, but generally, a lead agency and/or school principal appoints a site manager at each school to coordinate networks of services and classes, while neighborhood advisory boards engage a broad range of teachers, school administrators, students, parents and other residents and partners in site planning and communication.

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> *Community schools provide an integrated focus on student learning and family well-being, and bring health and social services, out-of-school time programs and adult education into school buildings.*

The City of Chicago's Community Schools Initiative is the largest in the nation, and was created under the leadership of former Chicago Public Schools (CPS) CEO and current Secretary of Education Arne Duncan. These schools offer afterschool academic programs ranging from literacy development to music to martial arts, and help parents earn a GED or receive counseling, language or job search assistance. Families can gain access to medical and dental care on site. CPS now runs 150 community schools — 25 percent of the city's public schools — that involve more than 400 partners and have raised test scores higher and improved classroom behavior more than their counterparts.

Several other cities have committed to this strategy at a citywide level. Baltimore's Community Schools Initiative comprises 43, or about one-quarter, of the city's schools. The city provides nearly $4 million to community organizations to hire site coordinators who work with coordinating councils at each school on attendance, family engagement and school safety. A steering committee provides guidance to an initiative-wide coordinator. In Portland, Ore., a collaboration of the city, county, state, community organizations and six school districts built on existing partnerships to develop 55 SUN Community Schools (SUN CS) for children of all ages. SUN CS site managers connect schools with libraries and community centers, as well as neighborhood health clinics, churches and businesses. Of the more than 17,000 students participating in SUN CS classes and activities, nearly three-quarters met or exceeded state benchmark scores in reading and math, and average daily attendance was 94 percent. In Lincoln,

Neb., 15 school-based Community Learning Centers — another recognized community school model — offer safe, supervised enrichment opportunities before and after school, on weekends and during the summer, as well as adult education and financial literacy.

Through the Elev8 (formerly Integrated Services in Schools) initiative, Chicago, Baltimore, Oakland and several New Mexico cities are taking steps to ensure that middle school youth are prepared for high school by the eighth grade by linking schools with community resources. To achieve this goal, Elev8 school sites extend the school day and year with high-quality learning and enrichment programs, and offer school-based mentoring programs, on-site health and mental health services and family supports that include adult education and public benefits screening. This model, which was developed and supported by The Atlantic Philanthropies, also puts a strong emphasis on parent engagement and advocacy.

Although citywide community school models are found in only a handful of municipalities, a larger number of cities have adapted many of the elements of this model by partnering with schools to provide children with various wraparound services. The New Haven, Conn., Coordinated School Health Program offers an example of school-based service delivery through the integration of various partners' resources. The program consists of eight components geared toward improving child health and school success: health education; school-based health, nursing, early childhood and mental health services; development of healthy school environments; health promotion for staff; physical education; nutrition services; counseling and social services; and family resource centers. The New Haven Public Schools Foundation mobilizes resources to support these partnerships and engages volunteers in tutoring and mentoring students after school. The City of Berkeley, Calif., offers another notable example in its Schools Mental Health Partnership among the city mental health and public health divisions, Alameda County behavioral health department, Berkeley Unified School District, Berkeley Alliance, local universities, mental health service providers and community organizations.

*Selected cities with community schools, community learning centers, Elev8 schools and comprehensive school-based wraparound services: Akron, Ohio; Baltimore; Berkeley, Calif.; Birmingham, Ala.; Charleston, S.C.; Chicago; Evansville, Ind.; Lincoln, Neb.; Louisville, Ky.; New Haven, Conn.; Oakland, Calif.; Portland, Ore.; Phoenix; Tukwila, Wash.; Tulsa, Okla.*

### *Offering teacher recruitment and retention incentives.*

Like St. Petersburg, Fla., at least a half dozen other cities seeking to attract and retain high-quality teachers are providing them with homebuyer loans, rental assistance and other financial incentives. Several of these cities offer zero or low-interest, deferred-payment loans for teachers' first home purchases. Credentialed teachers who receive assistance must typically complete a homebuyer education course. Eligibility is also restricted to teachers whose household incomes meet specific guidelines.

Since 1999, the San José, Calif., Mayor's Teacher Homebuyer Program, administered by the city's Department of Housing, has offered teachers zero-percent interest, deferred-payment loans of $40,000 or $65,000 depending on their household incomes and monthly housing payments. Loans are payable in 30 years or upon sale or transfer of the property. To qualify, teachers must be employed full-time at a public K-12 school within the city or at a public school where at least half of the students are San José residents. In addition, recipients must have acceptable credit

> *At least a half dozen cities seeking to attract and retain high-quality teachers are providing them with homebuyer loans, rental assistance and other financial incentives.*

histories and household incomes that do not exceed 120 percent of Santa Clara County's median income, adjusted for family size. The program can only be used for the purchase of a first home in San José city boundaries. Properties purchased are subject to a 45-year affordability restriction requiring that either the property be sold to an income-qualified household at an affordable price, or the city and borrower share increases in equity that accrue between the date of purchase and sale. For renters, the city also sponsors the Teach Here, Live Here Rental Assis-

tance Program in partnership with the Silicon Valley Education Foundation, providing grants to first-time teachers in math, science and special education.

Similarly, the Seattle Teacher Homebuyer Program provides up to $45,000 in deferred-payment financing for teachers' first home purchases at a 3 percent interest rate. The city Office of Housing's lending partner offers free credit counseling, waives lender fees and discounts closing costs. San Francisco's Teacher Next Door Loan Program gives up to $20,000 in down payment/closing cost assistance loans to credentialed teachers whose household income is below 200 percent of area median income. Teachers who leave the district within five years must repay the loan in full. After five years, these no-interest loans are forgivable based on the number of years of service in the district.

*Selected cities that offer teacher housing incentives: Baltimore; Chicago; New York City; San Francisco; San José, Calif.; Seattle; St. Petersburg, Fla.*

### *Providing multiple pathways to graduation through alternative high schools.*
At a time when roughly one-third of the nation's students leave high school without a diploma, cities are putting a growing emphasis on dropout prevention and recovery through multiple pathways to graduation, including: alternative high schools; credit recovery programs; flexible diploma and GED programs linked to job training; dual enrollment options; and other programs that offer wraparound services and connect classroom instruction with career and college readiness. While these pathways may also involve reengaging students in traditional high schools, several cities and school districts are working together to expand the number of alternative high schools available to students who struggle in traditional high school settings. Hallmarks of these alternative schools include a rigorous and relevant curriculum, project-based learning, close student-teacher relationships, youth voice and leadership development. Municipal officials are well positioned to connect students in alternative high schools with supportive wraparound services provided by city agencies and community organizations. At the same time, city leaders are also forging connections with postsecondary institutions and businesses to expand college and career options.

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As partners of the Alternative High School Initiative (AHSI) — a national network of 12 youth development organizations committed to creating educational options for youth who have struggled in or dropped out of traditional high schools — the cities of Indianapolis, Nashville, Tenn., and Newark, N.J., are at the forefront of this emerging movement. Each of these cities is bringing to scale a portfolio of national alternative school models to meet the needs of these youth. AHSI program models frequently offer a smaller, more supportive setting (e.g., Diploma Plus) and provide students with personal support and self-paced coursework options (Communities in Schools' Performance Learning Center). Other models provide opportunities to pair high school class work with construction trade skills (YouthBuild), internships (Big Picture schools) or dual enrollment at a local college (Gateway to College).

Similarly, New York City's Office of Multiple Pathways to Graduation provides over-age and under-credited students with various options to help them complete high school. The city's Young Adult Borough Centers allow students with adult responsibilities to take the evening classes they need to graduate, and Transfer Schools offer small, personalized learning environments and connections to college for students who are behind grade level. Students can also participate in a GED program, and each of these three options can be blended with Learning to Work programs, which provide job readiness skills and career exploration. Wraparound services are provided by community organization partners and are integrated across participating schools and programs. The New York City Department of Education's Referral Centers for High School Alternatives, located in every borough, refer students to the District 79 alternative schools and provide information on school options and enrollment procedures.

In Philadelphia, the Mayor's Office of Education and the Department of Human Services have partnered with school district officials and other community stakeholders to expand the availability of multiple pathways to gradu-

ation through Project U-Turn. With support from the Project U-Turn steering committee and larger collaborative, more than 2,000 additional seats have been created in small, "accelerated" high schools for over-age and under-credited youth and young adults (similar to New York's Transfer Schools, discussed above). Project U-Turn also helped the school district create a Reengagement Center, which has served more than 2,100 out-of-school youth seeking to re-enroll, and has referred almost 1,700 of these young people to educational programming. In addition, the collaborative has worked with Johns Hopkins University researchers to show that 80 percent of dropouts can be identified in the eighth or ninth grade based on whether they failed math or English, had poor attendance, earned too few credits or were not promoted to 10th grade. Based on this and other Philadelphia-specific research, as well as national studies of effective practice, Project U-Turn has promoted middle school early warning systems, advocated for Student Success Centers in neighborhood high schools to support graduation and postsecondary access and expanded the original set of three Youth Opportunity Centers (now known as E[3] — Education, Employment and Empowerment) to serve out-of-school and adjudicated youth at five neighborhood locations.

Finally, the Portland, Ore., Connected by 25 effort includes an alternative schools network that helps recover nearly 1,500 students per year. Connected by 25 has supported struggling eighth graders in their transition to high school and worked to tailor options to specific segments of the population, including Native American, Latino and homeless and runaway youth.

*Selected cities that have supported multiple pathways to graduation: Boston; Chicago; Indianapolis; New York City; Nashville, Tenn.; Newark, N.J.; Philadelphia; Portland, Ore.; San José, Calif.*

# Established Trends

### *Promoting parent and community engagement.*
A wide body of research shows that parent and community engagement in children's education has a strong, positive impact on student grades and test scores, attendance and behavior, grade promotion, graduation and postsecondary enrollment. These findings, compiled in a 2002 report by the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, apply to families of all income levels and backgrounds. Furthermore, organized interventions and programs to promote family engagement have proven successful in supporting children's learning and improving low-performing schools.

> *Many cities, such as Charleston, S.C., work with school districts to sponsor annual First Day of School events that foster relationships among parents, students and teachers, and engage businesses and other residents in local schools.*

Recognizing the importance of family connections to public schools, cities are making concerted efforts to involve parents and other residents in efforts to improve education. For instance, many cities work with school districts to sponsor annual First Day of School events that foster relationships among parents, students and teachers, and engage businesses and other residents in local schools. The Charleston, S.C., First Day Festival drew more than 9,000 children and families in 2008. The event encourages parents to attend school with their children on the first day, and provides them with information on health, wellness and student support services from more than 90 community and school-based providers. In addition, students receive free school supplies and backpacks, healthy snacks and free harbor boat rides and tours of local cultural attractions. The festival also features live entertainment and recreational activities. Mayor Joseph P. Riley Jr., who borrowed the festival idea from former Nashville, Tenn., Mayor Bill Purcell, recognizes businesses that give employees leave time to attend the festival, take their children to school on the first day, and participate or volunteer at their child's school throughout the year.

Other municipal leaders are focusing their efforts on engaging the community to address disparities in student achievement. Throughout 2007, Springfield, Ill., Mayor Timothy Davlin hosted an Educational Policy Series on Closing the

Achievement Gap. The city's Office of Education Liaison cosponsored three forums with the University of Illinois at Springfield, engaging a broad range of educators and other stakeholders. In Denver, Mayor John Hickenlooper convened a Summit on Latino Academic Achievement in 2004 that brought together 300 business, civic and educational leaders, many of whom requested and planned the event. These leaders focused on best practices to address the needs of Latino students, who make up nearly 60 percent of Denver Public Schools students yet have the lowest graduation rates. In addition to recommending a more rigorous curriculum and incentives to improve teacher quality, summit participants made several suggestions for engaging parents, from new teacher training courses on parental involvement and cultural competency to expanded bilingual early education options. More than 200 attendees participated in a follow up meeting 100 days after the summit to carry out these recommendations.

Mayors have also successfully engaged parents and community partners in discussions about how to reduce the number of students dropping out of school. Many cities nationwide have hosted dropout prevention summits with support from America's Promise – the Alliance for Youth. For instance, Louisville, Ky., Mayor Jerry Abramson and Jefferson County Public Schools Superintendent Sheldon Berman hosted a Graduate Greater Louisville Dropout Solutions Summit in 2008 that laid the groundwork for a comprehensive action agenda. Committees on multiple pathways, student supports, policy barriers to graduation, life readiness and education beyond high school, data and youth and parent voice will implement this broad agenda.

### *Establishing mayoral control of public school governance.*

In recent years, several prominent, large-city mayors have taken control of school governance in their cities. This trend has began in 1991 when Boston Mayor Thomas M. Menino gained authority from the State of Massachusetts to hold a referendum on mayoral appointment of the seven-member school committee for Boston Public Schools, a change upheld by voters in 1996.

Since then, a number of large cities have followed Boston's lead, beginning with Chicago in 1995, where the mayor is solely responsible for appointing members of the Chicago Board of Education and the school district CEO. In Philadelphia and Baltimore, the mayor and governor jointly appoint school board members. Cleveland's mayor appoints school board members from a slate of 18 nominees recommended by a panel of parents, educators and business leaders; at least four of the nine appointees must have expertise in education, finance or business management. The board hires the school district CEO with approval by the mayor. Washington, D.C., Mayor Adrian Fenty gained control over D.C. Public Schools in 2007 and has since worked with Chancellor Michelle Rhee to reorganize and consolidate the school system.

Mayoral control is not solely a large-city model. The mayors of Harrisburg, Pa., New Haven, Conn., and Trenton, N.J., also appoint their school districts' governing bodies, while the mayor of Hartford selects a school board majority. In Providence, R.I., the mayor appoints the school board with confirmation by the city council — a system in place in Jackson, Miss., for over half of a century.

Mayoral takeovers elicit strong reactions among public officials and the education community. Proponents point to achievement gains — particularly in the lowest performing schools — in Boston, Cleveland, Chicago and New York, as well as more stable and accountable school administration. The percentage of Chicago Public Schools students in third through eighth grades performing above national norms for the Iowa Test of Basic Skills in math doubled between 1995 and 2005, and increased by 17 percentage points for reading. In New York City, the proportion of students proficient in math rose 32 percentage points for fourth graders and 18 percentage points among eight graders between 2000 and 2005 (the mayor has controlled the school system since 2002). In Boston, 10th-grade state test score proficiency levels increased by 18 percentage points in reading and doubled in math between 1998 and 2002. Supporters of mayoral control cite mayors' accountability for system-wide results, flexibility in implementing new reforms, smoother negotiations with teachers and the political clout that mayors have in leveraging resources from other levels of government and the business community to improve school finances, capacity and infrastructure.

Critics of mayoral control see it as a one-size-fits-all approach that may limit parent input and the autonomy of individual schools and neighborhoods with different needs. In 2006, judges in California ruled that an effort to enhance mayoral control of the Los Angeles Unified School District was unconstitutional because it would countermand voter control of the school governance structure. The mayor and school board have since launched a new partnership to replicate best practices in schools across the district. Other skeptics of mayoral control are wary of increasing mayors' political influence on school administration, and express caution about the impact of electoral transitions on school improvement. In addition, cities' experiences with this system vary. For instance, Detroit had mixed results in impacting student achievement and voters chose to return to an elected school board. Despite these concerns and the limited possibilities for adapting this approach in many communities, the push for mayoral control will likely continue as a far-reaching response in cities with the most struggling schools.

### *Developing joint use agreements for city and school facilities.*
By establishing agreements for the joint use of facilities owned by cities and school districts, such as libraries, recreation centers, classrooms, computer labs, theaters and auditoriums, municipal and school officials can maximize local tax dollars and public property to support educational goals. Benefits include more efficient use of existing resources, less duplication and the opening of public space to broader community purposes. Because municipal zoning and land use decisions impact the location of new schools and recreation facilities, city officials can take advantage of these opportunities to explore possibilities for joint use.

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Several provisions are common to these intergovernmental agreements, the most basic of which is a decision about how and when the city and school district will use the facility. For instance, cities are often allowed to use school properties when they are not designated for school-related activities (e.g., afterschool programs, summer school), and schools can schedule activities at city parks and recreation centers when they are not being used by the city. Local officials can also outline the degree of flexibility with which use policies can be modified and who will coordinate usage. In Tualatin, Ore., where voters in 2004 passed a bond for the development of a multi-use sports field and cross-country running trail, the city community services director and school district athletic coordinator manage usage on a day-to-day basis. Other provisions focus on supervision, security, maintenance and repairs, rental fee revenue and insurance. The agreement also stipulates joint responsibilities for investment, distribution of operational costs and terms of ownership.

Joint use agreements take different forms depending on communities' local needs and priorities. The City of Ralston, Neb., utilized a joint use agreement when voters approved a $25.7 million bond package to renovate the local high school, but the total did not include enough funding for the interior fitting of the high school's future theater. The city stepped in by providing $60,000 a year for five years from local lottery funds. In addition to the high school's theatrical productions, the city's 6,300 residents use the theater for performances by the Ralston Community Theater group, music recitals, meetings and seminars. In Alameda and El Segundo, Calif., city and school leaders have implemented joint use agreements for the administration of city or school libraries, thereby improving resources, streamlining operations and eliminating duplicate materials.

Joint use agreements are not limited to pacts between cities and school districts, but can also apply to contracts with counties, community organizations, or other stakeholders. For instance, in Lincoln, Calif., the city and school district joined the local community college in applying for funding to create a shared library. In addition, city and school leaders jointly funded a new administrative office for both municipal employees and school district administrators.

The development of joint use agreements for athletic fields, parks, gyms, pools and the accompanying maintenance vehicles and equipment is also a widespread trend in communities throughout the country, as described in the Community Wellness chapter.

### *Convening city and school leadership.*

One important first step that municipal leaders can take to support public schools is to meet regularly with school district leaders. Many cities, such as Minneapolis, have formalized these regular meetings between mayors, superintendents, city managers and city council and school board members. By building ongoing relationships, city and school district officials can address issues of joint concern and identify opportunities to work together on behalf of children and youth. For example, Claremont, Calif., leaders instituted a regular "six-pack" meeting schedule in which the mayor, mayor pro tem, school board president and vice president, city manager and school superintendent discuss the city's youth master plan. In San José, Calif., Mayor Chuck Reed and Vice Mayor Judy Chirco hold quarterly meetings with superintendents from the 19 school districts serving San José students through a city-school collaborative. The collaborative includes three subcommittees working on school safety, teacher recruitment and joint use issues. In Louisville, Ky., the mayor and superintendent attend each other's cabinet meetings.

> *One important first step that municipal leaders can take to support public schools is to meet regularly with school district leaders.*

Other cities convene more expansive groups of leaders focused on education. Evansville, Ind., Mayor Jonathan Weinzapfel established the Evansville Education Roundtable in 2004 with representation from government, education, local businesses and the community. The roundtable has helped establish the Southern Indiana College Access Network, an early childhood development coalition and a youth mentoring program. Following a citywide education summit, former San Antonio Mayor Phil Hardberger established the P-16 Plus Council of Greater Bexar County in January 2008. The council seeks to align the work of early childhood providers, school districts, community colleges, universities and career training programs to create a unified educational system and identify ways to improve student achievement. Since 1983, the Portland, Ore., Leaders Roundtable has brought together local elected officials and education and business leaders to eliminate barriers to student success.

# FOUR NEW IDEAS TO CONSIDER

## Education

**Work to boost college completion rates.** Only about one-half of students enrolling in postsecondary institutions, and fewer than 40 percent who enter community colleges, make it to the "finish line" and earn a two- or four-year degree within six years. City leaders can play a key role in highlighting this challenge and forging lasting partnerships among schools, community colleges and other postsecondary institutions, job training programs, business leaders and nonprofit groups to increase the number of young adults attaining postsecondary credentials. Through community-wide collaborations, cities can also address barriers to college completion such as lack of earnings or child care, support efforts by alternative high schools and colleges to offer dual enrollment and develop data systems that track student outcomes (e.g., see Hartford, Conn., in the Infrastructure chapter).

**Combat health and housing problems that interrupt students' schooling.** Chronic absenteeism and frequent or abrupt shifts from one school to another can quickly derail students' progress and undermine academic achievement. By targeting one or more of the problems that lead to disruptions in schooling, city and school leaders have an opportunity to improve educational outcomes while also advancing the health and well being of children and their families. For example, municipal officials can work in concert with school personnel to identify children suffering from severe asthma and then use housing inspections and code enforcement measures to ensure that landlords eliminate building conditions that exacerbate asthma problems. Similarly, city and school officials can collaborate to minimize school disruptions when families lose their housing through evictions or foreclosures, arranging emergency shelter and adopting policies that enable students to remain in their school during a period of transition.

**Create a "0-8 strategy" for school readiness and early literacy.** Research suggests that students who are not reading on grade level by third grade face a high risk in later years of failing to graduate from high school. Knowing that school readiness and early literacy are keys to future academic success, mayors and other city leaders can collaborate with their school counterparts to craft a strategy that supports early learning for children from birth through age eight. Important gains can be made by aligning curricula and assessments used by preschool or other early care and education providers with those adopted by local elementary schools. Other areas ripe for city-school partnerships include improved parent involvement and communication efforts to smooth the transition to kindergarten as well as expanded outreach to and support for parents with infants and toddlers.

**Pursue school integration based on socioeconomic status.** One year after the Supreme Court declared unconstitutional efforts in Jefferson County (Louisville), Ky., and Seattle, Wash., to make public schools more integrated by using race as a factor in school assignments, the Jefferson County school board crafted a new school integration plan that assigns students to schools based in part on parents' income and education levels, while still taking neighborhood demographics into account. According to Richard Kahlenberg at The Century Foundation, similar plans exist or are being considered in more than 45 school districts across the country. For instance, Wake County, N.C., ensures that no schools have more than 40 percent of students receiving free or reduced price lunch. City leaders, whether or not they have a role in the governance of public schools, can help local residents understand the benefits of integrated schools and provide vocal support for the efforts of school leaders to bring together students of diverse backgrounds.

# Afterschool

## Key Goals:

- Keep young people safe during the hours when they are most likely to engage in risky and dangerous behaviors and be in harm's way.
- Link out-of-school and in-school learning to improve student achievement.
- Give young people opportunities to develop their talents, skills, interests and character.
- Support working parents who are not available to supervise their children in the before- or after-school hours or during school vacations.

## Innovations:

- Organizing an array of quality programs at neighborhood campuses.
- Realigning transportation to coordinate neighborhood learning opportunities.
- Unifying afterschool providers behind a citywide literacy initiative.
- Providing hands-on job experience for teens during out-of-school time.

## Emerging Trends:

- Expanding out-of-school time opportunities for older youth.
- Tracking afterschool program participation and its impact on student outcomes.
- Building citywide systems of high-quality, out-of-school time programs.

## Established Trends:

- Advancing statewide afterschool network initiatives on funding and policy.
- Developing afterschool program quality standards.
- Using GIS technology to map needs and create online program locators.
- Enhancing parks and recreation programming.

## Innovations

***Organizing an array of quality programs at neighborhood campuses.***
Providence, R.I., is a national leader in afterschool programming with its development of three neighborhood "AfterZones." These "neighborhood campuses" encompass a specific geographic area rather than an individual building, and link providers to offer an array of high-quality programs for middle school youth. At each AfterZone, between 300 and 500 neighborhood youth receive color-coded enrollment forms to choose from a multitude of fun and engaging learning opportunities, including: sports and recreation programs; arts, music, dance, filmmaking and theater; academic programs in math, literacy and science that engage high school and college tutors; creative clubs; field trips; youth leadership opportunities; and college and career exploration.

> *Providence, R.I., is a national leader in afterschool programming with its development of three neighborhood "AfterZones."*

The genesis of the AfterZone model was Mayor David Cicilline's formation of the Providence After School Alliance (PASA) in 2004, through which the mayor brought together more than 100 public and nonprofit partners to develop a citywide system of high-quality programs. PASA is an independent, nonprofit intermediary that strengthens the capacity of afterschool providers to expand access and improve program quality. The mayor chairs the PASA

board of directors, which includes the chief of police and school superintendent and representatives of city and state agencies, youth programs, postsecondary institutions, families and youth. In 2006, with support from national and corporate funders, PASA launched the AfterZone initiative with $400,000 going to each neighborhood campus over a three-year period. AfterZone neighborhoods were selected based on their concentrations of youth, families and facilities (e.g., gyms, classrooms, libraries, community centers).

To establish an AfterZone, a PASA manager/facilitator assists networks of neighborhood providers with the development of a governance structure. At the heart of this structure is a core coordinating group composed of lead administrators from neighborhood middle schools, libraries, recreation and community centers, community-based programs and licensed child care providers, as well as parents and youth leaders. One of the lead partners is responsible for placing an AfterZone coordinator in each of Providence's eight middle schools; the coordinator is hired and supervised by PASA in consultation with the coordinating group. This group also oversees the AfterZone budget and is expected to collaborate with other local program providers, arts and cultural program specialists, community stakeholders and other existing leadership structures managing neighborhood youth services. By bringing all key stakeholders to the table, these networks are able to strengthen existing programs and develop new ones. AfterZones enable partners to improve quality, variety and participation in several ways:

- Coordinating a common schedule of programs for at least four days per week and offering parents a comprehensive, bilingual course bulletin and program guide;

- Opening public and private facilities through joint funding and staffing decisions;

- Using the youthservices.net Web-based tracking tool developed by CitySpan technologies and offered by PASA to track registration, attendance and retention;

- Working with the city to create a transportation system linking youth to programs at multiple locations;

- Providing youth participants with healthy snacks; and

- Participating in ongoing evaluation and self-assessment.

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PASA increases AfterZones' capacity by offering comprehensive professional development opportunities to program staff, including an eight-week training course in youth development principles and periodic workshops. PASA also offers competitive grants ranging from $2,000 to $5,000 to help afterschool providers pilot innovative practices and trains youth workers in a common set of program quality standards using the Rhode Island Program Quality Assessment Tool. This tool, developed by PASA with the High Scope Center for Youth Program Quality, is now being used by all providers receiving 21st Century Community Learning Center funding throughout the state. In addition, each AfterZone receives logistical support from PASA for communications, transportation, public relations, administrative costs, facilities development, technology and stipends for parent outreach and recruitment.

As the city develops a sustainable, full-day learning strategy for young people that builds on neighborhood assets and makes the most of limited resources, Mayor Cicilline has continued to leverage city and donor funding to support the AfterZones. In the coming years, the city hopes to serve more middle school youth and expand the AfterZone model for younger children and older youth. For more information, see: www.mypasa.org.

*Related innovations:*
- Nashville, Tenn., has begun to implement the AfterZone model.

### *Realigning transportation to coordinate neighborhood learning opportunities.*
The St. Paul, Minn., Circulator bus system connects young people in three neighborhoods with high-quality out-of-school time programs at libraries, parks, recreation centers, schools and community organizations such as the YMCA and Boys and Girls Club. These free shuttle buses make extended learning opportunities accessible to children and youth ages 7 to 18 after school and on days when school is not in session. However, the Circulator is more than a way to provide safe and reliable transportation to local programs. It also serves as the focal point for coordination among community-based networks of afterschool program providers and residents.

The origins of the Circulator date back to a community organizing effort in 2003 initiated by the Neighborhood Learning Community on St. Paul's West Side, where residents, city parks and recreation staff and more than 17 neighborhood groups and service providers came together to discuss transportation barriers to youth participation in out-of-school time programs. With funding from a state-based foundation, this group began running shuttle buses to a set of neighborhood programs and providing parents with bus route maps and coordinated bus and program schedules. The Circulator buses led to a shift in focus from program or organization-specific transportation to a more holistic, community-wide approach. In addition, new initiatives, such as a collaborative summer camp program in St. Paul's West Side, have sprung from the development of the Circulator.

> *St. Paul's Circulator is more than a way to provide safe and reliable transportation to local programs. It also serves as the focal point for coordination among community-based networks of afterschool program providers and residents.*

Realizing the potential of the Circulator system to improve student learning, promote civic engagement and give young people a safe place to go during non-school hours, Mayor Christopher Coleman sought to expand this transportation option to other neighborhoods in 2007. The East Side Circulator began running that summer in the Dayton's Bluff and Payne-Phalen neighborhoods, providing children and youth with 3,600 rides, a number that grew to 4,200 the following year. In October 2008, Mayor Coleman announced the launch of school year-round services for the East Side Circulator. The coordinator of the mayor's broader Second Shift out-of-school learning initiative secured state and private funding for the operation of the new buses and led monthly neighborhood planning meetings at a local library. Although many partners provide in-kind support, the primary funding source for the East Side Circulator is a Minnesota Department of Education grant that funds other East Side Learning Collaborative afterschool and summer programming.

Due to different neighborhood characteristics (e.g., geographic area covered, number of school-age children) and their operation by separate neighborhood groups, there are several differences and similarities in the design of the eastern and western Circulator systems. While the Neighborhood Learning Community and the University of Minnesota's Center for Democracy and Citizenship have been instrumental in operating the West Side Circulator, city parks and recreation staff and the East Side Learning Collaborative coordinate the East Side system. In both cases, there are restrictions on how old a child must be to ride unaccompanied by a parent, guardian, or older sibling; in addition, parents on the East Side must register their children in advance, sign a consent form and provide emergency contact information. Youth Job Corps workers ages 18 to 21 are assigned to each East Side bus to ensure child safety and help young people connect to the learning sites along the route. Both systems use the same logo on local bus stop signs, but there are scheduling differences between the two Circulators. As a city task force considers expanding the Circulator to additional neighborhoods, an East Side/West Side Advisory Group developed Circulator guidelines in November 2008.

During preliminary evaluation interviews conducted by the University of Minnesota, 100 percent of interviewed youth program providers in neighborhoods without the Circulator noted that transportation was a barrier to afterschool participation, while not a single provider in neighborhoods with the Circulator mentioned transportation as an obstacle. Survey results also show that 76 percent of youth-serving organizations in Circulator neighborhoods stated that youth get to their programs via the Circulator buses. For more information, see: www.stpaul.gov/index.aspx?NID=340.

*Related innovation:*
- In St. Paul's twin city, the Minneapolis Youth Coordinating Board began running its "Youth Are Here" buses, which provided 5,000 rides in the summer of 2007.

### Unifying afterschool providers behind a citywide literacy initiative.
Stemming from a report by the Greater Louisville, Inc., (GLI) Education Task Force in 2003, Louisville , Ky., Met-

ro Government and Jefferson County Public Schools (JCPS) joined GLI to launch the Every 1 Reads partnership. Every 1 Reads maximizes the afterschool hours to pursue a community-wide goal of having every JCPS student read at or above grade level — based on the Commonwealth Accountability Testing System (CATS) — within four years. Mayor Jerry E. Abramson has been instrumental in promoting the afterschool component of this initiative, and in encouraging local afterschool providers to join Every 1 Reads. Since 2003, the partnership has made major strides, helping to cut the overall proportion of novice readers in half — from 18.6 percent to 9.4 percent — a difference of nearly 10,000 students. The proportion of students writing below grade level fell by nearly two-thirds, from 25.8 percent in 2003 to 9.35 percent in 2008.

> *Since 2003, Louisville's Every 1 Reads partnership has made major strides, helping to cut the overall proportion of novice readers in half — from 18.6 percent to 9.4 percent — a difference of nearly 10,000 students.*

Every 1 Reads relies on both out-of-school and in-school strategies, including a new, consistent curriculum, professional development, interventions with struggling readers and more regular diagnostic assessment. In 2008, Every 1 Reads engaged more than 10,000 volunteers in tutoring JCPS students who are reading below grade level. Volunteers must participate in an orientation session to learn JCPS protocol for tutoring students and submit information for a background check. Further tips and resources are available to volunteers from the National Center for Family Literacy and the Louisville public library.

An important element of Every 1 Reads is the city's effort to unite afterschool providers behind a single focus on literacy. Out-of-school time programs are utilized as a key point of intervention with struggling readers. Program providers at 53 endorsed Every 1 Reads sites receive training and networking opportunities and a "starter kit" with age-appropriate literacy materials. To find an Every 1 Reads youth literacy afterschool program, parents can visit a Louisville Metro Office of Youth Development Web site mapping programs by neighborhood and age group. This office also chairs a community engagement committee with Metro United Way, JCPS and the Urban League, and provides funding to more than 60 nonprofit afterschool programs engaged in the partnership.

Endorsed afterschool program providers are connected with TraxSolutions (formerly called KidTrax), one of the most innovative components of Every 1 Reads. Since 2001, the city has assisted providers with use of this data management system to track the impact of participation in afterschool programs on academic achievement. Students participating in afterschool programs scan their bar-coded TraxSolutions Cards, which also serve as library cards and bus passes. Nonprofits must use TraxSolutions to receive city funding for afterschool programming, and the city has provided money to help these organization use the tracking system. In addition to monitoring participation, TraxSolutions software (developed by nFocus) integrates JCPS data on test scores, truancy rates and suspensions. This system not only allows partners to assess the effect of programs on student achievement; it also helps educators and youth service providers work together to intervene with youth who are struggling in school. Data show that the proportion of students who participate in Every 1 Reads site programs and read at or above grade level improved from 78 percent in 2005 to 87 percent in 2008. In addition, JCPS found that students participating in community-based programs twice or more per week had better academic performance than students with little or no participation.

Municipal officials have supported the partnership in other ways as well. City leaders helped raise more than $8 million in corporate and private funding. Mayor Abramson also sponsors an awards program to recognize schools that make significant progress in reducing the number of novice readers or that have less than two percent of students reading below grade level on the Commonwealth Accountability Testing System. More than 20 schools received the Mayor's Top Reading School Awards of Excellence in 2009. Individual volunteers, teachers, businesses and organizations can receive additional recognition on the Every 1 Reads Web site. For more information, see: www.every1reads.com.

### *Providing hands-on job experience for teens during out-of-school time.*

Chicago's "apprenticeship training" model is at the cutting edge of a new focus on out-of-school time programs for teens and older youth. These programs give Chicago youth hands-on work experience in a variety of fields. Although they are not sponsored by unions and do not lead directly to jobs, they share many characteristics with traditional apprenticeships and have a proven track record of developing marketable skills and job readiness for thousands of young people. Central to Chicago's efforts is a nonprofit organization established and chaired by Maggie Daley — wife of Mayor Richard Daley — called After School Matters (ASM), which this past year provided youth ages 14 to 21 with more than 600 programs that develop authentic workplace skills and help them explore careers. The city's parks, libraries, family and support services and cultural affairs departments join more than 100 community organizations and 63 schools in partnering with ASM to create 30,000 program slots for youth throughout the city. Either directly or in partnership with other agencies and community groups, ASM runs programs primarily at local parks, libraries and schools, with support from a blend of city and private funding.

> *With more than 600 programs that help young people develop authentic job skills and explore careers, Chicago's "apprenticeship training" model gives youth hands-on work experience in a variety of fields.*

ASM programs build on the city's gallery37, an open-air art studio set on an undeveloped city lot in 1991 to offer afterschool and summer arts programs for teens. Through ASM, youth advance up a "ladder of opportunity" beginning with pre-apprenticeships that introduce teens to the workplace and teach teamwork, communications and critical thinking skills. Teens who complete these programs can then apply for apprenticeships and advanced apprenticeships, which are interactive afterschool programs that develop and refine specific skills through hands-on projects in a given professional field. Youth ages 16 to 21 who reach the top of the ladder apply these skills at internships with businesses, government agencies and nonprofits. For instance, gallery37 apprentices work on commission-based graphic design projects for clients while learning how to use digital design technology tools. Interns for gallery37 work in art galleries, assist professional artists or work on arts administration at various organizations. Their high-quality art products are displayed and sold at the Gallery 37 retail store at Chicago's downtown Gallery 37 Center for the Arts.

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ASM has expanded this model to several additional program areas:

- **tech37**: Apprentices learn website design, digital video production, robotics and how to repair and refurbish computers. Interns for the Algebra Project, a math literacy initiative developed with DePaul University, train apprentices to facilitate math workshops for younger teens and document the program through videos.

- **science37**: Apprentices take part in hands-on life science labs, learning about the development of pharmaceutical drugs and visiting Abbott Molecular laboratories, where professional scientists discuss DNA science and global health issues.

- **sports37**: Teens learn how to coach and referee for youth sports leagues, and apprentices can gain experience managing a Little League baseball stadium. The city Department of Transportation trains interns in bike repair and maintenance.

- **words37**: Apprentices take part in theater, creative writing and communications programs, and produce newspapers through the True Star Journalism program. Interns gain hands-on journalism experience at local newspapers, where they learn skills ranging from layout and design to advertising and photojournalism.

- **club37**: As the only ASM program model that does not follow the apprenticeship approach, teens attend structured, supervised, drop-in activities such as sports and dance.

For each of these programs, ASM recruits skilled professionals from Chicago to teach and train students in their career fields, and in each case, participants have opportunities to apply and showcase their abilities. In addition, ASM programs (excluding club37) simulate the job market by requiring teens to apply and interview for apprenticeships and offering a stipend to students in return for mandatory attendance. Teens can apply at partnering community organizations and can learn more at a biannual ASM Recruitment Expo. With donor support, the Chicago Out-of-School Time project has supported the expansion of the ASM program model, and through this initiative After School Matters will develop a replication guide to share the model with other program providers. For more information, see: www.afterschoolmatters.org

*Related innovations:*
  • Baltimore has adapted the apprenticeship model with After School Matters II.
  • Denver's Arts Streets program recruits local artists to provide youth apprenticeships.

# Emerging Trends

### *Expanding out-of-school time opportunities for older youth.*
According to a 2004 report by the National Institute on Out-of-School Time (NIOST), cities generally direct their afterschool efforts toward younger children for a variety of reasons: an emphasis on early intervention; a focus on the child care needs of parents of elementary school children; and a belief that high school already offers numerous extracurricular activities — even if the reality is that these opportunities have been reduced due to budget cuts. In addition, the Afterschool Alliance has estimated that 6.5 million children in the U.S. participate in afterschool programs, but only 8 percent of them are in high school. Teens with no place to go after school are more likely to use alcohol, tobacco and drugs, skip or drop out of school and engage in criminal behavior or sexual activity. More than 2 million high school students say they would participate in programs if they were available.

To respond to this demand, a growing number of cities are organizing more out-of-school time activities for middle and high school-age youth. As in Chicago, many of these programs prepare youth for life after high school, helping them explore college and career opportunities or enhance their skills and talents. The NIOST report finds that most afterschool programs for high school students involve youth mentoring, academic support, community service and career development or internship opportunities. For instance, Beacon Centers in New York City, Philadelphia and San Francisco keep public schools open beyond school hours to provide educational, career development and enrichment activities for youth of all ages as well as GED, English as a Second Language and parenting classes for adults. At these centers, youth receive tutoring and college preparation; they can also choose from a variety of arts and sports programs. Parents can obtain information on child care or health insurance.

> *A growing number of cities are organizing more out-of-school time activities for middle and high school-age youth.*

One of the primary distinguishing aspects of afterschool programs for older youth is that these youth often have more choices about how they spend their time out of school, as well as competing responsibilities such as part-time jobs. To ensure youth participation, cities seek to engage young people in designing relevant programs aligned with their interests. In Hillsboro, Ore., The Zone is a city-county-school collaboration that serves more than 800 older youth. Students plan programs and provide input and leadership to determine the wide variety of choices available. With funding from the city, foundations and the Washington County Commission on Children, The Zone engaged students in developing a marketing plan to promote participation, which included a mascot appearing at school assemblies.

Addressing barriers to and incentives for participation is another key concern. In Omaha, Neb., former Mayor Mike Fahey and the Greater Omaha Afterschool Alliance, in collaboration with the school district and the Sher-

wood Foundation, brought a Middle School Learning Center Initiative to scale in most local middle schools with support from state and federal grants. Each site offers incentives such as iPods, savings accounts, gift cards or field trips for program attendance and improved grades. Cities such as Salem, Ore., and Palm Desert, Calif., keep programs affordable by charging low user fees and accessible by sponsoring programs at local schools. Salem also highlights the importance of building relationships between teens and skilled, trusted adults — a variety of programs connect youth with police officers, firefighters and state Department of Fish and Wildlife staff. The cities mentioned above report that their afterschool programs have had positive impacts in a number of areas, such as improving public safety and student academic achievement and reducing truancy, dropout rates, childhood obesity and substance abuse.

*Selected cities providing out-of-school time programs for older youth: Boston; Chicago; Denver; Fort Worth, Texas; Hampton, Va.; Hillsboro, Ore.; New York City; Niles, Ill.; Omaha, Neb.; Palm Desert, Calif.; Philadelphia; Salem, Ore.; San Francisco.*

### Tracking program participation and its impact on student outcomes.

Like Providence and Louisville, a growing number of cities are taking advantage of new technology to track the impact of afterschool program participation on student success. Students swipe membership cards at program locations, allowing cities to monitor attendance at multiple school and community-based sites through a central data tracking system. Cities that collaborate with their school districts can go one step further by integrating these data with information on student performance and behavior. For example, the City of Detroit's Youth Connection works with more than 100 afterschool providers to gather data on 18,000 participants through EZreports software for the Youth Connection Data and Information System, which is funded by a U.S. Department of Education grant. Michigan State University researchers then correlate the data on number of hours in attendance and type of program activity with information on grades, attendance and conduct from Detroit Public Schools. Their analysis has shown that students with higher participation in afterschool programs demonstrated higher test scores and grades and better attendance and behavior.

> *Cities are taking advantage of new technology to track the impact of afterschool program participation on student success.*

Similarly, residents of Washington, D.C., began using the city's new DC One Card (dconecard.dc.gov) at public libraries, recreation centers and summer employment programs in 2008. D.C. Public School students in grades six through 12 will also begin to use the DC One Card as their school identification in the winter of 2009. In addition, the card doubles as a subway and bus fare card for youth, and will eventually be used by city employees for access to city buildings. While the One Card system does not track the activities of individuals, it provides useful feedback on participation in city programs. In Boston, the Triumph Collaborative's management information system tracks services used by youth at parks, libraries, transportation, schools and afterschool programs, as well as other qualitative information for each student. Since 2004, the Jacksonville, Fla., Children's Commission has used a system to track participation in afterschool programs, mentoring, early learning and child care, parenting and family programs.

*Selected cities that use management information systems to track program participation and impact: Boston; Chicago; Detroit; Grand Rapids, Mich.; Jacksonville, Fla.; Louisville, Ky.; New York City; Providence, R.I.; San Francisco; Washington, D.C.*

### Building citywide systems of high-quality, out-of-school time programs.

In many communities, the decentralized growth of out-of-school time programs has resulted in a fragmented set of opportunities scattered across schools, parks, recreation centers, libraries, museums and community organizations. Without a coordinated approach, these programs fail to reach a large number of disadvantaged youth while duplicating services in other neighborhoods. In recent years, municipal efforts to reduce this fragmentation have facilitated the development of citywide afterschool systems that promote access, build supply, improve quality and ensure sustainability over time.

Municipal leaders play key roles in the success of these initiatives; they can build public will for expanding and improving programs, convene stakeholders and keep partnerships vibrant, ensure that planning and policy development is based on reliable information about current services and needs and designate or recruit a local entity to coordinate citywide efforts.

> *In recent years, municipal efforts have reduced the fragmentation among out-of-school time programs, facilitating the development of citywide afterschool systems that promote access, build supply, improve quality and ensure sustainability over time.*

In Pasadena, Calif., the city provided a one-time donation to support financially struggling school-based programs in 2001, which prompted Mayor Bill Bogaard to explore ways to sustain these programs over time. Two years later, the mayor worked with other members of the city's Partnership of Children, Youth and Families to champion the development of a citywide system that now involves 60 service providers. The city conducted an assessment to gauge program needs and launched a major public outreach campaign to inform residents about the benefits of afterschool programs. City officials conduct regular surveys to ensure they are meeting parents' and students' needs, and provider staff receive quality training around a set of program standards. Major sources of funding derive from a private foundation and the State of California.

Baltimore's After School Strategy illustrates the role of intermediary organizations in building out-of-school time systems, and uniquely relies on three of these organizations rather than one. The After School Institute provides training and technical assistance in meeting quality standards. The Family League of Baltimore City manages contracts and evaluates program quality. Baltimore's Safe and Sound Campaign advances policy and funding strategies, organizes system partners and strengthens providers' capacity. In 2004, these organizations, which are all funded by the City of Baltimore, developed a cohesive out-of-school time program model that provides academic, enrichment and athletic programming at school sites for more than 9,000 of the city's 85,000 public school students. Under Mayor Sheila Dixon's leadership, the city now provides the largest source of funding for afterschool.

Finally, New York City's Out-of-School Time program serves more than 85,000 young people ages 5 to 21 each year. The city's Department of Youth and Community Development coordinates the resources of approximately 200 community organizations, hundreds of schools and 10 city agencies to offer 608 free programs across the city, with a heavy concentration in high-need neighborhoods. Programs must meet state school-age child care regulations and have low staff-to-student ratios. The After-School Corporation and the Partnership for After-School Education serve as intermediaries to promote quality and build program staff capacity. Since Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg launched the program in 2005, the OST Initiative budget has grown to more than $116 million in 2009, with the vast majority of funding from the city's general fund supplemented by additional private funding.

*Selected cities developing citywide afterschool systems: Baltimore; Boise, Idaho; Boston; Chicago; Denver; Grand Rapids, Mich.; Florence, S.C.; Fort Worth, Texas; New York City; Pasadena, Calif.; Providence, R.I.; San Francisco; St. Paul, Minn.; Washington, D.C.*

# Established Trends

### *Advancing statewide afterschool network initiatives on funding and policy.*
In several states, municipal leadership is the driving force behind statewide afterschool networks that shape state policy and funding for out-of-school time programs. These 38 networks engage municipal and school district officials, program providers, advocacy groups, state departments of education, governors' offices and other key leaders to improve state policies and local practices. City officials can partner with their networks to increase state support, enhance program quality, build public will and strengthen local partnerships. The cities of Indianapolis, Salt Lake City and Grand Rapids, Mich., each spearheaded the creation of their states' afterschool networks. In Salem, Ore., and Denver, senior municipal staff serve on steering committees or the boards of their networks.

Since 2002, the networks have successfully lobbied for new afterschool funding streams. As a key champion of the city's Lighthouse Program, former Bridgeport, Conn., Mayor John Fabrizi joined forces with the Connecticut Afterschool Network in 2006 to persuade state lawmakers to create a $4.5 million budget line item for afterschool programs. The City of Bridgeport was able to access $500,000 of these funds. Current Mayor Bill Finch continues to support the Lighthouse partnership, which now operates at 29 school sites and employs more than 200 teens through its training and employment programs. St. Paul, Minn., Mayor Christopher Coleman joined Youth Community Connections — Minnesota's statewide network — to support passage of legislation in 2007 increasing state funding for afterschool community learning programs by $5.3 million, of which $1 million went to the City of St. Paul and its community partners. Local leaders from Grand Rapids and Detroit worked with the Michigan After-School Partnership to amend the state's Child Care Licensing Act so that afterschool programs serving older youth were not held to the same regulations for staff-child ratios and facility requirements as programs for young children. This policy change produced significant cost savings and increased the number of programs eligible for state funding.

> *City officials can partner with their statewide afterschool networks to increase state support, enhance program quality, build public will and strengthen local partnerships.*

However, statewide afterschool networks are more than a vehicle for advocating for funding and voicing local needs to state policymakers. The networks also help cities share best practices and enhance program quality. In 2008, New York's network helped the City of Rochester conduct a "funding scan" to analyze new public and private financing options that could potentially support afterschool programs. The City of New Brunswick has benefited from technical assistance from the New Jersey School-Age Care Consortium in developing programs on obesity prevention, financial literacy and environmental awareness. Finally, cities such as Providence, R.I., and Tampa, Fla., have worked with their networks to develop uniform statewide quality standards and assessment tools to help providers evaluate their programs.

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### Developing afterschool program quality standards.

Afterschool program quality spans a spectrum ranging from programs that amount to mere babysitting to high-quality activities that promote healthy youth development, enhance students' academic abilities and attitudes and cultivate their interests and social skills. Program quality is consistently linked with positive child and youth outcomes. For instance, attendance in Fort Worth After School (FWAS) programs are correlated with better school attendance and math and science test scores. Students with high attendance in these activities also reported better grades and more self-confidence.

> *Because there is no common definition of quality, many cities have developed or adapted sets of standards by which to evaluate their local programs.*

However, because there is no common definition of quality, many cities have developed or adapted sets of standards by which to evaluate their local programs. In conjunction with an independent formal evaluation, FWAS compiles standards into a "report card" to assess its 84 school-based programs. St. Louis uses standards created by the National Association of Elementary School Principals, which are divided into minimum basic standards and indicators that demonstrate high quality. In Grand Rapids, the team of 185 afterschool providers and community partners that comprise the Expanded Learning Opportunities (ELO) Network used the National Afterschool Association's Standards for Quality School Age Care as the basis for local standards that measure the following indicators:

- Program and activities (e.g., a planned daily schedule, staff work with youth to plan and evaluate activities, activities have educational, social-emotional, physical and life skills outcomes);

- Administration and staffing (e.g., staff per child ratios, family involvement policies, staff qualifications and training and professional development);

- Human relationships (e.g., interactions that encourage learning and critical thinking, positive reinforcement and encouragement of responsible choices);

- Indoor and outdoor environment (e.g., adequacy of program space); and

- Safety, health and nutrition (e.g., criminal background checks for staff and volunteers, safe program space, appropriate supervision, availability of drinking water and healthy snacks and emergency medical procedures in place).

School-based providers in Grand Rapids must meet additional standards set by the state, and the ELO Network developed a modified version of their standards for single purpose programs. In addition, the network developed a self-assessment tool that offers program staff a checklist to determine how well they are meeting each standard and develop a plan to improve program quality.

Efforts to develop quality standards require active collaboration with the stakeholders providing afterschool programs, as well as input from youth, parents and funders. For instance, YouthNet of Greater Kansas City, Mo., and local agency partners involved youth directly in its standards development process and surveyed teens in local schools. YouthNet conducts customized trainings to help agencies address needs in meeting the standards. Professional development, technical assistance, peer networking and links between funding and program standards can also drive improvements in local program quality.

### *Using GIS technology to map needs and create online program locators.*

More than a dozen cities have used geographic information systems (GIS) technology to map the location of afterschool programs, providing city officials with a better understanding of local needs and resources. By collaborating with police departments, schools and other agencies, municipal leaders can overlay additional data that shows whether afterschool programs are appropriately targeted. Some cities map census data illustrating which neighborhoods have high concentrations of young people while others compare school attendance and achievement statistics with the location of afterschool services. The City of Denver identified neighborhoods with crime hot spots and high teen pregnancy and poverty rates, and then compared the data with information gathered from more than 700 afterschool providers. This mapping process, conducted with support from the Colorado Afterschool Network, gave city leaders a better understanding of the availability, quality, capacity and impact of programs in every neighborhood.

Denver is one of a handful of cities that have taken their mapping efforts one step further by publicly sharing the data through an online program locator (www.denvergov.org/denvermaps/afterschool). The mayor and superintendent launched this website at a high-profile event, and the Denver Mayor's Office of Education and Children regularly updates the program database. Boise, Idaho, followed a similar process, first analyzing programs in relation to poverty and crime rates, then reallocating city funding for a mobile recreation van to help fill program gaps. Mayor David Bieter's Council on Children and Youth then made a searchable database of programs available to the community through the Boise After3 Web site (see www.after3boise.com). Parents and youth can search for programs by street address, neighborhood, age group, or program type. The website maps programs offered by numerous public and community agencies.

> *More than a dozen cities have used geographic information systems (GIS) technology to map the location of afterschool programs, providing city officials with a better understanding of local needs and resources.*

Other cities have adapted the program locator model in different ways. In Morgantown, W.Va., a collaboration of the city, youth commission, Vision 4 Our Children Committee and a countywide afterschool coalition developed an expanded program locator for afterschool, preschool and day care programs (www.morgantownparentzone.

org). The Afterschool Chicago Web site, coordinated by the Chicago Out-of-School Time Project and the city's Department of Family and Support Services, contains thousands of programs sorted by eight program interest areas: academic, career, creative, health, life skills, religious, community and sports. The afterschoolchicago.org site is powered by Google Maps, allowing the site to show the location of afterschool programs for youth ages 6 to 21 in relation to public transit, schools, parks and libraries. The site presents information about program dates, times, fees and age range. The New Haven, Conn., Department of Youth has constructed a very similar site as Chicago's. In Boston, the BOSTONavigator site (www.bostonavigator.org) uses similar technology and includes comprehensive information on program goals, enrollment requirements, transportation options, parent involvement, wheelchair accessibility and whether program staff are bilingual. Key partners include the city's Youthline, Build the Out-of-School Time Network (BOSTnet), Boston Public Schools and Boston After School and Beyond.

### *Enhancing parks and recreation programming.*
City parks and recreation departments are often at the center of municipal partnerships with schools and nonprofits to improve out-of-school time programming.

Through San Francisco's Rec Connect program, for example, the city systematically builds partnerships between recreation centers and community-based organizations as it strives to provide high-quality afterschool programs for all elementary and middle school children by 2010. Launched in 2005, Rec Connect operates at five recreation sites with $1 million from the city's Department of Children, Youth and Families, $1 million of in-kind support by the Department of Parks and Recreation and additional resources from the United Way and local foundations.

> *Through San Francisco's Rec Connect program, the city systematically builds partnerships between recreation centers and community-based organizations.*

This strong support leverages the city's recreation center infrastructure with the additional capacity of YMCAs, Beacon Centers and other community organizations to provide a broad range of options for children in some of San Francisco's most disadvantaged neighborhoods. Site partners commit to achieving the objectives laid out in a jointly developed Rec Connect Roadmap guided by positive youth development and family support principles. Rec Connect sites have offered new programs such as teen financial literacy, ballroom dance, a debate club, a youth leadership council and "signature projects" showcasing best practices, including a girls' basketball league. More than 5,000 children and youth participated in these free multi-session classes and programs in 2007-2008, and 90 percent of participants feel there is a wide range of activities from which to choose.

In other cities, strong partnerships between parks and recreation departments and school districts are increasing the number and quality of opportunities available to children and youth. The City of Boise, Idaho, recently expanded programming in community centers that are located in three new schools. The Vancouver, Wash., Parks and Recreation Department sponsors its Kids First! programs at local elementary schools and provides free, nutritious snacks through a U.S. Department of Agriculture grant.

For children who do not live near afterschool recreation programs, more than two dozen cities have developed mobile afterschool centers that bring programs to schools, parks and housing complexes in underserved neighborhoods. This trend is particularly apparent in California and other areas with a heavy reliance on car transportation.

In Fresno, for example, a 40-foot ScienceMobile sponsored by the city's Community Services Division brings mobile science workshops to more than 50,000 students throughout the county and surrounding communities. The mobile science lab visits schools, events and community organizations and organizes hands-on projects in life and environmental sciences, robotics, chemistry, physics, geology and solar energy. The vehicle is equipped with satellite technology and wireless Internet access to present interactive television and computer workshops. These programs were launched by a cross-sector team in 2003, and continue to be supported by a partnership of the city,

school district and National Science Foundation. Other key cosponsors include local colleges and universities, the police department, state agencies and businesses.

In most other cities with mobile afterschool programs, parks and recreation staff operate recreation vans containing sports equipment, arts and crafts and board games. Some cities, such as Poway, Calif., use these vans to set up portable skate parks, while St. Paul, Minn., offers a mobile climbing wall. The City of East Palo Alto, Calif., trains and employs teens to run programs for younger youth through its Mobile RecCorps Program. Mobile recreation vans tend to operate only during the summer at parks that do not have recreation centers or in neighborhoods that are not within walking distance of local parks.

# FOUR NEW IDEAS TO CONSIDER

## Afterschool

**Rethink the traditional school day to create a citywide learning environment.** Out-of-school learning can occur in nontraditional settings throughout a community. These settings may be as diverse as local museums, theaters, farms and construction sites, or may involve job shadowing of small business owners or working alongside scientists on environmental projects. By envisioning a seamless learning system that bridges the in-school and out-of-school hours, cities, school districts and community organizations can redefine student success to include critical life and workforce skills. Career exposure, internships, afterschool programs and project-based learning approaches can be combined with dual enrollment options for high school and college credit to make learning more fun, relevant and useful. The Charles Stewart Mott Foundation's New Day for Learning framework provides a valuable guide for city leaders seeking to move in these directions.

**Use out-of-school hours to prepare young people for success in the global economy.** Because many employers place a high priority on the ability to interact cross-culturally, out-of-school time programs can prepare young people for the new labor market by enriching students' knowledge of languages, international issues and culture, communications and technology. City leaders have additional opportunities to build stronger connections between afterschool programs and science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) initiatives that equip students with much-needed technical skills. By working with museums, science organizations and private businesses, cities can help children and youth gain access to knowledgeable professionals who can make STEM skills interesting and relevant.

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**Promote environmental education as part of a "green city" effort.** Cities are often at the forefront of efforts to promote sustainable development, energy conservation and resource management. City officials are well positioned to work with school districts and afterschool programs in providing sites and facilities (e.g., parks, forests, wetlands, rivers and municipal buildings) where young people can learn about local sustainability efforts. For instance, teachers and program providers can use these sites to conduct "hands-on" lessons on the environment and how to "green" the local community. Joint use agreements between cities, school districts and community organizations can be amended to make these sites accessible and knowledgeable city staff can lend their expertise on local environmental programs and green practices.

**Professionalize the afterschool field through the development of career ladders.** The quality of afterschool programs is often limited by a lack of training for and high turnover among staff. Cities, school districts and postsecondary institutions can collaboratively tackle this problem by providing educators and afterschool staff with opportunities for professional development and training and then linking these opportunities to career ladders. Professional development may focus on best practices from other city afterschool systems, peer networking opportunities, training in the use of quality self-assessment tools and improved evaluation techniques. Municipal leaders can also encourage joint trainings for school staff and afterschool providers, create opportunities for shared planning time and increase communication and alignment of afterschool programs with academic goals.
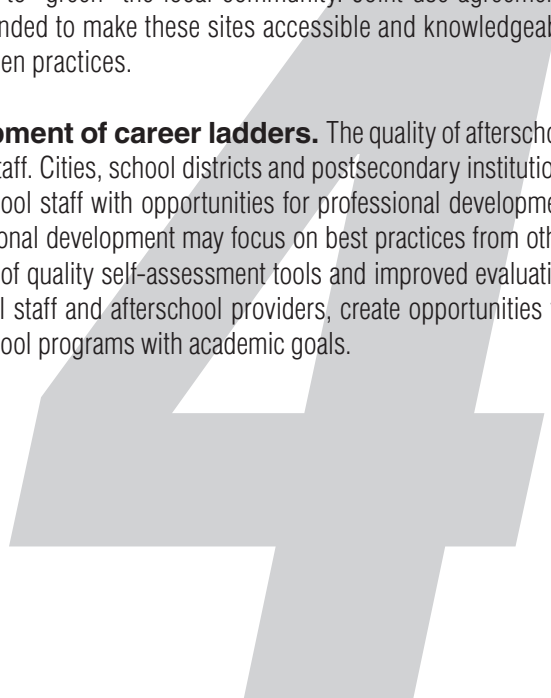
# Youth in Transition

## Key Goals:

- Provide a network of support specific to the needs of youth in transition, such as those moving from foster care or the juvenile justice system to independence; runaway or homeless youth; school dropouts; first-time parents; or recent immigrants.
- Help young people connect or re-connect to mainstream activities, such as education and jobs, as well as to supports such as caring adults, social and health services and housing.
- Create new opportunities for cross-system collaboration across diverse public — city, county and state — agencies, as well as private service providers, to more effectively meet the needs of at-risk youth.

## Innovations:

- Coordinating services for youth aging out of foster care.
- Providing transitional jobs to court-involved youth.
- Creating collaborative interagency structures.

## Emerging Trends:

- Building a local infrastructure focused on the needs of homeless youth.
- Streamlining access to services for youth in transition.
- Utilizing truancy interventions to help youth get back on track.

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## Established Trends:

- Supporting summer jobs programs.
- Operating teen parenting programs.
- Providing evening recreational opportunities for at-risk youth.

## Innovations

***Coordinating services for youth aging out of foster care.***
In the city of Philadelphia, hundreds of young people per year face the difficult transition from foster care to independence, often without the necessary preparation, resources and supports to successfully hold down a job and take care of their own housing, food and other needs. As a result, these young people experience high rates of unemployment, homelessness, dependence on social services, victimization and even crime. To provide needed supports, in 2002 the city's Department of Human Services (DHS) partnered with the Philadelphia Workforce Development Corporation, the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services and the non-profit Philadelphia Youth Network to design and fund a welcoming center for 16- to 20-year-olds who are in the foster care system (or were when they were 16).

> *Philadelphia's Achieving Independence Center is a centrally located gateway to services designed to provide foster youth with a chance to earn and save, in-house job training, housing assistance, computer skills, educational supports, life skills and counseling to help prevent unwanted pregnancies.*

The result of their collaboration was a unique one-stop center for older foster youth called the Achieving Independence Center (AI Center). This centrally located gateway to services was designed to provide youth with a chance to earn and save, in-house job training, housing assistance, computer skills, educational supports, life skills and counseling to help prevent unwanted pregnancies. The center — with non-traditional hours, flexible scheduling for both in-school and out-of-school youth and an arrangement with a nearby child care provider for participants with children — minimizes the need for youth to have to "office-hop" and addresses common barriers to needed services.

Eligible youth who sign up with the center become "members for life," often returning to share their experiences with young people who are preparing to become independent. Despite being a government program, young people like to spend time at the center and it is generally crowded on weekend nights.

With this membership model as a backdrop, the delivery of services begins with an orientation, individualized assessment and the development of a coaching-mentoring relationship with the youth. In a "hub and spoke" model, both members and their coaches determine which tracks of services (or spokes) they will utilize in their goal to achieve independence; this forms the basis for a member development plan.

Focusing on employability and practical tools for successful independent living, the AI Center has been effective in providing much needed services through strategic partnerships. After designing a conceptual plan with its agency partners, DHS issued a request for proposals and selected a private firm well known for its work with welfare and workforce delivery programs as the program manager. This managing agency works with DHS to coordinate a total of 13 co-located agencies, each with a unique service offering. Some of the most successful partnerships have allowed foster youth to benefit from the following services: on-site employment and training services; housing and credit counseling; tutoring, GED instruction and college and financial aid counseling; mentoring; computer classes; and education about health, relationships and sexuality.

Since the AI Center opened in December 2002, more than 3,300 youth in transition have become members. Of these, 600 or more have graduated from high school or received a GED, more than 650 have enrolled in college or other post-secondary school and 37 have graduated from higher education. 756 youth have been linked to full- or part-time employment at an average wage of $7.67 per hour.

*Related innovations:*

- The U.S. Department of Labor provided support to community groups and municipal governments — including New York City and Los Angeles/Pasadena — to provide "one stop" service centers for youth transitioning out of foster care.

### *Providing transitional jobs to court-involved youth.*
Without a high school diploma, without prior work experience or with a criminal record, many vulnerable youth are unable to find and keep a job. A small number of cities have taken steps to offer youth "transitional jobs" — temporary, paid employment with close supervision and wrap-around support services – to help them overcome barriers to work, develop good references and move into unsubsidized employment. In Boston, Youth Options Unlimited (YOU) Boston provides transitional jobs, intensive case management and educational support and placement to help court-involved and/or gang-affiliated youth, ages 14 to 24, develop the workplace skills, academic skills and life skills to succeed in a work environment.

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Now in its eighth year, YOU Boston is a division of the Mayor's Office of Jobs and Community Services and has established 501(c)(3) non-profit status to continue and expand services through the contributions of private foun-

dations and additional funding sources, including a state anti-gang initiative grant. YOU Boston was initially launched to serve a wide variety of youth in transition, and in 2005, the city chose to focus on court-involved youth. YOU now works with young people from every Boston neighborhood at its central location in the Roxbury neighborhood and throughout the community.

Serving in part as a juvenile and young adult "reentry" program, YOU staff members begin to meet with clients prior to their release from juvenile or adult facilities or treatment programs to build trusting relationships and initiate individual service plans prior to the client's return to the community. Once in the Transitional Employment Service Program (TES), staff focus on preparing clients to develop the fundamental skills that are required to retain any type of employment, while assisting those that have advanced through the TES continuum as they seek permanent placements in the workforce or long-term skills training. Given the value of education as it relates to earnings over a lifetime and success in the workforce, YOU includes an educational component within the TES curriculum and insists that clients be participating and progressing in their educational plan to maintain their subsidized wage.

The program's first level of employment readiness includes a two-week Pre-Placement employment series focused on conflict resolution, decision making, leadership, teamwork and communication. This is an interactive, eight day session that involves role plays based on actual scenarios youth may encounter when they are on the worksite. Youth are subsidized at minimum wage throughout the YOU TES programming. Level two is called Bridge, and provides a subsidized transitional job at a partner agency or organization with a team of peers. Unlike typical youth employment, these jobs are closely supervised and accompanied by critical support services to help young people overcome challenges. When participants show enough maturity and an appropriate skill set, they progress to an Individual Placement with a community partner, working up to 25 hours per week on their own, while still being subsidized and supported weekly by YOU staff.

Under the leadership of Boston Mayor Thomas M. Menino, Youth Options Unlimited has developed and maintained invaluable relationships with the Boston Police Department, Boston School Police, Department of Youth Services, Suffolk County House of Correction, Youth Service Providers Network (social work arm of the Boston Police), Boston Centers for Youth and Families (Streetworker program), Adult and Juvenile Probation, Boston Public Schools, Boston Public Health Commission, Private Industry Council and an alternative school network. YOU works with these partners on a regular basis to identify and refer young people who are in the greatest need of these services and to ensure that all programming is organized to ensure the safety of all young people. In addition, YOU collaborates with other successful service providers for this population in the greater Boston area such as the Maritime Apprenticeship Program (operated by the Hull Life Saving Museum), Action for Boston Community Development, the Ten Point Coalition (an ecumenical Christian group focused on troubled youth) and Youth Build.

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YOU strives to maintain more than 60 subsidized employment placements throughout the year, with an expanded TES program during the summer months placing more than 120 youth. In the summer of 2008, the TES program included 141 youth representing 47 different gang affiliations; YOU achieved a 76 percent overall retention rate, with more than 100 of the participants working at least five of the seven weeks.

Of the 769 court-involved or gang-affiliated young people participating in Youth Options Unlimited Boston from 2006 through the spring of 2009, all received subsidized work; 160 moved on to educational placements and 120 were placed in unsubsidized jobs. For more information, see: www.youboston.org

*Related innovations:*
- San Francisco provides subsidized employment opportunities to 1,400 high school aged youth who are on probation through the Mayor's Youth Employment and Education Program.

- Close to 1,400 New York City youth who were not in school or the workforce participated in New York City's Young Adult Internship Program, receiving paid internships, job training and educational support.

### *Creating a collaborative interagency structure to support youth in transition.*

In San Francisco, a collaborative, city-funded entity – the Transitional Age Youth Initiative (TAY SF) — focuses attention, resources and partnerships on the needs of the city's 80,000 young people between the ages of 16 and 24 as they transition into adulthood.

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In the spring of 2005, the San Francisco Youth Commission, a diverse group of youth between the ages of 12 and 23 appointed to provide feedback on city policies and budget decisions, passed a resolution calling on the mayor to create a citywide planning body to address the needs of young adults who were too old to receive services through the Children's Fund. Mayor Gavin Newsom recognized that providing better supports at this critical age could improve outcomes — for individual youth and for the broader community. In March 2006 he launched a Mayor's Transitional Youth Task Force (TYTF). Over the course of a year, TYTF committees and workgroups met on more than 60 occasions to review data, set priorities and develop strategies for meeting the complex, unmet needs of at-risk youth and young adults. The task force focused on youth transitioning through public systems (such as foster care, juvenile justice and special education); parenting youth; recent immigrants; youth with disabilities; and young people not on track to graduate from high school.

In early 2008, Mayor Newsom created TAY SF as a permanent interagency council charged with implementing the 16 policy strategies developed by the task force. These strategies, which are aimed at making improvements in education, employment, wellness, health and housing resources and opportunities for young people in San Francisco, are organized into four critical areas:

- Making transitional age youth a priority;
- Improving the quality of service delivery;
- Enhancing coordination of services; and
- Increasing system capacity.

To do this, TAY SF connects youth service providers, engages youth and local leadership and promotes best practices to empower youth as they enter adulthood.

In addition to being the catalyst for the creation of the Transitional Age Youth Initiative, the City of San Francisco fully funds the initiative, covering the salaries of three staff, youth stipends and the cost of office space and supplies. TAY SF staff benefit from ongoing youth input through its Young Adult Team. This diverse group of transitional age youth provides input on city policies and advocates on behalf of populations that might otherwise be ignored.

In the first few months of operation TAY SF produced a resource guide for youth service providers and launched an e-newsletter to serve as a place for providers to connect with each other and to learn about current transitional age youth legislation, publications and events. The TAY SF initiative is also planning for San Francisco's first comprehensive multi-service center to deliver seamless, culturally competent services. In addition, the initiative has utilized local graduate students to help analyze the practices of city departments, the workforce development system and youth service providers to make recommendations about how to better serve youth in transition. In a 2009 report, TAY SF set forth new priorities and approaches to creating a data system that can drive a comprehensive disconnected youth policy agenda. For more information, see: www.taysf.org

*Related innovations:*

- Washington, D.C., recently created an Interagency Collaboration and Services Integration Commission to promote collaboration — including shared indicators, data and quarterly targets — on issues related to children and youth, including the special

needs of disconnected youth. (See description in chapter on city infrastructure for children, youth and families.)

# Emerging Trends

### *Building a local infrastructure focused on the needs of homeless youth.*
Recognizing that youth who are on the street are particularly vulnerable, a small but growing number of cities have focused new attention on the special needs of homeless young people in recent years. While young people end up homeless for a variety of reasons, there are some common challenges faced by many homeless youth. Nearly a quarter identify themselves as lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, transgender or questioning (LGBTQ); two-thirds have suffered from physical or sexual abuse; three-quarters have dropped out of school; and up to 80 percent have mental health issues or use drugs. In addition, many youth in the foster care system become homeless after they are "emancipated" (generally at age 18); nearly a quarter of youth who have exited the foster care system experience homelessness and a third of all homeless adults report a foster care history.

> *City initiatives can help young people find immediate, appropriate shelter, followed by access to transitional housing, employment services and other needed supports to maintain stable housing.*

City initiatives can help young people find immediate, appropriate shelter, followed by access to transitional housing, employment services and other needed supports to maintain stable housing. To do this, cities generally create or participate in a coalition or commission to provide overall planning and service coordination for area residents who are homeless, with a special focus on homeless youth. Some specific approaches often include creating or designating facilities that provide shelter or transitional housing specifically for youth; launching special prevention and outreach programs targeting the root causes of youth homelessness; and working with service providers to identify and meet the unique needs of common subgroups among the homeless youth population.

The City of Seattle, for instance, created staff positions within the Human Services Department focused on homeless youth and actively participates in two collaborative working bodies, one representing public systems and agencies and the other for community organizations and youth-serving groups. Seattle's investment in homeless youth totals approximately $3.5 million — a blend of general fund dollars, grants and privately raised funding — and centers around five main strategies that are all carried out in partnership with other agencies and providers: direct street outreach with homeless youth hired as outreach staff; dynamic drop-in centers with an emphasis on employment, education and recreation; a continual focus on education; interagency collaboration; and transitional and long-term housing. Key to Seattle's success in these strategies has been the emphasis placed on targeting smaller sub-groups of homeless youth, such as Native Americans, pregnant teens and teen parents, recent immigrants and LGBTQ youth.

Similarly, the City of Minneapolis has been collaborating with Hennepin County and other local stakeholders through the Commission to End Homelessness, taking the lead on youth issues, which make up approximately one-third of the commission's activities. With a full-time staff member overseeing homeless youth issues at the commission, they have launched efforts to address family conflict resolution, improve services at the time of discharge from systems such as foster care and promote a youth-development culture among homeless service providers who are used to dealing with adults to equip them to serve young people better. The commission also created a new Bridge Center for Youth in 2008, an 18-bed transitional living center providing a variety of services to homeless youth. The city is one of several partners that have funded the new facility, providing more than $1.8 million in grants and deferred loans to The Bridge.

Cities such as San Francisco and Berkeley, Calif., have partnered with community organizations to establish multi-service centers for homeless youth. In addition to meeting basic needs for food and shelter, these centers provide young people with on-site access to supports and services aimed at transitioning out of homelessness.

*Selected cities building an infrastructure to serve homeless youth: Berkeley, Calif.; Denver; Las Vegas; Minneapolis; Nashville, Tenn.; Portland, Ore.; San Francisco; Seattle.*

### *Streamlining access to services for youth in transition.*

For years, resources and services for youth in transition were located in a wide variety of city agencies, schools and nonprofits, making them difficult for young people to learn about and access. A recent movement to address this problem has led a growing number of cities to pull together youth services — access to GED/pre-GED classes, career counseling, classes and online courses to help youth earn a diploma, life skills, social activities and clubs, job readiness and placement, training in high growth industries, college fair/tours, health and fitness and youth-led community service opportunities — so that these systems can better serve young residents. In some cases this is taking place in a particular location that pulls youth services together. In other cases, a "service navigator" provides this coordination and eases access to supports.

The City of Baltimore has streamlined access to services for out-of-school young adults (ages 16-22) through two Youth Opportunity (YO!) Baltimore centers. Located in different parts of town, these centers provide the education and career skills (including some paid work experiences) necessary for success in adulthood. One center has also added an on-site school. Started in 1999 with a Department of Labor Youth Opportunity Grant, Baltimore voted to provide funding to sustain this initiative after federal funding for the YO! Program ran out in July 2006. The program's positive results — GED achievement at twice the rate of nonparticipants, one-third higher earnings, 25 percent lower likelihood of pregnancy among female participants — continue to make this an important city investment.

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Similarly, Newark, N.J., brought key partners together — including city agencies, Newark Public Schools, Rutgers University, The Nicholson Foundation and numerous service providers — to launch the Youth Education and Employment Success Center (YE²S) in 2008. Operated by Rutgers University, the YE²S Center offers out-of-school or court-involved youth (ages 16 to 21) counseling, education and job-training in a youth-friendly environment. In addition, the center seeks to engage disconnected youth in the process of making the community more supportive of their needs, through activities such as "speak out" sessions and youth community mapping.

In St. Louis, the city and 10 partner organizations created the SPOT (Supporting Positive Opportunities with Teens) in the fall of 2008 to a focus on reducing the rates of sexually transmitted diseases amongst vulnerable youth. Going beyond traditional confidential free testing, youth ages 13 to 24 can benefit from youth development counselors, job referral services, after school computer labs, laundry facilities and other health-related services at this one-stop center. In its first quarter, more than 600 youth visited and made use of the center's services, with an average of 22 visits per day.

In Albany, N.Y., the city utilizes a single point of contact rather than a single physical location to streamline access to services. More than 300 young people each year meet with personal "service navigators" from the Department of Youth and Workforce Services. Through a series of two-to-four meetings, including at least one involving the young person's parents, the service navigator builds a relationship with the young person and develops an individualized service strategy, including referrals to one or more members of a partnership of six organizations. The service navigator provides oversight for all of the case managers who are working directly with the youth and tracks progress toward specific goals, such as higher graduation rates, better preparation for employment and development of life skills among disconnected youth. Biweekly meetings among the service providers help ensure coordinated eligibility determinations, administrative and case management and maximum leveraging of funding, as well as referrals beyond the service navigator partnership as needed.

*Selected cities streamlining access to services for youth in transition include: Albany, N.Y.; Baltimore; Newark, N.J.; New York City; Philadelphia; San Francisco; St. Louis.*

### Utilizing truancy interventions to help youth get back on track.

Truancy is a warning sign that a young person is heading down a path that may have more serious, long-term consequences, from dropping out of school to teen pregnancy or youth violence. In at least 14 cities, community partnerships are utilizing truancy interventions to ensure that truant youth and their families are connected to positive resources and supports. While these municipalities vary in their approach, most have found that active partnerships between the police, the schools and social service providers are crucial to success. Strong leadership by a local elected official can help generate a high degree of support among partner agencies.

> *Community partnerships between the police, schools and social service providers are utilizing truancy interventions to ensure that truant youth and their families are connected to positive resources and supports.*

These cities are taking a positive, rather than punitive, approach. For instance, the City of York, Pa., began monthly curfew rounds, taking truant youth to a local community center staffed with caring professionals, rather than the police station, to help them access a wide range of services and counseling.

In September 1999, Corpus Christi, Texas, combined its efforts to address truant youth and nighttime curfew violators through a Juvenile Assessment Center (JAC), which provides a round-the-clock single point of entry to needed services. Youth offenders and their parents can participate in a needs assessment and receive three months of free, comprehensive case management. A 2006-2007 report indicates that out of nearly 400 youth participating in the JAC case management program, only 21, or approximately 5 percent, committed delinquent offenses afterwards.

The police department in Sacramento, Calif., enlisted support from the school district, human services agencies and many community-based organizations to provide important supports — parenting classes, counseling, job skill training and drug treatment services — at the attendance center at Burbank High School. In addition, the services and referrals at these centers are available to parents of truant students. By the end of the first year, of the 250 truant students who passed through the attendance center, 91 were regularly attending school, grand theft in the area dropped by 31 percent and there was a documented improvement in student attitudes about school.

*Selected cities preventing truancy through community collaborations: Albany, N.Y.; Bossier, La.; Corpus Christi, Texas; Durham, N.C.; Greeley, Colo.; Newark, N.J.; Omaha, Neb.; Philadelphia; Pittsburgh; Sacramento, Calif.; Tacoma, Wash.; Tampa, Fla.; Trenton, N.J.; York, Pa.*

## Established Trends

### Supporting summer jobs programs.

Over the years, a large number of cities have supported summer youth employment programs — subsidized wages for youth who work in government or nonprofit settings — in order to help young people learn job skills and workplace norms, develop a work history and connect with adults who can provide advice and references. Even as federal funding for summer jobs was drying up earlier in the decade, cities recognized that the need was greater than ever. According to the Center for Labor Market Statistics and Northeastern University, teens and young adults failed to make any employment gains between 2000 and 2007, and were the most negatively impacted by the labor market downturn in 2008. The percentage of teenagers (16-19) who were able to find summer employment in 2008 sank to less than one-third, a 60-year low.

Despite these challenges, mayoral leadership proved critical to finding adequate funding and summer job placements in cities across the country. In the face of federal cuts to summer jobs funding, the city of St. Louis established its own

local program. Mayor Francis Slay provided leadership to garner both public and private funding and summer jobs placements in St. Louis hospitals, day care centers, senior centers, parks and public and private organizations.

> *Even as federal funding for summer jobs was drying up earlier in the decade, mayoral leadership proved critical to finding adequate funding and summer job placements in cities across the country.*

The City of Los Angeles' summer youth employment program, Hire LA Youth, experienced strong performance for several years running based on strong partnerships between the city, the L.A. Chamber of Commerce and local educational entities that help prepare the youth for their summer placements. In addition to an annual pitch to the business community, the city collaborates with other systems to identify vulnerable youth that would benefit from placements, including: probation court; foster youth and mental health agencies; and the new regional partnership, made up of all local government entities, the chamber of commerce and labor unions. On the heels of two years of record success, Mayor Antonio Villaragosa challenged city staff and employers in the community to ensure that 50 percent more youth from low-income families were placed in gainful positions in the summer of 2009.

In addition, cities have taken new approaches to make summer jobs programs more inclusive and to strengthen the feeling among youth participants that they can make a difference in their community. For instance, in Chicago, young people with disabilities participate in Mayor Richard Daley's Summer Jobs Program through a special partnership between the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities (MOPD), the Department of Children and Youth Services and the Chicago Public Schools. In the process, MOPD connects participating students with professional mentors who have disabilities to provide support and encouragement.

In Cincinnati, Ohio, Mayor Mark Mallory's Summer Youth Jobs Initiative offers youth choices about the skills they would like to develop. One of the choices, the Muralworks summer jobs program, employs 80 young people for six weeks to create murals in six Cincinnati neighborhoods. Under the direction of a mentor artist, the program teaches teamwork, builds artistic skills and strengthens civic pride in participating youth.

### *Operating teen parenting programs.*

When teenagers become parents, most are unprepared for the responsibility of raising a child while continuing with their education or holding down a job. In all parts of the country, city leaders have found that an investment in connecting these young parents to needed supports — including education, job training and parenting skills — can have a significant payoff in the lives of both the parents and their children. Some cities have created a full-service family center to meet the needs of parenting teens, while others operate programs out of schools or community centers.

> *City leaders have found that an investment in connecting young parents to needed supports — including education, job training and parenting skills — can have a significant payoff in the lives of both the parents and their children.*

In Lexington-Fayette, Ky., for example, the Division of Family Services collaborates with community partners to operate a Family Care Center. This exciting center provides teen mothers with case management, access to an alternative high school or GED classes, nationally accredited child care for children ages 6 weeks to 5 years, on-site employment skills training in a social enterprise setting, home visits for first-time parents and pediatric medical and dental care for their children. The City of Aumsville, Ore., in partnership with the school district, obtained a grant from the state to create a family and child development center that would house a Teen Parent Program and other services for young children and parents.

Other communities have focused on schools as the primary location for serving teen parents. In New Haven, Conn., where the city runs the public school system, pregnant and parenting teens can attend school at the Polly T. McCabe Center. Participating students benefit from small classes, personal attention from staff, wellness-stress management classes and child care that is supervised by a pediatric nurse and early childhood specialist. Teen parents who participate in the LYFE program in New York City receive child care while attending regular or alternative high schools or preparing for the GED. They are also encouraged to take parenting classes for credit, participate in support groups and take advantage of free cultural activities with their children through the program. In Louisville, Ky., the South Park TAPP (Teenage Pregnancy Program) High School is supported by the city and school district. Started in 1972, this program has a high graduation rate and 61 percent of the girls who attend go onto college.

While the focus of most teen parent programs is on young mothers, some cities have also created programs specifically for young fathers. For instance, in Phoenix, the STEP-UP (Skills, Training, Education, Employment Program for Unemployed Male Parents) program began in 1990 and complements the city's Young Families CAN program for teen mothers. Built around case management and counseling, the program offers young fathers a wide variety of supports, including legal assistance in paternity establishment, education and job training, a mentor and even opportunities for quality family time, such as the annual Family Camp Event. In Milwaukee, the city's fatherhood initiative has a specific effort to target teen and young adult fathers, called "Teen Talk." Teen Talk is led by peer educators who offer a safe space for support and discussion to more than 250 participating youth and young adult fathers.

### *Providing evening recreational opportunities for at-risk youth.*
Cities large and small have found that young people who are busy with athletics and other positive recreational activities are more likely to be healthy, connect with adults and stay out of trouble. As a result, more youth centers and recreation programs are providing late-night programming for young people in high-crime urban neighborhoods.

> *Los Angeles is keeping the lights on until midnight in 16 high-crime parks and adjoining recreation centers through the Summer Night Lights program, a key element of the city's gang prevention effort.*

The Department of Parks and Recreation in Seattle offers its Late Night Recreation Program on Friday and Saturday nights as a positive alternative to life on the street for high-risk Seattle youth. Within select park facilities, including the Teen Life Center, the city offers: athletic activities such as basketball, volleyball, martial arts and other sports; tutoring; computer training; teen parenting programs; and cultural activities such as ethnic dance and bead-making. According to the Seattle Police Department, crime has been reduced by an average of 30 percent in some Late Night center neighborhoods.

Similarly, Los Angeles is keeping the lights on until midnight in 16 high-crime parks and adjoining recreation centers through the Summer Night Lights program. The city organizes sports, music, food and even connections to summer jobs for participating young people, with a youth squad hired to promote and staff the program. In 2008, the first year of the Summer Night Lights program, city officials reported that the affected communities experienced significant declines in violent gang-related crime (down 17 percent), homicides (down 86 percent) and aggravated assaults (down 23 percent).

The Department of Parks and Recreation in the city of Oakland, Calif., is improving the attitudes and skills of at-risk youth, ages 13 to 21, in the afternoon and evening through their Radical, Roving Recreation (RRR) program. Collaborating with the public schools and court probation officers, the department provides unique programming such as yoga, radio broadcasting, shoe design, gardening and catering to students in distressed neighborhoods, juvenile halls and alternative schools. In addition, RRR offers youth participants opportunities to receive paid training and employment in city jobs such as lifeguards and camp counselors. In just three years, the city has enrolled 67 youth from juvenile detention or probation; these participants have less than a 5 percent recidivism rate.

# *FOUR NEW IDEAS TO CONSIDER*

## *Youth in Transition*

**Support "Opportunity Passports" for youth transitioning out of foster care.** Touted as the centerpiece of the Jim Casey Youth Opportunity Initiative, Opportunity Passport™ is a promising new effort that combines several forms of assistance for young people who are aging out of foster care: a personal debit account; a matched savings account that enables young people to save for specific investments, such as education or a down payment on a home; and a host of local "door openers," which vary locally but may include pre-approval for community college registration or expedited access to job training or adult education courses. While the Jim Casey Family Foundation is currently funding efforts in 10 cities nationwide and 10 counties in Michigan, municipalities are not currently taking the lead in these communities. City officials can give a major boost to such efforts by seeking to replicate this model.

**Establish a school-conditioned jobs program for vulnerable youth.** MDRC, an education and social policy research organization based in New York City, has developed a series of intriguing ideas that build on a successfully implemented, large-scale youth demonstration program from the 1970s, which guaranteed jobs to high school students based on their attendance and performance in school. These proposals suggest that mayors and other city leaders can improve both employment and education outcomes for vulnerable youth by linking paid work and the continuation or resumption of schooling. Three promising options advanced by MDRC include: a basic literacy and numeracy class for low-skilled disconnected youth (those functioning at $5^{th}$ to $7^{th}$ grade level) augmented by conditional paid work; a career-oriented GED program for high school dropouts combined with subsidized employment; and a summer program that offers both education and paid work to at-risk high school juniors on a college campus.

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**Offer barrier-busting vouchers to help young people continue their education, job training and employment.** Even when strongly motivated to complete a training program or find and keep a good job, out-of-school young people often face small obstacles that stand in the way of self-sufficiency. The Indianapolis Private Industry Council's "barrier-busting" vouchers, provided through its Youth Employment Services (YES) program with support from the Lilly Endowment, help jobless youth overcome a variety of barriers to their employment goals. For instance, participants can use vouchers to pay for bus passes, overdue parking tickets, gasoline or a driver's license so they can get to their jobs; clothing needed for job interviews; uniforms and tools required for work; and help with rent, bills, tuition and child care costs to prevent interruptions to their education, training and employment. A survey of YES participants conducted by an independent evaluator from Brandeis University's Center for Youth and Communities showed that half could not have continued their employment or training without the vouchers. Municipal leaders can promote this model with local workforce boards and service providers, identify or raise additional funds to help cover the cost of the vouchers, and ensure that they are available to all participants as needed throughout the fiscal or program year.

**Find new ways to use technology to re-connect with otherwise disconnected youth.** Recognizing the central role that technology plays in how youth communicate and seek information, city leaders can explore new models for using technology to reach youth in transition. In an approach similar to that adopted in creating interactive, online tools for reporting potholes or crimes and requesting municipal services, city leaders can work with service providers, Web developers and researchers to exploit fully technologies available to connect youth in transition with caring adults, jobs, city services and education. Smart-phone applications and social networking sites offer two new ways for cities to help youth access needed services and track progress on educational goals, employment referrals and other positive youth development activities. Progress made on "high-tech" communication, however, should complement rather than replace the "high-touch" elements of effective outreach and support to youth in transition.

# Youth Violence Prevention

## Key Goals:
- Reduce youth homicides and violent crime.
- Form partnerships that steer high-risk youth toward positive alternatives.
- Prevent conflict by breaking the cycle of revenge and retaliation.
- Counteract the culture of violence by amplifying the community's moral voice.

## Innovations:
- Establishing a system for updating and sustaining violence prevention plans.
- Connecting neighborhood and countywide crime prevention efforts.
- Galvanizing the community by reframing youth violence as a public health issue.

## Emerging Trends:
- Creating a dedicated tax for violence prevention.
- Working with former offenders to conduct street-level outreach.
- Promoting reentry and removing barriers to work for people with criminal records.
- Forming violent incident response teams.

## Established Trends:
- Adapting Boston's Operation Ceasefire model.
- Creating organizational structures to guide anti-violence efforts.
- Partnering with school districts to keep kids safe.
- Collaborating with the faith community.
- Connecting young people with caring adult mentors.

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## Innovations

***Establishing a system for updating and sustaining violence prevention plans.***
Although citywide task forces and comprehensive anti-gang strategies are now an established local trend, even the most promising collaborations tend to fade over time. Leadership transitions and shifting priorities draw energy away from violence prevention initiatives. Funding constraints dilute capacity and effectiveness. Cities often become reactive to violent incidents rather than proactively focused on the conditions that generate violence. Sometimes, success itself breeds complacency. In short, it is not easy to sustain one focused strategy as key players and circumstances continually change.

> *The San José, Calif., Mayor's Gang Prevention Task Force is remarkable because it has constantly refreshed and adapted its comprehensive violence reduction plan through an intensive, flexible, collaborative process.*

The San José, Calif., Mayor's Gang Prevention Task Force is remarkable because it has constantly refreshed and adapted its comprehensive violence reduction plan through an intensive, flexible, collaborative process. Since 1991, the task force has charted a successful path emulated by other California cities such as Santa Rosa and Fresno, and has helped the city cut per capita violent crime by 44 percent and the number of youth admitted to juvenile hall by 59 percent since 1996, making San José one of the nation's safest large cities.

Initially launched by former Mayor Susan Hammer, the task force has thrived under the sustained leadership of her successor, Ron Gonzales, and current Mayor Chuck Reed. The task force structure includes a policy team co-chaired by the mayor and police chief, and a technical team of senior city, county and community agency staff working with more than 70 public and private partners. The police and parks and recreation departments provide ongoing coordination for the task force.

All key stakeholders hold a firm belief that combating gang violence cannot be the sole responsibility of the police and that "we cannot arrest our way out of this problem," relying instead on a combination of prevention, intervention, suppression and rehabilitation strategies. Top-level leaders are consistently engaged in the policy team, including councilmembers, the city manager, county supervisors, school superintendents, judges, the U.S. Attorney, the district and city attorneys, the chief probation officer, the state parole board and the county Department of Corrections chief. The policy team provides overall direction for San José's strategic plan and develops memoranda of understanding among participating agencies. The team's meetings are open to the public, offering opportunities for resident input. The technical team provides the policy team with updates on the city's gang climate and develops policy proposals and programs based on what they see from the ground level. Both task force teams channel the voice of and create a broadened sense of ownership by the community, with representation from businesses, parents, youth, faith leaders and community groups.

One of the most innovative features of the task force is reflected in its emphasis on adjusting the mix of strategies it utilizes in response to changing local conditions and needs. Through a funding mechanism called Bringing Everyone's Strengths Together (BEST), the city allocates $3 million in general fund dollars annually to community organizations through grants of between $5,000 and $225,000. Grant recipients must respond to a Request for Qualifications and provide a 20 percent funding match. Funds are directed to both program activities and capacity-building investments. The most recent modification to the BEST funding ratio reallocated more money toward intervention; grantees seek to enhance services to youth who are hardest to reach. Of more than 4,000 youth served in 2006 to 2007, more than half were gang members or supporters.

Every three years, the task force undertakes a thorough, formal process to revise and update its comprehensive gang prevention plan as well as the BEST funding allocation. The process places a strong emphasis on obtaining community input. In the spring of 2008, 43 focus groups and 16 town hall meetings involved more than 1,200 residents. Youth were surveyed at schools, community centers and juvenile detention facilities. City and community partners took part in a retreat to assess and modify the strategic work plan. The resulting 2008 to 2011 plan directs new attention to an education and awareness campaign and the establishment of a seamless, asset-based service delivery system for young people ages six to 24. The task force plan and BEST grant recipients are subject to rigorous independent evaluation and performance monitoring. Because of the continuity of support for the task force through several mayoral transitions, and the ability to adapt plans to meet new challenges, the task force's work has become firmly embedded in the civic fabric. The sense of ownership of the task force by the community generates the political will for its long-term sustainability.

For more information, see: www.sanjoseca.gov/mayor/goals/pubsafety/MGPTF/mgptf.asp

*Related innovation:*
- The Santa Rosa, Calif., Mayor's Gang Prevention Task Force is closely modeled on the San José Task Force.

### *Connecting neighborhood and countywide crime prevention efforts.*
In 2006, San Bernardino, Calif., leaders launched Operation Phoenix, a comprehensive citywide crime prevention initiative with a focus on the city's highest-crime, 20-block police district. This innovative, two-pronged approach of connecting an existing countywide gang prevention effort with a neighborhood-based strategy involves strong mayoral leadership, decentralization of services and unique cross-system collaboration. Mayor Pat Morris has used his "bully pulpit" to build public will and convene key stakeholders. The police chief, city code enforcement officer and San Bernardino County Children's Network guide the initiative. By leveraging city, county and community

resources and partnerships, San Bernardino is able to blend intensive law enforcement with expanded access to multiple services and stronger community engagement efforts in the target neighborhood.

> *By leveraging city, county and community resources and partnerships, San Bernardino is able to blend intensive law enforcement with expanded access to multiple services and stronger community engagement efforts in Operation Phoenix's target neighborhood.*

The balanced approach of Operation Phoenix consists of a set of 18 interlocking prevention, intervention and suppression strategies. Operation Phoenix partners collaborate to optimize their services and programs, and there is continual cross-referral of neighborhood problems and needs. The city has hired new police officers and worked with state and federal law enforcement agencies to track violent offenders with GPS and crack down on illegal gun and drug traffickers. Simultaneously, teams of volunteers and city staff work in the neighborhoods to improve landscaping and street lighting, revitalize neighborhood watches and remove graffiti. The city is also using aggressive code enforcement to demolish abandoned buildings and hold property owners accountable for the environmental conditions that breed criminal activity. Other key citywide strategies include:

- Promoting affordable, quality child care and preschool programs;
- Expanding afterschool opportunities and vocational education; and
- Coordinating service delivery at an Operation Phoenix youth center, which offers athletic programs, homework help and parenting and English as a Second Language classes.

More than 30 city, county, state and community partners take part in Operation Phoenix through its steering committee and street teams, which are both staffed by the county Children's Network. Building on a 2005 countywide gang prevention initiative, county departments have strengthened coordination with police and other partnering city agencies on everything from expanding access to child protection to improving treatment for substance abuse and mental health. Operation Phoenix's target neighborhood is linked to the county's Healthy Babies initiative and the Children Services Department's Family-to-Family initiative, which restructures the child welfare system by empowering neighborhood-based teams of social workers, foster and birth families and community members. The Family-to-Family approach aims to reduce reliance on institutional care and help children remain safely with their families before out-of-home placement becomes necessary. Other examples of city-county collaboration are apparent in the Probation Department's efforts to provide parenting classes for families in the target neighborhood, and the Behavioral Health Department's collaboration with the Fire Department and school district to develop a program for juvenile fire-setters.

Operation Phoenix receives funding from Measure Z, a .25-cent sales tax increase approved by voters in November 2006 by two-thirds of the electorate. In addition, the mayor's office created the nonprofit Operation Phoenix Foundation to garner funds from private sources. Results thus far are promising. After seven months of implementation, an initial city-county report found that violent crime fell by 38 percent in the target neighborhood in the last six months of 2006 compared with the same time period in 2005. In addition, residents' perceptions of community safety have also improved since 2006. Since Operation Phoenix began three years ago, the citywide homicide rate is down 32 percent, vehicle thefts have fallen 23 percent and aggravated assaults have decreased by 20 percent. Operation Phoenix was recently expanded to three additional high-crime neighborhoods. For more information, see: www.ci.san-bernardino.ca.us/depts/mayor/operation_phoenix.asp

*Related innovation:*

- Similar to the component of Operation Phoenix that focuses on neighborhood improvement, Operation Restore Pride in Baton Rouge, La., improves the quality of life in specific neighborhoods through intensive one-week revitalization projects carried out by teams of city staff and up to 3,000 volunteers. These teams repair houses, engage residents in promoting safe neighborhoods and connect unemployed residents with local employers.

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### *Galvanizing the community by reframing youth violence as a public health issue.*
The perception of youth violence in the eyes of criminologists, city leaders and even a number of law enforcement officials has evolved to the point that many now view it as much as a public health issue as it is a criminal justice or law enforcement problem. In recent years, many local officials have progressively altered their response to youth violence, moving from a one-dimensional framework solely focused on cracking down on and locking up offenders toward a broader perspective aimed at stemming the onset and perpetuation of violent behavior.

> *Minneapolis has successfully reframed youth violence as a public health issue through an extensive process of planning and community engagement, which has united and galvanized community leaders and residents around a broader vision of youth violence prevention.*

The City of Minneapolis stands out for the way Mayor R.T. Rybak has successfully reframed the youth violence issue through an extensive process of planning and community engagement, uniting and galvanizing community leaders and residents around a broader vision of youth violence prevention. Facing a sharp increase in violent juvenile crime several years ago, city leaders initially responded with an aggressive and multi-faceted law enforcement effort that included a larger, more diverse police force, the creation of a juvenile crime unit, cutting-edge public safety technology, precinct-based prosecutors and outreach to youth. While these efforts reduced juvenile crime rates, Mayor Rybak and other municipal leaders realized that enduring reductions in youth violence would require a shift to a public health approach that involved the entire community.

In November 2006, the mayor and city council approved a resolution recognizing youth violence as a public health concern and calling for a 30-member committee to develop a comprehensive action plan. Mayor Rybak and two local foundation directors co-chaired this new Youth Violence Prevention Steering Committee. After a year of assessing existing local efforts and studying best practices from other cities, the committee finalized the "Blueprint for Action: Preventing Youth Violence in Minneapolis" in January 2008.

The blueprint, which now serves as the cornerstone for the city's programmatic initiatives and community engagement strategy, treats youth violence as a preventable epidemic requiring long-term solutions rather than a problem that can be eliminated only with enforcement techniques. This approach involves understanding the root cause of the problem, identifying and influencing the risk factors and protective factors that affect the likelihood of violence, developing research-based interventions, evaluating outcomes and educating the public about effective strategies. Four overarching goals in the blueprint put a strong emphasis on the prevention and interruption of further violence:

1) Connect every youth with a trusted adult.
2) Intervene at the first sign that youth are at risk for violence.
3) Restore youth who have gone down the wrong path.
4) Unlearn the culture of violence in the community.

A new youth violence prevention coordinator guides implementation of the blueprint's strategies, identifies public and private funding sources and ensures accountability among all partners involved.

The city is tracking several outcomes to measure its progress — not only violent crime by youth, but also risk factors such as truancy and gun possession, and protective factors such as high school graduation rates. A February 2009 quarterly report for the blueprint shows that violent juvenile crime throughout the city has fallen by 29 percent since 2007 and 37 percent since 2006. Moreover, in four of the five target neighborhoods identified in the blueprint, the decline in youth violence averaged 39 percent since 2007 and 43 percent since 2006. Other successes include the opening of a new Juvenile Supervision Center that helps students committing low-level offenses stay on track in school, while police focus more attention on arresting the most violent youth offenders.

The effort to reframe the youth violence issue in Minneapolis has also had a broader impact on state policy. The city was recently successful in calling on the State of Minnesota to adopt a policy defining violence as a public health issue. New legislation that took effect in August 2009 calls on the state to partner with Minnesota cities in de-

veloping community-based violence prevention programs and identifying public and private funding for initiatives that have proven to be effective. The law will initially support violence prevention efforts in five pilot communities, including Minneapolis. For more information, see: www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/dhfs/yv.asp

*Related innovations:*

- In 2008, Mayor Greg Nickels launched the $8 million Seattle Youth Violence Prevention Initiative focused on reentry, alternatives to juvenile detention, support for truant middle school students to stay in school and use of street outreach workers to prevent retaliation by victims' friends and relatives. The initiative will be coordinated through three community-led neighborhood networks.

- In late 2007, Jacksonville, Fla., Mayor John Peyton joined the City Council in launching Jacksonville Journey, a $31 million comprehensive, anti-crime initiative that expands opportunities for children and youth.

# Emerging Trends

### *Creating a dedicated tax for violence prevention.*
Like San Bernardino, Calif., several cities have funded violence prevention efforts through a voter-approved, dedicated tax. In some cases, these funding initiatives have created a powerful, united constituency for balanced youth violence reduction approaches by tying new funding for law enforcement with enhanced resources for youth programs.

Since November 2004, Measure Y in Oakland, Calif., has provided nearly $20 million per year to violence prevention programs and police and fire services. Generated by a new parcel tax and a parking surcharge at commercial lots, this funding made it possible for the police department to assign at least one Problem-Solving Officer to all 57 community police beats and hire new officers for homicide, drug, truancy enforcement, domestic violence and special victims units. In addition, Measure Y pays for programs serving at-risk youth and young adults ranging from ages 14 to 35, including those who are on probation or parole, or who are truant or suspended from school for violent behavior. School- and community-based outreach workers provide mentoring, case management and support services, and community builders go door-to-door to organize neighbors. Advocates and mental health professionals provide support for families and children experiencing domestic violence and for sexually exploited minors. Measure Y also funds diversion and reentry programs for youth on probation or parole as well as violent incidence response teams.

The mayor and city councilmembers appoint a Measure Y oversight committee. Three percent of Measure Y funding pays for professional evaluations, which highlight the effectiveness of the prevention and intervention programs. For example, evaluators found that juvenile parolees participating in Project Choice, which works with incarcerated offenders, have a 41 percent recidivism rate compared with a state average of 75 percent.

Other cities have garnered voter support for small sales tax increases to fund their anti-violence programs. At about the same time as the passage of Oakland's Measure Y, voters in Santa Rosa, Calif., approved Measure O, a .25-cent sales tax generating $7 million per year for the next 20 years for the police, fire and parks and recreation departments, the last of which coordinates the Mayor's Gang Prevention Task Force. Measure O funds 17 new youth development programs, such as job readiness, family support and drug and alcohol counseling. Fort Worth, Texas, and Little Rock, Ark., were among the earliest cities to allocate a targeted revenue source for violence prevention. Since 1995, a special Crime Control and Prevention District — established by state legislation and funded by a voter-approved, .5-cent sales tax — has boosted funding for police as well as the successful Fort Worth After School initiative. A special .5-cent sales tax funds Little Rock's Prevention, Intervention and Treatment Team.

*Selected cities with dedicated taxes for violence prevention: Fort Worth, Texas; Little Rock, Ark.; Oakland, Calif.; San Bernardino, Calif.; Santa Rosa, Calif.*

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### *Working with former offenders to conduct street-level outreach.*

Taking their cues in part from the successful efforts of Boston's street workers program in the early and mid-1990s, cities such as Chicago, Philadelphia, Providence, R.I., and Stockton, Calif., have partnered with faith-based and community agencies that employ street outreach workers to reach youth involved in gangs or criminal activity. In some cases, these workers are former offenders or former gang members themselves who understand the problems these youth face and know how to effectively communicate with them. With the right training and support, street workers are capable of steering at-risk young people toward positive alternatives and defusing conflict between rival gangs. These outreach workers avert crises before they happen and prevent retaliation if a crisis occurs. The street workers operate apart from and in parallel to police. All must overcome mistrust, but street workers must not be seen as providing police with information that would compromise their relationship with gang-involved youth. Therefore, street workers do not share specific details of individual cases with police.

> *"If you grow up and think it's normal to shoot a gun, you do it. If it's not normal and acceptable, then you don't. Norms are driven by peers, and it's peer pressure that needs to be changed." – Dr. Gary Slutkin, explaining the core premise of the CeaseFire Chicago model*

One of the most robust and professionalized examples of this approach can be found in Chicago's highly structured CeaseFire campaign, which partners with the city's community policing program to stop shootings. Housed at the University of Illinois at Chicago and co-chaired by Mayor Richard M. Daley, the Chicago Project for Violence Prevention employs outreach workers as one of five core components of CeaseFire, which has helped reduce shootings and killings by 41 to 73 percent in target neighborhoods. A three-year U.S. Department of Justice evaluation attributed 17 to 35 percent of the reduction solely to CeaseFire. This initiative approaches violence as a public health epidemic in which violent behavior is "transmitted" from one person to another. As with other epidemics and public health campaigns — such as smoking or the spread of HIV/AIDS — stopping and reversing violence requires interrupting transmission mechanisms (e.g., retaliation) and changing behavioral norms (e.g., peer-based social pressures). Dr. Gary Slutkin, an infectious disease epidemiologist who designed this model based on disease control and behavior change sciences, explains its core premise: "If you grow up and think it's normal to shoot a gun, you do it. If it's not normal and acceptable, then you don't. Norms are driven by peers, and it's peer pressure that needs to be changed."

The Chicago model has professionalized systems and structures for recruitment, training, supervision and support for four groups of workers who step in to prevent violence from escalating and to change social expectations. Equipped with intensive training, "violence interrupters" are in many cases influential former gang members who have made a complete break with their past behavior and have the credibility to intervene with gang-involved youth, anticipate and discourage retaliatory acts and promote nonviolent conflict resolution. "Outreach workers" are street-smart individuals who intervene in conflicts but also support a caseload of at least 15 high-risk youth, visiting them at home and connecting them to school, jobs and other opportunities. Outreach supervisors, often promoted from this pool of workers, provide coaching in intervention techniques, such as how to react safely to dangerous situations. Finally, violence prevention coordinators build neighborhood anti-violence coalitions. Other key components of the Chicago model include public education, community mobilization, faith leader involvement and police participation, in which young people receive messages of nonviolence from multiple, credible sources seeking to shift perceptions of what constitutes "normal" behavior. Violence interrupters and outreach workers also work with hospitals to respond immediately when shooting victims are brought to the emergency room.

In the initial year of implementation, the first six CeaseFire zones experienced an average 42 percent decline in shootings and sustained these reductions through 2004 — a significantly better track record than similar and neighboring communities and the city as a whole. Estimated savings for medical and criminal justice costs were more than $31 million between 2000 and 2004. Eight new CeaseFire neighborhoods experienced 20 percent fewer shootings in 2005 to 06 as citywide numbers increased, and the four newest CeaseFire zones cut the number of shootings by half in 2006 to 07. Retaliatory murders were totally eliminated in five of the eight zones examined in the external evaluation.

Elsewhere in the nation, street-level outreach programs have been launched or renewed. The Providence Police Department partners with the Institute for the Study and Practice of Nonviolence, which operates the Providence Nonviolence Streetworkers program. The institute's 13 street workers offer alternatives for high-risk youth — whether they're in school or juvenile detention — by providing court advocacy, visiting youth in detention centers and reconnecting them with jobs, education, services and their families. The Stockton, Calif., Operation Peacekeepers program, which began in 1998 but lost funding and staff after gang-related murders fell, was revitalized in 2007. The city blended general fund money with foundation and federal grants to hire four youth outreach workers and house the program in the mayor's office. These ethnically diverse, highly trained workers serve as a bridge between police, parole and probation, schools, community organizations and youth ages 13 to 18. Every month, 25 to 50 high-risk gang members are invited or mandated to attend a forum in which law enforcement officials explain the severe consequences of continuing their current behavior. Afterward, the Peacekeepers, community groups and mothers of gang members who have been killed talk to the youth about leaving the gang lifestyle.

*The Chicago CeaseFire model is being implemented in several Illinois cities, and is also being replicated in Baltimore and Kansas City, Mo. Other selected cities working with street outreach workers include: Boston; Chicago; Durham, N.C.; Hartford, Conn.; New Haven, Conn.; Oakland, Calif.; Philadelphia; Providence, R.I.; Richmond, Calif.; San José, Calif.; Seattle; Stockton, Calif.*

### *Promoting reentry and removing barriers to work for people with criminal records.*
More than 725,000 people reenter their communities from prison each year. That number includes 200,000 juveniles and young adults returning from juvenile detention or state and federal prison, according to the Urban Institute. A disproportionate number of these individuals return to a subset of distressed neighborhoods in large cities, where they struggle to find housing, employment, education and support services, and to reconnect with their families and communities. As a result, the Bureau of Justice Statistics reports that approximately two-thirds are arrested again within three years. As the prison population has soared since 1980, cities have become more focused on helping people with criminal records transition into their communities to prevent recidivism. For instance, Newark, N.J., is serving as a pilot city for a federal reentry initiative to provide job training and services to 1,200 people with criminal records. Cities may also offer tax credits, bid incentives for city contracts and wage reimbursements for businesses that hire people with criminal records, or establish community benefits agreements and first-source hiring to facilitate reentry. Boston promotes juvenile reentry by helping youth re-enroll in school upon returning from detention facilities (see the Youth in Transition chapter).

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> *Cities such as Boston, New Haven, Conn., Chicago, Minneapolis and San Francisco have implemented new policies that "ban the box" on initial municipal job applications indicating whether applicants have ever been convicted.*

An emerging trend documented by the National Employment Law Project is the push by municipal leaders to remove employment barriers for the one in five Americans with arrest or conviction records. Even with records for minor offenses that occurred a long time ago, these individuals have difficulty securing steady jobs. In response, cities and counties are setting an example by taking steps to reduce obstacles to municipal employment. For instance, cities such as Boston, New Haven, Conn., Chicago, Minneapolis and San Francisco have implemented new policies that "ban the box" on initial municipal job applications indicating whether applicants have ever been convicted. Except where state and local laws exclude people with convictions from specific jobs, criminal records are only taken into account after an applicant has been identified as a serious candidate or deemed "otherwise qualified" for a position. Cities with ban the box measures still conduct initial background checks for certain occupations, such as law enforcement or jobs that involve handling money or working with children, the elderly or other special populations.

These "ban the box" measures ensure that employers first consider applicants based on their skills. They also make clear the degree to which hiring decisions are based on criminal histories, and enable applicants to see if that

was the reason they were not hired and sometimes to appeal the decision. By demonstrating their commitment to removing barriers to employment, city officials are then in a stronger position to encourage private employers to overcome their reluctance to hire people with criminal records. Ordinances in Boston, New Haven and Cambridge, Mass., are the most far-reaching in that they also affect private vendors that do business with the cities; these businesses are permitted to request a waiver. In Battle Creek, Mich., the city requires vendors to state their hiring policies with any bids or proposals to contract with the city.

Other steps can be taken to complement "ban the box" policies to remove barriers to municipal employment. Cities such as Boston, Cambridge, Chicago, Nashville, Tenn., New Haven and Newark require that city agencies consider other mitigating factors, such as the age and seriousness of the offense, relevance of the crime to the position and evidence of rehabilitation. A recent NLC survey shows that these considerations are also made in many small and mid-sized cities, including Centerville and Dublin, Ohio, Edgewood, Ky., Farragut, Tenn., and Lumberton, N.C. Furthermore, Boston and San Francisco establish an appeals process for those denied employment due to their criminal records. Based on recommendations from a Mayoral Policy Caucus on Prisoner Re-entry, Chicago combines its hiring policy with grants for support services (e.g., substance abuse treatment) and transitional jobs program that help ex-offenders gain work experience (see the Family Economic Success chapter).

*Selected cities with "ban the box" policies: Austin, Texas; Baltimore; Boston; Cambridge, Mass.; Chicago; Minneapolis; New Haven, Conn.; Norwich, Conn.; Oakland, Calif.; San Francisco; Savannah, Ga.; St. Paul, Minn.*

### *Forming violent incident response teams.*

When a homicide or other violent incident occurs, city leaders and staff must react quickly. In addition to providing emergency services and investigating the crime scene, police and other city officials are in a position to de-escalate dangerous situations and support traumatized children, families and communities. For example, multi-agency teams of police, child welfare and mental health professionals, probation officers and faith-based and community leaders can ensure that children and families exposed to violence receive counseling, appropriate care or legal aid. Street outreach workers can defuse tensions, and local officials can convene neighborhood meetings to reinforce community norms of nonviolence.

> *Multi-agency teams of police, child welfare and mental health professionals, probation officers and faith-based and community leaders can ensure that children and families exposed to violence receive counseling, appropriate care or legal aid.*

The San José, Calif., Mayor's Gang Prevention Task Force has developed a Crisis Response Protocol to address these situations. If a gang-related homicide or serious injury occurs, the protocol activates police, other city agencies, social service providers, community organizations and schools. After the police department deploys officers to the scene of the incident, the department notifies the mayor's and city manager's office, the councilmember in whose district the incident took place and task force leadership. The crisis response team of city departments and community organizations assess the community climate and identify a course of action. Staff work with schools, families and neighborhoods and collaborate with police to prevent additional violence. Community meetings are planned within 48 hours and held within two weeks.

New Haven, Conn., and Charlotte, N.C., have developed a unique first-response model through the innovative Child Development-Community Policing Program. In New Haven, police are paired with mental health clinicians from the National Center for Children Exposed to Violence (NCCEV) at the Yale University Child Study Center. The program provides cross-training in police procedures, child development and trauma response so that these groups understand each other's work and are able to intervene with traumatized children and families. When violent incidents occur, police reach out directly to residents in their neighborhoods to connect children exposed to violence with the Child Study Center, where clinicians provide counseling and work with police, child protection and juvenile justice staff on individual cases. The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Child Development-Community Polic-

ing (CD-CP) Partnership replicates the New Haven program and serves as NCCEV's Southeast Regional Training Center for collaborations involving police, mental health therapists and child protective services in other cities, including Raleigh, N.C. Between 1996 and 2006, the Charlotte CD-CP referred more than 7,000 cases, more than half of which involved at least one child age 5 or younger.

Several other cities work across departments to reach children exposed to violence. With funding from Measure Y, Oakland, Calif., has developed a Community Response and Support Network to provide first response, emergency funds, intensive support services and mental health referrals for families and friends of homicide victims. The City of Los Angeles Crisis Response Team engages and trains volunteers to provide immediate crisis intervention and referrals for victims of violence and their families. Also in Los Angeles, a county-led Multi-Agency Response Team (MART) of children's social workers and law enforcement officials are prepared to respond to crises and provide child protective services at all hours. Social workers follow strict protocols during raids and arrests to minimize interference with police, who are trained to identify situations requiring child protection. This partnership has served more than 5,000 children since 2004 and improved transitions to alternative care for children whose parents are arrested.

*Selected cities that have adapted New Haven's Child Development-Community Policing Partnership: Baltimore; Bridgeport, Conn.; Charlotte, N.C.; Chelsea, Mass.; Clearwater, Fla.; Framingham, Mass.; Guilford, Conn.; Madison, Conn.; Nashville, Tenn.; Providence, R.I.; Raleigh, N.C.; Rochester, N.Y.; Sitka, Alaska; Stamford, Conn.; Zuni, N.M.*

*Selected cities with violence response teams: Brockton, Mass.; Cambridge, Mass.; Los Angeles; Mobile, Ala.; New Haven, Conn.; Oakland, Calif.; Richmond, Va.; San Francisco; San José, Calif.; Washington, D.C.; Wilmington, Del.*

# Established Trends

### *Adapting Boston's Operation Ceasefire model.*
More than 75 cities have adapted or replicated aspects of Operation Ceasefire, the culmination of a model partnership that helped dramatically lower youth homicides in Boston in the mid 1990s. The Chicago CeaseFire campaign mentioned above is modeled in part on this groundbreaking Boston initiative. Several core elements comprise the Boston Ceasefire youth and gang violence prevention model:

- Coordination among law enforcement agencies at the city, county, state and federal level, and collaboration with city agencies, service providers, faith and community leaders, street workers and researchers;
- Direct communication with gang members that violence will not be tolerated and will bring intensive enforcement efforts targeting their gang, combined with an offer of comprehensive service provision and support to escape the gang lifestyle;
- Intensive prosecution of the most dangerous and violent offenders by "pulling every lever" of legal action when violence occurs;
- Analysis and targeting of violence hot spots, and quick response to flare-ups of violence based on shared intelligence;
- Disruption of illegal gun trafficking; and
- Harnessing the community's voice to reinforce a social norm of nonviolence and utilizing street workers to help carry that message directly to youth.

In addition, Boston and other communities have bolstered this dual message of intervention and consequences by conducting joint home visits by police and clergy. Philadelphia's Youth Violence Reduction Partnership, led by the District Attorney's Office and City Managing Director's Office, operates in the city's most violent neighborhoods and targets youth who are most at risk of killing or being killed. Teams of police, probation officers and street workers make regular home visits to these youth, promising intensive surveillance as well as access to coordinated support services. In Boston, Stockton, Calif., and Baltimore, teams of law enforcement officials join social service staff in meeting face-to-face with young offenders and presenting them with a choice between increased enforcement pressure or services to help them stay out of jail.

> *The City of High Point, N.C., effectively disrupted and shut down the city's drug markets,*
> *and also reduced violent crime in the first target neighborhood by 57 percent.*

Another offshoot of the Ceasefire approach began in High Point, N.C., in 2004. With assistance from a researcher who worked on Operation Ceasefire in Boston, the city launched its successful Overt Drug Market Strategy. Building on the Ceasefire model, police identified and investigated street-level drug dealers, and worked with the district attorney and federal law enforcement officials to present nonviolent dealers with airtight legal cases against them in face-to-face meetings. The police then offered to suspend the dealers' cases as long as they refrained from selling drugs, but promised to activate their cases if they continued this activity. Law enforcement officials also brought together the dealers' families, service providers and faith and community leaders to make clear that help is available if the dealing stops and that the community cares about them but rejects their conduct. By dropping sweeps of nonviolent, street-level dealers and focusing on arrests of violent offenders, High Point effectively disrupted and shut down the city's drug markets, and also reduced violent crime in the first target neighborhood by 57 percent. The City of High Point's persuasion and deterrence strategy has generated extraordinary results in cities such as Hempstead, N.Y., and Providence, R.I. In Hempstead, drug arrests fell 87 percent after implementation of the High Point strategy helped the city shut its drug markets down.

Other cities that have developed strategies based on the Ceasefire model include: Camden, N.J.; Cincinnati; Indianapolis; Los Angeles; Minneapolis; Newark, N.J.; Oakland, Calif.; Rochester, N.Y.; San Francisco; and St. Louis. Recently, a growing network of cities has begun exploring a broader shift in overall policing strategy based on the two approaches used in Boston and High Point. More than 30 cities, led by their police chiefs and municipal leaders, have joined a new National Network for Safe Communities that will support jurisdictions in implementing these models. The network aims to promote city practices that reduce violent crime, eliminate overt drug markets, promote reconciliation among law enforcement and minority communities and reduce high incarceration levels.

### *Creating organizational structures to guide anti-violence efforts.*
Sustainability in combating youth violence often requires the creation of a formal entity to promote and track progress. These structures may take the form of anti-violence coalitions, service provider networks or city offices or departments with a mission of keeping youth safe. Bringing the right stakeholders together through a citywide task force is one commonly-used initial step. In Florence, S.C., the Mayor's Coalition to Prevent Juvenile Crime, convened in November 2004, brings together the police chief, city manager, school superintendent, chamber of commerce president, public housing director and Faith Based Coalition. After conducting a thorough assessment of needs and resources, the task force expanded out-of-school programs for youth in public housing. The coalition also created new job skills training and credit recovery programs. Since 2004, Juvenile Justice Department referrals have fallen by one third, juvenile arbitration cases are down 45 percent and juvenile felonies have decreased 75 percent.

> *In Florence, S.C., the Mayor's Coalition to Prevent Juvenile Crime has helped*
> *reduce juvenile felonies by 75 percent since 2004.*

Newport News, Va., launched its Keeping Our Kids Safe Violence Prevention Network in July 2006. Key accomplishments include a one-stop centralized referral that directs youth to one of more than 40 agencies. The city manager leads the network, along with the police chief, school superintendent and state attorney's office. Between October 2006 and September 2007, the city noted declines in juvenile offenses, truancy and suspensions for participating youth. In El Paso, Texas, which has one of the lowest homicide rates for a city of its size, the police-chaired Youth Initiative Program brings together more than 200 public and private agencies to discuss specific cases and interventions. A multi-agency referral system helps these providers connect students to appropriate services. Many other cities — including Baltimore, Richmond, Calif., and Salinas, Calif., — have developed special offices focused on youth violence. Since late 2007, Richmond's Office of Neighborhood Safety has built partnerships, improved

inter-jurisdictional coordination and leveraged funding resources. Philadelphia, Indianapolis and Oakland, Calif., have established mayoral offices for ex-offender reentry.

### *Partnering with school districts to keep kids safe and on track.*
School officials can be essential partners in reaching children and youth where they spend much of their time. For instance, one widespread city practice is the designation of School Resource Officers to improve school safety and develop crime prevention strategies and lesson plans.

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In Fort Worth, the nonprofit Safe City Commission — a partnership of the mayor, public safety officials and business and community leaders — works with local middle schools and Texas Wesleyan University on the Bright Futures gang and youth violence prevention initiative. Bright Futures empowers students with the knowledge and skills needed to avoid violence. Participants focus on academics, as well as life skills and enrichment activities. Texas Wesleyan students mentor program participants on the university campus. Bright Futures is offered in conjunction with Team Fort Worth, a stay-in-school mentoring initiative.

Because school bullying is correlated with anti-social and criminal behavior, the Chula Vista, Calif., Police Department uses the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program to reduce this behavior in nine schools. School resource officers from the police department participate in bullying prevention committees for each school with teachers, principals, family resource coordinators and parents. With training from experts, these committees prepare plans with consistent messages and methods for responding to incidents of bullying. A police department analyst coordinates implementation and evaluates progress based on student surveys.

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### *Collaborating with the faith community.*
The examples above provide a glimpse of the extent to which the faith community can be an asset to violence prevention efforts. A forthcoming NLC strategy guide outlines some of the reasons the faith community should not be overlooked as potential city partners:

- They are centers of community that may already be located in targeted neighborhoods and/or providing vital services to high-risk youth;

- Their leaders and members include trusted and respected adults who have firsthand knowledge of neighborhoods' problems and resources, and are often available to youth seven days a week, 24 hours a day;

- They can donate space, volunteers and other resources, and help mobilize the community toward a common goal; and

- They are well positioned to reach out to youth and their families; this is especially true of clergy or congregants who have themselves turned their lives around after having experience with gangs.

The strategy guide recommends guidelines for working with faith-based organizations, including the need to establish shared goals, fit programming to capabilities, treat faith leaders as full partners and prohibit proselytizing with public funds. In the past decade, partnerships between police and faith communities have become more robust and more prolific. Many of these partnerships focus on spreading a message of nonviolence and creating positive new alternatives. The Police Department Clergy Council in Oxnard, Calif., involves 500 clergy who work with police and service providers on gang prevention and intervention. Faith community volunteers go door-to-door to discourage violence

and speak directly with gang members to prevent retaliation. A similar network in Redlands, Calif., serves more than 500 youth per day at six afterschool program sites. In Washington, D.C., the East of the River Clergy Police Community partnership coordinates Weed & Seed programs (the ubiquitous two-pronged enforcement/prevention approach sponsored by the U.S. Department of Justice), runs transitional housing and youth intervention programs and recruits mentors for at-risk youth ages 8 to18 and ex-offenders reentering their communities.

Local officials increasingly realize that few institutions are as effective at engaging youth on a one-to-one basis as the faith community. In Worcester, Mass., a Police Department-Clergy Youth Mentoring Program connects youth with mentors from the faith community. More than 200 youth receive afterschool homework help, social needs assistance and group outings that promote self-esteem and build positive relationships among youth, faith leaders and police. In Brooklyn, N.Y., Kings County District Attorney Charles J. Hynes leads Youth and Congregations in Partnership (YCP), engaging court-involved and at-risk youth ages 13 to 22 referred to his office by judges, probation officers, social service agencies and truancy programs. These youth receive intensive mentoring from three faith-based organization volunteers and comprehensive services (e.g., conflict resolution training, mental health counseling, educational support, substance abuse counseling and job placement) from community providers over

> *Local officials increasingly realize that few institutions are as effective at engaging youth on a one-to-one basis as the faith community.*

a period of one year. YCP graduates reoffend at a rate of less than 25 percent compared with nearly 80 percent of similar youth from Brooklyn who do not receive these supports.

Faith leaders are key partners in the 13 cities participating in the California Cities Gang Prevention Network, a three-year project sponsored by NLC and the National Council on Crime and Delinquency. The Los Angeles team is led by Rev. Jeff Carr, the first director of the Mayor's Office of Gang Reduction and Youth Development, while Rev. Harry Cooper Jr., chairs San Diego's Commission on Gang Prevention and Intervention.

### Connecting young people with caring adult mentors.

According to the "Every Child, Every Promise" report by America's Promise – the Alliance for Youth, one-third of teens "lack quality relationships with their parents," and more than 40 percent of young people ages 8 to 21 say they "want more adults in their lives to whom they can turn for help." Mentorship programs offer a proven way to connect young people with trusted and caring adults. A national impact study of the Big Brothers Big Sisters program conducted by Public/Private Ventures showed that community-based mentoring can significantly decrease substance abuse among youth ages 10 to 16, and improve school attendance and performance. Children and youth in this study who had access to mentors were nearly one-third less likely to hit someone and were more likely to get along with their families.

Numerous cities have incorporated this prevention strategy into their public safety agendas. The City of Tulsa, Okla., has made mentoring a centerpiece of its broader anti-gang initiative. In September 2006, Mayor Kathy Taylor teamed up with U.S. Attorney David O'Meilia and the Community Services Council of Greater Tulsa to convene a Building a Safer Tulsa gang prevention summit that engaged more than 250 stakeholders in six working groups focused on school and community-based prevention, intervention and reentry. The mayor followed through on summit recommendations by forming a multi-agency gang steering committee, targeting afterschool programs to high-need neighborhoods, implementing the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Comprehensive Gang Prevention Model in a geographically targeted area and launching Mentoring to the Max. In its first

> *The City of Tulsa, Okla., has made mentoring a centerpiece of its broader anti-gang initiative.*

year, this mentoring program engaged more than 200 mentors in over 40 programs throughout the city and led to new afterschool programs in 18 elementary schools.

One additional notable prevention effort that involves a strong mentoring component can be found in White Plains, N.Y. The White Plains Youth Bureau's Step Up! Youth Development Program provides wraparound services and case management to high-risk youth ages 14 to 21, including those referred by police as an alternative to incarceration or involved in the department's prisoner reentry program. Step Up has reduced the number of negative interactions between police and youth, linked more than three-quarters of participants to jobs and paired youth with carefully screened mentors. These efforts by the police department and Youth Bureau have coincided with a nearly 50 percent reduction in serious crime in White Plains since 2000.

# *FOUR NEW IDEAS TO CONSIDER*

## *Youth Violence*

**Recruit community advocates to provide intensive support and mentoring to high-risk families.** Recognizing that a small number of individuals are often responsible for a disproportionate amount of violent behavior and that gang affiliation often spans multiple generations within families, an innovative approach developed by the Youth Intervention Network in Antioch, Calif., directs interventions toward entire families. The network enlists community members to serve as "Family Advocates" and trains them in mediation, advocacy, conflict resolution and mentoring. These Family Advocates "walk alongside" an individual youth and his or her family to keep them on track toward meeting personal goals, including participation in counseling, substance abuse, tutoring, housing support and job training programs. The Antioch trainings are based on conflict resolution strategies developed in Belfast as the Good Friday agreements were being negotiated, and seek to promote dialogue and reconciliation and reduce exclusionary behavior.

**Work with juvenile courts to expand alternatives to detention.** While serious and violent offenders need to be placed in secure facilities, community-based alternatives to detention can both save scarce public funds and produce better outcomes for many juveniles who have committed nonviolent offenses and do not pose a significant risk to public safety. Common program elements adopted by the Annie E. Casey Foundation's Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative sites typically include: home or community detention; day and evening reporting centers; residential and foster care alternatives when appropriate; and case advocacy and intensive case management. Mayors and other city officials can work closely with juvenile courts to develop these diversion programs and ensure close collaboration with police or other law enforcement agencies. Cities can also play important roles in expanding community service options and education, employment and mentoring programs that address the needs of at-risk youth, working in conjunction with case managers to facilitate effective referrals to these resources.

**Launch an intensive mentoring program for high-risk middle school students.** By partnering with school districts and community service programs, municipal leaders can design mentoring initiatives that reach young people at an early age, when they first begin to display risk factors for participation in and victimization by violence. One unique model that cities may consider for replication or adaptation is the Tariq Khamisa Foundation's HopeWorks Mentoring Program. This program, built on The Choice initiative designed by Mark Shriver in Baltimore and operated by the foundation in San Diego, Escondido and Compton, Calif., engages AmeriCorps members as mentors for young people referred by teachers, parents, counselors, police and community organizations. AmeriCorps participants are trained to provide youth between the ages of 10 and 15 with recreational and community service activities, educational support, crisis intervention and referral assistance. These mentors also conduct home visits and offer guidance in violence prevention strategies.

**Form regional or state networks to share best practices and improve state policies.** City leaders have long understood the range of benefits that can be gained through cross-city learning and collaboration; the identification of which strategies work, opportunities to address regional challenges that cross multiple jurisdictions, validation for local efforts and the ability to articulate common concerns to state and federal policymakers. Mayors can spearhead the development of regional or statewide networks that bring together the diverse range of partners who work on the very challenging issues related to youth violence. One potential model is the California Cities Gang Prevention Network hosted by NLC and the National Council on Crime and Delinquency, which brings together teams of municipal leaders, law enforcement officials and their government and community partners to develop balanced approaches to youth violence that blend enforcement, intervention and prevention strategies.
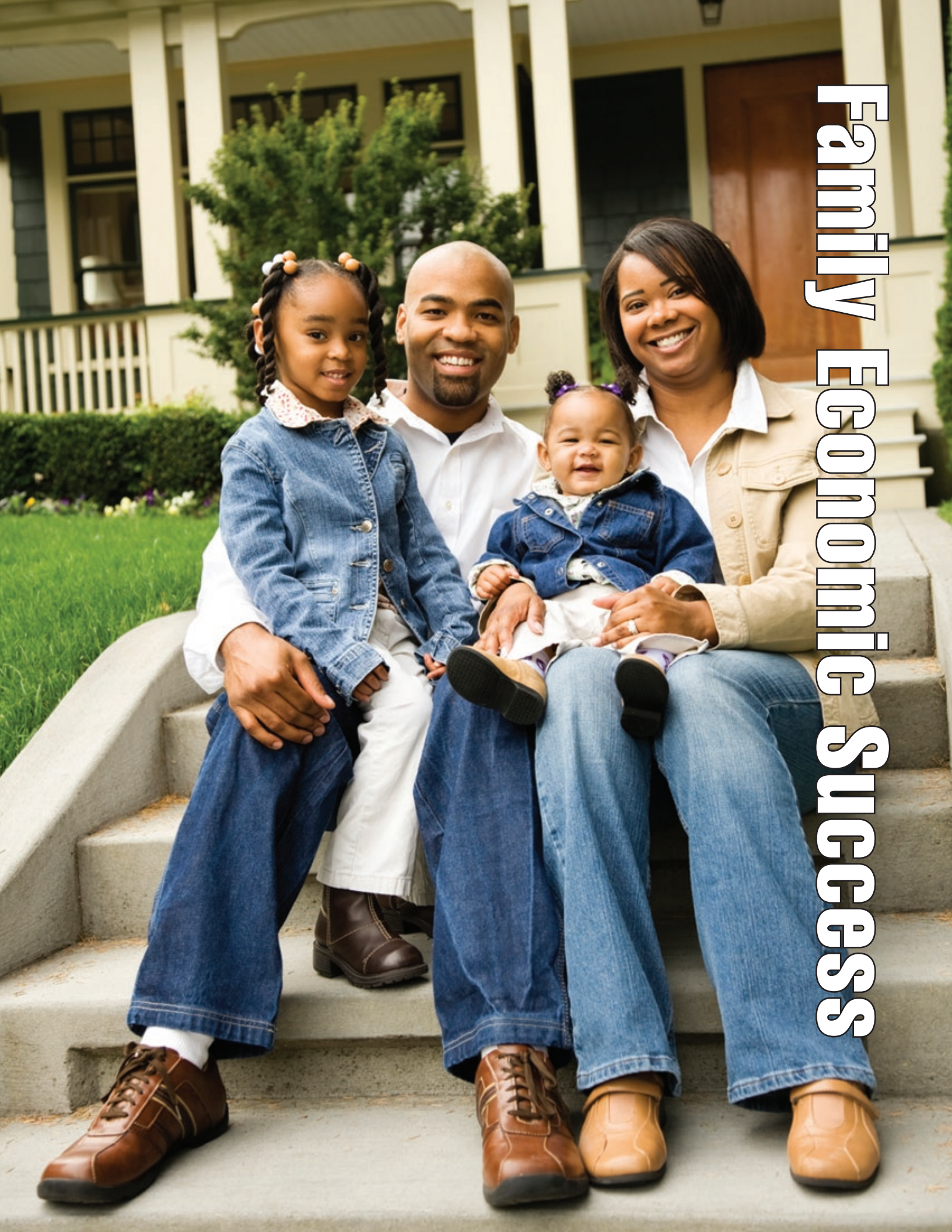
# Family Economic Success

## Key Goals:
- Help residents secure and maintain employment.
- Boost incomes to help families meet basic needs.
- Protect residents from predatory financial practices.
- Support families' efforts to build assets for a more secure future.

## Innovations:
- Initiating savings at birth with "children's development accounts."
- Offering alternative tax refund anticipation loans.
- Using poverty simulations to educate and motivate local leaders.
- Helping families stretch their budgets in tough economic times.

## Emerging Trends:
- Connecting low-income families to mainstream financial institutions.
- Helping families avoid home foreclosures.
- Restricting predatory lending practices.
- Providing and promoting financial education.
- Matching the savings of low-income families to help them build assets.

## Established Trends:
- Connecting eligible families to the Earned Income Tax Credit and other benefits.
- Offering employment and training programs for individuals with barriers to work.
- Providing homeownership counseling and supports.
- Mandating that certain local employers pay a living wage.

## Innovations

***Initiating savings at birth with "children's development accounts."***
A growing body of evidence suggests that growing up in poverty is associated with poorer educational and employment outcomes, and a higher risk of living in poverty as an adult. Children in families that have even a modest level of assets, regardless of income, tend to do better academically and stay in school longer. The City of Caguas, Puerto Rico, and a small handful of other cities have taken action to ensure that all children have the opportunity to build wealth as they grow through children's development accounts (CDAs).

> *The City of Caguas, Puerto Rico, has taken action to ensure that all children have the opportunity to build wealth as they grow through children's development accounts.*

Caguas established the first municipal-level, universal CDA program in 2008. Led by Mayor William Miranda Marín, and working closely with a San Juan community group, Fundación Chana y Samuel Levis, the city created a Child Trust Fund (CTF) that was designed to provide every child born in Caguas with a savings account and an initial deposit of $250.

Mayor Marín was inspired to create the CTF by a similar matched savings program for children and youth that was developed by the city's partner organization, the Fundación Chana y Samuel Levis in conjunction with a na-

tional initiative known as Saving for Education, Entrepreneurship and Downpayment (SEED). SEED is a 10-year initiative conducted by the Corporation for Enterprise Development (CFED) to develop, test and promote matched savings accounts and financial education for children and youth. Launched in 2003, the Fundación's program provided SEED accounts with an initial deposit of $250 to 82 Spanish-speaking elementary school students in Puerto Rico. Youth account-holders could earn a dollar-for-dollar match and savings incentives up to a total of $2,000. As of December 2006, average account balances grew to $681 (including matching funds).

Based on the success of the SEED program, Mayor Marín explored the possibility of providing savings accounts to all children born in the city and subsequently championed the Children's Trust Fund with an initial endowment from the city's general funds.

Through the CTF, families with children born after July 1, 2007, receive an initial cash deposit of $250 placed in a bank account. To be eligible for the program, one of the child's parents or a tutor must attend 25 hours of financial education classes and receive 15 hours of individualized financial counseling throughout the year. Parents must also deposit at least $10 in the child's account each month. The city plans to expand this program to make an additional deposit in the account for each child that finishes the sixth grade. Parents cannot access the funds until the child turns 18. Funds can be used only for postsecondary education, vocational training or starting a small business.

The CTF program is administered by the city's Children's Affairs Office and a local community bank. A local hospital refers 1,700 families with newborns annually, and various city agencies help connect other eligible families. Future plans for the city include increasing the amount of individualized financial counseling provided to CTF families, creating a citywide public media campaign on financial education topics and developing a "train-the-trainer" program to expand the financial education initiative.

*Related innovations:*

- In March 2009, the City of San Antonio — in partnership with the local United Way, the San Antonio Children's Museum and Citibank — launched Cribs to College (C2C), an innovative program to create college savings accounts with an initial deposit of $500 for children under the age of 1. Parents can contribute to the accounts to increase savings for their children, with a one-to-one match funded by the city, and children can "earn" additional investments by achieving annual developmental and other milestones, such as receiving good grades.

### *Offering alternative tax refund anticipation loans.*
The City of San Antonio gives its low- and moderate-income tax filers access to their tax refunds – including the refundable Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) — more quickly through its alternative refund anticipation loan program, called Refund Express.

> *To combat predatory practices, San Antonio leaders opted to give residents a better way to access their tax refunds quickly by developing an alternative to costly refund anticipation loans.*

For more than 30 years, the EITC has been considered one of the most important programs to help boost the incomes working families struggling to make ends meet. In 2007 alone, the EITC provided close to $48 billion in additional income to 24 million individuals and families. Despite the program's success, however, tax preparation companies have developed a host of products designed to deliver the EITC more quickly to taxpayers but which, in effect, target low-income taxpayers with high-interest loans. These products, known as refund anticipation loans (RALs) are high interest rate, short-term loans secured by the taxpayer's expected refund from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). RAL providers charge fees that in 2006 averaged about $300 per borrower, with interest rates ranging from 70 percent to 1,800 percent on an annualized basis. RALS appeal to low-income taxpayers who rely on the refunds to pay for immediate needs like rent, food and utilities, and are willing to pay to receive their refunds in one to two days rather than the standard one to two weeks.

For the past decade, the City of San Antonio has helped low- and moderate-income families claim the federal Earned Income Tax Credit through outreach and free volunteer tax preparation sites. Over time, city leaders became aware that many families were still using paid tax preparers and taking out high-cost RALs to meet immediate financial needs. In 2006, more than 56,000 of the estimated 170,000 San Antonio taxpayers that claimed the EITC received a Refund Anticipation Loan (RAL), paying more than $11 million in interest and processing fees.

To combat these predatory practices, city leaders opted to give residents a better way to access their tax refunds quickly by developing an alternative to the costly RALs. Through an innovative partnership with a local credit union, low-income tax filers can get access to their tax refunds sooner without having to pay the high fees and interest rates. The city's alternative refund anticipation loan program, Refund Express, offers a no-interest loan. Additionally, there is no loan fee; however, $5 of the tax payer's refund is placed into a savings account with the credit union. This builds a connection to mainstream financial services, encourages individuals to save what they can of their refund checks and allows them to get their tax refund deposited directly into their savings account in future years.

The program has been successful since its inception. In the 2007 tax year, the program provided 2,164 Refund Express loans, with an average loan amount of $2,638. The IRS deposits the refund into an account controlled by the credit union, allowing for a simple repayment process. This structure kept the 2007 loan default rate below 1 percent; defaults mainly occurred due to errors in refund calculations by the IRS or the individual taxpayer. In the process of providing these alternative refund loans, the city helped more than 1,500 people open new bank accounts.

*Related innovations:*

- Savannah, Ga., piloted an alternative refund anticipation loan (ARAL) for residents accessing free tax preparation services during the 2009 tax season. A total of $229,657 was accessed through 71 loans, saving residents an estimated $21,300 in fees compared to traditional refund anticipation loans.

- Philadelphia is offering small loans with low interest rates through its newly launched Bank On Philadelphia program. One key goal of the program is to increase residents' access to alternative pay-day loan products offered by credit unions, and to allow non-banking Philadelphians to establish good credit to help them eventually obtain mortgages and car loans.

### *Using poverty simulations to educate and motivate local leaders.*

While many city leaders seek to make poverty reduction a community priority, Savannah, Ga., utilizes an exciting approach that engages residents in experiential poverty simulation exercises to build better public understanding and engagement around the issue of poverty. The poverty simulations, which have been used aggressively by Step Up Savannah (a unique partnership between the city and the Savannah Chamber of Commerce), have resulted in a shift of public sentiment and an increase in public will to support anti-poverty efforts that are included in a broader anti-poverty plan developed under the leadership of Mayor Otis Johnson.

> *The poverty simulations in Savannah, Ga., have resulted in a shift of public sentiment and an increase in public will to support anti-poverty efforts that are included in a broader anti-poverty plan developed under the leadership of Mayor Otis Johnson.*

In an effort to reduce Savannah's 22 percent poverty rate, the city convened an anti-poverty task force in 2003 to address the city's growing income inequality and stagnant poverty rate. Step Up Savannah was the result of this task force and is charged with spearheading and managing the city's anti-poverty and financial stability efforts by creating innovative approaches to workforce development, wealth building and work supports. Step Up Savannah functions as a quasi-city government organization that engages local business, government and non-profit organi-

zations. It now consists of more than 80 organizations and other stakeholders in the community. The city provides funding and staff support and serves as a champion for the anti-poverty agenda.

The poverty simulation was originally developed and is licensed by the Missouri Association for Community Action (MACA). MACA provides poverty simulation kits for purchase to organizations or local governments, including all of the instructions and materials necessary for replication.

Savannah now hosts regular poverty simulation exercises called "Welcome to the State of Poverty." Participants are forced to better understand the difficult choices that low-income families often face during a typical month. Over the course of four 15-minute "weeks," groups of 35 to 75 people assume roles in 26 typical families and try to make home and utility payments; keep their families safe, fed and healthy; and handle unexpected problems and expenses with few resources and inflexible bureaucracies.

Facilitators conclude each simulation with a chance for participants to share their experiences, insights and frustrations. Both the experience of the simulation itself and the opportunity to reflect on it as a group engender greater understanding and help motivate residents to support improvements in public policy.

The city has utilized these simulations to engage local municipal officials, members of the business community, staff from community groups and others. The efforts have been so successful that they have been featured as a promising practice in local newspapers, and national publications and were included in a segment on National Public Radio.

Since 2003, more than 2,500 residents have participated in these poverty simulations, succeeding in raising public awareness and building public will to increase resources and improve services for low-income families. Approximately one-third of the more than 100 business and government leaders who have participated have committed to work with the Step Up initiative. As a result, Savannah has been able to create some new anti-poverty initiatives through Step Up and to tie poverty reduction into the city's overall economic development plan.  For more information, see: http://www.stepupsavannah.org/get-involved/poverty-simulations

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*Related innovations:*
- San Antonio; Bryan, Texas; and Rapid City, S.D., have also implemented poverty simulations.

### Helping families stretch their budgets in tough economic times.
As the costs of basic necessities are rising and many family incomes are falling, city leaders are looking for ways to help residents stretch their budgets and remain financially secure during tough economic times. Boston Mayor Thomas M. Menino, observing families of all income levels feeling the impact of the recession, launched the Food and Fuel Campaign, a collaboration among government, businesses and nonprofit organizations to help residents and small businesses gain access to basic necessities.

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The Food and Fuel Campaign seeks to connect residents to public benefits like SNAP (formerly food stamps) and LIHEAP (home energy subsidies) that can help them cover the costs for nutritious meals and heating their homes. It also provides residents with helpful tools and tips to stay warm and healthy throughout the winter. Finally, it mobilizes community volunteers and other partners to help meet the basic food and fuel needs of low-income residents.

The Food and Fuel Campaign was launched in August 2008 with a summit hosted by Mayor Menino at which community partners offered Boston residents practical advice on a wide range of cost saving topics. The city partnered with supermarkets, utility companies and community organizations to share information on planning a

smart grocery budget, claiming food subsidies and heating assistance and becoming more financially savvy. The summit drew more than 1,000 residents, many of whom signed up for public benefits on the spot. The campaign, which is largely coordinated and administered by volunteers, continues to hold public outreach events, while also distributing information through mailings and Web-based resources.

Community dinners are a unique aspect of this Campaign that attracted more than 2,000 people in the first year of the program. Held at schools and community centers in targeted neighborhoods, these events provide more than a one-time meal. Participating residents connect with city leaders and other community members, learn about neighborhood resources and receive tips on how to cook healthy meals on a budget. At the end, each person goes home with a free bag of groceries as well.

Developing new public and private partnerships within the community has been a key strategy for the campaign. These partners have donated the majority of the resources needed to run the program, including staff and volunteer time, groceries and brochure materials. As a result, the City of Boston is able to administer the campaign at very little cost to the city.

While the campaign provides very practical and concrete assistance to help families stretch their budgets now, Mayor Menino also sees this effort as a meaningful way to strengthen families and communities over time. Families learn new skills that will lead to smarter money management, and they benefit from opportunities to connect with neighbors and city leaders. Communities grow stronger as neighbors gather to eat together, learn together and perhaps find new opportunities to support one another. Finally, the public-private partnerships that help ameliorate the effects of the recession through Food and Fuel will also provide a foundation for new or improved programs and policies to address the roots of poverty.

For more information, see: http://www.cityofboston.gov/mayor/food_fuel.asp

# Emerging Trends

### *Connecting low-income families to mainstream financial institutions.*
A small but rapidly growing number of city officials are working to reduce the large number of city residents who are losing money because they either lack bank accounts altogether or have accounts but continue to use high-cost fringe financial services. These "unbanked" and "underbanked" individuals often do not trust mainstream banks, lack proper identification or feel they cannot afford to open a bank account. The price they pay for remaining outside of the mainstream banking system, however, is quite steep, including forgone interest, high fees for check cashers and money orders, a longer wait for tax refunds or steep rates for a refund anticipation loan and an increased risk of theft.

> *A small but rapidly growing number of city officials are working to reduce the large number of city residents who are losing money because they either lack bank accounts altogether or have accounts but continue to use high-cost fringe financial services.*

When Mayor Gavin Newsom and Treasurer José Cisneros of San Francisco launched the Bank on San Francisco initiative in September 2006, this innovative effort to connect low-income families to mainstream financial institutions quickly garnered national attention. The Bank on San Francisco program strategically engaged a citywide collaboration comprised of the city, financial institutions and community-based organizations to develop a new banking product, supported by robust marketing, outreach and data tracking strategies.

The 17 financial institutions that are part of Bank on San Francisco have since opened more than 25,000 low- or no-cost checking accounts that have no monthly minimum balance requirement and waive one set of fees per client. To address existing or perceived barriers to mainstream banking, participating institutions agree to accept

alternative forms of identification and to open accounts under certain circumstances for those on ChexSystems, a consumer credit reporting agency that financial institutions use to track bounced checks, overdrafts and other activities that would traditionally bar individuals from opening new accounts. Participating banks refer new account holders, particularly those on the ChexSystem, to an approved financial education class that focuses on budgeting and account management, and agree to help sponsor or participate in these trainings. In addition, they actively partner with community groups to promote the product and track accounts and report out on a quarterly basis.

In the three years since the launch of Bank on San Francisco, half a dozen other cities — from Evansville, Ind., to Seattle — have launched their own Bank On programs and additional cities are actively planning to launch campaigns in the near future. Many cities have closely followed the Bank on San Francisco model, but in some cases have made modifications to fit their local strengths and the needs of the community. For example, the Bank on Houston and Philadelphia campaigns expanded the role of financial education and developed targets and standards related to this element of the program.

In addition, some cities have taken other approaches to connecting low-income families to mainstream financial institutions. For example, New York City and San Antonio have built on their existing asset-building infrastructure, including their strong EITC campaigns, to offer residents savings accounts and loan products when they have their taxes prepared at local free tax preparation sites.

*Selected cities with Bank On programs: Evansville, Ind.; Houston; Los Angeles; Philadelphia; San Francisco; Savannah, Ga.; Seattle.*

### *Helping families avoid home foreclosures.*
Responding to the national housing crisis, a growing number of cities are taking steps to stem the tide of home foreclosures. Local leaders recognize that foreclosures lead to widespread negative outcomes: families are uprooted; the financial sector grows increasingly fragile; neighborhoods become blighted when large numbers of houses stand empty; and city finances are battered when home foreclosures soar. According to the Center for Responsible Lending, city government loses an estimated $22,000 in lost taxes and other costs for each foreclosed property.

At least a dozen cities — and likely more — have initiated substantial partnerships and programs to tackle this problem that go well beyond simply providing information to residents. For instance, the cities of Louisville, Ky., and Jacksonville, Fla., created funding pools to offer $5,000 loans to help families facing foreclosure due to a short-term financial crisis. In Louisville, these loans are reduced over time if the owner stays in the home, and are fully forgiven after 10 years.

> *Responding to the national housing crisis, a growing number of cities are taking steps to stem the tide of home foreclosures.*

In 2003 the City of Chicago spearheaded the Homeownership Preservation Initiative (HOPI) in partnership with Neighborhood Housing Services of Chicago, key lending institutions within the city and the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago. HOPI helps homeowners avoid foreclosure through agreements to renegotiate loan terms and small loans to help homeowners with mortgage payments. The city also maintains a 311 foreclosure prevention hotline to connect concerned homeowners with city-approved credit counselors for one free hour of credit counseling assistance, and sponsors bi-monthly "Borrower Outreach Days" in public spaces with elected officials, credit counselors and lenders on site. All of these efforts are publicized through an extensive outreach campaign, including advertisements on public transit and postcards mailed directly to residents. In the last four years, more than 5,500 residents have sought foreclosure assistance and more than 1,600 homes have been saved. In the last six years, the city has helped prevent more than 2,000 foreclosures, reclaimed nearly 550 vacant buildings and provided counseling to more than 12,000 Chicago residents.

In June 2008, the City of Philadelphia launched the first city-sponsored plan in the country that helps lenders and homeowners at risk of foreclosure renegotiate the terms of the loan. Working with the Philadelphia Court of

Common Pleas, the city requires that before any owner-occupied home can be foreclosed and sold by the Sheriff's Office, the borrower and lender must review the loan before the court. In the first three months, this program prevented the sale of almost 80 percent of the referred properties.

*Selected cities with foreclosure prevention initiatives: Baltimore; Boston; Detroit; Chicago; Jacksonville, Fla.; Louisville, Ky.; Milwaukee; New York City; Philadelphia; Richfield, Minn.; St. Paul, Minn.; Syracuse, N.Y.; San Antonio; and St. Louis.*

### *Restricting predatory lending practices.*
Municipal officials see firsthand the devastating effects of predatory lending practices — such as high cost payday loans, refund anticipation loans or subprime car loans — on low-income families and communities. City leaders are increasingly taking action against the payday lending industry by passing local legislation and building local partnerships to give low-income consumers more affordable options.

> *In Washington, D.C., the City Council passed the Payday Loan Consumer Protection Act of 2007, capping the interest rate for short-term loans often used by low-income residents.*

In Washington, D.C., the City Council passed the Payday Loan Consumer Protection Act of 2007. This legislation caps the interest rate for consumer loans (which had previously been exempted from interest rate caps) at 24 percent for short-term, "payday" loans. Marketed to borrowers who cannot wait until their next pay day for immediate needs, payday loans are small cash advances for short periods of time that come at a high cost. Without a cap, annual interest rates are typically between 391 percent and 782 percent. The average payday loan already charges about $15 in fees for a $100 loan.

Miami took steps to curb the high fees charged to low-income families for tax preparation and refund anticipation loans. The city's asset-building partnership, ACCESS Miami, reached an agreement with H&R Block, the nation's largest tax preparer, calling for reduced fees and less aggressive marketing of high-priced refund anticipation loans. Through this partnership, H&R Block offers low-cost tax preparation services to Miami residents at select sites.

The City of San Antonio helps low-income consumers refinance their high-interest car loans to make it easier for them to keep up with payments. Participants are referred to the program during tax season through the city's volunteer tax preparation sites. To qualify for the program, participants must have a car loan with an annual percentage rate (APR) that exceeds 9 percent; the average original interest rate of program participants is 18 to 25 percent APR. Through a partnership with Generations Federal Credit Union, taxpayers can initiate the auto-refinance process right at the tax site and earn an additional $100 reward from the credit union. Each week the site with the highest number of refinances earns a gift card as an incentive to educate taxpayers. In 2008, 110 program participants refinanced their car loans, resulting in an average monthly savings of $125. The resulting reduction in monthly cost provides significant assistance to low and moderate income families.

These efforts build on the now more-common approach utilized in dozens of cities across the country — from small cities in north Texas to larger ones in California — of establishing new zoning laws to limit the size or location of payday lenders and putting a moratorium on new payday lenders while the cities study their impact.

*Selected cities combating predatory practices: Burlington, Vt.; Chicago; Draper, Utah; Greenville, S.C.; Miami; Milwaukee; Norfolk, Va.; Oakland, Calif.; Phoenix; San Antonio; Washington, D.C.*

### *Matching the savings of low-income families to help them build assets.*
A growing number of cities have begun offering — or working in partnership with others to offer — matched savings accounts (often called individual development accounts or IDAs) that allow low- and moderate-income families to save for future investments. Through IDAs, participants receive a financial match for personal savings toward specified goals, such as purchasing a home, starting a business or pursuing higher education. Some communities, such as Bryan, Texas, provide support to nonprofit IDA providers, while others offer a city-run IDA focused exclusively on saving for the purchase of a home, such as in Durham, N.C.

A small number of cities are directly operating more comprehensive matched savings programs for low-income residents. In San Antonio for instance, savings can be used for either the purchase of a home or the cost of education and training, including technical/vocational training, community college or a four-year degree program. In addition, the city partnered with the Ford Motor Company to provide a $2 match for every $1 saved (up to $3,000) to help low-income individuals save for the purchase of a new or certified, pre-owned Ford or Mercury vehicle to help them travel to and from work.

> *Through individual development accounts, participants receive a financial match for personal savings toward specified goals, such as purchasing a home, starting a business or pursuing higher education.*

In 2009, the City of Oakland, Calif., launched a citywide Families Building Wealth IDA pilot program, which will help residents save for continuing or vocational education, the purchase of a new home, or small business capitalization. The program will provide culturally tailored financial education to 250 city residents and help more than 100 participants open an IDA account with a minimum contribution of $20/month. The IDA program will offer a $2 financial match for each dollar saved; with a maximum match of $4,000, savers can conclude the program with $6,000. Not only will each participant complete the financial literacy program, but they will also be provided with one-on-one coaching and counseling related to their asset purchase to ensure that investments are carefully considered and all other avenues of support — such as existing first-time home buyer incentives, microenterprise loans and financial assistance for education — have been tapped.

*Selected cities offering matched savings accounts: Bryan, Texas; Durham, N.C.; Oakland, Calif.; Rapid City, S.D., San Antonio.*

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### *Providing and promoting financial education.*

In order to help families make the most of their earnings, municipalities are increasingly providing or supporting initiatives that offer financial education, covering topics such as banking and budgeting, credit and credit repair, identity theft and building assets. These efforts seek to protect residents from the predatory lending practices that put too many families in a downward spiral of debt and give families the tools to build assets for a stronger financial future.

> *Municipalities are increasingly providing or supporting initiatives that offer financial education, covering topics such as banking and budgeting, credit and credit repair, identity theft and building assets.*

Cities have found a number of ways to support financial education programs. In New York City, Mayor Michael Bloomberg created the Office of Financial Empowerment (OFE) within the Department of Consumer Affairs to educate, empower and protect low-income residents. In partnership with nonprofits and financial institutions, OFE manages the Financial Education Network, which has a searchable online database to connect families with financial education classes, workshops, hotlines and one-on-one counseling services throughout the city.

Other cities have taken steps to make financial education classes more readily available. In Trenton, N.J., Mayor Douglas Palmer created the Greater Trenton Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)/Asset Building Coalition in 2004 under the leadership of the City of Trenton's Department of Health and Human Services. In addition to promoting the federal EITC and providing access to free or low-cost tax services, the coalition supports financial education classes for adults and youth. The Trenton Coalition also partnered with the American Credit Alliance to operate a "Debt Mobile" that travels to different communities around the city providing financial education, credit scores and counseling and assistance in opening a bank account.

In Phoenix and San Antonio, financial education efforts are aimed at residents of all ages. In Phoenix, classes for adults, youth and even young children are taught by volunteers from local financial institutions at the city's community centers. In San Antonio, financial literacy skills were taught to 10,000 elementary and middle school children, ages 5 to 14, through the After School Challenge program, as well as to financial aid recipients at the local community college and adults through the city's community centers.

A number of cities are also boosting participation in financial education by mandating participation for individuals involved other aspects of a city's asset development program, including connections to mainstream bank accounts and individual development accounts.

*Selected cities with financial education initiatives: Charlotte, N.C.; New York City; Phoenix; San Antonio; Trenton, N.J.*

# Established Trends

### *Connecting eligible families to the Earned Income Tax Credit and other benefits.*
Starting roughly a decade ago, word spread quickly among city leaders that money from the federal government — and in some cases state governments — was being left on the table by the large number of low- and moderate-income workers who were not claiming tax credits for which they were eligible. In 2009, the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) entitled workers with modest earnings to a tax refund of up to $4,716, even if the worker did not earn enough to owe taxes. Recognizing this loss both for individual families and the local economy, mayors and councilmembers increasingly initiated or joined existing local EITC campaigns, with the total reaching approximately 200 cities in 2008. In addition, many cities saw an opportunity to promote multiple benefits through broader outreach campaigns, linking families to programs that help with the cost of health care, child care, food, energy and more.

> *Earned Income Tax Credit and multi-benefit outreach campaigns use public education to encourage low- and moderate-income families to take advantage of refunds and programs for which they are eligible.*

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EITC and multi-benefit outreach campaigns use public education to encourage low- and moderate-income families to take advantage of refunds and programs for which they are eligible. Cities of all sizes, from Chicago to Bryan, Texas, have used a wide variety of outreach strategies, including: information on utility statements or employee paystubs; messages on grocery store bags and fast food restaurant tray liners; door-to-door campaigns by trained community members or youth; features or public service announcements in a variety of local media outlets; placards on public transportation; and partnerships with faith leaders in the community. EITC campaigns also frequently include city leadership or collaboration in the provision of free tax preparation services to help eligible individuals file their taxes.

Some cities have utilized interactive technology to help families connect to all of the public tax credits and benefits for which they are eligible through a single, simplified computer program. Benefit screening technology can help city agencies or community organizations identify the benefits for which families are eligible and the estimated amount of the benefits; in some cases, these programs even allow an application to be submitted online. For example, the City of Seattle's Human Services Department, in collaboration with the city and county's Public Health Department, developed PeoplePoint: Bridge to Benefits. This benefit screening tool provides a streamlined application process for multiple benefits and programs at one time, avoiding the need for a family to complete a host of often duplicative applications.

The City of San Francisco, recognizing the tremendous impact that the federal EITC has had for low-income families, has created a local, city-wide earned income tax credit based on the federal EITC. The San Francisco Working Families Credit provides $100 to qualified low-income families while also serving as a marketing tool to

connect families with the federal credit and other benefits. New York City also created a generous local Child Care Tax Credit to provide relief to nearly 50,000 families.

In addition, EITC campaigns have served as a springboard for a number of innovative initiatives that cities have undertaken more recently to promote financial education, connect families to bank accounts and curb predatory lending,.

### *Offering employment and training programs for individuals with barriers to work.*
City leaders recognize that community and financial stability are not possible amidst high unemployment rates and scant opportunities for additional education and training to boost the job prospects of low-skilled residents. Even in good economic times, some workers face significant challenges in the labor market because they have little or no work experience, have had trouble with the law or a previous employer, suffer physical or mental health disabilities or encounter cultural or language barriers to work. City officials across the country are working to connect or reconnect these individuals to steady work, whether through the efforts promoted by local workforce investment boards or through specific city initiatives.

These efforts have taken a variety of forms. For example, microenterprise initiatives offer small-business loans accompanied with microenterprise training. Cities can enhance opportunities for both individual and neighborhood stability by fostering new local business. In cities from Savannah, Ga., to Los Angeles there has also been a resurgence of interest in sectoral strategies to train residents for — and ensure they are connected to — jobs in strong and growing employment sectors. By working with specific industries in the city, such as health care, hospitality or construction, cities can develop more targeted training programs for new workers and pathways to advancement for incumbent workers.

In 2004, the City of Portland, Ore., as part of its overall poverty reduction strategy, created the Portland Economic Opportunity Initiative to provide the needed supports, workforce training and microenterprise projects to increase the income and assets of targeted low-income participants by at least 25 percent within three years of their enrollment.

Focusing on individuals with significant barriers to employment, some cities have developed or funded transitional jobs programs. These programs generally provide a temporary, supported work environment along with intensive training to offer specific populations the background skills and experience they need to enter a new field. Target populations can include ex-offenders, disadvantaged youth, public assistance recipients or others. In 2007, the Mayor's Office of Workforce Development in Chicago created a new transitional jobs program called Customized Work Services (CWS) to help ex-offenders in Chicago gain solid work experience and earn $7.50 an hour within the city's Fleet Management, General Services and Streets and Sanitation departments. Through a combination of case management, job readiness training and paid work, participants prepare to compete for jobs outside of the city. Chicago also sponsors a Social Enterprise Venture program for ex-offenders, which places formerly incarcerated residents in revenue-generating ventures operated by not-for-profit agencies.

### *Providing homeownership counseling and supports.*
Although homeownership is not the most sensible choice for every family, it provides greater stability for many families and strengthens the neighborhoods in which they live. To help families achieve this aspect of the American Dream, a large number of cities and towns offer homeownership counseling to ensure that prospective homebuyers are ready to take on the financial responsibility and upkeep of a new home, as well as information on how to navigate the complexities of purchasing a home.

In addition to information, many cities also provide some level of financial assistance to first-time homeowners. Ranging from matched savings accounts (as noted in emerging trends) to one-time grants for homes purchased in a particular high-foreclosure neighborhood, these programs help ameliorate the steep upfront costs of purchasing a home. Other municipalities have created financial assistance programs to make it more affordable to purchase a home in the community in which one works. These incentives may be focused on public servants, such as police officers and school teachers, or may be done in collaboration with local employers to help their employees settle nearby.

Through the Office of Homeownership, the City of Baltimore offers grants toward downpayment and closing costs for all city employees working for six months or more, as well as employees of more than 80 collaborating local employers. The city also co-sponsors home buying fairs through which prospective homebuyers participate in neighborhood trolley tours in the spring and fall, and the first 50 to execute a sale contract in the designated region receive $3000 toward down payment and closing costs.

Finally, some communities are supporting sweat-equity models like those employed by Habitat for Humanity to help families obtain homes. Cumberland, Md., is investing Community Development Block Grant funding in a collaborative effort to help residents achieve the goal of homeownership through sweat equity as they refurbish abandoned properties. Future homeowners must go through training and financial counseling to ensure that by the time the homes are ready to be occupied, they understand the fundamentals of homeownership, from mortgages and insurance to home maintenance and repair.

### *Mandating that certain local employers pay a living wage*
According to the Living Wage Resource Center, more than 140 cities and counties have passed ordinances requiring the city — and many local businesses that receive contracts or other benefits from the city — to pay employees a wage higher than the federal minimum wage. This higher wage reflects a widespread acknowledgement that the federal minimum wage is inadequate to cover real living expenses.

> *More than 140 communities have passed ordinances requiring the city — and many local businesses that receive contracts or other benefits from the city — to pay employees a wage higher than the federal minimum wage.*

Most living wage laws require the city — and employers benefiting from the city — to abide by the set minimum wage. This may include: city contractors or subcontractors of a certain size; businesses receiving tax breaks or other incentive packages from the city; businesses that have city leases, concessions or franchises; or employers in a specific tourist-related business district. In Missoula, Mont., the city-county passed a living wage ordinance in 2001 requiring companies that receive city economic development assistance to pay their employees at least as much as the starting wage for city employees and provide health benefits.

A few cities have enacted a city-wide minimum wage that is higher than the state or federal minimum and helps raise wages more broadly. For example, in 2006, Albuquerque, N.M., passed legislation to create a separate local minimum wage that will rise to $7.50 per hour in 2009. Although the wage level is lower than many living wages, it applies to all employers in the city, rather than just those who benefit from contracts or tax breaks from the city.

There are a variety of ways that local officials determine the living wage they set for the community. In some cases, cities set the wage a certain percentage higher than the federal or state minimum wage (150 percent higher in Philadelphia, for example). In other cases, the city chooses a rate that is then indexed for inflation, or is reviewed periodically by the city council. Still others utilize a "self-sufficiency standard" that captures a more complete picture of the income that families of varying sizes would need to make ends meet, which has been developed for a number of cities and states by a national organization called Wider Opportunities for Women.

In addition to specifying a wage floor, some seek to influence employer choices regarding benefits and local hiring as well. For example, in cities such as Manchester, Conn., and Ventura, Calif., the required wage is reduced if the employer contributes to the employee's health care coverage. Similarly, some cities reduce the wage requirements if an employer provides paid leave time. To promote local hiring, Boston's Jobs and Living Wage Ordinance requires covered employers to enter into "first source" hiring agreements, in which they agree to interview Boston residents sent by local referral agencies and One Stop Career Centers first.

# *FOUR NEW IDEAS TO CONSIDER*

## *Family Economic Success*

**Work with employers to promote direct savings and access to public benefits through human resources departments.** By working with employers to enroll employees automatically in a plan that diverts a small portion of weekly earnings into a savings account, municipal leaders can promote short-term savings as well as steps toward longer-term retirement or homeownership goals. AutoSave, a pilot project launched by the New America Foundation, uses payroll deductions to make it easier for workers to save money on a regular basis. Mayors and other city officials can also encourage employers to embed information about and screening for public benefits such as the Advance Earned Income Tax Credit, subsidized health insurance and nutrition assistance programs in the routine human resources process for new employees.

**Make debit cards available as an option for unbanked residents.** Prepaid debit cards are a popular alternative for the unbanked. These cards function like traditional debit cards but do not allow the customer to overdraw the account, thus avoiding costly fees. Some cards are tied to savings features and alternative credit-building features. Cities can work with a prepaid debit card provider to develop a basic card with unique features that would meet the needs of the unbanked in the community who are not interested in being connected to a bank. Cities can also utilize their existing infrastructure for social services and asset building to promote and distribute prepaid debit cards. For example, information about prepaid cards and how to obtain them could be made available at the city's tax preparation sites during tax time.

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**Donate city fleet vehicles to address gaps in public transportation.** While many cities have worked to improve public transit to meet the needs of local employers and employees, gaps in the public transportation system continue to frustrate many residents, including shift workers and individuals trying to commute from downtown neighborhoods to outlying suburbs. To address this problem, cities can support car ownership for low-income families by donating cars from the city fleet to affordable car ownership initiatives or car share programs targeted to low-income residents. Seattle and Tacoma, Wash., are currently piloting fleet donation programs.

**Develop job training initiatives for green industries.** City leaders can take advantage of the increasing interest in initiatives that promote a cleaner environment and more efficient energy use by developing their workforce to participate in this growing industry. Many of these green jobs, such as overhauling energy-inefficient buildings or manufacturing environmentally friendly products, are well-suited for low-to-middle skilled workers, providing opportunities for these often under-employed workers to find and maintain employment at a livable wage for them and their families. City leaders also can bring more jobs into their communities by advancing green industries, thus boosting economic development and capturing valuable employment opportunities for their region. At the state level, Michigan is investing significant resources in a No Worker Left Behind program, which provides subsidized education and training to interested residents, with the goal of retraining 100,000 workers to qualify for green jobs by 2010.
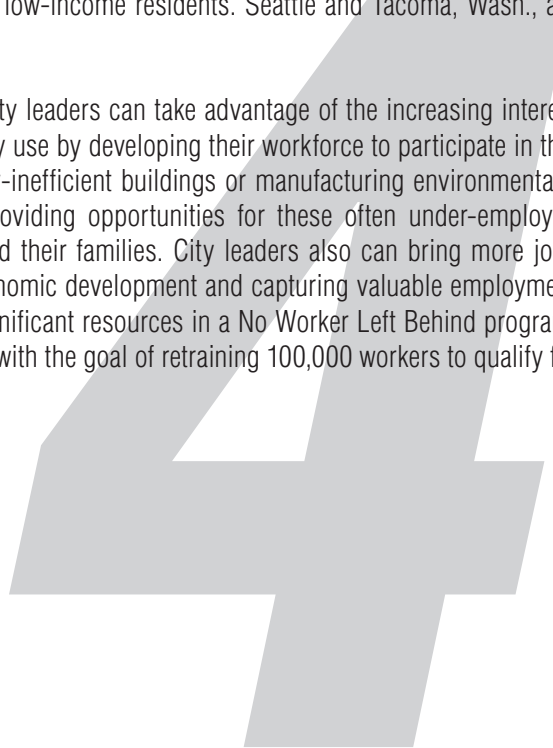
Community Wellness

# Community Wellness

## Key Goals:
- Curb childhood obesity and promote preventive health care.
- Increase opportunities for physical activity.
- Promote good nutrition and healthy eating habits.
- Address inequities in access to fresh food, recreational spaces and access to health care.
- Make healthy lifestyles more sustainable by linking to other individual and community goals.

## Innovations:
- Converting schoolyards to engaging spaces for physical activity and experiential learning.
- Creating a sustainable funding partnership to promote access to fresh food.
- Offering residents universal access to health care.
- Linking wellness efforts to local economic growth.

## Emerging Trends:
- Developing a comprehensive, citywide wellness plan.
- Increasing access to play spaces for children in low-income areas.
- Utilizing community gardens to address obesity, hunger and youth development goals.
- Linking physical activity and conservation efforts.
- Promoting healthy choices at restaurants.

## Established Trends:
- Partnering with schools to increase physical activity and foster healthy eating.
- Issuing a mayor's challenge to promote physical fitness.
- Making it easier and safer to be active.
- Increasing access to farmers' markets.

## Innovations

***Converting schoolyards to engaging spaces for physical activity and experiential learning.***
The Boston Schoolyard Initiative (BSI), a partnership between the City of Boston, Boston Public Schools and the Boston Schoolyard Funders Collaborative, was launched by Mayor Thomas M. Menino in 1995 to convert paved and often deteriorating schoolyards into green spaces that promote physical activity and experiential learning.

When a schoolyard is simply a patch of asphalt with some modest equipment, children are less likely to play active, exploratory games during the school day, teachers are less likely to bring their classes outside for hands-on lessons in the fresh air and children in afterschool programs or from the surrounding neighborhood are less likely to utilize the play space during non-school hours. To facilitate more outdoor time and increased physical activity, BSI has converted traditional school playgrounds into engaging schoolyards with features such as landscaped walking paths, climbing areas, outdoor classrooms, wilderness zones and gardens. These renovated spaces encourage active outdoor play and help teachers utilize natural settings to teach about everything from math to biology and conservation.

Prior to the launch of BSI, ad hoc groups around the city were working to upgrade playgrounds at schools, but these projects were underfunded, often took more than five years to complete and lacked needed maintenance. In 1994, the Boston GreenSpace Alliance and the Urban Land Use Task Force brought this issue to Mayor Menino's attention and he enthusiastically convened a task force that led to the launch of the public/private Boston Schoolyard Initiative the following year. The mayor has provided critical ongoing leadership and the Boston Schoolyard Funders Collaborative, which was set up to encourage and oversee private sector involvement, provides staff support for the BSI, including the executive director, program director and education director. The city provides planning support; schoolyard design, construction and project management through the Public Facilities Department; program and financial oversight; and significant financial support. In recent years, BSI has pioneered and refined the development of outdoor classrooms, and in collaboration with Boston Public Schools, has created professional development and curriculum support materials to help teachers use the schoolyard to improve student learning.

> *The Boston Schoolyard Initiative converts paved and often deteriorating schoolyards into green spaces that promote physical activity and experiential learning.*

Over the past 13 years, the City of Boston has invested nearly $20 million in public funds, which combined with more than $4 million in private funds through the Boston Schoolyard Funders Collaborative (BSFC), has allowed BSI to construct 71 schoolyards serving thousands of children from every Boston neighborhood. In addition, the redesigned schoolyards are open during non-school hours to neighborhood families whose children may not be in school yet, expanding the initiative's impact.

For each schoolyard project, a Schoolyard Friends Group, composed of volunteers from the neighborhood and school community, is the driving force in the design and development process. Each group receives an initial planning and organizing grant and BSI supplies a paid community organizer to help build the capacity of the group and facilitate the identification of key issues and priorities. The city's Department of Construction and Property Management then assigns a project manager to the team to help the group select a landscape architect and provide ongoing assistance with the design and construction process. Throughout the process, the group also receives information and technical assistance from BSFC staff as they make choices about what to include and plan for use and maintenance of their schoolyard and outdoor classrooms. Some schoolyard groups host a "community build day" to keep installation costs down and engage community members in the effort. Before a schoolyard is officially opened, students develop a series of playground rules.

Leaders of BSI work to ensure sustainability of the new schoolyards by creating low maintenance designs and building community ownership. BSI also provides training to those tasked with landscape management, and supports their efforts by creating roving crews supported by BSI and the public schools to address upkeep. Schoolyard Friends Groups, youth crews and other volunteers also host spring and fall schoolyard events and help with basic maintenance, such as planting or repainting lines for games. Finally, by promoting environmental stewardship among students and school staff, the entire school community takes better care of the green space they have been afforded through this initiative.

Boston has discovered that these projects lead to better utilization of community resources, more appealing open space for creative and physical play and new opportunities for outdoor learning activities — from measuring the schoolyard, to putting on plays in a new amphitheater, to planting and harvesting in a school garden. For more information, see: www.schoolyards.org

### Creating a sustainable funding partnership to promote access to fresh food.
While many cities have worked to attract grocery stores or support farmers' markets in low-income neighborhoods, the City of Philadelphia worked to put in place a sustainable public/private funding partnership to improve access to fresh food in underserved communities. The City Council of Philadelphia took an active role in pushing for the creation of the Pennsylvania Fresh Food Financing Initiative (FFFI), which provides grants and loans to help

supermarkets and other fresh food markets operate in communities where infrastructure costs cannot be met solely with conventional loans. This initiative provides low-income families with greater access to nutritious food at lower costs, creates jobs and revitalizes neighborhoods.

> *Philadelphia's Fresh Food Financing Initiative (FFFI) provides low-income families with greater access to nutritious food at lower costs, creates jobs and revitalizes neighborhoods.*

The City of Philadelphia was a key player in the creation of the FFFI. In 2001, The Food Trust, a Philadelphia-based nonprofit, released "The Need for More Supermarkets," a report that showed poor supermarket access in Philadelphia is linked to the high incidence of diet-related diseases in many low-income neighborhoods. In response, City Councilor Blondell Reynolds Brown called for the creation of a Food Marketing Task Force, under the leadership of The Food Trust, to recommend policy changes to improve the availability of affordable, nutritious food in the city. The Food Marketing Task Force was composed of more than 40 experts from city government (including the City Commerce Department, the Health Department and the City Council), the supermarket industry and the civic sector. This task force pushed for the establishment of the statewide Fresh Food Financing Initiative and state representative Dwight Evans of Philadelphia served as the state-level champion.

Targeting underserved areas, the FFFI works to: create new supermarkets; help existing supermarkets renovate their space to provide fresh and healthy options; provide refrigerators for corner stores to carry more fresh fruits and vegetables; and create new open-air markets. To accomplish these goals, FFFI provides up to $250,000 per store in grants for pre-development costs, land assembly, capital investments, soft costs related to start-up (e.g., training or security expenses) and construction grants. As of March 2009, FFFI committed $63.3 million in grants and loans to 68 stores across the state, including 24 stores in the city of Philadelphia, ranging in size from 900 to 69,000 square feet. In total, these projects are expected to create or retain 3,734 jobs and more than 1.44 million square feet of fresh food retail across Pennsylvania.

The state of Pennsylvania committed $30 million over three years to seed the funding for the program. This money was given to a community development bank, The Reinvestment Fund (TRF), which leveraged this funding with New Market Tax Credits and other private sources to create a total fund of $120 million. The program, which is managed by The Food Trust, The Reinvestment Fund, the Greater Philadelphia Urban Affairs Coalition and Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development, is essentially a "one-stop shop" for financing fresh food retailers in underserved areas.

Through this funding partnership, the development of new supermarkets, grocery stores and other venues for purchasing fresh food is occurring at a scale that is much more comprehensive than in most other cities. Moreover, retailers are reporting that produce sales in the new stores are high, indicating that the initiative is succeeding in providing needed access to fresh, healthy food. For more information, see: http://www.thefoodtrust.org/pdf/2009FFFI.pdf

*Related innovation:*
- New York City established the Food Retail Expansion to Support Health (FRESH) Food Stores program. FRESH is modeled after the Philadelphia FFFI and provides zoning and financial incentives for the establishment and retention of neighborhood grocery stores in underserved communities in Northern Manhattan, the South Bronx, Central Brooklyn and Jamaica, Queens.

### *Offering residents universal access to health care.*
Despite the fact that health coverage is rarely thought of as a municipal issue, Mayor Gavin Newsom recognized that community wellness requires universal access to primary health care. In February 2006, he created a planning council that included representatives from a variety of sectors — health care, business, labor, philanthropy

and research — and charged them with designing a system to ensure that all residents of San Francisco could have access to a medical home offering preventive health care, appropriate management of chronic diseases and prompt attention to medical issues that would become much larger and more costly if left untreated.

> *The Healthy San Francisco program connects residents to local health care providers, linking each participant to a primary care medical home from among 27 public and nonprofit health centers.*

The Universal Healthcare Council (UHC) gathered data about community needs, researched health access models and listened to advocates and employers. Based on the recommendations of the UHC, Supervisor Tom Ammiano proposed a Worker Health Care Security Ordinance, which passed unanimously in July 2006. This ordinance offered a two part approach: first, it required all large- and mid-sized employers to contribute to their health care costs through an Employer Spending Requirement (ESR); and second, it provided residents with access to a medical home through the Healthy San Francisco (HSF) program administered by the city's Department of Public Health.

Overseen by the Department of Labor Standards Enforcement, the ESR requires all San Francisco businesses with 20 or more employees to pay at least $1.17 per hour worked per employee toward employee health care costs. Employers that do not choose to provide subsidized health insurance through the company may choose what is called the "city option," in which they either provide their contribution to HSF or deposit it in medical reimbursement accounts that workers can use to cover health care costs. In the first year and a half of the program, employers contributed over $14 million to HSF, with approximately $2 million in additional funds contributed by participants through quarterly enrollment fees.

The Healthy San Francisco program is designed to provide universal, comprehensive, affordable health care to all uninsured adults irrespective of employment status, immigration status or pre-existing conditions. The city is also working toward the goal of making this program available to residents of any income level with a sliding-scale fee based on income; the current upper income limit is 500 percent of the federal poverty line.

This city-driven innovation does not provide portable insurance, but instead connects residents to local health care providers, linking each participant to a primary care medical home from among 27 public and nonprofit health centers. When someone enrolls, they are connected to the new patient appointment center for assistance making their selection and setting up their first appointment. Once their medical home is established, they can continue to be seen by doctors at that clinic for preventive care and management of chronic problems such as asthma or diabetes. They also have access to specialty care, urgent and emergency care, mental health care, substance abuse services, laboratory, inpatient hospitalization, radiology and pharmaceuticals. In fact, in February 2009, Pfizer announced that a subset of HSF participants would begin receiving medicines for free through Pfizer's Sharing the Care program.

More than 40,000 San Francisco residents were enrolled as of May 2009, with nearly a quarter of these new to the health care system (other than emergency care). Of these, 72 percent are at or below the federal poverty line, 14 percent are homeless individuals and 9 percent are young adults (ages 18 to 24) who often struggle to afford coverage. The city hopes enrollment will be close to 60,000 by the end of 2009, attaining what researchers suggest is the maximum expected enrollment out of an estimated 73,000 uninsured.

This system of place-based provision of health care services is more affordable for the city and allows the provision of better coverage to a greater number of residents than if residents were purchasing individual insurance. Nevertheless, HSF continues to encourage residents who have access to public or private health insurance to get it or keep it. To this end, the Healthy San Francisco program provides application assistors, who help enrollees apply for public health insurance programs offered by the state and federal government. In one year, they processed almost 3,000 new applications for free or low-cost health insurance.

In order to continue to improve on its model, San Francisco has set up a quality improvement component of HSF to review (and where necessary, remediate) several issues, including wait times and the quality of basic preventive care and proper management of chronic conditions. Further, the city is hiring an evaluator to assess the impact that HSF is having and at what cost, and what lessons they have learned that would influence replication in other cities. For more information, see: http://www.healthysanfrancisco.org/

### *Linking wellness efforts and local economic growth.*

The New Haven Food Policy Council, created by city ordinance in June 2005, is operated by the local nonprofit, CitySeed, with funding and in-kind support from the City of New Haven and the Community Foundation for Greater New Haven. Their initial focus on improving the quality of food served in schools led the council to recognize the value of serving school children fresh, locally-grown produce. At the same time, they recognized that this could be an opportunity to strengthen the agricultural sector of the local economy. Through local sourcing for school meals, the city's Food Policy Council is promoting the dual goals of increased support for local farmers and far more nutritious food for students than was previously available through the contracted school meal service.

> *Through local sourcing for school meals, the City of New Haven's Food Policy Council is promoting the dual goals of increased support for local farmers and far more nutritious food for students than was previously available through the contracted school meal service.*

In a report released at the May 2008 Greater New Haven Childhood Obesity Summit, the Council argues: "By sourcing locally, students receive food that is fresher and more nutritious than food that has traveled a far distance…. Farms are able to increase their markets by sourcing to schools, improving business viability and strengthening the local economy." The report recommended moving from a contract-based system to a self-operating school food service or, if these services continue to be contracted out, to utilize the RFP process to encourage local sourcing of fruits and vegetables from regional farms.

Acting on the recommendations of the council, the New Haven Board of Education (which is appointed by and includes the mayor) successfully returned the New Haven Public Schools to a self-operating food service under the direction of Chef Tim Cipriano. With experience bringing local food to other school systems, "Chef Tim" works to find ways to make fresh food appealing to young people, serving hamburgers on whole grain buns topped with fresh lettuce and tomatoes with a side of fresh peaches or preparing for dessert a winter squash and apple crisp with a crunchy cornflake topping. He also places an emphasis on teaching kids about how food is grown or raised, giving kids the chance to grow their own food and helping them connect to food by creating and marketing their own recipes or conducting nutritional analyses of food.

This change in the management structure and leadership of the public school food service is already leading healthier choices for New Haven's 20,000 public school students and a greatly increased emphasis on buying fresh, healthy, local food. For more information, see: http://www.cityofnewhaven.com/Government/FoodCouncil.asp

*Related innovations:*

- The Legacy Project, a special entity within the City of Burlington, Vt., manages a Food Council that seeks to strengthen the ties between the local food production system and the school meal system for healthier students and a stronger local economy.

- In Portland, Ore., the city's Bureau of Planning and Sustainability has helped institute Farm to School initiatives, including the Local Lunches program, in an effort to create a new market for the producers while improving the freshness and nutritional value of school meals.

# Emerging Trends

***Developing a comprehensive, citywide wellness plan.***
City efforts to reduce childhood obesity and foster a healthier community have greater impact and staying power if they are grounded in a comprehensive, citywide wellness plan. A comprehensive citywide wellness plan is one that encompasses five key components: (1) the development of a shared vision; (2) the engagement of diverse stakeholders; (3) identification of comprehensive strategies that promote physical activity, access to healthy foods and healthy eating; (4) shared accountability to encourage key stakeholders to remain at the table after strategies are defined; and (4) establishment of a local coordinating body to manage and sustain commitment to the policy. Across the country, more than a dozen cities have initiated such planning efforts, from the Health is Wealth initiative in La Mesa, Calif., to Music City Moves in Memphis, Tenn.

Strong mayoral leadership can provide critical momentum for — and attract key partners to — a collaborative planning process. In Savannah, Ga., Mayor Otis Johnson launched the Healthy Savannah 2012 initiative in the summer of 2007 and developed a vision for community wellness. This plan balances new opportunities for physical activity and efforts to promote a more nutritious, balanced diet.  Going well beyond a single initiative or short-term campaign, the Healthy Savannah Leadership Team, a collaborative representing business, local government, healthcare, public schools, higher education and the local non-profit community, is developing a five-year strategic plan to work toward the community's long-term goals. This Leadership Team is charged with five key goals:

- Creating an environment that makes a healthy choice an easy choice,
- Building a collaborative network that identifies and shares resources,
- Collecting and disseminating information,
- Promoting best practices and implementing innovative programs and
- Advocating for effective policies.

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In addition to mayoral leadership, collaboration with the local school system enriches comprehensive planning efforts. In Jackson, Tenn., for instance, the strong leadership — through words, actions and involvement — from both the mayor and superintendent led to a commitment from the city, school and county to draft a joint comprehensive wellness policy that was supported by the mayor and city council. The resulting Jumpstart Jackson initiative is a collaborative effort between the city of Jackson and the Jackson-Madison County School System to raise community awareness about childhood obesity and provide opportunities, both in and out of school, for increased physical activity and opportunities for healthy eating. The presence of strong leadership at the top helped increase buy-in from city and school staff, and brought additional community organizations and local businesses on board as partners.

Building on a school-based demonstration, the City of Somerville, Mass., has developed a research-based wellness plan in conjunction with Tufts University that has led to a robust local initiative called Shape Up Somerville. Starting in 2002, a Tufts University research study began testing new approaches to promote energy balance with students in the Somerville Public Schools, increasing the number of physical activity options available to children before, during and after school, while improving what they ate through education and changes in the school food program. Based on the results of this work and strong leadership from Mayor Joseph Curtatone, the city created a local task force, composed of more than 11 initiatives and 25 stakeholders, to design a comprehensive community plan to help the entire community shape up, and hired a dedicated staff person to coordinate and help implement the plan. The resulting initiative, Shape Up Somerville, includes infrastructure improvements, new opportunities for physical activity, support for the local farmers' market and efforts to change policy. According to the city, specific accomplishments include the extension of a bike path that will eventually go all the way to Boston, a successful initiative to get more kids to walk to school by providing enhanced pedestrian safety, dozens of new bike racks for schools and streets and a Shape Up Partners promotional program for area restaurants offering special menu items with low-fat substitutes and controlled portions. First year research results of the program indicate that a typical Somerville child will gain on average one pound less per year as a result of the Shape Up Somerville initiative, as compared to similar populations.

*Selected cities with community wellness plans: La Mesa, Calif.; Memphis, Tenn.; Nashville, Tenn.; Savannah, Ga.; Cambridge, Mass.; San Antonio; Detroit; Minneapolis; Somerville, Mass.; Jackson, Tenn.; Hartford, Conn.; Johnson City, Tenn.; Charleston, S.C.; Oakland, Calif.*

### Increasing access to play spaces for children in low-income areas.

Children need safe and inviting places to run, climb and play to support both physical and mental health. Yet local officials in a growing number of communities are recognizing that inequitable access to the remaining safe spaces for play is contributing to higher childhood obesity rates among low-income children.

> *Local officials in a growing number of communities are recognizing that inequitable access to safe spaces for play is contributing to higher childhood obesity rates among low-income children.*

Many communities have taken advantage of technical assistance, peer networks and in some cases funding from a national organization, called KaBOOM!, that is dedicated to creating playgrounds in walking distance of every child. For instance, with sponsorship from KaBOOM!, Tucson Parks and Recreation launched a pilot program in May 2008 to open 12 school park sites during summer vacation, after school hours and on weekends as part of a partnership with Tucson Unified School District. The city was designated a "Playful City" by KaBOOM! for its commitment to increase opportunities for play in the community

Although departments of parks and recreation are often the lead agencies in this effort, leadership from a local elected official who has served as a champion for the effort can help garner more community support and ongoing investment. For example, Mayor Rick Baker noticed that the City of St. Petersburg, Fla., had a large inventory of playgrounds but that many children still lacked a safe place to play in walking distance. As a result, he launched the Play 'N' Close to Home initiative, pledging that he would locate a public playground within a half mile walk of every St. Petersburg child. Since making this pledge in 2004, the city has added 25 new playgrounds, including seven at local elementary schools, and is on track to meet an interim goal (as part of the Mayors' Action Challenge for Children and Families) of having a playground within walking distance of 80 percent of children by 2010. Mayor Michael Bloomberg, as part of his PlaNYC initiative, is also working to ensure that all New Yorkers live within a 10-minute walk of a park through a partnership between the Trust for Public Land and the New York City Parks Department.

In San Francisco, Mayor Gavin Newsom is working to keep parks safe by connecting the local 311 information system to a Web tool called ParkScan, which allows residents to report problems at a local park, such as graffiti or broken swings. Through this effort, the city seeks to target its maintenance efforts so that all available play spaces are safe and inviting.

*Selected cities working to increase access to play spaces in low-income areas: San Francisco; St. Petersburg, Fla.; Atlanta; Tucson, Ariz.; New York City.*

### Linking physical activity with environmental efforts.

With a growing recognition across the country about the need to protect our environment, city officials are seeing new opportunities to address the dual priorities of "going green" and promoting community wellness.

In a growing number of communities, municipal leaders are showing how increased exposure to nature has immediate health benefits, while generating support for conservation efforts. In St. Paul, Minn., the department of parks and recreation partnered with the Säjai Foundation to incorporate its Wise Kids Outdoors program into recreation center-based afterschool programming to change the way children interact with and appreciate nature, while teaching them about the importance of healthy eating and physical activity.

In 2008, Jacksonville, Fla., launched the Great Outdoor Adventure, focusing on conservation and the environment. This program, targeted to 4-year-olds who are enrolled in the Mayor's Book Club (described in the innova-

tions section of the early childhood chapter), encourages children and their families to spend time in Jacksonville's parks and other natural areas and teaches them about conservation through a children's book entitled: "We're Going Green."

The City of Hartford, Conn., is partnering with Connecticut Governor Jodi Rell's No Child Left Inside Initiative to help children re-connect with the great outdoors and build the next generation of environmentally conscious citizens. Activities include fishing derbies, access to parks and summer camp. In Durante, Calif., the city rehabilitated the Fish Canyon Trail less than a mile from town and created a Teen Trekkers hiking club for youth.

In other communities, cities are connecting opportunities for physical activity, such as walking or riding a bike, to reduced emissions and a cleaner environment.  Mayor E. Denise Simmons of Cambridge, Mass., issued the 9 in '09 Mayor's Challenge to encourage residents to participate in nine or more Walk/Ride Days in 2009. Organized by the Green Streets Initiative, Walk/Ride Days are celebrations held on the last Friday of each month. Participating residents wear green and can receive discounts at local shops or restaurants. Individuals record their participation online or in "passports" and the mayor will hold a special reception in January 2010 with prizes, awards and more.

*Select cities linking environmental efforts with community wellness: Bridgeport, Conn.; Cambridge, Mass.; Decatur, Ga.; Durante, Calif.; Hartford, Conn.; Jacksonville, Fla.; Portland, Maine; San Francisco, Calif.*

### *Utilizing community gardens to address obesity, hunger and youth development goals.*
Taking advantage of the widespread presence of community gardens in cities across the country, local leaders have been finding that these gardens can help them accomplish multiple goals for youth in their community. From preventing obesity and addressing hunger, to establishing mentoring relationships and entrepreneurial skills, cities are increasingly making use of this common community asset in new and exciting ways.

> *The City of Savannah, Ga., is targeting the development of city-funded community gardens in parks near afterschool programs and senior centers to build in mentoring programs around the community garden.*

The City of Savannah, Ga., for example, is targeting the development of city-funded community gardens in parks near afterschool programs and senior centers to build in mentoring programs around the community garden. The fresh foods from the garden are then harvested for use in the Kids Café, an afterschool supper program for children who are at risk for hunger, as well as the Golden Age senior program.

Other communities are addressing nutrition education for youth — in addition to access to healthy food — through their community gardens. In Seattle, the Department of Neighborhoods' P-Patch Program, in conjunction with the not-for-profit P-Patch Trust, provides organic community garden space for residents of 70 Seattle neighborhoods, with an emphasis on youth, low-income residents and immigrant populations. The "Cultivating Youth" initiative within the P-Patch Program teaches hands-on nutrition and gardening classes through its Nutrition Education Program at a local elementary school and a variety of afterschool locations each week. They also work with partners in several Seattle Housing Authority communities to bring nutrition and cooking events to the families of their students. Similarly, the Moses Lake, Wash., community garden project, managed by the city's parks and recreation department, has forged links with local school groups and chefs to make the garden both a food source and educational tool for the community.

The City of Norwalk, Conn., converted an overgrown farm into a city-run community garden that combines recreation, nutrition education, gardening and historic preservation. The garden is located at the site of Fodor Farm, one of the last working farms in southern Norwalk, and was created through a joint effort by Norwalk's Recreation and Parks Department, Health Department and the Historical Commission. It was financed with a $98,000 state grant intended to encourage projects that promote healthy lifestyles and help prevent obesity through educational sessions on cooking and nutrition, recreational classes and a farmers' market that will run from June to October.

*Selected cities with multi-purpose community garden initiatives: Burlington, Vt., Moses Lake, Wash.; Del Paso Heights, Calif.; Seattle; Norwalk, Conn.; Oakland, Calif.; Savannah, Ga.*

### *Promoting healthy choices at restaurants.*
Based on research finding that meals purchased away from home are generally higher in calories and saturated fat and lower in fiber and nutrients than home-prepared foods, cities across the country are taking steps to support healthier restaurant menu options and educate the public to improve their choices.

> *New York City, San Francisco and Philadelphia require restaurants with set menu items to provide nutritional information on menus or menu boards.*

In some cases, these efforts are taking the form of positive recognition for local restaurants that offer healthy choices. The city of Berkeley, Calif., partnered with Kaiser Permanente's Healthy Eating, Active Living Program to launch the Eat Well Berkeley restaurant initiative to support and promote area restaurants that offer healthy food choices and call attention to those items on the menu. To qualify for the Eat Well Berkeley initiative, restaurants must be in good standing with the environmental health department and meet a set of health criteria, including: no use of trans-fats; inclusion of fruit or vegetable side dishes; healthy preparations of lean meats; and healthy options on the children's menu. Participating restaurants receive public recognition on the Eat Well Berkeley website and brochure. Restaurants also receive free nutrition consultation and support, as well as Eat Well Berkeley stickers or digital logos to highlight more nutritious offerings. As the restaurant initiative takes root, the City of Berkeley is also exploring a similar certification program for convenience stores that offer healthy snacks. Similarly, in Savannah, Ga., Mayor Otis Johnson is providing stickers of approval for restaurants meeting health conscious standards in an attempt to draw visibility to restaurants that offer healthier options, and in Jackson, Tenn., the city partners with restaurants to provide customers with table tents highlighting healthy menu choices.

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Other cities are passing ordinances to require better consumer education through menu labeling. For instance, New York City, San Francisco and Philadelphia require restaurants with set menu items to provide nutritional information on menus or menu boards.

Following the lead of Tiburon, Calif., where the 18 local restaurants were convinced to voluntarily remove all trans fats, a growing list of cities — including New York City, Philadelphia, Boston, Cambridge, Mass. and Brookline, Mass. — have banned the use of artificial trans fats in city restaurants, providing restaurants and other eateries a transition period in which to find suitable substitutes, as well as advice on alternatives.

*Selected cities promoting healthy choices at restaurants: Savannah, Ga.; Berkeley, Calif.; Los Angeles; New York City; Philadelphia; Boston; Cambridge, Mass.; Brookline, Mass.; Somerville, Mass.*

# Established Trends

### *Partnering with schools to increase physical activity and foster healthy eating.*
Because children spend so much time in school — and often eat breakfast, lunch and snacks there — schools are critical partners in city efforts to curb childhood obesity and promote healthy lifestyles. City-school partnerships can range from discrete initiatives, to ongoing joint-use of recreational facilities and parks, to joint planning to address the community's overall wellness needs.

Some cities and schools work together toward specific goals, such as making changes that will promote healthier choices. For instance, the Eat Well/Be Fit Committee in the Town of Needham, Mass., which includes the city health department, parks and recreation and local school district among others, is encouraging schools to substitute special recognition and fun activities for the traditional cupcake celebrations of students' birthdays throughout the year. In other cases, city-school partnerships can help bring fresh, healthy food into school cafeterias (such as in

New Haven, Conn., described above) and can make vending machine choices more healthy — and more consistent — throughout the city's schools and recreation centers.

> *Because children spend so much time in school — and often eat breakfast, lunch and snacks there — schools are critical partners in city efforts to curb childhood obesity and promote healthy lifestyles.*

Joint-use partnerships between city agencies and school districts are a key tool to promoting wellness in many communities. In the City of Albany, Ore., for example, the city has maintained Deerfield Park, which is owned by the school district, and can use the fields for community youth baseball and youth football. The city and school have a similar arrangement regarding the high school pool; the school district continues to use the pool 800 hours per year free of charge for athletic teams, rehabilitation of injured athletes and physical education classes, but community residents have access to the pool during other times.

The City of South Sioux, Neb., worked with the South Sioux City Community School District and the YMCA to develop a $10 million regional recreation center. The city provided the land along the Missouri River, the city and school district each contributed $750,000 of non-property tax dollars toward the project; a fund drive raised $6.8 million and a USDA loan was secured for the balance. By sharing resources, all participants benefitted from a new state-of-the-art recreation facility. As part of the agreement, city employees have free use of the facility for five years.

Finally, schools can also be tremendous partners in providing valuable data about the needs of children, serving as innovation labs as the community tests new ideas, and helping design and lead new initiatives to mobilize youth to make healthier choices, as described in the comprehensive, city-wide planning trend above.

### *Issuing a mayor's challenge to promote physical fitness.*
Local elected officials can use the bully pulpit to spur members of their communities to get fit. One common way mayors and other elected officials have helped combat obesity and promote healthy lifestyles has been to issue a community-wide challenge to lose weight and get in shape. Cities of all sizes have utilized this approach to educate and motivate residents.

> *When Oklahoma City Mayor Mick Cornett challenged residents to collectively lose weight as a city-wide New Year's resolution in 2008, he shed 42 pounds and inspired more than 20,000 residents to collectively lose more than 140,000 pounds.*

Cities frequently use a city website to supplement this effort, offering information on healthy eating and physical activity opportunities and tools for tracking weight loss. In addition, local businesses may provide free items to participants to help them get fit — from bike reflectors to healthy cookbooks — or as prizes for those logging the most hours of physical activity to greatest weight loss.

Some cities have set an overall goal for the community. When Oklahoma City Mayor Mick Cornett challenged residents to collectively lose weight as a city-wide New Year's resolution in 2008, he shed 42 pounds and inspired more than 20,000 residents to collectively lose more than 140,000 pounds. In the City of Philadelphia, former Mayor John Street bolstered his 76-ton weight-loss challenge to residents with the installation of a health and fitness czar and a network of supports from healthy cooking classes to discounted gym memberships. As a result, the city successfully left behind its dubious distinction as America's fattest city.

In another model, city officials have set forth physical challenges for residents. Through the Shape Up SF! Walking Challenge, led by the City of San Francisco, more than 100 teams and 3,000 people walked the coastline of California between October and December 2006.

Finally, some communities have set up competitions to push residents to stay motivated. In the winter of 2007, Savannah, Ga., challenged Albany, Ga., to a three-month wellness challenge between set groups of families. Participants completed physical, biochemical and written assessments, and Savannah was declared the winner. In Newton, Mass., the mayor twice challenged city employees to join four- or five-member fitness teams to compete for prizes during a two-month Mayor's Fitness Challenge. The first challenge generated so much enthusiasm — as well as positive health results — that Newton more than doubled the number of participants involved in the second Fitness Challenge.

### *Making it easier and safer to be active.*
Cities of all sizes have taken steps to make it both easier and safer for residents — especially children and youth — to be physically active. These efforts to encourage walking and biking as a part of daily life often include public education and marketing efforts, police or citizen involvement to ensure safe routes to school and infrastructure improvements to make the city more friendly to pedestrians and bicyclists.

> *At least one city in every state has utilized Safe Routes to School funding to ensure that children can safely walk to school.*

At least one city in every state has utilized Safe Routes to School (SRTS) funding to ensure that children can safely walk to school. These SRTS efforts may include new sidewalks and cross-walks, safety personnel or neighborhood watch efforts or activities to generate interest in walking to school. As part of its SRTS initiative, the City of Garfield funded an eight-part "Get Up and Go" series in the local paper with activities and helpful information about walking and biking. The city also developed an online interactive community asset and walkability map, including schools, businesses, the location of crossing guards and digital pictures of interesting items along the way contributed by students in the YMCA's before-school program. In other cities, like Shawnee, Kan., and Cleveland, Ohio, city leaders have launched a "walking school bus" to allow young people to walk to school together with an adult.

Many cities are also taking steps to promote walking and biking throughout the city for people of all ages. In Louisville, Ky., Mayor Jerry Abramson launched a Healthy Hometown Movement, including a far-reaching initiative to promote walking and biking in his city. These efforts included: awareness-raising summits on the benefits of biking and walking; a pedestrian and bicycle coordinator; dedicated space on the city's website offering maps and safety tips; an ambitious new bike trail called the Louisville Loop; and new safety markings to emphasize that motorists and bicyclists are to share the traffic lanes on city streets.

Mayor Darwin Hindman of Columbia, Mo., worked in partnership with a 6,000-member community-based organization called PedNet to develop a master bicycle and pedestrian plan. He successfully secured a $25 million federal grant to support the construction of new bikeways and walkways linking schools, residential neighborhoods, recreation facilities and business centers, and adopted new street construction standards to make walking and biking easier and safer. Similarly, the city of Decatur, Ga., is working to fulfill its commitment to become an "active living community" through the creation and implementation of its Community Transportation Plan for Active Living. The plan is multi-modal and strives to enhance quality of life in Decatur by increasing safe pedestrian and bicyclist opportunities. Recent projects include new bike lanes, sidewalk replacements, pedestrian safety improvements and streetscape revitalizations. The work was funded through two federal transportation enhancement grants and a municipal bond issue.

### *Improving access to farmers' markets for low-income residents.*

Understanding the value of access to fresh produce, cities have long supported non-profit farmers' markets through in-kind support, such as the use of public space, assistance getting the word out or help with set-up and clean-up. In addition, many cities — Santa Monica, Calif.; Saline, Mich.; Cannon Beach, Ore.; Glendale, Ariz., and Vicksburg, Miss., to name a few — initiate or formally sponsor farmers' markets to ensure that residents have access to fresh food.

Beyond supporting the presence of farmers' markets in general, a growing number of municipalities are taking additional steps to ensure that low-income families have access to these markets. Some cities and towns are taking steps to ensure that residents who rely on public transportation can access farmers' markets. In New Haven, Conn., the city added a stop on its free downtown trolley to increase access to one of four farmers' markets operated in city parks during the spring and summer.

> *In New Haven, Conn., the city added a stop on its free downtown trolley to increase access to one of four farmers' markets operated in city parks during the spring and summer.*

Cities are also encouraging vendors to ensure that families receiving nutritional supports through food stamps or the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program can use these for produce and other locally produced food at farmers markets. At the Charleston Farmers' Market in Charleston, S.C., which is operated under the auspices of the city's Office of Cultural Affairs, a number of the farmers participate in the WIC program, helping pregnant and parenting women and their young children get plenty of fruits and vegetables in their diets. In New York City, the Health Department's public health office administers the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly known as food stamps) and awards "Health Bucks" that can be used to purchase free fresh fruits and vegetables at farmers markets when SNAP recipients use an electronic benefit transfer (EBT) card.  Similarly, in Boston, the city is offering "Bounty Bucks" to low-income residents to double the value of their SNAP benefits (up to a $20 per person limit) at most local farmers' markets.
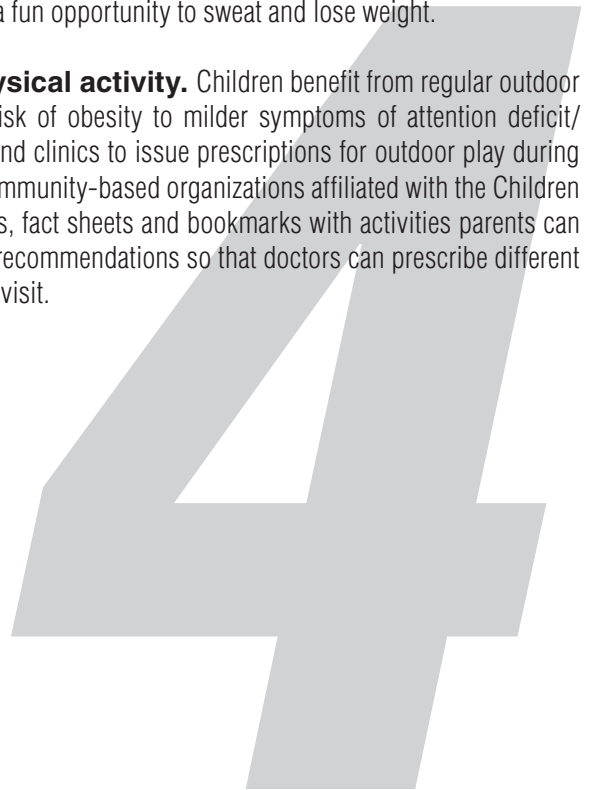
# FOUR NEW IDEAS TO CONSIDER

## Community Wellness

**Create or support mobile farmers' markets.** Because low-income neighborhoods frequently do not have adequate access to fresh foods, some nonprofit organizations have begun experimenting with mobile farmers' markets to bring fresh produce from local farmers or community gardens to these neighborhoods. City leaders can help organize new mobile markets by providing grants for start-up or expansion, waiving fees for vending and health permits, or streamlining paperwork requirements. Mayors and other municipal officials can also help educate residents about the availability of new mobile markets and the importance of eating fresh, healthy food.

**Utilize public health nutritionists to help restaurants and schools prepare healthier meals.** City officials can ask public health department nutritionists to work with chefs in local restaurants to reformulate recipes to make their offerings healthier. Though intensive, the process does not have to be a huge burden on staff time. In Lake County, Ill., one nutritionist worked with area chefs over the course of a year to improve local restaurant offerings. The county found that the key to success is having the nutritionist actually try out the reformulated recipes with chefs to ensure that they will use them. Health officials can provide similar advice to school food service managers to promote simple substitutions that will make school meals healthier.

**Connect fitness and learning through technology.** School districts across the country are recognizing the opportunity to use technology to engage young people in physical activity. City leaders can encourage schools and recreation centers to incorporate popular active video games such as Dance Dance Revolution into physical education classes or afterschool programs. In Charleston, S.C., school officials at Mitchell Elementary created an interactive fitness laboratory that allows students to practice math skills via DVD while using exercise machines. Similarly, five New York City middle schools are participating in a pilot project that has brought Wii Fit into the classroom and provides students a fun opportunity to sweat and lose weight.

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**Encourage local pediatricians to prescribe outdoor physical activity.** Children benefit from regular outdoor activity and contact with nature in a variety of ways, from decreased risk of obesity to milder symptoms of attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder. City leaders can work with local pediatric offices and clinics to issue prescriptions for outdoor play during wellness exams and other office visits. Across the country, a number of community-based organizations affiliated with the Children and Nature Network have already begun such campaigns, offering posters, fact sheets and bookmarks with activities parents can do outside with their children. They have also developed age-appropriate recommendations so that doctors can prescribe different opportunities for outdoor interaction at each regularly scheduled wellness visit.

# Youth Civic Engagement

## Key Goals:
- Give youth a voice in the local decisions that affect their lives.
- Help city leaders develop better policies and make wiser investments.
- Cultivate the next generation's civic leaders by helping youth build confidence, connect with peers and adults and develop leadership and teamwork skills.

## Innovations:
- Adopting a bill of rights for children and youth.
- Partnering with an intermediary to engage and empower youth.
- Supporting sustained connections to local government service over time.

## Emerging Trends:
- Using television and new media to engage young people.
- Developing city initiatives to encourage youth to vote.
- Putting youth in charge of developing teen centers and skate parks.

## Established Trends:
- Forming a youth council.
- Appointing youth to municipal boards and commissions.
- Conducting a community youth mapping project.
- Hosting a youth summit.
- Promoting youth service.

## Innovations

***Adopting a bill of rights for children and youth.***
The City of Portland, Ore., and Multnomah County recently amplified the voice of youth in local government through an exercise in civic learning and participation. In 2006, Portland became the nation's first city to adopt a Children and Youth Bill of Rights. Former Portland Mayor Tom Potter and former Multnomah County Chair Diane Linn worked with a core group of 15 to 20 youth to lead a year-long process that engaged more than 5,000 young people. With guidance from city and county staff and volunteers, the youth team asked their peers a simple question — "what are your rights?" — and gained input in school and at community forums. Youth and other project leaders developed strategies for eliciting feedback from the community, identifying key themes to sort responses into six "articles," drafting a document and garnering support from elected officials and schools.

> *In 2006, Portland became the nation's first city to adopt a Children and Youth Bill of Rights through a year-long process that engaged more than 5,000 young people.*

More than 500 youth attended a Convention on the Rights of Children and Youth to "ratify" the Bill of Rights, after which youth successfully convinced city councilmembers and county board members to adopt the document. The articles in the final Bill of Rights proclaim the right for youth to have:

- A voice in decisions that impact their lives;
- A quality public education;
- Health and wellness;
- Basic needs for a productive life;
- A safe and healthy environment at home and in the community; and
- Access to safe and clean recreational areas.

What makes the Bill of Rights an authentic exercise in youth engagement are the concrete ways in which the city and county are using the document to guide local policies and programs. For instance, shortly after youth ratified the Bill of Rights, the city developed a Youth Planner Program in its Bureau of Planning modeled after a successful initiative in Hampton, Va. (see below). The Portland program was developed in partnership with the Multnomah County Commission on Children, Families and Community and the Multnomah Youth Commission. The Youth Commission makes a concerted effort to involve a very diverse group of youth throughout the city. These efforts include a deliberate focus on recruiting youth who face barriers to participation, and working with youth to make the commission's programs relevant to their lives and tailored to their wide-ranging interests.

The Bill of Rights document serves as a tangible resource for Youth Commission members and their peers seeking to influence municipal policy and hold city and county officials accountable to their youngest constituents. Because of the adoption of the Children and Youth Bill of Rights, the Youth Commission was designated as an official joint city/county youth policy advisory group. The city and county have called for the Youth Commission to conduct an assessment of opportunities for youth engagement in service, volunteering and employment in Portland and Multnomah County.

The commission has spearheaded numerous other initiatives, including budget advocacy efforts to ensure that Portland remains a national leader in youth civic engagement strategies; a program to support youth appointed to city and county boards and commissions; a YouthVOTE! initiative to engage youth in local elections; and a committee to advocate for free public transportation for youth, which currently provides free bus passes to students in three high schools and will expand to serve 14,000 students in all of Portland's public, charter and alternative schools in 2009. Additional commission efforts focus on youth-led marketing for school-based health services and identifying ways in which these centers could be made more youth-friendly. The commission has also formed a media team that trains young people in producing digital video and Web content both for paying clients and to help advance the commission's policy agenda. For more information, see: www.portlandonline.com/youth

*Related innovations:*
- In March 2009, the City of Millbrae, Calif., adopted a Children's Bill of Rights drafted by the San Mateo County Youth Commission and the Peninsula Partnership Leadership Council after these groups reviewed the Portland Children and Youth Bill of Rights.

- Working in partnership with YOUth V.O.I.C.E. (a coalition of various Fall River, Mass., youth groups), Fall River Mayor Robert Correia signed a Youth Bill of Rights in August 2009.

### *Partnering with an intermediary to engage and empower youth.*
Widely recognized as one of the most successful and long-running initiatives in the field, the Hampton, Va., Youth Civic Engagement (YCE) model has empowered local youth for nearly 20 years. This initiative has led to a fundamental shift in city leaders' perceptions of young people. Municipal officials now see youth as resources for community problem-solving rather than recipients of services. YCE's effectiveness can be attributed to the City Council's formation of the Hampton Coalition for Youth, a city department that serves as the catalyst and planning organization for youth issues. The coalition mobilizes the community to promote hundreds of opportunities for youth to impact local policy and practice, provides support and technical assistance to numerous youth-serving organizations in Hampton and sponsors the Hampton Youth Commission.

The other key ingredient for success is the coalition's partnership with Alternatives Inc., a nonprofit youth development intermediary that trains youth and adults in how to work together effectively. This agency, which began offering substance abuse and treatment services in 1973, later shifted its focus beyond prevention to supporting positive youth development — building on young people's strengths and assets rather than trying to fix their problems. Alternatives Inc., now plays an instrumental role in organizing youth and adult leadership groups in each high school and neighborhood to identify issues and concerns. The Neighborhood Youth Advisory Board supported

> *Widely recognized as one of the most successful and long-running initiatives in the field, the Hampton, Va., Youth Civic Engagement model has empowered local youth for nearly 20 years.*

by Alternatives Inc., involve more youth than would be possible in a community that only has one citywide youth council. Led by teens, this board trains other youth to take an active role in improving their neighborhoods. Alternatives Inc., also supports Uth ACT, a diverse youth network formed to promote service and activism. By creating a constructive "inside-outside" tension between local government and a strong intermediary skilled in youth development principles, the partnership between Alternatives Inc., and the city enables the YCE initiative to genuinely promote youth voice.

The core of Hampton's YCE model is a pyramid of opportunities for youth participation in local decision-making with three pathways to empowerment:

- A Service pathway providing short-term, meaningful volunteer opportunities in schools, neighborhoods and city departments;

- An Influence pathway in which youth participate in advisory roles or provide input through focus groups and speakouts; and

- A Shared Leadership pathway in which youth take on leadership roles such as awarding grants and serving as full voting members on city and school boards and commissions.

These various pathways expand the number of youth who are engaged in local government and the community, by allowing them to choose the level of involvement that works for them. The city also hires three youth to work as city planners to develop and update the youth component of the Hampton Community Plan. More than 100 youth work in other city departments such as parks and recreation or serve as volunteers or interns. With support from the Coalition for Youth, the city's youth commission distributes $40,000 per year in city grant funding for youth-focused projects.

The enhanced youth voice and leadership opportunities generated through the Hampton YCE model have yielded multiple dividends for the city. Youth have brought new ideas about land use and needs assessment to parks and recreation staff, shaped school policies on cell phone usage and minimum GPAs for participating in school sports and helped design and raise money for a new state-of-the-art teen center in which programming will be led by youth and adult partnerships. Young adult voter participation in Hampton is significantly higher than the national average, and YCE participants demonstrate greater involvement in their community and engagement in civic discourse. Hampton's YCE model won the 2005 Innovations in Government Award sponsored by Harvard University and the Ash Institute, as well as the 2008 Virginia Innovators Award for Youth Civic Engagement Partnership from the Southern Growth Policies Board. For more information, see: www.hampton.gov/foryouth/youth_youth.html

*Related innovations:*

- Two other particularly strong and multi-faceted youth civic engagement programs can be found in Boston and San Francisco. The San Francisco Youth Commission partners with a local intermediary called the Youth Leadership Institute, which strengthens youth-adult partnerships and provides youth with leadership skills and civic engagement opportunities.

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***Supporting sustained connections to local government service over time.***
Many cities have found ways to involve young people in local government, but all too often these efforts offer only sporadic opportunities that are not connected to an ongoing strategy for engaging youth over time. The City of Olathe, Kan., stands out for keeping youth involved in their community and government from the early grades to high school and beyond. Beginning with a Youth in Government curriculum for elementary school students and continuing with a teen council and city internship program, Olathe's efforts to empower youth in local government include a cohesive set of education and leadership opportunities. The city and school district jointly fund these opportunities, and the assistant city manager and director of student development join students on a Student Development Advisory Board that oversees the programming. As a result of this intentional approach, local youth engagement efforts have grown substantially since 1998.

> *Youth in Olathe, Kan., emphasize that youth empowerment*
> *"is not a program, it's a mindset!"*

Olathe's Youth in Government curriculum provides third graders with a 56-page "Learning About Olathe" workbook on the structure of local government. Elementary school students also visit City Hall for a tour of the city cable channel studio, a presentation on Geographic Information System technology and participation in a mock City Council meeting and budget workshop. Beginning in middle school, more than 1,500 youth participate in the Youth Congress for grades 7-12. Loosely modeled on the U.S. Congress, the Youth Congress offers year-round opportunities for young people to set priorities and shape policy, and holds an annual General Assembly involving between 300 and 400 students. High school students on the city's Teen Council participate in a rigorous, youth-run leadership development program, and assist the City Council in researching, writing and implementing policies. In 2008, the Teen Council developed and piloted the Olathe KidFitness Challenge to address childhood obesity in elementary schools by providing prizes and incentives for maintaining high levels of physical activity and good nutrition. The city also sponsors a student-run Youth Court that functions as an alternative to District Court for first-time juvenile offenders (e.g., for trespassing, theft or vandalism), with a focus on "positive, pro-social" sanctions.

Particularly notable is the City of Olathe Placing Investment in the Leaders of Tomorrow (CO-Pilot) City Internship Program, which provides high school students with internships combined with mentoring and personal development opportunities. CO-Pilot links students to city departments in their fields of career interest, such as computer systems networking, criminal justice, health and human services, finance, public administration and environmental design. The internship orientation and special training sessions provide interns with an introduction to city government, and representatives of each city department serve on the CO-Pilot Advisory Board overseeing the program. By facilitating career connections before students go to college, this program makes it more likely that students will return to live and work in the city.

There are numerous other youth-led programs in Olathe, such as an Olathe Youth Fund for projects initiated by students. These programs are built around the "Communities that Care" strategic approach to positive youth development. However, Olathe youth emphasize that youth empowerment "is not a program, it's a mindset!" For more information, see: www.olatheks.org/youth

# Emerging Trends

***Using television and new media to engage young people.***
A growing number of cities are reaching out to youth through the new media that young people use on a daily basis to communicate with each other, such as social networking websites, YouTube, blogs and other interactive Web-based services. Youth commissions across the country use either Facebook or MySpace to keep members informed about the commissions' activities. For instance, the Philadelphia Youth Commission's Facebook and MySpace

pages provide a forum for discussion of the commission bylaws, budget and subcommittees. The Boston Mayor's Youth Council highlights its efforts on YouTube.

> *In addition to social networking sites, several cities' youth councils have partnered with local public access channels to produce shows that focus on the lives and interests of teens.*

In addition to social networking sites, several cities' youth councils have partnered with local public access channels to produce shows that focus on the lives and interests of teens. For instance, the Tampa, Fla., Mayor's Youth Corps, coordinated by city staff, produces its own monthly "From the Corps" television show on City of Tampa Television, the city's government access channel, to offer a youth perspective on city issues. Lead stories have featured the local food bank, a shelter for abused women and children, youth events and efforts to build racial and cultural understanding. The Youth Corps also has produced public service announcements on recycling and using local parks. In addition, the government access channel features the Mayor's Book Talk television show, in which Mayor Pam Iorio joins fifth-grade students and a local bookstore partner to promote literacy among the city's children by discussing selected books.

The Riverside, Calif., Youth Council has a Public Access Production Committee, which also produces 30-minute informational programs that air on a local public access channel. This committee uses the Charter Communications studio facilities to create educational and entertaining programs of interest to youth, such as "Teen Scene Riverside," which features a panel of experts, a studio audience and special field reports by committee members. The committee has aired "The 25 Most Remarkable Teens in Riverside," a program recognizing local teens who have achieved impressive results in 25 categories.

*Selected cities with youth council television programs: Farmington Hills, Mich.; Kirkland, Wash.; Riverside, Calif.; Tampa, Fla.*

*Selected cities with Facebook or MySpace pages: Boston; Burleson, Texas; Eagle, Idaho; Little Rock, Ark.; Key Biscayne, Fla.; Philadelphia; Seattle; Topeka, Kan.; Tulsa, Okla.; Wichita, Kan.*

### Developing city initiatives to encourage youth to vote.

One of the most obvious ways to promote civic engagement is to help citizens register to vote and cast their ballot on Election Day. But how can cities get young people excited about an election before they reach voting age? Youth council members have helped some cities develop creative strategies to mobilize youth to make their voices heard and to change local and state policies that remove young people from the electoral process.

> *The Casper, Wyo., Youth Empowerment Council developed and won passage of state legislation allowing 16-year-olds to work in polling places on Election Day.*

The Cambridge, Mass., Kids' Council's Youth Involvement Subcommittee is trying to increase youth voter participation by lowering the voting age for city elections from 18 to 17. To achieve this goal, the committee developed the Youth Voting Age Project (YVAP), resuscitating an effort that began in 2001. After the committee held a Youth Voting Rally at City Hall in June 2003, the Cambridge City Council voted almost unanimously in favor of a home rule petition to the state legislature that would enable 17-year-old residents to vote in local elections. The committee has recently worked with state legislators to overcome procedural hurdles to passing a bill lowering the voting age. However, despite their advocacy on the floor of the state House of Representatives, the youth have not yet been successful in moving the bill through legislative committees. Proponents of the bill believe that lowering the voting age would encourage teens to develop better voting habits early in life and would reinforce civics education in school, thereby boosting voter turnout as teens get older.

The Casper, Wyo., Youth Empowerment Council, which advises the City Council, school district and local hospital foundation, has taken a different tack to promote youth engagement during election time. The youth council developed and won passage of state legislation allowing 16-year-olds to work in polling places on Election Day. Youth led the process of drafting a bill, building support at the local level, and lobbying state legislators and the governor. Due to their efforts, 50 youth election judges ages 16 and 17 worked with adults in 2006 to open and close the polls, answer questions and distribute and count ballots. The council expanded the number of youth poll workers in advance of the 2008 elections. According to one youth council member, "We wanted to come up with an idea that would get more youth involved in politics and help create lifelong voters."

In a more traditional approach to getting out the vote, the Boston Mayor's Youth Council began an outreach campaign in 2003 to register teens as they become eligible. Youth council members organized voter registration drives and made voter information more accessible to other youth. The council also published "Our Vote Matters," a voter guide for Boston teens that answers frequently asked questions, provides information about absentee ballots, and gives instructions on how to register and vote.

*Selected cities with youth voting initiatives: Boston,; Cambridge, Mass.; Casper, Wyo.; Portland, Ore.; Riverside, Calif.; San Francisco.*

### *Putting youth in charge of developing teen centers and skate parks.*
Many cities and towns dedicate some funding to skate parks, teen centers and other fun places for young people to go, but some municipalities have gone a step further by putting youth in charge of leading the planning and development of these facilities. Beyond engaging youth in city government, these efforts have multiple benefits. Youth can develop their leadership abilities and specific skills such as fundraising, budgeting and design and programming decisions. In addition, youth are more likely to use a new recreational resource that they have helped plan and develop.

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In Caldwell, Idaho, members of the Mayor's Youth Advisory Council were heavily involved in all aspects of developing a local skate park. These youth highlighted the demand for a skate park, worked with the city to identify a location, researched other regional skate parks, led the design and raised more than $100,000 for the skate park through fundraising efforts and the generous donations of two local developers. The youth council has also planned fundraisers to help Caldwell open its first YMCA.

Youth are also taking a leadership role at THE GARAGE in Burnsville, Minn., a community center and music venue that provides teens with a safe and fun environment in the non-school hours. Converted from an old garage for city vehicles in 1999, this facility, operated by the city's recreation department, offers weekend concerts that attract thousands of young people, as well as a range of programs developed and led by youth. These youth serve on THE GARAGE Advisory Board along with the mayor, police officers and the Dakota County Public Health Department. Before the development of this center, only 34 percent of residents felt youth were "listened to and valued," a number that has now increased to 71 percent. Participating youth are less likely to abuse drugs and alcohol or commit vandalism or theft, and have better school attendance and behavior. THE GARAGE has been named the Twin Cities' Best All Ages Nightclub for five years in a row since 2004.

*Selected cities that have engaged youth in the design of or planning for teen centers and skate parks: Burnsville, Minn.; Caldwell, Idaho; Farmington Hills, Mich.; Hampton, Va.; Kirkland, Wash.; Niles, Ill.*

## Established Trends

### *Forming a youth council.*
Hundreds of cities throughout the nation now have youth advisory councils or youth commissions that provide input on local government decisions, lead community service projects, develop educational programs and sponsor events for teens. Youth council structures vary by city. In some cases, they are sponsored directly by a mayor's office, as in Boston, Indianapolis and Nashville, while in others they are formed through a city-school (e.g., Des

Moines, Iowa) or city-county (e.g., Spokane, Wash.) partnership. Successful youth councils often share several common elements:

- Youth are involved from the outset in leading, planning, gauging youth interest and recruiting participants.

- The council's structure, composition, roles and responsibilities are clearly defined in bylaws or a city ordinance.

- Partnerships with school districts and youth-serving agencies ensure that a diverse group of youth from schools and neighborhoods throughout the city are represented.

- The time, location and format of meetings are youth-friendly.

- Both youth and adults, including an individual who can provide staff support for the youth council, receive some training on how to work together effectively.

- Youth market the council to their peers and lead all youth council projects.

- A fundraising plan or modest budget is in place to sustain a long-term commitment.

- Local elected officials create an environment in which youth perspectives are listened to and respected.

The Savannah, Ga., Youth Council and Chatham County Youth Commission both give youth an active voice in formulating local policies. Together, these groups have helped curb smoking among youth and reduce illegal cigarette sales to minors. After youth commissioners were able to purchase cigarettes at half of the 84 local stores they visited, local leaders put these businesses on notice at a "Kick Butts Day" press conference and tobacco sales to minors decreased. Youth commissioners have also raised awareness about HIV/AIDS, encouraged local businesses to use a Truancy Hotline, sponsored a Teens Drive Safe public awareness campaign and visited preschools to read to young children. Voter registration and electoral participation among older youth are at an all-time high in Savannah, and the Youth Council and Youth Commission have assisted several cities and counties in setting up their own youth councils and commissions.

> *Hundreds of cities throughout the nation now have youth advisory councils or youth commissions that provide input on local government decisions, lead community service projects, develop educational programs and sponsor events for teens.*

In Oak Ridge, Tenn., the Youth Advisory Board (YAB) hosts a highly successful graduation celebration event every year. Working together with a group of parents to create a foundation that raises money for the event, the YAB provides more than $50,000 in cash and prizes to encourage students to graduate and attend the event. Members of the YAB also give a State of the Youth report to the City Council each year and in January 2008, the YAB hosted a "Why I Love Oak Ridge" video contest for students, with the winning videos posted on the city website and on YouTube. The City Council appoints all 16 board members annually through an application and résumé screening process.

### *Appointing youth to municipal boards and commissions.*
In addition to sponsoring a youth council, cities can designate seats on city boards and commissions to give youth a voice in these entities' decisions. These actions are most effective in promoting youth voice when young people are made full voting members. In Boise, Idaho, for instance, youth have served one-year terms as voting members on 10 city boards and commissions since 1999. These appointments provide the youth with an understanding of how local government works and an opportunity to add their perspectives. Youth are members of commissions for parks and recreation, the public housing authority, planning and zoning, the library board and the arts commission, among others. These appointments began as part of Boise's Healthy Community Healthy Youth initiative to promote youth participation in local decision-making processes.

The City of Nashville, Tenn., also appoints youth to municipal boards and commissions. The 50 youth appointees and adult representatives from each of the boards or commissions receive special training on communication, partnership skills and roles and responsibilities. In Burlington, Vt., youth serve on boards such as the police commission, restorative justice panel, parks and recreation, library and school board through the City Youth on Boards program.

### *Conducting a community youth mapping project.*

Youth mapping projects engage young people in canvassing their neighborhoods to identify and map the location of all services, resources and opportunities available to youth. With guidance from a community advisory board and planning and implementation led by a local youth-serving agency, youth mappers receive training and compensation or school credits as they conduct interviews, record their observations and work with Geographic Information Systems tools to map, analyze and disseminate the information they have collected. This information can be compared with "problem-focused" geographic indicators such as crime and dropout rates that are collected more frequently, and can also be used to identify needs and service gaps. Although these data can be very useful, the process itself has intrinsic value in promoting youth leadership and civic engagement.

> *Youth mapping projects engage young people in canvassing their neighborhoods to identify and map the location of all services, resources and opportunities available to youth.*

Strong public-private-nonprofit partnerships are essential to the success of mapping projects, which have been conducted by more than 100 cities since the 1990s. The City of Newark, N.J., is one of the most recent cities to launch a mapping project, utilizing the Community YouthMapping program designed by the Academy for Educational Development's Center for Youth Development and Policy Research. In July 2008, Mayor Cory Booker joined youth mappers, their college-age supervisors and partners such as Newark's Youth Education and Employment Success Center as they surveyed resources in their wards.

Youth mapping projects are often an early component in a youth master planning process. For instance, in creating its Strategic Plan for Youth in 2002, the City of Newport News, Va., worked with young people to conduct more than 1,800 surveys in a mapping project focused on opportunities for youth employment, education, relationships with trusted adults, volunteering and other youth services. The 1999 mapping report revealed that 80 percent of these opportunities were accessible by public transportation. The City of Grand Rapids, Mich., is currently undergoing a youth master planning process in which the city's Youth Commission will create a website to identify programs and services. To learn more about cities that have used youth mapping projects to develop online program locator websites, see the Afterschool Chapter.

### *Hosting a youth summit.*

Many local officials use a youth summit as the initial point of entry for promoting youth civic engagement. These summits provide a forum in which youth can discuss their concerns with municipal leaders and suggest changes to city policies. Effective youth summits require youth-led planning, a convenient time and accessible location, a format that encourages youth participation and a commitment to following up on summit participants' recommendations.

> *The Grand Rapids, Mich., Mayor's Youth Council works with the city,*
> *school district, businesses, and nonprofits to sponsors the annual*
> *KidSpeak Youth Forum at the City Commission chambers.*

In Fort Worth, Texas, the local Youth Advisory Board organizes an annual Youth Town Hall in which youth discuss important issues with the Fort Worth City Council. Fort Worth has also collaborated with the Texas Municipal League to host a statewide summit for hundreds of youth commission members from across the state, an idea that was adapted by the Mississippi Municipal League in 2008 after its staff visited the 2006 Texas summit.

The Grand Rapids, Mich., Mayor's Youth Council works with the city, school district, businesses, and nonprofits to sponsors the annual KidSpeak Youth Forum at the City Commission chambers. KidSpeak empowers youth to advocate on their own behalf before an audience of local and state legislators and other community leaders. Recent KidSpeak forums have focused on preventing youth violence, the need for caring adults in young people's lives and transportation and land use decisions that can reduce urban sprawl and pollution.

Youth summits can also be an opportunity for promoting youth development and skill-building. The City of Roanoke, Va., recently held a conference for youth ages 13 to 18 to interact with local officials and teachers and to attend workshops on leadership development. The Roanoke Youth Commission, Youth Services Citizen Board, city Youth Services Division and Valuing Our Youth through Community Engagement collaborative sponsored the event.

### *Promoting youth service.*

Youth-led community service projects are one of the most common methods by which cities promote youth participation in local government. These projects help young people develop new skills and strengthen their sense of civic connection and responsibility. In addition, service projects enhance the perception among adults that youth are assets to — rather than burdens on — the community. Cities can engage youth in service projects, simultaneously promoting youth leadership and improving local neighborhoods. Some city efforts have connected with the service and conservation corps network, as more than a dozen cities in California and elsewhere have done by hosting a local corps.

> *Since 1995, the Oxnard, Calif., City Corps has encouraged more than 12,000 young people ages 13-24 to give back to their communities.*

In Oxnard, Calif., the city's Recreation and Community Services Department has created its own City Corps, a community service learning program that offers hands-on training, active civic engagement and leadership development. Since 1995, City Corps has encouraged more than 12,000 young people ages 13-24 to give back to their communities. In response to a spike in youth violence in the mid-1990s, the program initially served youth referred by the county probation agency, but is now open to all youth who are interested. City Corps projects involve removing graffiti, assisting the elderly and people with disabilities, restoring wetlands, maintaining storm drain channels, providing tutoring and homework help, working on multimedia projects such as audio/video recording of City Council meetings and much more. Volunteers are recognized at City Council meetings and are also connected to opportunities for paid employment with the city. "Green jobs" have become a new focus of the program, with youth employed to install solar panels.

Other youth service projects utilize a variety of strategies and partners. In April 2009, New York City launched NYC Service, recruiting volunteers to help communities struggling with the current economic downturn, ensuring every young person has an opportunity to serve and be civically engaged, and seeking to make New York the easiest city in the country to volunteer. NYC Service includes a streamlined volunteer screening process that can be used by multiple organizations, reducing costs for duplicative background checks. Because the mayor controls the school district, the city is requiring all schools to have a youth service plan. Since numerous school districts in other cities maintain service requirements for graduation, cities such as Coral Springs, Fla., work with schools to provide opportunities for youth involvement in city repair and maintenance projects. In addition, many cities work with YouthBuild programs across the nation to provide education and job skills as youth build affordable housing. Finally, mayors in cities such as Akron, Ohio, and Washington, D.C., have raised the profile of service projects by recognizing volunteers at annual Global Youth Service Day events.

# *FOUR NEW IDEAS TO CONSIDER*

## *Youth Civic Engagement*

**Strengthen neighborhood supports for youth civic engagement.** Effective efforts to engage young people in local government reach into all neighborhoods and well beyond those groups of students who already hold leadership positions within their schools. Mayors and other city leaders can work through municipal recreation centers and community-based organizations to identify a diverse mix of youth from each neighborhood who have untapped leadership abilities. By involving these youth in activities that build their leadership skills, a community can establish recruiting and feeder mechanisms for a citywide youth council that is truly representative of the full spectrum of its young residents.

**Create new, high-visibility opportunities to nurture and highlight youth leadership.** As with so many things, the best way to learn about our system of government is to participate directly in it. Municipal leaders can encourage young people to get involved, even before they reach voting age, by challenging them to organize voter registration drives and supporting their efforts. Similarly, city officials can underscore the importance of civic participation in the electoral process by building a new local tradition of youth-led election forums or debates that amplify the voice of young people in local government. Finally, mayors can invite youth leaders to participate in their annual "state of the city" address and present their own "state of the youth" address as part of this high-profile event.

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**Train high school students to design and teach local "civics" classes in middle schools.** Research suggests that various forms of cross-age tutoring yield benefits for older youth who teach as well as younger students who receive their instruction. City leaders can work with school officials to give high school students the chance to design and teach classes on local government in middle schools. Even a short sequence of classes can have a significant impact on students' understanding of how local government works. Many state municipal leagues — including those representing cities in California, Colorado, Florida, Illinois, Kansas, Texas and Utah — have developed civics education curricula for teachers that are aligned with state content standards and focused specifically on local government. Cities can use these existing curricula as starting points in developing new initiatives.

**Give the local youth council a mandate to review and comment on city grants and contracts to youth-serving agencies.** Authentic youth civic engagement includes efforts to give young people some measure of genuine power or influence in local decision-making processes. One option that mayors and city councils can consider is charging the local youth council with responsibility for reviewing and commenting on grants and contracts that fall in specified categories. Insights and feedback from a diverse group of young people can raise important questions for consideration by city leaders and add a valuable, market-driven component to the development of the city's partnerships with youth-serving agencies.
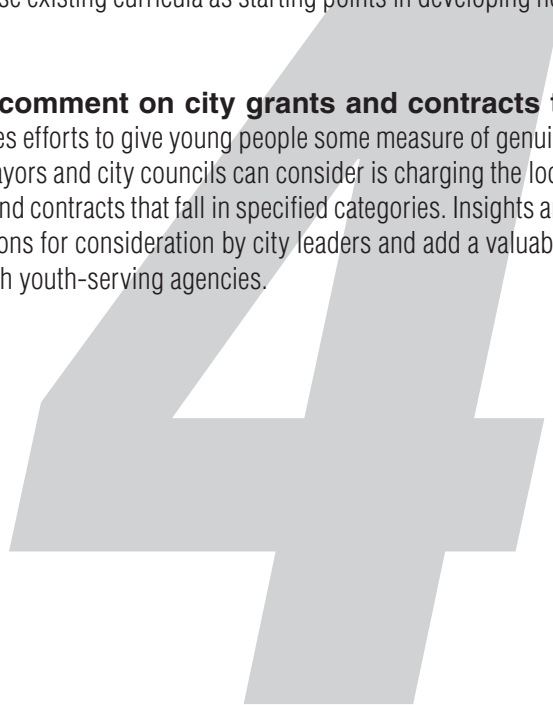
Local Infrastructure for Children, Youth and Families

# Local Infrastructure for Children, Youth and Families

## Key Goals:
- Engage key stakeholders and residents in identifying needs, priorities and opportunities for future action.
- Improve coordination and capacity across public, private and nonprofit sectors.
- Establish reliable and adequate funding streams to sustain city efforts.
- Expand and facilitate access to local programs and services.
- Develop and evaluate innovative new strategies.
- Measure progress over time.

## Innovations:
- Connecting a critical mass of children in one neighborhood with a comprehensive network of services.
- Sharing data across local agencies and school districts.
- Creating an innovation lab to test new strategies.
- Using a children's fund to guide city plans and priorities for young people.

## Emerging Trends:
- Publishing children's scorecards and children's budgets.
- Working with a citywide intermediary to improve youth services and opportunities.
- Dedicating a local revenue source for services to children and families.

## Established Trends:
- Creating a youth master plan.
- Establishing a city office or department for children, youth and families.
- Offering a directory or hotline to connect residents to youth services.

## Innovations

***Connecting a critical mass of children in one neighborhood with a comprehensive network of services.***

Launched in July 2006 by Orlando, Fla., Mayor Buddy Dyer, Parramore Kidz Zone (PKZ) is a multi-sector, public-private partnership that delivers a full network of research-based programs and services to level the playing field for children, youth and their families in Parramore, the city's highest-crime, highest-poverty neighborhood. Of the more than 2,000 children living in this neighborhood, 73 percent are growing up in poverty and 84 percent in single parent households. Rather than focus narrowly on individual problems or program interventions, the more holistic and ambitious PKZ initiative aims to "move the needle" on a broad set of indicators for these children, such as juvenile crime, teen pregnancy, poverty, high school dropout rates and child abuse and neglect. The PKZ approach of concentrating investment within a targeted neighborhood addresses the concern that resources spread too thinly across the community would not make as measurable an impact. It is also intended to prove that bringing prevention programs to scale in a narrow geographic area can improve child and youth outcomes for an entire neighborhood.

Modeled on the Harlem Children's Zone in New York City and part of a larger city effort to revitalize the historic Parramore neighborhood, PKZ leverages partnerships with schools, local nonprofits, churches, neighborhood associations, and recreation centers to connect a "critical mass" of children and youth living in the neighborhood to a

wide range of prevention programs and opportunities. Objectives include boosting participation in pre-kindergarten, health and dental care, mentoring, afterschool, academic enrichment, arts, life skills and tutoring programs, as well as linking young people and their families to job opportunities and family economic assistance programs.

> *The Parramore Kidz Zone initiative aims to "move the needle" on a broad set of indicators – such as juvenile crime, teen pregnancy, poverty, high school dropout rates and child abuse and neglect – for more than 2,000 children in Orlando's Parramore neighborhood.*

When city leaders launched the program, they knew they had to overcome mistrust among residents disenchanted with past efforts to revitalize the neighborhood. PKZ seeks to restore trust between city government and the neighborhood, and relies on several strategies to improve access to programs and ensure their effectiveness, including:

- Marketing available programs and services intensively through a full-time outreach and community organizing team;
- Striving to eliminate barriers of cost, transportation and paperwork;
- Issuing grants to attract new programs into the neighborhood and build the capacity of existing grassroots programs; and
- Employing meticulous, independent program evaluation.

The city plays a vital role in leading and coordinating the PKZ initiative. Mayor Dyer appointed a committee of community and business leaders that oversees distribution of project funds. The Community Foundation of Central Florida manages these funds in a Legacy Trust for Orlando Children established by the City Council. This unique funding structure has enabled the city to leverage more than $2 million in private, corporate and philanthropic donations, with heavy involvement from the mayor, who organizes a signature annual fundraising event called "CityKidz! Buddy's Benefit for Children." The city has also provided $275,000 to ensure there is no waiting list for child care subsidies in the neighborhood and increase the number of children who attend quality child care centers. PKZ has attracted additional state and federal funding. For instance, the city's early successes and strong partnership with the school district have helped leverage a U.S. Department of Labor grant to fund one of the outreach workers. Because much of PKZ funding is allocated on a "per child served" basis, money flows disproportionately to programs that are most popular with neighborhood youth and their families.

The director of the city's Families, Parks, and Recreation Department administers the initiative, convening and providing resources to a coalition of community partners. A cross-system disconnected youth subcommittee had collaborated on more than 50 individual cases as of January 2009. PKZ has also engaged hundreds of residents in planning and implementation, including a youth advisory council that engages in ongoing dialogue with program staff.

In the first three years of the project, juvenile arrests declined by 47 percent, births to teen mothers fell by 18 percent, the percentage of low birthweight infants dropped by 22 percent, and reading and math state test scores improved across the board. In addition, nearly 2,100 children — virtually 100 percent of all those residing in the neighborhood — enrolled in PKZ's programs by the end of the third year, and more than 300 families received support in applying for jobs and public benefits.

As this targeted yet far-reaching approach continues to develop, local officials will draw lessons for replication of this "all hands on deck," neighborhood-based model in other neighborhoods or cities. In addition, the Obama Administration has set a goal of creating up to 20 Promise Neighborhoods across the nation based on the "Children's Zone" model. For more information, see: www.cityoforlando.net/pkz.

*Related innovations:*

- San Francisco's Communities of Opportunity (COO) is a collaborative anti-poverty strategy focused on 2,600 families in the southeastern part of the city. Through a partnership between the city, residents, philanthropies and nonprofits, COO seeks

> to transform the service delivery system in areas such as youth success, employment, health, safety, development, environment and social capital.

- The Harlem Children's Zone is operated and overseen by a nonprofit entity, but it receives a portion of its funding from New York City.

- Miami-Dade County seeks to replicate the Harlem Children's Zone model through its Magic City Children's Zone pilot project.

### *Sharing data across local agencies and school districts.*

Through its Hartford Connects initiative, the City of Hartford, Conn., has demonstrated that the ability to collect, analyze and share relevant data across local agencies can be a powerful tool for municipal leaders.

> *Through a decade of collaborative effort, the City of Hartford has reduced barriers to live data sharing in order to track and improve outcomes for individual youth.*

In cities throughout the nation, access to reliable data helps municipal officials develop targeted strategies to ensure that individual children and families have the support they need to be successful. At an aggregate level, data-driven approaches enable city officials to understand local needs and trends, identify gaps in services, evaluate programs and policies and allocate limited resources. However, even as the same children and families interact with multiple public systems, data on these families are almost always collected and stored separately within individual agencies. Cross-system approaches encounter multiple obstacles to sharing these data: legal provisions — such as the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) — intended to protect students' privacy that require parental consent for obtaining school data, concerns about the misuse of agency data, the need to reconcile separate data collection and analysis processes and technological challenges in integrating databases and making information accessible to stakeholders.

High-level leadership and strong interagency partnerships are needed to overcome these hurdles. Through a decade of collaborative effort, the City of Hartford has reduced barriers to live data sharing in order to track and improve outcomes for individual youth. These efforts began in 1999 with a Department of Labor Youth Opportunity grant that supported Hartford Connects I, a custom-made, Web-based case management system. When the grant ended in 2004, many of the partners involved in this effort worked with business associations and colleges to form the Hartford Future Workforce Investment System (FWIS). The FWIS collaborative coordinated services for youth ages 14 to 24 to increase high school completion, college attendance and completion, career-focused training and acquisition of living wage jobs. In 2006, these roles were incorporated into local government through the creation of the city's Office for Youth Services. The following year, building on partnerships formed through the grant and FWIS, the city launched Hartford Connects II, a collaboration of the Office for Youth Services, Hartford Public Schools, Capital Workforce Partners (the regional workforce investment board), and nine nonprofit service providers and funders.

With Social Solutions' Web-based Efforts to Outcomes (ETO)® data collection, tracking, and reporting system, Hartford Connects II allows 171 staff users to examine customized individual records and aggregate data for more than 20,000 students, including:

- Their educational status, school attendance and achievement;
- High school graduation, enrollment in or completion of postsecondary education and employment status, including whether they receive a living wage salary;
- Their neighborhoods and information on other family members;
- English proficiency, disabilities, foster care placement and court involvement;
- Overall goals determined through an intake assessment; and
- Participation in 36 programs focused on youth development, education, training, EITC take-up, social services, housing, asset building and violence prevention.

These data provide city staff with a clearer understanding of which approaches are effective and help them support early intervention, identify which other agencies are serving the same youth and devote more time to their core missions. ETO reporting features also track outcomes by individual, agency, service, initiative, funding source or demographic group.

The Hartford Connects II partnership has developed policy agreements and memoranda of understanding with Hartford Public Schools and between agencies, and has formulated compliance policy standards for FERPA and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act. Through a partnership with Metro Hartford Information Systems, the Office for Youth Services provides support and training for staff users. In 2009, Hartford Connects II will integrate data from a broader range of city and community-based entities, including the city's Juvenile Review Board, Health and Human Services Department and Office for Young Children, Youth Service Bureau agencies, a community schools partnership and Boys and Girls Clubs. The coming year will also bring a focus on enhanced utilization of site and program referral, and daily uploads of information from Hartford Public Schools' Student System database. For more information, see: www.hartfordconnects.org

*Related innovation:*
- Housed at the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia's Kids Integrated Data System (KIDS) merges archived, de-identified data from city health and human service agencies and the school district on more than 250,000 children to inform research, policy analysis and strategic planning.

### *Creating an innovation lab to test new strategies.*

In 2006, following recommendations by a Commission for Economic Opportunity, New York City Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg launched the Center for Economic Opportunity (CEO) as a "research and development laboratory for testing new anti-poverty strategies." Since then, CEO has annually invested more than $150 million in more than 40 promising ideas to help families overcome an array of barriers to economic self-sufficiency, from unemployment and teen pregnancy to inadequate health care and education. CEO designs, implements, funds and evaluates cutting-edge initiatives that build human capital and provide work supports. Programs target the working poor, young adults, and children ages 0 to 5; some programs are also directed specifically toward the city's poorest neighborhoods.

While many of the activities supported by CEO are innovations in their own right, the city's approach to funding an innovation lab is particularly noteworthy. With a resolute focus on accountability, CEO rigorously assesses outcomes for each initiative as it seeks to continue or replicate evidence-based practices that can break cycles of intergenerational poverty, and discontinue programs that achieve insufficient results.

> *In 2006, New York City Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg launched the Center for Economic Opportunity as a "research and development laboratory for testing new anti-poverty strategies."*

In a January 2009 report on early achievements, the city highlighted some critical elements of the CEO model:

- Strong mayoral leadership and placement of implementation and evaluation responsibility within City Hall under the deputy mayor for health and human services to overcome siloed approaches to poverty reduction;
- An inclusive planning process, tapping the innovative ideas of agency leaders, and allowing some joint initiatives between more than one department;
- An Innovation Fund that is separate from agency budgets and supported by both public and private resources;
- Effective agency management of projects, including cross-program consulting and technical assistance to boost provider capacity;

- Active monitoring by city agencies, a CEO monitoring and evaluation team and several independent, external evaluation firms;

- Utilization of short-term program data and assessments for quick feedback, while investing in more rigorous long-term evaluation; and

- A willingness to evolve, reinvest and disinvest if necessary.

In April 2009, Mayor Bloomberg announced positive initial evaluations of 11 programs and stated that six programs would no longer be backed by CEO. While framed around a goal of reducing poverty, the successful initiatives supported by the CEO Innovation Fund cross a broad range of areas. For instance, in 2008, a local Child Care Tax Credit provided up to $1,700 each to help more than 50,000 families with young children offset the cost of child care, while other policies expanded access to healthy foods at markets, bodegas, and vending carts in high-poverty neighborhoods. The innovation lab has also allowed city agencies to experiment with different approaches to traditional strategies that have the potential to achieve a broader impact. The city Department of Finance's use of federal tax information to mail pre-populated amended tax returns to residents who were eligible for but did not claim the EITC in the prior year put approximately $3.6 million into the hands of nearly 4,200 individuals in 2008.

The innovation lab encourages incremental risk-taking, incubating bold new poverty reduction approaches that may offer a breakthrough for local policymakers. As the nation's first conditional cash transfer program, the privately-funded Opportunity NYC pilot offers participating families cash incentives for adult education and job training, sustained employment, strong school attendance and achievement, parent attendance at parent-teacher conferences, maintenance of adequate health coverage and regular medical and dental visits. Cash rewards are directly deposited in special low-cost savings accounts or stored on value cards for participants. CEO also funds initiatives that include the Office of Financial Empowerment, an acclaimed nurse-family partnership home visiting program, "green-collar apprenticeships" for young adults, and stronger enforcement of local living wage, prevailing wage and consumer protection laws.

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Finally, by drawing lessons from cutting-edge ideas put into practice for the first time, CEO will also inform federal and state policy. For example, CEO has applied an alternative to the outdated federal poverty measure that more accurately represents the true cost of living in a particular geographic area. In addition, Mayor Bloomberg is hoping the CEO model itself will garner federal support. In an April 2009 letter to President Obama, 25 mayors joined Mayor Bloomberg in calling for a Federal Urban Innovation Fund. Administered by the White House, the fund would help cities and federal agencies partner to develop, evaluate, bring to scale and share effective approaches to poverty reduction, and would also support a national effort to revise the official federal poverty measure. For more information, see: www.nyc.gov/ceo

*Related innovation:*
- The Mind Trust in Indianapolis, described in detail as an innovation in the Education chapter, is a nonprofit intermediary supported by the city that enables educational entrepreneurs and organizations to develop and test new strategies for improving student achievement.

### *Using a children's fund to guide city plans and priorities for young people.*
The San Francisco Children's Fund anchors a rigorous and inclusive planning process to determine how the city can best meet the needs of local children and youth. In 1990, following a series of budget cuts that sharply reduced services for San Francisco's young people, a campaign led by Coleman Advocates for Children and Youth pushed for a successful referendum to amend the city charter. The referendum guaranteed that a portion of property tax revenue would be dedicated toward a Children's Fund for young people ages 0 to 17. This "Children's Amendment" also established a baseline budget for children's services in an attempt to ensure they would not be cut from other areas, and stipulated that any decrease or increase to the Children's Fund be proportional to fluctuations in general fund revenue and account for growth in the population of children. Voters approved the amendment, which went into effect in 1991. A 2000 reauthorization that passed with 74 percent voter approval expanded the Children's

Fund by dedicating 3 cents per $100 of assessed value from property tax revenues toward the fund. The next reauthorization of the amendment will be on the ballot in 2015.

The Children's Fund, administered by the city's Department of Children, Youth and Their Families (DCYF), supports a web of programs that reach more than 40,000 young people throughout San Francisco. Eligible services supported by the fund include: child care and early education; out-of-school time programs; health and wellness services; training, employment and job placement; youth empowerment and leadership development; violence prevention; school partnership efforts; and family support.

> *One of the most innovative aspects of the San Francisco Children's Fund is how it serves as a focal point for a multi-year planning cycle led by the city's Department for Children, Youth, and Their Families.*

Although San Francisco is the first city to guarantee a portion of municipal revenue toward children's services, many cities have since followed suit (see Emerging Trends below). Yet one of the most innovative aspects of the Children's Fund is how it serves as a focal point for a multi-year planning cycle led by DCYF, resulting in a Children's Services Allocation Plan and a Request for Proposals through which nonprofit organizations can apply for city funds to deliver services and programs. This process begins with an in-depth Community Needs Assessment involving significant community participation and input. Since the 2005 assessment, DCYF has sponsored more than 40 neighborhood forums engaging over 1,500 residents and conducted surveys, focus groups, data collection efforts, interviews with city department heads and other stakeholders and a YouthVote civic engagement initiative. In addition, a Children's Fund Citizen's Advisory Committee appointed by the mayor that includes parents and youth provides oversight for use of the fund.

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The finalized Allocation Plan must have measurable goals, objectives and outcomes, and must include an evaluation of services supported by Children's Fund dollars. The plan must also describe how services receiving funding are coordinated with other children's services, and provide a breakdown of the amount of funding that goes toward specific services. At least 3 percent of the set-aside is dedicated toward youth-initiated projects. Based on the Children's Services Allocation Plan presented by the mayor and approved by the city Board of Supervisors, DCYF issues requests for proposals to community organizations and develops and manages contracts for city and community-based children's services. The Children's Fund has helped DCYF make a broad mix of city innovations possible, including:

- Afterschool for All, which is closing the gap in the number of children seeking but unable to access quality afterschool programs;
- Rec Connect, which partners five recreation facilities with community organizations to provide quality programs to more than 14,000 youth;
- A Wellness Initiative that serves 6,600 students at 15 school-based wellness centers on high school campuses;
- Anti-truancy and violence prevention initiatives in 25 schools; and
- A local wage augmentation program for child care workers.

To ensure that the Children's Fund generates a strong return on investment, DCYF requires that grantees meet minimum quality standards and tracks a broad range of performance measures, such as the quality and accessibility of child care services. For more information, see: www.dcyf.org

*Related innovation:*
- In Oakland, Calif., the 1996 passage of a Kids First! Measure K amendment to the city charter by more than three-quarters of the electorate set aside 2.5 percent of the city's unrestricted general fund revenue in an Oakland Fund for Children and Youth, which is modeled on the San Francisco Children's Fund.

# Emerging Trends

### Publishing children's scorecards and children's budgets.

Although this trend is more common at the county level, a handful of cities publish "scorecards" that evaluate the well-being of children, youth and families. These documents can serve as useful tools for measuring progress over time and drawing attention to urgent needs, trends, and priorities. One well-known example is the Philadelphia Children's Report Card and Community Report Cards published from 2000 to 2008, which monitored 26 key indicators in areas such as child health, school readiness and achievement, safety and family stability.

> *In St. Petersburg, Fla., a City Scorecard is posted on the city's website, allowing residents to see how well their local government is meeting performance measures for various departments and services, including Mayor Rick Baker's many school improvement initiatives.*

A number of other cities turn to an independent intermediary to gather the data and report on their findings. For instance, the Irvine, Calif., City Council contracted with the nonprofit Children and Family Futures (CFF) to develop a "2007 Indicators Report on the Condition of Children, Youth, and Families in Irvine." This report has helped the city advance a five-year strategic plan for children, youth and families. The report measures 36 indicators of family income, health, child care and school readiness, academic achievement, risky behavior, family stability and social capital and diversity. CFF selected indicators based on an assessment of local policies and programs, as well as input from youth and community leaders.

In St. Petersburg, Fla., a City Scorecard is posted on the city's website, allowing residents to see how well their local government is meeting performance measures for various departments and services. The scorecard highlights progress on Mayor Rick Baker's many school improvement initiatives, as well as local schools' performance according to the state's grading system. The City Scorecard also tracks key indicators in economic development, government operations, neighborhoods and personal safety.

One of the best sources of data available to communities of all sizes is the Annie E. Casey Foundation's KIDS COUNT Data Center (http://datacenter.kidscount.org), which in addition to city, state and national data, contains community and school district-level data on more than 100 indicators of child well-being. The Data Center makes it possible for cities to create their own maps, graphs and charts and to easily post local data on their websites.

In addition to publishing children's scorecards, several cities have developed children's budgets and fund maps to analyze the various public and private funding streams that support different types of services for children and youth. New Orleans, Philadelphia, San Diego, Seattle and Washington, D.C., are among the communities that have used this strategy to streamline services and maximize limited resources.

*Selected communities that publish children's scorecards: Baltimore; Claremont, Calif.; Irvine, Calif.; Kansas City, Mo.; Los Angeles County, Calif.; Minneapolis; Sacramento County, Calif.; San Diego; San Francisco; Santa Barbara County, Calif.; St. Petersburg, Fla.*

### Working with a citywide intermediary to improve youth services and opportunities.

Across the country, a modest number of cities have turned to nonprofit intermediary organizations, rather than a city office or department, to support service and funding coordination, advocacy, collaboration and strategic planning, capacity building and/or evaluation on issues related to children and families. There are several reasons why local officials have chosen to turn to a strong external intermediary to fulfill these responsibilities. Such organizations may be well positioned to sustain multi-sector collaborations over time, withstanding changes in city administration and turnover among municipal employees. A nonprofit intermediary may also have greater capacity to perform important functions such as conducting research. In addition, these organizations may be seen as a neutral party by a broad group of stakeholders, providing a bridge between local governments, schools and other

service providers. Local intermediaries typically receive city funding and often include municipal officials on their governing boards.

> *In 2006, the City of Oakland entered into a joint powers agreement with Alameda County and the Oakland Unified School District to create a new public entity called Youth Ventures.*

Intermediary structures and functions vary significantly across communities. For instance, the Philadelphia Youth Network (PYN) is an independent, nonprofit intermediary that coordinates education and training services for youth, including those who are out of school and/or in public care systems. PYN manages Project U-Turn, a collaborative campaign to resolve Philadelphia's dropout crisis. As described in the Education chapter, Project U-Turn has supported high-quality research and analysis to segment the dropout population, expanded educational options and developed approximately $50 million in new resources to support these efforts since 2006.

With funding from the city and other public and private sources, PYN also manages WorkReady Philadelphia, the city's workforce development system for youth ages 14 to 21. WorkReady provides high-quality summer and year-round programs for approximately 8,000 young people annually. Since its inception in 2003, WorkReady has served more than 40,000 young people, and has leveraged more than $30 million in funding beyond the city's Workforce Investment Act (WIA) allocation. PYN manages these two initiatives on behalf of the Philadelphia Council on College and Career Success — the city's legislatively mandated WIA Youth Council — which it staffs and supports. In addition, PYN administers the city's WIA, TANF and other youth workforce funds through a competitively procured contract with the Philadelphia Workforce Investment Board.

Compared with PYN, the Family League of Baltimore City (FLBC) — a quasi-public, nonprofit organization housed in the city's Office of Community and Human Development — is more closely tied to municipal government and focuses solely on initiating collaborative processes, strategic planning, and program evaluation. It does not have any role in direct service provision. FLBC also contracts with and offers technical assistance to community-based program providers of youth services. FLBC's board represents the mayor's office, several other city departments, the school system, faith groups, the United Way and many other key agencies. Like the Youth Council overseen by PYN, the Family League fulfills a state legislative mandate. The State of Maryland requires the establishment of Local Management Boards (LMB) that bring together public and private child and youth-serving agencies to coordinate services. As Baltimore's LMB, the Family League works with other local intermediaries, such as the more advocacy-focused Baltimore Safe and Sound Campaign, to support Baltimore's After School Strategy (see the Afterschool chapter).

The city's deputy mayor, director of Baltimore Rising Inc., (formerly the Mayor's Office for Children, Youth and Families and also an arm of the Mayor's Office of Community and Human Development), and FLBC director recently worked together to reestablish a Strong Families Committee, which infuses family strengthening principles into the work of local service providers. Due to this partnership, personnel in city, community and faith-based agencies have received training on key principles for how to build upon the strengths of families through a Family Strengthening Training Institute. The committee was convened by Mayor Sheila Dixon upon her announcement of the city's adoption of NLC's "City Platform for Strengthening Families and Improving Outcomes for Children and Youth" in September 2007.

Finally, the City of Oakland entered into a joint powers agreement with Alameda County and the Oakland Unified School District to create a new public entity called Youth Ventures in 2006. The agreement builds on Oakland's Safe Passages partnership developed through participation in the national Urban Health Initiative. Youth Ventures institutionalizes cross-system collaboration and coordination, serving multiple functions, including:

- Developing and advocating for effective policies and system changes to improve the health and well-being of children, youth and families;
- Promoting data sharing and conducting data collection, analysis and evaluation;

- Leveraging and pooling resources;
- Marketing services to target populations; and
- Building the capacity of public agencies to implement innovative strategies.

Youth Ventures is a lead agency for Oakland's school-linked services initiative, and also enhances local early child-hood and violence prevention programs.

*Selected city intermediary organizations that improve services and opportunities for children, youth and families: Family League of Baltimore City; Chatham-Savannah, Ga., Youth Futures Authority; Jacksonville, Fla., Children's Commission; Minneapolis Youth Coordinating Board; Houston Joint City/County Commission on Children; Philadelphia Youth Network; San Diego Children's Initiative; Washington, D.C., Children and Youth Investment Trust Corporation.*

### Dedicating a local revenue source for services to children and families.

All cities grapple with the question of how to pay for services that strengthen families and expand opportunities for young people. This challenge has been exacerbated by the current recession, in which all three primary sources of municipal revenue — property, income and sales taxes — have declined simultaneously for the first time since NLC began tracking this information in 1985. With the competing demands made upon fluctuating general fund revenues, several cities have developed separate funding sources dedicated to services for children, youth and families. San Francisco offers just one example in which a city sets aside a portion of general fund dollars for child and family services. A report by the Finance Project on "Creating Dedicated Local and State Revenue Sources for Youth Programs" outlines several other forms that these local revenue streams can take, including: dedicated, voter-approved sales or property taxes that can only be spent on children and families; special tax districts created under state legislation; developer impact fees directed toward child care; and community trust funds that can leverage private donations.

> *Notable dedicated funding streams include the Portland, Ore., Children's Investment Fund and the Seattle Families and Education Levy.*

Notable dedicated funding streams include the Portland, Ore., Children's Investment Fund passed by voters in 2002, and the Seattle Families and Education Levy, launched in 1990 and renewed by voters in 1997 and 2004, which now provides $116.8 million over seven years for school-based health centers, afterschool opportunities and early child-hood programs. Each of these levies maintains strong accountability mechanisms to ensure the money is well spent. Cities such as Ames, Iowa, and Aspen, Colo., have also implemented dedicated sales taxes to help parents with child care costs. The Miami-Dade County Children's Trust, supported by 86 percent of voters in a 2008 referendum and funded by a portion of local property tax revenue, delivers more than $100 million for youth services. The City of Kent, Wash., sets aside 1 percent of its general fund for human services provided by community agencies.

At least 15 cities, mostly in California, impose a child care facilities linkage fee on developers, with the proceeds used to help build new child care facilities in response to the growing demand among new workers and residents. Some cities offer developers the option of building on- or off-site child care centers, donating land or contributing funds to nonprofit provider facilities. In 2006, Santa Monica, Calif., adopted new developer impact fees that are charged based on the square footage of a development. Fees are highest for large residential properties, and then steadily decline for large office buildings, retail spaces, and hotels, which all have the option of building a facility in lieu of paying the fees.

Finally, mayors and other municipal leaders can serve as chief fundraisers for community trust funds for children and youth. The Mayor's Charitable Trust established by Columbus, Ohio, Mayor Michael Coleman in 2000 has directed money from the city's general fund, businesses and residents toward the Capital Kids afterschool program. Leadership by Nashville Mayor Karl Dean paved the way for a new Education First Fund within the Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee. The fund supports a project manager position to coordinate the city's education

reform initiatives, which include new alternative high schools, reform of existing schools, teacher recruitment and professional development, an Attendance Center for truant youth, expanded afterschool programming, youth employment and career exploration and youth engagement.

*Selected cities with child care facilities linkage fees: Berkeley, Calif.; Concord, Calif.; Danville, Calif.; Davis, Calif.; Los Angeles; Martinez, Calif.; Palm Desert, Calif.; San Francisco; San Mateo, Calif.; San Ramon, Calif.; Santa Monica, Calif.; Seattle; South San Francisco; West Hollywood, Calif.; West Sacramento, Calif.*

# Established Trends

### *Creating a youth master plan.*
Adapting the familiar process of developing a master plan for land use and infrastructure decisions, more than 20 cities have created comprehensive youth master plans that coordinate services provided by multiple stakeholders. By collaborating with school officials, community organizations, parents and youth, municipal leaders engaged in a youth master planning process can improve communication, streamline and reduce duplication of services, identify unmet needs and priorities, develop sustainable long-term strategies and measure progress over time.

> *Adapting the familiar process of developing a master plan for land use and infrastructure decisions, more than 20 cities have created comprehensive youth master plans that coordinate services provided by multiple stakeholders.*

In 2006-2007, the City of Claremont, Calif., evaluated its progress on and made updates to its youth and family master plan. Local officials first developed the plan in 1995 in response to budget shortfalls that forced the elimination of afterschool recreation, music and arts and sports programs provided by the school district and city. A Committee on Youth and Family established by the City Council and local Board of Education facilitates implementation and evaluation of the plan, which focuses on access to existing programs, substance abuse and mental health programs, evaluation of outcomes and other issues.

Youth master plans can also be used to promote regional coordination. In 2008, Charleston, S.C., leaders began implementing a countywide plan developed with support from the mayors of Charleston, North Charleston, Mount Pleasant and 14 other municipalities in Charleston County. After surveying local students and conducting youth and adult focus groups, the planning team outlined a vision statement and seven goals with corresponding strategies and outcomes. Priority areas include youth leadership, health and wellness, education and youth employment. The implementation team partnered with College of Charleston students to market the plan to the community.

Several municipalities, such as Manchester, Conn., and Rapid City, S.D., have used NLC's "City Platform for Strengthening Families and Improving Outcomes for Children and Youth" as the framework for comprehensive plans focused on the needs of young people and their families. Town officials in Manchester have supported a cross-departmental team that worked with an outside consultant to launch a Children, Youth and Families Master Plan process in December 2008. Using a model previously implemented in Brighton, Colo., the town has engaged youth and other residents in several committees, which track the platform's seven key areas for action: early childhood development; education and afterschool; youth in transition; youth development; health and safety; family economic success; and neighborhoods and community. A core team provides oversight for the entire process.

Rapid City, S.D., formed a new Task Force for Strengthening Families in 2007 under the leadership of Alderman Lloyd LaCroix and Mayor Alan Hanks. The task force's executive committee is composed of the mayor, two aldermen, the city's community development specialist and representatives from the school district, local United Way, Chamber of Commerce and two private foundations. Other key stakeholders represent nonprofit and for-profit service agencies, county and state government and the justice system. Building on a 2006 community needs assessment, the task force has met monthly and established committees in six key areas: youth engagement; reduc-

tion of truancy and dropout rates; expansion of transportation options; support for early care and education; and committees on both prevention and treatment for mental health and substance abuse. Each of these committees sets at least one specific goal or target per year upon which all members at the table can agree. Rapid City has made early progress in exploring cost-effective ways to streamline transportation to jobs and appointments for the homeless, parolees and ex-offenders, conducting a survey of youth needs, developing and implementing a truancy and dropout policy, developing a mental health and substance abuse plan and identifying parents' child care and pre-K needs.

### *Establishing a city office or department for children, youth, and families.*

Young people and their families frequently interface with numerous local agencies and institutions, both within and outside of municipal government. More than a dozen cities have created a special mayor's office or department to provide strategic direction and support for the broad range of services available to children, youth and families through the city or its community partners. These offices or agencies can play important roles, such as:

- Convening and forming partnerships with schools and other agencies;
- Analyzing the city's effectiveness in supporting young people and their families;
- Expanding awareness of and access to programs and services;
- Strengthening the capacity of networks of service providers;
- Aligning city and community resources;
- Developing and advocating for family-friendly policies; and
- Leveraging funding from the private sector and state and federal government.

Despite this breadth of potential functions, these city entities can frequently be divided into mayor's offices that have more of a policy and advocacy role and municipal departments that administer programs. An example of the latter is San Antonio's Department of Community Initiatives (DCI), which coordinates numerous programs that enhance families' economic self-sufficiency and well-being. In addition to DCI's successful efforts to increase Earned Income Tax Credit claims and enrollment in children's health insurance programs, the department also oversees six Community Family Learning and Resource Centers, afterschool programs for 11,000 children and the Early ON School Readiness Project involving both child care centers and informal caregivers.

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Established by the Grand Rapids, Mich., City Commission in 1998, the Grand Rapids Office of Children, Youth and Families manages some programs — such as the Mayor's Youth Council — but primarily serves to advance sound local policies and effective partnerships. Recently renamed the Office for Our Community's Children, this entity is a collaboration of the city, Grand Rapids Public Schools and the community. Among the office's achievements are the formation of an Expanded Learning Opportunities network of afterschool providers that has developed program quality standards, and success in helping garner more than $44 million in state and federal funding for an afterschool program within every public school in the city. The office was created following recommendations made by a mayoral task force in 1995. Nearly every city and town, no matter the size or composition, can establish a local task force or commission to strengthen its local infrastructure and facilitate communication and coordination among community stakeholders.

While not a city office or department, Washington, D.C., has set up a strong interagency council that cuts across all city entities that work with at-risk children and youth. Operated by the deputy mayor for education, the 21-member Interagency Collaboration and Service Integration Commission (ICSIC) aligned its work with six citywide goals for young people. ICSIC promotes sharing and analysis of data, explores opportunities for collaboration and leads school and community-based intervention and prevention initiatives. Cities such as Boston and Louisville, Ky., have formed a separate cabinet for health, family and/or human services.

### *Offering a directory or hotline to connect residents to youth services.*
The publication of a directory of youth programs and services — either in print or online — is a simple and inexpensive way to expand residents' access to information. While some directories like San Antonio Kid First — an online portal for child care assistance described in the Early Childhood chapter — are focused on a particular type of program, others serve as a single point of access for families to connect to a variety of programs and services for children and youth.

> *Since the mid-1990s, the City of Boston has sponsored the innovative Youthline resource and referral service under the auspices of the Mayor's Youth Council.*

Many cities, such as Chicago and San Francisco, have partnered with local United Ways to create a public information line using either the 211 or 311 systems. Residents can call to learn how to access public benefits or receive referrals to services. Since the mid-1990s, the City of Boston has sponsored the innovative Youthline resource and referral service under the auspices of the Mayor's Youth Council. Youth are trained and paid to link young people, parents and people who work with the city's youth to more than 1,500 neighborhood programs and resources mapped by youth council members. These Youthline staffers respond to inquiries and make regular updates to the resource database, which was made accessible online in 2000 (and recently renamed the BOSTONavigator) with the help of the city's management information systems department.

Building on the work that cities have done in mapping youth programs at the local level, a national organization called Youthline America (www.youthlineamerica.org), led by the former commissioner of the New York City Department of Youth Services, is developing a national database that maps places to go and things to do for youth in local neighborhoods, as well as a toll-free hotline linked to the website and staffed by youth.

# *FOUR NEW IDEAS TO CONSIDER*

## *Infrastructure*

**Place a new emphasis on young adults and young families.** As a result of profound economic and social changes during the past 30 years, large groups of young people between the ages of 18 and 25 — along with families headed by these young adults — are increasingly struggling to gain any semblance of financial stability and durable connections to mainstream society. Mayors can respond to this new reality by expanding the focus of their offices of children and youth to include young adults and young families. The functions that such offices typically play — in coordinating policy development or promoting interagency collaboration and service integration, or both, — are sorely needed for this older population in order to revive the rapidly vanishing dreams of the next generation of young parents and their young children.

**Develop a more robust set of neighborhood indicators for children and families.** In the absence of reliable, neighborhood-level data, city leaders seeking to improve outcomes for children, youth and families often find themselves "flying blind." Mayors and other city officials can avoid this result by working with local nonprofit and research institutions that are closely aligned with civic leadership to create better indicators of child and family well-being across their cities. School data, including kindergarten assessments of school readiness and attendance records from early elementary grades, and state or county health records can prove extremely valuable in identifying signs of early trouble. The National Neighborhood Indicators Project offers exciting models for municipal leaders to consider as they move forward in this area.

**Work with local service and volunteer organizations to coordinate skill-based volunteering.** In cities throughout the country, municipal leaders are partnering with service organizations to engage volunteers in thousands of projects, from back-to-school backpack drives to afterschool mentoring programs. For instance, Sacramento, Calif., Mayor Kevin Johnson is currently working with HandsOn Sacramento —– one of more than 250 affiliates of the Points of Light Institute's HandsOn Network — to develop a comprehensive volunteer service plan. City efforts to encourage volunteerism can have even greater impact by focusing on recruitment of highly-skilled individuals to perform specific tasks related to their professional training. For example, certified public accountants can offer financial education and help families open children's savings accounts, and retired counselors and human resources workers can work alongside school guidance counselors to assist students with college and career planning.

**Create or strengthen community hubs in neighborhoods throughout the city.** Vibrant and thriving neighborhoods are anchored by places where residents congregate, families build informal support networks and neighbors go for help or advice. Churches historically have played these roles in many communities, but in today's increasingly diverse and secular society neighborhoods often lack places that can serve as a focal point for community life. City leaders can establish a goal of creating or strengthening community hubs in every neighborhood and then search for ways to advance this goal through their partnerships with or direct control over schools, libraries, recreation centers, health clinics, workforce development programs and public housing developments. A number of innovations and program models described in other sections of this report — including community schools, collaborations between recreation centers and local nonprofits and co-location of municipal or other public services — illustrate ways to anchor neighborhoods and can provide starting points for a larger citywide strategy.

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