



**Community Teamwork, Inc.  
Building Community ~ Changing Lives**

## **Strategic Community Action Plan 2012 - 2014**



**Submitted to: Massachusetts Department of Housing & Community Development  
100 Cambridge St.  
Boston, MA 02108  
Carlos Luna, Program Representative**

**Submitted by: Community Teamwork, Inc.  
155 Merrimack St.  
Lowell, MA 01852  
Karen Frederick, Executive Director**

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**Community Teamwork, Inc.  
Mission Statement**

**OUR MISSION**

**THE MISSION OF COMMUNITY TEAMWORK, INC. IS TO ASSIST LOW-INCOME PEOPLE TO BECOME SELF-SUFFICIENT, TO ALLEVIATE THE EFFECTS OF POVERTY, AND TO ASSIST LOW-INCOME PEOPLE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE DECISIONS THAT AFFECT THEIR LIVES.**

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**LA MISSION DEL PROGRAMA DEL CTI ES AYUDAR LA GENTE DE POCO INGRESO SER INDEPENDIENTE, ALIVIAR LOS EFECTOS DE LA PROBREZA Y AYUDARLOS A PARTICIPAR EN LAS DECISIONES QUE AFECTAN SU VIDA.**

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*គោលការណ៍នៃអង្គការ CTI (COMMUNITY TEAMWORK, INC.)*

*គឺដើម្បីជួយអ្នក(គ្រួសារ)ដែលមាន ប្រាក់ចំណូលតិច  
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ដែលមានលើជីវិតរបស់ខ្លួន។*

**COMMUNITY PROFILES**

**Merrimack Valley Region**

As the convening agency for the Merrimack Valley Regional Network to End Homelessness, Community Teamwork, Inc. (CTI), and its many area partners, have provided services to families and individuals across the Merrimack Valley Region. This area consists of 19 communities along the Merrimack River from Westford to Salisbury including: Westford, Chelmsford, Billerica, Tewksbury, Lowell, Dracut, Tyngsboro, Dunstable, Andover, North Andover, Methuen, Lawrence, Haverhill, Groveland, West Newbury, Newburyport, Merrimac, Amesbury, and Salisbury. The gateway cities within the Merrimack Valley are Lowell, Lawrence, and Haverhill.

Their designation as Gateway Cities refers both to their roles as entry points for immigrants and to the problems that new immigrants and descendants of previous ones face as a result of economic decline in the inner city industries that originally drew them to the Gateway Cities. Both Gateway Cities and towns alike have seen their factories emptied and moved for cheaper labor sources in the southern states or even overseas. Many of the waves of immigrants, particularly the earliest, have managed to save enough money, acquire enough education or skill training to move to the suburbs. However, some from each wave have been unable to better themselves sufficiently to overcome the economic problems that have afflicted the region since its heyday in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. The standards of economic distress all point to the problems of the Gateway Cities. The people with the lowest incomes and lowest skill levels tend to be concentrated in the central cities. Those who have been brought low by crisis, bills, loss of jobs, divorce or other family breakdowns, and evictions or foreclosures eventually wind up in the in the central cities.

Lowell is the largest of the three gateway cities in terms of population with 106,519 people compared with 76,377 people in Lawrence and 60,879 in Haverhill. Racial diversity is more strongly reflected in Lowell and Lawrence. The U.S. Census 2010 American Fact Finder indicates Lowell’s race/ethnicity at 60.3% White, 6.8% Black, 20.2% Asian and 17.3% Hispanic, compared with Lawrence having 42.8% White 7.6% Black, 2.5% Asian and 73.8% Hispanic. Of the three gateway cities, Haverhill has the highest median household income at \$60,535, nearly twice as high (53%) as Lawrence at \$32,337 and 22% higher than Lowell at \$49,818. All three communities have pockets of higher concentrations of poverty within various neighborhoods. The city of Lawrence has the highest level of poverty at 27.3%, followed by 17.7% in Lowell and 11.8% in Haverhill. The following chart depicts some of the economic indicators of the three Gateway Cities in the Merrimack Valley Region.

<b>Economic Indicators of the Merrimack Valley Gateway Cities</b>					
City	Poverty Rate	Poverty Rates for 25yrs. and older with < H.S. Diploma	Unemployment Rate (May 2011)	H.S. Drop-Out Rate	# Without a H.S. Diploma
Lowell	17.7%	29.0%	9.8%	4.4%	18-24 yr. old – 2025 25 and older - 7016
Lawrence	27.3%	32.8%	16.5%	9.4%	18-24 yr. old – 2,337 25 and older – 6,393
Haverhill	11.8%	27.6%	8.3%	6.4%	18-24 yr. old – 535 25 and older – 3,207

*Source: U.S. Census: 2005 – 2009 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates; Massachusetts Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Education, Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development*

Lawrence was designated by the Department of Labor as a Labor Surplus Area in FY11, a classification given to cities and towns when their unemployment rate is 20% above the national average for a full year. The other cities in the Merrimack Valley did not reach this condition, but all have unfortunately high numbers of unemployed or under employed residents.

Housing costs were highest in Haverhill where the median monthly cost for renters is \$961 as compared with Lawrence at \$922 and Lowell at \$895. However, all three communities have significant numbers of renters spending 30% or more of their income on housing with Lawrence at 62%, Haverhill at 55% and Lowell at 48%. This is a clear indicator that more affordable housing is necessary in order to prevent or eliminate homelessness.

**CSBG Service Area**

Community Teamwork’s core service area includes the city of Lowell and the seven surrounding towns including Billerica, Chelmsford, Dracut, Dunstable, Tewksbury, Tyngsboro and Westford. These communities make up what is known as the Greater Lowell area. Each one of these communities has a rich history and many distinct and unique offerings. Although most of the seven surrounding towns were predominately agricultural communities with vast amounts of land, many have shifted from agriculture to other industries. Commercial businesses including high-tech firms, industrial parks, and large shopping centers are offered in each of the towns. There are also multiple recreational opportunities due to the large number of lakes, ponds, and hills throughout the area. The communities that make up the Greater Lowell area are situated close to major highways including Route 495 and Route 3 and all are within a 45 minute commute to Boston. The following chart depicts some economic indicators within CTI’s CSBG Service area:

<b>Economic Indicators within Greater Lowell Area</b>					
City/Town	Population	Unemployment Rate (May 2011)	Poverty Rate	Median Household Income	% with Food Stamps/SNAP Benefits in past 12 months
Billerica	39,862	7.1%	2.5%	\$87,048	1.7%
Chelmsford	34,106	6.1%	4.0%	\$89,022	1.7%
Dracut	29,411	7.5%	2.9%	\$71,480	3.3%
Dunstable	3,387	4.4%	3.3%	\$109,333	0.5%
Lowell	106,519	9.8%	17.7%	\$49,816	13.6%
Tewksbury	30,593	7.0%	3.8%	\$83,709	1.6%
Tyngsboro	11,989	7.3%	2.0%	\$98,413	1.4%
Westford	22,642	5.0%	1.1%	\$119,051	1.0%

*Source: U.S. Census: 2005 – 2009 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates; Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development*

**Lowell**

Lowell is the fourth largest city in the Commonwealth with a total population of 106,519. With its rich history dating back to the Industrial Revolution, Lowell became known as the Mill City where it welcomed waves of immigrants from Ireland, Greece and Canada to work in the mills and to build its elaborate canal system used for harnessing energy for power. However, once the textile industry began to collapse, businesses and shops started to close resulting in a loss of jobs and an increase number of vacant store fronts. It has taken time and planning for Lowell to transform itself from the deteriorating Mill City it became in mid 1900’s into a Destination City for tourists who come in droves to visit the first urban National Historical Park in the country, to partake in the largest annual free Folk

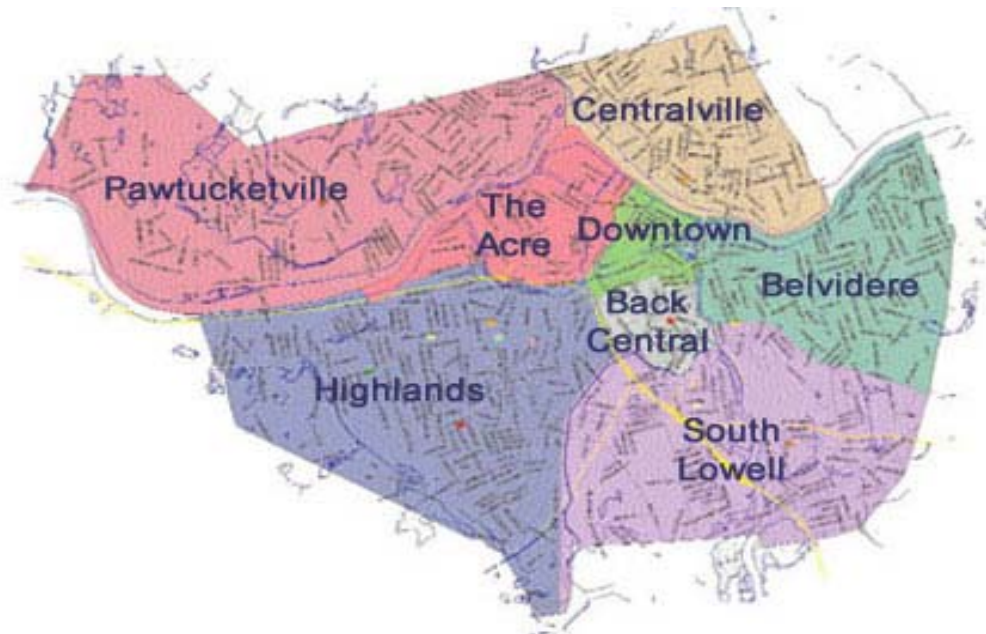
Festival in the country and to visit the many museums and a multitude of cultural and artistic events that Lowell now offers.

In addition to the many cultural attractions, Lowell is home to two prestigious academic institutions, the University of Massachusetts at Lowell and Middlesex Community College, both of which have campuses in the heart of the downtown area.

Lowell's major medical centers, including Lowell General Hospital, Saints Memorial Medical Center, and the Lowell Community Health Center, provide state-of-the-art health care to residents of the Merrimack Valley. Lowell General is currently undergoing a major expansion of its Cancer Center and the Lowell Community Health Center has just moved its headquarters from one side of the downtown to the other side in order to accommodate its growing operations.

Lowell is known as a "melting pot" or a city whose residents make up a strong racial and ethnic diversity. The U.S. Census 2010 American Fact Finder indicates Lowell's race/ethnicity at 60.3% White, 6.8% Black, 20.2% Asian and 17.3% Hispanic. The overall poverty rate in Lowell is 17.7% although some of the city's neighborhoods have much higher concentrations of poverty such as the Acre at 38%. For the past 20 years, Lowell has been designated by the US Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD) as a Renewal Community and Empowerment Zone based on its rate of poverty and unemployment. The U.S. Census 2009 American Community Survey indicates that 46% of families have incomes below \$55,110, the median family income in Lowell.

Lowell consists of eight distinct neighborhoods including the Acre, Back Central, Belvidere, Centralville, Downtown, Highlands, Pawtucketville, and South Lowell.



**Acre:** The Acre, the oldest neighborhood in Lowell, is perhaps the most ethnically diverse neighborhood in the city with a population of just over 12,000 consisting of large numbers of Hispanics and Cambodians. It is also the poorest neighborhood in the city with a poverty rate of 38%. The average Median Household Income is \$29,776. The Acre is home to one of the first federally funded urban renewal housing projects, the North Common Village, consisting of 524 units for low-income,

elderly and disabled families and individuals. Once considered one of the most distressed areas in Lowell with deteriorating housing, low educational attainment and high crime rates, the Acre has undergone a transformation over the past few years thanks in part to the Coalition for a Better Acre in partnership with the city which has been responsible for the development of 380 residential rental units, 50 homeownership units, plus retail, office, community center, and light industrial space.

**Back Central:** One of the first residential areas in Lowell, the Back Central neighborhood is home to a large population of Portuguese, Polish, Brazilian and Armenian immigrants. Back Central, which borders the Downtown, was an area in high demand in the early 1800's and homes were built quickly and on small lots. In the 1900's, with very limited land left available, three and four stories were built onto the existing buildings and residential homes. Today, the neighborhood is still very densely populated with close to 3,500 housing units and very little space for parking. With more cars than spaces available, the residents of the Back Central neighborhood came up with a solution to their parking issue. They developed a permitting system that allows them to park in off-street lots that are vacant or under-utilized or in "car condos" in which residents pay for on-street parking spaces. Back Central was also home to the former Prince Spaghetti Company, one of the largest pasta plants in the country that employed over 400 people prior to its sale to Borden Food Corporation in 1987 which ultimately closed in 1997. The population in Back Central is 8,765 with an average median household income of \$41,000.

**Belvidere:** Lowell's most affluent neighborhood is Belvidere, meaning "Beautiful to Behold" in Italian. In the 1800's, the mill owners built very large and opulent homes. These distinctive homes, many of historic significance, still exist today. Belvidere, like the Highlands neighborhood, further distinguishes its sections as upper and lower Belvidere. Lower Belvidere is similar to Back Central with densely populated areas predominately occupied by lower income families. The median household income in Belvidere is \$59,402 with a population of 10,862.

**Centralville:** Centralville is located across the Merrimack River, north of Downtown Lowell, and is bordered by the town of Dracut to its north and the Pawtucketville neighborhood to its west. Centralville's earliest settlers were French Canadians. The neighborhood is famously known as the birthplace of beat poet and writer Jack Kerouac. Today, there are pockets of Hispanic, Asian and African immigrants who have taken up residency in the Centralville neighborhood. Getting to Centralville requires crossing one of two bridges; the Aiken St. Bridge or the John Cox Bridge, formerly known as the "Bridge St. Bridge." The Aiken St. Bridge, built in 1883, is one of the most beautiful bridges in the nation. Known as a lenticular truss bridge with five spans, it is the longest of its kind in the country. The "Bridge St. Bridge" spans across the river from the Downtown directly onto Bridge St., the commercial area of the Centralville neighborhood with its many small businesses, restaurants and shops. The Christian Hill area of Centralville, one of the highest points in the city, offers beautiful views of the neighborhood and the Downtown. Centralville's population is 15,495 with a Median Household Income of \$52,781.

**Downtown:** Downtown is at the center of the city, with the Merrimack River to its north. Lowell's many canals, built primarily by Irish and Greek immigrants, flow through the downtown. The Merrimack River and the complex canal system provided power to the Mills during the Industrial Revolution. However, after the collapse of the textile industry, the once vibrant Downtown became filled with vacant store fronts and empty mill buildings. Today, the Downtown neighborhood has evolved into a cultural and recreational destination. It is home to the nation's first Urban National

Historical Park which offers tourists a glimpse into the Industrial Revolution and the Textile Industry. Flocks of tourists visit Lowell each year to ride the trolley cars, cruise the canals, walk along the river walk or take part in the largest free folk festival in the nation. Also, the demand for housing in the Downtown made many developers transform several of the old mill buildings into beautiful condos and artists' lofts. With so many people taking up residence in the Downtown, new businesses, shops and restaurants have opened making the Downtown one of Lowell's most vibrant and sought after neighborhoods. The population in the Downtown neighborhood has grown in recent years to 3,756.

**Highlands:** The Highlands is located in the western part of Lowell and boast the largest population of all the neighborhoods in the city. Like Belvidere, the Highlands neighborhood is comprised of the Upper and Lower Highlands. The Lower Highlands began as a residential cluster near a belt of small factories and sawmills near the railroad line. The upper Highlands was primarily farmland that was developed into housing in the 1850s. Between 1880 and 1920, Jewish immigrants from Russia, Poland, and Germany established a community in the Highlands.

Today, the Highlands, in particular the Lower Highlands, is home to a large Southeast Asian population, primarily Cambodian. The Highlands is also home to the "towers," a high-rise triple tower office complex built by Dr. An Wang in 1976 that served as the headquarters of computer giant Wang Laboratories. Like many dot-com industries, Wang reached its peak in the mid 1980's when it employed over 30,000 people and had revenues of over \$3 billion. Today, the towers is known as Cross Point and serves as office space for multiple businesses. The population in the Highlands is 28,975 with a Median Household income of \$50,294.

**Pawtucketville:** Pawtucketville is located in Lowell's northwestern corner and is geographically the largest neighborhood in the city. Like Centralville, Pawtucketville lies across the Merrimack and is connected to the rest of Lowell by a series of bridges: the Rourke Bridge, the O'Donnell Bridge, and the University Avenue Bridge. The original settlers to Pawtucketville were Native Americans of the Pennacook tribe. Their word "Pawtucket," meaning *place of loud noise*, is said to be referring to the Pawtucket falls in the Merrimack River. Irish and French Canadians were some of Pawtucketville's earliest immigrants.

Pawtucketville stretches from densely populated streets in lower Pawtucketville, near the north campus of UMass Lowell, to the rural area of the Lowell-Dracut-Tyngsboro State Forest. Population is 15,032 and the Median Household Income is \$57,760.

**South Lowell:** South Lowell is made up of a number of small neighborhoods densely clustered together into one and includes Sacred Heart, Ayer City, the Bleachery, the Grove, Riverside Park, Swede Village and Wigginsville. Daniel Ayer and William Wiggins, of who Ayer City and Wigginsville were named, were both prominent developers in the mid 1800's. As the population in the city grew to about 40,000 in 1840, they developed a tannery, coal and lumberyards and a manufacturing company for woolen goods, rope, glassware and glue in order to provide goods to the residents of Lowell. Today, South Lowell is still known as a commercial area but also as home to the Lowell Cemetery (1841), an early example of a Victorian garden cemetery, combining burial places with landscaped parkland. Many of Lowell's mill workers and their families spent Sunday afternoons picnicking in the Cemetery which also served as a place for social gatherings. Several prominent Lowell citizens have been laid to rest there including Daniel Ayer himself, U.S. Senator Paul Tsongas and 19th century

congressman and governor of Puerto Rico Charles H. Allen of Lowell. The Population of South Lowell is 9,578 and the Median Household Income is \$60,960.

## **COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

### **OVERVIEW OF PLANNING PROCESS:**

In early December 2010, the Planning Office began its *Planning to Plan* phase for CTI's Strategic Community Action Plan for 2012 – 2014. A presentation and overview of the Planning Process was presented to Executive, Senior and Key Managers and it was decided, for the first time in CTI's history, to combine both its three-year Community Action Plan with its Strategic Plan.

A Strategic Planning Committee was established in December 2010. The Strategic Planning Committee included 21 individuals from all Divisions across the agency. It was inclusive of all levels of management and front-line staff as well as the Board President and the Executive Director, all of whom actively participated on the committee. Appreciation and gratitude is extended to the following members of the Strategic Planning Committee:

Barbara Warren – Client Services  
Bobby Tugbiyele – Workforce Development  
Brian Yates - Planning  
Carl Howell – Housing & Homeless Services  
Cheryl Amey – Workforce Development  
Chris Hunt – Child & Family Services  
Christina Santos-Gordon – Energy & Community Resources  
David Ouellette – Housing & Homeless Services  
Ed Cameron – Housing & Homeless Services  
Germaine Vigeant-Trudel, Board President  
Jennifer Wehe – Workforce Development  
Julie Salois – Child & Family Services  
Karen Frederick – Administration – Executive Director  
Kristin Tremblay – Child & Family Services  
Kristin Ross Sitcawich – Housing & Homeless Services  
Lakshmi Pathi – Child & Family Services  
Lydia Sisson – Workforce Development  
Peggy Shepard – Planning  
Sharon Shelton – Community Relations  
Susan Brittain – Energy & Community Resources  
Yolande Pere – Workforce Development  
Sarah Kanellas – University of Massachusetts at Amherst

This committee met regularly and consistently every two weeks beginning in January 2011 through July 2011. The committee spent several months planning, meeting, surveying, interviewing, analyzing, compiling and finally writing this document. The following is a brief description of the assessments and other activities that took place in order to better understand the needs of our stakeholders:

**Board Retreat** – The CTI Board of Directors held a retreat on Saturday, January 29<sup>th</sup> from 8:00am – 1:00pm at UMass Lowell's Allen House. The purpose of the retreat was to inform the Board of the

planning process and discuss the agency's Strategic Community Action Plan to date, to conduct a Focus Group with the Board of Directors and to review the Mission of the agency.

**Client Needs Assessment** – A newly developed survey tool was used in this planning year. It consisted of three parts; Part One collected primarily client demographic information; Part Two asked clients about their experience with CTI; and Part Three asked clients to rank themselves on seven of the indicators of the Self-Sufficiency matrix including Employment, Education, Child Care, Food, Healthcare, Housing and Transportation. The survey was mailed to a sampling of 1,200 current clients which were randomly selected from the Octopia database. A total of 216 surveys were entered into SPSS for analysis of the responses. This represented an 18% return rate. The findings of this survey will be discussed in detail in the following pages.

**Staff Survey** – A staff survey was distributed to all CTI staff using an on-line survey tool (Survey Monkey). One-hundred and seventeen (117) staff responded to the survey.

**NIQCA Self-Assessment/Peer Review** – In mid 2010, CTI participated in its second Self-Assessment/Peer Review developed by the National Institute for Quality Community Action. The NIQCA assessment process takes an in-depth look at agency operations within six standards including Human Resources, Information Technology, Finance & Budget, Operational Management & Organizational Structure, Planning & Community Investment, and Governance. The rationale for undertaking this QCAS assessment points to a commitment to developing and sustaining management policies and procedures which reflect “best practice” standards of operations. The underlying assumption of the process is that effective service programs are the products of well managed agencies committed to a program of continuous quality improvement. The assessment process is a collaborative experience designed to help agencies mobilize and direct internal efforts to strengthen management practices by: (1) Identifying priority needs for improvement, (2) Developing specific plans to address needs and deficiencies in a timely fashion and, (3) Routinely evaluating progress and updating plans for improvement.

**Community Focus Groups** – The Strategic Planning Committee completed seven Focus Groups with the following entities: CTI Board of Directors, CTI Head Start Policy Council, IDA Savings Club Participant, Youth Round Table, Acre Neighborhood Association, Centralville Neighborhood Association and the Pawtucketville Neighborhood Association.

**Community Needs Assessment** – The Strategic Planning Committee conducted a Community Needs Assessment using both an electronic survey tool (Survey Monkey) and a paper version. There were 124 responses from the community at-large.

**Youth Round Table** – On May 25, 2011, twenty-seven (27) youth from the Greater Lowell area came together for a Round Table discussion in response to an invitation from the White House to take part in the *100 Roundtables with Young Americans*. The youth discussed the issues of Family Structure and Lack of Role Models, Poverty, and Gang Violence. They named their Roundtable “Stand Up, Make a Change!”

**Community Planning Event** – A Community Planning event entitled *Facing Challenges, Making a Difference*, was held at the Houlares Early Learning Center on June 10, 2011. The event brought together over 50 stakeholders representing local employers, bankers, educators, healthcare

providers, faith-based and community-based organizations, clients, staff, Board members and others. This half-day event was facilitated by Michael Gallagher, Senior Vice President and Risk Management Director at Enterprise Bank and Trust. Attendees worked at tables in self-managed groups and focused on responding to the following three questions for each of our five priority areas: What does CTI do best? What should CTI do differently? What should CTI add or initiate that we don't do now?

## **DATA ANALYSIS**

**EXTERNAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT:** In addition to the secondary data collected for the Community Profiles, four sources of primary data were used to understand the external community needs. These included a community survey, focus groups, a youth round table discussion and a large community planning event. The following represents the results and feedback from each of these secondary data sources:

### **Community Survey Responses:**

**Where do you live? *Most respondents to the Community Survey were from Lowell***

**Lowell - 72.3%**

Billerica - 6.2%%

Chelmsford - 6.2%

Dracut - 8.0%

Dunstable - 0%

Tewksbury - 0%

Tyngsboro - 0%

Westford - 7.3%

**How long have you lived in Community? *There is longevity in the neighborhoods***

Less than 1year – 2.4%

1 – 5 Years – 25.8%

5 – 10 Years – 16.9%

10 – 15 Years – 11.4%

15 – 20 Years – 9.7%

**Over 20 Years – 33.8%**

**Overall, how satisfied are you with your neighborhood as a community or place to live? *The majority of those responding were Completely Satisfied or Satisfied (total 83.8%) with their community as a place to live***

Completely Satisfied – 18.5%

**Satisfied – 65.3%**

Unsatisfied – 12.2%

Completely Unsatisfied – 4.0%

**How do you access information about needed services? *An interesting 71.4% get their information on-line!***

Neighbors/Friends - 47.8%

Newspaper – 42.0%

Television – 15.9%

Radio – 16.8%

**On-Line (Internet) – 71.4%**

City or Town Hall – 24.3%  
Government Agencies – 29.4%  
Library – 20.1%  
Schools – 16.8%  
Childcare Programs – 5.8%  
Doctor’s Office – 8.4%  
Coffee Shops – 7.5%  
Flyers/Billboards/Newsletters – 21.0%

**Quality of Life Issues:**

**(Very Satisfied, Satisfied, Unsatisfied, Very Unsatisfied)**

Community residents were asked about their overall satisfaction with quality of life issues that included such things as feelings of safety, cleanliness of neighborhood, condition of roads and streets, safe and affordable housing, recreational opportunities, sense of community, job opportunities, education and schools, childcare, youth programs, etc. **Overall, the level of satisfaction with Quality of Life issues was “Satisfied” in all categories although the majority of those responding (57.5.5%) stated they were Unsatisfied or Very Unsatisfied with Job Opportunities.**

**Level of Need for Services: On the following scale,  
(Very Needed, Somewhat Needed, Not Needed, No Opinion)**

**The following were the top six services & programs ranked as Very Needed by respondents.**

1. Fuel Assistance – 73.1%
2. Employment/Job Training – 73.0%
3. Homeless Shelters – 68.5%
4. Childcare – 68.0%
5. After School Program – 65.3%
6. Financial Education 59.2%

**Aware that CTI offers these services:**

**Of the top six services & programs listed above as being Very Needed, we asked people if they were aware that CTI provided these services. *More outreach and awareness is necessary.***

1. Fuel Assistance: 89.6% said yes, they were aware CTI offered Fuel Assistance
2. Employment/Job Training: 59.7% said yes, they were aware CTI offered Employment/Job Training.
3. Homeless Shelters: 64.1% said yes, they were aware CTI offered Homeless Shelters.
4. Childcare: 84.6% said yes, they were aware CTI offered childcare
5. After School Programs: 66.1% said yes, they were aware CTI offered After School Programs.
6. Financial Education: 54.0% said yes, they were aware CTI offered Financial Education.

**Ever Hear of CTI?**

89.5% said yes, they’ve heard of CTI

**How did you hear of CTI?**

74.1% said from neighbors/friends, 39.7% from Internet

**What other Services would you like to see available?**

- Services for ex-offenders

- Information about how to keep neighborhood safe and out of bullies from children & adult.
- Housing and Shelter
- More business support or community support for children's programs. School fundraising, Pop Warner, promote more DARE awareness in schools.
- Help with job placement with job that I will be able to support myself and daughter not just a job, real assistance to be self sufficient not just enough to get off assistance
- Improved transportation to usable hubs in Boston (South Station). Currently the Commuter rail does not run late at night, and also arrives at North Station, making public transit from Lowell to cities outside of the Merrimack Valley prohibitively cumbersome.
- I would like to see some kind of job assistance for families who are in need, a service that looks at how long someone's been out of work, how many people are in the household and how much childcare will cost for the parents as opposed to what they are making and what their expenses are. Also I would like to see people working in your offices that are less judgmental and more compassionate not everyone who is trying to get assistance is trying to cheat the system. Look more at the entire picture and less at the financial statements.
- House homeless w/services instead of sheltering. Teach youth life skills. Adequate in-patient mental health services.
- Help to the vets who come back from the war.
- Adult Education, Mentor programs for teens/ young adults
- Support groups. Information for children of elderly; taking care of elderly parents Courses and tuition help for retraining
- More financial workshops. Anything that empowers women.
- Youth services: sports, and recreational plans for youth children (free).
- Lower rents - more community programs that are less expensive.
- Free classes on what assistance there is to better help people that are out there.
- More food resources.
- I would like to see more involvement for the kids for example, sports, workshops, music, just anything to get kids together to make the place we live a better one for everyone.
- Financial Education to high school students 9th - 12th grade.
- Outreach to high schools/middle schools to introduce finances at an early age.
- Adult Safety Program
- Nutrition classes, budgeting classes, perhaps internships with local businesses for possible employment later.
- More affordable job opportunities.
- College Loans/Financial Planning.
- Services and help for people with chemical intolerances and allergies.
- I think you are doing enough with the resources you are given. But: Family Planning!
- Financial Education in Schools for Children.
- Housing and Shelter
- More help for seniors and middle class.
- Gang prevention.
- Debt Consolidation, legal advice, rental asst.
- Mandatory classes on morals and ethics. Parenting classes "How to be a good mother/father" Class called "It's not OK to give up" Leads into unemployment

- More jobs programs and more help in the community. More safety in the community.
- College-Training Classes-Education, ESL, etc. Work Opportunities

***Some of the common threads among the above comments were around more jobs and job opportunities, financial literacy, housing and shelter, and children & youth services.***

**Community Focus Groups:**

**Focus Group: Centralville Neighborhood Action Group**

**4/18/2011 @ 6:30pm**

**Approximately 40 residents in attendance.**

- 1. What are one or two things you like best about your neighborhood?**  
Diversity, people, public parks, business districts, hospitals, university, revitalization work (i.e., market basket on bridge St.)
- 2. What are one or two things that you'd like to see improved in your neighborhood?**  
Traffic, paintings/murals on bridges, absentee landlords, slum lords, enforcement, trash, potholes, dogs, "discount store", trash barrels on street, crime/drug dealing.
- 3. What services do you rely on?**  
Police, fire, inspection services, trash pick up, street sweeper
- 4. Where do you get your information about services?**  
Ann Marie and CNAG, newspaper, radio, face book page/social media, email
- 5. What services do you need that you're not receiving?**  
Services are there they just need consistency
- 6. Of all things talked about, what was the most important thing said tonight?**  
Cleanliness!

**Focus Group: Acre Neighborhood Association**

**4/20/2011 @ 6:00pm**

**Approximately 12 residents in attendance**

- 1. What are one or two things you like best about your neighborhood?**  
Food, Ethnic Restaurants, accessibility (i.e., able to get to the downtown easily or out of Lowell easily)
- 2. What are one or two things that you'd like to see improved in your neighborhood?**  
Street repairs, cleanliness, we pay a boat load of property taxes and streets should be in better condition, walking along the bridges there is a lot of trash, perhaps youth programs could do some sidewalk clean-up, sidewalk not taken care of around O'Donnell Bridge, Dogs roam free and leave messes on sidewalks, lots of people walk and would like better walking areas, parking issues, could use more receptacles for bottles and cans so we can separate for trash and recycling, have students design receptacles like they have at Hampton Beach, Properties are not maintained well, front lawns are not maintained, lots of trash around Burbecks Ice Cream, cars parked in front of homes and don't know who they belong to.
- 3. What services do you rely on?**  
Basic services, waste services, street sweeper, rely on the pools and parks to be open for the kids, Fuel Assistance is really important.
- 4. Where do you get your information about services?**  
City of Lowell website, friends, neighbors, Lowell Sun, Laundry Mats, Library

**5. What services do you need that you're not receiving?**

Services are there but information about them don't get delivered very well. Need to make an effort to get information out. Use billboards. We have language issues also which can be a barrier to services.

**6. Of all things talked about, what was the most important thing said tonight?**

Pedestrian walk-ways that connect Lower Highlands to the Acre. Better pedestrian walkways along canal walks and other areas across the city. Urban Institute is studying this issue.

**Focus Group: CTI Savings Club Meeting**

**4/25/2011 @ 6:00pm**

**Twenty (20) participants in attendance**

**1. What are one or two things you like best about your neighborhood?**

Helpful neighbors, cleanliness, accessibility to needs, culturally diverse and for the most part, people feel safe in their community.

**2. What are one or two things that you'd like to see improved in your neighborhood?**

Job opportunities, affordable childcare, better care of the streets and sidewalks, crime rate to drop, less traffic.

**3. What services do you rely on?**

Fuel Assistance, child care vouchers, WIC, public transportation, Section 8, IDA Program

**4. Where do you get your information about services?**

Internet, mass.gov, friends, CTI meetings, children's school

**5. What services do you need that you're not receiving?**

Job training, financial assistance with child care, child support.

**6. Of all things talked about, what was the most important thing said tonight?**

More job opportunities and child care.

**Focus Group: Pawtucketville Neighborhood Association meeting**

**6/6/2011 @ 6:00pm**

**Approximately 20 residents in attendance**

**1. What are one or two things that you like best about your neighborhood?**

Diversity in the community, including music and food

Several Pawtucketville residents commented on the public space in their community including the forest, and river

Another resident commented on how easy it was to walk to the places that he needs to go to including the schools

**2. What are one or two things that you'd like to see improved in your neighborhood?**

Pawtucketville residents felt that there was too much cut through traffic in their neighborhoods. A few residents expressed that they felt that the city did not think about their neighborhoods when they were planning events. They talked about the winterfest in the past had started in Pawtucketville and that there was a lot to do, but now all the events are in the downtown area and that they feel excluded.

Also talked about how beautiful the River walkway is and should be utilized more

**3. What services do you rely on?**

Residents felt transportation in downtown area was good and that they could get most places they needed to go to.

They felt the police/fire were very responsive to their needs.

They also said that they enjoy the farmers' market, senior center & road runner service

**4. Where do you get your information about services?**

Newsletters, particularly the Neighborhood Association newsletter

Dracut paper and the Sun

Talked about wanting to know more about what was going on in CTI and wondered if someone from CTI could pass info on to the various Neighborhood associations (maybe add to email distribution list when sending out program newsletters)

**5. What services do you need that you are not receiving?**

Talked about the Senior center being too far away for many of Pawtucketville's residence, wondered if could have one closer. One resident commented on the program "rebuilding together" that does restoration projects and felt that there should be more awareness of this program in Lowell.

**6. Of all the things talked about, what was the most important thing that was said tonight?**

Raising awareness of services that are available

Many residents expressed that they don't really know about all that CTI does, and would like more information

Suggestions were made about how that could be done including adding NA's to the email distribution lists

Also many expressed frustration over having to go across the river for many things that are offered and wondered why more things were not done in Pawtucketville

Each of the four External Community Focus Groups shared similar concerns about their neighborhoods. Very simply, most people just want to live in a clean and safe neighborhood. Interestingly, however, was the fact that all four of these community groups expressed, to some degree, the importance of each of the priority areas within this Strategic Plan including Affordable Housing & Homelessness, Financial Literacy & Asset Development, Workforce Development & Job Readiness, Children, Youth and Families, and Benefit Enrollment & Coordination. Many indicated that these areas were the most important thing discussed at their Focus Group as summarized by their comments: Affordable housing, education, services for School Age Activities/Sports, middle school age, teens, Cleanliness! Better pedestrian walkways along canal walks and other areas across the city. More job opportunities and child care and raising awareness of services that are available. Many residents expressed that they don't really know about all that CTI does, and would like more information.

**Youth Roundtable Discussion:** President Obama's Administration organized *100 Roundtables with Young Americans* and invited young people from across the country to participate. This event was initiated and lead by CTI YouthBuild Lowell in collaboration with the City of Lowell Youth Council with support from the Lowell Community Health Center Teen Coalition and the United Teen Equality Center. On May 25, 2011, twenty-seven (27) youth from the Greater Lowell area came together to discuss the issues of Family Structure and Lack of Role Models, Poverty, and Gang Violence. They named their Roundtable "Stand Up, Make a Change!" The following are feedback notes from the Roundtable that were submitted to the White House.



## FEEDBACK MEMO

May 25, 2011

### MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT'S YOUTH ENGAGEMENT TEAM

#### **Top 3 Issues You Discussed:**

1. Family Structure & Lack of Role Models
2. Poverty
3. Gang Violence

#### **What was the issue that you think most needs to be addressed and why?**

Our Youth Roundtable event was held on May 25<sup>th</sup> and was titled "Stand Up, Make a Change!" This event was initiated and lead by CTI YouthBuild Lowell in collaboration with the City of Lowell Youth Council with support from Lowell Community Health Center Teen Coalition and United Teen Equality Center.

The issue that most needs to be addressed in Lowell, MA is the lack of role models that exist in our community. A role model is someone who influences another person, someone you'd look up to, someone whom one wants to emulate, and someone who has the will power to do the right thing. There are too few people in the community who are powerful and also earn the respect of others in a positive manner. We lack positive role models. The family structure in our homes is falling apart. Most households are single parent homes. One parent is working multiple jobs, leaving the child alone most of the day without supervision, protection and without someone in the home who can really teach him or her how to go about life in a positive and productive manner. As stated by a teen, children from single parent families lack male role models. Youth in Lowell are affected by the lack of positive role models in multiple ways, including, not having adequate family attention which often leads to teen pregnancy, substance abuse, and gang involvement. According to the Lowell Community Health Center, a local teen outreach program, Lowell has the 11<sup>th</sup> highest teen birth rate. The Lowell Police Department, reports that there are 19 gangs in Lowell and gang violence seems to be more and more prevalent in our neighborhoods. Hispanic and Asian youth dominate Lowell's gang scene. During our small group discussion on gang violence, many of the Asian youth shared that they joined gangs because that's what their siblings, uncles, parents did, and that is what they "know". Belonging to a gang provide youth with a sense of family. Many of the youth present also shared that having positive role models and stronger family values would deter gang involvement.

#### **What is an issue you discussed that folks have successfully helped tackle? What was their plan to tackle it?**

Gang violence, although an issue in the community, through the work of many youth serving agencies, such as, CTI YouthBuild Lowell, United Teen Equality Center (UTEC) and Lowell Community Health Center Teen Coalition (LCHC) has diminished somewhat and many youth have been able to get out of the gang life through their involvement in these organizations. These organizations work with youth to engage them to take part in leadership development activities: gang violence prevention, community outreach, creative arts, GED prep, career prep, community service and public policy advocacy and education. The Streetworker outreach team at UTEC has made great strides against gang violence and towards peace within the community. Streetworkers develop various peacemaking processes between those youth that are most often involved in street violence or other crises. Through strategies such as peace circles (a method of communication and problem solving from the aboriginal and native traditions) and the *Peace Council* (where current and former gang leaders come together

to sustain peace), both staff and youth work toward building relationships and bridges between the youth of different gangs. LCHC Teen Coalition has been hosting the *Dance for Peace* event for the last 16<sup>th</sup> years. This event was originally put together to raise awareness about teen pregnancy and prevention. Soon after, the event changed its focus to violence prevention, in particular, gang violence. All proceeds raised during the *Dance for Peace* event go towards the Remember Quoc Le Scholarship Fund. On June 7, 2001, Quoc Bao Le was robbed of his life due to gang violence. We knew him as a community organizer, a high achiever and a pleasure to be around.

**Additional Notes/Comments:**

A community meeting is scheduled to take place on June 16<sup>th</sup> to further discuss these topics and to call our community to take leadership, stand up and make a change!

**THE ADDITIONAL COMMENTS WERE SHARED DURING THE DISCUSSION ABOUT POVERTY:**

***How can we get more jobs for people?*** How can we get more jobs that also support Lowell?

Can jobs be created for people in Lowell that help Lowell at the same time? For example can't the city hire people to pick up the trash that is around and to clean up the parks? If we give these jobs to homeless people maybe they will feel a sense of importance and it will help them find work again. If we create these jobs for people and only give it to those who really need it in our community then they don't have to go other places to look for jobs.

How do we judge people that are considered homeless? Is there are nice way that we can ask people if they need help? As a community, our goal should be to have 0 people living on the streets.

***How to fix poverty?*** We all need to work together to fix poverty, but it's going to be a long process

If we can concentrate the money better we might be able to help more people. For instance I saw roads being dug up and fixed when there seemed to be no problem with the roads, why can't we refocus that money to help people?

We could hold more community events so people can gather information on where they can go for help. And if more people come to the events the people who are facing poverty may not feel like such outsiders, they will feel more like equals.

Maybe we could do something with the taxes we pay. Maybe there could be two rates. One higher rate for those people who don't try to help and don't do community service in their area-their taxes would be higher. And for those people who try to make their community better they could have their taxes decreased.

Unfortunately people always say they are too busy to help. I think the internet is the problem and the fact that people don't pay enough attention to what is going on around them.

Also it would be helpful if can redemption centers stayed open later. Many people collect cans to try to make extra money and if they aren't open people won't be able to get money they need.

***How can the mayor help with poverty?***

The mayor can make more programs for the homeless. Also he can loosen the rules a little bit. Men have a really hard time getting into shelters because women with children come first along with pregnant mothers to be. They have no place to go. There should also be more programs for parents and their children. Sometime parents cannot work because there is no place for their children to go, and if there is no place for the children then the parents won't work. Also there should be a shelter in each neighborhood that way people don't need to travel far, and then people will notice that it is a problem that affects the whole city, not just the downtown area, and then maybe more people will help.

“There also needs to be an effort on the part of the people who are facing poverty. They need to do a lot of work to take the opportunities that are given to them. They need to want to get off of the system and not take the easy way. I’m not saying that money is everything or that money is happiness, but it is a foundation to making your life better. Also I think that if people had a better idea as to where money came from and where the resources come from they would be more responsible to try everything to get out of poverty” Youth present during the discussion.

#### **THE ADDITIONAL COMMENTS WERE SHARED DURING THE DISCUSSION ABOUT LACK OF ROLE MODELS:**

##### **What is a Role Model (RM)?**

- Someone who one can look up to.
- Someone who influences another person.
- Someone whom one wants to emulate.
- Someone who makes a strong impression.
- Someone who is supportive of another person or persons.
- Someone who acts as a guide for as person or persons.
- Someone who has the will power to do the right thing.

##### **What is a Mentor?**

- Someone who teaches another person or persons.
- Someone who takes another person “under their wing”.
- Someone who is a hero.
- Someone who can be relied upon.

##### **What is the difference between a RM and a Mentor?**

A Mentor is a person who guides another person or persons on a more personal level.

A Role Model may not choose to be influential in someone’s life.

A Mentor chooses to be influential in someone’s life.

##### **Why are Role Models needed?**

The media and popular culture depict a preponderance of negative Role Models.

Bad behavior is often glamorized in the media and popular culture.

##### **Why is there a lack of positive Role Models?**

There are few people in the community who are powerful and who, at the same time, earn the respect of others.

##### **Personally, who are your Role Models and why?**

Teacher: She helped me think differently about college and my future in the field of Education.

Various People: For different aspects of my life; professional, artistic etc.

Doctor: He had unconditional acceptance when I admitted wrong doing.

Sister: She persevered and succeeded through difficult times.

Teacher: She demonstrated a commitment to me and earned my trust.

Martin Luther King Jr: Was inspired by his philosophy on equality and race.

##### **For whom are you a Role Model and how so?**

Peer Tutor / Mentor at school, Younger siblings, Nieces, Cousins, Friends, Children, As a parent, Younger peers:

To inspire young writers and creativity, Colleagues: Professionally.

#### **SOLUTIONS**

##### **How does one find a Role Model?**

Through school presentations and activities that develop relationships between

people with similar interests (vocational, hobby etc. Through Youth Organizations.

#### **How can communities create and develop positive Role Models and/or Mentors?**

- Train prospective RMs to understand what one can offer and how to successfully Mentor another person. (However, there is one thought that such a role cannot be taught; only learned.)
- Sponsor Mentor “conventions” or “bulletin boards” where Mentors can offer their skills and where prospective “Mentees” can search for RM’s.
- Develop and support formal school programs that foster Internships.
- Identify and publicize community figures for their positive contributions and assist them in their role as a RM or Mentor through “Mentee” matching and training.
- Spread the word.
- Spread the Love

#### **Community Planning Event**

**6/10/2011 – 8:30am – 1:00pm**

#### **57 Stakeholders Attended**

In addition to capturing community needs with survey instruments and focus groups, CTI also hosted a large community planning event on Friday, June 10, 2011 at the Houlares Early Learning Center. The event brought together 57 Stakeholders representing Higher Education, Local Government, Youth, Housing Programs, Healthcare, Local Bankers, Immigrants, Elderly Services, Substance Abuse, Mental Health, Early Education, Adult Basic Education, Local Employers, CTI Constituents, Board of Directors, and staff. This half-day event was facilitated by Michael Gallagher, Senior Vice President and Risk Management Director at Enterprise Bank and Trust. Attendees worked at tables in self-managed groups and were provided with a brief overview of our five strategic priorities including Affordable Housing & Homelessness, Workforce Development & Job Readiness, Children, Youth and Families, Financial Literacy & Asset Development, and Benefit Enrollment & Coordination. Stakeholders were then asked to respond to the following three questions for each of our five priority areas: What does CTI do best? What should CTI do differently? What should CTI add or initiate that we don’t do now?

The responses to these three questions were as varied as the attendees themselves. The feedback, however, was creative and inspiring.

#### **FINANCIAL LITERACY & ASSET DEVELOPMENT**

##### **Do Best?**

- Financial Literacy Academy and its off-shoots have broad impact on clients
- Providing incentives for attending
- Email distribution list keeps people informed of upcoming classes
- Great curriculum
- Adult Education uses good information and referrals to Financial Literacy
- Great outreach to schools
- Great community support for the program
- Family Finance Solutions is a huge plus
- More than 30 people are saving in an IDA Program
- Eight (8) have purchased homes
- Strong internal partnerships with other Divisions
- Work very well with local banks

### **Should Do Differently?**

- Prepare materials in multiple languages in order to eliminate language barriers
- Expand basic financial literacy programming
- Outreach to both internal and external resources
- Track referrals Better
- Offer classes on the weekends
- Offer webinars
- Focus on Youth Financial Literacy
- Improve marketing to inform general public
- Create Marketing plan to attract clients on social network programs
- Enhance partnerships

### **Add or Initiate?**

- Add a “buying a car” program to the asset development initiative
- Credit repair for youth who have had their credit compromised by parents.
- Make every client enroll in the Financial Literacy Academy
- Create a Train-the-Trainer program so other organizations can teach as well.
- Add materials on social media pages
- Link to first-time homebuying classes
- Link to unemployment offices
- Work on forums with schools

## **AFFORDABLE HOUSING & HOMELESSNESS**

### **Do Best?**

- Programming takes people from most vulnerable state to stabilization dealing with all phases of homelessness
- Extent of work done at CTI on homelessness is great
- Programs are reaching many towns
- Partnering with Landlord Association
- Landlord education
- Known as a respectful organization
- De-stigmatizing affordable housing
- Tax Credit Equity
- Establishing partners
- Common Ground Development Corporation (104 units created!)
- Relationships with towns and partnerships

### **Should Do Differently?**

- Work with multi-generational homeless families to educate them about permanent housing
- Increase communication with families in shelters and hotels
- Provide homework assistance & play groups
- Early warning outreach
- Increase partnerships with for-profit businesses to help with homeless issues
- Try to change the concept of “affordable housing”

- Prevention activities should share close relationships with Legislators

#### **Add or Initiate?**

- More transitional housing
- Smaller caseloads
- Revolving loan fund for homeowners to do emergency work and improvements similar to the model already established with the home modification program.
- Outreach to EAP Programs to assist those who are at-risk of homelessness
- Create efficiencies by linking all organizations together about housing to see issues beforehand and work together to stem further issues and develop a database to alert to issues
- Research other types of living situations to alleviate homelessness.
- In conjunction with the 10-year plan to end homelessness, begin social media campaign so community feels compelled to help end the problem.

### **WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT & JOB READINESS**

#### **Do Best?**

- Good curriculum & program
- Staff are “awesome” and work hard
- Good job reaching out to youth and those on TAFDC
- Established a micro-loan fund at the LSBAC for small businesses
- Coordination within CTI and in community
- Key part of CTI mission
- Motivating clients by identifying their skills and helping them excel
- Group appointments and referrals

#### **Should Do Differently?**

- Getting connections with employers willing to hire folks who are hard to employ
- Ensuring people have a pathway to higher earning potential
- Include more mentoring
- Improve outreach outside the agency
- Expand technical training programs
- Enhance work with Chamber of Commerce

#### **Add or Initiate?**

- Transportation assistance for jobs outside of transportation loop
- Making stronger links with construction projects
- Train cultural organizations on job programs so they can bring info to their communities and bring GED classes to cultural organizations
- Increase partnerships with vocational schools
- Integrate agency-wide volunteer program with volunteer job-descriptions
- Partner with Dress for Success, SuitAbility
- Create an Advisory Committee of alumni

## **CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES**

### **Do Best?**

- Center-based childcare
- Comprehensive day-long care with wrap around services
- GED and ESOL in childcare center
- Quality care- give parents opportunities to work
- Empowering parents
- Provide essential services
- Culturally sensitive
- Dedicated staff

### **Should Do Differently?**

- Move parent classes downtown
- Bring family support out to community
- Improve case management to connect clients to more services
- Expand afterschool programs
- More summer programs for youth and teens - look at partnering with the parks
- Extend daycare hours
- Get families to invest in their children at pre-natal levels

### **Add or Initiate?**

- Use buses for transportation support for parents accessing jobs
- Develop programming in Centralville section of the city
- Work with schools to create a community center
- Have parents education classes at other sites
- Power or youth is not harnessed – do something
- Increase funding at state level
- Get high schools involved to show need for family engagement

## **BENEFIT ENROLLMENT & COORDINATION**

### **Do Best?**

- Pre-Assessments & Referrals
- Good job training staff to feel comfortable asking questions
- Mobile process – can be done from anywhere
- CTI has made great efforts to Integrate Services
- New space better supports clients, more welcoming

### **Should Do Differently?**

- Roll in WIC
- Use a tool that can be shared to see sum total of benefits clients might be eligible for
- More workshops and training
- Cross-training should be done consistently
- Case management – should be more geared toward dismantling silos
- Improvement in outreach through electronic formats

**Add or Initiate?**

- Expand case management across the agency
- Address software challenges
- Develop continuous training programs
- Develop a CTI “Yellow Pages” a directory of services and programs
- Develop a marketing plan to better inform community of services
- Enhance training

All of the above comments, ideas and suggestions were generated from a well informed group of community stakeholders. To the extent possible, these will be integrated into our strategic priorities.

**DATA ANALYSIS**

**INTERNAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT:** Four additional sources of primary data were used to understand the internal needs of the agency. These included a Staff Survey, focus groups with the Board of Directors and the Head Start Policy Council, a Client Needs Assessment and an internal agency Self-Assessment & Peer Review provided by the National Institute for Quality Community Action (NICQA). The following represents the results and feedback from each of these primary data sources:

**Staff Survey:** CTI believes that there is a direct correlation between the strength of the agency and the strength and knowledge of its staff. Employees are the agency’s biggest asset and CTI is committed to providing staff with professional development and educational opportunities to the greatest extent possible. Using an electronic survey through Survey Monkey, CTI staff were asked to complete an anonymous survey consisting of 16 questions relating to Organizational Effectiveness, Program Effectiveness, Advancement Opportunities, and Work Satisfaction. One-hundred and seventeen (117) employees started the survey with 109 completing it. The results are as follows:

**Organizational Effectiveness**

**1. I have a clear understanding of the Mission of the agency.**

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly Agree	51.3%	60
Agree	46.2%	54
Disagree	0.0%	0
Strongly Disagree	0.9%	1
No Opinion	1.7%	2

**2. CTI does a good job in fulfilling its Mission.**

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly Agree	31.0%	36
Agree	58.6%	68
Disagree	5.2%	6
Strongly Disagree	0.0%	0
No Opinion	5.2%	6

**3. I understand the direction and goals of the agency.**

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly Agree	23.9%	28
Agree	65.0%	76
Disagree	8.5%	10
Strongly Disagree	0.0%	0
No Opinion	2.6%	3

**4. I am optimistic about the future of the agency.**

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly Agree	17.1%	20
Agree	62.4%	73
Disagree	11.1%	13
Strongly Disagree	0.0%	0
No Opinion	9.4%	11

## Program Effectiveness

**5. My program policies and procedures are clear to me.**

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly Agree	20.5%	23
Agree	62.5%	70
Disagree	15.2%	17
Strongly Disagree	0.9%	1
No Opinion	0.9%	1

**7. I know about other agency programs and how to make referrals.**

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly Agree	16.2%	18
Agree	59.5%	66
Disagree	18.9%	21
Strongly Disagree	1.8%	2
No Opinion	3.6%	4

**9. I know more about agency programs and services now than I did last year.**

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly Agree	22.1%	25
Agree	61.9%	70
Disagree	8.0%	9
Strongly Disagree	1.8%	2
No Opinion	6.2%	7

## Advancement Opportunities

**10. I am satisfied with the training and development opportunities CTI offers.**

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly Agree	15.0%	17
Agree	57.5%	65
Disagree	15.9%	18
Strongly Disagree	4.4%	5
No Opinion	7.1%	8

**12. I am optimistic about my job growth at CTI.**

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly Agree	10.7%	12
Agree	52.7%	59
Disagree	22.3%	25
Strongly Disagree	7.1%	8
No Opinion	7.1%	8

**6. My program provides quality services in a customer friendly manner.**

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly Agree	30.4%	34
Agree	59.8%	67
Disagree	6.3%	7
Strongly Disagree	0.9%	1
No Opinion	2.7%	3

**8. I know about services outside of the agency and how to make referrals.**

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly Agree	14.2%	16
Agree	55.8%	63
Disagree	22.1%	25
Strongly Disagree	3.5%	4
No Opinion	4.4%	5

**11. In the past year, I have learned new skills that have improved my work.**

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly Agree	20.2%	23
Agree	63.2%	72
Disagree	13.2%	15
Strongly Disagree	0.9%	1
No Opinion	2.6%	3

## Work Satisfaction

### 13. My job is meaningful and fulfilling.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly Agree	38.6%	44
Agree	50.9%	58
Disagree	6.1%	7
Strongly Disagree	1.8%	2
No Opinion	2.6%	3

### 14. My work schedule allows me flexibility to balance work/family needs.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly Agree	22.8%	26
Agree	51.8%	59
Disagree	16.7%	19
Strongly Disagree	6.1%	7
No Opinion	2.6%	3

### 15. I participate in employer sponsored activities such as the Spinner's Game, Holiday Parties, or other CTI sponsored events.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Always	7.1%	8
Often	23.2%	26
Sometimes	35.7%	40
Not Usually	25.0%	28
Never	8.9%	10

### 16. Overall, I enjoy working at CTI.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly Agree	28.3%	32
Agree	61.9%	70
Disagree	6.2%	7
Strongly Disagree	0.9%	1
No Opinion	2.7%	3

A couple of important highlights about the staff survey, which speaks well about the agency's integration efforts, are as follows:

- 84% of staff stated they knew more about agency programs now than they did last year.
- 75.7% of staff stated they know about other agency programs and how to make a referral.
- 70.0% of staff stated they know about services outside of the agency and how to make a referral.

### Focus Group: CTI Board of Directors

1/28/2011 – 8:00am – 1:00pm

CTI's Board of Directors responded to a slightly different set of focus group questions at its retreat in January 2011. Here are the outcomes of those questions:

1. What do you think is the greatest problem facing our community?
  - Affordable Housing, Low-Income Housing, Homelessness, Foreclosures
  - Unemployment, Lack of Jobs,
  - Economy Decline, Lack of Living Wages,
  - Rising prices on Everything – Food, Fuel, Housing, All basic human needs
  - Affordable childcare so parents can work
2. What do you see as the biggest challenge for low-income people?
  - The Economy is having an impact on everyone, especially low-income people
  - The ability to learn new skills and obtain a job that leads to self-sufficiency
  - The need for educational opportunities and the rising costs for a college education
  - Housing, lack of affordable housing, preventing homelessness
  - Lack of job opportunities, even low-paying jobs are hard to come by

3. What does CTI do well?
  - CTI has strong leadership
  - Many quality programs that serve low-income people well
  - Partnerships, Collaboration, Diversity
  - Knowledgeable Staff, Good Programming
  
4. What can CTI do Better?
  - Expand funding, Diversify Funding Sources
  - More Affordable Housing, Low-Cost Housing,
  - Expand its partnership with UMass Lowell

**Focus Group: Head Start Policy Council**

**4/6/2011 @ 6:00pm**

**22 in attendance**

1. **What are one or two things you like best about your neighborhood?**  
Public transportation, neighbor communication, quiet-away from street noise, fenced yard, public parks, stability, diversity, homework club, neighborhood schools
2. **What are one or two things that you'd like to see improved in your neighborhood?**  
Pot holes in the streets, no sidewalks, litter, cars speeding, need clean-up and repairs to school play structures at the Lincoln, public transportation (Gallagher Transfers), infrastructure, summer activities/sports, surfaces of play areas at schools, entrances of schools too close to the main street (Moody, Shaughnessy, Lincoln, some schools are dark and dingy, no adult supervision outside @ morning drop-off.
3. **What services do you rely on?**  
WIC, SNAP, public transportation, trash removal, weekly food circulars for coupons delivered at your door.
4. **Where do you get your information about services?**  
(This question was overlooked in this Focus Group)
5. **What services do you need that you're not receiving?**  
Fuel, Housing, SNAP, Affordable child care, more housing/affordable – lost Julian Steele, more shelters, more services for young adults/jobs, health care, mental health services (coping with depression), domestic violence services, advice for achieving higher education and assistance with financial assistance.
6. **Of all things talked about, what was the most important thing said tonight?**  
Affordable housing, education, services for School Age Activities/Sports, middle school age and teens

Again, the emphasis on affordable housing, education, youth services, and employment were all identified as important issues among the Board of Directors and the Head Start Policy Council.

**Northeast Institute for Quality Community Action (NIQCA)**

**Self-Assessment & Peer Review:** The NIQCA assessment process takes an in-depth look at agency operations within six standards including Human Resources, Information Technology, Finance & Budget, Operational Management & Organizational Structure, Planning & Community Investment, and Governance. This was the second Self-Assessment and Peer Review that CTI voluntarily participated in over the past six years. Although this was an intensive, months-long process, the overall value of this

process cannot be underestimated. After examining documents, interviewing key informants and scoring itself on a scale as follows (1 = At Risk; 2 = Approaching Achievement of Best Practice Standard; 3 = Fully Meets Best Practice Standard; 4 = Exceeds Standard: Approaching Excellence; 5 = Excellent), the self-assessment teams scored themselves in each of the six areas. Following the Self-Assessment process was the Peer Review where three Peer Reviewers from Community Action Agencies in Rhode Island and Connecticut conducted a mirror assessment and reviewed the same documents, interviewed the same key informants and assigned scores to all six areas. Proudly, CTI was found to be fully meeting best practice and approaching excellence in its overall agency score.

**Client Needs Assessment:** Over the period of about two months, CTI conducted a client needs assessment. The Strategic Planning Committee developed a new survey tool for this planning year. It consisted of three parts; Part One collected primarily client demographic information; Part Two asked clients about their experience with CTI; and Part Three asked clients to rank themselves on seven of the indicators of the Self-Sufficiency matrix including Employment, Education, Child Care, Food, Healthcare, Housing and Transportation. The survey was mailed to a sampling of 1,200 current clients which were randomly selected from the Octopia database. A total of 216 surveys were entered into SPSS for analysis representing an 18% return rate.

**GENERAL DEMOGRAPHICS**

**PART I**

**Age:**

1.4% - Under 20  
 33.2% - 20 – 29  
 29.4% - 30 – 39  
 14.1% - 40 – 49  
 8.1% - 50 – 59  
 1.9% - 60 – 64  
 11.8% - 65+

**Race:**

2.4%- Amer. Indian/Alaskan  
 3.9%- Asian  
 9.2% - Black or African American  
 70% - White  
 2.4% - Multi-Race  
 12.1% - Other

**Ethnicity:**

66.8% - Non-Hispanic  
 33.2% - Hispanic

**Education Levels:**

12.9% - Up to 8<sup>th</sup> Grade  
 19.0% - Up to 12<sup>th</sup> Grade (Not Graduate)  
 32.4% - High School Graduate or GED  
 24.3% - Any Schooling Beyond H.S.  
 11.3% - College Graduate (2-4 year college)

**Income Levels:**

3.9% - No Income  
 45.4% - Under \$10,000  
 32.9% - \$10,000 - \$25,000  
 11.6% - \$25,000 - \$35,000  
 4.8% - \$35,000 - \$45,000  
 1.0% - \$55,000 - \$65,000  
 .5% - Over \$75,000

**EXPERIENCE WITH CTI**

**PART II**

In this part of the survey, clients were asked questions about their experience with CTI. Some of the highlights of the responses had a clear correlation to the agency integration efforts. We asked clients three questions that related to integration and benefit enrollment.

- Were you told about other services offered by CTI for which you or your family may be eligible? – 69.2% responded Yes, they were told about other services.

- Were you given information about how to access these other services and did someone assist you? - 73.2% responded Yes, they were given information and assisted to access other services.
- How likely would you have been to apply for these other services had you not been given information about them? - 32.% said it was unlikely and 10.4% said it was very unlikely that that would have applied for other services.

## **SELF-SUFFICIENCY MATRIX**

### **PART III**

In order to take a point-in-time snap-shot on where our clients fall on the Self-Sufficiency Matrix, clients were asked to rank themselves on seven domains including Employment, Education, Childcare, Food, Healthcare, Housing and Transportation. Within each of these domains, clients were presented with descriptions of the scales and were asked to put a check mark next to the area that best described their current situation. These descriptions represented a scale from 1-5 with 1 = In-Crisis; 2 = At-Risk; 3 = Safe; 4 = Stable; and 5 = Thriving. The following is a compilation of how clients responded to this part of the survey.

<b>Scale</b>	<b>Employment</b>	<b>Education</b>	<b>Childcare</b>	<b>Food</b>	<b>Healthcare</b>	<b>Housing</b>	<b>Transportation</b>
<b>In-Crisis</b>	54.6%	23.4%	32.8%	1.0%	1.4%	33.8%	4.4%
<b>At-Risk</b>	19.0%	3.6%	3.8%	66.2%	1.4%	11.9%	14.7%
<b>Safe</b>	16.6%	36.0%	40.5%	17.1%	57.6%	7.5%	16.2%
<b>Stable</b>	8.0%	13.2%	7.6%	9.5%	8.2%	17.9%	30.4%
<b>Thriving</b>	1.8%	23.8%	15.3%	6.2%	31.4%	28.9%	34.3%

The chart above indicates that the domains of Employment, Housing, and Childcare were the areas in which the majority of clients felt they were in-crisis. Additionally, the data indicated that 17.1% (or one in six clients) reported being in-crisis on any three or more domains while 62.5% reported being in-crisis on at least one. The data also showed that our clients have many strengths and weaknesses across each of these domains and although they may be in-crisis in one area, that does not mean they are in-crisis across the board. As a matter of fact, 68.5% reported that they were thriving in at least one of the domains listed above.

## **SERVICE DELIVERY SYSTEM**

After nearly 35 years at the same location, CTI moved its agency headquarters from 167 Dutton Street to 155 Merrimack St., in the heart of downtown Lowell. The move, which took place in March of 2011, was a monumental undertaking for the agency and its staff but a necessary one since CTI had outgrown its Dutton St. location long ago. Despite an amazingly daunting task, CTI can proudly state that its service delivery never stopped and its doors remained opened until the last box was loaded on the moving truck. The new space on Merrimack St. is double the size of the old one and has allowed CTI to consolidate many of its off-site programs into the Merrimack St. location which ultimately saved a great deal in rental costs. Some programs such as our Residential Services, YouthBuild, Energy, WIC and Early Learning programs are still located in off-site locations but today the bulk of CTI programming is conveniently located under one roof that is easily accessed by public transportation.

Last year, CTI delivered services to over 40,000 individuals and 18,000 families across its service area. Some services are delivered directly through agency programs and some through case management and referrals. CTI's Annual Plan outlines the programs and services offered within the agency and describes its outcome based activities and goals based on National Indicators. In recent years, CTI has organized its programming in a Division structure. This structure, consisting of four Divisions that support several related programs, has helped to streamline service delivery. Currently, the four Divisions and their programs include the following:

**Division of Child and Family Services** includes quality Early Education and Care Programs including center-based and home-based options such as Head Start and Early Head Start for infants and children under five years of age; School Age Programs that provide safe, enjoyable and well supervised after school activities for children between the ages of six and thirteen; and the Women, Infants and Children Program (WIC) which provides nutritional education, immunizations and vouchers that may be redeemed for healthy foods for pregnant and post-partum women, infants and children under the age of five.

**Division of Housing and Homeless Services** includes such programs as the Housing Choice Voucher Program, also known as Section 8; Shelters for Homeless Families; the Housing Consumer Education Program which offers emergency and advocacy services; Scattered Site Transitional Assistance Programs for victims of domestic violence; Housing Assistance Programs that helps find affordable housing for people in need; and the Stabilized Housing for Individuals and Families in Transition (SHIFT) Coalition which provides homelessness prevention services.

In addition, CTI serves as the convening agency for the Merrimack Valley Regional Network to End Homelessness. The Merrimack Valley Regional Network encompasses 19 communities along the Merrimack River from Westford to Salisbury, spanning west to east to including: Westford, Chelmsford, Billerica, Tewksbury, Lowell, Dracut, Tyngsboro, Dunstable, Andover, North Andover, Methuen, Lawrence, Haverhill, Groveland, West Newbury, Newburyport, Merrimac, Amesbury, and Salisbury. The center points of the cluster structure are Lowell, Lawrence, and Haverhill.

**Division of Energy & Community Resources** provides Fuel Assistance, Weatherization, Burner Repair and Replacement and other Energy Conservation Programs for low-income families in Greater Lowell and the western suburbs including Waltham, Watertown, Belmont, Arlington, and Lexington; three Senior Volunteer Programs including the Foster Grandparents, Senior Companions and Retired Senior Volunteers. Other programs include the Family Resource Network that includes the Children's

Collaborative, Family Foundation Network, Financial Literacy Academy, Family Finance Solutions initiatives, the Individual Development Account (IDA) Programs, SuitAbility which provides interview clothing to women who are re-entering the workforce, and the outdoor Lowell Farmers' Market offering fresh locally grown produce.

**Division of Workforce Development** includes employment training programs in healthcare such as the Pathways to Advancement and Training in Healthcare (PATH) initiative that helps low-income people train for entry-level jobs in the healthcare field and incumbent workers advance to better ones, a Commercial Driver's License Program that trains participants to pass the test to obtain a commercial driver's license, and our Early Childhood Teacher Training Program that assists participants to become certified Early Learning Teachers through the Mass. Dept. of Early Education and Care, a Weatherization Business start-up, and a job readiness curriculum that teaches participants 21<sup>st</sup> century skills. Also included in this Division are CTI's YouthBuild Program where out-of-school, out-of-work youth can earn their GED while learning the construction trade and helping to build affordable housing in the community, the New Entry Sustainable Farming Program that helps immigrants and refugees learn to farm and grow foods indigenous to their countries, and the Lowell Small Business Assistance Center the provides entrepreneurs with tools and opportunities to start or expand their small business.

Like many Community Action Agencies across the state, CTI has been exploring ways to better integrate its services in order to ensure meaningful and measurable progress toward assessing individual and family needs. Along with Quincy Community Action Program (QCAP) and Montachusett Opportunity Council (MOC), Community Teamwork, Inc. (CTI) participated in the Community Action Access Points (CAAPs) pilot project to explore ways in which to develop an integrated service delivery system that focused on efficiently addressing client needs in a more complete and thorough manner without being tied to funding and contract restrictions.

A major focus of Community Teamwork over the past few years has been the integration of all agency services so that clients seeking just one agency service will be informed of and referred to other agency programs for which they may qualify. An electronic pre-assessment and referral tool was developed to allow case workers to identify needs and make appropriate referrals.

Service Integration was identified as one of six critical areas that the agency addressed in its last Strategic Plan and will continue to be explored in this one. The "no wrong door" approach to service delivery has not been lost or forgotten. Several agency staff have been cross-trained in many agency programs and have the ability to complete applications on behalf of clients for numerous services. Over the next few years, this approach will continue to be implemented across the agency as more and more staff are cross-trained to provide more than just one service. Additionally, an Integration Committee consisting of staff from all agency Divisions was established and has led to the development of our Vision of Integrated Services as defined by the following:

*A model of delivering services that strives to view a client holistically, identifying all of their needs regardless of point of entry in a timely fashion, and incorporating intake, assessment, direct services, referrals, and case management, as needed, to assist them in their progress toward self-sufficiency with compassion and empathy.*

## LINKAGES

Community Teamwork relies on its partners in the community to serve clients across the region. There is no one agency that can do it all and CTI is no exception. CTI has been a leader in the development of both local and regional partnerships and collaborations that have linked together services and allowed the agency to capitalize on existing community resources and to mobilize new ones. From the state delegation and local government officials to area businesses and other non-profits, CTI recognizes the importance of linking services and resources together in order to obtain the best results possible for the families and individuals it serves. The following is a listing of our current partnerships with each agency Division.

**Division of Workforce Development:** Formal partnerships that include Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) have been developed with a multitude of partners within the Division of Workforce Development. The Workforce Development Division employs Employment Specialists, Career Coaches, Educational Coordinators, Teachers, Construction Managers, Case Workers and others who reach out to area employers, educational institutions and other providers to work collaboratively on behalf of the individuals they serve. A job readiness curriculum has been developed that employs 21<sup>st</sup> century skills designed to increase employability skills necessary in today's job market. As staff work to assist unemployed or underemployed individuals to find work, these partnerships have grown in numbers.

The Pathways to Advancement & Training in Healthcare (PATH) program had strong partnerships with Lowell General Hospital, Saints Medical Center, Lowell Community Health Center, Greater Lowell Workforce Investment Board, the Career Center, UMass Lowell, Middlesex Community College, and the Shawsheen Technical Vocational High School. Although this program has exhausted its funding through the Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund, these partnerships remain strong and will continue to grow through CTI's Work Readiness and Career Services programs.

The Commercial Driver's License Training Program partners internally with the Division of Child & Family Services to provide classes to Head Start parents and externally with Northern Essex Community College which provides classroom training.

Project Renew, CTI's Weatherization business model, is a training ground for Weatherization trainees to learn the trade and work in this expanding industry. Without its training and employers partners, including several local Weatherization vendors, this program would not be what it is today.

YouthBuild has numerous partnerships that work together to ensure that these young people are able to earn their GED, continue on to college or find employment. They include the Lowell Adult Education Center, Middlesex Community College, Charter Brothers, Common Ground Development Corporation, the City of Lowell, Lowell Housing Authority, Sunlight Solar, YouthBuild USA, and many others.

The Division's newest employer partners include Christek Interconnects, Inc., a local manufacturing company that partners closely with the Workforce Development Division. Through a collaborative effort, ten students were recently awarded certificates for their participation in a nine-day soldering training program at Cristek which manufactures electronic connecting pieces for the biomedical, aerospace and military markets which are then supplied to Raytheon, Goodrich and other large

companies. While CTI provided the employability skills and soft skill training, Cristek provided the on-the-job training for these participants.

Additional partnerships with area employers include MoJo, (Moms & Jobs) a socially responsible apparel manufacturing company in Lowell. MoJo and CTI partner on two fronts: the first of which is in providing access to quality child care to MoJo employees, and the second of which is to provide a pre-employment training program for Moms interested in employment with MoJo. This training program will give candidates the opportunity to see if a job with MoJo is a right fit for them, and will provide them with the skill set required in order to obtain a role within MoJo.

CTI is currently establishing a partnership with Aramark, a world-wide company that provides food services, facilities management and uniform and career clothing to health care institutions and others, to establish a training program for unemployed or underemployed individuals. All of these partnerships are critical to the sustainability of the Workforce Development initiatives.

**Division of Housing & Homeless Services:** The growth of this Division has brought about many new partners, several of whom also have formal MOUs with CTI. The Stabilized Housing for Individuals and Families in Transition (SHIFT) Coalition is a group of non-profits, faith-based organizations and public agencies that work together on homelessness prevention issues. The Coalition has developed a well oiled system of referrals and intake over the years and includes participation of over 50 partners working together to prevent and end homelessness. Some of these partners include the Fireman Foundation, Merrimack Valley Catholic Charities, Central Food Ministry, Sisters of Charity, St. Joseph the Worker Shrine, Christ Church United, St. Vincent DePaul Society, Lowell Housing Authority, Lowell Department of Planning & Development, Lowell Hunger/Homeless Commission, the state Department of Transitional Assistance, Department of Children & Families, and the Department of Mental Health. Other partners include local non-profits such as Lowell House, House of Hope, Justice Resource Institute, and many of CTI's internal programs.

As the convening agency for the Merrimack Valley Regional Network to End Homelessness, CTI expanded its collaboration with partners from across the entire Merrimack Valley region. They include organizations serving Greater Lowell, Lawrence and Haverhill including DayBreak, Lazarus House, Mitch's Place, Lowell Transitional Living Center, Emmaus House, Merrimack House, Milly's Place, House of Hope, Turing Point, Scattered Sites, the YWCA and YMCA, Department of Transitional Assistance, Department of Mental Health, as well as the Greater Lawrence Community Action Council and Community Action, Inc. in Haverhill.

As a Regional Non-Profit Housing Agency, CTI administers the Housing Choice Voucher Program (Section 8) with over 2,200 housing vouchers across 42 cities and towns in Massachusetts. In order to coordinate this massive program, CTI must work closely with the Mass. Department of Housing & Community Development, Department of Transitional Assistance, and the Department of Housing & Urban Development. In addition, CTI has developed a wide network of area landlords that work closely with our Section 8 Program, the Scattered Sites, Housing Assistance Program, and our Family Shelters.

Another regional umbrella initiative is CTI's Housing Consumer Education Center (HCEC) offering a myriad of housing programs, emergency services and advocacy to thousands of families and individuals each year. Housing Counseling, First-Time Homebuyer classes, Home Modification, and Foreclosure Prevention are offered in the HCEC as well as emergency services to help clients with rental assistance,

moving costs, transportation, food, clothing, furniture and other basic human needs. The Housing Consumer Education Center depends upon its many community partners to provide these services. Some partners include Home Preservation Coalition of the Merrimack Valley, the Coalition for a Better Acre, Mission of Deeds, several local parishes, the Wish Project, Household Goods Recycling of Massachusetts and many others.

One of the newest initiatives within the Division of Housing & Homeless Services is the HomeBASE program. HomeBASE was established to continue the homeless prevention and rapid re-housing efforts by institutionalizing diversion and short-term rental assistance in order to reduce the need for shelters and motels. This initiative provides alternative solutions to shelter and allows a longer period of time for organizations to provide the intensive case management and wrap around services necessary to ensure that at-risk families obtain needed educational and employment skills in order to wean them from the short-term rental subsidy and become economically self-sufficient. This program requires partnerships from across the Merrimack Valley Region.

**Division of Child & Family Services:** Early Learning has long been a cornerstone within the agency starting with the War on Poverty's flagship program – Head Start. The Division of Child & Family Services operates the Head Start, Early Head Start, Family Childcare, School Age and WIC Programs. All of these essential programs require collaboration and partnership with local providers as well as educational and social service networks. They include the Lowell Public Schools, the Massachusetts Head Start Directors Association, the Department of Early Education and Care, Middlesex Community College and UMass Lowell. Additionally, the Division's Early Learning Program frequently collaborates with early intervention programs such as the Anne Sullivan Center, South Bay Mental Health, Spiritus, and the MSPCC among others.

The WIC Program works very closely with the Lowell Community Health Center (LCHC) where it provides nutritional counseling at the LCHC Pre-Natal clinic. It also partners with the Hunger/Homeless Commission, the Lowell Farmers' Market and several area small markets and convenience stores that accept WIC vouchers.

In addition to the above partners, the Division has recently applied to the Dept. of Health & Human Services for funding both a Healthy Marriage grant and a Responsible Fatherhood grant. Partners include the Massachusetts Department of Revenue/Child Support Enforcement, Department of Transitional Assistance, Career Center, Lowell General Hospital, Department of Child & Family (child welfare), CTI/Scattered Site Transitional Housing (domestic violence), local employers and a number of local financial institutions (i.e. banks, credit unions).

**Division of Energy & Community Resources:** By its sheer nature of providing "community resources," the Division of Energy & Community Resources has a long list of organizational partners. Starting with the Energy and Conservation Programs, long term partnerships have been established with their many oil vendors, utility companies, weatherization and electrical contractors to ensure that clients receiving Fuel Assistance remain safe and warm throughout the winter months.

The growing Family Finance Solutions initiative has numerous partnerships with local bankers, many of whom teach classes in the six-week Financial Literacy Academy, in particular employees from Enterprise Bank and Trust, Jeanne D'Arc Credit Union, and the Northern Massachusetts Telephone Workers Credit Union. Through the development of local public access programming entitled Finance

Matters, the Division of Energy and Community Resources has established partnerships with Lowell Telecommunications Corporation (LTC), Lowell's public access TV station, as well as its counterpart in the towns of Chelmsford, Dracut, and Tewksbury.

The Greater Lowell IDA Collaborative was established in 2007 when CTI was awarded an Asset for Independence grant to start an IDA Program in Greater Lowell. Those partners include the Coalition for a Better Acre, Casey Family Services, and the Caleb Group.

The Coordinated Family & Community Engagement Program works to improve the quality of pre-school education and services to low-income families. This program, in addition to the Mass Family Network Program, which provides supportive, educational, and fun activities for families with young children, work in partnership with both the local and state level Early Childhood Programs and is a member of the Greater Lowell Family Resource Collaborative consisting of parents, advocates, and providers of services to families and children in the Lowell, Mass. area.

Recently, the Division of Energy and Community Resources submitted an application to the Dept. of Housing & Urban Development to initiate a Healthy Homes Grant. This application was based on partnerships with such entities as Bain Pest Control to provide integrated pest management services, D.E. Small Electric, K&J Electric, Inc. and Mammola Electrical Services to offer electrical services, the Institute for Environmental Education, an environmental trainer in the area of asbestos, lead paint and mold removal, and other companies like Axiom and Enviro Vantage that offer remediation services in the removal of environmental hazards in the home. If funded, CTI work in close partnership with all of these entities to ensure our clients health and safety in their homes.

## EVALUATION OF NATIONAL GOALS AND INDICATORS AND AGENCY OUTCOMES

Community Teamwork's organizational structure supports and encourages wide in-put from all levels of staff and the Board of Directors into the development of the Strategic Community Action Plan, the CSBG Annual Work Plans and the identification of the National Goals and Outcome Measures. The Planning Office works with each Division and, at the programmatic level, collaboratively participates in the development of National Goals and Outcome Measures that best measure the overall programmatic intentions.

The critical priority areas that are identified in the Strategic Community Action Plan are tied to the Executive Directors goals which are developed after completion of a comprehensive Community Needs Assessments and the periodic internal Self-Assessment and Peer Review. Outcomes and results are reported to the Board of Directors and are included as part of the annual evaluation of the Executive Director. Overall outcomes on the goals identified within the Strategic Community Action Plan are reported annually to a wide network of community partners and stakeholders in a published document. This process also helps tie together our Annual Plan with our more global Strategic Community Action Plan. The Annual Plan is reviewed and approved by the Board of Directors and an internal review of progress on goals and outcomes are monitored regularly by the Executive, Senior and Key Management Teams and are reported out in the CTI's monthly reports to the Board of Directors. These reports are widely distributed not just to the Board of Directors but to all levels of Management and are also shared with staff across the agency.

In addition to monthly evaluation of programmatic goals, the overall progress of these goals are reported to DHCD every six months. Agency administration and the Board of Directors review and approve of the National Goals and Outcome Measures and make certain that modifications are made if and when necessary. Continued evaluation and oversight of the National Goals and Outcome Measures are the responsibility of all levels of Management and will continue to be reviewed at regular monthly intervals and modified if needed.

### **Overall Community Priorities Resulting from Needs Assessment:**

Upon evaluation of CTI's extensive Needs Assessment process that included both internal and external assessments, a number of critical issues surfaced. However, the issues that presented as the most critical for CTI to address over the next three years include the following areas:

- **Employment**
- **Housing**
- **Childcare**
- **Financial Education**

**Employment (Workforce Development/Job Readiness):** Within the agency's core service area, as well as cities and towns across the Commonwealth, we saw record high unemployment rates dating back to January 2010 when Lowell's rate was at its highest at 12.1%. Since that time, Lowell's unemployment rates have remained in the double digits with a current rate of 10.2% in July 2011.

In addition to what the secondary data tells us, the results of our surveys and focus groups indicates a high level of concern over job loss and lack of job opportunities. The need for Employment and Training services were evident within our client needs assessments, community needs assessment and

within the focus groups conducted with the Head Start Policy Council and CTI's Board of Directors. Through the needs assessment survey, the community at-large identified Employment and Training as the second most important and most needed program or service that CTI should provide. Our clients, based on the data from the client needs assessment, reported being most in-crisis in the Employment domain (54.6%) on the Self-Sufficiency matrix, clearly indicating that jobs are crucial to their self-sufficiency. For these reasons, CTI has identified Job Readiness and Employment and Training as a priority issue.

**Housing (Affordable Housing and Homelessness):** Having a roof over one's head fulfills a basic human need yet homelessness in the Greater Lowell area and across the Merrimack Valley has risen substantially in the past few years. Echoed throughout the Neighborhood Focus Groups was the importance of having a clean, safe place to live. Ranked as Very Needed by respondents of the community survey was the need for homeless shelters which ranked third out of the top six services. Almost 34% of clients felt they were in-crisis on the Self Sufficiency Matrix's Housing domain. CTI's Board of Directors identified Affordable Housing and Homelessness as one of the greatest problems facing our community today and as one of the biggest challenges for low-income people.

Affordable Housing and Homelessness has been a critical issue for the past 10 years within the Greater Lowell area. CTI played a significant role in the City of Lowell's Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness and shortly thereafter became designated as the convening agency for the Merrimack Valley Regional Network to End Homelessness. Working in partnership with 19 communities along the Merrimack River, the Network has provided homelessness prevention and rapid re-housing to hundreds of families and individuals within the Region. Affordable Housing and Homelessness remains a critical community problem and will continue to be a priority and major focus for CTI over the next three years.

**Childcare (Children, Youth and Families):** Lack of childcare is one of the biggest barriers to overall self-sufficiency that parents face today. Nearly 33% of clients who responded to the needs assessment survey reported they were In-Crisis on the Childcare domain. CTI's Board of Directors felt that lack of affordable childcare so parents can work was one of the greatest problems facing our community. Being able to access quality, affordable childcare is huge challenge, particularly for low-income families when there are hundreds of people on the state-wide wait list.

Childcare in support of employment is crucial to self-sufficiency. Without childcare, parents are unable to work. Should they lose their jobs, parents then face potential loss of housing due to their inability to pay the rent or mortgage. Suddenly, parents can find themselves falling deeper and deeper into poverty simply due to the lack of quality, affordable childcare. Community Teamwork has identified Childcare as a major priority over the next three years.

**Financial Education (Financial Literacy, Income Management & Asset Development):** This economy has placed many pressures on low-income families and individuals and the state of the economy became the topic of discussion at several of the Focus Groups that were conducted. The decline of the economy, the lack of living wages, lack of jobs, skyrocketing unemployment and rising prices on essential items like food, fuel and housing have forced families to find ways to stretch their income just to make it through week by week. Financial Education was also identified as one of the top six services that are "Very Needed" by the Community based on the results of the Community Needs Assessment.

At CTI’s Community Planning Event held in June, Community Partners expressed a big need to expand Financial Literacy classes and to target youth so they can improve their knowledge of management and be better prepared to make smart financial choices in the future. Based on both the community needs assessment and the feedback from staff who also see a big need for Financial Education as a path to Self-Sufficiency, CTI will make this a priority to address over this planning cycle.

**Workforce Development & Job Readiness**

**Strategy Statement:** According to a report by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development entitled “Commonwealth of Massachusetts Employment Projections 2006-2016”, the Massachusetts economy is projected to expand 6.3% by 2016, generating 216,650 new jobs and an additional 768,330 jobs will result from the need to replace workers who retire or change careers. It is expected that nearly 1 million jobs will need to be filled in Massachusetts by 2016. With record high unemployment in Lowell (10.3% in June 2011) many residents are unemployed or underemployed because they lack the skills necessary to get a job or advance to a better one. CTI’s Workforce Development Division will work to address this issue by expanded programming that includes job readiness and 21<sup>st</sup> century skills in order to prepare Greater Lowell residents for the growth in jobs that is expected over the next few years.

**Three Year Goals:**

- Increase our capacity to support the development of a competitive entry-level workforce by strengthening the financial stability of the Division and expanding collaborative partnerships.
- Strengthen our impact on local economic development by enhancing workforce development programs including those that support sustainable social enterprise, self-employment, and business development opportunities.
- Develop a unified Division identity that positions Workforce Development as an integral component of CTI and a valuable community resource.

<b>Workforce Development Programs</b>	<b>National Indicator</b>
Job Readiness	1.2
Career Services	1.1
Project ReNew	1.2
YouthBuild	1.2
Lowell Small Business Assistance Center	3.2
New Entry Sustainable Farming Program	3.2

**Financial Literacy, Income Management & Asset Development**

**Strategy Statement:** Making effective financial decisions and knowing how to manage money are skills critical to enjoying a secure financial future and to sustain housing. Yet many individuals and families lack the knowledge necessary to make sound financial choices, as evidenced by falling savings rates, mounting consumer debt, and a growing dependence on alternative banking institutions. These indicators suggest that access to financial education is a pressing need, especially for groups such as youth and families transitioning from welfare to self-sufficiency. CTI’s Division of Energy & Community

Resources will work to increase the financial literacy of the residents in Greater Lowell through its Family Finance Solutions initiatives and Asset Development Program.

**Three Year Goals:**

- To assist low-income individuals to increase their financial knowledge, improve their ability to practice good money management skills, and help them to better position themselves to be able to invest in their futures.
- To help low-income individuals and families increase their income and savings, create assets, and establish a more secure financial base.
- To expand Financial Education classes to target youth and young adults beginning in elementary school through college.

<b>Financial Literacy, Income Management &amp; Asset Development Programs</b>	<b>National Indicator</b>
Individual Development Accounts (IDA) Program	1.3
Financial Literacy Academy	1.3
Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA)	1.3
Family Finance Solutions	1.3

**Affordable Housing & Homelessness**

**Strategy Statement:** The nation’s deep economic recession resulted in a significant increase in homelessness. Lowell’s annual Point-in-Time (PIT) count of homeless people was 482 in 2010 as compared to 309 in 2009, a major increase of almost 36% in the homeless population. Statewide, there are over 1,000 homeless families living in state-funded hotels and every available shelter bed across the state is full. There are many causes of homelessness including lack of education or marketable job skills, mental illness, or loss of employment. Thousands of Lowell residents have lost their jobs resulting in a significant increase in Lowell’s unemployment rate from 9.8% in May 2011 to 10.3% in June 2011. For many in Greater Lowell and across the Merrimack Valley, the loss of income meant the loss of their homes either through eviction or foreclosure. Still, one of the major causes of homelessness remains - **Lack of affordable housing**. The current number of households on the CTI Section 8 wait list is 11,525 and the wait is 8-10 years long for a housing subsidy. These staggering numbers require a direct response to a difficult and daunting social issue. HomeBASE is a major reform to the way the Commonwealth assists homeless families and CTI will work with the state to implement this new approach to help prevent homeless.

**Three Year Goals:**

- To work closely with DHCD and our Regional partners to expand homelessness prevention services for families and individuals.
- To continue to educate local communities about affordable housing and to support new affordable housing development in the region.

- To advocate for quality, cost effective social policies that provide sensible approaches to preventing and ending homelessness.

<b>Affordable Housing &amp; Homelessness</b>	<b>National Indicator</b>
Residential Services	6.2
HomeBASE	1.2
Foreclosure Prevention	1.2
Housing Consumer Education Center	1.2
Scattered Sites for Domestic Violence	6.2
Elderly & Handicapped Housing	6.1
First Time Homebuyers Education	3.2
Home Modification	6.1
Housing Prevention & Stabilization	1.2
Housing Development	2.1
Housing Choice Voucher Program (Section 8)	1.2
Special Needs Rental Assistance	6.1

### **Children, Youth & Families**

**Strategy Statement:** There is a direct correlation between self-sufficiency and access to child care. Many Greater Lowell families are unable to access quality, affordable child care for several reasons, one of which is the long wait to obtain a slot. Currently, there are 847 Greater Lowell families on the state-wide wait list for Early Head Start/Head Start. Lack of child care becomes a barrier to employment for without it, parents are unable to work. Additionally, children, particularly low-income children, need access to medical and dental care and healthy nutrition in order to be developmentally ready for school. Parents also need access to before school/after school care for school age youth which provides a supportive system for parents to continue to work and helps youth avoid risk-taking behaviors and achieve academic success. CTI’s Division of Child and Family Services will work to ensure that parents have access to quality, affordable child care and will assist children and youth to develop to their full potential.

### **Three Year Goals:**

- The Division of Child and Family Services will continue to deliver quality care for children from birth to 14 years old (including prenatal women) and their families, while expanding services for child care, before and after school care, WIC and family development programs to underserved areas of Lowell and the surrounding communities, such as Centralville. Services should specifically be expanded to target prenatal women, infants and toddlers and include a pilot program to support parent transportation to work.
- The Division of Child and Family Services will track family’s progress toward self sufficiency by using the Scales and Ladders, while assuring coordination of services within CTI and with community partners. This includes enhancing the collaborative case management system to assure the best results for families are achieved.

<b>Children, Youth and Families</b>	<b>National Indicator</b>
Early Learning (Head Start/Early Head Start)	6.3

School Age Program	2.1
Family Child Care	2.1
WIC	6.3
Healthy Summer	6.3

**Benefit Enrollment & Coordination**

**Strategy Statement:** Most often, clients come to Community Action Agencies in need of one service such as Fuel Assistance or WIC. Although they may receive that one service, they may not be informed of or assisted to access other services for which they may be eligible. Assessing the needs of the entire family at the point of intake and creating a comprehensive and coordinated system of care through a quality case management model, makes for a better system of coordination and service delivery. Cross-training and education on all agency programs and those within the communities served is critical to providing quality integrated services. CTI will continue to work on providing integrated services and linkages to other agency and community programs in order to provide a seamless delivery of services that meets the needs of the entire family.

**Three Year Goals:**

- Develop and support a case management model of service delivery beginning at intake and enrollment in CTI programs.
- Increase the capacity of agency staff to identify family needs, make appropriate referrals to other agency or community services, and deliver quality programming through education and training.
- Participate in the e-government state-wide system of Benefit Enrollment and Coordination (BECS).

<b>Benefit Enrollment &amp; Education</b>	<b>National Indicator</b>
Pre-Assessments	6.5
Agency Referrals	6.5

CTI will continue to address its other programmatic and administrative goals as outlined in the Funding and Service Delivery sections of this Strategic Community Action Plan. As these activities are further broken down, CTI will incorporate the National Goals and Outcome Measures into its Annual Work Plan. CTI’s overall agency and programmatic goals utilize all of the National Indicators as noted below and progress on these areas will be reviewed monthly in reports to CTI’s Board of Directors and adjusted accordingly if needed. All goals and outcome measures will be reported out on a semi-annual basis as required by DHCD.

**National Indicators**

<p><b>Goal 1: Low-Income People Become More Self Sufficient</b></p> <p>1.1 – Employment</p> <p>1.2 – Employment Supports</p> <p>1.3 – Economic Asset Enhancement &amp; Utilization</p>
<p><b>Goal 2: The Conditions in Which Low-Income People are Improved</b></p> <p>2.1 – Community Improvement &amp; Revitalization</p> <p>2.2 – Community Quality of Life and Assets</p> <p>2.3 – Community Engagement</p>

**Goal 3: Low-Income People Own a Stake in Their Community**

3.1 – Community Enhancement through Maximum Feasible Participation

3.1 – Community Empowerment through Maximum Feasible Participation

**Goal 4: Partnerships Among Supporters and Providers of Service to Low-Income People are Achieved**

4.1 – Expanding Opportunities through Community-Wide Partnerships

**Goal 5: Agencies Increase their Capacity to Achieve Results**

5.1 – Broadening the Resource Base

**Goal 6: Low-Income People, Especially Vulnerable Populations, Achieve their Potential by Strengthening Family and Other Supportive Systems**

6.1 – Independent Living

6.2 – Emergency Assistance

6.3 – Child & Family Development

6.4 – Family Supports (For Seniors, Disabled, and Care Givers)

6.5 – Service Counts

## FUNDING STRATEGY

**Current State:** CTI receives Federal, State, Local, and Private funding sources in order to serve the more than 40,000 low-income individuals and 18,000 families it served last year and in previous years. The following is a breakdown of funding percentages.

57% Federal through the State  
19% Federal Direct  
13% State Direct  
7% Other (Grants, Individual Contributions, Other Revenue)  
1% Local  
3% American Recovery and Re-Investment (ARRA)

Annually, CTI manages well over \$70,000,000 in federal, state, and local funds with help and support from its Executive Management team including its Chief Financial Officer her staff of nine financial experts. The agency's Board of Directors, in particular the Finance Committee, provides fiscal oversight of all agency funds. Due to strong management, smart choices, and close oversight of the agency's finances, CTI has managed to remain fiscally stable. However, the economic climate, which has resulted in state-wide cuts in program funds combined with reduced charitable giving, is a ominous threat that looms overhead and one that CTI must pay close attention to over the next three years and beyond.

The use of Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Funding has allowed CTI to leverage funding from these other sources to support existing programmatic growth and to establish new sources when a critical need arises. Over the past three years, CSBG funds served as the foundation for leveraging other sources of funding. This core funding provides the necessary means for CTI to initiate action when a critical community need arises and there is no other means to address that need. These funds have been an anchor of support that has allowed the agency to deliver services while exploring new long-term support for addressing critical community needs.

**Future Strategies:** The state of the economy has had a serious impact on the clients we serve as more and more have fallen victim to job loss, unemployment, foreclosure and other crisis. However, the current economic climate has also had far-reaching implications for both our public and private funders. As the financial markets declined, so too did the bottom line of even the biggest of endowments and foundations, making it even more competitive and challenging for non-profits to raise necessary funds for programming. This trickle down effect has brought about many challenges for CTI and its ability to raise necessary funds to support clients as they struggle to reach economic self-sufficiency. During these tough times it is more important than ever to examine our funding strategy closely and to be disciplined about the way that we raise (and spend) money.

Highlighted in the Foundation Center's Nonprofit Literature Blog was an article in the Spring issue of the *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, written by William Landes Foster, Peter Kim, and Barbara Christiansen ([www.literature.foundationcenter.org](http://www.literature.foundationcenter.org)). The article was entitled Ten Nonprofit Funding Models. Although all ten of the models categorized various approaches nonprofits may take in their fundraising approach, the Policy Innovator Model was one that draws many similarities to CTI's intended strategy. The following is a brief excerpt from the article that describes the Policy Innovator Model.

**POLICY INNOVATOR** *Some nonprofits, such as Youth Villages, rely on government money and use a funding model we call Policy Innovator. These nonprofits have developed novel methods to address social issues that are not clearly compatible with existing government funding programs. They have convinced government funders to support these alternate methods, usually by presenting their solutions as more effective and less expensive than existing programs. (By contrast, Public Providers tap into existing government programs to provide funds for the services they offer.) An example of a Policy Innovator is HELP USA. This nonprofit provides transitional housing for the homeless and develops affordable permanent housing for low-income families. Andrew Cuomo (son of former New York governor Mario Cuomo) founded HELP USA in 1986 as an alternative to New York’s approach of paying hotels to house the homeless in so-called “welfare hotels.” HELP USA’s innovative approach to the housing crisis came about in an era when homelessness was a prominent public issue and government funders were willing to try a novel approach. Cuomo gained the initial support of government decision makers by positioning his solution as both more effective and less costly, which was critical during New York’s fiscal crisis. In 2007, HELP USA’s revenues were \$60 million, almost 80 percent of which came from government sources, half federal and half state and local. The organization was operating in New York City, Philadelphia, Las Vegas, Houston, and Buffalo, N.Y. Nonprofit leaders considering the Policy Innovator funding model should ask themselves the following questions:*

- *Do we provide an innovative approach that surpasses the status quo (in impact and cost) and is compelling enough to attract government funders, which tend to gravitate toward traditional solutions?*
- *Can we provide government funders with evidence that our program works?*
- *Are we willing and able to cultivate strong relationships with government decision makers who will advocate change?*
- *At this time are there sufficient pressures on government to overturn the status quo?*

Several of CTI’s Executive, Senior and Key Management team are members of local, state and national affiliations that work closely with legislators and other public officials to develop policies that identify innovative and cost-saving measures to solve social problems. It is the agency’s believe that working collaboratively with all stakeholders to advocate for state and national policies that are the most effective to beneficiaries and less costly overall is the best approach to sensible problem solving.

CTI recognizes the importance of diversifying its funding and is committed to taking a “Think Tank” approach to agency development and fundraising. CTI will continue to apply for public resources to fund its core programs and services but will also explore non-traditional ways to raise the funds necessary to serve the needs of the community. By developing a comprehensive funding plan that incorporates both traditional and non-traditional methods for raising funds for existing services and identifying and prioritizing new or enhanced programmatic growth, CTI will be able to remain focused on quality service delivery that is mission driven.

The following are broad fundraising strategies that CTI will apply over the next three years:

- *Advocate for sensible cost saving policies that affect low-income people*
- *Develop a comprehensive fundraising plan for all agency Divisions*
- *Diversify funding*
- *Increase private, non-governmental funding through social entrepreneurship*

- *Improve the agency's management and communication of grant seeking activities*
- *Increase the agency's ability to leverage CSBG funds*

### **Fundraising Identification, Definition and Timing**

Community Teamwork will continue to apply for all appropriate federal, state, and private funds in order to continue and/or enhance programs throughout the next three years. In addition, CTI works very hard throughout the year to raise funds in a variety of ways including, but not limited to, large fundraising events and annual appeals. Over the next three years, CTI will host the following fundraising events:

**Community Action Awards:** This is a new event that supplants the agency's Local Heroes Awards. The Community Action Awards was created to celebrate the people and institutions who lead our community through action. This year, we are honoring the financial sector, specifically local banks and credit unions that help CTI and other non-profits create and sustain programs that revitalize our economy; stabilize individual, family and small business finances; and move us toward greater economic and social health, especially during these difficult times. This year, the event will be held on October 26, 2011 at the UMass Lowell Inn and Conference Center. Like the Local Heroes Awards before it, the Community Action Awards is destined to be a major fundraising event. It will be held annually in October on the same day as the Board of Directors' Annual Meeting.

**Carnival Fundraising Event:** CTI hosts an annual Key West Carnival Fundraiser in the month of April at the Lowell Memorial Auditorium. It is always very well attended with upwards of 500 + supporters, community partners, donors, staff, etc. The Carnival theme includes a tropical island buffet, hula dancers, dancing with Changes in Latitudes, a Jimmy Buffet tribute band, a silent auction and a live auction, raffles, give-a-ways, and the grand prize of \$10,000. All proceeds from this event go to the agency's homelessness prevention services. CTI has been very successful in securing sponsors and ticket sales and has successfully raised over \$450,000 to prevent homelessness over the past nine years.

**Laura Smith Thanksgiving Event:** This is another annual Thanksgiving event traditionally held in early November at the Elliot Presbyterian Church in Lowell. Laura Smith is the Assistant to Middlesex Community College President Carole Cowan and a well known singer and entertainer. Laura performs a lively gospel event to help raise funds for homelessness and for her Martin Luther King scholarship fund. This event, like the others, has provided CTI with necessary funds that fill in budget shortfalls.

**In addition to the events mentioned above, CTI also conducts and Annual Appeal to raise necessary funds that are targeted to one or two specific needs.**

**Annual Appeal:** The Annual Appeal is generally focused on meeting a specific need within the community. Our "Warm Hearts, Warm Hands" campaign raised needed funds to expand fuel and weatherization services to those most in need.

CTI has also been fortunate to receive on-line donations through its website. This way of donating is simple and easy for supporters and donors to give. In addition to our own on-line donations, CTI is also a part of Network for Good and Commonwealth Five databases which allows people to select organizations in which to donate based on their giving preferences.

**Divisional and Programmatic Funding Needs:**

**Division of Housing & Homeless Services:** As one of nine Regional Housing Agencies within the state, CTI administers the Section 8 Housing Assistance Program with over 2,200 housing subsidies, serves as the convening agency for the Merrimack Valley Regional Network to End Homelessness, operates two homeless family shelters serving 7 families at each site, and operates the Housing Consumer Education Center that provides a broad array of housing and advocacy services. Over the next few years, CTI will apply for another contract to continue its administration of the Section 8 Program and its Homeless Shelter Program from the Department of Housing and Community Development. CTI is also currently immersed in the HomeBase initiative and will work very closely with DHCD to provide housing stability and family supports to homeless families from across the region living in shelter and state-funded motels.

**Division of Child & Family Services:** With both federal and state funding, CTI has operated its Early Learning Programs, including Head Start, Early Head Start, Family Child Care, and Supportive Care for more than 40 years. Added to these are the School Age Programs located in six (6) public schools in Lowell and the Women Infants and Children (WIC) Program with a case load of over 5,000. CTI will apply for two new federal grants funded by the Department of Health & Human Services. The Healthy Marriage and Responsible Fatherhood Programs will enhance existing Child & Family Programs and their ability to provide additional services to those in need.

**Division of Energy and Community Resources:** Public funds have allowed CTI to operate its LIHEAP, Weatherization and HEARTWAP Programs for decades. It is due to this critical source of funding that more than 13,000 households, the largest number in CTI's history, were able to sustain one of the harshest winters we've seen in years. Energy Conservation programs have grown and now provide consumers with education and cost saving measures to keep their homes safe, warm and affordable. CTI has recently submitted an application to HUD for a Healthy Homes Production Grant that will enhance its Weatherization efforts and provide health and safety resources to eligible clients. In addition to Energy Programs, the Division of Energy and Community Resources has seen tremendous growth in its Financial Literacy Education programs due in part to federal and state resources including CSBS funding.

**Division of Workforce Development:** CSBG funds are directly responsible for the development of CTI's newest Division. With a small amount of CSBG funding, CTI was able to conduct a comprehensive Workforce Analysis of the Greater Lowell area, identify the workforce needs, challenges, and barriers of those seeking employment and of area employers and then use this analysis to secure state funding from the Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund to initiate a program for help enrollees obtain entry level jobs in the health care industry, and incumbent workers advance. The Workforce Division has created a Job Readiness curriculum to assist people with 21st century skills, a critical service in today's volatile job market. The Division also oversees the YouthBuild Program and the Lowell Small Business Assistance Center. CTI has operated YouthBuild for more than a dozen years and was awarded an unprecedented three years of HUD funding and two years of DOL funds to administer the program. This year, YouthBuild suffered a severe blow when it did not receive Department of Labor funds.

Fortunately, the program has worked very hard to diversify its funding and, therefore, will be able to continue to operate, although on a much smaller scale, until additional funding is secured. CTI recently submitted an application to the Department of Labor for an H-1B Visa Program that will allow us to train American workers for jobs in industries that are often filled by immigrants with H-1B Visa status.

In addition to the potential funding opportunities mentioned above, CTI has been working closely for many months with partnering agencies, educational institutions, local government, and others in preparation of the release of the U.S. Department of Education's Promise Neighborhoods initiative. A steering committee has been formed and CTI has been voted to be the lead on this exciting initiative. Based on the model of the Harlem Children's Zone, the purpose of Promise Neighborhoods is to ensure that all children and youth growing up in a Promise Neighborhood, have access to great schools and strong systems of family and community support that will prepare them to attain an excellent education and successfully transition them to college and a career. As the lead agency for this initiative, CTI is committed to this nationally significant project and looks forward to implementing a Promise Neighborhood initiative here in Lowell.

CTI must also incorporate new and innovative methods to raise funds in addition to the tried and true methods of fundraising. To do this, CTI will enhance the use of social media techniques including FaceBook, Twitter, Blogs and Email Marketing as a structure for communication and an expansion of development efforts, in addition to its Annual Appeal and Direct Mail Campaigns.

CTI's annual Carnival fundraising event has raised over \$450,000 in homelessness prevention funds for families and individuals in crisis over the past nine years. Each year, the amount raised has increased through the hard work and dedication of the Board of Directors and the Fundraising Committee. Over the past two years, the proceeds from the event have been shared across the region with our partners in Great Lawrence and Haverhill for the common purpose of preventing homelessness. This year, the Carnival event will take on an exciting new twist in order to expand its reach and increase its proceeds.

The annual Local Heroes event has served as a cornerstone for recognizing individuals and organizations that go above and beyond the ordinary to make extraordinary differences in the Greater Lowell community. This year, CTI will take a whole new approach by honoring community institutions and industries that share a common interest and willingness to help CTI further its mission. This year, CTI will honor our local financial and banking industry whose support to the agency has made it possible to expand our Financial Literacy efforts, support our new Representative Payee Program and capitalize our Micro-Loan fund for small businesses.

CTI will also explore all of its social enterprise programming such as SuitAbility which offers interview and work clothing to women re-entering the workforce. SuitAbility has opened a retail store in downtown Lowell which not only offers the general public great clothing at great prices, but also serves as a tool for increasing programmatic revenue in order to increase sustainability and lessen the need to rely on public sources of funding.

CTI will continue to develop these strategies over the next three years in our efforts to enhance the overall efficiency and sustainability of agency funding.

## **VISION STATEMENT**

Community Teamwork will be an advocate for systemic change on issues that affect people of all means, including poverty, education, workforce training, housing, economic development and civic engagement.

CTI will serve people from its core service area in Greater Lowell as well as people from the Merrimack Valley and portions of the North Shore with quality programming that leads to upward mobility and economic self-sufficiency. In achieving our Vision, all CTI staff will work in collaboration with other programs so that participants are aware of and participate in all agency programs for which they qualify.

CTI's Divisional structure will provide continuity of services and staff will be well versed on all agency and community resources. The agency will have a "no wrong door" policy with centralized intake, assessment and referrals. CTI staff will serve the needs of the entire family in a culturally respectful and compassionate manner and will collaborate and communicate with staff across the agency to strive toward best practices in ensuring that all client needs are met.

In addition, CTI will collaborate with other public and private agencies in our service area to create and sustain partnerships that will help CTI to carry out its Mission and achieve our Vision.