

COMMUNITY TEAMWORK, INC.

COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN 2006 – 2008

Mission Statement

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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Community Profile

Lowell Enterprise Community, Renewal Community

Several years ago, the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development designated the City of Lowell an Enterprise Community because it combined critical needs with the demonstrated record of responding effectively to them. In 2001, a new designation of Renewal Community was sought and obtained.

The core of need in the Lowell EC/RC is located in the Census Tracts in and around downtown Lowell. The 1990 poverty rate in the Census Tracts was 37.5% with the rates sometimes over 40%.

The resources of the City are manifested in several different ways. LeLacheur Field, built to house the *Lowell Spinners*, a Single A affiliate of the Boston Red Sox, has emerged as one of the primary social focal points of the City. All games are sold out. The Tsongas Arena is the home of the professional Minor League hockey team the *Lock Monsters*, and the UMASS Lowell *River Hawks* and the site of shows that take more space than the Lowell Memorial Auditorium at the other end of downtown can provide. The Democrats and Republicans have each held state conventions at the Arena. Numerous small national conventions have been held in Lowell. These recent successes have built on the original model of success in the City, based on the Lowell Urban National Historic Park and the high technology symbolized by Cross Point Towers at the Intersection of Route 3 and 495. Wang Laboratories has emptied out its buildings as it contracted, but new owners re-filled the towers with new businesses.

The location of the Cross Point development at the intersection of Routes 3 and 495 is reflected in its name and is indicative of its role in the state economy. The Massachusetts Taxpayer Foundation (MTF) has described the state economy as having two major parts. Greater Boston and the Ring Roads (Routes 128 and 495) around it have boomed in good times and held their own in down times. The rest of the state is characterized by older, worn out industries, and economic decline that not even the greatest boom overcomes. The MTF gives Route 495 as the line between these two sectors. In Lowell and the Greater Lowell area, this characterization appears to be accurate. Cross Point and other highway oriented developments are the engines of economic growth of the City and the region. The Lowell Enterprise and Renewal Communities are essentially to the north of Route 495. The Town of Dracut is also north of Route 495, and the urbanized section of Dracut shares several of the economic characteristics of inner city Lowell. (The rural section of Dracut is similar to the adjacent sections of New Hampshire.) The other

towns of Billerica, Chelmsford, Dunstable, Tewksbury, Tyngsboro, and Westford generally fit the boom characteristics of Metropolitan Boston.

An overall goal of the next three years for CTI will be to enable the low-income people concentrated in the Lowell Renewal Community to participate in the comparative boom of the suburbs. The barriers to this goal are not merely geographic. Low-income people need child care, transportation, affordable housing, "soft" basic job skills, and specific skill training to be able to fully benefit from the prosperity of the 495 area in good times, and to enable them to ride out the downturn without falling into even more dire straits than they began in.

Boston Metropattern: A Regional Agenda for Community and Stability in Greater Boston, a report by the Metropolitan Area Research Corporation and Citizens Housing and Planning Association gives specifics on the two different parts of the Greater Lowell region. "Extreme poverty tracts, where poverty exceeds 40%, were centered mostly in Boston, Lowell, Lawrence, and Lynn." Lowell's 55% of school students eligibility for subsidized meals is third in the region behind Boston's 72% and Lawrence's 71%.

Lowell is also a home for large numbers of non-White students. Lowell has the eighth highest percentage of non-Asian minorities in the region at 25% (Latinos from many countries and some black). However, the City of Lowell has the second largest Cambodian population of any city in America and the largest Asian community in the state at 16%. Most of the Asian students are Cambodians, Laotians, or Vietnamese who have come to America as refugees from the Killing Fields of Cambodia and the refugee camps of Thailand. They have much greater needs than their Chinese and Japanese predecessors in other cities that have had several decades in America to achieve prosperity. It should also be noted that the Black population of Lowell includes not just Black American citizens of several generations, but also recent African refugees from wars and persecutions as brutal as those in Cambodia. Lowell is home for some of the low-income people who are most in need of assistance to become self-sufficient because of the harshness of the treatment they endured and the recentness of their arrival.

Unfortunately, as these immigrants, refugees, and other low-income people arrived in Lowell in search of the jobs that would enable them to achieve self-sufficiency, many of the jobs had vanished or moved to the suburbs. The Metropattern map of jobs per 100 persons by municipality in 1998 shows Chelmsford, Billerica, and Tewksbury in the 48.8 to 67.0 range. Lowell itself reflecting its portion of the 495 jobs was in the 31.6 to 48.5 jobs range along with Westford and Tyngsboro, the suburbs furthest from the intersections of Routes 3 and 495 and of 93 and 495. Extremely rural and low population Dunstable had only 2.7 to 12.5 jobs, while Dracut to the north of Lowell and most isolated from the highways was in the 12.7 to 22.4 job rate.

The fiscal capacities of the communities are reflective of their job success. Lowell and Dracut are in the lowest range (\$971 to \$1455) for fiscal capacity per household per municipality, and in the lowest for percentage change in fiscal capacity by municipality in 1993-1998 (-24.1% to -12.4%). Dunstable starts comparatively high in the \$2026 to \$2298 range (higher than the \$2026 regional average but was in the same steep decline range as Lowell and Dracut. Billerica started high in the \$2026 to \$2298 range and declined by the range of 11.7 to 8.7. Chelmsford started in the \$1782 to \$2009 range and declined in the -8.2% to -4.1%. Tewksbury started at \$1782 to \$2009 and declined minimally if at all (-.3% to 4.1%). Westford started at \$2206 to \$2298. Its

decline was in the -8.2% to -4.1% range. Dunstable started at \$2026 to \$2298 range and declined by -24.1% to 12.4%. Lowell's fiscal capacity was significantly lower than the towns other than Dracut, and it declined as precipitously as this highway-isolated neighboring community.

Current Regions

Commonwealth, the magazine of Mass. Inc. describes the Greater Lowell area as split into sections of two of their new regions of the State in its September, 2002 issue. The City of Lowell itself is part of the region EL Norte, which includes Lawrence, the Eastern end of Middlesex County and the southern end of Essex County. Lowell's large immigrant population brought it into these sections along with comparatively low numbers of college graduates.

The rest of the Greater Lowell area is in "Stables and Subdivisions" which includes most of the suburbs of Lowell and Lawrence. This region is characterized by its high growth rates and high education rates. The Mass. Inc. paradigm thus confirms the differences between low-income, low-education Lowell and the high income, high education suburbs. A basic task of CTI will be to help the inhabitants of Lowell to share in the abundance of the suburbs. They need jobs, education, skill training, transportation, and child care. CTI's programs that alleviate the effects of poverty through Fuel Assistance, Rent Subsidies, Emergency Shelter, WIC food coupons, etc. attract those who need education, job training, job search, etc. One focus will be to link the two through coordinated intake and case management.

2000 Census

The Census data showed the growth in population, general ethnicity, education, and income. Although Lowell still has serious economic problems, the Census does reflect continued progress. Although some advocates claim that the 17% of the City's population listed as Southeast Asians is too low, this figure still gives Lowell the highest percentage of Asians in the state and certainly appears to be accurate to that extent. The Census Bureau did make a heroic effort to count all residents of the City. The Lowell suburbs grew significantly over the decade, but few low-income people were able to access these units as the Chapter 40B listing of Affordable Housing Units shows.

2000 Census

Community	Total Population	% Change	Asian	White	Black
Billerica	38,981	3.7%	1,074	36,906	432
Chelmsford	33,858	4.6%	1,563	31,520	266
Dracut	28,562	11.6%	737	27,170	222
Dunstable	2,829	26.5%	43	2,758	3
Lowell	105,167	1.7%	17,371	72,845	4,423
Tewksbury	28,851	5.8%	460	27,824	194
Tyngsboro	11,081	28.2%	275	10,597	55
Westford	20,754	26.6%	994	19,449	62

The Education and Income show the pattern of wealth and education in the suburbs. Lowell's figures are lower than its suburbs; better than other central cities.

Income/Education Data

Town	Income	% Change	% with Degree
Billerica	67,799	3%	23%
Chelmsford	70,207	0 %	44%
Dracut	57,676	- 2 %	20%
Dunstable	86,633	6%	44%
Lowell	39,192	2 %	18%
Tewksbury	68,800	0 %	25%
Tyngsboro	69,818	10%	31%
Westford	98,272	24%	57%
Lawrence	27,983	- 3 %	10%
Springfield	30,417	- 9 %	15%
Worcester	35,623	- 6 %	23%
Cambridge	47,979	11%	65%

Clearly, income and education are linked. People with better income can get better educations for their children who in turn make more money than their parents.

Affordable Housing

The figures for Chapter 40B subsidized units reflect the reverse of the education income figures. The communities with high incomes and education have low numbers of affordable units.

*Greater Lowell Communities
Compliance with Chapter 40B*

Town	# of Housing Units	# of 40B Units	Percentage (10% is target)
Billerica	13,055	216	1.65%
Chelmsford	12,981	459	3.54%
Dracut	10,597	279	2.63%
Dunstable	933	0	0%
Lowell	39,381	5,312	13.49%
Tewksbury	10,125 81	410	4.05%
Tyngsboro	3,784	116	3.07%
Westford	6,877	132	1.92%

Source: Department of Housing and Community Development

**COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN 2006 – 2008
Needs Assessment Survey**

The attached needs assessment survey, identified as a model community needs assessment survey by DHCD and created by QCAP, was modified slightly to fit within the scope of CTI’s service area and programs. The survey was made available in three languages including English, Spanish, and Khmer. It was distributed to 795 participants in CTI’s programs including Fuel

Assistance, Homeless Shelters, Section 8, Scattered Sites, Head Start, Children’s Collaborative, WIC, Housing Consumer Education Center, and Advocacy. Returns totaled a remarkable 379 surveys or 49%. As an incentive to complete and return the survey, participants were entered into a drawing to win a \$200 gift certificate to any area Market Basket. This may explain why we had such a great response. A little more than half of the surveys were mailed to participants’ homes while the remaining surveys were conducted either in person on a one-on-one basis or in small focus groups.

Part One:

The survey gathered some household characteristics including Age, Ethnicity, Education Level, Family Size, Income Level and Source, and CTI Programs that respondents and/or their children participated in or were enrolled in. The following statistics represent the responses to these categories.

AGE:

Under 20 yrs.	4%
20 – 29 yrs.	27%
30 – 39 yrs.	22%
40 – 49 yrs.	17%
50 – 59 yrs.	12%
60 – 64 yrs.	4%
65 +	11%

RACE / ETHNICITY:

White	44%
Black	7%
Asian	8%
Hispanic	37%
Other	2%

EDUCATION LEVEL:

Grade School	28%
GED	18%
High School Diploma	25%
Some College Courses	16%
Associate’s Degree	4%
Bachelor’s Degree	3%
Other	3%

FAMILY SIZE:

1	17%
2	24%
3	22%
4	20%
5	7%
6	3%
7	2%
8	.005%
Over 8	.002%

INCOME SOURCE:

Wages	32%
TAFDC	15%
Unemployment	5%
SSI/SSDI	18%
Pension	14%
Social Security	14%
Other	7%

INCOME LEVEL:

No Income	5%
Under \$10,000	43%
\$10,000 - \$25,000	35%
\$25,000 - \$35,000	6%
\$35,000 - \$45,000	4%
\$45,000 - \$55,000	2%
\$55,000 - \$65,000	.006%
\$65,000 - \$75,000	.006%
Over \$75,000	.009%

CTI PROGRAMS:

Fuel Assistance / Energy Conservation	35%
WIC	22%
YouthBuild	1%
Child Care	12%
Senior Volunteer Programs	.004%
Housing Programs	22%
Other	4%

Age: The majority of those surveyed fall under the age of 40 (53%) with the highest single percentage (27%) falling within the 20 – 29 year old age range. Eleven percent (11%) of those surveyed are over 65 years of age.

Race/Ethnicity: Whites and Hispanics represent the largest majority of those surveyed with a combined average of 81%.

Education Level: Alarmingly, the highest percentage of those responding to this area (28%) stated they only had a grade school education, some as low as 3rd and 4th grade! Only 25% have high school diplomas while only 18% have GED's. Very few people have any college education with only 4% having Associate's Degrees and only 3% having a Bachelor's Degree. Educational opportunities for low-income people in terms of Adult Basic Education, GED's, ESL, and other areas are of major concern to CTI. We will continue work on developing an Educational Clearinghouse to assist people to complete the next level of education. It is our intent to obtain funding and recognition for the clearinghouse from the U.S. Dept. of Education as an Educational Opportunity Center.

Family Size:

Most of those respondents came from a family size of two. In most cases, this consisted of married senior citizens or single mothers with one child. Family sizes of four (4) and under made up the majority percentage or 83% combined. Very few larger families responded.

Income Sources and Levels:

Almost ½ of those surveyed (43%) earn under \$10,000 per year while a combined total of 83% earn \$25,000 or less with 5% indicating they have no income at all. This falls into the extremely low-income category, well below poverty levels. With 32% earning wages, it would seem that most of those who are working earn minimum wage at best. There certainly seems to be a correlation between low wages and the educational levels noted above. More work is needed to increase education levels and provide opportunities for people to earn a living wage.

CTI Programs:

Fuel Assistance (35%), WIC (22%), and Housing Programs (22%) topped the charts as programs in which respondents or their children have participated.

Part Two:

The second part of the survey instrument was broken down into eleven areas including Community, Housing/Energy, Child Care, Health Care, Nutrition, Transportation, Family, Income/Financial, Employment, Education/Technology, and Youth. Participants were asked to check Yes, No, or Doesn't Apply to show their responses to various statements. The following represents the responses within each of the eleven categories:

Community:

In this category, 58% of the respondents indicated they are registered voters. However, of that amount, more than ½ (54%) stated they did not vote in the last election. Most people (70%) knew how to find services in their area and found community information either through Family/Friends (76%), Newspapers (82%), or surprisingly, Community Access TV (71%).

It was refreshing to see the majority of people surveyed (87%) felt safe in their homes and/or neighborhoods while 78% know and talk with their neighbors *and* did not suspect that there was any drug dealing going on in their neighborhood.

Housing/Energy:

Affordable housing and the rising costs of energy bills remains an area of concern for many low-income people. Of those surveyed, 41% have trouble meeting their rent or mortgage and 47% pay more than 50% of their income toward rent. The threat of eviction or foreclosure was experienced by 19% of those surveyed.

Finding affordable housing without a subsidy was also a problem for 54% of the respondents, and 11% indicated they have experienced some form of housing discrimination.

The ability to pay winter heating bills is and remains a critical issue with 61% indicating they could not pay their bills all winter long without the help of fuel assistance. Additionally, 33% stated they have had their telephone or other utilities such as gas or electric shut off due to high arrearages.

Some good news in this category is that 81% said they do not have lead paint in their homes.

Child Care:

Interestingly, an average of 60% of those surveyed said that Child Care issues did not apply to them. Of the remaining 40%, forty-three percent (43%) said their child care was affordable, while 56% said it was not affordable. In terms of quality of care, 65% felt their preschoolers were receiving quality care while 34% did not. Again, of the 40% that responded to this category, 76% indicated they did not have trouble finding after-school care for their children.

Health Care:

Amazingly, 85% of those surveyed stated they have some form of health insurance while 73% stated their children have health insurance. This can be attributed to the fact that 46% of respondents receive TAFDC (15%), SSI/SSDI (18%), or Social Security (14%) and as a result, would be covered by Mass Health or Medicare. Also, so many of those surveyed are very low-income with 43% earning less than \$10,000 and they too may qualify for Mass Health simply based on their income level.

Of those surveyed, 28% cannot afford prescription drugs. Although Mass Health and other programs assist people with prescription drug costs, this is an area that CTI must watch closely. As our population shifts and baby boomers become seniors, and the numbers of Americans suffering from diseases such as hypertension, high cholesterol, diabetes, and other medical problems rises, prescription medicine must be available and affordable for low-income people.

Nutrition:

There was some concern about nutrition as it relates to health. 22% indicated that they or members of their family have problems with diabetes and/or obesity and 27% said they needed to learn more about good nutrition. Sadly, 1/3 of those surveyed or 34% stated they have trouble affording food for their families and 31% have used a food bank or soup kitchen in the past year.

The survey also indicated that more than ½ (56%) use food programs such as WIC or Food Stamps to help offset the cost of their grocery bills.

CTI has been a leader in the area of nutritional education through our WIC program. Our Outdoor Farmers' Market brings local produce to the heart of downtown Lowell and coupons are available to WIC recipients, senior citizens and low-income people that may be redeemed at the Market. Proudly, the Farmers' Market will celebrate its 25th anniversary this year.

Transportation:

Reliable transportation is a necessity in order to achieve self-sufficiency yet, 52% of those surveyed stated they did not have adequate, reliable transportation and an additional 40% said they could not afford to pay for transportation. CTI attempted to participate in the Cars for Jobs Program to provide low-cost reliable cars so that low-income people have a means to get to work when they cannot rely on public transportation. This was not successful, however we will continue to research ways in which low-income people can depend on reliable transportation at the lowest possible cost.

Family:

Based on the responses, 70% of those surveyed said yes, they have a very supportive family. However, 28% indicated they have experienced emotional or physical abuse by a partner sometime in their life. Although, men may be victims of domestic violence, statistics show that 85% of victims are women. According to the National Institute of Justice "women are substantially more likely than men to be murdered by their intimate partner." Children who witness violence in the home are more likely to exhibit behavioral problems. They may, in fact, learn to use violence to resolve their own disagreements. Domestic violence is about animal abuse, elder abuse, abuse against people with disabilities, child abuse, spousal abuse, sibling abuse, teen dating violence and more. **Source: National Institute of Justice.*

CTI's Scattered Site Transitional Apartment Program (SSTAP) offers help to women who are victims of domestic violence by providing a safe haven in temporary housing and intensive supportive services to women enrolled in the program.

Income/Financial:

Based on the fact that most of those who responded to this survey are very low-income, it is not surprising that 47% said they have too much debt. What is interesting is that only 25% said they have high balances on their credit cards, primarily because most do not have or are unable to obtain credit cards due to either poor credit histories or simply not having enough income to qualify for a credit card. More than ½ of those surveyed (57%) said they have a budget that they follow.

The loss of public assistance did not apply to almost 50% of those surveyed. However, of the remaining 50%, seventeen percent (17%) lost their public assistance because of time limits and 16% became employed and were no longer eligible.

Employment:

At least 11% of the respondents are retired seniors, many of whom collect social security and/or pensions and another 18% are people receiving SSI/SSDI and are unable to work. Despite this fact, only 30% work full-time and 19% work part-time. Of those working, 57% said their job

does not pay enough to meet their living costs and 40% felt they needed more education or training to find a good or better paying job.

Some of the jobs that people indicated they would like included professional positions such as teaching, nursing, etc. Others simply wanted to work at “a job that pays enough to make ends meet” as one responded stated.

Education/Technology:

CTI has a partnership with the City of Lowell’s Adult Education Program to offer GED and ESL classes for residents at our family shelters, Milly’s Place and the Merrimack House, and also for Head Start parents at our Head Start facility on Phoenix Ave. in Lowell. As a component to our YouthBuild Program, GED classes are also held throughout each program cycle for YouthBuild trainees required to work toward a GED. These classes are an important program piece in assisting clients to reach the next level of education. Thirty-four percent (34%) of those surveyed indicated they would like to take adult education classes while 37% said they could not afford further education or training.

In terms of Technology, 46% do not have access to a computer or the Internet. Of those who do have access to a computer, 31% said they needed computer training.

Youth:

Having access to adequate after-school activities is important to working parents in maintaining their employment and ultimately their self-sufficiency. CTI’s School Age Program enrolls approximately 254 children in its After School Program. The needs assessment survey showed that 37% felt there was adequate after school activities for youth ages 6 – 13 and 31% indicated the same for kids between the ages of 13- 16.

Youth violence in schools and neighborhoods was a concern for 59% of those surveyed.

**COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN 2006 – 2008
Internal Needs Assessment**

Rapid growth, a change in leadership and a desire to establish our organizational direction led to the decision to embark on a Strategic Planning Process in January 2004. A core committee consisting of a broad range of internal stakeholders was established. This group was made up of employees from Senior Managers to Front-Line Staff as well as members of CTI’s Board of Directors. The committee began meeting bi-weekly over the course of the next four months to establish a process in which we as an agency would identify and prioritize strategic issues. The strategic planning process spanned across a nine-month period as we entered the Planning to Plan phase in January 2004 and then producing the written plan in September 2004. The highlight of the planning process was a two-day community event held on April 29th and 30th 2004. This event brought together Internal Stakeholders including staff, both management and non-management, Board of Directors, and members of our Head Start Policy Council, and External Stakeholders such as community partners, advocates, government funders, private sector representatives, elected officials and many other non-profit partners. Eighty participants in all came together for two days and worked in self-managed groups to explore CTI’s past and present and to help chart the future of the agency. Through the process of a SWOT analysis, we identified our strengths, weakness, opportunities and threats and defined the environmental

challenges that we face with the Greater Lowell community and CTI's service areas. The following is a listing of CTI's strengths and weaknesses:

CTI Strengths

Staff Strengths

- Longevity of Employees
- Employee Longevity
- Staff Longevity
- Employees have been with clients
- Support of employee education
- Clients Become Staff
- Bonding with Peers
- Staff assumes leadership roles in other organizations
- Employee commitment to CTI mission
- Activity for Employees
- Dedicated Staff
- Professionalism
- Great Staff!
- Great Executive Director
- Employees with Diverse Backgrounds
- Pride in our Work
- Stability in Staff
- Great Employee Benefits
- A client as the Executive Director
- Good Management Staff
- Strong Staff & ED
- Compassionate & Dedicated Staff

Fundraising

- Fundraising for Community Need
- Good Fundraising
- Great Fundraising
- Ability to Raise Money

Innovative & Creative

- Risk Taker
- Forward Thinking
- Eye on Economic Development
- Keeps it Real

Good Client Relationships

- Positive Outcomes for Clients
- Advocate for Clients
- Client Involvement
- Good getting clients involved with their own services
- Good Connection to Clients
- Human Being Answers the Phone
- Receptionist helps make 1st impression positive

Institutional Wisdom

- History
- Forty Years of History
- Values Differences
- Haven Environment

Quality Programs

- High Quality Early Childhood Programs
- Great Senior Programs
- Emergency Transitional Programs
- Help Youth – Many Youth Programs
- Respect for Youth
- Affordable Housing
- Housing Assistance

Strong Support from Elected Officials

- Links to Legislators
- National Identity with State-Wide Affiliates
- State & Federal Recognition
- Good Relations with Politicians
- Political Connections
- Elected Officials
- Enabling Legislation

Strong Community Base

- Has Community Resources
- Community Confidence

- Community Involvement
- Understanding Community Needs
- Great Sense of Community
- Roots in the Community
- Good connections in the community
- Name Recognition
- Big
- Large Agency, #2 in State
- Positive Reputation (local, state, nation)
- High Visibility
- Good Reputation – Good Outreach
- Reputation
- Successful
- City-Wide Recognition
- Recognition by Association
- Strong Reputation
- Well liked and accepted by other agencies
- Community Knowledge
- Knowing the Territory
- Meeting Community Needs
- Good Reputation in Community & State

Mission Based

- Very focused mission
- Valuable mission
- Clear mission
- Great mission
- Organization remains focused on mission

Flexible & Resourceful

- Flexibility to address issues & problems
- Flexible hours of service
- Always on Call

Fiscally Strong

- Fiscally Sound
- Fiscally Responsible
- Finances
- Diverse Funding Sources

- Internal Review
- Good Internal Systems, i.e., Fiscal, HR, etc.

Positive Atmosphere & Values

- Responds well to issues with clients (and quickly)
- Works well in crisis
- Enthusiasm on the Job
- “I Can” Attitude
- Not Afraid to Fail
- Reality Based
- No Task Too Large
- Advocacy
- Strong Humanistic Approach

Empowerment

- On-going support for all
- Make a Difference
- Willingness to do more
- Knowledgeable
- Give Hope
- Change People’s Lives
- Commitment
- Helpful
- Understanding
- Sensitive to Needs
- Bonding
- Champion of Underdog
- Friendly
- Coming Together
- Caring
- Tolerance
- Respect of Person
- Opportunity for all
- Encouragement & Opportunity
- Opportunities for Community Service
- Workshops
- Promote Self-Development
- Parent Empowerment
- Good Sense of Family Support

Partnerships

- Cooperation
- Good Collaborators
- Good Ability to Provide Linkages
- Partnerships
- Great Community Partners
- Great Teamwork
- Teamwork
- Communication
- Strong Partnerships
- Partners with other agencies
- Partnerships with Community Groups
- Community Partnerships
- Forty Years of Community Connections

- Good Cultural Diversity
- Languages
- Multilingual

Wide Range of Programs

- Multiple Programs
- Broad Range of Services
- Wide Range of Services
- Variety of Programming
- Broad Base Programming
- Creativity in New Programs
- Umbrella Concept
- Strength in Numbers

Facilities Ownership

- Good Locations & Facilities
- “Owns” Facilities
- Ownership
- Own their Buildings
- Facilities

Quality Programs

- Dedication to Children & Family
- WIC
- Early Head Start
- Daycare Centers & Home Providers
- Fuel Assistance
- Before & After School
- Supply Breakfast, Lunch, Snacks

Cultural Sensitivity

- Diversity of Culture
- Diversity

CTI WEAKNESSES

Management Issues

- Spread too Thin
- Making Time to Reflect & Assess
- Lack of Communication Between Decisions
- Lack of Decentralized Structure
- Too Many Committees
- Too Many Meetings
- Uncertainty with Finances
- Need More Funds
- Computer Resources (MIS)
- Too Many Employees Qualify for Services (low-pay)
- Undeveloped Middle Management
- Need More Recognition for Employees Performance, Not Seniority
- Keeping Staff Motivated
- Unfair Job Distribution
- Workload
- Hard Work Not Recognized
- Staff Morale
- Lack of Knowledgeable Employees
- Call Returning (not returning calls)
- Unanswered Emails
- Decision Making Aversion
- Lack of Procedures & Protocols
- Succession Planning
- Need for More Diversity in Management Level

Communication Issues

- Communicate to All Staff
- Conveying Information to Clients is Difficult
- Internal Communication to all Sites
- Internal Knowledge Consistency
- Growth vs. Communication
- Communication
- Not Clear Understanding of Broad Mission

- Many People Don't Know What CTI Does, Mission, etc.
- Not Clear Understanding of all Programs
- Public Education
- Feeling of Disconnection of Small Programs from others in Division
- Lack of Communication Between Offices/Centers/Sites
- Lack of Sharing Information for Clients
- Off-Sites feel like they are in Limbo
- Some Employees don't Realize they work for CTI
- No Agency-Wide Orientation for New Employees
- Lack of Communication Between Staff and Parents
- Communication Flow is Weak to Off-Sites
- Internal Communication Top Down Lacking
- Communication Between Departments
- Off-Site Programs not Included in Many Things.
- Off-Site Facilities are Forgotten

Training Issues

- Lack of Staff Development
- Provide Education Opportunities to ALL Employees
- Need More Trainings of Programs for Employees
- Limited Training Opportunities
- More Training for Front-Line Employees
- Employees Don't Know Other Functions of CTI
- Lack of Employee Knowledge of all Services Offered
- Lack of Supervisory Training
- Lack of Sensitivity

- Limited Training Opportunities
- More Training for Front-Line Employees
- Poor Customer Service Training
- Poor Referral Service
- Lack of Supervisory Training
- Confidentiality – Need More Attention to this
- Perception that not all clients are deserving of services

Miscellaneous Issues

- Employee Benefits
- Equal Opportunities for Staff
- Salaries
- Relatively Low-Pay Scale
- Inequity of Distribution of Benefits
- Burned Out Staff
- Low-Pay
- Low Pay Scales
- Lack of Upward Mobility
- Limited Room to Excel
- Understaffed
- Not Enough Exposure for Youth Programs
- Staff Resources
- No Support Staff for Off-Site Facilities
- Lack of Amenities for Staff
- Not Enough Supplies for Employees
- Off-Site Employees are Treated as Outsiders
- Coordination of Services
- Chairs in Board Room Too Low
- Short Chairs in Conference Room
- Lack of Waiting Space for Clients
- Lack of Social Services for Children
- Uneven Quality of Programs
- Prevention Services
- Clinical Case Management
- Bureaucratic
- Limited Ability to Provide more Housing
- Parking

- Not Enough Easels (just kidding!)
- Not Enough Language Capacity
- Lack of Services for Seniors
- Not Enough Programs for Seniors
- Not Enough Transportation for Elderly and Limited Income
- Consider the Elder as Part of the Family
- Limited State-of-the-Art Equipment
- Need Computer Upgrades
- Fleet Maintenance & Repair
- Too Many Changes, State of Flux
- Judgmental
- Slow-to-Change
- Lack of Ideas
- Not Enough Mental Health Partners
- No Mental Health Programs
- Limited Space for Daycare
- Lack of Opportunity for Parental Involvement
- Too Focused in Lowell Only
- Too Big
- CTI Hasn't Evaluated its Operation Before Now
- Trust in Immigrant Refugee Community United
- Limited African Involvement
- Second Languages
- Staff Respect of Clients
- Lack of Language Skills
- Lack of Knowledge of Other Communities
- Missing Low-Middle Income
- Limited Unrestricted Dollars
- Things Are Not Equal At Every Site
- Multiple Sites to Manage
- Ownership of Facilities Limited
- Multiple Sites
- Limited Housing (Shelters)
- Don't Own Enough Sites!
- Physical Attributes of Buildings (Face Lifts)
- Bi-Lingual Staff
- Lack of Upward Mobility for Clients

- Transportation
- Gaps in Services
- Board of Directors need more Commitment from Members
- Board Retention & Partnership
- Board Recruitment
- Perception of CTI
- Better Name Recognition
- Better Publicity
- Better Information About Programs
- More Outreach and Publicity about the Agency
- Outreach and Information About Services
- Off-Sites don't have Voice Mail
- Too Much Voice Mail (Except Khmer & Port.)
- Limited Political Involvement
- Too Many Reports
- Safety Problems
- Heating Costs (oil)
- Unemployment
- Brazilians
- Compliance with Federal & State Rules
- Inability to Know Key Staff Due to Compensation
- Limited Funding
- Limited Scholarship Money
- Not Enough Money for Emergency Services
- Improve Client Tracking and Intake Procedure
- Follow-Up of Referrals is not Consistent
- Insufficient Case Management
- Working Space for Employees
- Crowded Workspace
- Do for People Rather Than Teach
- Waiting Lists
- Suggestion Boxes
- Parking
- No Parking for Anyone
- Parking!
- No Parking
- No Parking on Dutton St. & Market St.
- Parent Training
- Need More Space and Funding to Meet Needs
- Strengthen Outside Resources
- Dress Code
- Evaluation of impact esp. with newcomers
- Program Evaluation

The planning event produced an enormous amount of data that was reviewed, analyzed and compiled into five core priorities. They include the following:

Affordable Housing:

To increase the supply, and to prevent the loss of affordable housing units.

Community Communication:

To increase the knowledge of the full range of CTI's Programs on the part of staff, clients, and the community at large in order to provide all appropriate services to all people in need and enhance relationships with existing and potential donors.

Educational Programs:

To empower and support residents of the region to acquire enough education to improve the quality of their lives.

Partnerships:

To develop partnerships with appropriate community agencies to increase the number of services available to low-income people.

Staff Training and Development:

To enable all staff to acquire the skills they need to attain their full potential and to assist both internal and external clients to attain their full potential.

In addition to the above, we also identified some Workplace Wins for staff in the areas of improved communication, tuition reimbursement, and subsidized childcare.

Workplace Wins:

To create an environment where employees have increased opportunities that will help them improve their skills and meet their professional and personal goals.

One of the primary objectives of the planning committee was to ensure that all of the priorities identified above must align with our day-to-day activities and must become an integral part of what we do every day.

COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN 2006-2008

Service Delivery System

CTI's services are delivered through a series of Divisions composed of related programs. The Divisions provide these services at CTI's main offices at 167 Dutton Street in Lowell and a variety of other sites throughout the service areas of the programs.

Division of Housing and Homeless Services

The Housing Division occupies the third floor of CTI's main building at 167 Dutton Street. At this site, the Division administers the Section 8 Tenant-Based Housing Assistance Program throughout Northern Middlesex County and most of Essex County and administers several

targeted tenant-based rental assistance programs for homeless veterans and Department of Mental Health clients, as well as several project-based programs. The actual service sites of the targeted housing subsidies include Julie House in Lowell for persons with AIDS, Veterans' Mansion in Haverhill for housing for homeless veterans, and Lincoln-Winn Hotel in Salem, Massachusetts for housing for the disabled.

The DTA funded Housing Assistance Program also operates from 167 Dutton Street, though the workers spend most of their time at DTA offices in Lowell and Lawrence helping low-income people to avoid homelessness and in Shelters for homeless families including CTI's Milly's Place and Merrimack House, as well as the House of Hope and Lowell Transitional Living Center, helping these families conduct their housing searches. The HAP operates in the Haverhill area via a subcontract to Emmaus, Inc. CTI's two Shelters for homeless families are about a mile (and an easy bus ride) from 167 Dutton Street and within a block of each other, so the staffs at the two Shelters can work together to help residents overcome their problems and become self-sufficient.

CTI's Housing Consumer Education Center serves the Merrimack Valley, Cape Ann and the North Shore from the first floor at 167 Dutton Street. The HCEC staff provides information and referral and brief case management on housing issues to tenants, landlords, first-time homebuyers, long-time owners in danger of foreclosure, etc. The HCEC staff provides First-Time Homebuyer classes throughout the region with particular attention to Methuen and Gloucester where the Methuen Community Development Office and Gloucester Catholic Charities (respectively) pay for classes. Completion of the classes qualifies students for various state and local programs.

The HCEC manages a wide range of programs including the Home of Your Own Program for handicapped individuals, the Home Modification Program of the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission, the Soft Second Program of the Massachusetts Housing Partnership, and the Get the Lead Out Program of MassHousing (the former Mass. Housing Finance Agency.) The HCEC is also recognized as a foreclosure prevention program of Freddie Mac.

The Housing Division also administers the Scattered Site Transitional Apartment Program (SSTAP) for victims of domestic violence from 167 Dutton Street with funding from the Department of Social Services. The case management is provided at 167 Dutton Street with the housing at different locations throughout the Merrimack Valley.

Division of Property and Energy Services

The Energy office has moved to 517 Moody Street, a site four (4) blocks from 167 Dutton Street in the Acre section of Lowell next to downtown. The new space, which was developed by the Coalition for a Better Acre to CTI's specifications, is handicapped accessible (unlike Energy's former location in the basement at 167 Dutton Street) and has ample parking (again, unlike 167 Dutton Street.) As many people are served by mail as possible. The southern communities in the Fuel Assistance area are served through temporary locations in community facilities in Arlington and in the Council on Aging or Veteran's Agent offices in one of the neighboring towns. The Weatherization and HEARTWAP Programs (publicly funded) and Energy Conservation Programs (funded by private utilities) are all operated from the new location on Moody Street.

The Division operates 60-units of Elderly Housing in Methuen; 9 units of family housing at 423 Broadway St. in Lowell; and is about to open a 15 unit affordable housing complex in Westford.

YouthBuild

The YouthBuild Program is currently operating from the former Red Cross building on Pawtucket Street near CTI's family shelter, Milly's Place, and a short drive from 167 Dutton Street and the rest of downtown Lowell.

Division of Child and Family Services

The former Departments of Head Start and Family Life Services have been consolidated into a Division that provides all of the programs of the two Departments in several consolidated sites. The central administration of the Division is located at 167 Dutton Street. Children in Family Child Care homes are served from 167 Dutton Street. 460 low-income pre-school children and 75 infants and toddlers are in the James A. Houlares Early Learning Center at 126 Phoenix Avenue in Lowell along with the Social Service and Health staffs, a central kitchen which also cooks for the Healthy Summer Program, the Parent and Staff Training Center, and the offices of the Mass. Family Network and the Children's Collaborative. 140 pre-school children are served at the Children's Corner facility at 554 Pawtucket Street in Lowell. Other classrooms are located in Billerica High School, a public school in Pepperell (to the west of the agency's basic service area), and Children's Village at the Mill in downtown Lowell. The transportation system for all children in the Division's programs is operated by radio from the Houlares Early Learning Center. One Teen Parenting or Family Learning Center is located at the Phoenix Avenue site, another at Lowell High School. The Office for the School-Age Programs is located at 169 Merrimack Street, with CTI's Volunteer Center. The programs are located at a number of sites.

Women, Infants and Children's Supplementary Nutrition (WIC) Program

The WIC Program's office at 40 Church Street in Lowell has benefited from its location near a shopping center.

Division of Community Resources

Volunteer Center

CTI is one of only a handful of agencies in the country to administer all three Corporations for National services programs – Retired and Senior Volunteers (RSVP), Foster Grandparents (FGP), and Senior Companions (SCP). All three are administered from CTI's Volunteer Center at 169 Merrimack Street (2 blocks from our 167 Dutton Street agency headquarters.). Volunteer sites number in the dozens throughout the Greater Lowell area.

Child Care Search

Child Care Search operates from an office building at 2352 Main Street in Concord. This location reflects a requirement that the office be located near public transportation in the Metrowest area. Staff routinely spends time in DTA offices in Framingham, Malden, and Somerville, and on Community Partnership Boards representing 44 communities.

Search currently operates two programs serving Greater Lowell - the Family Foundations Network and Children's Collaborative programs that are located at CTI's Phoenix Avenue facility.

New Entry Sustainable Farming Project

This program is operated in partnership with Tufts University and several other agencies. Immigrants with farming backgrounds or interests are recruited, trained and supported by staff located at 9 Central Street. The land they farm is in Dracut and other rural towns.

Lowell Farmers' Market

The Market is open Fridays from July through October at the John F. Kennedy Civic Center next to Lowell City Hall. The Market Master recruits, trains and supports the Market vendors from offices at 167 Dutton Street, a block away.

Lowell Small Business Assistance Center (LSBAC)

The Lowell Small Business Assistance Center is ideally located at 88 Middle Street on the second floor of a building owned by Middlesex Community College, in easy walking distance of CTI and its other two main sponsors, Middlesex Community College and the Lowell Division of Planning and Development. The site is highly accessible for potential entrepreneurs from the Lowell inner city. As sponsor, MCC is donating the cost of rent.

COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN 2006 - 2008

Linkages

Community Teamwork, Inc. has been a leader in the development of a series of linkages in many areas that coordinate existing resources and mobilize new ones to help low-income people. This longstanding commitment was re-affirmed in the agency's Strategic Planning process in 2004 when partnerships were chosen as one of the agency's priorities.

SHIFT Coalition

The most recent linkage development carried out by CTI was the Stabilized Housing for Individuals and Families (SHIFT) Coalition. CTI convened this group of nonprofit, public agencies, faith-based institutions, community-minded for profits, etc. to address the growing number of low-income people in hotels on public subsidies, and other families, homeless or at risk of being homeless. The SHIFT Coalition, under the leadership of CTI's Executive Director, worked out a division of labor and system of referrals in which faith-based organizations raise funds for people in need, and refer them to Coalition members with case managers. The non-profits and government agencies dispense these and other funds in a coordinated case management system

The SHIFT Coalition developed a system to assist homeless families to leave hotels and find permanent housing. This "Shelter to Housing" Program was presented to the Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance. DTA approved it as a pilot project for the Lowell area and 42 families were moved from hotels to permanent housing. Based on its success in Greater Lowell the Program was implemented statewide.

CTI also worked statewide through the Building Blocks coalition of homelessness prevention and housing groups to win approval of the funding of the Residential Assistance to Families in Transition (RAFT) Program. The RAFT Program provides first and last months rent, security deposits, etc. to enable homeless families to obtain housing and emergency rent and mortgage payments to help families to avoid homelessness through eviction and foreclosure. In Fiscal Year 2005 CTI helped 104 families with RAFT funds.

CTI has also obtained \$50,000 from the Fireman Foundation for a full-time staff member for the SHIFT Coalition to call meetings and coordinate interagency efforts and to develop an early warning system to prevent homelessness by intervening before a family is too deeply in debt to avoid homelessness.

The Executive Director of CTI called a meeting of all people involved in the prevention of homelessness, and services to those families and individuals already homeless. She chaired the meeting and subsequent meetings. The staff from CTI participating in the Coalition include the Director and Assistant Director of Housing & Homeless Services, the Advocacy Coordinator, the Housing Assistance Program Coordinators, the Housing Consumer Education Center Director the Planning Director and Assistant Planning Director. The Assistant Planning Director came up with the acronym Stabilized Housing for Families and Individuals in Transition (SHIFT) Coalition.

In addition to CTI staff, representatives of the following organizations participate in the SHIFT Coalition.

Lowell City Agencies

- Lowell Health Department
- Lowell Housing Authority
- Lowell Division of Planning & Development
- Lowell Police Department
- Lowell Hunger / Homeless Commission

Massachusetts State Agencies

- Department of Mental Health
- Department of Transitional Assistance
- Department of Social Services

Faith-Based Institutions

- Merrimack Valley Catholic Charities
- Central Food Ministry
- Sisters of Charity
- St. Joseph the Worker Shrine
- Christ Church United
- St. Vincent DePaul Society at Holy Family

Private Non-Profits

- House of Hope (Family Shelter)
- Lowell House
- Justice Resource Institute
- Project Bread
- One Family (Statewide homeless advocate)

General Linkage

CTI convened the early meetings of the Nonprofit Alliance of Lowell to allow the smaller agencies in the City to exchange information on best practices, etc. CTI serves as fiscal agent for several small agencies in Lowell that provide critically needed services, but lack the money to administer grants and contracts on their own. CTI administers the grants of the smallest agencies at its own expense. The larger ones are asked for a fee until they grow enough to become self-sufficient.

CTI serves as fiscal agent in 2005 for the following community-based agencies from Lowell:

Sierra Leonean Association of Lowell, Lowell Wish Project, Caring for Kids, Building Resilience in Kids, Friends of Tyler Park, MARA, Healthy Summer

Housing

CTI was one of two original founding members of the Lowell Housing Partnership. CTI staff was instrumental in the establishment of the Lowell Hunger and Homeless Commission and remains active in its work.

CTI's Planning Director, Assistant Director of Housing and Homeless Services, and Shelter Coordinators are members of the Lowell Continuum of Care for the Homeless. This group is convened by the Lowell Division of Planning and Development to assess the needs of the homeless residents of Lowell, determine which services are not met, and attempt to fill the gaps through a coordinated application to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development under the McKinney Homeless Assistance Program. The Continuum conducts the Annual Point in Time Survey of numbers of homeless people in shelters, streets, etc. in the City, and approves applications for Shelter Plus Care, Supportive Housing, etc. to respond to their needs.

In addition to CTI and DPD, the active members of the Continuum of Care include the House of Hope (a family shelter), Alternative House (shelter for victims of domestic violence), Lowell House (shelter and services to victims of substance abuse and other addictions), Lowell Transitional Living Center (the only shelter for homeless individuals in Greater Lowell), and Middlesex North Resource Center (shelter and services for mentally retarded people), Pathfinders (safe haven for mentally ill people), and Crescent House (services to homeless veterans.)

As the Section 8 regional nonprofit agency, CTI is linked to the Massachusetts Nonprofit Housing Association, a statewide network that has fought to maintain services to more than 2,000 low-income tenants and to develop new programs like the Housing Consumer Education Center and the Housing Assistance Program.

As part of the statewide regional housing network, CTI plays an active role in statewide housing advocacy like campaigns of MNPHA, Citizens Housing and Planning Association, Building Blocks Campaign, and Homes for Families. CTI staff work with DHCD and CHAPA staff to develop new programs, and actively participate on the MNPHA Rental Assistance and Legislative Committees. CTI's Planning Director serves on the Legislative Committee. CTI's HCEC staff works closely with the HCEC staffs of other regional housing agencies. More than a dozen CTI staff take part in MNPHA annual conferences as a means of acquiring new skills and sharing experiences with their colleagues from other agencies.

Economic Development

CTI has worked closely with Middlesex Community College, the Lowell Enterprise Community, Lowell's Division of Planning & Development and 25 other partners to develop and maintain the Lowell Small Business Assistance Center as means of giving low-income people the ability to create their own jobs or benefit from the entrepreneurship of others.

CTI's Deputy Executive Director is the Chair of the Center City Committee. He and the Executive Director are members of the Lowell Plan and the Lowell Development Finance Corporation. The former is a group of local, public, and private community leaders who plan the future of the City. The latter is a consortium of area banks that loans the money to implement the plan. CTI's Executive Director is a member of the Lowell Workforce Investment Board.

Nutrition

As noted above, CTI staff helped to establish the Lowell Hunger and Homeless Commission, and the agency maintains a seat on the Commission. CTI works with other Commission members and other community-based organizations and have faith-based organizations to help meet the emergency nutritional needs of low-income people of Greater Lowell. In addition to the shelters noted above, nutritional linkages include the Merrimack Valley Food Bank, Catholic Charities Emergency Food Pantry, and MA/Com Food Share, a charitable piece of local corporations.

CTI has also developed ways to help low-income people to grow their own food or to gain access to locally grown food. CTI's Farmers' Market has made local farm produce available in downtown Lowell for more than 23 years. The Market's success is enhanced by coupons for fruits and vegetables that are funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture through the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. The coupons are available to WIC recipients, elderly people, and other low-income people. The New Entry Farmer Program has enhanced the variety of foods produced for the Market. This partnership was established by CTI and Tufts University to enable Southeast Asians with experience or interest in farming to farm small plots on farms in the suburbs.

One of the farmers supporting them was John Ogonowski, the pilot of one of the two planes flown into the World Trade Center. In tribute to him, Congressman Marty Meehan and Senator Edward Kennedy have introduced legislation to permanently acquire part of the land tended by the New Entry Farmers. At the announcement of the filing of the legislation, Mr. Ogonowski's farm was the site of a gathering that reflected the extensive linkages that have made this program a success. The guests included representatives of the Federal Agriculture Extension Service, the Massachusetts Commissioner of Food and Agriculture, Executive Director of the Cambodian

Mutual Assistance Association, both veteran and New Entry Farmers, and staff from the University of Massachusetts Amherst and Lowell, as well as Tufts University.

Child Care

CTI serves as the lead agency for the Community Partnerships for the towns of Billerica, Chelmsford, Dracut, Tewksbury, and Westford and participates actively in the work of the Lowell Community Partnership. The Massachusetts Family Network grant enables CTI to help parents and children not in any of the programs of our Division of Child & Family Services.

CTI's Executive Director is the President of the Massachusetts Day Care Association (MADCA). CTI's Head Start staff participates in the work of the Massachusetts Head Start Directors' Association. CTI's Child Care Search Department carries out Resource and Referral Programs and serves on community partnerships in most southwest Middlesex County communities.

Youth

A variety of incidents including crime and arrests of youths showed that more intensive youth programming was needed in Lowell. The Executive Director and other staff participated in the work of the Mayor's Joint Youth Commission, Lowell Career Pathways and other youth-related efforts for years. When a new sponsor was needed for the Lowell YouthBuild Program, CTI was able to demonstrate a broad range of support for its successful application. Supporters included the Lowell Probation Department, Middlesex County District Attorney's Office, and Lowell Streetworker Program. CTI also received state YouthBuild funds and great support from the City of Lowell, which provided sites to build houses on and the money to pay for it.

CTI is ready to play any appropriate role in coordinating and administering youth programs as it showed by becoming sponsor of the Lowell Spindle City Corps. and serving as fiscal agent of the United Teen Equality Center (UTEC) until it could become independent.

CTI YouthBuild participated actively in the work of the Massachusetts YouthBuild Coalition to restore the budget line item of support for the program.

Community Development

CTI participates actively in the City of Lowell Consolidated Planning process, which leads to the City's application for Community Development Block Grant, HOME, and Emergency Shelter Grant funding. As a result, CTI is able to access CDBG Human Services funding for the Retired Senior Volunteer Program, Energy Home Repairs, CDBG Economic Development funds for the Lowell Small Business Assistance Center, HOME funds for homes to be build by YouthBuild, and ESG funds to help support CTI's family shelters. The City's Homeless Assistance application to HUD also includes a thorough listing of CTI Housing programs.

The City's successful application for designation as an Enterprise Community in 1998 included strong support from CTI and resulted in significant funding for a variety of programs for inner-

city low-income residents. EC funding was vital to the establishment of and ongoing survival of the Lowell Small Business Assistance Center.

CTI also strongly supported the City's successful bid for designation as a Renewal Community in 2001. Renewal Community status adds little direct funding but provides powerful tools to assist in the growth of small business. The LSBAC encourages small businesses to use the incentives for businesses in Renewal Communities.

Professional Associations

In virtually all fields, CTI staff participates actively and frequently in leadership positions in the work of professional associations for their fields including the Massachusetts Nonprofit Housing Association, Massachusetts Head Start Directors' Association, Massachusetts Association of Day Care Agencies, the Massachusetts CAP Directors' Association, etc.

Lowell Cable Television

CTI's Community Relations Coordinator and Assistant Director of Planning & Program Development both serve on the Board of the Lowell Telecommunications Corporation. The Assistant Director also serves on the Executive Committee of the LTC Board.

Summary

CTI has developed a network of private, local, state, and Federal linkages to bring together all possible resources to help the low-income people of Greater Lowell to overcome the effects of poverty and to become self-sufficient.

COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN 2006 – 2008

Funding Strategy

State Refunding

Over the next three years, most of CTI's programs funded by the state will issue competitive Requests for Responses. CTI will apply to keep all of the programs currently serving the agency's basic service area and restore one program serving the Greater Lowell area from an Essex County base to a Middlesex County service area.

Section 8 Leased Housing

The agency will apply for another 10 year contract to administer the Section 8 Leased Housing Assistance Program from the Massachusetts Department of Housing & Community Development. The agency's proposal will be developed as part of a joint effort of the Mass. Nonprofit Housing Association. Common language will be developed for common sections. Extensive reference will be made to the demonstrated value of a statewide program with reciprocal arrangements for exchange of vouchers between regions and the heightened efficiencies of a statewide waiting list. Emphasis will also be placed on the other programs like the Housing Assistance Program of housing search for homeless families and homelessness prevention for families at risk.

Family Shelter

In the response to the Department of Transitional Assistance RFR for Family Shelters, CTI will emphasize the agency's existing experience in housing search for family shelter guests, both as separate programs and previously as part of CTI's Family Shelter. CTI has a long tradition of services to homeless families, leadership of the SHIFT Coalition, and its participation in the Lowell Continuum of Care for the homeless.

Child Care

The Division of Child and Family Services, with the help of Agency Administration, will develop responses to the RFR's of the Massachusetts Department of Social Services for center-based child care, family child care, and infant & toddler care. The response will cite our long experience in all forms of child care.

Child Care Voucher Management

The agency will attempt to have the Child Care Voucher Management Service areas redrawn to follow the previous configuration in which the Greater Lowell area of northern Middlesex County was together with western Middlesex County down to the Framingham area. If successful, CTI would then apply for the program in the restored service area. If the northern Middlesex/Essex County area remains intact, CTI would apply to either become a subcontractor for the Greater Lowell area to improve service to the low-income people of Greater Lowell or apply for the whole area (which parallels our Section 8 area) in partnership with area CAP's.

Federal Grants

CTI will attempt to receive continued funding for its current grants and contracts so long as they continue to meet the needs of the low-income people of Greater Lowell. CTI will also reach out to develop new funding sources to meet newly documented need.

Economic Development

To obtain long-term funding for the Lowell Small Business Assistance Center, CTI will seek Micro-Enterprise funding from the Office of Community Services, the Office of Refugee Resettlement, and the Department of Health and Human Services, which has provided funding for the African Assistance Center. The LSBAC will also attempt to develop permanent ongoing support of \$5,000 each of the 8 regional and local banks who are members of the LSBAC's list of partners. The LSBAC will apply for Refugee funding as a sub-grantee of the Cambodian Mutual Assistance Association, the African Assistance Center of Lowell, or other appropriate groups.

In addition, funding will be sought from the PRIME (Program for Reinvestment in Micro-Enterprise) and Micro-Loan Technical Assistance Programs of the Small Business Administration if they are ever funded again at the National level.

Youth

The YouthBuild Program has managed to survive with a combination of HUD, Lowell CDBG and Mass. Department of Education supplemental YouthBuild funds. The agency will also seek

out other means of paying for the construction of housing and the training of youth in job skills and enough basic academic skills to enable them to obtain GED's.

Whether alone or as part of a citywide Youth Coalition, CTI will seek funding for continued or expanded services from the Work Force Investment Act through the Greater Lowell Investment Board (CTI's Executive Director is a member.) Funds will also be sought from national discretionary funds of the Department of Labor such as the Youth Opportunities or YOGI grant and other grants available to the WIB Youth Council. CTI's YouthBuild Director serves on the Youth Council.

YouthBuild will also seek the help of the Commonwealth Corporation Division of Youth and Education (CYDE), which is supposed to assist at risk out of school youth to obtain education.

Beyond WIB and CYDE, Community Teamwork will also explore funding sources like the Gang Resistance Program of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms, and the youth-related programs of the Department of Justice.

CTI will also attempt to broaden the career related training element to encompass on a broader range of job possibilities. The program refers to enrollees to the Environmental Clean-up Training Process of the Coalition for a Better Acre. CTI YouthBuild will attempt to develop a historic preservation craftsman training program in partnership with the National Park Services' historic preservation or using the model of the Bennett Street School training center in Boston. CTI's YouthBuild will also look to the future for Solar Energy training programs, possibly in partnership with the Sheet Metal Worker's Union.

CTI will seek funding for these and other alternative ways to train young dropouts for useful jobs in a variety of fields and to complete their high school education, and even continue it in Lowell's two public institutions of higher education. CTI's YouthBuild Program should ultimately become a Youth Choices Program if funding is available.

In all these ways, CTI will attempt to establish a system in which young high school dropouts can learn academic and business skills and receive training in a wide range of vocational fields. CTI will seek this in its own or as part of a citywide or regional coalition.

Child Care

CTI will administer the merge of the mainly Federally funded Head Start and Early Head Start programs with the mainly state funded Child Care, Family Child Care, Supportive Care, Center-Based Care, etc. so that all eligible children receive Head Start comprehensive services, and all the children of working parents can receive full-time child care.

As the RFP for Child Care Voucher Management is being developed, CTI will actively compete for a fair chance to administer the program in the Greater Lowell area, and thus make sure that Greater Lowell receives its fair share of vouchers and that low-income parents of Greater Lowell will get the child care they need to become self-sufficient.

Housing & Community Development

CTI's Housing & Community Development will slowly grow through the addition of new programs that complement and expand the existing programs. New Section 8 niche or targeted programs will be added to the existing ones, in partnership with DHCD or directly if necessary. The Housing Consumer Education Center will add new programs to promote homeownership and prevent homelessness. The Section 8 Family Self Sufficiency component will work together with the HCEC to help low-income people become homeowners. CTI will continue to provide a broad spectrum of housing services to help prevent homelessness, shelter the homeless and help them to become self-sufficient, provide housing subsidies and homeownership subsidies. CTI will attempt to build new affordable housing or preserve existing housing using Community Preservation funds in any town where the CPA is enacted.

CTI and its affiliates, Common Ground Development Corporation and Community Housing, Inc., will attempt to mobilize housing development funds from the HOME Program by qualifying or maintaining its qualification as a state or local Community Housing Development Organization (CHODO), and thus access HOME funds reserved for CHODO's.

Elderly Self-Sufficiency

CTI will continue to help low-income elderly people to remain self-sufficient through the maintenance and development of 202 Elderly Housing; through providing opportunities for community service; through the provision of Senior Companions and Friendly Visitors; and through the provision of Fuel Assistance and Energy Conservation, Food Stamps and Farmers' Market Coupons, and of transportation to medical appointments. CTI will attempt to build on each of these services to meet other needs of seniors. Home Health services, home rehabilitation, chore services, and other supports to enable seniors to maintain independent living situations will be explored and carried out if feasible.

Nutrition

CTI will continue to seek funds to enable low-income residents of Greater Lowell to have access to high nutritional quality food. WIC funds will serve pregnant women, infants, and children; low-income people of all ages will be assisted to obtain Food Stamps; children will receive high quality meals and snacks while in any of the programs of the Division of Child and Family Services. The Farmers' Market and the various coupons for low-income people will make fresh fruits and vegetables available to low-income residents of the City of Lowell.

CTI will continue to make these programs beneficial to Southeast Asians and other immigrants. The New Entry Farmer Program done in partnership with Tufts University will continue to recruit Southeast Asians interested in growing Asian-specific fruits and vegetables at sites in the suburbs like at White Gate Farm. The products are then sold to Asians hungry for the tastes of home at Asian restaurants and food stores and CTI's longstanding outdoor Farmers' Market on Fridays in downtown Lowell at the JFK Plaza next to City Hall. CTI will also advocate that the list of foods available for WIC coupons be altered to include other nutritional foods that are more palatable to their tastes than the current ones on the WIC list.

Fundraising

In addition to continuing existing services and funding sources as much as possible, and to add new complementary functions from these or other appropriate funding sources, CTI will seek private foundation funding for expansions into new program areas to meet the needs of low-income people.

An Annual Communication and Community Relations Calendar

This Calendar will provide structure for the agency's internal and external communications providing a foundation for all development efforts. This Calendar will include:

- Agency, employee and donor events;
- Collaborative events with other organizations;
- Agency publications (annual report, quarterly newsletter, donor newsletter, employee bi-monthly updates);
- Agency promotional materials; and
- Expanded use of CTI's website, Housing Consumer Education Center website, and links to other pertinent state and local websites.

The community will be informed about in a variety of ways including the following:

- News releases to media and stakeholders;
- Stories and coverage in the local press;
- Speakers Program in which the Executive Director, Executive Deputy Director, the CR&D Coordinator, and other staff speak about the agency's positive impact on the community at scheduled monthly presentations hosted by local civic, religious, education and business groups;

Direct Mail Annual Appeal Campaign

Increased community giving will be sought through a direct mail annual appeal by using smaller, but more qualified, donor prospect mailing lists including business vendors with whom the agency spends \$5,000 or more each year in the purchase of goods and services; community leaders from private and public sectors; known 'friends' and 'supporters' of the agency's mission; the board of directors and its network of contacts; and an employee giving campaign. New leads are also being generated through coordination of community relations with the fiscal department, program services and community affiliations.

Major Donors

CTI's heightened visibility in the community has drawn major donors to come forward to adopt the agency, as a whole, or specific program as the focus on their corporate and individual giving of both money and time. In the past year, CTI's clients have benefited from the generosity of Cadence Corporation and UBS Financial Services. We will continue the programs that lay the

groundwork for such donations and assist the donor to provide as much support as possible from the organization and their individual employees and members.

Leadership Breakfast

An annual Leadership Breakfast gives CTI an opportunity to recognize the outstanding contributions of various major donors, update the needs of low-income people, and persuade other donors to match the generosity of the Honorees.

Local Heroes Award

This annual event honoring heroes of all sorts for serving the community keeps CTI and its concern before the public, even at times when major help is being actively pursued.

CTI will continue a vigorous Community Relations campaign to inform the community about our clients needs to bring both corporate largesse and individual “widows’ mites” to the aid of the agency’s clients.

Carnivale – Annual Fundraising Event

In this past three years, CTI has developed its Carnivale fundraising event from a nascent idea that raises more than \$30,000 for families in crisis or at risk, and also is a major social event that brings together community leaders to focus on poverty and to have fun. This event has a Mardi Gras theme that has focused on different specific celebrations in its first two years. New Orleans was the first year’s theme and it had a Caribbean theme the second year. Tickets, \$10,000 raffles limited to 300, a silent auction of donated prizes, and separate raffle on the night create excitement and energy. In 2004, Carnivale raised \$30,000. In 2005, it raised \$40,000 over its considerable expenses with the help of substantial community sponsorships from individuals and companies who have become aware of CTI’s role in serving the community through vigorous community relations programs that the agency has carried out.

Carnivale has been a tremendous success in raising funds for the poor and raising consciousness about the presence and causes of poverty. CTI will continue to use it for these purposes in the next three years.

COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN 2006-2008

Vision Statement

CTI will be an advocate and catalyst for systemic change on issues that affect low-income people, including education, workforce training, housing, economic development, and civic engagement.

CTI will:

- Increase the supply and to prevent the loss of affordable housing units
- Increase the knowledge of the full range of CTI's Program's on the part of staff, clients, and the Community-at-Large in order to provide all appropriate services to all people in need and enhance relationships with existing and potential donors
- Empower and support residents of the region to acquire enough education to improve the quality of their lives
- Develop and maintain partnerships with appropriate community agencies to increase the number of services available
- Enable all staff to acquire the skills they need to attain their full potential and assist both internal and external clients to attain their full potential
- Create an environment where employees have increased opportunities that will help them improve their skills and meet their professional and personal goals.