

Buncombe County Agenda Item Information Sheet

AGENDA ITEM: Economic Community Investment Model

MEETING DATE: February 21, 2017

REQUESTED BY: Amanda L. Stone

Background information

- Over the last two years, the HHS Board has engaged in an in-depth analysis of factors that impact the health and development of all children in our community. This review has included extensive literature review, community outreach forums and input sessions, review of national best practices and evidence informed models, testimony from experts from a broad range of professions, and data analysis.
- Buncombe HHS was one of 20 communities in the nation invited to apply for grant funding to build a more resilient community. As part of that grant, Buncombe used funds to innovatively provide small grants to community-based organizations that give lift to at risk neighborhoods and communities. This initiative was presented to the Board of Commissioners in June, 2016 along with a report from Dr. Dwight Mullen on the "State of Black Asheville".
- Since June, 2016 the efforts being led by the HHS Board have broadened to include an Equitable Opportunity Work Group that has included community, elected and appointed officials.
- The HHS Board utilized an existing contract with a research economist to expand and verify the data analysis done by Dr. Mullen and his students.
- Through this work, it is clear that the health and development of children in our community is negatively affected by poverty, race and trauma. These pressures impact children, hampering the development of the necessary social, educational, and work skills to achieve self-sufficiency and contribute to our community.

The following recommendations are the result of the work outlined above and an extensive review of best practices:

1. Support and leverage maximum impact of performance-based contracts that define our community nonprofit and faith-based safety net.
2. Invest in small business and income producing neighborhood learning environments that promote job readiness, skill/trade building and paid apprenticeships connecting with our schools and business community.
3. Through Community Innovation Grants, support community/neighborhood structures to provide youth mentorships and positive environments that foster safety, health and economic self-sufficiency.
4. Continue to offer small Tipping Point Grants to give lift to informal community and neighborhood ideas and projects.

Anchor institutions can give lift to neighborhood and community efforts so that they are safer and healthier by improving the built environment of communities and partnering with community champions who are already doing the work, ultimately building and maintaining a positive social fabric. Efforts to improve education, employment and health must be supported by formal and informal community infrastructure-where meaningful and sustainable change can take root. This infrastructure provides the latticework for other efforts to grow upon. Without this latticework, efforts at improving conditions will never take hold.

This effort will coordinate and leverage resources and expertise across the City and County to provide support and foster leadership capacity that builds strong neighborhoods and a robust workforce.

Pro's

Improve education, employment and health outcomes for children and families through formal and informal community infrastructure.

Con's

None

Funds required in current budget:

Allocate \$500,000 toward strategic investments that support the community's efforts to build income producing opportunities, provide job training and paid apprenticeships, support small businesses and employment, and enhance neighborhood infrastructure.

Alternatives

None

Action recommended:

Provide \$500,000 allocation to support this Economic Community Investment Model.