

Main South Promise Neighborhoods Partnership

Preliminary Memorandum of Understanding

Between the United Way of Central Massachusetts and Community Partners

I. Promise Neighborhoods Vision

The Main South Promise Neighborhoods Partnership will (MSPNP) significantly improve the educational and developmental outcomes of children in the Main South Promise Neighborhood (MSPN) and help transform that community.

II. Promise Neighborhoods Mission

MSPNP will take a comprehensive approach designed to ensure that children have access to a continuum of cradle-through-college-to-career solutions which has both academic programs and family and community supports with strong schools at the center. Consistent with this approach is a revitalization strategy that will help transform the MSPN into a healthy and vibrant community of opportunity.

VI. Duration of Agreement

The term of this agreement shall be for **one year**, commencing **October 1, 2010** and ending **September 30, 2011**.

The following entities have executed this Preliminary Memorandum of Understanding pursuant to Absolute Priority 1, Paragraph 5 (a)(i)(ii):

Clark University	Worcester Educational Collaborative
Worcester Public Schools	Colleges of Worcester Consortium
Main South CDC	Family Health Center of Worcester
Edward Street Child Services	Latino Education Institute

United Way of Central Massachusetts (UWCM) is committed to the work being undertaken by the MSPNP and agrees to act as lead agency for the planning process. Our financial and programmatic commitment will include significant existing staff support throughout the planning year. The SVP will: oversee the start up phase and serve on the Advisory Council for the duration of the project; be responsible for all grant management reports; and lead resource development efforts to support the work of the MSPNP. Two AVP's will provide staff support to committees during the start up phase and will continue to provide technical support and capacity building expertise for the duration of the project. The VP of Marketing/Communications will: develop communications material; guide the event planning process; and oversee the web presence and all electronic communications. Our CFO will oversee the financial management of the grant. An administrative assistant will be available. UWCM will recruit, train and house staff hired during the planning process. The work of the MSPNP is aligned with the UWCM vision, theory of change, theory of action and existing activities as follows: We enrich the lives of young children in central MA to ensure they enter school ready to learn. UWCM provides staff, technical and financial support to programs that: provide safe and affordable high-quality, early education and care; strengthen parenting skills so caregivers are able to raise healthy children who are prepared to succeed in school; and strengthen the infrastructure of high-quality, early education and care settings. UWCM prepares youth to lead independent and productive lives. We have a strategic partnership with the public schools, the community and families to improve the academic outcomes of our youth. UWCM provides staff, technical and financial support to programs that: foster youth development and future economic opportunity; and provide crisis intervention, prevention, and counseling services for at-risk youth. UWCM and its partners address the needs of individuals and families. We provide staff, technical and financial support to programs that: assist people in meeting their basic needs such as food, shelter, and clothing; and provide education and training programs that develop life skills and career opportunities.

Clark University has been deeply committed to the revitalization of the targeted area since the inception of its partnership with the community in 1985. Key stakeholders came together and recognized, as a theory of change, the importance of working in an alignment to address the concerns of the community in a comprehensive fashion. We have provided neighborhood families with great educational opportunities through the creation of the University Park Campus School with the Worcester Public Schools and the offer of free tuition to Clark for neighborhood residents, at a current cost of more than \$500,000 annually. The Hiatt Center at Clark University has deep relevant experience and expertise in planning and development to support the Innovation School partnership. The mission of the Hiatt Center is to support the development of exemplary models of urban schooling, teacher education, and teaching practice through local partnership. The Center has several current grants, dedicated to professional learning and secondary school reform totaling approximately \$400,000, to develop an Innovation School learning network in the target area over the next two years. The Clark community recognizes the need to build a comprehensive support network around the families and students from the community and has been working with the public schools, community-based agencies and faith institutions in this effort. The MSPNP represents the strategic direction of Clark and the MSPN's community-based initiatives. Clark will align staff responsibilities and development programs representing thousands of hours of work in the targeted area. Clark will conduct relevant research, in particular through the Mosakowski Institute for Public Enterprise, which is dedicated to informing policy and practice in the areas of education, health and the environment. Support for the schools will be central. Soon Clark will build a new \$2.5 million athletic field with track to be shared with the neighborhood Boys & Girls Club and the 3,000 children it serves.

The **Worcester Education Consortium (WEC)** is committed to the work of the Main South Promise Neighborhood Partnership (MSPNP) and will participate fully in the planning process. Under direction of a Board composed of corporate and civic leaders, the leadership of several of our colleges and universities and public school parents, WEC engages the community in fulfilling its responsibility to ensure that excellence in education is available to all public school students and that they are prepared for success in college, career, and life. This is accomplished through multiple roles including that of convener of the community on education issues and critical supporter of the schools.

Our programs include a *Community Briefing* series on important topics affecting education in Worcester, *Best Practice Forums* to allow for the exchange of promising approaches and practices that impact student learning, and a parent engagement initiative working with other community based organizations to support family involvement in both schools and student learning. Part of WEC's work is the development of a *Community Compact* to articulate the responsibilities of schools, families, students, and the community in support of education. A *Fellowship in Education and Community* focuses on the research that supports our work. The MSPNP is aligned with our theory of change that public engagement with specific reform goals leads to public responsibility and sustained changes in policy and practice. For us, meaningful and sustainable change is the result of the joining of family, school, and community in service of a common agenda on behalf of children. The MSPNP agenda is consistent with our belief that while education is a crucial tool in work against poverty, it is vital to provide the ancillary services that mitigate the effects of poverty that burden schools and students. The Worcester Education Collaborative firmly commits to working with other organizations to develop a comprehensive, community based, data-driven, and child-centered plan.

Worcester Public Schools (WPS) is committed to significantly improving the educational and developmental outcomes of children and recognizes the need for high quality partnerships to deliver these results. WPS is positioned to commit resources and programming to the planning and implementation of a sound plan of action. Leadership, staff, time, and financial resources over time are recognized as essential supports to bring this initiative to scale and for changes to be sustained. The WPS vision, theory of change and theory of action encompass effective, strong school and community partnerships utilized to overcome students' health, social-emotional, and educational barriers so that students succeed and are positioned for a better life. Moreover, WPS will contribute to the development and strengthening of the MSPNP so that every student will have access to the benefits of wrap-around supports to ensure health, social-emotional, and educational security. The MSPNP is not new work, but represents the next step in the district's phased improvement. Resources already dedicated to the district's Innovation Schools work can be utilized due to the tight alignment and coherence between that and the MSPNP. Through Innovation Schools, the district seeks to scale up highly personalized instruction, deliver high standards, and ensure college- and career-readiness for every student. WPS values collaboration and partnership. We currently employ various forms of shared governance, seeking the input of multiple stakeholders and engaging in collaborative decision-making. By design, Innovation Schools approximate in-district charter schools and are intended to have significant autonomy in staffing, curriculum scheduling, professional development and budget allocation, while continuing to be accountable to the district Superintendent and School Committee. WPS commits to developing an infrastructure of policies, practices, systems, and resources that support the continuum of solutions in the MSPNP proposal and bring to scale those elements that are proven effective.

The Colleges of Worcester Consortium (COWC) a not-for-profit association of 13 public and private accredited colleges and universities located in central Massachusetts. We are committed to the work being undertaken by the MSPNP and agree to participate fully in the planning process. COWC has a long and successful history of higher education access and retention services across the state and, as such, is very familiar with the needs of an educationally and economically disadvantaged population. Our services include Educational Talent Search which is designed to serve youth who have the potential to succeed in college but who are educationally and economically disadvantaged. GEAR UP programs foster school-wide changes that promote and increase college awareness and readiness. CSI Worcester is an intensive, two-year, after-school program, based on college campuses, and supported by mentors from local businesses to help high school students from groups traditionally under-represented in college gain access to post-secondary educational opportunities. Educational Opportunity Center services assist low-income adults to access postsecondary education and training programs in order to gain self-sufficiency for them and their families. We have extensive experience working with both youth and adults, including both school-based and community-based programming. COWC will commit to providing these programs within the MSPNP area. The work of the MSPNP is aligned with the COWC vision, theory of change, theory of action and existing activities as follows: The COWC vision includes enhancing higher education in our region. We strongly believe that education is our greatest antipoverty tool. To impact change, we value partnerships, strategic planning with direct impact on targeted students, and data as keys to this change. COWC commits to working in partnership and to provide and use data effectively to ensure its programmatic contributions fit strategically into the development of the neighborhood partnership.

The Main South Community Development Corporation (CDC) is committed to the work of the Main South Promise Neighborhood Partnership (MSPNP) and will participate fully in the planning process. We have been a neighborhood-based community organization leading the strategic planning process and development for the University Park neighborhood since 1986. The CDC has a representative board that includes thirteen neighborhood residents or business owners, Clark University, and St. Peter's Parish.

The CDC has been the driving force behind a comprehensive, neighborhood-based strategic planning process over the past twenty five years. This partnership has produced significant physical change in the target area and has built a strong sense of community activism that has addressed issues such as crime, arson, abandoned buildings, and community-based planning. The CDC has been successful in bringing new partners to the table and leveraging significant new funding into the neighborhood. The partnership has attracted over \$100 million in funding since 1986, with most of this investment occurring in physical rehabilitation and new construction. Since 1988, the CDC has invested more than \$35 million to renovate 237 units of abandoned or fire-damaged property and provide 70 first-time homeownership opportunities to families through new construction or renovations.

The vision of the MSPNP aligns perfectly with the strategic vision of the CDC. It is necessary to support families outside the classroom with quality housing, safe neighborhoods, jobs, and community organizing so that children and youth succeed. The expanded comprehensive approach as designed under the MSPNP will bring more focus to the educational and personal success of these neighborhood students and families.

The CDC will commit to using its existing staff and resources to work with the organizations and the families in our community to improve their quality of life and provide exceptional educational opportunities for children.

Family Health Center Of Worcester (FHCW) is committed to the work being undertaken by the Promise Neighborhoods Initiative and agrees to participate fully in the planning process. Our financial and programmatic commitment will include: Participation by senior executives in planning and coordination activities; Provision of comprehensive health care in school health centers operated at South High Community School, Sullivan Middle School, Goddard/University Park Schools and Claremont and Woodland Academy; Operation of two primary care community health centers at neighborhood locations at 26 Queen and 645 Park Ave.

The work of the PNI is aligned with the Family Health Center of Worcester vision, theory of change, theory of action and existing activities as follows:

The mission of the Family Health Center of Worcester, Inc. (FHCW) is to improve the health and well-being of underserved and culturally diverse Worcester area residents through the provision of high quality, comprehensive, and continuous primary health care, dental, behavioral health and social services. We respectfully and compassionately care for patients in the context of their family, culture and community. As a community health center, FHCW is committed to improving the health and well-being of residents of Worcester's Main South and Piedmont Neighborhoods. We provide primary and urgent medical care including prenatal care, labor and delivery, dental, nutrition, mental health and social services, lab, radiology and pharmacy care to over 23,000 patients through over 100,000 visits. Our services are offered by staff that speak seven different languages and supplemented by medical interpreters in over 30 languages. Each year, we assist over 5,000 people in applying for health insurance benefits but serve all, regardless of their ability to pay.

Edward Street Child Services (ESCS) is committed to the work being undertaken by the MSPNP and agrees to participate fully in the planning process. Financial and programmatic commitment will include: Collaborative work to increase the alignment of curriculum among the Worcester LEA, early childhood education programs, and family childcare providers in the neighborhood; Use of shared data to identify gaps, research models and pilot strategies to close the gaps; Continuous quality improvement support to early education programs in the UPP to ensure that children have access to voluntary high quality programs that prepare them to enter school ready to learn and to succeed; Implementation of Reading Readiness programming for young children; Collaborative Parent Involvement and Parent Training Programs in the neighborhood; and Assistance to families navigating the childcare voucher system to assure that eligible children obtain and retain subsidized early education and care. The work of the MSPNP is aligned with ESCS's vision, theory of change, theory of action and existing activities as follows: Our goal is to eliminate the educational achievement gap in the community by providing all children with access to voluntary, high quality early childhood education to prepare them for success in school and life. Low income working families are often priced out of the market. As the state reduces the number of families eligible for subsidized early childhood education, many are forced to rely on friends and family to care for their children while they work. While we believe the care provided is often exceptional, children in these settings are often not provided with the rich early education experience that will prepare them for success in school and life. Research shows that low-income at-risk children make the greatest gains in physical, cognitive, and social-emotional development when given the opportunity to participate in high quality early childhood education. It is only right thing to give these children the opportunity to succeed.

The Latino Education Institute (LEI) at Worcester State College is committed to the work being undertaken by the MSPNP and agrees to participate fully in the planning process. Our theory of change dictates that education is a community enterprise, involving schools, families, and the community at-large. Closing the achievement gap depends on the ability to harness the individual and collective strengths of stakeholders. This is especially important for language minority students, including immigrants and the U.S.-born children of immigrants, who often do not receive appropriate educational services due to a mismatch between the languages and cultures of the schools and those of their communities. LEI programs assist students in ways that lie beyond traditional methods and are based on innovative models that highlight the strengths of Latino families, reduce school dropout rates, improve enrollment in higher education, and promote an informed citizenry. The LEI currently provides core programs (serving 800 families per year) which are both people and place-based, including **Club Education** which provides intensive English-as-a-Second-Language classes for parents in Worcester and enhances English literacy and communication skills and promotes acculturation; **Innovative Services for Latino Achievers** is an academic after-school program for grades 3-6 operating in three schools in the proposed service zone; **Latina Achievers in Search of Success** engages 6th grade Latina girls and their mothers in an educational after school program which focuses on personal development, cultural enrichment, college awareness and career exploration; and **Latinos Involved in Discovering Educational Resources** an afterschool program engaging families in activities that facilitate access to higher education; and **Countdown to Kindergarten**, a program based in a public housing development that promotes parental development, family literacy, and school readiness for children aged 2-5 and their parents. The LEI is committed to system-wide reforms that improve educational outcomes for Latino students.

