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## **I. NEED FOR THE PROJECT**

### **Priority 1 - Description of the neighborhood and level of distress**

For more than 40 years, the Community Group (TCG) has been quietly leading transformative work built around a continuum of services for children from infancy through the teen years in the high-need city of Lawrence, Massachusetts, a city where the ELL student population is radically underperforming and where over 40 % of Hispanics have no high school diploma. Our many accomplishments span across a broad spectrum including early education, k-8 education, after school, resource and referral, data management, parent education and professional development and training. TCG has been recognized at the national level for the successful development of a high performing charter public school that has closed the achievement gap for children who are low-income, English language learners. We successfully transition and support these students through their high school and college years. We are highly motivated and confident that we can lead a Promise Neighborhood initiative that responds to Absolute Priority 1 in the Arlington Neighborhood of Lawrence. Our ACE (Arlington Community of Excellence) initiative will significantly improve the educational and developmental outcomes for children in this highly-distressed part of our city, serve as catalyst to the neighborhood's transformation, and offer a national model of program integration and effectiveness.

The Arlington Neighborhood is best understood in the context of the city of Lawrence, a former textile-manufacturing center, created by mill owners as a site for their factories and labor. Always an immigrant city, subject to changes in demographics and economy, Lawrence is now among the poorest cities in the US. It is densely populated, with 72,388 residents occupying less than 7 square miles. Sixty-eight percent (68%) of Lawrence residents are Hispanic (primarily

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Dominican and Puerto Rican)<sup>1</sup> who benefit little from regional employment opportunities targeted to a knowledge community centered on the city of Boston, only 30 miles away.

Residents are young; nearly one in four is 10-24 years old.<sup>2</sup> The percentage of children aged 5-17 living in poverty in Lawrence is 33.6%.<sup>3</sup> Unmarried mothers account for 72.5% of births, and the city's teen birth rate is 80.9 per 1,000 females aged 15-19, more than 3 times the statewide rate.<sup>4</sup> Reports of maltreatment of Lawrence's children are at 77.3 per 1,000, 46.1% greater than the Massachusetts rate.<sup>5</sup>

The 4-year graduation rate for students in the Lawrence Public School district is 48.1%, compared to the state rate of 86.9%.<sup>6</sup> The percentage of the Lawrence population 25 years and over without a high school diploma is 33.6% (42.1% for Hispanic males and 40.9% for Hispanic females).<sup>7</sup> The city's rate of violent crime was 653.2 per 100,000 in 2008, 45.5% above the Massachusetts rate.<sup>8</sup> Lawrence Police report that half of all arrests are drug-related.<sup>9</sup>

Examination of Arlington Neighborhood data reveals a high concentration of young families and the highest levels of poverty in the city. The Neighborhood was targeted by Lawrence's Community Development Department, which made it the subject of revitalization planning in 2009. Over the past years, the neighborhood has dealt with the effects of hundreds of vacant and abandoned parcels (as high as 20% by some estimates) and, more recently, dislocation of owners and renters due to a spate of foreclosures. Nevertheless, it is home to 14,700 residents or 20% of the City's population.<sup>10</sup>

Less than 50% of the Neighborhood's adult population has completed a high school education, and less than 10 percent have completed an associate degree or more.<sup>11</sup> According to diagnosis-related group code data from Lawrence General Hospital, during the past 12 months there were over 20,800 visits for emergency/in-patient care for children from the Arlington

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Neighborhood and 9,000 came for services more than once, indicating that many neighborhood families use emergency room services rather than primary health care physicians. Over 1,700 visits were related to asthma and/or acute respiratory infection. Although statewide immunization rates are the highest in the nation (82.3%),<sup>12</sup> TCG's data indicates that 65% of children aged 0-5 enrolled in our programs were not up to date with immunizations in 2009-2010 (city-level statistics were not available). Few residents have access to higher-wage employment due to language and transportation barriers. The Neighborhood's unemployment rate is at least 17.6%<sup>13</sup> and its labor force participation rate of 48.9% is 17 percentage points below city and state rates.<sup>14</sup> The Neighborhood's median household income is \$26,776, 7% lower than the Lawrence average.<sup>15</sup> There were 331 incidents of crime in the Neighborhood in 2008, including homicide, robberies, aggravated assault, commercial and residential burglaries, and motor vehicle thefts.<sup>16</sup>

Data specific to our three Neighborhood partner schools is also noteworthy. Arlington Elementary School (AES), our target school, has been deemed one of the state's most persistently underperforming and subject to intervention.<sup>17</sup> Other partner schools, Arlington Middle School (AMS) and Henry K. Oliver School (HOS), are also in need of improvement.<sup>18</sup> AMS is in the "Improvement" stage for student subgroups in Mathematics, and in the "Restructuring" stage for English Language Arts; the school has only achieved Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) once for either subject in the last three years.<sup>19</sup> HOS is in the "Corrective Action" stage for both Mathematics and English Language Arts, and has not achieved AYP in either subject for the past two years.<sup>20</sup> The average proficiency percentage at our partner schools on the state's standardized test (MCAS) ranges from 38.2 to 45 points lower than the statewide average for white students,<sup>21</sup> demonstrating a significant achievement gap. The percentage of

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Hispanic students ranges from 93.4% to 95.9% and free lunch eligibility ranges from 89.8% to 90.2% (compared to 27.4% statewide).<sup>22</sup> Student mobility rates for 2009-2010 were 17.5% for AES, 13.1% for AMS, and 20.1% for HOS.<sup>23</sup> School attendance rates drop precipitously beginning in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade.<sup>24</sup>

The data above makes a compelling case for intensifying services to children of the Arlington Neighborhood; it is clear that their lives are impacted by the pervasive effects of poverty. Arlington residents are under-represented in political, social, and school-related activities in Lawrence. For example, there is not a single organization representing parents at the lowest performing school in the neighborhood. While human service groups operate in the city, this neighborhood has never been the target of a coherent and coordinated continuum of support focused on setting and attaining measurable transparent goals related to children's academic success, nor have district and charter schools collaborated in a meaningful way to improve student achievement.

The Arlington Neighborhood extends from the Lawrence/Methuen city line south to the Spicket River, west to Broadway Street and east to Berkeley Street. During the first phase of planning, we will target a geographically contiguous area within the Arlington Neighborhood, comprised of a cluster of 101 streets and parts of streets where some 5,822 children live and which form the full catchment area for our three partner schools. In phase two, we will extend ACE into the remaining streets in the Arlington Neighborhood (an additional 4,000 children) and will bring Lawrence's public high school into the continuum. This strategy will allow us to focus our efforts on our three initial partner schools to ensure that we begin the initiative at a manageable scale (see V: Quality of Management Plan).

Our decision to focus on Arlington as the opportune location for place-based change is based on three factors. First, the neighborhood's concentration of need, outlined above, sets it apart from the rest of the city. Secondly, TCG has a long association with the neighborhood, having originated there 40 years ago with our first preschool program. Ten of TCG's family child care providers, 18% of its charter school students, and over 20% of the 750 children in its childcare programs reside in the Arlington Neighborhood. Finally, many factors have come together to create a climate of change in the city. The first Hispanic mayor in the city's history is in full support of this initiative, as are the city council, community development department and the superintendent of schools. The state has recently renewed multi-year contracts for TCG's child care contracts and the charter school's charter was renewed with distinction. Lawrence Public Schools have reached out to TCG to participate in a stakeholder group to develop a plan of transformation for the Arlington Elementary School.

Based on the data we have collected, Arlington children's life chances are limited by critical gaps in programs and services as well as a lack of cohesion among existing programs. TCG believes that we can plan and lead the implementation of a continuum of solutions that will fill these gaps and bring the Arlington Neighborhood to a tipping point that will dramatically change the life trajectory of its residents. The central elements of this continuum will include: strategies to dramatically improve neighborhood schools; after school and summer programs; high-quality early education and childcare that prepares children to succeed in school; and support for families. TCG is poised to further develop this continuum and to lead a coordinated effort that will, over time, transform the Arlington Neighborhood into a beacon of hope and a model for the rest of the city.

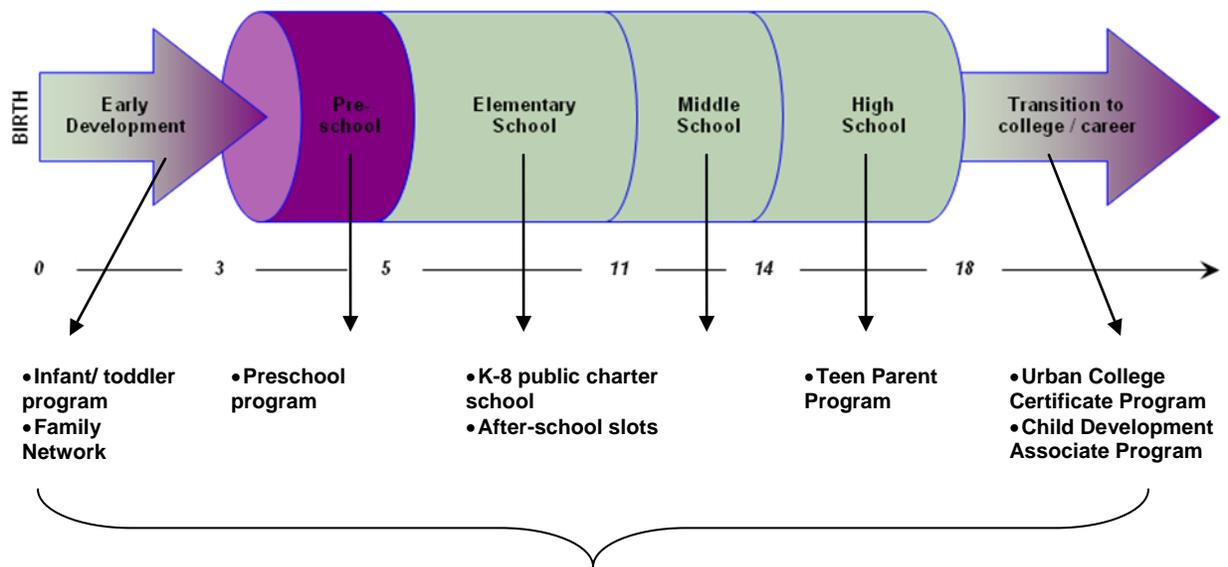
## II. QUALITY OF PROJECT DESIGN

### Priority 2 - Description of how the applicant will plan to build the continuum

#### Building from a Strong Foundation

The Community Group (TCG) has documented accomplishments in improving educational outcomes for children in Lawrence, including many that reside in the ACE zone. As the anchor agency for the ACE project, TCG is ideally suited to create a Promise Neighborhood by building upon a powerful continuum of service offerings for children and families that is already in place. *Figure 1* below provides an illustration of TCG's current work across the birth to college to career continuum.

*Figure 1: TCG's Existing Program Offerings in the Context of the Continuum*



**Educator Training and Support for individual educators, schools, districts**

TCG delivers state-licensed childcare and early education programs that annually serve more than 750 Lawrence children, from infants to teenagers. TCG also founded and manages Community Day Charter Public School, a high-performing K-8 school with a 15-year record of academic achievement. We are one of the few organizations in the country that effectively serves

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children whose primary language is not English, as evidenced by the fact that CDCPS students have completely closed the proficiency achievement gap with White students in the state (the average proficiency percentage on the state's standardized test for CDCPS's Hispanic students is 0.8 percentage points higher than the statewide average for White students).

In addition to the programs we currently offer, TCG is well-positioned to forward the Promise Neighborhood agenda based on its long-term, substantive leadership. We seek to build upon this strong foundation to grow the continuum with a focus on place-based efforts within the Arlington Neighborhood in order to continually improve our programs and integrate them with those of our partners to better provide the highest quality programs for the children of Lawrence.

### **Lawrence Public Schools**

The school district delivers education programs and services for more than 13,000 city residents each year, from preschool children through adult learners. While ACE will target all children within the Arlington Neighborhood, it will focus significant energy on its target school, Arlington Elementary School (AES). AES serves 481 students in grades K-4, and has been designated as one of the 35 most persistently low-performing schools in the state by the Massachusetts Department of Education (MA DESE). In May, the Lawrence Public School district (LPS) began the process of redesigning the school using the "transformation" model, one of the four school intervention models specified by the USED for persistently lowest-achieving schools. TCG's Executive Director, Sheila Balboni, was invited by the district's Superintendent to play a key role in AES's 13-member Local Stakeholder Group as the designated Community Representative. The Local Stakeholder Group's charge is to provide the district with recommendations to redesign AES in order to accelerate achievement for all students. The Group will provide recommendations to the Superintendent in July to support the development of a

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turnaround plan to be submitted to the Lawrence School Committee and MA Commissioner of Education. The school district will apply for a competitive School Turnaround Grant to fund AES's transformation; the criteria for grant selection include "the extent to which the district's redesign plan displays a strategic and well-thought out approach that will lead to rapid and sustainable improvement in targeted schools."<sup>25</sup>

Having the credibility due to our reputation for high quality programs and the relationships with school district leaders that are necessary to help bring about meaningful change, TCG is in a position to play a pivotal role in the redesign of AES. We will draw upon the expertise of Community Day Charter Public School (CDCPS) faculty and staff and share strategies (that have proven effective with children who have the same demographic profile) to assist the school's redesign team to develop and implement the turnaround plan. **(The most recently updated data for ELA scores reveal that in 2010 CDCPS students living in the phase 1 ACE Neighborhood achieved 94% proficiency compared to Arlington Elementary School scores of 21% proficiency in 2009).** Additionally, TCG is expanding our year-round out-of-school-time program that will provide AES students academic remediation, enrichment, recreation and fitness experiences.

In addition to the target school, TCG is partnering with two other schools: Arlington Middle School and the Henry K. Oliver School, low-performing schools in the ACE zone that serve grades 5-8 and 1-8, respectively. As noted in our MOU with LPS, we plan to identify specific solutions from the ACE continuum that will significantly improve academic and other outcomes for the neighborhood children attending these schools. We will use achievement data and other information to identify the most relevant solutions, and will work with district and school leaders

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to ensure that all students in the three schools access them. Specifically, TCG brings expertise in solutions that have resulted in strong academic outcomes for students at CDCPS, including:

- **Analysis of MCAS data** - With the guidance of a full-time Data Manager, CDCPS faculty analyzes the performance of current and former students in order to inform curriculum.
- **Benchmark assessment system** - CDCPS creates and administers a periodic assessment that is standards-based and customized for each teacher.
- **Individualization** - Teams of CDCPS teachers use data from benchmark assessments and other sources to create Personalized Educational Goals and instructional plans for each student.
- **Expanded learning opportunities (ELO)** - an organized approach to prepare students and families for post-secondary education and choices and early college awareness; includes academic tutoring/enrichment, secondary school test-prep, study skills, secondary school information, school tours, financial aid information and guidance services.
- **Formative assessment strategies** - CDCPS has developed guides for both students and teachers in the use of real time data to give them insights about what students understand during a given lesson or curriculum unit.
- **Data-informed curriculum mapping** - CDCPS teachers use assessment data, state standards, and other resources to design a curriculum map that is followed/revised throughout the year.
- **Research-based literacy & vocabulary strategies** - CDCPS uses a data-driven, innovative approach to literacy instruction for English Language Learners.
- **Blackboard Configuration (BBC)** - This approach, designed by Dr. Lorraine Monroe, is a visual display with which all teachers communicate key elements of a given lesson to students.

**Other Partners:** Using the Promise Neighborhood indicators as a guide, TCG identified eleven additional organizations that have demonstrated excellence in providing programs and services

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to children and families in Lawrence. They were chosen because their programs fill gaps, provide needed capacity, or broaden our response to the needs of children who will be accessing the continuum of solutions in the ACE zone. Additionally, they provide a broader array of actors that can be instrumental in bringing about policy change and scaling impact over time. All partners currently serve children and families in the Arlington Neighborhood. Organizations listed below have signed MOUs (see Appendix C) with TCG and are essential to delivery of the continuum of solutions. Other partners (whose MOUs also appear in Appendix C) will help to establish a broad base of support and resources for ACE.

<b>Partner Name</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>City of Lawrence Community Development Department (CDD)</b>	Identified the Arlington Neighborhood as a Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Area in its new HUD-mandated Consolidated Plan; work in ACE includes residential lead abatement, residential rehabilitation, improvement to neighborhood parks, installation of community gardens and organizing neighborhood associations around capital projects.
<b>Greater Lawrence Community Action Council (GLCAC)</b>	Anti-poverty Community Action Program (CAP); has existed for over 40 years. Operates Early Intervention and literacy programs, Head Start and Early Head Start, workforce development, housing and energy services, and nutrition programs.
<b>Greater Lawrence Family Health Center (GLFHC)</b>	Anti-poverty Community Action Program (CAP); has existed for over 40 years. Operates Early Intervention and literacy programs, Head Start and Early Head Start, workforce development, housing and energy services, and nutrition programs.

<p><b>Groundwork Lawrence (GWL)</b></p>	<p>Non-profit organization that empowers Lawrence residents to improve their quality of life through environmental improvements, conservation, community gardens/access to healthy food programs, increased access to parks, safe facilities that encourage healthy physical activity, youth education and employment initiatives.</p>
<p><b>Lawrence Community Works (LCW)</b></p>	<p>Nonprofit community development corporation (CDC) with membership of thousands of Lawrence families; expertise in developing grass roots community involvement for targeted programs both in Lawrence and nationally. Lawrence programs include affordable housing, community center, playgrounds, and family asset-building efforts.</p>
<p><b>Lawrence General Hospital (LGH)</b></p>	<p>Private, not-for-profit hospital with a comprehensive Community Benefits program. Collaborates with GLFHC through the Lawrence Family Practice Residency Program, training medical residents who dedicate their training to serving Lawrence. Comprehensive pediatric services.</p>
<p><b>Northern Essex Community College (NECC)</b></p>	<p>Public community college with certificate and degree programs; on-site childcare for low-income and at-risk children from the neighborhood; and enrichment programs to encourage early college and career awareness for school-age youth.</p>
<p><b>University of Massachusetts, Lowell (UML)</b></p>	<p>Public, 4-year university committed to encouraging Lawrence youth's aspirations for post high school education; serving on Local Stakeholder Group for transformation of Arlington Elementary School.</p>

## **Understanding the Needs of the Arlington Neighborhood**

A recent analysis of community data illustrated a broad set of pressing problems facing residents of the Arlington community. TCG reviewed the data, developed a statement summarizing each problem, and assigned each statement to categories to ensure that we had a complete understanding of the community's challenges and to determine whether any additional project indicators would be needed. The problems identified correlate to the following categories: children's health; early childhood development; K-12 learning; lifestyle health and choices; safety; school continuity and resources; postsecondary options; and family stability. By using this framework, TCG was able to identify one or more program offerings that address the most significant barriers to solving each problem, based on the best available evidence (see **Appendix F: Problems, Solutions, and Evidence**).

## **Goals and Timelines for Building a Continuum of Solutions**

The Project Director will begin the planning year by facilitating a retreat in October 2010 for Project Partners, Advisory Board members and Resident Leaders in order to develop a framework for the planning year by forging a shared vision and identifying common values that will drive the project and achieve long-term goals. Throughout the project, leaders will seek input, shape the design of the project, and report back to the broader community.

The ACE Needs Assessment will be conducted from November through January 2011. The Project Director and our local research and evaluation partner (UMDI; see Section IV: Quality of Project Personnel) will use information from the needs assessment, segmentation analysis, community campaign and planning retreat to guide the Partnership in establishing the long-term outcomes we plan to achieve for each indicator. This step is critical, as it will require that stakeholders identify and agree on the specific results that will demonstrate the success of the

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project. The group will then identify operational milestones that will map our path for each indicator to reach long-term outcomes within the established timeframe.

The needs assessment will launch an integrated planning process that will include the development of discrete plans with specific goals that link to all other plans. Many of these initiatives will be efforts that continue beyond the planning year. Each plan will be developed by a distinct working group, consisting of representatives from partner organizations with relevant expertise. Leaders for each group will be responsible for facilitating group members in meeting specific goals, working with other groups when plans overlap, and reporting back to the group at large. Working Groups will be designated for each of the following areas: refining the continuum; overseeing improvement in partner schools; community engagement; business planning/fundraising; data; human resources; facilities; and public relations.

The Continuum Working Group will begin its work in January 2011, following the needs assessment; its charge will be to refine the continuum of solutions on which all other Groups' work will be based. With guidance from UMDI, the Continuum Group will conduct a thorough review of ACE's initial continuum to determine whether problems are sufficiently addressed by proposed solutions and whether research findings support their inclusion in the continuum. The Group will submit a report to the ACE Partnership detailing possible implementation challenges and opportunities in the proposed continuum, and will make recommendations to each partner (including TCG) regarding ways to modify existing programs in order to better align them with the best available research. This stage of planning will enable ACE to be a vehicle not only for coordinating programs and services among partner agencies, but for increasing their quality and effectiveness.

Next, the Continuum Working Group will use the results of the needs assessment and segmentation analysis in order to identify gaps in age groups, services, and capacity. They will create an implementation plan to both address identified gaps and to leverage the efficiencies inherent in a broad continuum by not duplicating efforts. The group's ultimate goal will be to establish a unified, comprehensive continuum with integrated programs that will maximize student achievement in our target school and effectively serve all children in the ACE zone classified as high-need, as well as additional children in the zone who will access specific solutions.

Once the initial continuum is revised (April 2011), the Continuum Working Group will focus on two main tasks: examining the transitions and links between programs and developing a set of shared metrics for "continuum success," with the goals of making the continuum as seamless as possible, eliminating barriers between "silos," and promoting high-quality programs based on evidence of success. Recommendations to partners may include scaling up programs that have an established record of excellence, but that need to expand their reach in order to have greater impact; enhancing certain elements within programs; and/or developing ways to share data, planning, and communication between separate entities.

Partners will work together to realize this agenda by planning for: a) a strong internal and external communication plan among partners across the continuum; b) a robust data management system that enables the sharing of information across the zone to ensure more effective and efficient program management, as well as transparency with external stakeholders in the community; and c) an initiative-wide point of contact that serves a common intake and assessment function, identifies children who are not accessing the continuum and conducts the necessary outreach to ensure that those children are reached.

TCG prides itself as a learning organization in which reflection and professional development continually enhance quality and extend impact. This premise will carry over to the ACE initiative. TCG and our partners will implement a rigorous learning agenda in Lawrence and we are eager to participate in a community of practice throughout the planning year, as described in the Promise Neighborhoods application. The opportunity to work with other groups who are also facing challenges and developing solutions will be a valuable part of our planning process. While we welcome the opportunity to collaborate with any other partnership, a partnership that exists in another small city and/or one that serves a high number of English Language Learners would be particularly beneficial.

**Priority 8 - Description of how the applicant will plan to use data**

We anticipate using data in numerous ways during planning and implementation, including: to engage community residents and gain their perspectives and support; profile the characteristics of ACE residents; inform decision-making; monitor and report on the execution of continuum strategies; provide the Promise Neighborhood evaluator with information; track use (and non-use) of program resources; ascertain barriers to usage and seek to ameliorate them; connect each child or student participant with relevant continuum elements; classify levels of participation in particular solutions; measure change via project indicators; obtain information on participant satisfaction; fine-tune one or more elements of the continuum's overall practices concerning program quality, outreach, intake, internal and external communications; identify and resolve glitches (i.e., structural or regulatory problems that impede participants' access to or flow through continuum elements); and regularly report on participation, progress, successes, problems and solutions to partners, community residents, relevant city and state agencies, the Promise Neighborhood evaluator and USED.

The Project Director will establish a Data Working Group, which will include participants from each partner school and agency. During the planning year, the data working group will, among other tasks, oversee the development or customization of a longitudinal database system that will be flexible enough to accomplish the objectives listed above. It will be linked by a secure internet connection with each partner agency and will assign a unique identifier to each ACE resident. Fortunately, Massachusetts was recently awarded a USED grant for a statewide longitudinal data system (funded through ARRA) that will track progress for children and adults from pre-K through college; we plan to link this system with our own.

The Data Working Group will receive ongoing training in all aspects of the longitudinal system and capabilities. The group will establish a structure for reporting important data to the larger group of partners, including user-friendly data dashboard templates, and will establish ways to share community-accessible data templates with students and families via password-protected online access. These structures will be used during the planning year, as well as during implementation. The group will also be tasked with identifying evolving needs regarding specific data that should be entered/tracked, data sets that are useful for different partners/roles within the project and templates and systems that promote ease of accessing and understanding data. All partners, including Lawrence Public Schools (LPS), have agreed to share data deemed relevant by the Project Director and/or the Data Working Group, and have confirmed that they are able to share such data in rapid time on an individual student basis while adhering to privacy requirements. We will apprise ourselves of and abide by all state and federal requirements regarding confidentiality. Each user of the data system will have access only to the level(s) and type(s) of data appropriate for his/her role within the project. Moreover, because the data will reveal encouraging as well as discouraging trends and results, we will create and enforce policies

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for public disclosure that are legally, ethically and programmatically responsible yet assure community accountability. By virtue of their participation in the project, all partners have also agreed that if data indicates that a program or practice is not effective as measured according to project indicators, they will seek assistance and take steps as necessary to enhance its effectiveness and impact. TCG will document the use of data (including lessons learned and best practices), and feedback on this topic from all participating agencies, and will provide quarterly reports to all partners and the broader community, ensuring a transparent flow of information.

**Priority 9 - Commitment to work with the national evaluator**

TCG will provide the necessary staff time to cooperate with the USED and with its national Promise Neighborhoods evaluator to ensure that data collection and program design are consistent with plans to conduct a rigorous national evaluation of the program and of specific solutions and strategies pursued by all participating agencies. TCG has in the past worked with a national evaluator, as a participating school in a USED Charter School grant (“Keeping the Promise”), and successfully fulfilled all evaluation requirements. Given our significant experience implementing a continuum of services in a specific community, we would be eager to share our lessons to help inform the design of the national evaluation.

We will establish a feedback loop such that our local evaluator can share any findings from the nationwide Promise Neighborhood evaluation activities with the ACE Partnership. TCG will also develop, in consultation with the local and national evaluators, an evaluation strategy, including the identification of a credible comparison group. We will then develop, in consultation with the national evaluator, a plan for identifying and collecting reliable and valid baseline data for both program participants and the designated comparison group of non-

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participants. In addition to pledging our full cooperation with a planned evaluation, TCG will be eager to leverage the process to inform the ongoing improvement of its core programs.

### **Priority 10 - Description of indicators to be used for needs assessment**

The indicators we will use for the needs assessment will be those we anticipate using as project indicators; they are listed below. Each is followed by a method for collecting the pertinent data.

#### **Birth—Kindergarten**

##### **1. # and / % of Babies born healthy (full term, healthy weight, & free of drug-related complications)\*\***

Department of Public Health (DPH) data.

##### **2. # and % of children birth to 5 years who have a place where they usually go, other than an emergency room, when they are sick or in need of advice about their health\***

a. Partner schools will send home a School Climate Survey that will include 1-2 questions about where children go when they are sick or in need of health advice. Parents who do not return the survey will be contacted by TCG.

b. In addition, TCG will work with our partners to get answers to the same survey questions from parents of children birth to five who do not have siblings in the partner schools.

c. We will conduct a street-to-street survey of all street addresses not otherwise identified as having children in the 0-K range and will pose the same questions as above. (\*Data for all School Climate Survey Questions will be collected as specified in b and c.)

##### **3. # and % of three-year-olds and children in kindergarten who demonstrate at the beginning of the program or school year age-appropriate functioning across multiple**

**domains of early learning as determined using developmentally-appropriate early learning measures\***

a. At partner schools, pre-K-K teachers develop profiles of young students that incorporate data derived from observations, use of the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol, vocabulary monitoring charts, Structured Oral Language Observation and Success for All curriculum assessments and DIBELS and GRADE assessments to monitor reading progress.

b. For children ages 3 to kindergarten who are not in the partner schools, TCG will work with each private early childhood program to administer appropriate assessments across multiple domains (Brigance Diagnostic Inventory of Early Development II and Early Preschool Screen II which include cognitive, language, literacy, math, numeracy, motor, adaptive and social emotional domains or the Ages & Stages Questionnaire, which includes cognitive, language, motor, adaptive and social emotional domains).

c. For children not enrolled in any early childhood program, TCG will reach out through health, social and recreational agencies and will administer the same assessments. For the remaining children identified by street address, the lead agency will hold incentive-based open houses and play groups to administer the same screening assessments.

**4. # & % of children, from birth to kindergarten entry, participating in center-based or formal home-based early learning settings or programs, which may include Early Head Start, Head Start, child care, or publicly-funded preschool\***

TCG will get the number of students in publicly funded preschool from the partner schools. For all other children, TCG will access the database of TCG's Child Care Circuit (the Massachusetts Region 3 Resource and Referral agency) to get lists of all early learning settings and will contact each early learning setting to get numbers of students from the Arlington neighborhood.

**Grades Kindergarten—8**

**1. # & % of students at or above grade level according to State mathematics and English language arts assessments in at least the grades required by the ESEA (3<sup>rd</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> and once in high school)\***

TCG will work with one of its affiliated programs, Community Partners Initiative (using state MCAS test files supplied by the partner and non-partner schools in the Arlington Promise neighborhood), which will provide detailed reports showing students at or above proficiency. These reports will list each student and will be disaggregated by grade and demographic subgroups.

**2. Attendance rate of students in 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, and 9<sup>th</sup> grade\***

TCG will work with the partner middle schools to get data (from the three SIMS state student information files sent to the state each year) about the attendance rates for each grade.

**3. # & % of children who participate in at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity daily and consume five or more servings of fruits and vegetables daily\*\***

a. The School Climate Survey sent home by the partner schools will include questions about whether children participate in at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity daily and consume five or more servings of fruits and vegetables daily. Parents who do not return the survey will be contacted by TCG. See \* above for b and c.

**4. # & % of students who feel safe at school and traveling to and from school, as measured by a school climate survey\*\***

a. The School Climate Survey sent home by the partner schools will include 1-2 questions about whether students feel safe at school and traveling to and from school. Parents who do not return the survey will be contacted by TCG. See \* above for b and c.

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**5. Student mobility rate\*\***

TCG will obtain data about each student at each school (from SIMS state student information files sent to the state 3 times each year) to determine new student arrivals and student withdrawals at other times than the beginning and end of the school year.

**6. # and % of students who participate in community-based out-of-school-time (OST) programs that support learning\*\***

TCG will use a longitudinal database listing all children to determine the number of students in the Arlington neighborhood from grade K through high school and will get the number of students in relevant OST programs from our partners and other social service agencies in Lawrence.

**7. # & % of students who have school and home access (& % of the day they have access) to broadband internet\*\***

a. The School Climate Survey sent home by the partner schools will include questions about whether students have school and home access (and % of the day they have access) to broadband internet and a connected computing device. Parents who do not return the survey will be contacted by the lead agency. See \* above for b and c.

**Grades 9-12 (Kindergarten—Grade 8 indicators above also apply to Grades 9-12)**

**1. Graduation rate\***

TCG will obtain data about each student from the five clustered Lawrence high schools and other vocational and private high schools to determine the 4-year graduation status of each high school student in the ACE neighborhood and will determine the 4-year graduation rate.

## **Postsecondary**

### **1. # & % of Promise Neighborhood students who graduate with a regular high school diploma and obtain postsecondary degrees, vocational certificates, or other industry-recognized certifications or credentials without the need for remediation \***

a. After students graduate, TCG will continue to track the progress of neighborhood residents through data partnerships with several local colleges and participating agencies.

\*Academic indicator

\*\*Family and Community Support Indicator

\*\*\*Applicant-identified Family and Community Support Indicator

## **III. QUALITY OF PROJECT SERVICES**

### **Priority 2 – Description of how the applicant will plan to build the continuum**

TCG has identified several specific solutions that address the set of problem statements we drew from data collected about the Arlington Neighborhood. **Fifteen problems, solutions, evidence, and relevant partners are listed in Appendix F.** The set of proposed solutions is an initial version of the continuum of services and supports designed to improve the educational and life outcomes of children residing in the ACE Zone. We conducted a thorough review of research and used the best available evidence to build the continuum of solutions. In many cases, we were able to identify particular program elements that have been proven effective; we will use these elements to gauge and improve the quality of many solutions. Bringing programs into stronger alignment with research-based practices is integral to our planning process and one of the goals of the overall initiative. Additionally, the recruitment of additional partners, as needed, will be used as a strategy to address any critical gaps. In some cases, we found research supporting particular curricula, interventions and assessments, which helped us to select particular programs

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that would comprise the most effective solutions. In some cases, we found research supporting particular curricula, interventions and assessments, which helped us to select particular programs that would comprise the most effective solutions. Problems, solutions, evidence and relevant partners are listed in Appendix F.

## **Priority 8 – Plan to use data to measure impact of solutions**

### **Analysis and Measurement of Indicators**

During the planning year, TCG will lead the ACE Partnership (consisting of all partners with attached MOUs) in a rigorous research and planning agenda to develop a comprehensive strategy for improving the education and outcomes of Arlington children and families. To begin, the partnership will analyze each project indicator in depth. Our goal will be to identify the root cause(s) of barriers to improvement on each indicator (using our initial list of problems as a starting point) and any additions to our list of project indicators that will produce a data set that will give a more complete picture of ACE. These steps will be critical to creating a framework for data collection that will provide a clear, accurate and comprehensive picture of the needs of ACE's residents. Once the list of indicators is analyzed and enhanced (November 2010), we will implement a thorough needs assessment and segmentation analysis.

### **Needs Assessment and Segmentation Analysis**

UMDI will oversee and manage the needs assessment process from data collection through segmentation analysis and reporting. UMDI will establish mechanisms to obtain data from partners, including executing appropriate confidentiality agreements. In cases where an indicator cannot be measured using extant data, UMDI will work with the partners to create effective instruments and methods for collecting the necessary data about children and parents. Simultaneously, UMDI will compare the street addresses of those families to a complete street

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address listing provided by the city to identify addresses not included in the database. They will then create instruments and protocols to collect the necessary information on any additional families through a street-by-street census of the Arlington neighborhood, which will be carried out by the partner organizations with ongoing support from UMDI. We plan to collect data from the entire Arlington neighborhood (not just the area we have identified as the initial ACE zone) to obtain data that will inform our plan for scaling up the project after the first year of implementation.

UMDI will compile all of the extant and new data collected by the partners into a master data file with a unique identifier for each resident. Those data will be utilized in a segmentation analysis to differentiate the needs of various populations in the dataset. Independent variables to be utilized in the segmentation analysis will be determined in consultation with the partner organizations. They will likely include: resident age/grade-level, family income, racial/ethnic background and levels of parental education. UMDI will also work with TCG and its partners to create a risk/vulnerability index based on selected indicators and use that index to create lists of high-, moderate- and low-need residents. The index and its component indicators will be mapped against sections of the neighborhood to create a more in-depth view of areas of need within the ACE zone and inform whether certain supports should be location-specific. It is anticipated that the full needs assessment and segmentation analysis will be completed by the end of January 2011.

#### **IV. QUALITY OF PROJECT PERSONNEL**

##### **Priority 3 - Applicant's organizational capacity to plan and implement a Promise**

###### **Neighborhood**

The Community Day Care Center of Lawrence, which does business as The Community Group (TCG), is a nonprofit, tax exempt organization that was established in Lawrence in 1969 to provide child care services for working families. The agency's operating budget was \$22,000 and it initially served 35 preschool children. Over the last 40 years, TCG has significantly expanded its footprint to develop innovative programs that respond to the needs of children and families within Lawrence and across northeastern Massachusetts. In 2009, TCG generated revenues of more than \$73 million, including \$62 million in payments to early education and child care providers. Revenue sources included: contracts with the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care; customer fees for early education/child care (set by the Commonwealth and charged on an income-based sliding scale); training and consultation services; and allocation and competitive grants awarded by the MA DESE and private foundations. TCG has an excellent history of managing revenues, maintaining positive cash flow, operating within budgets, earning clean audits and consistently avoiding the burden of debt service. These factors have allowed us to expand programs and maintain stability despite economic variability. TCG leader and social entrepreneur Sheila Balboni has led TCG's growth and success, and has assembled a stable, high-quality team capable of developing and managing programs and services related to the TCG mission who are eager to help lead a Promise Neighborhood. In addition to the staff identified below, the management organization that supports TCG's programs and charter school includes seasoned staff in the areas of

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funding/development, accounting and finance, technology, human resources, public relations/marketing and data design/analysis.

The agency's growth has been guided by our mission to "create, manage and nurture high quality programs focused on education and related services that support families and educators." We apply a results-driven management philosophy and a set of common principles and values that include:

- Supporting all aspects (cognitive, social, physical, emotional) of children's development;
- Using reliable sources of data on all levels of the organization to guide program planning;
- Continually innovating in order to meet the needs of children and families;
- Supporting and respecting children and families from diverse cultural backgrounds;
- Encouraging staff members to continue to learn and grow professionally; and
- Collaborating with others to leverage resources, improve quality, and embed our work in the community

#### TCG Program Portfolio:

The current TCG umbrella includes the following core programs; together they represent a range of services for children from birth through career:

1. Community Day Care – TCG delivers state-licensed childcare and education programs that annually serve more than 750 Greater Lawrence children, from infants to adolescents, including low-income children receiving child care tuition support, children with special needs, second language learners, children of teen parents, and children in foster care. Our two center-based early childhood programs offer year-round, full-day schedules for toddlers through kindergarteners; they include high-quality curriculum and are accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). One of the centers is located on the

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Lawrence Campus of Northern Essex Community College, where expanded hours are available for working parents enrolled in evening courses. TCG also operates a support program for teen parents and a childcare center for their children, which are housed at Lawrence High School and are designed to work collaboratively with the faculty to address the unique needs of teen parent families.

In addition, TCG manages a network of 52 licensed family childcare providers, ten of whom live and provide services in the ACE neighborhood. TCG provides curriculum resources, innovative professional development, equipment, supplies, technology tools and training programs that address the unique needs of family child care providers. The agency prides itself on being an “incubator” for these minority-led micro-enterprises (most are led by Hispanic women). We developed our own Child Development Associate (CDA) program that features an innovative leadership component for experienced providers who are mentors for CDA candidates. Another initiative, the Urban College Bilingual Early Childhood Certificate Program, offers college credit for content-based courses in English and Spanish, which can be applied to college degree programs.

Another Community Day Care program, Latchkey Kids’ Place After-school Program (LKP), is an out-of-school-time program that currently operates at six sites throughout the greater Lawrence area (five of these sites are within Lawrence Public School buildings). It serves 269 students after school every day until 5:30, as well as full days during school vacations and throughout the summer. The program is an enrichment opportunity for students, most of whom participate in the program through state subsidies due to low income and/or Department of Social Services status. LKP teaches mathematics and literacy skills through interactive activities that also cultivate teambuilding and character development.

2. Community Day Charter Public School (CDCPS) – CDCPS is a K-8 public charter school that provides Lawrence children a rigorous academic program that prepares them for educational success. By almost every measure, CDCPS has been not only one of the most successful charter schools in Massachusetts, but one of the highest performing charter schools in the country since it opened in 1995. Although the school is chartered to serve 331 students, the waitlist for admission is over three times greater than the current enrollment. CDCPS's students reflect the general population of Lawrence (80.1% of CDCPS students' first language is not English; 29.6% are classified as Limited English Proficient; 18.7% are classified as students with special needs). In particular, CDCPS has excelled at closing the achievement gap between Hispanic and White students. For example, the average proficiency percentage on the MCAS for CDCPS's Hispanic students (88% of the student population) is 0.8 percentage points higher than the statewide average for White students.

The school has an impressive record of student achievement: in every grade and subject, CDCPS students outperform Lawrence Public School district averages, and often rank among the top achievers in the state. On the 2009 8<sup>th</sup> Grade English Language Arts MCAS, CDCPS was the top-scoring school in the state of Massachusetts. On the 2007 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Mathematics and Science MCAS, CDCPS ranked second and third in the state, respectively. Since our first class of 8th grade students graduated in June 2000, 60% have attended, or currently attend, 20 different private secondary schools that base admissions on academic performance— including some of the most competitive high schools in the country, such as Phillips Andover and Phillips Exeter. Whether they attend private or public schools, CDCPS alumni are demonstrating success with 91% graduating from high school in four years, and 80% of CDCPS alumni having graduated

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from high school and attending college. Among the range of honors and recognitions earned by Community Day Charter include:

- The Massachusetts Dept. of Education Compass School Award and nomination for the U.S. Blue Ribbon Schools recognition;
- The National Center for Urban School Transformation Excellence in Education Award;
- In September 2009, our school was one of five profiled in Inside Urban Charter Schools: Promising Practices and Strategies in Five High-Performing Schools (Harvard University Education Press, Katherine K. Merseth); and
- For the third consecutive year, New Leaders for New Schools recognized the School with a Silver-gain EPIC (Effective Practice Incentive Community) Award for making significant achievement gains.

3. Child Care Circuit (CCC) – CCC is a resource and referral agency operated by TCG that provides parents and educators in 53 Merrimack Valley/North Shore communities with information about licensed childcare programs, access to childcare subsidies, parent/family support, workshops, continuing education and college courses. CCC gives families informational resources that help them make educated choices about childcare options. CCC earned recognition by the National Association of Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies (Child Care Aware Quality Assurance), indicating that our services meet national standards of quality. The CCC training department has also earned certification as an Authorized Provider by the International Association for Continuing Education and Training (IACET), a certification that qualifies us to offer IACET-approved continuing education units (CEUs) for training courses.

4. Community Partners Initiative (CPI) – CPI disseminates the best practices of our organization through delivery of professional development, training, technical assistance, data analysis and

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consultation services for educators in early childhood through grade 12. CPI's clients have included more than 50 charter public schools, district public schools and charter support organizations in Massachusetts and other states. Our data tools are praised by educators for simplifying the analysis of student assessment results used to inform their instructional decisions. The tools were identified by the Pioneer Institute Center for School Reform for assisting educators to more effectively use MCAS data to improve student achievement in the September 2009 article titled *Closing Springfield's Achievement Gap: Innovative Ways to Use MCAS Data to Drive School Reform*.

5. Creating Opportunities for Hispanics in Lawrence – TCG is a pioneer in creating job opportunities and professional growth for Hispanics in Massachusetts. In addition to the charter school and early childhood programs listed above, all of which support children's learning English and Spanish, the agency has a strong record of hiring and training Hispanic staff and of designing professional development that supports their career advancement. Hispanics currently comprise 69% of TCG staff and providers. The agency has provided significant access to tuitions and funding to support career advancement for its own non-English speaking staff. In addition, TCG was the first in the state to develop and offer training in Spanish for area childcare workers and first in the state to create a minority business enterprise for childcare centers. The agency has been a strong advocate for entry level courses for credit in Spanish at the college level, and has developed its own courses in Spanish related to early care and education in conjunction with Urban College. When the state established academic credentials for advancement in the field, TCG was a passionate advocate for expanding opportunities for courses in ESL and Spanish. Testimony at the recent MA Department of Early Education and Care's state-wide board meeting

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by TCG staff Manuela Su resulted in a unanimous vote to support coursework for Spanish-speaking child care workers and family child care providers.

TCG Management:

TCG's senior management team is comprised of highly qualified and experienced professionals with expertise in areas required for the successful implementation of a Promise Neighborhood. Sheila Balboni (M.Ed., 1982, Harvard Graduate School of Education) will serve as the Project Director. Ms. Balboni has a distinguished record of designing, developing, funding and managing successful programs that serve Lawrence, which has earned her credibility and respect in the city. She began her work with TCG in 1980, when she was the Executive Director of a small preschool, and since then has energetically led the agency's development by successfully developing innovative programs that respond to the needs of children, families and educators in a city that embodies many of the nation's toughest urban challenges. Ms. Balboni has strategically linked the growth of programs for children with workforce training for parents, and in the process has created jobs with career advancement potential for several generations of city residents, most of whom are Latina women. She is connected to the Lawrence community and inspires dedication among her staff, and she consistently sets ambitious, measurable goals and holds her organization accountable for achieving them. She is currently working with a co-director at TCG, which will allow her to transition out of her role at the agency to lead the ACE Promise Neighborhood project.

Ms. Balboni will draw upon the skills and talents of TCG staff, including Matt Einson, Director of Technology (M.S., 1989, Pennsylvania State University), and Bruce Bean, Data Manager (Ph.D., 1975, University of New Hampshire). Mr. Einson and Mr. Bean have worked together to share information and facilitate data-sharing across the functionally and physically

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separate programs of TCG. They utilize various software programs and database tools, as well as local and wide area network technologies, to develop and implement a variety of standalone and browser-based solutions for data tracking. At the early childhood level, they have worked with the state's student information software system to create many custom reports. They have also worked with the Massachusetts Department of Education to implement a student data system with an unduplicated count across the entire state. In addition, they have developed a complete software reporting system for tracking high-stakes test performance; this system is currently in use in many Massachusetts schools (including CDCPS).

In addition to Mr. Bean and Mr. Einson, TCG's Promise Neighborhood team will include Catherine Graham (M. Ed, Harvard Graduate School of Education), with extensive experience in managing education programs for second language learners; Manuela Su (BA, University of Massachusetts), with expertise in developing training and support for parents and entry level workers; and Maria Gonzalez (MBA, Bentley College), with program development and management expertise (see Appendix B - Resumes).

In addition, TCG will be working with two consulting groups. 2Revolutions is a strategic advisory group focused on breaking down divisions that prevent children from progressing through a seamless continuum of supports. 2Revolutions has conducted intensive research about TCG and led workshops with staff and board members to help determine TCG's strategic direction. Under their guidance, the agency has set new goals related to linking their various programs more strategically in order to better serve children and families. 2Revolutions will work with the Partnership in developing and implementing a design plan for the project. We have also contracted with the University of Massachusetts Donahue Institute (UMDI) to provide support and guidance during the needs assessment phase of the planning process and to serve as

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our local evaluator thereafter. UMDI routinely designs and implements applied social science research studies, including comprehensive program evaluations, on behalf of organizations and programs. The team's experience gathering and reporting federally-mandated performance measures, measuring fidelity of implementation and monitoring outcomes will help to ensure the quality of the planning from onset through implementation. UMDI will take on the following responsibilities during ACE's planning year: 1) oversee and manage the needs assessment process; 2) lead the efforts of the Continuum Working Group; 3) participate in the Data Working Group; and 4) work with the Promise Neighborhoods national evaluator.

Our vision for the ACE Promise Neighborhood is one of a cohesive community, infused with a culture of achievement and pride, where all residents are able to access opportunities made possible by a cohesive infrastructure of high quality education programs, family support services and community resources. Our goal is for ACE to lead Lawrence in the revitalization that it has needed for many years and that its residents deserve, and in so doing, to create a national model of place-based change.

## **V. QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT PLAN**

### **Priority 4 - How the applicant will plan to sustain and "scale up" the proposed Promise Neighborhood**

#### **Scaling Up**

Our plan for years 1-4 is to begin work in the ACE Zone, which is the area served by Arlington Elementary School (AES), Henry K. Oliver School (HOS), and Arlington Middle School (AMS), and to begin by focusing on grades K-4 and continuum services related to these age groups. Each year, we will add additional grade levels and their associated schools and continuum elements until in year 4 the full continuum is available to the entire ACE Zone,

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reaching some 6,000 children. In years 5-8, we will scale up to serve the entire Arlington neighborhood, bringing on 3 additional schools and 4,000 additional students. By the end of year 8, the continuum will be at full implementation, forwarding the developmental, educational and professional successes of nearly 10,000 children, students and young adults. The particulars of our scale up strategy are as follows:

Year 1: Students and solutions related to AES grades K to 4, and HOS grades 1 to 4.

Year 2: The above, plus grade 5 and age ranges Prenatal to Age 3 and Age 3 to Age 4.

Year 3: The above plus Grades 5 to 8 (AMS and HOS) and Grades 9 to 12 (all six academies housed in the Lawrence High School complex).

Year 4: The above plus Postsecondary Options.

\*This will complete the continuum for the roughly 6,000 children in the total catchment area for AES, AMS, and HOS.

Years 5-8: The above, plus new schools (Francis Leahy School: grades K to 5; John Tarbox School: grades 1 to 5; and James Leonard School: grades 6 to 8), thereby serving the entire Arlington Neighborhood, comprised of 10,000 children in total.

<b>Age 0-4</b>	<b>Age Grade K-8</b>	<b>Age High School</b>	<b>Age Post High School</b>	
<b>Estimate of Number of Children in ACE</b>				
<b>Census American Community Survey Ages</b>				
<b>under 5 years</b>	<b>5 to 14 years</b>	<b>15 to 19 years</b>	<b>20 to 24 years</b>	
1,483	1,960	1,167	1,212	ACE 18.92% of Lawrence for years 1-4
2,547	3,365	2,004	2,081	ACE 32.49% of Lawrence for years 5 and on

## **Sustaining the Work**

TCG has an outstanding record of achievement in relation to the funding of its programs. Despite the fact that the agency owns three large buildings that house its charter school and child care programs, the agency has no debt on its balance sheet. Over the years, the agency has entered into creative partnerships that have resulted in over \$6,000,000 in funds for capital expenses and operations from a variety of sources including: foundations (both local and national), individuals and parent-volunteer groups. In addition to building and renovation expenses, funds have been donated for scholarships, libraries, summer camp, textbooks and curriculum, sports and music programs for children, new program development, data and data analysis. The agency has been innovative in developing consultation and related services that have been a source of revenue based upon fees for services. This revenue has been used to build reserves of unrestricted cash available to agency programs.

TCG has developed a budget combining Promise Neighborhood funds and matching funds (cash and in-kind) from partners, a local foundation and our own resources. We have also recently secured a five-year renewal of our existing contracts with the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care that comprise a range of comprehensive services for children, including: center-based toddler, preschool and kindergarten childcare; out of school time care for children in K-6 district public schools (including the Arlington Elementary School); family childcare programs; training and support for the parents of children from birth through three years; summer camps; information and referral (for childcare, programs for children with special needs, and parenting support); childcare for teen parents; childcare for children referred by the state's Department of Children and Families; and the K-8 charter school managed by TCG. These contracts represent an investment by the state of over \$ 15,000,000 for child-related

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services for low income and distressed families, and ACE neighborhood children are eligible for these services as the program scales up.

TCG staff sits on statewide working groups and boards that advise the MA EEC on policy related to these contracts; their input will assist in ensuring the infrastructure necessary to support the ACE continuum of solutions. In addition, the Community Development Department for the City of Lawrence and the Mayor of the city have pledged their support in coordinating federal and local funding related to the development of gardens, playgrounds and recreational spaces and safety programs for the Arlington Neighborhood. In addition, the Promise Neighborhood grant comes at a time when many forces are converging to form a “perfect storm” to support its success: recent changes in the city’s environment (both politically and at the school level) have resulted in dramatically increased collaboration and a palpable eagerness to bring about significant change. Lawrence recently elected its first Hispanic mayor, whose pledge of support relative to “TCG’s outstanding record of achievement in Lawrence” resulted in the Lawrence Community Development Department signing on as a partner in the initiative. This opportunity is also aligned with the evolution of TCG. We already offer a range of high-quality programs to Lawrence residents, many of whom live in the Arlington Neighborhood; these programs can be tapped into and coordinated for children of the neighborhood. In 2010, TCG was fully funded for all of its multi-year contracts that went out to bid for childcare, resource and referral services and educator training, thus establishing a 25-year record of consistent support from the state. TCG is also unique in that our charter school has a proven record of success in closing the achievement gap for Hispanic students. A previously tentative relationship between the charter school and the school district has recently blossomed into a meaningful partnership. Moreover, during 2009—the agency’s 40<sup>th</sup> year in operation—TCG’s board and staff set goals

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related to integrating services and programs strategically in order to more effectively serve our children and families.

Complementing this corpus, federal recognition and funding will be vital to TCG and its partners to galvanize significant additional private support and additional program funding from the state's child care and educational agencies to create the continuum, sharpen its practices and to institutionalize the approach. While there are a small number of philanthropies that focus on Lawrence, there are many more that support innovations in improving outcomes for poor children, a significant portion of which are interested in effective solutions to tenacious problems, such as closing the achievement gap for ELL students. If we are successful in improving outcomes over this period (and we believe very strongly that we will be), we will more effectively deploy current resources and attract continuing private funding to sustain our path-breaking work, particularly with regard to changing the educational experiences and outcomes of ELL students. Moreover, we plan to work with the city and state in efforts to extend the reach of ACE within Lawrence and to replicate the program in other Massachusetts cities.

### **Estimating Start up and Operating Costs**

Start up Costs: Based on TCG's 40 years of experience developing new programs, we anticipate that the start-up year for each new solution will require \$150,000 of one-time costs, which can generally be amortized over a 5 year period. These costs include research about the solution model, capital and equipment costs, and additional start-up staff time. New solutions will require their own funding sources (generally contracted) for ongoing operations.

Operating Costs: Most of the 47 solutions in our proposed continuum involve existing programs run by the partners. Based on our 8-year scale-up plan (estimated total children in the continuum

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for years 1-8 will be 980, 2463, 4610, 5822, 6524, 7588, 9127, and 9997), we anticipate that the additional operating cost per solution of linking the existing programs (with the focus on each child in a multitude of programs) and placing new children in the existing programs will be \$75,000 per year per solution for years 1-4 and \$150,000 per year for years 5-8. The revenue sources for these new children in the existing programs will come predominantly from the solution partners' funding and contract services.

The yearly ongoing operating costs for TCG are estimated to be \$574,000. This will involve an amount of \$475,000 for all of the costs for the planning year (except for the needs assessment) and the development of the longitudinal database system. Additional amounts will be \$65,000 for additional staff, \$10,000 to maintain the data system, and \$24,000 for rent, utilities, and maintenance (rent is not included in the planning year but facilities will be provided at no cost by TCG). Other ongoing operating costs will be estimated by determining expansion based on increased number of children.

Planning Phase Estimates: During the planning phase and after purchase and installation of the longitudinal database system, the lead agency will estimate the number of ACE children currently being served by each of the solutions. Each partner providing a solution will estimate the cost per child using preliminary standard cost templates (including both direct and indirect costs) developed by TCG. For those children not currently being served by each solution, TCG will estimate costs to expand the current solution to include more children. At this time other solutions may also be added, and TCG will work with the appropriate partner to estimate costs per child for these solutions.

Implementation Phase Estimates: During the implementation phase, TCG's accounting department will develop permanent standard cost templates (including both direct and indirect

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costs) for each partner providing a solution. These standard templates will include information about the number of children receiving the solution, so that costs per child can easily be determined.

**Priority 5 - Description of commitment the applicant anticipates receiving from partners, including Memorandum of Understanding**

**The ACE Partnership**

During this initial planning phase, TCG has developed and compiled Memoranda of Understanding with 11 partner organizations. Each partner has committed resources to the ACE Promise Neighborhood (in-kind and/or cash), and has identified how their approach and philosophy are aligned with those of the overall initiative. The process of establishing these agreements has been instructive—different groups in the city learned more about each other, and the partnership has brought about a renewed sense of collaboration and dedication to the future of Lawrence. Each partner organization has identified one to three senior staff members who will serve as delegates to the ACE Partnership. These are “point people” who have the authority necessary to gather and share data from their organization and to designate resources to contribute to ACE. Each partner organization has taken steps to ensure that their representative(s) will be able to devote the time needed for ACE meetings and tasks, and have committed to communicating about the ongoing progress of ACE across their respective organizations. Some partners will serve on the Advisory Board; all partners will be involved in those working groups related to their area of expertise.

**Role of Project Director**

Although much of the planning year will involve collaboration and group reflection, the ACE Project Director Sheila Balboni is ultimately responsible for the success of the ACE

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project, and all partners have agreed to work with her as part of their commitments, including responding to her requests in a timely manner and following through on agreed-upon action items. In her role as project leader, she will act as liaison between the Partnership and the Advisory Board. In addition to leading and monitoring all Partnership activities during the planning year, the Project Director will be responsible for designing a performance management system that holds partners accountable for meeting specific goals and objectives. She will also secure commitments from partners that will extend well beyond the planning year into the implementation phase of the project.

### **Role of the Advisory Board**

TCG has assembled an Advisory Board that will bring additional talent, resources, and community connections to the ACE. It is comprised of a spectrum of leaders from across a breadth of various sectors who are representative of the Arlington Neighborhood and who bring diverse perspectives and expertise. In some cases, Advisory Board membership overlaps with the ACE Partnership to ensure that key partners have a voice in the project. However, several people were invited to serve on the Advisory Board due to their particular expertise or experience, even though they will not be directly involved in delivering a particular solution. In addition, the input of Neighborhood Leaders (described later in this section) will figure prominently in Board and Working Group planning. The Advisory Board's role will be to set a general course for ACE, to establish policy for the project, and to serve as thought partners to the Project Director and leadership team throughout the planning and implementation of ACE. The Board includes representation from public officials, ACE residents, community organizations, foundations and the school district. Members and affiliations are listed below; those names followed by an asterisk are representatives of the Arlington Neighborhood.

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Sheila Balboni: ACE Project Director

James Barnes: City of Lawrence Director of Community Development

Patricia Flynn: Judge, Juvenile Court

Harold McGoon\*: Executive Director, Lawrence/Methuen Community Coalition

Ana Colon\*: Parent of Arlington Elementary School student

Charles LoPiano\*. Assistant Executive Director, Greater Lawrence Community Action Council

Modesto Maldonado\*: City Councilor of Arlington Neighborhood

Eddie Mas, Former head of Lawrence Family Health Center

Mary Lou Bergeron: Acting Superintendent, Lawrence Public Schools

Jess Andors: Lawrence Community Works

Josh Miner, Executive Director, Stevens Foundation

Louis Torres, TCG Board Member

### **Role of Working Groups**

As described previously (see Section II: Project Design), the ACE Project Director will form Working Groups that will engage in an integrated design process. Each group will focus on particular goals, with operational milestones established throughout the planning year. Working groups and goals are listed below.

1. Continuum Working Group (functions as an Executive Committee): develop seamless, integrated continuum of solutions
2. Lawrence Public Schools Working Group: monitor transformation process and implementation of identified strategies for significant improvement at target school; identify specific solutions that will be accessed by students at other partner schools; develop plan for steps to bring additional schools into the continuum over time

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3. Community Planning Working Group: identify concrete ways to cultivate the community's support in the planning process and the project plan; develop methods for engaging the community in establishing outcomes and measuring progress during implementation in an ongoing way;
4. Business/Fundraising Working Group: develop project budget; set fundraising goals and strategies;
5. Data Working Group: work with UMDI to determine specific features needed for ACE database; recommend database vendor that will meet project needs; determine how to ensure consistency of data entry and analysis across organizations; determine assessment and data management strategy and partners' data training needs
6. Human Resources Working Group: determine specific hiring needs for overall project; determine training needed for different aspects of project planning and implementation (including data systems)
7. Facilities Working Group: develop shared use contract to implement across organizations; determine specific program resources and needs vis-à-vis facilities; identify facility improvements necessary for successful delivery of solutions; explore revenue-generating opportunities related to ACE facilities portfolio
8. Public Relations Working Group: oversee project branding and communication efforts both internally and with external stakeholders; seek feedback regarding perceptions of different groups about the project and respond accordingly

Each working group leader will identify key operational milestones for their plan and communicate these to the Project Director so that she can manage the overall project. Groups will utilize Tenrox project planning software in order to track, plan and report on project

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activities. The Project Director will develop a dashboard that she will periodically review with working group leaders to show the Partnership's progress toward their planning goals. The Project Director will be ultimately responsible for all groups to adhere to an established timeline and to avoid drifting from objectives. The Project Director has the right to replace a working group leader who is not effectively guiding his/her group toward developing an actionable plan.

### **The Role of Neighborhood Leaders/*Líderes Comunitarios***

We plan to launch a community campaign for the purposes of building a constituency within Arlington to ensure that residents are aware of, involved with, and feel served by the Promise Neighborhood initiative. To do this, we will rely on the expertise of our partner organization, Lawrence Community Works, Inc (LCW). A leader in the practice of social network-building and community organizing in partnership with the Annie E. Casey Foundation, LCW has provided technical assistance, learning forums and one-on-one consulting to neighborhoods around the country focused on building local capacity and translating social network and membership principles into practice. The goal of this aspect of ACE is to ensure “authentic demand,” i.e., that neighborhood residents have a voice in decisions related to the project; have competence and confidence to participate fully in these decisions; and understand the project and the way it relates to constituencies in their neighborhoods. LCW will engage Arlington Neighborhood stakeholders—including residents, local business leaders, and school staff—during the planning year in an array of venues: a multi-session charrette (beginning in October 2010), focus groups, individual interviews and community surveys.

A key component of our campaign will be to engage a small group of community residents to connect the neighborhood to the ACE continuum. We plan to create paid positions for Neighborhood Leaders/*Líderes Comunitarios*: residents who will lead ACE “on the ground”

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within their neighborhood. Initially, we will identify five adults who are known and trusted by the community and who understand the needs of their neighbors; this number will increase as ACE expands over time. Each leader's home will be a gathering place for small social events, peer meetings and mentoring. This network will provide the partnership with a viable way of obtaining input from residents, gathering and disseminating information and reaching individuals who are not yet connected with other programs or schools. LCW will provide training and ongoing professional development to Resident Leaders/*Líderes Comunitarios* focused on leadership, facilitation and community change.

## **VI. SIGNIFICANCE**

### **Priority 6 - How the applicant will plan to track available sources and funding levels of Federal, State, and local funds that could be utilized in the project**

While TCG has significant experience, expertise, and relationships within the Lawrence community –and, indeed, across the state and beyond –the success of the ACE initiative will depend primarily on the breadth, depth and strength of the partnership we develop in support of its core objectives. This will be no truer than partners' ability to marry existing –and identify new –funding streams to maximize their impact on behalf of Lawrence families.

TCG as Financial Steward: TCG has an excellent history of managing assets and maintaining positive cash flow and consistent operations within budgets, as evidenced by annual financial reports prepared by the organization's CPA and by annual financial audits conducted by independent CPAs. The agency has been the recipient of public funding from state, local and federal agencies for over forty years and during that time has established an extraordinary record of compliance. In addition to the \$16 million received annually for program operations, the agency also manages over \$65 million in child care voucher funding for the state. Reviews by

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the state auditor's office, as well as audits by state agencies, have been consistently positive. In a letter of support for TCG's application for Promise Neighborhood funds, the Massachusetts Commissioner of Early Education and Care states that the Department is in "full support of TCG's application." This record of achievement is based upon policies related to internal audit and quality control and draws upon the knowledge and experience of a strong financial team.

TCG's business office establishes separate general ledger codes to clearly identify all program revenue and expenses. TCG's Chief Financial Officer and Executive Director review monthly statements to compare them to the budget; any variances are analyzed and appropriate actions taken. Changes in budgets from year to year often reflect the evaluation of our clients, with children's needs being the driving force behind discretionary spending and variations in allocation of revenues from year to year.

Role of a Strong Partnership: During the planning year, the ACE Partnership will establish structures to ensure that we leverage a range of funding sources. The Business/Fundraising Working Group will be comprised of financial and development experts from different partner organizations, including those familiar with diverse public and private funding avenues. The group will initially identify existing funding streams that the ACE Partnership can access and co-mingle for greater effect. For example, ACE partners currently operate federally-funded programs such as Early Reading First and Early Head Start and have received ARRA funding in the following areas: expansion of child care for preschools; management of child care vouchers for community partners; and the purchase of curriculum and educational programs and materials. Lawrence Public Schools, an ACE partner, is applying for ARRA School Turnaround Funding of approximately \$500,000 for each of three years for two schools, one of which (Arlington Elementary School –our target school) is in the Arlington neighborhood. Current state and local

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funding secured by ACE partners includes Quality Rating Improvement Scale grants, child care subsidies, literacy program planning grants, and local community development grants for recreational areas, gardens and health education for youth. Current local and national foundation funding will also be identified and explored for possible aggregation or extension to maximize the potential impact of targeted funding.

The partnership will then map a fundraising strategy that includes tracking new public funding opportunities as they become available, writing grant requests for specific foundations whose missions align with that of the Promise Neighborhoods program, and identifying individual donors who can support ACE. The strategy will ensure that the partnership accesses diverse funding streams and taps the expertise and connections that each partner brings to the project. Finally, the partnership will explore ways that the collaboration among partner organizations made possible by ACE can lead to increased efficiency, thereby enabling partner organizations to contribute their own funds to help support implementation of ACE.

The connections that TCG and other partners have with the Lawrence community will be critical assets in identifying resources on which ACE can draw. We will ensure that funding and programs are directed toward supporting ACE's work, rather than duplicating efforts. The Greater Lawrence Community Action Council, an ACE partner, will apply for a HUD Choice Neighborhoods grant. The Greater Lawrence Family Health Center and Lawrence General Hospital seek public funding (state and federal) to support healthcare efforts within ACE. All Promise Neighborhood financial activity will be summarized on its own separate budget report, allowing revenue and expenditures to be easily analyzed. TCG is expert at identifying and overcoming barriers that impede project goals. Senior staff from the agency have been leaders in forming collaborations among like-minded groups to influence the development of policies that

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support children and families. They hold leadership positions on statewide boards and work with state agency personnel to develop children- and family-friendly policies and procedures.

TCG has an outstanding history of developing innovative practices and creating models that can be replicated in the future. The organization uses its programs as laboratories for developing successful strategies to better meet community needs. Then, there is a history and culture of documenting promising practice and developing trainings to disseminate what learning to others in the field. Over the past years, the agency has drawn upon its expertise in developing innovative programs to train thousands of child care personnel and teachers. For example, TCG's charter school (CDCPS) was the first charter school in the state to recognize that curriculum standards and data analysis are critical components in developing strategies to support children's learning. Based on the success of their school, the organization developed Community Partners Initiative (CPI), a model for disseminating these practices to school administrators and teachers around the state and further afield.

Each of the partners has been chosen because of their effectiveness in providing services to children and families and because of their commitment to working together to form a continuum of services in the Arlington Neighborhood. TCG and the constellation of partners form a powerful catalyst for integrated change and opportunity for the Arlington Neighborhood and the City of Lawrence, across the continuum of birth to college and career.

**Priority 7 - How the applicant will identify Federal, State, or local policies, regulations, or other requirements that would impede the applicant in achieving its goals**

TCG fully recognizes the inherent challenges with large-scale initiatives that take advantage of multiple funding sources from multiple levels of government and involve multiple partners to implement. Failure to identify and adequately respond to these challenges can adversely affect

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program outcomes and effective program management. The organization is fortunate to be able to draw upon our experience in forging partnerships like the establishment of an employer-supported minority business enterprise in Lawrence (Merrimack Valley Child Care Center) for the children of textile workers. As the lead agency in securing funding and developing the center, we worked with such diverse groups as: MA Department of Economic Affairs, the City of Lawrence Department of Community Development, the International Ladies Union of Garment Workers (ILUGA) and Greico Manufacturing, Inc; the center became a model for replication in Massachusetts.

We intend to draw upon several strategies and resources to identify and seek sustainable solutions to any barriers that we may encounter in pursuit of our program goals. They include at least the following.

ACE Partnership Planning: As a part of our broader planning activities –and in a process that will mirror our exploration of existing and potential funding streams –we will bring our partners together with other experts as needed to examine the pertinent policies and regulations of each of the funding streams expected to be used to implement ACE as well as the regulatory environments (e.g., state education legislation and regulations, union contracts, planning and zoning requirements) to which the partners and/or the solutions must adhere. While many obstacles and challenges will likely emerge through the course of the work, we believe it will be important to proactively brainstorm with partners, up front, the potential barriers that we may be likely to encounter. We will take a cross-cutting look at eligibility, targeting, funding provisions, work rules and other standards to assess their impact in terms of implementation capacity and achievement of goals so that we and our partners will be in the best position to recommend solutions, workarounds and/or proposals for changes in policy, regulations or practice. The

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kinds of resources we expect to weave together for ACE include state funding for child care, parent training and school turnaround at the elementary level; foundation funding to support public relations; plus grassroots organizing, early intervention, health services and youth programs that are provided through ACE partnerships.

Academic and Subject Experts: We will take advantage of the research and publications of institutions and organizations that focus on policy and regulatory issues likely to influence our success (New Teacher Project, Harvard's Center on the Developing Child, Policy Link).

Moreover, we expect that there will be a flurry of new case study research reviewing the implementation of school transformation processes in communities across the country.

Policy Engagement: In the Commonwealth as elsewhere across the country, Race to the Top has given rise to a number of new options for improving underperforming schools. To help contribute to the implementation and, as necessary, evolution of these new state provisions, the ACE Partnership will be actively involved in a variety of policy discussions. These will include our statewide public charter school association, staff of the Commonwealth's Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's Office of Accountability and Assistance, which is managing the transformation process, and groups like New Schools Venture Fund with an interest in dissemination of good practices between charters and district schools.

Other Comprehensive Programs: Promise Neighborhoods is a significant initiative and one of a number of comprehensive community development programs being implemented by federal agencies (e.g., HUD), states (e.g., Rhode Island), cities (e.g., Detroit), and nonprofits in partnership with some or all of the foregoing (e.g., LISC, Living Cities). These initiatives all involve integrating the goals, policies, practices, and organizational cultures of a variety of players and will offer lessons for our work. If we and other Promise Neighborhood participants

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are effective in defining and overcoming impediments to improving educational and other outcomes in low-income communities, these systems' improvements will be a very important contribution to the next generation of place-based change efforts. Promise Neighborhoods offers a truly remarkable opportunity for our Hispanic community to draw upon all the resources of our city to build a foundation of support for their children that fosters their academic achievement and that becomes a legacy for future generations and a model for Massachusetts and the rest of the country.

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Census 2008 American Community Survey Table C03001

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Census 2008 American Community Survey Table C03001

<sup>3</sup> Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education 2010 and 2011 Title I Allocations

<sup>4</sup> Massachusetts Department of Public Health, Massachusetts Births 2008, published March 2010

<sup>5</sup> Massachusetts Department of Children and Families, 2008 Child Maltreatment Statistics

<sup>6</sup> Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education website

<sup>7</sup> U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 2008 Table B15002

<sup>8</sup> 2008 FBI Crime in the United States Tables 5 and 8

<sup>9</sup> Personal communication, June 2010

<sup>10</sup> *The Arlington Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy*. Community Opportunities Group, Inc., Land Strategies Group, LLC, Connery Associates, and Public Planning, Research, and Implementation, Inc, for City of Lawrence Community Development Department, August 2009

<sup>11</sup> *The Arlington Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy*. Community Opportunities Group, Inc., Land Strategies Group, LLC, Connery Associates, and Public Planning, Research, and Implementation, Inc, for City of Lawrence Community Development Department, August 2009

<sup>12</sup> Center for Disease Control Press release, August 28, 2009

<sup>13</sup> Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development

<sup>14</sup> *The Arlington Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy*. Community Opportunities Group, Inc., Land Strategies Group, LLC, Connery Associates, and Public Planning, Research, and Implementation, Inc, for City of Lawrence Community Development Department, August 2009

<sup>15</sup> *The Arlington Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy*. Community Opportunities Group, Inc., Land Strategies Group, LLC, Connery Associates, and Public Planning, Research, and Implementation, Inc, for City of Lawrence Community Development Department, August 2009

<sup>16</sup> *The Arlington Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy*. Community Opportunities Group, Inc., Land Strategies Group, LLC, Connery Associates, and Public Planning, Research, and Implementation, Inc, for City of Lawrence Community Development Department, August 2009

<sup>17</sup> Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (2010). *Massachusetts School and District Profiles 2009-2010*. Malden, MA.

<sup>18</sup> Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (2010). *Massachusetts School and District Profiles 2009-2010*. Malden, MA.

<sup>19</sup> Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (2010). *Massachusetts School and District Profiles 2009-2010*. Malden, MA

<sup>20</sup> Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (2010). *Massachusetts School and District Profiles 2009-2010*. Malden, MA

<sup>21</sup> Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (2010). *Massachusetts School and District Profiles 2009-2010*. Malden, MA

<sup>22</sup> Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (2010). *Massachusetts School and District Profiles 2009-2010*. Malden, MA

<sup>23</sup> Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (2010). *Massachusetts School and District Profiles 2009-2010*. Malden, MA

<sup>24</sup> Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (2010). *Massachusetts School and District Profiles 2009-2010*. Malden, MA

<sup>25</sup> Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (2010). *Local Stakeholder Group, Redesign Team, and Timelines for Level 4 Schools Guidance Document*. Malden, MA.