

Central Little Rock Promise Neighborhood

Project Narrative

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Section 1: Need for the Project

The Little Rock School District (LRSD) may be the single most recognizable in the nation—perhaps in the world—owing to the catastrophic events surrounding the LRSD Board of Directors’ efforts to comply with the U.S. Supreme Court’s May 17, 1954, ruling in the case of *Brown v. the Board of Education of Topeka* and desegregate Central High School: “On May 22, 1954, the Little Rock school board stated that it would comply with the law of the land as reflected in the Supreme Court’s decision. Looking back, this statement by the school board, coming less than a week after the historic *Brown* decision, was a credit to the school board and the city” (Anderson *et al*, 1997, p. 12). Nonetheless, about three years later, Governor Orval Faubus ordered the Arkansas National Guard to surround the campus to prevent nine African-American students from entering Central High, and President Dwight D. Eisenhower sent federal troops to break the blockade. While this action produced the environment for Ernest Green’s historic graduation from Central High in May 1958, it also created a community division so deep that the LRSD’s high schools were closed completely for the 1958-1959 school year despite a court order to proceed with integration. Perhaps not too surprisingly, the LRSD has yet to recover from the series of events that has since transpired.

What the Central High Crisis did to the public schools, the development of I-630 through the heart of the city did to its neighborhoods. While some studies suggest that in 1957 most neighborhoods in Little Rock were racially mixed, today Little Rock is a “city of emphatic racial and class separation” (*White Flight*, 2010). The neighborhoods south of I-630 stretching from the Central High neighborhood in the east to the campus of the University of Arkansas at Little Rock (UALR) in the west have been particularly hard hit. Once home to major commercial centers that attracted shops, restaurants, and entertainment venues considered to be statewide

destinations, today the area is marked by a physically deteriorating infrastructure, declining property values, and obsolete commercial buildings (University District Partnership, 2005, p. 9).

This historically significant and underserved geographic area, defined by seven U.S. Census Tracts in Pulaski County (10, 11, 12, 13, 18, 19, 21.02), will be the focus of the Central Little Rock Promise Neighborhood (CLRPN) project. This neighborhood meets the requirements of Absolute Priority 1.

The U.S. Census (2000) reports that 24,592 people live in this neighborhood. Seventy-seven percent (77%) are classified as black or African-American and 20% as white. Little Rock's total population is 55% white and 40% black. Eleven percent (11%) of housing units are vacant with that rate reaching as high as about 20% in two of the seven Census Tracts. There are few parks. Many of the neighborhoods lack sidewalks. Only 43% of housing units are occupied by the home's owner. The unemployment rate averaged 13% before the latest economic downturn. In a 2009 report to UALR's University District Partnership, the CRE Consulting Corps, a group of leading realtors from across the county, concluded that a stigma plagues much of this area (CRE Consulting Corps, 2009).

Poverty plagues many of the residents of this neighborhood. About one-third of the neighborhood's people (30.5%) live below the poverty level; nearly one half (46.5%) of individuals under age 18 live below the poverty level. The number of children living in single-parent homes is 57.8%--almost twice that of the city as a whole at 33.9%. For these children, poverty rates reach as high as 64%. Despite the fact that CLRPN is home to two college campuses (UALR and Arkansas Baptist College), with two others just beyond its borders (the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences and Philander Smith College), less than 16% of people over 25 living in the neighborhood have attained a Bachelor's degree or higher. This is

even lower than the state average of 18.1%, which has earned Arkansas the dubious national rank of forty-ninth (49th) for number of college graduates (Census Bureau).

The disconnect between the neighborhood and its institutions can also be seen in the public schools that serve the children of this area. Five schools have been identified as the schools through which the majority of neighborhood children should pass, if they remain in the traditional public schools. Bale, Franklin, and Stephens are the elementary schools. All three of these schools' physical locations and attendance zones are exclusively within the CLRPN. There are no LRSD middle schools in the CLRPN: students are bused to Forest Heights Middle School located 1.1 miles to the north. Central High School is located in the CLRPN, but the majority of the neighborhood is not in its attendance zone. Hall High School, located 1.5 miles to the north, is the "neighborhood" high school. According to the Arkansas Department of Education's Data Center, the student population at all five of these schools is predominantly African-American, ranging from a low of 79% at Forest Heights to a high of 98% at Franklin. The numbers reported for the LRSD overall are 68% black, 22% white, 8% Hispanic, and 2% other (<http://adedata.arkansas.gov>). According to the National Office for Research, Measurement and Evaluation Systems (NORMES), a public online source of all Arkansas school performance reports, free and reduced lunch (FRL) rates range from a low of 70% at Hall to a high of 95% at Franklin. The FRL rates for the three elementary schools are all around 90% or above (<http://normesasweb.uark.edu>).

The academic performance of the students in the CLRPN schools is distressingly low. Hall High School is currently on the Arkansas Department of Education's list of persistently lowest-achieving schools. All of the other schools, except for Bale which has been off the list for one year, are in some form of state-sanctioned school improvement. In the last three years,

no student (0%) at Hall has tested at the advanced level on the Arkansas Grade 11 Literacy Test. In 2009, only 31% of Hall's juniors tested proficient on this test. At Forest Heights, only 31% of 8th graders tested proficient or better in math on the Arkansas Benchmark Exam—only 52.5% in literacy. At the third-grade level in 2009, 45% of Franklin's students tested proficient or above in math, 33% in literacy; Stephen's students tested 59% in math, 40% in literacy; Bale's students tested 73% in math, 52% in literacy. The test results for all of these schools usually fall below the average for the LRSD which itself is usually well below the state average. In fact, the LRSD had this to say in its recently completed Strategic Plan report: "A review of current student achievement shows that student performance in math and literacy at all grade levels is below par – woefully so for the district's children from minority and poverty backgrounds – and that the achievement gaps are large and growing (LRSD, 2010)." Specifically, based on the percentages of white and black students scoring proficiently or better on the Arkansas Benchmark Exam, the LRSD reported an achievement gap among its 8th grade students of 33% in literacy and 57% in math (2010).

Outside of school, the situation is not much better for the children and youth growing up in the CLRPN. Statewide statistics show dire need in some key health indicators. According to "Natural Wonders: The State of Children's Health in Arkansas," of those children 3-5 years old who were measured, 35% are either at risk of being overweight or are overweight, and only 13% eat the daily recommended number of fruits and vegetables. Furthermore, 41% of Arkansas children live in homes with tobacco smoke, compared to a national average of 26%, and 25% of Arkansas children smoke cigarettes themselves (Natural Wonders Partnership Council, 2007). At Franklin Elementary almost half (47%) of the student body had untreated caries/cavities in dental screening conducted by UALR Children International during the last school year. Public

safety is also a concern for the children of the CLRPN. In a national study based on police department records, *Crime in Metropolitan America* ranked Little Rock the 23rd “most dangerous city” in America for 2006 (Morgan & Morgan, 2006). In a local area analysis conducted by New Futures for Youth in 2001, about one-third (30%) of all incidents of high violence victimization of youth across the entire city were reported to have occurred in the CLRPN area. Youth idleness rates for the CLRPN are at 15% compared with a 6.7% rate for the state.

The time is ripe for change in the CLRPN. In the last few years, both UALR and the City of Little Rock have embarked on comprehensive neighborhood revitalization efforts for areas included in the CLRPN: the University District Partnership and the 12th Street Corridor Plan. The Central Arkansas Library System is spending over \$12 million to build a new state-of-the-art Children’s Library and Learning Center in the center of the CLRPN. In the past year, the Little Rock Housing Authority received funds through both the Department of Housing and Urban Development and the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act for building projects in the Central High neighborhoods. In January, UALR, along with UAMS and the City of Little Rock, formed the Central Arkansas Technology Park Authority—the first step to carrying out a plan to build a research park in the CLRPN specifically intended to serve both institutions’ academic needs while helping revitalize its immediate surroundings. In part due to the Neighborhood Leadership Academy, run by UALR, numerous neighborhood associations, both existing and recently formed, have become increasingly active.

While the promise of change is in the air for the CLRPN, significant challenges remain. General strife about the schools abounds. Prominent members of Little Rock’s business community have become disinvested in the public education system (Market Street Services, 2009, p. 4). The two community leaders the Superintendent asked to co-chair the strategic

planning process resigned from the committee just weeks before the plan was released. Many families have looked to charter schools to provide alternatives for their children. In response, the LRSD has filed a lawsuit against the state over the way it approves charters for open enrollment charter schools in Pulaski County. In this environment, it is clear that addressing public perceptions and confronting legitimate concerns about the traditional public schools and public charter schools must be a priority of the CLRPN project.

A sharp focus on visible results must also be a priority for the CLRPN plan. When communities have been divided and problems allowed to persist for long periods of time, many begin to question if change is even possible. In fact, all of the partners of the CLRPN have been involved in many community improvement efforts in the past, but the tipping point for these neighborhoods has yet to be reached. To overcome this doubt, the CLRPN will need to prove, in relatively short order, that this effort is different and that our continuum of solutions is capable of producing meaningful and lasting change in the schools, in the community, and in the lives of children.

Section 2: Quality of Project Design

The partnering organizations in the CLRPN plan to develop a continuum of solutions by working backwards while building upwards. Working backwards from the Results Framework, existing expertise, and collaborative efforts, the coalition will build upwards to create a reform plan for each targeted school and use an “umbrella” approach to create a more coordinated system of delivery of services that can expand established pockets of excellence in terms of programs and services while plugging prevalent gaps.

The foundation of the continuum of solutions is a Results Framework that has been developed jointly by a team of representatives from all signatories to the Memorandum of

Understanding (MOU). This seven-page Framework document serves as the core of the agreement and reveals the depth of commitment to this project as it defines in detail the comprehensive set of common outcomes and indicators necessary to ultimately change the odds for all of the children growing up in the CLRPN. It is ambitious. A total of fifty-nine (59) separate indicators of success have been identified. Eleven (11) of these will serve as Promise Neighborhood program indicators as well as CLRPN project indicators; the remaining forty-eight (48) will be project indicators unique to the CLRPN effort. Conducting and maintaining regular measurements of these 59 indicators will allow for a systematic and objective assessment of progress towards achieving the Framework's fourteen (14) desired outcomes—all of which flow from the partners' shared Theories of Action and Change described in the MOU. In addition to the ten (10) key target areas included in the *NIA*, these include four (4) unique target areas that the coalition of partners considers critical to the success of this approach. These are as follows:

1. Students and neighbors feel connected. This addresses the CLRPN goal of nurturing productive citizens and the *NIA* invitational priority of civic engagement.
2. Students and families have high academic aspirations. This addresses the reality of the historic pattern of low educational attainment levels that has produced a dominant non-college-going culture that extends well beyond the boundaries of the CLRPN, indeed throughout the State of Arkansas.
3. Students attend effective schools. This addresses the fact that the targeted schools are among some of the lowest-performing schools in the LRSD.

4. Children and youth participate actively in the arts and humanities. This complements the cultural goals for the area established in recent strategic planning processes undertaken by neighborhood and business groups and addresses the *NIA* invitational priority of arts and humanities (University District Partnership, 2007; Market Street Services, 2009).

The plan is to use this Framework not only to guide but to drive the continuum of solutions. Every proposed solution must be linked directly to one or more indicators in the Framework and, ultimately, will be evaluated on its ability to have a significant impact on these indicators. In turn, every indicator must be linked to one or more solutions in our continuum as that, ultimately, will determine the strength and completeness of our success pipeline. The complete Framework document is included as Appendix F.

The continuum of solutions will also be designed to leverage the existing expertise and efforts of the partners and complement the strategies established for existing revitalization efforts in the area. Arkansas Children's Hospital (ACH) already provides primary medical care, through clinical services and in-patient care, to large numbers of children in the CLRPN and conducts various health and wellness programs in school and community settings. ACH is also the sponsoring agency of the Arkansas Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters Program (HIPPPY). UALR Children International (CI) provides in-school health and dental screenings for students in all three CLRPN elementary schools. CI also runs a long-established school-based afterschool program at Bale Elementary and has existing plans to expand this program to Stephens this fall. CI's summer camps, leadership and service learning youth development programs, and College Preparatory Program offer other services to students of all ages in the CLRPN. New Futures works with two Youth Initiative Project (YIP) programs in the

CLRPN and, in an effort to support the students YIP targets throughout the day, has partnered with the LRSD to place a Youth Intervention Specialist in Hall High School. New Futures also works with some of the CLRPN's smaller non-profits and other out-of-school time service providers on increasing program quality through assessment using a tool called the Youth Program Quality Assessment. Developed by High/Scope Educational Research Foundation, its use is aligned with the Arkansas Standards for Quality Afterschool developed in 2006 by the Arkansas Out of School Network (Arkansas Out of School Network, n.d.).

The Central Arkansas Library System (CALs) is about two years into its Children's Initiative. Its plan is to build a state-of-the-art "green" Children and Youth Library and Learning Center with cutting-edge, interdisciplinary educational programming for children and youth. The library campus will include three refurbished LEED certified houses, a teaching greenhouse, garden, and kitchen. Programs will be designed to incorporate the "whole child" approach to learning and cover a variety of interests and skills: arts, music, health and nutrition, eco-civic knowledge, service learning, and green technology. The City of Little Rock has partnered with CALs on the 12th Street Corridor Revitalization project and will complement its plans for the Children's Library with a number of planned or existing initiatives: transition to adulthood programming, YouthBuild programming, urban gardening programming, and the development of a "green" Job Corps for disconnected youth. All of these initiatives will be focused on the CLRPN.

The University of Arkansas at Little Rock colleges and departments are involved in a number of initiatives that impact the CLRPN. In addition to the work of UALR Children International, UALR's College of Education (COE) has worked closely with a number of LRSD schools over the years including substantial partnerships with both Bale and Hall. The COE's

Center for Literacy provides training for Reading Recovery teachers in many LRSD elementary schools, including those in the CLRPN. Both the Math and Science Education Partnership and the Center for Gifted Education provide specialized professional development programs for area teachers. The School of Social Work is part of the Arkansas Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (AECCS) Partnership Council, an effort to create a more coordinated system for delivering early care and education, family support, parent education, medical homes, and social-emotional health to all of Arkansas' children including those in the CLRPN. The Department of Criminal Justice's Juvenile Justice Center provides training for teachers and school administrators on topics such as adolescent development, dealing with disabilities, juvenile law, key indicators of child well-being, and issues of school violence prevention and intervention. Hamilton Learning Academy, one of four LRSD alternative schools, is located next to Bale Elementary in the CLRPN.

The CLRPN plan to build up and link programs and services will start with the schools. The initial task will be to conduct a thorough analysis of the organizational culture and climate of each school, as well as its success at implementing existing reform efforts. Part of this analysis will be conducted as a facilitated self-study by school personnel, and part will be conducted by an independent consultant. The CLRPN coalition will conduct focus groups with parents, business leaders, and community members to discuss their perceptions of and experiences with these schools. The staff of the CLRPN will also evaluate the two competing whole-school reform models currently in use by these schools: America's Choice and High Schools That Work. The CLRPN will use the fifteen (15) evidence-based strategies for increasing graduation rates identified by the National Dropout Prevention Center/Network to focus all parts of this evaluation on what works. These strategies are as follows: systemic renewal, school-community

collaboration, safe learning environments, family engagement, early childhood education, early literacy development, mentoring/tutoring, service-learning, alternative schooling, after-school opportunities, professional development, active learning, educational technology, individualized instruction, Career and Technical Education (CTE) (Smink & Reimer, 2005). The goal will be to develop a detailed and coordinated reform plan that will allow each school to retain a unique identity while institutionalizing a complementary set of best practices and programs so that the instructional programs and other school-based services offered at the schools will indeed form the basic structure of the CLRPN's success pipeline.

Efforts to build a complete continuum of solutions outside of the schools will be focused on establishing more coordinated and collaborative implementation processes for the wide array of services and experiences that will be needed to “wrap around” the schools. The planning process will start with a thorough inventory of existing educational, health, and family services offered by organizations other than the schools within the geographic area of the CLRPN. Statewide programs and efforts to provide services to children and families will also be inventoried, and the actual use of these services by families living within the CLRPN examined. CLRPN staff will conduct community focus groups and regular town hall meetings to assess community perceptions of needs and gaps in services for the purpose of exploring how most effectively to incorporate programs and services of noted excellence into the continuum. Such programs include the new Arkansas Better Beginnings quality standards for early education and care programs and the ARKids First health insurance program. The work of the CLRPN will be coordinated with the Department of Human Services' Arkansas System of Care Plan and, as such, use the Ages and Stages Question (ASQ) - 3 and the ASQ Social Emotional (SE) questionnaires to measure age-appropriate functioning across multiple domains of early learning

for the CLRPN's three-year-olds. It is anticipated that the use of the ASQ-3 with the SE add-on will be required in all Early Head Start and Head Start programs in Arkansas (Arkansas Children's Behavioral Health Care Commission, 2008). The CLRPN staff will pay particular attention to the quantity and quality of parenting, afterschool, and wellness programs (particularly wellness programs for adolescents and youth) that are available in these neighborhoods as these three areas have already been identified in the work of the partners as key gaps. All of this will be incorporated into a detailed plan to establish several new "umbrella" programs that will be run by partners in this effort who will be responsible for addressing the accountability issues that will arise when working with numerous service providers and organizations. (The nature of these umbrella programs is more thoroughly described in Section 3.)

Data will be the anchor for all CLRPN efforts and, as such, has been made a key budgeting priority. (38% of total expenses are anticipated to be in the Data Team allocation.) This will ensure that the Data Team has the expertise and resources it will need to build a longitudinal data system that is: 1) comprehensive enough to measure all 59 of the CLRPN project indicators, plus two additional program indicators for the national evaluation; 2) sophisticated enough to link to the Arkansas Department of Education's Longitudinal Data System and, eventually, to the Little Rock School District data dashboard currently under construction, and other systems as needed. It will also have the expertise and resources it needs to collect and process the data needed to measure these indicators—some of which will require the construction of new survey instruments—and conduct a representative sampling of the neighborhood's children. Finally, it will have the expertise and resources it needs to create the

sort of data interface necessary to ensure that data are not only collected and stored safely, but are accessible in real-time to all partners, solutions providers, and evaluators as needed.

At UALR, there is a myriad of expertise on the construction and management of longitudinal data systems. The College of Engineering and Information Technology's Information Quality program, a partnership between UALR and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), has been involved in the Arkansas Department of Education's (ADE) multi-year efforts to build and expand its statewide data system. In fact, the current director of the ADE's Arkansas Research Center is a recent graduate of this program. The Department of Computing Services brings the high level of operational expertise that comes from housing and managing the data infrastructure of an Internet 2 campus, one of only 209 in the country. The Institute of Economic Advancement (IEA) is experienced in building and maintaining similar data management systems for a variety of clients and can design a system that will ensure secure access, the ability to display both raw data and reports, the ability to edit tables and records individually, the ability to update data in bulk, and the reliable storage of the data. IEA is also experienced in conducting segmentation analyses and reporting results for population cohorts.

The Survey Research Center of UALR's Institute of Government (IOG) is a full-service center with expertise in survey development, execution, and analysis. IOG also has experience conducting longitudinal surveys that require tracking individuals over time. For the CLRPN, IOG anticipates having to create three new surveys in the planning year. Two will be school-based and focused on collecting the data for indicators measuring the attitudes and behaviors of students, parents, and staff in the targeted schools. The other will be focused on collecting data for the family and community support indicators that apply to all children in the neighborhood, not just the students of the targeted schools. While using a multi-mode total population approach

to conducting this survey was considered to avoid having to rely solely on a representative sample, ultimately it was decided that the expense of trying to survey more than 3,000 households with individuals under 18 would prohibit this approach. Therefore, a random sample of CLRPN households will be conducted. This sampling approach will result in the completion of no fewer than 400 comprehensive interviews with 400 households. Survey sampling of this nature will offer the project data with a plus or minus 5% margin of error.

For the CLRPN data to be useful in both the internal and external evaluations that will be conducted, all of those involved in the creation, management, and implementation of the data system will have to help tackle the complex issues of uniformity and synchronization in collecting and compiling “clean” data. In other words, data that consistently use a unique identifier for each individual to avoid duplication and that have clear meanings that will remain constant over time. Significant work will also have to be done to construct waivers that maximize both privacy and accessibility as necessary. Finally, to ensure that the effort can be replicated, all steps taken to complete this work will have to be carefully documented and then analyzed at the end of the process.

The CLRPN partners are committed to facing these data challenges and to working diligently on evaluation of the project with the national evaluator named by the Department of Education. Through the MOU, all partners have established their agreement to work cooperatively in developing a data-sharing plan such that all necessary evidence will be readily available for the purpose of assessment and evaluation. All CLRPN staff members will be required to commit to working with the national evaluator. Finally, the CLRPN Administrative Team will commit to working with the national evaluator to ensure that all necessary steps are taken so that the programs designed and the data collected for the CLRPN are consistent with

national evaluation efforts and that reliable baseline data are collected for both CLRPN children and a credible comparison group during the planning year.

Section 3: Quality of Project Services

The CLRPN will use umbrella programs as a key part of its efforts to create a complete continuum of solutions for neighborhood children. Specifically, the CLRPN partners anticipate that the results of the Needs Assessment and Segmentation Analysis will show the need to target more coordinated approaches in three key areas: school-based programs, out-of-school-time (OST) programs, and bridge programs.

Literacy, talent development, and teacher training are all areas of potential need that will require the use of school-based settings. While most existing literacy interventions in the CLRPN are short-term and target very young students, the scores of Hall High School's 11th graders point to a long-term problem. The Comprehensive Intervention Model (CIM) is a systemic approach to literacy improvement that spans the K-12 spectrum (Dorn & Schubert, 2008). Developed by UALR COE faculty members, CIM provides layered interventions in two waves. Wave 1 focuses on increasing overall literacy achievement levels for all students by the end of the third grade. Wave 2 (4 -12 grade) focuses on providing research-based strategies for reading and writing in the content areas for struggling readers. This approach would allow the CLRPN to target services for those students whom data have shown are falling most sharply behind in reading and writing. CIM has been implemented in schools across the country and builds on the evidence-based Reading Recovery program already implemented in the CLRPN elementary schools (U.S. Department of Education Institute of Education Sciences What Works

Clearinghouse, 2008). CIM could be implemented by a partnership between the LRSD and the COE in all five target schools of the CLRPN.

There is a growing body of research that supports the connection between student learning in the arts and a wide spectrum of academic and social benefits (Arts Education Partnership, 2002). These include increasing achievement in reading, math, and thinking skills, as well as enhancing student motivation and contributing to a positive school environment. For these reasons, integrating arts instruction into a school's curriculum can ensure that all children's natural talents are discovered. The A Plus Schools Program is a research-based whole school reform model that uses arts-based instruction to create enhanced learning opportunities for all students. It has been shown to have positive effects on both students and teachers, as well as at the school and community levels (A Plus Schools Program, 2001). An attempt to create an A Plus School Network in Arkansas recently lost its funding, but there remains significant interest in this program in the state. The A Plus Program could be implemented by the LRSD in all three CLRPN elementary schools in partnership with UALR's College of Fine Arts and CALS.

Improving teacher quality, the single most important school factor proven to affect student success (Aspen Institute Commission on No Child Left Behind, 2009), must be a significant focus of the CLRPN efforts in all five targeted schools. In its Strategic Plan, the LRSD has prioritized the provision of "intense, professional development programs for teachers" and plans to organize schools so that all teachers have time to meet regularly in Professional Learning Communities (LRSD, 2010, p. 8). This approach can be enhanced by the use of Pearson Learning Teams (PLT)—an evidence-based school improvement model specifically focused on guiding teacher collaboration efforts and building leadership capacity. It has been particularly successful in Title 1 schools (Saunders & Gallimore, 2009). Faculty members from

the COE have existing plans to implement PLT in a LRSD school outside the CLRPN during the 2010-2011 school year and could work with the LRSD to scale up this pilot in the fall of 2011 to include the CLRPN schools.

The CLRPN anticipates the need to create a system to coordinate the provision of high quality afterschool and summer learning opportunities to ensure adequate access to such programs throughout the neighborhood. Studies of OST programs suggest their impact can vary greatly depending on design, implementation, and staffing (U.S. Department of Education Institute of Education Sciences What Works Clearinghouse, 2009). Thus, to maximize their effect and ensure that the students identified as most in need have ample OST opportunities, systemic and sustained support for OST providers is required. The AfterZone model developed for the city of Providence, Rhode Island, holds particular promise for the CLRPN because its two distinguishing features address key local concerns (Kotloff & Korom-Djakovic, 2010). Its neighborhood “campus” structure allows for services to be offered at multiple sites while remaining geographically clustered to help address transportation concerns. Its focus on providing continuous quality improvement and professional training opportunities for program staff parallels existing efforts to address OST quality concerns in the CLRPN. CALS would take the lead on this effort as creating some sort of OST program clearinghouse is part of its existing plans for the new Children’s Library. New Futures would work with CALS to incorporate its existing work with the Arkansas Out of School Network’s YPQA into this system.

Bridge programs of the CLRPN will be designed to integrate more seamlessly school-based and OST programs at key transitional points in the educational process. The full-service community school approach of purposefully integrating academic, health, and social services has been shown to impact student and adult learning, strengthen families, and promote healthy

communities (Coalition for Community Schools, 2009). Yale University's School of the 21st Century or Family Resource Center (21C/FRC) model provides a tested blueprint for providing family and parenting support for children from infancy (School of the 21st Century, 2006). Its six guiding principles are as follows: strong parental support and involvement, universal access to child care, non-compulsory programs, a focus on the overall development of the child, high-quality programming, and professional training and advancement opportunities for child care providers. The flexibility of the model, as well as its alignment with the goals of existing early child care, health and wellness, and youth development programs at both the ACH and UALR's Children International, make it particularly suited for the CLRPN and would make it possible to target services very specifically for both individual children and families. UALR will house the coordinator for the Arkansas 21C Initiative as of Fall 2010 and could take the lead in implementing this solution, although it is anticipated that this solution would involve most, if not all, of the CLRPN partners.

The Youth Initiative Project (YIP) of New Futures for Youth, a gang-alternative program, was designed and implemented in Little Rock in the 1990s as part of the Annie E. Casey Foundation's New Futures Initiative. The Boys & Girls Clubs of America's Gang Prevention Through Targeted Outreach is a similar model that has been rigorously tested and has proven effective at providing youth with key developmental supports and producing positive outcomes such as reduced suspension rates and increased graduation rates (Anderson & McClanahan, n.d.). YIP is now a time-tested, city-funded, community-based OST program with a complementary school-based component that provides a Youth Intervention Specialist (YIS) to a limited number of LRSD schools. Expanding this program to more comprehensively serve students starting in the middle grades, particularly those the data indicate are most at-risk still in mainstream school

settings, could be of great benefit in the CLRPN. New Futures would be the lead partner in this effort.

Finally, for first-generation college students to succeed, research has shown that targeted, comprehensive interventions both before and during college can be critical (Tym *et al*, 2004). Components of such a comprehensive program exist in the CLRPN. Both Hall High and Forest Heights Middle School have offered the Advanced Via Individual Determination (AVID) Elective, although only Hall currently offers it. AVID is a program that has proven results in increasing test scores and student enrollment in advanced level courses (Hooker & Brand, 2009, p. 42). UALR Children International (CI) has a new, custom-designed College Prep Program (CPP). The oldest CPP students are in the 9th grade, so CI has not yet had a chance to produce results; nonetheless, its design attempts to incorporate many of the best practices of model programs including providing students with expanded learning opportunities that focus on increasing college knowledge and access, pairing students with mentors, and assisting students as necessary with supplemental tutoring and test preparation services. UALR's African-American Male Initiative (AAMI), launched in 2009 to promote the retention and graduation of African-American men, provides similar supports, including a peer and professional mentorship program (once students enroll in college). Preliminary results compiled by the Office of Student Services after the program's first semester of operation show that it has had an almost immediate impact on both achievement and retention as program participants were significantly more likely than non-program participants to have earned a grade point average of 3.0 or higher in the fall semester and to have enrolled for the spring semester. While all of these efforts show promise, with no structural links between/among them, what does not exist in the CLRPN is a clear and coordinated pathway from middle school through high school to college for students identified

by data as most in need of such guidance. Creating such a bridge program will be a priority of UALR in the CLRPN.

Section 4: Quality of Project Personnel

The University of Arkansas at Little Rock (UALR) is uniquely positioned to provide the leadership necessary to ensure the success of the coalition that will bring the CLRPN project to fruition. As Arkansas' only metropolitan university, UALR has at the core of its institutional goals "exceptional service through partnerships and outreach activities" (Anderson, 2005, p. 21) and regularly engages in statewide outreach. Two specific pledges contained within the UALR Strategic Plan, *Fast Forward*, underscore the sincerity of its commitment: "to work in partnership with governmental entities and community organizations and groups to solve community problems and advance the community in other ways"; and "to work as an active partner in revitalizing the University District, the area of the city immediately around the university" (Anderson, 2005, p. 23).

UALR's College of Education (COE), recognized as exemplary by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, has a long-standing history of working successfully with the Little Rock School District, as well as other LEAs in the State of Arkansas. The COE's Center for Literacy is a national leader in literacy reform as a result of its Partnerships in Comprehensive Literacy model, of which CIM is part. Unfortunately, the COE's Central Education Renewal Zone, aimed at providing ongoing, quality professional development for partner schools and LEAs, has not been approved for renewed funding from the state and will come to an end, effective June 30, 2010. The chief lesson learned from this experience concerns

the need to seek alternative funding sources from the outset, instead of relying upon the state, especially in difficult financial climates.

UALR's service to the neighborhood and its residents may best be exemplified by UALR Children International (CI), a child sponsorship organization that works closely with area schools, parents, and numerous partners to provide educational, health care and family assistance programs. Over the last 15 years, CI has served over 15,000 neighborhood children. In 2005, CI played a leading role in establishing the Future Smiles Dental Clinic. A collaborative effort that involved a team of 12 different organizations, this is the only school-based dental clinic housed in an elementary school in Arkansas. In addition, for more than a decade, the Friday Fellows Leadership Program, an undergraduate honors program emphasizing service learning and leadership development, has involved students in numerous service projects. Many of these have been focused on the neighborhoods immediately surrounding the campus. Most recently, UALR has become part of the Shepherd Project, a collaborative effort by select colleges and universities across the country to establish poverty studies programs with significant experiential learning components. It is anticipated that, when the program is fully implemented, Shepherd Scholars will be engaged in many community-based studies and projects.

Key partners in the CLRPN also have a strong history of commitment to the growth, vitality, and success of area residents. As with UALR, they are all also physically located in the geographically defined area of the CLRPN or have close ties with organizations in the CLRPN and, thus, have a vested interest in improving conditions in the neighborhood. Arkansas Children's Hospital (ACH) has been located in the CLRPN since 1922 and is the only pediatric medical center in the state and one of the ten largest in the nation. ACH has been closely involved with neighborhood schools, associations, and improvement projects and continues to

support non-profit organizations throughout the city. Similarly committed to local residents, the Central Arkansas Library System (CALs)—now the sixth fastest growing library system in the United States—has prioritized the building of new libraries in historically marginalized neighborhoods. The construction of its new 30,000-square-foot children’s library facility in the heart of the proposed CLRPN is such an example. New Futures for Youth, Inc., is a community non-profit created in 1988 to improve outcomes for youth in the City of Little Rock. New Futures, in collaboration with a number of partners, has managed the implementation of a wide variety of strategies designed to reduce youth violence and teen pregnancies while improving academic success, employability, and other opportunities for young people. The City of Little Rock invests \$3 million annually to improve life outcomes for children, youth, and their families. The City’s Community Programs Department (CPD) was established in 1996. The CPD has served as the administrative arm for programs in education, health and safety, youth development and training. These efforts were recognized nationally in 2001 when the National League of Cities presented Little Rock with an Innovation Award for the creative strategies it uses to finance prevention, intervention, and treatment programs that benefit the community, generally, and youth, specifically.

Since effective schools are vital to the success of the CLRPN, the Little Rock School District’s (LRSD) commitment to the project is critical. Unlike many school districts in other sections of the country, the LRSD does not suffer from a lack of funding: “State funding, combined with [the District’s] own local tax effort, combined with targeted Federal resources for special education and Title I, provide enough money to deploy all the strategies essential to [its] students’ success” (LRSD, 2010, p. 16). The LRSD and its community partners have well-established working relationships that, nonetheless, tend to remain separate in practice. Because

the CLRPN offers a comprehensive, evidence-based approach to improving outcomes for children in distressed neighborhoods, the LRSD believes that the project will strengthen its efforts to fulfill its mission; as a result, its often divided Board of Directors voted unanimously in favor of participation in the CLRPN.

As an institution of higher education, UALR is accustomed to gathering, synthesizing, and analyzing data for the purpose of decision-making and ongoing improvement. However, UALR's efforts with respect to data collection and analysis extend well beyond campus. The Arkansas IDEA Data and Research Office, housed in the COE's Center for Applied Studies in Education, is a partnership of UALR and the Arkansas Department of Education. It manages, analyzes, and provides accurate, valid, and timely data on special education programs in the state. UALR's Institute for Economic Advancement (IEA) is home to the Arkansas Census State Data Center, the official source of local U.S. Census data in the state. As the Arkansas lead agency, IEA promotes and disseminates Arkansas census information and data in various formats around the state. IEA also houses a Children's Research (CR) center. The CR is a primary source of data concerning the welfare of children and families in the state, including data used for the Arkansas Kids Count Program. In addition, for the past seven years, UALR's Institute of Government (IOG) has conducted an annual survey of racial attitudes in central Arkansas for the purpose of ascertaining the extent to which individuals of differing ethnic backgrounds hold the same or opposing views on a variety of topics important to the community—education, healthcare, crime, etc. Survey results are then presented in an annual Racial Attitudes Conference, sponsored by the Office of the Chancellor, to provide a forum for information sharing and thoughtful discussion with the ultimate aim of improving race relations in the community.

Given the University's commitment to maintaining existing and exploring new relationships with members of the general public to effect positive change, the Office of Community Engagement (OCE)—a vital part of the Office of Advancement at UALR—was established in 2001 to integrate outreach into UALR's culture. The OCE also facilitates opportunities for volunteerism and service learning among students, faculty, and staff. Furthermore, the University District Partnership (UDP), which grew out of the UALR's Oak Forest Initiative begun in 1994, is committed to the revitalization of surrounding neighborhoods to establish and/or maintain commercial vitality, public safety, and high-quality schools (Anderson, 2005, p. 53). The UDP's Educational Network, launched in 2009, is specifically devoted to increasing and improving educational outcomes for neighborhood youth.

UALR was a recipient of three significant community revitalization grants during the 1990s. First, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) awarded the university a \$1 million grant to be applied to problems found in adjacent neighborhoods. HUD then awarded UALR a Community Outreach Partnership Center (COPC) grant, and a follow-on New Directions grant totaling \$550,000. These three major grants firmly situated UALR as a major problem-solver in central Little Rock neighborhoods.

UALR's CI program, founded in 1994 as part of a Share America program and sustained for 15 years, is a primary example of UALR's ability to secure adequate funding from a variety of sources for an ambitious, multi-faceted program. Initially made possible by monies received from the Kansas City-based Children International, UALR's CI has garnered more than \$12 million in total grant funding since its inception. In 2008, UALR, as lead applicant, succeeded in securing \$13.2 million from ExxonMobil Corporation through the National Math and Science Initiative to establish and house the Arkansas Advanced Initiative for Math and Science, Inc.

(AAIMS). AAIMS is replicating a model incentive and training program designed to maximize the number of high school students passing Advanced Placement mathematics, English and science exams. Early in 2009, the Walton Family Foundation of Bentonville, Arkansas, provided an additional \$2.9 million to the program. As a result, AAIMS is currently serving students at twenty-three schools in various locations throughout the state. Most recently, UALR launched its previously mentioned African-American Male Initiative (AAMI) funded entirely by institutional monies. This initiative had such tremendous results from the outset that the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation granted \$150,000 to UALR to take the lead in establishing the Marginalized Males Workforce and Education Consortium in Arkansas—a project involving several colleges and universities across the state.

The ultimate goal of a number of projects either initiated or coordinated by UALR is to be part of addressing the complex issues related to race and poverty. Since there can be no social justice in the absence of economic justice, improved educational opportunities lie at the heart of many of these initiatives. Thus, UALR has considerable experience “implementing efforts similar or related to the Promise Neighborhood” and is committed to a philosophy that extends well beyond the present funding opportunity.

The Project Director and Key Personnel for the CLRPN are dedicated to excellence and intent upon the success of this project. Julia C. Hall, M.Ed., will serve as the Project Director. Ms. Hall, a Phi Beta Kappa graduate of Harvard University, has more than twenty years’ experience in education—as teacher and program administrator—including approximately five years devoted to WorldTeach. In the latter capacity, she taught English to teachers, students, and members of the community in a rural setting outside of Outjo, Namibia, then oversaw the expansion of the WorldTeach/Namibia program to include numerous sponsoring partners and

volunteer placement sites across the country. For six years, she served as International Studies Specialist at Dunbar Magnet Junior High/Middle School in Little Rock, Arkansas; and for five years as Gifted and Talented Teacher for the Benton Junior High School in Benton, Arkansas. Ms. Hall has been nominated for *Who's Who Among America's Teachers* on three occasions. Perhaps most significantly, Ms. Hall has extensive experience in the design and administration of innovative educational programming aimed at nurturing ideas, policies, and activities for the improvement of life outcomes—both as Program Coordinator for the Winthrop Rockefeller Institute in Morrilton, Arkansas, and as Director of UALR's University District Educational Network. (See Appendix B, p. 1.)

The CLRPN will also have at its disposal several UALR faculty and staff members with extraordinary experience and expertise in data management, education, social work, and community engagement. John R. Talburt, Ph.D., CDMP, will provide technical oversight for the construction of the longitudinal data system during the course of the planning year. His publications span nearly forty years and much of the essential development of computer machinery. As a result of the depth of his experience, Dr. Talburt has been invited to present his findings at more than sixty conferences and other venues—including the Intelligence and National Security Alliance (INSA) Board Meeting in Washington, D.C., in 2009. (See Appendix B, p. 4.) To assist in defining the process by which data will be gathered, compiled, and made accessible, the CLRPN will have the services of Jim Lynch, MPA, retiring Director of Institutional Research at UALR, who has more than twenty years' experience managing data for the specific purpose of informing a wide range of public service projects. Mr. Lynch also has a lengthy history of community engagement—having volunteered to serve as Chairperson of Little Rock's Racial and Cultural Diversity Commission, President of the Arkansas Public Policy

Panel, and two terms as President of the Coalition of Little Rock Neighborhoods. (See Appendix B, p. 27.)

The Solutions Team will have two leaders: Bruce D. Smith, Ph.D., Associate Dean of the College of Education at UALR and Professor of Special Education, and E. Chris Lloyd, LCSW, Ph.D., Assistant Professor in the Graduate School of Social Work. Dr. Smith has presented his findings at numerous state and national conferences, has conducted extensive research in learning disabilities and, since 1999, has been deeply involved in the Terra Firma Project: Teacher Education Reform Research in Arkansas: Forces, Influences, Roles, Motives, and Activities. (See Appendix B, p. 30.) Dr. Lloyd has served as co-investigator on funded research projects in collaboration with staff at both Arkansas Children's Hospital and the University of Arkansas School for Medical Sciences. He has a particular interest in the deleterious effects of poverty and maltreatment on the socio-emotional development of children. (See Appendix B, p. 40.)

The leadership of the Sustainability Team will draw on the institutional expertise of UALR's Institute of Government (IOG). Focused on improving the quality of government and nonprofit agencies in Arkansas, IOG faculty and staff have years of experience providing high quality public policy analysis, applied research, and management training to local organizations. Roby Robertson, Ph.D., Director and Professor of Public Administration, has a long-standing research interest in and working knowledge of public/private partnerships. His current research focus is on an analysis of how governance decisions are made across partnerships. Kim Evans, J.D., Director of the Center for Nonprofit Organizations, has worked extensively on capacity building and leadership training projects for the nonprofit sector in Arkansas. She is a founding

member of the Arkansas Coalition for Excellence, the professional association of nonprofits in Arkansas. (See Appendix B, p. 46.)

Tom Jenkins, M.Ed., ESD, will serve as a planning consultant working closely with both the Administrative and Solutions Teams. Mr. Jenkins has extensive experience designing, establishing and administering international school systems, mostly for American corporations in central Asia and the Middle East. He has received several awards for teaching, including a nomination for the Presidential Award for Excellence in Science and Mathematics Teaching. His practical knowledge of what it takes to create and run a high-performing school in difficult circumstances ensures that the CLRPN will have the level and type of expertise it needs to accomplish all parts of the scope-of-work it has planned. (See Appendix B, p. 47.)

Section 5: Quality of the Management Plan

Realizing that people are at the core of any highly successful organization, the management team for the CLRPN has been structured to take advantage of the many valuable human resources at the disposal of UALR and its coalition partners. Since genuine community engagement will be vital at every stage of this long-range project, community members will assume critical advisory and staff roles.

The CLRPN Advisory Board will consist of up to twenty-one (21) members: one resident from each of the seven census tracts, one parent from each of the targeted schools, and one representative from each partnering organization. This configuration allows room for some degree of expansion—while ensuring community voice by maintaining that at least one-third of the membership will be from the neighborhood. The Advisory Board will meet at least once a month during the planning period to provide guidance for the Project Director and Team

Leaders. The Advisory Board will also be asked to play a primary role in planning a State of Our Kids Summit and in cultivating an on-going community dialogue about this effort. (See Appendix B, p. 49, for a complete list of current Advisory Board members.)

The Administrative Team, led by the Project Director, will include an administrative assistant, a grant writer, a public relations specialist, and a planning consultant. In addition to conducting the day-to-day business of the project, the Administrative Team will coordinate monthly meetings of the Advisory Board, research and track additional funding sources for program implementation, and work with the National Evaluator. In consultation with a Resource Advisory Council, the Administrative Team will create a long-term financial strategic plan for the CLRPN. The Administrative Team will also be responsible for providing any assistance necessary for the three teams that will be created to carry out the scope-of-work for this project: the Data Team, the Solutions Team, and the Sustainability Team. Each of these teams will also have its own Advisory Council comprised of key staff members of the partnering organizations and other interested community members focused on assisting team members in carrying out their specific tasks.

The Data Team will be responsible for conducting the Needs Assessment, creating a comprehensive, longitudinal data management system, conducting the Segmentation Analysis, and consulting on assurances and privacy issues. In addition to the Team Leader, the Data Team will include a data expert from the LRSD (5% time), representatives from those contracted for required data services (collecting, compiling, and managing), as well as two graduate assistants from UALR's Department of Information Quality—the only such graduate program in the United States and one of only three in the world—who will be responsible for building the database. The Data Advisory Council will assist team members as they work with the LRSD, the

Arkansas Department of Education, the Arkansas Department of Health, and the Arkansas Department of Human Services, as well as others to ensure that existing data is incorporated effectively and can be made available quickly enough to be of immediate use to the solution providers.

The Solutions Team will be charged with finalizing the plan to deliver the continuum of services stipulated in this proposal, developing a process for seamlessly linking programs and services, compiling cost estimates for start-up and implementation of each proposed solution, and creating an internal evaluation plan for each solution. The Solutions Team will be co-facilitated by a UALR College of Education faculty member and a UALR School of Social Work faculty member (25% time) and will include one resident from the neighborhood, the Executive Director of New Futures, Inc. (10% time), and three graduate assistants. The Solutions Team will be assisted by the Administrative Team's planning consultant. The Solutions Team will also consult, individually, with the principals from the five targeted schools in the LRSD, and make regular school visits as they facilitate each school's self study and create reform plans for the schools in strict alignment with the rest of the planned CLRPN pipeline. Members of this team will further develop an internal evaluation plan for each solution. The Solutions Team will work in close collaboration with the Data Team throughout the process to ensure that solutions are aligned with the results of the Needs Assessment and Segmentation Analysis and are being delivered in a timely manner effective for their use both programmatically and for the benefit of individual students. The Solutions Advisory Council, including one LRSD Administrator (5% time) and all five school principals (5% time each), will assist team members in determining how to design and align a continuum of services focused on meeting the most pressing local needs while balancing community perceptions with the results of the data assessments and analyses.

The Sustainability Team will build community support and involvement in the ongoing effort, work with public and private agencies, consult on the accountability structure/contract for implementation, conduct the Impediments Study, identify ways in which impediments may be addressed, and document the entire planning process. The Sustainability Team will be led by members of UALR’s Institute of Government with expertise in public administration, public-private partnerships, and community engagement. Team members will include a resident of the neighborhood, New Futures’ Director of Program Services (10% time), and one graduate assistant from UALR. Students from the Clinton School of Public Service, as well as UALR CI/UDP AmeriCorps Members, will also be available to assist *pro bono* as the work of the Sustainability Team directly relates to and parallels ongoing classes and projects. The Sustainability Advisory Council will consult with team members both in developing and coordinating quarterly “town-hall meetings” in preparation for the State of Our Kids Summit—in addition to providing suggestions for sustaining and scaling-up the project.

All team leaders will have much to contribute to and glean from participating in the Community of Practice. Therefore, the budget has been designed such that each team has a travel allowance specifically for the purpose of attending Community of Practice events. This allocation will also make it possible for all team leaders to meet with the National Evaluator outside the State of Arkansas, if necessary.

Table 1 on the next page provides an overview of the timeline of tasks for the Data, Solutions, and Sustainability Teams. The Administrative Team will assume primary responsibility for developing a plan to leverage additional resources during the first six months of the CLRPN project and begin implementing elements from this comprehensive, long-term

[Table 1 will be inserted here when the file is converted to .pdf.]

strategy during the remaining six months of the planning period. The Project Director will work assiduously with Team Leaders to ensure that they remain on-task, on-time, and within budget.

As indicated in the MOU, the CLRPN coalition of partners has developed a common Theory of Action and Theory of Change based on Vision and Mission Statements that were carefully developed over the course of several months. Each signatory to the MOU has also agreed to align specific activities and resources with the proposed Promise Neighborhood project. (See Appendix C for details.)

UALR's Offices of Advancement, Development, and Research/Sponsored Programs have been consistently successful in securing and integrating funding streams from multiple public and private sources and fully comprehend the need to secure commitments from additional community stakeholders to sustain and bring the CLRPN to scale over time. Indeed, as indicated in Letters of Support, both the Little Rock Housing Authority and John Riggs, IV, President of the J.A. Riggs Tractor Company, have committed to providing a portion of the required match in cash. Mr. Riggs is a former member of the Arkansas Senate and former member of the LRSD Board of Directors. UALR has also received general letters of support from Buddy Villines, Pulaski County Judge, and Cory Anderson of the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation (WRF). As indicated in the letter from Judge Villines, he has personally ensured that the CLRPN will receive the full attention of the Pulaski County Council for Children and Youth Services Board—a coalition of public and private service organizations, businesses, churches, as well as other civic groups and associations. Mr. Anderson's letter attests to the fact that the WRF believes that the CLRPN project is in direct alignment with the Foundation's own strategic goals; thus, the WRF will assist the coalition by granting access to its own research and development capacity. (See Appendix D for details.)

Section 6: Significance

The University of Arkansas at Little Rock (UALR), lead organization in the CLRPN, has a lengthy history of successfully garnering resources to sustain and scale-up its programs and services. To further strengthen its capacity for strategic fund-raising, UALR will create a Resource Advisory Council (RAC) comprised of campus personnel and community members with relevant expertise and experience in working with entrepreneurs, individuals, and private foundations, as well as federal, state, and local governmental agencies. Members of the RAC will be available to consult with the Project Director of the CLRPN as she coordinates the partners' efforts to seek sources of funding for the future development of this project.

A preliminary scan of private foundations reveals several whose interests/initiatives make it evident that they should be considered distinct possibilities for Promise Neighborhoods projects across the United States: the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, the Braitmayer Foundation, the Windgate Charitable Foundation, the Carnegie Corporation of New York, and the Annie E. Casey Foundation. Two others have expressed particular interest in supporting projects designed to enhance educational and socio-economic opportunities in Arkansas: the Schott Foundation for Public Education and the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation. (See Letter of Support from the WRF.)

Although it would be ideal to find a major donor for the CLRPN project in its entirety, it will also be possible to seek funding to expand new and existing projects that will form part of the continuum of solutions. For example, in 2010, UALR received \$50,100 from Arkansas Blue Cross and Blue Shield for CI's Future Smiles Dental Clinic. The Blue and You Foundation for a Healthier Arkansas awards grants generally ranging between \$5,000 and \$150,000 annually; thus, there is a distinct possibility that CI can successfully apply for additional monies to expand

the services offered through its dental clinic. Similarly, new programs and services that will be integral to the work to be conducted by the CLRPN coalition may be launched with monies from entities with a particular interest in the outcomes they are intended to achieve. The CLRPN's inclusion of the invitational priority to actively engage children and youth in the arts and humanities may be of interest to the THEA Foundation of Arkansas—which has at the heart of its mission the importance of art education in the development of youth.

Indeed, given the scope of this project, it will be necessary to enlist a number of new partners over time to expand the continuum of solutions and reinforce outcomes. Potential future coalition members for the CLRPN include the Arkansas Department of Education, the Arkansas Department of Health, and the Arkansas Department of Human Services. Each of these agencies has the potential to contribute considerably—both in cash and in kind. The University of Arkansas School for Medical Sciences could prove a tremendous resource if it were to work in tandem with Arkansas Children's Hospital to ensure the health of all area residents. Arkansas Baptist College and Philander Smith College could prove invaluable in extending the reach of some of the CLRPN's proposed academic solutions.

The CLRPN partners will base their decision concerning preparedness to scale-up the project largely on the results of the Needs Assessment. Nevertheless, the severity of the challenges confronting residents of the CLRPN suggests that the best approach will entail deepening the work in the existing neighborhood as opposed to expanding the program model to new communities too quickly. More than likely, it will first be necessary to leverage existing assets and identify best practices prior to replicating the project in other neighborhoods—although the partners have agreed that it is ultimately their intention to do so. However, another vital component in reaching this decision will concern the results of the Impediments Study.

As stated in the MOU, the CLRPN partners are aware that to maximize the long-term effectiveness of specific academic, health and social service interventions and practices and create a true community of opportunity accessible to all children in a given area, certain systemic and structural problems will need to be addressed. In fact, certain federal policies, regulations, and other requirements will certainly impede the achievement of the goals of the CLRPN. These policies and related programs will become obvious as Promise Neighborhoods across the country present similar findings to the National Evaluator, but some are evident even on the surface. For instance, according to the USDA's Food and Nutrition Service, the 2010 WIC packages—for the first time in the history of the program—include vouchers for fresh fruits and vegetables; however, the allowance for children one to four years of age is a meager \$6 per month, and that for pregnant and lactating women only \$10 per month. Given that the USDA's own Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion has concluded that “positive effects [are] noted above five servings of vegetables and fruits per day” (2010) for every citizen at every stage of life, federal policy in regard to the contents of the WIC packages clearly places U.S. women, infants, and children living below the poverty level at a nutritional disadvantage during very critical stages of life. The implications of this single federal policy are far-reaching as poor nutrition can result in a host of physical and mental developmental problems and contribute significantly to childhood obesity, diabetes, and heart disease.

Inevitably, certain state and local programs policies, procedures, and other requirements will also be found to continue to create obstacles to the health, education, and socio-economic welfare of the residents of this neighborhood. The process of uncovering these will entail careful study on the part of the CLRPN's Sustainability Team, especially as the answers to certain crucial questions may trigger controversy. Fortunately, UALR's Institute of Government (IOG)

is accustomed to asking difficult questions and revealing the results publicly at the annual Racial Attitudes Conference. The most recent (2010) survey of black and white residents of Pulaski County focused on crime. Interestingly, the results showed that “both blacks and whites have more trust in the police in their local areas than in the judicial system” (UALR IOG, 2010, p. 23)—not that trust in the police was widespread among blacks, especially those living within the City of Little Rock. Respondents’ attitudes toward the police varied sharply and along ethnic lines: “Significant differences in results appear yet again between LR-whites and LR-blacks on this question, at 53 and 20 percent, respectively. In other words, LR-whites are more than likely to report a ‘great deal’ of trust in police in the community than are LR-blacks” (UALR IOG, 2010, p.24).

It is clear that addressing these sorts of engrained, societal issues will require resourcefulness and intense collaboration on the part of every member of the CLRPN coalition; nonetheless, UALR and its partners, all deeply vested in these neighborhoods, feel this is a challenge they can face and, by doing so, trigger more change than may seem possible to all but the most idealistic at the moment. Despite the fact that the philanthropic community in Arkansas is quite small by comparison with those in many other states, there is a distinct indication that even slight illustrations of progress will be sufficient to motivate its members to contribute. It is also extremely important to note that, even for the initial planning period, the CLRPN has already succeeded in enlisting the support of a prominent local businessman; doubtless, given adequate evidence of the possibility of real change, other members of the business community in Little Rock will be willing to assist in a project designed to promote, ultimately, the economic advancement of area residents.

As indicated in *Plain Talk*, UALR's meticulous 1997 study of the LRSD, the community as a whole must "decide that it is going to have one of the best public school systems in the country because that is what the children and the city both need" (Anderson *et al.*, p. 180). Despite a lengthy history of conflict and disillusionment in the geographic area targeted by the CLRPN, that decision has finally been reached collectively by the members of this coalition. In addition, UALR Chancellor Joel E. Anderson has decided that there will be an Institute for Racial and Ethnic Studies on the University campus—the primary mission of which will be determined at a summit to be held in July, 2010. While it has taken more than five decades, there is now tremendous momentum to confront the past and instigate real change. For the neighborhoods surrounding Central High, the time is right for the CLRPN.

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