

LIVABILITY LAB

MUSKEGON'S 100-DAY CHALLENGE

Business | Education | Health | Residents | Non-profit | Government | +More

100 DAYS

19 TEAMS

1 AUDACIOUS
VISION

Challenge Celebration

January 23, 2020

Reunite, Report + Refocus

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The Livability Lab Framework

Livability: *The sum of things that add up to quality of life: economic prosperity, social stability, educational opportunity, environment, and more.*

Lab: *A place for research and development, for innovation and risk-taking, and to learn and grow.*

Framework: *a set of guidelines or ideas used to help solve complex problems or create new solutions.*

The Livability Lab Framework (see diagram opposite page) is a useful tool that helps this community do groundbreaking work. It looks simple, but is loaded with information. The online version is interactive, each section is clickable and leads to data compiled from hundreds of community surveys, focus groups, and local and national reports.

The Vision is in the center, and the five Livability Elements surrounding it are areas that the community listed as necessary for a healthy and thriving life. Click on those and you will see the definition and status of each. The orange Community Conditions help us take action; these are things that need to be addressed to improve Livability and reach our Vision.

Find the interactive Framework at LivabilityLab.com

One Audacious Vision: Muskegon County Thinks Big

Audacious adj. showing a willingness to take surprisingly bold risks

To create the Vision, we collected community surveys, focus group responses, and reports during the past year. Many Vision drafts were sent back to the community for more discussion, and eventually the final version emerged.

While the 100-day Challenge process has been used around the country, it usually has a specific focus, for example: improving high school graduation rates. As we worked through the feedback, it became clear that the people of Muskegon County weren't going to settle for a goal that narrow. Understanding that things

are interconnected, residents knew that to improve livability it's necessary to think big. Business, education, neighborhoods, health, and more all needed to be included in this effort. This is a groundbreaking approach.

In Muskegon County, we've proven that we have the grit, the know-how, the work ethic, the heart, and the audacity to adapt and achieve great things, even during challenging times. We've taken great strides forward these past several years, we'll build off this momentum and continue working together to reach our community Vision.

100-Day Challenge Process: Define, Design, Do, Learn

While the Livability Lab Framework helps identify root causes that affect Community Conditions, it's the Lab's 100-Day Challenge Process that helps take action on that information.



Foster-Fishman, P. G., & Watson, E. R. (2018). *The ABLe Change participant manual*. East Lansing: Michigan State University.

The Lab creates a unique space where innovation happens. The mix of perspectives together with the freedom to experiment brings about surprising results. We call these results 'wins,' and when it comes to experimenting in the lab, those wins can arrive at many stages along the way.

For example, when you have made it several steps through a process but realize you've discovered a missing ingredient that will make it work better, it's a win to have made that discovery. While you might have to go back several steps, you now have learned an important factor that will ultimately take you forward with greater success.

In preparation for the Challenge Launch, local Coaches trained for the Process and how to guide Teams through it. When launch day arrived on September 10, 2019, a diverse mix of over 300 people from across the county attended. It was now up to them; if the Vision, Framework, and Process was compelling, they would be moved to participate. It turns out it was, and they did.

Residents of Muskegon County enthusiastically embraced the 100-day Challenge, and nineteen different teams emerged and began the important work of accelerating positive change. This work continues as we come together to celebrate with the Challenge Teams, and consider the next steps.

On the following pages are summary reports from each of the Challenge Teams. The Teams have all experienced wins in different stages of the Process: Define, Design, Do, and Learn. Some wins took a team all the way to their initial goals, some wins revealed additional root causes that need addressing before taking next steps, others found that merging efforts made the most sense. All have valuable Discoveries along the way.

We are grateful to the Teams for their commitment to the 100-day Challenge Process, and for sharing their stories so we can learn and grow from their time in the Lab.

The summary reports centered on five reflection questions. The responses are recorded here as submitted, allowing each Team's unique style and experiences to come through.

We encourage others to read through these summaries, and consider ways to support the recommendations through the next phase of the work.

TEAM 1 & 2

Neighborhood Association Council & Partnership Charter

What did we set out to do in these 100 Days?

Increase resident voice in local decision-making through neighborhood associations and establish a Muskegon Heights Neighborhood Council. Develop a Resident Partnership Charter to improve partnerships between residents and local organizations.

What did we accomplish?

- Met with neighborhood leaders; creation of Crescent and West Side Neighborhood Associations.
- Obtained neighborhood and council organization information from other cities.
- Drafted Neighborhood Council Partnership Standards.

What helped us succeed?

What Community Assets did we draw upon?

- Longtime residents in Muskegon Heights who love their neighborhood and want it to thrive.
- Build from existing neighborhood associations - Bethlehem Park and Woodcliffe.
- A Muskegon Heights resident is on the Board of the Neighborhood Associations of Michigan.
- Partnerships with Muskegon Heights Business Association.

How did cross-sector involvement help our efforts?

- It helped us clearly understand decision-making processes, we involved Neighborhood Associations, City Council, Muskegon Heights Business Association, residents, city developers, and local agencies.

How did engaging residents help our efforts?

- Our group surveyed and held focus groups, and included residents on our team.

What are our lessons learned?

- Ways to engage residents and identify key leaders.
- Steps to founding a council for higher-level decision-making and funding.
- Having a charter sets a standard how outside organizations can interact with the associations.
- Persist in efforts to reach your goals. If strategies to engage aren't working, modify them.

What are our recommendations for the next phase of this work?

- **What needs to be done next?** The Neighborhood Council needs to begin its work. Finalize Neighborhood Council Partnership Standards.
- **Who needs to be involved in this?** Neighborhood Association representatives and increasingly include City staff and others: agency representatives, churches, developers, business people, etc.
- **What support is needed?** Commitment from each neighborhood association, endorsement from the Muskegon Heights City Council and support from local agencies and foundations.

TEAM 3

Muskegon Heights Youth Initiative

What did we set out to do in these 100 Days?

Create a Mentorship Network to increase youth academic and cultural leadership skills.

What did we accomplish?

- Held focus group sessions with youth to determine how our youth initiative should be structured.
- Planning an open house in January to recruit mentor or community leaders to be a part of our mentorship network (Muskegon Heights Youth Initiative).
- Designed a one-pager, flyer, logo, and Facebook page for the mentorship network.
- Determined the demographic of youth (grades 6-9) our network should target.

What helped us succeed?

Involving multiple layers of community assets and decision makers helped us build a strong network of individuals dedicated to the success of the mentorship network. The Livability Lab platform and the work with the CHIR assisted in networking with group members and recruitment. We received support from neighborhood associations within the city of Muskegon Heights, and met with local pastors to gain additional support. Learned from existing boys and girls organizations from Muskegon Heights. Cross-sector involvement included faith, health professionals, and education staff.

What are our lessons learned?

There are similar groups working with youth in after school programs, but we learned there was still a need for a grassroots network to offer more than an afterschool club. This is explained in our one-page info sheet.

What are our recommendations for the next phase of this work?

- **What needs to be done next?**
 - Continue to recruit volunteers and hold our open house event to start to form our group of volunteers that will be used to staff our youth initiative for summer 2020.
- **Who needs to be involved in this?**
 - City leadership, school personnel, community leaders, churches, and residents.
- **What support is needed?**
 - Funding sources to help expand our network and sustain the initiative. Volunteers willing to act as mentors or instructors who will work with the youth.

TEAM 4

Aligning Economic Opportunity Resources and Supports

What did we set out to do in these 100 Days?

- To align economic resources and supports with the articulated needs of residents living in Muskegon Heights. This objective initially targeted the CHIR's Resilience Zone where resident interviews found that the work of local non-profits and employers must be better aligned to accelerate community and individual well-being.

What did we accomplish?

- To better identify specific barriers and opportunities to individual success, the Team reviewed data from the Mercy Health Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) and Social Determinants of Health data shared by the Livability Lab. Interviews were also conducted with two regional organizations - Black Wall Street and Muskegon Young Black Professionals. These interviews solicited input and recommendations for change. Examples offered included sponsoring "listening nights" where local entrepreneurs can learn from business leaders about the struggles of starting a business, toolbox items, and how experiencing failure can turn into a learning opportunity.
- Based upon this input along with review of source material and the identification of root cause barriers, the Economic Opportunity Team believes it now has a much greater understanding of structural impediments to resident economic success.

What helped us succeed?

- **What Community Assets did we draw upon?** CHNA Data, Black Wall Street, Muskegon Young Black Professionals, Home-Based Businesses, Muskegon Heights Business Association, Muskegon Chamber, GROW, Muskegon Heights Neighborhood Associations.
- **Cross sector membership** allowed the team to gather resources and make connections to organizations all working toward a similar goal.
- **Resident engagement** through surveys and reports (CHNA, ALICE) helped our group better identify specific barriers and opportunities to individual success and see what major causes are holding individuals back.

What are our lessons learned?

- Becoming aware of many informal/home-based business enterprises located in Muskegon Heights that could greatly benefit from small amounts of capital investment and professional mentoring. One opportunity is the establishment of microenterprise loans for these small start-up businesses.
- Benefit of aligning with the larger community economic development visioning process by the Muskegon Heights Business Association. Helping entrepreneurs can pave the way for wealth-building. The team views this work as the creation of a *transitional path to personal economic independence and well-being*.

What are our recommendations for the next phase of this work?

- The Muskegon Chamber has already identified a potential partner in this effort: Grand Rapids Opportunities for Women (GROW). GROW is a Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) serving West Michigan. Initially established to help women, GROW now serves all entrepreneurs. A partnership with GROW could establish a new local fund for small business loans.
- The team will develop a strategic plan that will guide future work, incorporate the input they have gathered, and explore opportunities to align additional partnerships.

TEAM 5

Coordinating Local Food Advocacy and Access Efforts

What did we set out to do in these 100 Days?

- Organize and mobilize existing food efforts in Muskegon County. Determine the needs of the Muskegon County Food System and help create access and education for good food for everyone. Create a one-stop place for resources, policies, questions, and projects.

What did we accomplish?

- Created a governance structure for the Muskegon Food Alliance, submitted for 501c3 non-profit status.
- Had discussions with potential organizations to foster the growth of the Alliance.
- Created structure of membership and sub-committee working groups: Healthy and Local, Green and Fair, Affordable and Accessible.
- Created a membership database that will continue to be updated, held the first kickoff meeting and board meeting, membership list expanded to over 150 members.
- Holding community convening event on January 29th.
- Working with MCC (college) students to develop logo and marketing materials.

What helped us succeed?

- **Community Assets** – Worked closely with existing local food groups. Pulled resources from Ottawa Foods, met with their members, and looked how their start up worked.
- **Cross-sector involvement** – Collaboration with the Lakeshore Fitness Center, AgeWell services, Pioneer Resources on access (transportation) to food, and surveying healthcare patients about their food access. Membership consists of Health Professionals, Churches, Education, Fitness, Law Enforcement, and Farmers.
- **Engaging Residents** – We hope to hold a community convening to learn about the barriers residents face.

What are our lessons learned?

- The engagement of residents is a key piece moving forward.
- Identifying barriers to help determine where sub-committees should focus.
- Putting together a new organization is a lot more labor intensive than what it looks like on paper, and politics are involved (more than people think). Food organizations are protective over their turf.
- Every person has a different opinion of what "healthy food" is and what should be offered.
- The importance of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion between the board, residents, members, and foods.
- It is important to have key stakeholders from larger groups.

What are our recommendations for the next phase of this work?

- **What needs to be done next?**
 - Make sure members can provide feedback and their experience is equally weighted as much as everyone else's in the room. Finalize logo and marketing materials from MCC students. Press release to spread the word closer to launch. Social media landing page. Finalize community convening meeting on January 29th. Meet with grant writer to finalize contract.
- **Who needs to be involved in this?**
 - Healthy Eating Action Team, Muskegon Food Hub, Muskegon County Food System Council, United Way Emergency Food Sub-Committee, Inclusive Leadership Academy (MCC), American Culinary Federations (Lakeshore Branch), West Michigan Sustainable Business Forum Food Recovery Sub-Committee, Legislators.
- **What support is needed?**
 - Support for an executive director; grant writing; sponsorships; resident and local organization support (buy-in); consistent participation from members.

TEAM 6

Strengthening Childcare Opportunities

What did we set out to do in these 100 Days?

- Create a cross-sector community team to address the community-wide challenges of affordable childcare in Muskegon County. Develop a business plan for a new childcare center.

What did we accomplish?

- Identified a critical need for childcare, and current challenges and a deficit of resources to address it.
- Childcare Action Team has been formed as a subcommittee of the Great Start Collaborative, to increase alignment and coordination with all birth to kindergarten efforts in the community.
- Childcare development coordinator, Kathy Sayles, was hired by United Way and will continue to drive the team's work.
- Learned about the process of designing and starting a childcare center from LARA staff and another recently opened community based childcare center.
- Researched shared services models and reviewed recent needs assessments to identify potential services to be offered locally.
- Identified likely location to host childcare center and developed business plan.

What helped us succeed?

- **What community assets did we draw on?** Relationships: Great Start Collaborative (MAISD), LARA/licensing specialists, Great Start to Quality, Goodwill Industries, local childcare (family, group, and center based) providers and more. Data: Community Health Needs Assessment (Mercy Health Project) ALICE report – (United Way), Pritzker Listening Sessions, Talent 2025 report, and provider surveys.
- **How did cross-sector involvement help our efforts?** Insight from government (legislative and regulatory); providers (family and group home and center based); and early childhood education and higher education team members helped. Workforce development data, and business insight on how childcare issues are a serious barrier. The Little River Tribe of Ottawa Indians gave valuable insight. Support of community funders.
- **How did engaging residents help our efforts?** Roundtable conversations with providers gave valuable feedback on what they would find most useful from a shared services hub, especially a substitute teacher pool, and administrative operations support.

What are our lessons learned?

- Not all providers want or need the same type of shared services supports. These services could include billing, financial management, substitute pool, HR solutions, professional development, and more. There are some shared services models (MELBA), but we also need a localized solution. Building the shared services hub with the providers, prioritizing their biggest needs will get the most results.
- Childcare center development will take significant financial investment.
- This work can be a real opportunity for workforce development.
- Advocacy will be important – and we can't do it alone.

What are our recommendations for the next phase of this work?

- **What needs to be done next?**
 - Finalize business plan for childcare center and present to organization Board of Directors for approval. Create a case statement for funding (why), including the shared services hub. Additional research and site visits needed. Development and community awareness efforts. Advocacy – a coordinated effort to increase the eligibility requirements (200% FPL) and reimbursement rates.
- **Who needs to be involved in this?**
 - For action team development and planning, additional stakeholders should be involved, including employers/industry, potential funders, families, and educators. (See action team structure plan). Other coalitions (Talent 2025, GSC) can be models.
- **What support is needed?**
 - Logistical support, marketing support, support of legislative partners, funding, data dashboard development, partnership with Chamber.

TEAM 7

Improving Intergenerational Literacy

What did we set out to do in these 100 Days?

- Create the conditions for initial, sustainable and dramatic improvements in the literacy of all people, birth through adulthood, who live in Muskegon County through the development of a Literacy Coalition.

What did we accomplish?

- Convened over 100 community members from diverse sectors to discuss newly collected data from both clients and agencies and review Read Muskegon's role as the convening agency for the coalition.
- Formed the Muskegon County Literacy Collaborative compiled of cross-sector membership from individuals/organizations who all face the barriers of literacy.
- Formed and convened the first two Action Teams: Public Awareness and Integrated Continuum of Services.
- Solidified the collaborative's mission and vision statement:
 - **Mission** - The mission of the Muskegon County Literacy Collaborative is to identify, convene, align and build capacity with partners who improve the lives of individuals, children and families of Muskegon County to radically raise literacy levels.
 - **Vision** - We envision a thriving, healthy, safe Muskegon County where low literacy barriers are overcome, enabling children to enter Kindergarten ready to learn, students to be successful in school, and adults to be prepared for post-secondary success and able to achieve a stable and enriched life.

What helped us succeed?

- **What community assets did we draw on?**
 - Utilizing the experiences of partners including shared best practices and resources. Recognition of opportunities to increase outcomes through community wide collaboration.
- **How did cross-sector involvement help our efforts?**
 - Involved individuals from the business community, libraries, workforce/jobs, philanthropy, and adult and youth education to help identify the group's direction and learn what barriers other organizations face related to low literacy.
- **How did engaging residents help our efforts?**
 - Resident voice helps to strengthen messaging, outreach efforts, development of action items that best meet the needs of the community. Importantly, residents will be critical in connecting illiterate adults to services.

What are our lessons learned?

- Reviewed positives and negatives of various collective impact structures and the work of the Flint & Genesee Literacy Network for inspiration. Identified that it was important to look at how the work is being done and not who is doing the work. Agreed on a foundational understanding of the importance of resident voice in the development phase.

What are our recommendations for the next phase of this work?

- **What needs to be done next?**
 - Public Awareness campaign to increase general public understanding of scope of illiteracy issues and connect community members to services.
 - Development of Integrated Continuum of Services to ensure seamless transition from birth through adult literacy efforts with a focus on family literacy and breaking generational cycles.
 - To focus with intention on those members that are new to community services; to level-set commonly used language; to adopt community organizing principles; and create a system of constant and consistent evaluation and mid-course correction strategies to ensure that as we move forward we are focused on our goals and remain true to the intended outcomes.
- **Who needs to be involved in this?**
 - The collaborative is always evaluating the membership roster to ensure they have cross sector representation. The action team is working on definition of collaborative membership including a rubric of representation and engagement expectations.
- **What support is needed?**
 - The Muskegon Literacy Collaborative will need full community support and engagement to dramatically improve our literacy levels including commitments of resources.

TEAM 8

Assess Housing Stock/Needs To Identify And Address Gaps

What did we set out to do in these 100 Days?

- Assess the current housing stock to identify the number and type of housing actually needed in Muskegon County to end homelessness. Create maps and visual presentations to tell the story.

What did we accomplish?

- Identified available housing and types and found gaps.
- Identified the # of homeless students.
- Create maps and visual aids to share information.
- Created a list of all the meeting times and locations of local government units (upload on Community enCompass website and available for sharing).

What helped us succeed?

- **What community assets did we draw on?**
 - West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission (WMSRDC); Muskegon County Homeless Continuum of Care Network, CHIR, County Clerk, City of Muskegon, Access Health, Health Project, Housing Commission, landlords, Community Health Worker, HARA.
- **How did cross-sector involvement help our efforts?**
 - We definitely had many perspectives at our table. Diversity of knowledge of housing and homelessness was varied and allowed us to fill in the gaps. It made you think about things differently when people asked questions. We all had different knowledge and it all worked well together. It showed us that a lot of the work has been done separately but not together, it was siloed. This helped bring the knowledge to one place.
- **How did engaging residents help our efforts?**
 - Bringing to light the real issues out there. Learn of the actual problems on the streets.

What are our lessons learned?

- There was a lot of information out there we didn't know about that was readily available.
- Finding housing is a labor intensive effort, very unique and has to be based on the individual.
- There needs to be resources to help with the process.
- There are barriers to obtaining housing.
- We have a sense of gained responsibility and have better understanding.
- It could be helpful to have an "Adulting 101" class/resource for those in need of support.

What are our recommendations for the next phase of this work?

- **What needs to be done next?**
 - Getting residents/participants involved.
 - Go to the city council and other municipality meetings and take the maps and the report and talk about the findings.
 - Work with the participants involved with the other programs like Family Promise, Muskegon Covenant Academy and Fresh Coast and empower participants to go to municipal meetings and advocate.
 - Have a plan or a recommendation when going to the Council meetings.
 - More preventative money to prevent evictions and other efforts.
 - Increase adult protective services for seniors.
- **Who needs to be involved in this?**
 - Family Promise, Muskegon Covenant Academy, Fresh Coast Alliance, Developers, Judges and Attorneys for eviction prevention efforts, tenants/renters themselves, case managers, emergency rooms, staff running the subsidized housing.
- **What support is needed?**
 - Make information more available of where people can go for help including increasing utilization and support of Call 2-1-1.
 - Funding/resources.
 - Champions in each community and advocates for each family.
 - More community awareness of the issue.

TEAM 9

Increase Financial Literacy to Promote Homeownership

What did we set out to do in these 100 Days?

- Develop the network of individuals and organizations that will form the foundation of support/training operations concerning financial literacy and home maintenance. The intention is to put people on the path to financial sustainability and obtaining/maintaining homeownership.

What did we accomplish?

- We convened representatives from housing, financial institutions, local landlords and housing advocacy groups. We collected local information on current resources that address financial literacy. We found that consumers are often unaware of resources.

What helped us succeed?

- **What community assets did we draw on?**
 - Information from local financial institutions, housing advocacy groups, landlords, MOCAP, Family Promise, and we looked at the role that Housing Counselors play. We considered factors that lead to eviction from rental property that represent barriers to financial and housing security.
- **How did cross-sector involvement help our efforts?**
 - It allowed the team to view financial literacy from different vantage points. We gained a clearer picture of issues and barriers that people face in achieving the level of financial security for home ownership.
- **How did engaging residents help our efforts?**
 - The perspective of residents is an unmet need for our group. We are beginning this work.

What Lessons learned?

- Develop a network of individuals and organizations that can provide financial literacy and home ownership support and training for residents. A large focus must be to get information about classes in place. Communication about existing resources for residents should be expanded. Need to create a space where residents can ask questions and talk about their unique situations so referrals and resources can be intentional and helpful in moving to the next step towards their goal.

What are our recommendations for the next phase of this work?

- **What needs to be done next?**
 - Align resources that exist.
 - Gather information from residents.
 - Conduct survey at the upcoming Show me the Money event.
 - Examine the role rental eviction plays as a barrier to future home ownership.
- **Who needs to be involved in this?**
 - Residents, financial coaches and institutions, housing advocacy and support groups, landlords, neighborhood associations, and residents.
- **What support is needed?**
 - Organizational support to complete the process of gathering information and forming a cohesive system to address financial literacy and homeownership.

TEAM 10

Identify, Promote, and Support Minority-Owned Businesses

What did we set out to do in these 100 Days?

Identify, Connect and Support Minority-Owned Businesses throughout Muskegon County.

Overview of Initial Project & Goals:

- Create a complete list of minority-owned businesses.
- Identify ways to connect minority-owned businesses with resources and with others.
- Promote minority-owned businesses in the community.
- Connect with aligned partners and organizations to refine and strengthen the work.

What did we accomplish?

- Began with an initial survey and outreach to local organizations. Our initial list was over 600 businesses that included people of color, women, veterans, and individuals with disabilities. After further discussion with the group, we decided to focus on specific minority businesses owned by people of color. The final list ended up with 160 businesses.
- We surveyed the businesses to identify ways to support them. We had about 14 businesses respond.
- We connected with aligned partners and organizations to refine and strengthen their work.

What helped us succeed?

- **What community assets did we draw on?**
 - We worked with local agencies, minority-owned businesses, Muskegon Area First and the Chamber of Commerce.
- **How did cross-sector involvement help our efforts?**
 - We connected with over 26 West Michigan organizations to help grow the list and work collaboratively.
- **How did engaging residents help our efforts?**
 - The residents we engaged were business owners.

What are our lessons learned?

- That there is not a list like this in West Michigan and numerous organizations are interested in there being such a list.
- We learned that while surveys are good, it is often hard to get people to fill them out. It is better if we connected one-on-one with people.
- We learned that it takes a lot of time, energy and resources to create and maintain any type of accurate database. It also will take commitment; we started out strong with 20 team members but by the last meeting only six team members were active.

What are our recommendations for the next phase of this work?

- **What needs to be done next?**
 - Follow up needs to be done with the businesses. We think that if we could get a team of people to connect with at least 5-10 businesses to get survey feedback that will really help us to the next step.
- **Who needs to be involved in this?**
 - Chamber of Commerce, Muskegon Area First and minority-owned business owners and anyone else that has a passion for this project.
- **What support is needed?**
 - Time, resources, and funds to do a solid promotion plan or contract someone to get the information that is needed.

TEAM 11

Foster Unity and Literacy with a New Reading Buddy Program

What did we set out to do in these 100 Days?

- Investigate the need for reading buddy volunteers in afterschool and early care programs.
- Recruit participation from interested high school student groups.
- Design a Reading Buddy Program that provides more read-aloud opportunities for young children, meets community needs for volunteers AND fosters unity and relationships among students across school districts.

What did we accomplish?

- Engaged a diverse group of student leaders.
- Identified after school sites for reading buddy volunteers.
- Involved leadership from other organizations including Pathfinders, Rotary, Muskegon Heights Academy, MAISD, United Way.
- Trained 17 students so that they can train their peers and be the first set of volunteers.
- Sent 6 volunteers to 3 sites (Paula Addison's Home Day Care, Nelson Elementary Afterschool Impact Club, and Kingdom Embassy Homework Club) for a Pilot Volunteer Week--December 13-19.
- Designed logo and identified United Way as a likely home for this initiative long term.

What helped us succeed?

We involved many other groups and drew on the expertise and framework of existing programs.

Cross-sector involvement and the **engagement of students from different communities** helped us truly realize the importance of the work we need to do.

What are our lessons learned?

- You get a lot of good work done when involving different perspectives, and just because we're kids, it doesn't mean we can't make an impact. We were pleasantly surprised to have adults and others take us seriously and support this effort. We gained confidence.
- Segregation and racism, as well as school rivalries, are an even more urgent issue than we realized. Although this project will focus on literacy and service long term, it is essential that we continue to foster unity across the county by involving youth from all school districts and working together as much as possible.
- Needs significant coordination. By nature, there will be a lot of turnover in high school students who both volunteer and take leadership roles. This needs to be taken into consideration. Also, there is more "paperwork" involved in clearing volunteers to serve with young children. Need a way to streamline background checks so only one is done and serves for all the sites.
- The children are eager for more interaction with books and older role models. This can make an immediate difference to the child even before we know the long-term outcomes.

What are our recommendations for the next phase of this work?

- **What needs to be done next?**
 - Meet with United Way regarding housing this initiative.
 - Engage student leaders and sites from outlying school districts, problem-solve around transportation.
 - Buy books, lanyards, and other materials. Launch program with volunteers serving weekly at all sites.
 - Explore a single Volunteer Background Check that could work for all sites.
- **Who needs to be involved in this?**
 - The existing design team, with possible leadership by United Way, and additional students.
- **What support is needed?**
 - Creative problem solving around transportation for High School volunteers. The work revealed the importance of finding ways for students from different communities to work together and to serve in communities that may not be their own neighborhoods.
 - Leadership from an established Countywide organization to oversee the logistics.
 - Continued support and leadership from youth empowerment programs.
 - Some early literacy training support and book ordering support from Read early. Read often.

TEAM 12

Understand And Address Local Workforce Development Gaps

What did we set out to do in these 100 Days?

Identify and Address gaps in workforce development and have an implementation plan by January of 2020.

What did we accomplish?

- Took inventory of existing workforce development programs and identified local job seeking resources in Muskegon.
- Some root causes are still unknown (mental health, substance use, hidden job requirements).

What helped us succeed?

- **What community assets did we draw on?**
 - Engaged organizations focusing on workforce development: Chamber of Commerce, West Michigan Works, Muskegon Area First, MiTalent, and Employers Association.
- **How did cross-sector involvement help our efforts?**
 - Involved individuals from education, nonprofit, healthcare, and business for a broader perspective.
- **How did engaging residents help our efforts?**
 - Attempted to engage local businesses, engaged with existing clientele from Fresh Coast, and in the future engage with job seekers via nonprofit.

What are our lessons learned?

- Difficult to gain information from employers, it seems like they have to know you or it's difficult to find the right person to talk to. If it is that difficult for our group to contact and find information about positions, then it must be even more difficult for job seekers.
- Our net was too wide and focusing on a certain sector (i.e. manufacturing) would be better.

What are our recommendations for the next phase of this work?

- **What needs to be done next?**
 - Moving forward, our group wants to narrow the focus to one industry of jobs in order to get job positions available, requirements, experience, etc.
- **Who needs to be involved in this?**
 - Muskegon Area First, West Michigan Works, Chamber of Commerce, Muskegon Angels, and Mercy Health.
- **What support is needed?**
 - Coach or staff person to lead a larger effort. Housed in a workforce organization or piggyback off an organization doing similar work.

TEAM 13

Create Affordable Transit with Wheels to Work program

What did we set out to do in these 100 Days?

- Create affordable transit by engaging local businesses in the Wheels to Work program, contact businesses and demonstrate value to get their buy-in to the program. Bring program to Muskegon where employees experience a barrier to work due to transportation issues; make transportation to and from work available through Wheels to Work 24/7 and 365 days a year.

What did we accomplish?

- Accomplished our goal of bringing Wheels to Work to Muskegon workers. On December 16th, the Muskegon hub launched and took its first ride! Our team recruited Tyson Foods and made contact with potential/future businesses. Hired two local Muskegon drivers and are holding a bi-weekly hiring event in Muskegon; will hire a minimum of six drivers and a site supervisor.

What helped us succeed?

- **What community assets did we draw on?**
 - KPEP (community based alternative to incarceration), 100 Day Challenge members, Hope Network, and the county administrator all helped in the success of achieving our goal. Members were from Talent 25, Hope Network, Muskegon GIS, and United Way. Transportation is a major barrier in Muskegon and the community was willing to offer support and buy-in.
- **How did cross-sector involvement help our efforts?**
 - Our team was made up of members outside of the business community, but still utilized our local knowledge to contact/advertise to businesses and market the Wheels to Work program.
- **How did engaging residents help our efforts?**
 - Residents are engaged via their connection to employers.

What are our lessons learned?

- Some businesses are hard to contact. Having and building a relationship with a business to show the value of the program and get their buy-in takes time, and they need to have interest in working with you (see our brochure with employer benefit statistics). Patience and persistence.
- The monthly cost to own a vehicle is \$409, and many workers are not able to drive themselves to work. They rely on other modes of transportation, but busing is not available to all people, everywhere.

What are our recommendations for the next phase of this work?

- **What needs to be done next?**
 - Continue working with employers who are close to signing on and hiring locals to fulfill the needed jobs in Muskegon; continue to grow.
- **Who needs to be involved in this?**
 - Local Muskegon businesses and workers. Businesses wanting to welcome Wheels to Work should contact us to expand the route of Wheels to Work in Muskegon County. RideWheelstoWork.com
- **What support is needed?**
 - Muskegon Businesses wanting to expand transportation opportunities for their employees.

TEAM 14

Prenatal Support

What did we set out to do in these 100 Days?

- Increase access and awareness to prenatal care.

What did we accomplish?

- By distributing a community survey, we learned about what barriers mothers face when accessing prenatal care. Learned more about what prenatal services are available in Muskegon, and our team worked with provider offices to get a better insight of what barriers their patients face.

What helped us succeed?

- **What community assets did we draw on?**
 - Connected with local prenatal care offices and members from our team to distribute surveys, collect, and analyze data.
- **How did cross-sector involvement help our efforts?**
 - Insights from Health professionals, non-profit organizations, community members, and transportation agencies help our group achieve our goal of learning what services are available and what services community members want to see in the future. We would like to work more with Great Start.
- **How did engaging residents help our efforts?**
 - Surveying expecting moms before their provider appointments and in the general community helped us identify barriers that keep women from attending appointments and accessing prenatal care.

What are our lessons learned?

From surveying Muskegon residents, we learned:

- Generally, women agree it is important to see a provider while pregnant.
- Women agree that prenatal care is important to their baby's health.
- The top 4 conditions/barriers are:
 - 1. Bringing other children to appointments
 - 2. Work (scheduling)
 - 3. Transportation
 - 4. Not comfortable with provider
- Things that would make it easier to attend prenatal appointments:
 - 1. Childcare services at appointments
 - 2. Increase bus routes & more transportation options/help for pregnant women
 - 3. Increase variety of prenatal services
 - 4. Cultural competence and educated on community resources for patients
- Women rely mostly on these sources of information on their pregnancy:
 - 1. Health Professionals
 - 2. Internet Searches
 - 3. Mom/Dad/Family

In order to gain more survey responses, in-person engagement outside of provider offices and attending events where mothers are would be a better way of getting responses.

What are our recommendations for the next phase of this work?

- **What needs to be done next?**
 - Addressing the major barriers of childcare, transportation, and work schedules. Advocating for provider offices to have at least one day of extended hours (evening or weekend). Encourage offices to have a form of childcare available in-house where parents can bring children to appointments, but not have to have them in the room during the appointment. Explore technology applications to connect moms with community resources and be a support throughout their pregnancy journey (i.e. Goal Momma, 211).
- **Who needs to be involved in this?**
 - Collaboration between transportation, childcare, and prenatal/OBGYN offices to expand available services to pregnant mothers. Partnership and collaboration between healthcare providers.
- **What support is needed?**
 - Support from organizations, agencies, provider offices, and community members to raise awareness of the free services for prenatal care in Muskegon.

TEAM 15

Create a Safe Space for Youth in Muskegon Heights

What did we set out to do in these 100 Days?

- To create a safe space for kids at Muskegon Heights Academy (High School).

What did we accomplish?

- Worked to determine what "safe space" meant: what we viewed versus how the students viewed it.
- Worked to gather input from the students by going into the school and conducting focus groups.
- Worked to identify areas where there could possibly be a duplication of efforts.
- Brought in other human assets that would be helpful in reaching the stated goal.

What helped us succeed?

- **What community assets did we draw on?**
 - Worked with both students and school administration as well as other local boys and girls clubs to see what is currently in place and used that information to work with the school to engage students.
- **How did cross-sector involvement help our efforts?**
 - Members of the team were made up of school administration, local community leaders, and health professionals that all offered different point of views and fresh ideas.
- **How did engaging residents help our efforts?**
 - Engaging students allowed the team to better define what safe space meant to them, which is essential in creating a space where THEY will find value.

What are our lessons learned?

- What we define as a safe space may not always be in alignment with how students define it.
- Safe spaces are needed both in and outside of school spaces.

What are our recommendations for the next phase of this work?

- **What needs to be done next?**
 - Help the students create a safe space in and out of school and within Self. External environments tend to be subject to change. Sometimes without notice.
 - Utilize practices that Create a sense of self. Western and Eastern approach.
 - Create a safe space in the Boys and Girls club (B&G) at Muskegon Heights Academy (MHA).
 - Create a safe space in the shared location with Team 3 (Youth Mentorship).
 - Develop ideas provided by students i.e. Chess Club.
 - Measure the effectiveness of interventions used in the B&G club at MHA.
 - Create a Controlled and Uncontrolled group.
 - Pre-test - Culturally Competent.
 - Utilize interventions by modeling and being consistent.
 - Retest at 3 or 6 months mark.
 - Revise approach if necessary.
 - Post-test Culturally Competent.
 - Analyze Data.
 - Synopsis.
- **Who needs to be involved in this?**
 - Everyone is an intervention tool. We are all integrated.
 - Community.
 - Students themselves.
- **What support is needed?**
 - Support from MH Academy to work with our group and listen to our recommendations of what the students are looking for and providing logistics to establish a safe space in and out of school.

TEAM 16

Increase Employment Opportunities via Expungement

What did we set out to do in these 100 Days?

- Create a public event that would provide an opportunity for individuals to have their convictions set aside with support along the many steps of the process. A longer-term goal was the creation of an expungement court for Muskegon County.
- Increase awareness of the impact a person's criminal history has on increasing their equity i.e. wages, housing, well-being. Increase awareness of what the expungement process requires for individuals needing expungement, and for those human service agencies that support them.
- Examining Root Causes: The team recognizes there are many societal causes for the numbers of people in the criminal justice system, our focus was on the small numbers of individuals who access the expungement system, estimated at only 6-7% of those eligible.

What did we accomplish?

- Creation of an event in January that will increase awareness, enter people into the expungement process, strengthen agency partnerships that support individuals and build trust in those systems.
- Increased awareness by partners of the need for advocacy at the individual level, to understand they have a role in helping individuals access the system, and the barriers that are placed in the way of those seeking expungement.

What helped us succeed?

- Involvement from Black Women's Caucus, Goodwill, Talent 2025, Public Defenders office, District Court, and West Michigan Works! The leadership and organization of Team Captain Kathy Rohlman and District Court Administrator Patrick Finnegan.
- **What community assets did we draw on?** Diversity of the group brought perspectives and motivations to the discussion. We also had the benefit of access to the Detroit Mercy expungement event organizers to gain insight and tools.
- **How did cross-sector involvement help our efforts?** Increased understanding of how we can work together across boundaries for a common purpose. It harnessed the energy of different motivating factors (employment, access to justice, social equity) toward the accomplishment of a goal.
- **How did engaging residents help our efforts?** This is an area we are still working on but we are using social media and more traditional media and marketing to reach as many people as possible.

What are our lessons learned?

- Community organizing is difficult work that requires buy-in from many facets of our community.
- Need more people involved who have gone through the process, would provide valuable perspectives.
- The process has more steps than many knew including awareness with other agencies and understanding why so few people apply for expungement.
- The impact of racism and segregation is large in this aspect of the criminal justice system. Larger than our group could address in this process.
- Many of the individuals in the system have been discouraged and rejected, and have given up.
- Lack of awareness by individuals who could benefit from expungement; the role of human services agencies; the number of steps needed to make an expungement happen makes it difficult to follow through to the end; a lack of trust of agencies and support within the system.
- Expungement court is a future effort; need more data from events; need an increased understanding of the new legislation and the opportunities it will create.

What are our recommendations for the next phase of this work?

- **What needs to be done next?** Public awareness campaign, legislation follow-up, data gathering, advocacy for individuals who can have their record set aside with employers, education programs and human service agencies.
- **Who needs to be involved in this?** Those involved in the process need a stronger voice, increase partners – especially employment partners, increase the involvement of the faith community.
- **What support is needed?** The 100 Day Challenge provided a catalyst for work that had its beginnings before the event. Access to staff support by the CHIR and its funding sources would be very helpful.

TEAM 17

Align Efforts and Increase Access to Local Resource Information

What did we set out to do in these 100 Days?

- Help reduce the resource guide and community calendar fatigue that is shared by area organizations. Further, the team wanted to develop a collaborative strategy that made sharing event and resource information and accessing event and resource information more streamlined.
- The team's original goal was to catalog all resource guides and calendars currently distributed in the community and to convene those making these documents. The goal of the convening is to develop a plan to meet everyone's needs around creating and disseminating this information.

What did we accomplish?

- Through the team process our plan changed and evolved. We surveyed over 140 community partners to learn how organizations currently share and access information about events and programs that benefit those in need in Muskegon County.
- We learned that many organizations shared the same frustrations regarding a centralized system for information sharing and many were familiar with 2-1-1 and expressed desire to partner with 2-1-1 to better incorporate event and time limited programs into the existing resource database.
- The team worked with 2-1-1 to make a recommendation to build a database of flyers that will be housed on the 2-1-1 website. The flyers will be downloadable, searchable and uploadable by organizations. Design for this database is already underway.

What helped us succeed?

- Team members were from Call 2-1-1, Sam's Club, United Way of the Lakeshore, Agewell Services, HealthWest, Muskegon Community Health Project, DHHS, West Michigan Works!, Hackley Public Library, Senior Resources, Hackley Community Care, Arbor Circle, parent voice and more! The biggest advantage was having 2-1-1 staff and board members at the table who were willing to make changes that would meet the needs of local organizations trying to adequately share program information and resources with the community.
- There are also several community relations and marketing members at the table who understand what rolling out something like this takes as far as communication is concerned. This will help reinforce the importance for agencies to upload to this system, once live.

What are our lessons learned?

- It's okay to start small. The team knows that the ultimate goal is much larger than just a flyer database but they also know that the infrastructure needs to be built to sustain a fully integrated system.
- Use of virtual meeting software is helpful for increased participation. We offered the meetings via ZOOM so that individuals, who could not attend in person, could still participate.
- Collaboration is key. Having the right people and right organizations at the table makes all the difference!

What are our recommendations for the next phase of this work?

- **The work is still ongoing. As for the immediate future:**
 - Build-out website flyer database.
 - Public education campaign is needed to educate agencies on the new site. The group can look to build a video tutorial to walk people through how to upload to the site.
 - Communicate (repeatedly) the new platform through the collaborative bodies identified in the team's Google spreadsheet. These include the CCC, Case Managers, United Way Directors, and others.
- **VISION FOR THE FUTURE:**
 - The database is just the start. The vision for the future includes one form that auto sends a notification to various calendars/groups/newsletters so that the individual is not publishing and sending information through a variety of channels.
 - Gather a team to start talking and looking at resource guides based on the completed survey. This would need to involve those who completed the survey stating they make resource guides. We obtained this information, but have not had time to dive in and start looking at resource guide fatigue.
 - Needed support includes a community wide effort to engage organizations in managing the new database and keeping it updated.
 - Further, a community campaign could ensue to let individuals in the community know about this resource including faith-based organizations, schools, parent groups, etc.

TEAM 18

Discharge Procedures to Reduce Release into Homelessness

What did we set out to do in these 100 Days?

- Develop and implement discharge procedures to reduce release from the hospital emergency department into homelessness.

What did we accomplish?

- Present plan to hospital leadership to get buy-in for changing procedures and request membership in or collaboration with this committee.
- Identify and onboard additional individuals to be on this action team, including members familiar with Muskegon's coordinated entry and members of the hospital and/or local PCMHs including, but not limited to, Dan Skoklund of Muskegon Rescue Mission and Shelly Evans of HealthWest.
- Review the hospital and PCMHs' current intake and discharge procedures.
- Meet with members of the Northern CHIR's housing team to review the intake/discharge procedures that were implemented in their pilot site.
- Identify procedures that could be implemented in Muskegon.
- Develop and present intake/discharge policies to the hospital, these will include Social Determinants of Health screening and referral to the hub.

What helped us succeed?

- **What community assets did we draw on?**
 - Drew upon the current processes and procedures of the Muskegon County Homeless Continuum of Care and their current development of a coordinated entry system.
 - Utilized knowledge from Muskegon housing partners: Family Promise, Every Woman's Place, Missions, Pathways (Hub), HealthWest, Community enCompass, Salvation Army, Mission for Area People, Fresh Coast, MOCAP, Muskegon Housing Commission, Muskegon Heights Housing Commission, Jericho Church, VA, VOA, Harbor Hospice, Long-term care (i.e. nursing homes), McKinney Vinto, and DHHS.
- **How did cross-sector involvement help our efforts?**
 - Partnered with the hospital, Health Project, Continuum of Care, and Housing providers to learn from their best practices and create a program that can serve the greatest population in Muskegon.
- **How did engaging residents help our efforts?**
 - Did not yet engage with residents directly.

What are our lessons learned?

- The current discharge process isn't utilizing our local network of housing partners and is not able to sustain the growing rate of homelessness in our county. There is an opportunity for collaboration to change the discharge process and improve in the areas that need attention.

What are our recommendations for the next phase of this work?

- **What needs to be done next?**
 - Train hospital staff on new procedures and set up follow up to ensure consistency and use of procedures, modifying where necessary for improvements.
 - Develop, report and present to the Continuum of Care that includes pre- and post-policies, lessons learned from this process, and recommendations for implementing new procedures in additional locations.
 - Educate the community housing partners and residents about the new process.
- **Who needs to be involved in this?**
 - The Continuum of Care and Health Project will need to be involved to help facilitate trainings about the new process to hospital staff.
- **What support is needed?**
 - Growing partnerships with local housing partners.
 - Collaboration with hospital staff and ER to implement new procedures.

TEAM 19

Reduce Inequities in the Distribution of K-12 Funding

What did we set out to do in these 100 Days?

- We set out to create more equitable K-12 education on a State level.
- Define a proposal to submit to Legislators to that end.
- Gather businesses, community leaders, and residents behind the proposal.

What did we accomplish?

- We have defined what type of proposal we want to create through a pilot program utilizing the School Finance Research Collaborative's funding model created through evidence-based research. We will work to build a campaign to gain support of this proposed program.

What helped us succeed?

- **What community assets did we draw on?**
 - We drew primarily on the assets and relationships of the MAISD. It was best equipped to facilitate the project as it has a significant amount of information regarding student populations and K-12 funding locally and at the State level.
- **How did cross-sector involvement help our efforts?**
 - Cross-sector involvement is incredibly important to our effort as, on a foundational level, having other industries lobby for education funding amplifies the voices. Legislators are used to hearing educators asking for more education funding, they are less used to business leaders chiming into the discussion.
- **How did engaging residents help our efforts?**
 - Initially, residents have little involvement as the Team's efforts focus on a high-level policy proposal. Resident voice will be more important once a proposal has been defined as it can help to create pressure on legislators to act.

What are our lessons learned?

- As the Challenge Team has primarily existed in the "define" stage of the process, it involved many discussions and opinions without necessarily concrete resolutions, which can prolong the discussions and decision making process.

What are our recommendations for the next phase of this work?

- **What needs to be done next?**
 - We need to collect additional information to define how much our proposal would cost.
 - We need to determine what type of cost-sharing would be required between local and state buy-in.
 - We need to reach out to additional State elected officials once we have a better-defined proposal.
- **Who needs to be involved in this?**
 - Jon Bumstead, Terry Sabo, and Greg VanWoerkom – at minimum. The more Republican support in the Legislature, the better our chances at that level will become. Their office's inclusion will help to draft language in both the Senate and House once we are ready to have legislation introduced.
 - The Superintendents for both districts currently proposed to receive this funding.
- **What support is needed?**
 - Business support will go a long way if each sign onto the proposal.
 - Local School District Support.
 - Legislative support.
 - Support for Muskegon Promise as its model is incredibly similar to how we want to do the local/state funding split during the pilot program.

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The Muskegon Livability Lab continues with the hundreds of community volunteers, team members, team coaches, and the following community partners:

Gary Allore –
President, Mercy Health

Troy Bell –
City Manager, City of Muskegon Heights

Jane Clingman-Scott –
Chair, Community Health Innovation Region

Mark Eisenbarth –
Administrator, Muskegon County

Mark Glover –
Treasurer/Secretary, Bethlehem Park Neighborhood Association and former educator

Brad Hilleary –
CEO, Webb Chemical/Heights Business

Todd Jacobs –
President and CEO, Community Foundation for Muskegon County

Erin Kuhn –
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Cindy Larsen –
President, Muskegon Lakeshore Chamber of Commerce

Kathy Moore –
Director, Muskegon County Health Department

Dr. Dale Nesbary –
President, Muskegon Community College

Mimi Rankin –
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Christine Robere –
President and CEO, United Way of the Lakeshore

Antonette Robinson –
Chair, Crescent Neighborhood Association

Lisa Sabourin –
President and CEO, Employers Association of West Michigan

Dr. John Severson –
Superintendent, Muskegon Area Intermediate School District

Kim Sims –
Former Mayor, City of Muskegon Heights (2015–2019)

Walter Watt, Jr. –
Mayor, City of Muskegon Heights (2019 -)

Jonathan Wilson –
Regional Manager, DTE Energy

LIVABILITY LAB

MUSKEGON'S 100-DAY CHALLENGE

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For additional information about the Livability Lab Design Team, Muskegon CHIR, Coaches and Participants of the 100-day Challenge Teams, and ongoing updates and activities toward the Muskegon County Vision, please visit LivabilityLab.com