

Safe, Equitable and Thriving (SET) Communities  
Task Force  
August 11, 2016  
Meeting Minutes

SET TASK FORCE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Stacey Walker, Mary Wilcynski, Alphonse O'Bannon, Akwi Nji, Dorice Ramsey, Dale Todd, Gary Hinzman, Leslie Wright, Rodrick Dooley, LaSheila Yates, Karl Cassell, Rafael Jacobo, Carlos Grant, Paul Hayes

SET TASK FORCE MEMBERS ABSENT:

Trace Pickering, Ben Rogers, Jenny Schulz, Okpara Rice, John Tursi

CITY LIAISON PRESENT:

Angie Charipar

CITY STAFF PRESENT:

Police Chief Wayne Jerman, Administrative Assistant Jean Novak

OTHERS PRESENT:

Jennifer Hemmingsen  
George Olmstead

CALL TO ORDER/APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

The meeting was called to order by Co-Chair Stacey Walker at 7:30 AM. Gary Hinzman moved to approve the minutes from July 11, 2016. Dorice Ramsey seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

George Olmstead presented comments regarding the RISE Program. The RISE Program is run by Fresh Start Ministries, and it is a program for people who just got out of the Linn County Jail. They are located at Mission of Hope in Mound View, and they have people go into the jail. They have people fill out forms and request group meetings with them in the jail and can also request one on one meetings. Navigators go into the jail and talk to them, and they are invited to come to them after they get out. They help them find services; they have job lists, talk to them about health care and referrals to mental health services and substance abuse services. A brochure was distributed.

DISCUSSION OF QUESTIONS:

Mary said that each subcommittee has a relatively solid working draft of the first three questions (purpose statement, what conditions do we want to change, and the target population). Now, we have to figure out how to make those changes happen. How are we going to address the target group, and what are we going to propose? What are the policy/practice changes that we might want

to propose? Do we have the right people at the table to help us with those changes? Are we listening to the voices of experience and knowledge, or those voices that would help us to think harder? Not only do we need to propose policy and practice changes, we need to try to figure out first of all, whether it has worked other places, or what evidence we have to try to determine whether our changes would work, and how are we going to know if it is successful in the long run. Mary opened the floor for discussion regarding these questions.

## SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIR UPDATES:

### Law Enforcement & Public Safety

Chief Jerman reported that the Law Enforcement and Public Safety Subcommittee began answering the first three questions fairly easily and quickly, and now the fourth question; a. and b. has driven a lot of good discussion among the subcommittee members in an attempt to identify policy and practice changes. They discussed everything from social media practices to state laws, and change will not come quickly. We are attempting to invoke change of some conditions that have been going on for years, if not decades.

Gary said that some of the things that they are looking at, and will include in the report, are initiatives that the Chief and others have worked on prior to this committee coming together. Some of the programs are offered by the U.S. Attorney's Office, and the Department of Corrections. Those programs have already been evaluated by other entities, and they hope that they would occur here as well. Regarding policy/practice change, the subcommittee discussed changing state law. In particular, they discussed gun laws, and why some people are allowed to carry guns. Obviously, the ones that they are concerned about are not necessarily the ones who are licensed to carry guns, but those who aren't. A discussion occurred that maybe carrying a concealed weapon should be treated more like drunk driving laws. The first offense is one category of crime, the second offense might be an aggravated misdemeanor, and the third offense could be more severe. This would have to go to the legislature for their approval, and then they would have to work around the Second Amendment rights, that some people feel strongly about in Iowa. They are looking at possible solutions to some very complex problems, but it is going to take more community involvement. It will take a little longer to come to resolution on some of these issues.

Chief Jerman has been working with the Public Health Department and, the University of Iowa, trying to come up with a way to study gun violence. The Chief said that he invited Dr. Pramod Dwivedi of the Linn County Public Health Department to become a member of the Law Enforcement/Public Safety Subcommittee, and he has attended one meeting. Dr. Dwivedi was out of town for the July meeting, but he and Chief have been meeting frequently directly in response to the 1 Strong proposal about the CDC study. Linn County Public Health has the resources and ability to conduct such a study that is being requested by 1 Strong. He has met with the University of Iowa College of Public Health and their Injury Prevention Center, and they have contacts with the CDC. Also, Chief Jerman was at a meeting with State representatives a few days ago, and the CDC was also present. Dr. Dwivedi not only offered, but is very eager to be able to conduct the study. Dr. Dwivedi has an epidemiologist on staff, he has the contacts, and he's agreed to do the study. Chief Jerman agreed to provide him with all the data that anyone would need to conduct such a study, and to also act as the liaison for the City of Cedar Rapids. The CDC study for the City of Wilmington, DE came through Wilmington, Delaware's Department of Public Health, and that's how the CDC generally will become involved in such studies is when a department of public health makes the request for that type of study, either from a state agency or a city or county department of public health. Therefore, Linn County Public Health will be conducting it, and the Chief will be providing the assistance and the data

that any study would need. Dr. Dwivedi was very interested in joining the subcommittee and being able to participate and contribute to the task force. Also, Dr. Dwivedi should be able to provide some sort of timeline; however, the study that was conducted in Wilmington was very involved. One of their recommendations is exactly what we are doing here in Cedar Rapids, which is forming a community-wide committee to review the causes. Also, the Chief said that while we have a violence problem in Cedar Rapids, it is not at the same level as the City of Wilmington, DE. The population of Wilmington is 80,000, compared to Cedar Rapids' population of 128,000. In one year, Wilmington had 157 shooting victims, compared to our 30. Also, the Chief is willing to accept any assistance that any study will provide.

Gary felt that the Department of Public Health would have to set up the study and the parameters of it, and what they are going to measure the data in. He hopes that they would set it up so that it could be longitudinal, and not just one study and done; but it would continue annually so that they can check the progression of where they are going from one point in time to another. Then, we can see if this group has come up with recommendations that do in fact get implemented because we think they are good recommendations. He likes the idea of Linn County Public Health being directly involved, because they can stay involved for the long haul. There's nothing to prevent them from asking the CDC to help review it or come in and provide some guidance if they choose to. Also, they are probably the entity that is most likely to get the attention of the CDC, if we ask them to visit our community.

Leslie said that she had the opportunity to participate in a community collaboration meeting when 1 Strong came and spoke to Public Health, and that 1 Strong raised some strong concerns that a locally facilitated study would not be trusted. Also, Leslie said that it's her understanding that the CDC is no longer funded to go into communities and do these studies. So, even if we asked them, they wouldn't be able to come, but they've expressed willingness to be of technical assistance. She hopes that we could find a way with the CDC's guidance, technical assistance, and objectivity involved in the project, that we could work through people's concerns about the truth being told.

Gary emphasized that we need to figure out long term solutions why young people are resorting to gun violence. Have a road map to help get them out of the hopelessness and despair that they think they have nothing to lose, and put them on the right track. These are difficult issues to work through. Also, he thinks one of the recommendations from the Wilmington report was to increase the level of job opportunities and apprenticeships in the community. It isn't going to be a solution that shows up in the first year or two. We can do some things immediately, and we have articulated some of those things that will show up in the report that are already being undertaken. But, to look for the result of what happens in Wilmington, or what happens in Cedar Rapids, it will take us a few years to start seeing some movement.

### Education

Paul Hayes gave the update to the committee. They are struggling with the same thing that the Law Enforcement subcommittee is struggling with in terms of the scope and complexity of the issues. They are narrowing and focusing their conversations on what are those things that are going to be most beneficial to the neediest students, focusing on all youth of color and all youth of poverty. At some point, once they have the data and the measures that they know will impact the open engagement that they want to prove, they will be narrowing those numbers down a little bit and then focusing and changing the scope of who we are trying to impact. They are exploring ideas and throwing some things out there about programming and policy around attendance and discipline and looking at those things and who are they impacting now? Who is not impacted by that, and how can

they change those to improve that open engagement for the students that they want to change? The process that they are using is a very open conversation structured by the questions. They started looking at a backwards design and looking at how are they going to know when they are successful. Their next step in the process is asking, what's out there? What are we currently doing? Are there things that require some tweaking to policy and procedures so that they can start honing in on those things that are going to be most impactful and the things that we can do right now, and then long-term.

Akwi mentioned that some of the programs that have been in the schools for years have been important and effective; however, funding for these resources have been cut.

Stacey said the question of funding for resources always comes down to prioritization. If the Education Subcommittee feels that a particular program is the best way to close the achievement gap, then perhaps our report could be forceful enough to cause the decision makers to find a way to fund this. This is true for all the subcommittees, to go to bat and advocate for something. In the Law Enforcement and Public Safety Subcommittee, they had a long discussion on the Shall Issue Law. If you get enough people on the same page applying enough pressure, we can have some sort of impact.

Paul mentioned that they are looking at their attendance policy, but it is not work of this subcommittee; it's already work that's being done. They can look at that data and see how many kids it is impacting.

Mary said that both groups did a lot of "brainstorming", where they would just throw ideas up and didn't evaluate them. Sometimes, we box ourselves in to what we already know, or what we think is feasible, and both committees said feasible or not, let's put it on the board. Maybe that's where we need to start in the policies and practices questions.

Stacey also encourages the brainstorming process, because this is the stage where we are developing recommendations. Imagine you're the governor, the mayor, or whoever the big decision maker is, and you need to solve this problem, what do you do? Paul felt that it's important to check your ego at the door, and let go of prior knowledge or territorial knowledge of things, and being open to those new ideas.

LaSheila mentioned that the school district should be working with Kirkwood with their Workplace Learning Program. She also wondered if the RISE group is connected with the Sixth Judicial District's re-entry coordinator. Mary said that one of the biggest challenges is to figure out how to connect those dots, so that we don't have pockets and silos of effort, and we are knowledgeable about how to use each other's programs that are already in place. Gary said that the RISE Program was really created by the Sixth Judicial District through its foundation. The foundation no longer exists, but the two organizations do work together.

Leslie described a cross-sector group that started in Ohio called Strive, and they have a pathway visual from birth to work. They highlight the key milestones for kids, both from a learning perspective, and from a family, social, and emotional perspective. Part of the challenge we have is how do we help people have seamless pathways, so that it doesn't become a burden on the family and the community to try to find all the pieces that they need. She will send this information out.

Stacey said that we can collect as much information as we can, but it's nearly impossible for us to be experts in every program. Each one of us is going to have institutional knowledge about several different programs. Also, Mary felt that informational brochures can be out of date before they're printed.

Al felt that we need true collaboration among agencies. Are we really trying to push kids into programs, or are we trying to hold on to them because the numbers will affect us? Dorice agreed that non-profits can't operate in a silo, and that they all need to connect to each other. When they hand off a child, how do we track that? How do we know that a difference is being made in that child's life? How do we envision some type of system where we can actually track the progress of children as they go through this type of program or services? How do we know if we are significantly making an impact? We have to do a better job as a community, as a non-profit, in tracking the progress.

Leslie mentioned a project that's in development; called a SIM (State Innovation Model) grant that Public Health is working on. A key component of this is the technology system similar to something that Four Oaks uses for one of their programs. It is a database that can track and be shared by many, and all of records are attached to a parent or a child. Leslie cited, as an example, an agency in north Minneapolis, with primarily families of color in a neighborhood with tremendous challenges with violence. They use a data system like this where they engage with parents and ask questions such as would you like your child to graduate from high school, because in that neighborhood, less than 1 out of 3 kids are graduating from high school. They use the system so that more than 40 different partners can collaborate and learn from each other for the benefit of the family; not for the benefit of the agency. The parents set goals based on what they believe are the things that are going to be successful in parenting and help their kids be successful. Then the organizations align in service to that. It would allow for connectivity.

In order to have the right people at the table, Mary feels that we need to make sure that we continue to bring people in that are already engaged in some of this work. Also, we need to think and brainstorm way past what we would normally maybe do. Then, bring ourselves back to reality as we begin to forge policy and practice changes and move on.

Regarding the need for structure around how you move a child through all of these areas, Rod felt that this can't be left to the committee to implement. Gary said that we may not be able to put the structure in place, but it could be a major recommendation of the group. Leslie suggested having a smaller group of people willing to look at this, and then bring it back to this larger group.

In regard to programming or drawing in some of the connections to bring people together who are working on the same effort, LaSheila mentioned that Civil Rights can help refer information regarding the offender re-entry program. Also, she recently learned about a program called Creating Futures at Kirkwood College which works with kids who are 16 – 21. For those in the school system, they can tap into the Workplace Learning Center connection and IOWA BIG.

In regard to the education piece, Dale mentioned one of the most beneficial and most eye opening things he has done to date is meeting with 7 kids from Washington High School. Of the 7, 6 of them were from Chicago. If we could somehow replicate that model in some of the other schools, and interface throughout the year, he feels it would be a good opportunity to get good insight from kids at the other high schools.

Al said that he has been to several committee events, and he has not seen other members of the Task Force there. Leslie said that there needs to be advance communication of the events. So everyone is aware of the events.

### Programming

Dorice said that their subcommittee has been tasked with looking at programs from the cradle to being successful adults, auditing all the programs that are in the community and figuring out a way to catalogue, i.e., list all the programs. The list has to be dynamic and fluid because everything changes. They will send it out on Google sheet to everyone. They will then populate the spreadsheet with all the programs, and analyze the gaps where there are no programs. They are trying to figure out the best format and how to house all this information. 211 can be difficult if you don't know specifically what you are asking for. She feels we need an investment by the city to make sure that they're providing some type of programming, because it's falling on non-profits, and non-profits have to compete for funding.

Akwi mentioned that once we have the catalogue, if there's a way to provide some sort of incentive program for parents, where parents look at all these options and get their child connected with these programs and have their goals mapped out. Rod said that they did talk about that in the subgroup as well as to make sure that they are pro-active and communicating those things to the target audiences.

Gary said that many years ago, funding was put into a pool of money, and the neighborhood associations could draw on that money and form their own board of directors and vote on proposals. If somebody had a concern in the neighborhood and wanted a program, they could get the funding to do it. Funding might come from the City, the United Way, Iowa Department of Public Health, etc.

Awki mentioned that in order to belong to an after school program, the student has to meet certain behavioral and academic requirements to get into the program. She wonders how many other programs have similar requirements that keep out some of the kids who need it most. She feels that this is something that needs to be addressed because the kids who are out on the streets need to be involved in these programs. Leslie said that this touches on the policy and practice change.

### Economic Opportunities Subcommittee

Carlos discussed and distributed copies of the updated Economic Opportunities Subcommittee worktable:

#### Worktable for SET Task Force

Economic Opportunities	Develop a comprehensive communication plan that connects targeted (at-risk) individuals in an employment gap with resources designed to provide meaningful skills, training and certifications that lead to gainful employment in existing high quality jobs.
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<p>Conditions To Change</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•• Low quantity of qualified candidates for the current job market tied to gaps in proficiency skills.</li> <li>•• Current disconnect with job placement efforts, despite high wage options</li> <li>•• Barrier with getting potential candidates through the initial screening processes.</li> <li>•• Principals, teachers and school counselors are not completely competent with the various career training programs to include KPACE (Kirkwood Pathways for Academic Career Education and Employment) and other Industry Sector Boards.</li> <li>• Low quantity of paid internships for high school and college students.</li> <li>• Lack of visibility for mid-size companies in their attempt to market paid internships and apprenticeships to students.</li> </ul>
<p>For Whom</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High School Students</li> <li>• Underemployed Adults</li> <li>• Unemployed Adults</li> <li>• Out of School Youth (<i>age 18-25</i>)</li> </ul>

Conditions To Change	Policy Change	Practice Change
<p>Low quantity of qualified candidates for the current job market tied to gaps in proficiency skills.</p>	<p>CRCSO's current policy linked to Career Education states students will be infused into all levels of the instructional program. Components should include, but not be limited to, awareness of self in relation to others and the needs of society, experiences in personal decision-making, and exploration of employment opportunities. Experiences will be designed to foster work skills and work ethic. As a part of career education, the administration is authorized to develop and offer educational activities in which students participate directly in the development and demonstration of various products, services, and skills.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Adhere to House File 2392             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. School districts need to develop a career and academic plan for all eight graders based on career guidance and development standards.</li> <li>b. Districts choose career information system from a list of vendors who meet career guidance and development standards.</li> <li>c. Districts establish a team of</li> </ol> </li> </ol>

	<p>A comprehensive guidance program will assist in the dissemination of career information. Community representatives may provide information or instruction to individual students or groups of students during school hours upon the authorization of the appropriate administrator. The Board may periodically review the means by which career education is integrated into the guidance and instructional programs</p>	<p>personnel (principals, teachers, counselors) to help every student develop a career and academic plan.</p> <p>CTE Redesign Plan</p>
<p>Current disconnect with job placement efforts, despite high wage options</p>		<p><a href="http://www.exolorepace.org">www.exolorepace.org</a></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Navigator that links resources with potential candidates and high school dropouts.</li> <li>2. <a href="http://www.ace1mentor.org">http://www.ace1mentor.org</a></li> </ol>
<p>Barrier with getting potential candidates through the initial screening processes.</p>		

<p>Principals, teachers and school counselors are not completely competent with the various career training programs to include KPACE (Kirkwood Pathways for Academic Career Education and Employment) and other Industry Sector Boards.</p>	<p>CRCSD's current policy linked to Career Education states students will be infused into all levels of the instructional program. Components should include, but not be limited to, awareness of self in relation to others and the needs of society, experiences in personal decision making, and exploration of employment opportunities. Experiences will be designed to foster work skills and work ethic. As a part of career education, the administration is authorized to develop and offer educational activities in which students participate directly in the development and demonstration of various products, services, and skills. A comprehensive guidance program will assist in the dissemination of career</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Align practices to the standing school board CTE policy. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Active recruitment of students into KPACE.</li> <li>b. Active, positive marketing of the advantages of such programming.</li> <li>c. Celebrate KPACE success equivalent to current celebration around Advance Placement (AP) programming</li> </ol> </li>   <li>2. Adhere to House File 2392 <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. School districts need to develop a career and</li> </ol> </li> </ol>
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	<p>information. Community representatives may provide information or instruction to individual students or groups of students during school hours upon the authorization of the appropriate administrator. The Board may periodically review the means by which career education is integrated into the guidance and instructional programs</p>	<p>academic plan for all eighth graders based on career guidance and development standards.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>b. Districts choose career information system from a list of vendors who meet career guidance and development standards.</li> <li>c. Districts establish a team of personnel (principals, teachers, counselors) to help every student develop a career and academic plan.</li> </ul>
<p>Low quantity of paid internships for high school and college students.</p>		
<p>Lack of visibility for mid-size companies in their attempt to market paid internships and apprenticeships to students.</p>		

Another thing they will be looking at is how can they get potential job candidates who have criminal backgrounds through the job screening process; i.e., banning the box.

### Housing

The Housing Subcommittee is comprised of landlords, service providers, and City staff; and there is a shortage of affordable housing in Linn County. The reason why developers don't develop affordable housing is because there are a lot of complicated tenants with a lot of challenges. Even if tenants have Section 8 vouchers and/or several means to pay rent, from a

marketing and economic development perspective, they are a good candidate for a landlord to take a chance on. There is a disconnect, and not a way to provide these tenants with supportive services that would help ease the angst on the part of the landlord and law enforcement. They analyzed nuisance abatement calls over the last two years, and they believe that the program has been very beneficial to helping to stabilize core neighborhoods. They are going to suggest concentrating on the worst offenders (10% of the worst landlords). At the same time, it's not just these landlords that are causing the problems, there's also about 10% of the tenant-based population that needs help and doesn't understand the law and their responsibilities. Waypoint has a program called the Tenant Academy, with 9 hours of classroom based activity that provides education about managing money, paying rent, things that will get someone evicted, and things that are the landlord's responsibility and the tenant's responsibility. They would like to see a program like this ramped up, and maybe a more collaborative model that works with other service providers. Waypoint provides housing for domestic abuse victims who often end up getting evicted.

Karl brought up for discussion access to Section 8 housing, as well as the need to work with the policy makers who have made terrible policy decisions, which have a terrible impact on people, and unjust evictions. Dale mentioned that the Department of Justice has sent out new guidelines on what are grounds to refuse to rent to someone. Karl felt that there is a way to get around that by just being politically correct. The ones being rejected do not have the political and economic means to advocate for themselves to do that.

Leslie would like to see the eviction data. Also, there are those who don't have criminal backgrounds who would like to move out of a neighborhood, but can't because they are afraid of losing what they have. They need flexibility so they can choose the neighborhoods they would like to live in. Also, regarding evictions, some African immigrants or refugees are not equipped with the information to understand whether they are actually being evicted. Mary agreed, if they are not being evicted, they could be pushed out or bullied out. Dale mentioned that they have a representative from Iowa Legal Aid on our task force.

Gary felt that a statement probably needs to be made about permissive bans to housing that might allow more people to qualify.

LaSheila said that the Civil Rights Commission has the authority to look at impact in adverse impact cases based on criminal background. They are now more sophisticated in their techniques because of the guidance they have received from HUD and DOJ. When someone feels they were denied because of their criminal background, they will look at particular populations based on race and maybe even mental disability. It has impact because it cascades across different groups. Having the guidance allows their investigators to not deny just on its face, because it's a criminal background, but they can look at state and local data to show that these individuals have a disproportionate incarceration rate so therefore it may have a negative impact on having housing problems.

### Community Outreach

Karl reported that Horizons is going to take 8 to 10 people and conduct some Kitchen Table Conversations in the next two weeks.

Akwi reported that the non-profit agency, the Hook, is trying to come up with some new programming to launch this fall. One of the things that they came up with is called the Living Room Series. The idea is that monthly they will have an evening scheduled where there are two components to it. There's dinner and then storytelling. 20 – 25 people are invited to one location (maybe someone's home, Diversity Focus office, etc.) and dinner is served and then people just tell stories of their experiences of living in Cedar Rapids. The idea is that they are building a sense of community, by getting 20 to 25 people together who may not otherwise find themselves in the same room at the same time, with different ages from different backgrounds. They are trying to figure out how to finance the meals. If the cost is \$20 to \$25 per ticket that would clearly eliminate some people. They would offer scholarships or encourage a business to buy 20 tickets, and then they would randomly pick 20 members from the community to be involved. It is similar to some of the conversations that other groups are trying to have as a community. They will focus on very informally telling or sharing stories. It serves the mission of the Hook, which relies on the belief that when we tell our stories that's how outsiders become insiders. When we tell our stories, that's how we engage with one another.

LaSheila mentioned that the Civil Rights Commission is partnering with the African American Museum, Diversity Focus, Human League Change, Flow Media, etc. for a series of authentic story telling where people can share their experiences. It is called Legacies and the first talk is going to be on September 22<sup>nd</sup> at the Library. It will focus on African American women, mentorship for black youth, and how grief matters. Also presented will be Leadership Challenge. The series will be quarterly, and it will be available through Flow Media to hear different stories and perspectives. She said that they can share that information with the programs committee to see if maybe there's an interest.

Stacey mentioned that the subcommittee chairs should be inviting him, Mary and Jennifer to their meetings. Akwi would like to see some sort of a calendar or email which contains all the upcoming events, so the members will have advance notice and can attend as many events as possible. Chief Jerman mentioned that on August 15<sup>th</sup>, there will be an event with Big Bang, which is a group of young men at the Amphitheatre, and then the last Sunday of this month and next month is Stop the Violence activities at Redmond Park from 2:00 to 8:00. Al reported this Saturday at Oak Hill Jackson Church is the Back to School Bash.

#### ADJOURN:

The Task Force will be returning to its normal meeting date/time of the first Thursdays of each month at 7:30 a.m. at the City Services Center. The meeting adjourned at 9:40 AM.

*Respectfully submitted,  
Jean Novak*