

## Overview of Promise Neighborhood Initiative Proposal for Austin, TX

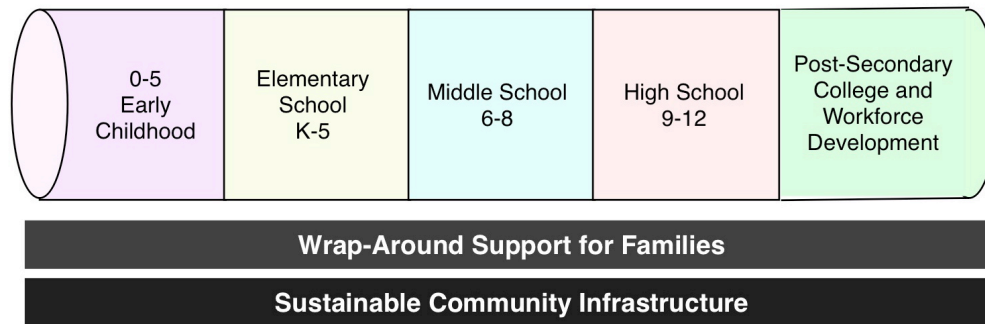
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The Obama administration is developing the Promise Neighborhood initiative, through the Dept. of Education, to replicate the successful Harlem Children's Zone model in 20 cities. An RFP for a \$500,000 planning grant will be released in November/December with awards early in 2010. Cities successfully completing the planning phase will then be eligible for 10-year federal grants (based on 50% municipal/private match) to take their projects to scale.

**Core Mission/Purpose:** The Promise Neighborhoods program seeks to provide children in poverty with every possible chance to succeed through the combined development of high-quality, comprehensive, coordinated, neighborhood-based programs for children, youth, young adults, and parents, combined with efforts to rebuild the fabric of the community.

**Program:** Over time, each designated Promise Neighborhood would create a pipeline of accessible, linked, best practice programs and high quality schools for neighborhood children and young adults from 0-23 years old, starting when parents are pregnant and finishing when children graduate from college. The pipeline should be enveloped with additional programs to support parents, families and the larger community.

Seamless Pipeline for Development of Youth, Ages 0-23



Applicants will be a coalition of community-based organizations, non-profits, municipal agencies, business supporters, school districts and foundations that have experience with working together to improve the lives of children in their communities. A lead agency (not the school district) will coordinate funding and operations.

**Steps for Developing a Promise Neighborhood Proposal:** With planning grants being awarded to just 20 cities (there is, potentially, another round of grants), a number of cities have spent the last year gathering data, building coalitions and developing proposals. While Austin is not at that level of planning, the basics are in place to develop a coalition quickly.

1. We are data rich, with a number of coalitions at work. The United Way, in particular, has spent the last several months putting together neighborhood data that will be helpful in choosing potential neighborhood(s) and supporting a proposal.

2. A large number of potential partners has been looking at the Promise Neighborhood/HCZ model over the past year. Support exists from AISD, City of Austin, Travis County, non-profits, foundations, business organizations and community groups.
3. A number of key entities (City of Austin, AISD) are engaged in early-stage strategic planning, allowing for alignment of the Promise Neighborhood initiative with broader goals and strategies for youth and families.
4. Proposals developed by other cities, along with existing HCZ replication sites, gives Austin resources with which to develop a plan quickly.
5. A team of city and community leaders from Austin will be attending the Harlem Children's Zone Conference on Promise Neighborhoods November 9-10. This information-gathering team will be able to bring back the tools necessary to begin putting an Austin proposal together.

## Proposed Timeline



### *Choosing a neighborhood*

The goal of the Promise Neighborhood initiative is to touch at least 65% of the families in need with intensive services, including education, health, housing and employment. Choosing too large a neighborhood will probably lead to an unsuccessful proposal. The HCZ began with just 24 blocks of Harlem, which has now scaled up to over 100.

In conversations with the Department of Education, it has been indicated that a high school feeder pattern in Austin might be the optimal size, with a plan that begins small and scales up over time.

Choosing a neighborhood will involve looking at both need and capacity. To qualify, a neighborhood will need to have at least 40% of children in poverty, or 30% with other significant factors (crime, education, housing). There also needs to be groups within that neighborhood that have shown some success over time in dealing with the effects of poverty.

**Based on the work already done by the United Way, it is suggested that a working group be formed immediately to pull together the data that will be needed to decide on the target neighborhood for the proposal. With the RFP coming out in November/December, the choice should be made no later than the week of November 16 by coalition partners.**

## 2

### *Form a Steering Committee*

Based on the current interest from a wide range of partners, a steering committee can be formed immediately, representing government, education, health, housing, business, law enforcement, faith, non-profits and community partners. This group would have four functions:

- Lead the selection process of the target neighborhood(s)
- Reach out to community partners to draw them into the planning process
- Lead the development of the programmatic strategy for the PN proposal
- Form the organizational and leadership strategy for the PN proposal

## 3

### *Develop a Programmatic Strategy*

Once a neighborhood is identified, the steering committee can begin developing a programmatic strategy. Several cities, including Minneapolis and Orlando, have developed good program structures that could be starting places for an Austin plan.

While the strategies developed will be based on the particular needs and assets of the neighborhood, there are certain common elements from the HCZ strategy that should be present. These include early childhood development, a K-12 unified approach, and after-school programming. Other elements that are either included in the Harlem plan or those by other successful cities, include adult and parenting education, access to quality healthcare, workforce development, crime reduction and affordable housing.

Without the RFP from the Dept. of Education, it is difficult to know what elements will be required to receive the planning grant. The information gathered at the HCZ conference should help.

## 4

### *Organization and Leadership Strategy*

The eventual success of this initiative will likely depend heavily on organizational decision made at the outset. The Dept. of Ed is requesting that one lead non-profit be chosen to manage the grant, though the application will come from a coalition that can include community-based organizations, municipal agencies, schools, healthcare institutions, non-profits, faith-based organizations/institutions and business groups. The lead agency can be an existing group or be a 501(c)(3) formed for the purpose of the Promise Neighborhood initiative.

Several years ago, Orlando formed the Legacy Trust for Orlando Children. This organization handles the funding decisions for the Parramore Kidz Zone. The mayor acts as the “face” for the project, especially fundraising. The Legacy Trust funds a number of local

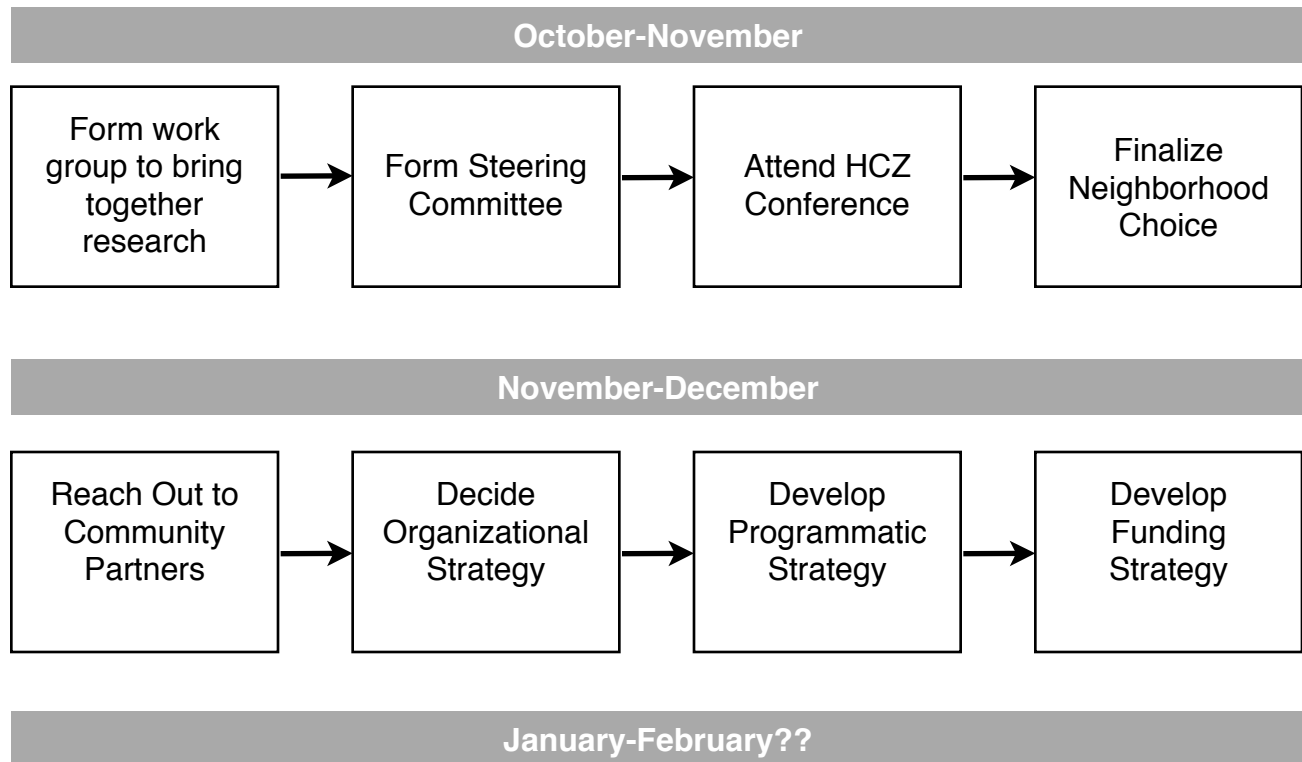
community-based organizations, and acts to coordinate already existing services for youth and families. This model of forming a new non-profit that organizes the coalition partners is a model that is worth considering for Austin.

HCZ also has been successful, in part, because of the leadership of Geoffrey Canada. Canada speaks widely and is able to personalize fundraising for the project. While not absolutely necessary for a successful initiative, it is worth considering who can represent the project effectively to the city and to local and state funders.

## 5 Funding

The Dept. of Ed has said that the PN grant would provide half of the funding budgeted for the initiative, with the rest coming from local sources. It is key that the project develop a diverse set of funding sources in order that it become sustainable. Some cities (Rochester and Miami) have been able to tap into state funding. Community foundations and private funding have also been key to the success of the HCZ.

While it is not crucial that Austin have all of its funding in advance of the planning grant proposal, we will be required to have some commitments and a plan for fundraising.



Respond to RFP for PN Planning Grant