

**COMMUNITY VOICES, COMMUNITY VISION:
LIFE EAST OF THE RIVER**



**AN EAST OF THE RIVER TASK FORCE
FOCUS GROUP REPORT**

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EAST OF THE RIVER FOCUS GROUP REPORT

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INTRODUCTION

A revival is taking place east of the Anacostia River. There are plans to revitalize the river's waterfront with residential, commercial, and cultural developments. Blueprints for the completed project show new roads and bridges, riverside parks, meandering paths for biking and walking, and vibrant waterfront neighborhoods¹ reminiscent of Georgetown and Old Town Alexandria. Over the next few decades, long-neglected public housing units will be refurbished, major federal government offices will relocate to wards 7 and 8, and the now-polluted Anacostia River will undergo a thorough cleansing. If successful, the District's plan will generate new investment and over \$1 billion in tax revenue for the city.²

But where do residents of wards 7 and 8 figure in these plans? And what do residents want for the neighborhoods they call home?

This report shows that people living east of the river have a clear sense of the problems that have plagued them for decades as well as a solid vision for redressing them. The nonprofits that have helped residents for years are eager to bridge what they call "the philanthropy divide" and to begin hands-on partnerships with grantmakers to build the human, physical and financial foundations for the thriving communities they envision.

¹ Benjamin Forgey, "River of Dreams: An Exhibition of Lofty Plans for the Anacostia Inspires Hope They'll Come True," [washingtonpost.com](http://www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn/A23880-2004Jan16?language=printer). 17 January 2004, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn/A23880-2004Jan16?language=printer>

² <http://www.wjla.com/news/stories/0104/118856.html>

WHO WE ARE

Washington Grantmakers is the national capital region's philanthropic center of gravity. It is a network of funders who partner with nonprofits and government agencies to improve the region one grant at a time.

Washington Grantmakers:

- Identifies and supports effective leadership in the philanthropic and nonprofit sectors;
- Promotes effective grantmaking through educational programs, peer networking, and funding collaboration;
- Works with nonprofit partners to promote new models and new approaches to meeting community needs;
- Tells the story of how philanthropy can make a difference and searches for innovative forms of charitable investment; and
- Advocates for all grantmakers in the region.

Among other activities, Washington Grantmakers' consists of working groups composed of members who work together on community issues. One of these special interest groups is the Children, Youth and Families Working Group; the East of the River Task Force is part of that group. The task force promotes a strong nonprofit sector in wards 7 and 8, whether or not services are headquartered in those wards.

The East of the River Task Force's specific goals are:

- To identify funding priorities east of the river by surveying local residents and community organizations;
- To develop a profile of giving patterns by local grantmakers to create a baseline of philanthropic investment and to track giving east of the river;
- To promote effective connections between funders, nonprofits and neighborhoods east of the Anacostia River to improve outcomes for children, youth and families;
- To support efforts such as The Community Foundation for the National Capital Region's *Spirit of Giving* guide;
- To explore partnership possibilities with DC government leaders east of the river; and
- To invest in research, advocacy, and organizing efforts in addition to supporting nonprofits that provide direct services or programs to people living east of the river.

This report, presented by the East of the River Task Force, is a tool for funders to guide their grantmaking in wards 7 and 8.

APPROACH

“There is a philanthropy divide that stops right at 16th Street, despite some efforts to come east of the river. I hope that funders who read this report will be genuine in their attempts to make the proper investments to do what needs to be done.”

--A focus group participant

Plans for redevelopment east of the river are not complete without the community’s perspective. So in April 2003, 34 young people, community leaders, working poor mothers, and recipients of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) participated in focus-group discussions.³ Their purpose was to help the East of the River Task Force and other funders understand the needs east of the river, examine the obstacles that had been encountered in redressing those needs, and learn residents’ vision for the community.

The task force culled focus-group participants from recommendations by community-based organizations, as well as its own resources. The East River Family Strengthening Collaborative hosted the focus groups.

The focus groups covered four priority areas that the task force had previously identified. Those areas were:

1. Out-of-School-Time/Youth Development;
2. Good Jobs;
3. Family Financial Management; and
4. Neighborhood Economy.

Three secondary areas received limited discussion time. Those areas were:

1. Early Childhood Development/Day Care;
2. Public Safety; and
3. Public Education.

There were four focus groups over four days, and each was two hours long. There was one focus group for each participant category—young people, community leaders, working poor mothers and TANF recipients. Facilitators guided discussions through a pre-prepared list of questions that probed participants’ opinions about existing services and their dreams for new programs. When complete, facilitators gave participants an honorarium for their time.

To promote openness and confidentiality, task force members did not participate in the discussions, and facilitators did not attribute specific comments made by attendees.

³ Catalina Vallejos Bartlett, Mary Lou Rife and Frances McFarland Horne conducted the focus groups.

LIFE IN THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

“Imagine, for a minute, that you just returned to Washington, DC, after being gone for five years. Think about all you'd find missing. The massive deficits? Gone. The receiverships—gone. Two thousand abandoned properties—gone. Snow on the roads—gone on time. The control board—gone early. And decades of despair and disinvestment? Gone forever.”

--Mayor Anthony Williams, State of the District Address, February 5, 2004

When Mayor Anthony Williams delivered his State of the District address in February 2004, he touted a nation's capital that was on the upswing after years of mismanagement. The number of immunized children had doubled, and more people had health insurance. Thousands of affordable housing units had been created, and hundreds had left welfare for work. Teen pregnancy was down. More seniors could afford prescription drugs, and treatment options for people with substance abuse issues were available. There were jobs for 43,000 District residents. Washington, D.C., the mayor said, was the number one real estate city in the world, surpassing Paris and New York.⁴

But while life in the District of Columbia may have improved for some, growing numbers of city residents are trapped in poverty.

More than 20 percent of District residents are poor, an increase of 14 percent from a decade ago. This poverty rate is the highest the District has seen in the last 40 years. Overall, the number of residents in poverty grew in every ward.⁵ But the greatest increase occurred among African Americans.⁶

Twenty-five percent of African Americans in the District of Columbia are poor, representing 77 percent of all District residents in poverty.⁷ African Americans represent 63 percent of married couples in poverty.

Asian and Latino populations also saw significant increases in poverty. Indeed, these populations experienced the fastest growth in percentage living in poverty, 104 percent and 39 percent respectively.

The District of Columbia's unemployment rate stood at 7.3

Quick Facts About the District of Columbia

- ✓ More than 572,059 residents
- ✓ Almost 53 percent of residents are female
- ✓ 60 percent of residents are African American and almost 31 percent are white
- ✓ Nearly eight percent of residents are Latino, and almost three percent are Asian/Pacific Islander
- ✓ 46 percent of households include families

⁴ www.washingtonpost.com

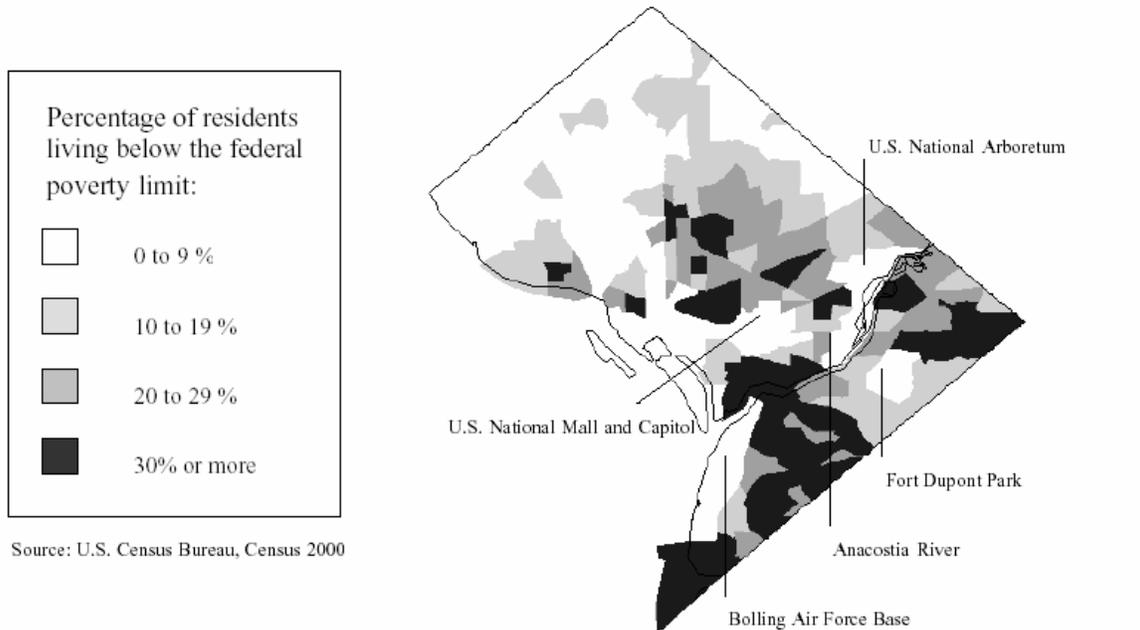
⁵ “2000 Census Numbers Reveal Higher Poverty Numbers in the District by Ward and Neighborhood Cluster,” DC Agenda Neighborhood Information Service, October 2002

⁶ “Primary Care Safety Net: Health Care Services for the Medically Vulnerable in the District of Columbia,” DC Primary Care Association, 2003 Update, October 2003.

⁷ DC Primary Care Association

percent in August 2003. Interestingly, the city's high-poverty neighborhoods have more people who are unemployed but **fewer** families on public assistance than in 1990. This latter trend is probably due to the high number of poor residents leaving the welfare rolls because of the 1996 Welfare Reform Act.⁸

The geographic distribution of District residents who are in poverty is shown below. Ward 3 has the lowest percentage of people living in poverty. Conversely, most of the city's poor live east of the river.



In addition to stratification by income, the District of Columbia is also stratified by race. Although the total population for each ward is relatively equal, the demographics of each ward are revealing. Wards 2 and 3 house 60 percent of the city's white residents, while wards 5, 7 and 8 house nearly 60 percent of the city's African-American population. Sixty percent of the District's Latino population resides in wards 1 and 4. Eighty percent of people of Asian descent live in wards 1, 2 and 3. Ward 1 is the most diverse ward in the District; ward 7 is the least.¹⁰

⁸ DC Agenda Neighborhood Information Service

⁹ DC Primary Care Association

¹⁰ DC Primary Care Association

LIFE EAST OF THE RIVER

Where are they going to send people who have difficulty affording homes? They're doing away with all the public housing. Poor people have a right to have somewhere to live, too.

--A focus group participant

The east side of the Anacostia River is a place of astonishing natural beauty. Along the river, bald eagles can be seen. There are breathtaking panoramic views of the capital city from St. Elizabeth's Hospital overlook, Our Lady of Perpetual Help Catholic Church, and Cedar Hill, where the abolitionist and statesman Frederick Douglass lived.¹¹

After the Civil War, many freed slaves migrated to Anacostia and the new community of Barry Farms. Established on land purchased by the Freedman's Bureau, freedmen built their homes at low cost but with a great deal of sweat equity. A strong, self-reliant African-American community developed and thrived.¹²

After World War II, much of this fabric was destroyed. Urban renewal in southwest Washington led to an influx of new, mostly poor residents whose need for services was overwhelming. Much of Barry Farms was demolished to make way for public housing projects. New freeways along the river isolated the community from the waterfront. Historic houses deteriorated.¹³

Today, the term "east of the river" means more than geography. It has become a metaphor for the racial, social, physical, economic and psychological segregation that exists in the District of Columbia. The Anacostia River is the liquid dividing line between rich and poor, black and white, social acceptance and social stigma. Just as the river has become a dumping ground for environmental waste, communities east of the river have become dumping grounds for the city's hard-to-site programs such as public housing and public treatment facilities.

Remarkably resilient, community leaders and residents believe in their power to build healthy families, children and neighborhoods. Community leaders' respect for the value of residents east of the river compels them to strive against impossible odds—inadequate facilities, changing government leaders, limited access to wealth, and sporadic public and private attention. A host of renowned nonprofit agencies have their roots firmly planted east of the river, and others that are less known, but equally valuable, are making a difference for residents.

The gains that have been realized are astounding. Nonprofit leaders have successfully created programs on workforce development, substance-abuse recovery and public safety. They have secured affordable short- and long-term housing for residents, complete with wraparound services. These leaders are even building a multimillion dollar facility that will bring arts, culture and recreation to the community. And they haven't done it alone. Residents have banded together to nurture families and achieve positive outcomes for children. The stability

¹¹ www.exploredc.org

¹² www.exploredc.org

¹³ www.exploredc.org

some residents have realized through purchasing the mixed-income homes that have replaced public housing allows them to focus on other essentials such as education, employment and child-rearing. The momentum these achievements offer, combined with avid interest in east-of-the-river communities from District government leaders, present a prime moment for sustained and increasing dollar support from grantmakers.

The reason for such support is clear. Wards 7 and 8 had the largest increase of people living below the poverty level, according to Census 2000. In fact, the poverty rate in ward 8 (36 percent) is higher than any other ward in the city.¹⁴ The majority of poor, female-headed households lives east of the river.¹⁵

African Americans represent more than 97 percent of the population in wards 7 and 8. The majority of African Americans who are poor live east of the river.¹⁶

Thirty-six percent of ward 8's population is under 18, the highest percentage of youth in a ward in the District of Columbia.¹⁷ Moreover, half of the children living in ward 8 are poor.¹⁸ In ward 7, more than a third of children are poor.¹⁹

More than a third of adults over 24 years of age do not hold a high school diploma, compared to 22 percent for the District as a whole.²⁰ Unemployment is concentrated in the eastern half of the District, with ward 8 reporting over 12 percent unemployment.²¹

“Unemployment is overwhelming and staggering, particularly among African-American males.”

--A focus group participant

The psychological impact of geographic distance, racial prejudice, and the stigma associated with being poor make some residents east of the river reluctant to travel to services or jobs outside their neighborhoods. Thus, an insidious segregation has set in, and its effects only grow with time.

Statistics like these sound an alarm for those interested in the health of the nation's capital. High poverty rates combined with other indicators—lack of employment, low educational attainment, and an over-representation of female-headed families—have a detrimental impact on long-term outcomes for children. Children growing up in severely distressed neighborhoods like those east of the river are less likely to perform well in school, are more susceptible to teenage pregnancy, and are less likely to make a smooth transition to the work force.²² The long-term effects of

¹⁴ DC Primary Care Association

¹⁵ DC Agenda Neighborhood Information Service.

¹⁶ DC Agenda Neighborhood Information Service.

¹⁷ DC Primary Care Association

¹⁸ DC Agenda Neighborhood Information Service.

¹⁹ DC Primary Care Association

²⁰ DC Agenda Neighborhood Information Service.

²¹ DC Primary Care Association

²² O'Hare, William and Mather, Mark, “The Growing Number of Kids in Severely Distressed Neighborhoods: Evidence from the 2000 Census,” The Annie E. Casey Foundation and the Population Reference Bureau, Revised October 2003

apathy and neglect eventually cost taxpayers millions of dollars in remedial education, social services, health care, and incarceration.

WHAT COMMUNITY RESIDENTS WANT

Some people think that living in the ghetto means you don't want to do anything, and you don't know anything.

--A focus group participant

Focus groups composed of youth, working poor mothers, and TANF recipients gave the task force and other funders myriad ideas for strengthening their communities. The ideas centered on the priority and secondary areas the task force had previously identified.

Two points permeated focus group discussions. The first was a fervent desire for programs that involved both parents and children. Besides the dearth of programs for adults east of the river, it was obvious that educational and economic needs among parents and children overlapped, given the relative youth of primary caretakers. Second, financial literacy emerged as a significant need. Banks often reject potential account holders if they have poor credit histories. Such rejection denies access to basic financial-management tools such as checking and savings accounts. For some participants, the alternative was check-cashing businesses that charged customers exorbitant fees for using their services. Grants toward financial literacy could make an impact on long-term outcomes for residents.

Here is a summary of findings from each focus group, organized by priority and secondary areas.*

Youth

Priority Area One: Out of School Time/Youth Development. The 11 teenage focus-group members had high career goals. Some wanted jobs in medicine, others wanted work in the engineering profession, and still others dreamed of life in sports. To realize their goals, these young people wanted more mentoring programs for children and parents, job fests, and community-building activities.

Priority Area Two: Good Jobs. While good education is the foundation for successful careers, other targeted interventions can also be useful. Participating youth wanted programs focusing on how to get a job, jobs that offered work experience, and jobs for the summer that offered higher wages. They also felt that some jobs could be available to promising students who were under 18 years old.

"It's a shame when you have to struggle to get a job at McDonalds."

--A focus group participant

Priority Area Four: Neighborhood Economy. A narrow list of businesses thrives in wards 7 and 8; among them are liquor stores, carryouts and McDonalds. Focus group participants dreamed of other businesses owned by African Americans such as nursing care, music, advertising or fashion. They also wanted help with starting businesses like beauty salons.

* Due to time and interest, some groups did not address all priority and secondary areas.

Secondary Area Three: Public Education. Students urged leaders to provide better physical structures for schools and more qualified teachers who care about them.

Working Poor Mothers

Priority Area One: Out of School Time/Youth Development. The five women who participated in focus groups were all native Washingtonians who had lived in wards 7 and 8 most of their lives. But besides geography, the woman shared similar goals for their children. Mothers wanted their children to have good primary and secondary education, and then attend college. To assist, the women wanted information on grants and scholarships to be available early—while their children were in elementary or middle school.

Priority Area Two: Good Jobs. Women wanted technology training, seeing it as the key to maintaining good jobs for themselves and for their children.

Priority Area Three: Family Financial Management. Participants wanted programs that would help them save toward their goals of homes and reliable transportation. They wanted support for African-American entrepreneurs and more shopping options in their communities.

Secondary Area One: Early Childhood Development/Day Care. Women wanted affordable, quality childcare that was accessible. They also wanted childcare that was available to parents who were low-income despite having full-time jobs or not receiving TANF assistance.

Secondary Area Two: Public Safety. Community members wanted safety for themselves and for police officers. Participants welcomed ways to build the community's trust for police.

TANF Recipients

Priority Area One: Out of School Time/Youth Development. The six women and one man who participated in focus groups wanted better education and better teachers for their children. They especially mentioned the need for qualified special education teachers. Participants urged program leaders to listen to what young people wanted and to be responsive.

Parents wanted more recreational facilities and field trips outside their neighborhoods. Finally, parents wanted challenging academic programs for their children and programs that included parental participation and community support.

Priority Area Two: Good Jobs. While a limited number of businesses exists in wards 7 and 8, some focus group members did not characterize them as good careers. Alternatively, participants offered a list of jobs they would like to see in their neighborhoods, including data entry, assistants to nurses or dentists and childcare.

Notwithstanding, parents admitted the need for job training for adults and youth, as well as support for entrepreneurial activities. To ensure success, they asked for job supports including:

transportation; before- and after-care; day care; weekend care; budgeting education; and second-chance employment programs for ex-offenders.

Priority Area Three: Family Financial Management. Participants shared the American dream of homes, cars and small businesses. They also wanted the wherewithal to pay for their children's college educations.

To achieve these goals, parents wanted a series of financial management classes. Topics could include budgeting, banking, saving, credit management, tax preparation, and goal-oriented workshops toward home buying or saving for college educations.

Priority Area Four: Neighborhood Economy. Because some residents do not own cars, many parents preferred businesses that were in walking distance of their homes. Grocery stores are desperately needed, as well as free food pantries for residents on fixed incomes. They also desired Laundromats, clothing stores and neighborhood-based restaurants. Potential new business owners wanted mentoring and economic stimulus packages.

Secondary Area One: Early Childhood Development/Day Care. Mothers desired after-school programs for children in pre-kindergarten through first grade. These children are often too young to attend existing activities. Parents also wanted more child care programs within their neighborhoods.

Secondary Area Two: Public Safety. Residents wanted to eliminate drug activity by boosting the police presence in their neighborhoods. To be effective, however, participants urged the police to be more interactive with community residents.

WHAT COMMUNITY LEADERS WANT

[I want] board members to drop in and see what is going on or even participate in workshops and other activities to get hands-on experience."

--A focus group participant

While residents were clear about programs needed east of the river, community leaders were equally clear about the capacity-building support they needed to boost their organizations' impact in wards 7 and 8. The 11 participants focused on three of the East of the River Task Force's priority areas. In lieu of the secondary areas, however, the task force asked community leaders to describe their organizations' capacity-building needs.

Priority Area One: Out-of-School/Youth Development.

Community leaders felt culturally sensitive, non-judgmental mentoring and tutoring programs were effective strategies for developing youth. They wanted more formal recreation centers to give young people safe, structured places to go besides the streets. Other useful interventions might include literacy programs for both parents and children, self-efficacy and self-esteem activities, field trips, and parent/child interaction.

One issue that should not be missed is the need for structured educational programs for young people with behavioral and truancy issues. These should be particularly available while caregivers are working.

Priority Area Two: Good Jobs.

Community leaders wanted programs to address the high adult illiteracy rate in wards 7 and 8. They felt these, coupled with job training and job placement programs would improve employment prospects for residents. Participants also felt entrepreneurship activities for young people, along with well-marketed, neighborhood-based computer centers, would boost career readiness. In these ways, students could take advantage of distance learning opportunities.

But to be successful, community leaders also said that residents must be taught the soft skills needed for successful employment, such as discipline, dressing professionally and effective workplace communication. Activities that build self-esteem and teach cultural heritage could help youth build the self-confidence required to be successful.

Finally, community leaders stressed the importance of family strengthening programs such as mentoring, African-American cultural activities, and esteem-building efforts that involve both parents and children. They also sought services that would return economic, social, and familial stability to ex-offenders.

"...there are many empty buildings on this side of the river. A lot of organizations know exactly what they would do and know exactly how they would do it, even if it's a matter of them coming together to do a certain thing. But it's very difficult to get through the red tape...to try and get these properties to the benefit of the kids and the benefit of the community is very difficult."

--A focus group participant

Priority Area Four: Neighborhood Economy. Participants want to promote an environment that attracts business by refurbishing abandoned buildings and eliminating drug activity. To do so, nonprofit leaders pushed for an increased police presence in the wards.

In addition to the priority areas, community leaders discussed the following ways to build nonprofit capacity in wards 7 and 8.

Funding. Community leaders wanted at least five years of funding in increasing amounts to help them become self-sustaining and independent. They wanted grants to increase or decrease based on agreed-upon, periodic performance measures that were based on program **quality** versus program **quantity**.

Hands-on partnerships with funders. Community leaders welcomed training on evaluating programs, identifying benchmarks and measuring outcomes that would help them demonstrate success and strengthen their chances of future funding. They welcomed support that would assist them in remaining viable after grants had ended.

Community leaders invited hands-on participation by foundation board members and program officers. They hoped funders would “spend time in the trenches” to observe their programs and offer hands-on experience.

Creativity in grantmaking. Focus group participants wanted freedom to be creative in shaping funding proposals. They were willing to collaborate with other agencies to meet minimum past operating budget requirements for grants, thereby increasing chances for funding. They asked funders to consider support for combined programs, such as those in which health and social services are offered in conjunction with arts and culture.

Programs. Finally, community leaders asked for support to help youth develop the soft skills necessary for successful employment. They deemed sessions on good manners, discipline, appearance, and respectful workplace communication just as important as specific job-skills training.

“Create an atmosphere where children can be caught doing something good.”

--A focus group participant

INTERVENTIONS THAT HAVE NOT WORKED

“...there are a number of bogus programs that get funded that look good on paper.”

--A focus group participant

Residents and community leaders spoke candidly about what went wrong with existing programs.

Community Residents

Focus group participants lamented the loss of recreational centers and the shortfall in funding for after-school activities. They felt these, combined with cuts in school budgets, sent a mixed message to children who were urged to stay in school but were not given the support to do so.

For their part, students felt their teachers didn't care about them. They also decried the lack of heat, lights, electricity and equipment in their schools. The absence of such basics as sinks in bathrooms and toilets that flushed was particularly troubling to students.

“Our school gets the leftover teachers; this is their retirement job.”

--A focus group participant

Some summer programs were not affordable to working poor parents. Lack of follow-through for many of the after-school programs that do exist was disappointing. Nonetheless, for after-school programs that did work, there were two obstacles: 1) limited space; and 2) grade-eligibility requirements. Finally, participants noticed there were a number of programs for young children, but few for teenagers.

Poor training and the absence of effective job placement programs were obstacles to employment for participants. Some even felt misled by job fairs that did not offer what they advertised. And men raising children alone felt excluded by some jobs programs.

Participants unanimously complained about the high cost of childcare. Even though vouchers exist, parents disagreed with the policy of making them available only to caregivers with the lower incomes derived from TANF or working part time.

Community leaders

Job training has not been coupled with effective job placement programs. While summer jobs have been useful, many employers have slashed the number of young people they can accept. Some remaining employers ask nonprofits to pay up-front costs and then bill for reimbursement later. In most cases, wages are too low to cover families' necessities, presenting a poor alternative to more lucrative illicit employment.

In general, programs that operated for limited periods throughout the year did not work as well as those that were year 'round. In addition, participants said that time-limited funding for

agencies that were not indigenous to the community often led to abandoned programs and services.

Finally, grant guidelines requiring operating budgets of \$500,000 or more presented obstacles for small but effective agencies.

GET INVOLVED

Washington-area funders are already targeting major dollars toward services east of the river, according to data compiled for Washington Grantmakers' Children, Youth and Families Working Group. In 2001, funders gave about \$16 million to programs benefiting wards 7 and 8, mostly to organizations headquartered there. In fact, several survey respondents made significant, place-based grants east of the river, both for capacity-building and program support.²³

The majority of grants east of the river have gone to programs addressing the task force's first priority area: out-of-school-time/youth development. Interestingly, this area is both the largest grant recipient and the area where funders see the greatest unmet need. Other giving has supported public education, early childhood development, family strengthening, capacity-building, and college access.²⁴

But this report shows that there is much more to be done. Interest in giving east of the river continues to grow and has already spurred several opportunities for those who want to get involved in supporting programs east of the river.

- Join Washington Grantmakers' Children, Youth and Families Working Group and the East of the River Task Force to learn more about the nonprofit agencies that are impacting this community. The task force is a resource for funders to help them identify strategic opportunities for investment and increase their giving east of the river.
- Become a member of a place-based funders group focusing on giving in wards 5, 7 and 8. Its goal is to lift 30,000 families out of poverty.
- Make a contribution to the East of the River Fund hosted by The Community Foundation for the National Capital Region (CFNCR).
- Learn more by reading CFNCR's *Spirit of Giving* guide, which gives an overview of the rich history, challenges and resources east of the river. The guide also highlights the work of 15 small and effective nonprofits.

²³ McKee, Arthur, "Survey of Washington Grantmakers' members on their giving east of the Anacostia River," May 2002.

²⁴ McKee, Arthur

CONCLUSION

It takes a village to raise a child, but a village can't stand by itself.

--A focus group participant

Plans to revitalize neighborhoods east of the Anacostia River should bring financial investment, needed services, and new hope to residents who live there. But memories of past urban renewal programs that left poor residents permanently displaced are already being voiced.

Residents and community leaders know what they want for their communities, and they are inviting grantmakers to partner with them in making it happen. East of the River Task Force members hope funders will support time-honored programs and agencies while also building the capacity of promising new ones. Task force members also hope this report will encourage policymakers to incorporate residents' vision for a vibrant community east of the Anacostia River.

APPENDIX A: COMBINED CHECKLIST OF NEEDS IDENTIFIED BY COMMUNITY RESIDENTS AND LEADERS

Priority Area One: Out-of-School Time/ Youth Development

1) Parental Involvement

- Family-strengthening programs
- Parents' groups
- Parent/youth councils or forums
- Parenting skills programs

2) Mentoring Programs

- For children of all ages, especially from six to eight years old.
- For children and parents
- Community support efforts that bring people together

"...it starts with the parents because they have to teach the children that they're going to fail sometimes...but failure is only a moment. It only lasts for a short while...When you show them that, a new world opens up to them."

--A focus group participant

3) After-school Activities

- Tutoring programs (for example, high school/elementary school partnerships and intergenerational programs)
- Literacy programs and programs that combine academics and athletics
- Fields trips to sites in Washington, D.C.
- Activities that expose children to other cultures and environments
- Programs that promote self-efficacy and other positive alternatives to street life
- Programs that allow interaction and bonding between children and parents from an early age
- Consistent, sustained programs at the elementary school level that increase self-esteem, decrease fear of failure and teach independence
- Programs that incorporate African-American history, culture and art into education and social-service programs

4) Recreational Centers

- Physical spaces to hold social and educational activities, such as playgrounds and other safe places for children to have fun and learn
- Activities that focus on young children, not just teenagers
- Tournaments or block parties
- Job fests to acquaint teens with prospective employers and to provide alternatives to children who can expect to earn \$500 a day or week selling drugs

- ❑ Clean-up fests
 - ❑ Basketball courts
- 5) More publicity about and access to information for youth, including college scholarships and grants.

Priority Area Two: Good Jobs

1) Job Training and Job Modeling

- ❑ Programs that integrate ex-prisoners into the community, including social services, job training and placement, and parenting skills, especially for fathers
- ❑ More publicity about jobs and vehicles for seeking jobs
- ❑ More summer jobs or internship programs for children and parents and relaxation of tough income requirements for participating in programs
- ❑ Liaisons with business owners from other areas in the District of Columbia
- ❑ Increased availability computers and programs to prepare youth for computer-based jobs and distance-learning opportunities
- ❑ Support for entrepreneurship programs for youth
- ❑ Mentorship programs that help employees develop skills and obtain degrees
- ❑ Jobs for teenagers who are not yet 18
- ❑ Programs that offer work experience
- ❑ Higher wages for summer jobs

2) Job Supports

- ❑ Transportation
- ❑ Day care, before- and after-care
- ❑ Budgeting education
- ❑ Weekend care

Priority Area Three: Family Financial Management

- 1) Counseling about credit, decreasing credit problems and working with banks
- 2) Financial management information through a variety of media, and more advertising about availability
- 3) Tax preparation assistance
- 4) Conveniently located programs and more childcare availability

Priority Area Four: Neighborhood Economy

- 1) Businesses owned by African Americans including restaurants, shopping centers, strip malls, Laundromats, and real estate companies
- 2) Programs that teach small businesses how to write grants
- 3) Information-sharing about how to win local grants
- 4) Food pantries

- 5) Health insurance companies
- 6) Hospitals
- 7) Supports that would build the neighborhoods' economy
 - a. Cleaning up the environment
 - b. Increased safety and police presence
 - c. Sustainable, community-based programs
 - d. More community support, especially from churches
 - e. Fundraising assistance for small businesses
 - f. Business mentoring opportunities

Secondary Area One: Early Childhood Development/Day Care

- 1) Childcare for young children
- 2) Availability of childcare vouchers at parents who are working, yet poor
- 3) More day-care centers located on community properties

Secondary Area Two: Public Safety

- 1) Quick responses from police officers
- 2) Visible police presence
- 3) Increased community interaction with police to develop greater trust among community members
- 4) Reporting suspicious people in the neighborhood
- 5) Eliminating drug activity
- 6) Posting drug-free zone signs
- 7) Neighborhood clean-up programs
- 8) 24-hour, private security

Secondary Area Four: Public Education

- 1) Improved relationships between parents and schools
- 2) Adequately funded teachers' positions
- 3) Improved school facilities
- 4) Better teachers
- 5) More school security
- 6) Better school resources
- 7) More technology programs
- 8) Better meals in schools
- 9) Programs that promote parental involvement

APPENDIX B: PROGRAMS THAT RESIDENTS AND COMMUNITY LEADERS SAY HAVE WORKED

During focus groups, facilitators asked participants to identify nonprofit agencies and programs that were making a difference. Facilitators' questions probed more than awareness of agencies and programs. Rather, questions delved into participants' views of their effectiveness. The checklist below highlights the agencies, and where applicable programs, that focus group participants found helpful.

Priority Area One: Out of School Time/Youth Development

- Academy of Business (a skills improvement and scholarship program)
- Bernard Gray Maya Gallery
- Books and Balls (a year 'round program of Southeast Ministry that combines education and sports)
- Boys and Girls Clubs (field trips)
- East of the River Steel Bank
- Ergonomics (an internship program to improve office skills)
- GW Carver (after-school activities)
- Head Start
- I Have a Dream (provides money for college)
- Outcomes, Inc. (teaches nonprofit leaders how to identify benchmarks and develop evaluations)
- Quantum Opportunities
- River Terrace and Northeast Performance Terrace
- Sign of the Times
- Super Leaders
- The Washington Scholarship Fund's Higher Achievement Program

Priority Area Two: Good Jobs

- Urban Life programs (provides jobs and teaches professionalism)
- An introduction to business class at Ballou
- Quantum Opportunities

Priority Area Three: Family Financial Management

- Individual Development Accounts
- Payroll deduction programs

Priority Area Four: Neighborhood Economy

- NFTE (entrepreneurship program with field trips)

- H.D. Woodson’s Business and Finance program (supports start-up businesses)

Secondary Area One: Early Childhood Development/Day Care

- (Residents mentioned no specific programs.)

Secondary Area Two: Public Safety

- Neighborhood Watch
- Safety patrols

Secondary Area Three: Public Education

- Big Brothers/Big Sisters