



Education and Housing Equity Project Records.

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Common Grant Application - Narrative

PROPOSAL NARRATIVE

A. ORGANIZATIONAL INFORMATION

History

The Education & Housing Equity Project was created in early 1995 by a combined group of education and housing advocates who shared a belief in the pressing need to link the issue of school desegregation/integration to the broader issue of segregated housing and neighborhoods. In early 1996, its first staff was hired to develop the organization, begin exploring how to build a coalition that could work for racially and economically inclusive communities and respond to the segregation and disparities developing in the metropolitan area, and begin a community-wide dialogue on these critical issues. In late 1996 and 1997, the Community Circle Collaborative was born and the first round of Community Circle conversations were held at various locations around the Twin Cities metropolitan area. A metropolitan citizen's forum was held at Macalester College at the conclusion of the conversations and a report on the results of the conversations was published in 1998. Since that time, EHEP has been co-sponsoring additional conversations addressing equity and dealing with race and education and partnering with housing, education and human rights organizations to work on agendas that have been informed by the conversations and that advance the mission of our organization. A second round of Community Circle conversations is now planned for 1999. A newly revised discussion guide has been prepared. Partnerships with potential sponsor groups and facilitators have been initiated. In the fall of 1998, Community Circles were held in Minneapolis, co-sponsored by the Minneapolis Public Schools, the Minneapolis Urban League, the Neighborhood Revitalization Program, Parks and Library Boards (providing meeting spaces), the Jefferson Center (providing scribes) and the Society of Professionals in Dispute Resolution (facilitators). At this time we are planning a metropolitan-wide round of community circles beginning in February 1999. Recently our Community Circles project was selected by The President's Initiative on Race as a "Promising Practice" for advancing race relations and progress on issues of race in the United States.

Mission & goals

The Education & Housing Equity Project's mission is to act as a catalyst to build broad-based coalitions and engage the community in public discussions, analysis and advocacy for the purpose of promoting racially and economically inclusive communities that give families of all incomes, races, and cultural backgrounds access to quality schools and affordable housing throughout the metropolitan area.

EHEP pursues its mission through a three-part strategy:

- Coalition and partnership building and advocacy;
- Community education and informed public conversation; and
- Assisting communities in becoming more inclusive and integrated

Current programs, activities, and strengths/accomplishments

Coalition Building and Advocacy to Inform Public Decision Making

Since its inception, EHEP has spent a significant portion of its energies in discussions and collaborations with other organizations and groups. These have led to several jointly sponsored projects as well as a fuller understanding of the need for an organization and collaborative that can link the issues of housing and education and develop the desperately needed consensus and leadership to move the community forward and to connect these issues to the challenges of poverty and segregation. After a year of creating the organization, the second and subsequent years have been devoted to extensive research of the literature, one-on-one interviews and multi-participant focus group meetings with a broad range of community leaders and experts in the fields of housing, education, anti-racism and metropolitan stability, and building a broad-based coalition and partnerships that can work on these combined issues. Our unique contribution has been to encourage the linkage of housing and school issues in the work of existing organizations and coalitions and connecting these coalitions to each other and to issues of race and poverty. Some of our major accomplishments have included:

- Coalescing with both housing and education organizations to focus on the re-drafting of the State Board of Education's desegregation rule, to link school desegregation issues with the broader issues of housing segregation and metropolitan stability (1996 and 1998).
- Encouraging a coalition working with the newly formed Minnesota Fair Housing Center on a fair housing testing campaign in suburban Hennepin County to frame the issue of housing discrimination in the context of schools and broader life opportunities (1996).
- Engaging the Minneapolis Public Schools and the Mayor of Minneapolis to support and assist in the development of the community circles project (see below) and, following a presentation (in Dakota County) sponsored by the Family Housing Fund, encouraging a study of the linkage between housing/household stability and educational achievement in Minneapolis, which led to *The Kids Mobility Project* (1997).
- Collaborating with and supporting MICAH's (Metropolitan Interfaith Council on Affordable Housing) fair housing initiative proposal to HUD to jointly develop, with the Illusion Theater, a series of theater events that highlight the need for metro-wide fair and affordable housing for people of all backgrounds and to deal forthrightly with discriminatory practices and attitudes of fear that keep this from happening. EHEP is represented at each of the theater events and is specifically co-sponsoring the Minneapolis and Saint Paul performances (1997 - 1999).
- Participating as an advisor to the consulting teams working with interested parties to mediate the educational adequacy and educational equity lawsuits currently pending (*NAACP v. State of Minnesota* and *St. Paul School District v. State of Minnesota*) and participating in the mediation planning retreat organized by the principal parties in the lawsuits (1997 and 1998). In early 1998, EHEP's director testified in support of the mediation process before the Minneapolis School Board, which subsequently endorsed the same position. EHEP has been asked to continue to be a resource group to the mediation process.
- Working with the Right to Housing Campaign and the Alliance for Metropolitan Stability to develop an Inclusionary Housing proposal that could provide the basis for a new approach to expanding affordable housing choices and mixed income housing development in state housing legislation (1998).
- Jointly sponsoring with the Urban Coalition and the Minnesota Minority Education Partnership a series of issue forums on the State's proposed new Desegregation Rule, the Inclusionary Education Program Rule (revision of the originally proposed Diversity Rule), and requirements for teacher licensure. The EHEP board also contributed substantive written testimony to the State Board of Education on the proposed changes to the Profiles of Learning (1998).
- Contributing to the work of the Minneapolis Affordable Housing Task Force through its Director who has been appointed to the Task Force (1998 - 1999). Our message has been that recommendations not only focus on providing needed housing but also on expanding people's locational choices and access to economic and social opportunities.

Assisting Communities in Becoming More Inclusive and Integrated

EHEP has been less involved with this strategy since it largely evolves from the other two strategies. However, at least two examples stand out.

Following the first round of community circles, we were invited by the Minnesota Fair Housing Center to assist them in implementing a Hennepin County funded workshop for suburban planning officials and human rights commissions on promising tools and practices for implementing fair and affordable housing. In September 1998 over 100 city officials and developers attended the "Building Inclusive Communities" Conference in Bloomington. EHEP worked with the Fair Housing Center and the Alliance for Metropolitan Stability to sponsor programs that highlighted promising practices in other parts of the country. EHEP helped to bring the Vice President of Chicago's Leadership Council for Metropolitan Open Communities to the Twin Cities to discuss the Oak Park experience in becoming and sustaining one of the most successful racially integrated cities in the United States.

In the East Metro Area we have been invited by the Office of Interdistrict Initiatives to participate in their planning process to develop a multi-school district governance structure to expand integrated school initiatives involving Saint Paul and suburban East Metro school districts. This activity will continue in 1999.

After the second round of Community Circle conversations, we expect to be doing more of these kinds of

activities.

Community Education and Conversation

By far the most significant and distinctive work of EHEP is the "Choices for Community" Community Circle Project. In 1996, EHEP partnered with the Minnesota Minority Education Partnership, the Metropolitan Interfaith Council on Affordable Housing, the Minneapolis Initiative Against Racism and the Minnesota Fair Housing to form the Community Circle Collaborative. Within the year, 20 additional organizations would join the Collaborative. In 1997, the Collaborative launched a metro-wide dialogue project in which 500 citizens from different walks of life came together, 5 to 15 at a time, in community circles throughout the metropolitan area to discuss the future of the Twin Cities area with a focus on two central questions:

- "What are the impacts of existing patterns of residential, economic and racial segregation on the educational achievement and life opportunities to Twin Cities area children and families?" and
- "What can or should we do, as individuals and as a community, to enhance educational success, and housing and economic opportunities for *all* children in the Twin Cities metropolitan area?"

Community Circles of citizens from thirty-five cities were convened by a variety of local sponsoring organizations. All were provided with discussion guides, prepared by the Collaborative, and were moderated by facilitators, recruited and trained by the Collaborative. The conversations culminated in a Metropolitan Citizens Forum held at Macalester College Chapel and moderated by Saint Paul's George Latimer and Minneapolis' Vivian Jenkins Nelsen. A report that synthesized the findings, conclusions and action recommendations coming out of the community circles was prepared and is being shared with the project partners and various decision makers in the metropolitan area.

Since the conclusion of the first round of community conversations, EHEP and collaborative partners have been evaluating the first round, identifying promising practices that advance educational success and expand affordable housing choices, meeting with various stakeholders to discuss the results of the community conversations, and revising and improving the process for a second round.

Plans for a second round of Community Circle conversations, to be held in 1999, are well underway. A round of Minneapolis Circles, co-sponsored by the Minneapolis Public Schools and 5 other partner organizations is currently underway, and will serve as a prototype for metropolitan-wide conversations to begin in February.

The second round will build upon the lessons of the first round and will include additional groups not represented in the first round, such as the business community, labor unions, outer suburban residents and employers, more residents and leadership groups in Saint Paul and East Metro, and a wider range of participants from communities of color. These conversations will be more clearly focused on systemic barriers and changes needed to build more inclusive communities and institutions. The discussions will also include an action component (Action Forum) that will focus on promising practices already underway in various parts of the Twin Cities (e.g., East Metro Interdistrict Initiatives), connect participants with opportunities for involvement in their community, and more directly connect the work of the community circles with key decision makers and decisions-making bodies.

At the conclusion of Round Two, EHEP and the Community Circle Collaborative will co-sponsor a Citizens Summit with the Minnesota Meeting and Minnesota Public Radio. The Summit will use electronic keypad technology to elicit focused responses and discussion of specific issues and solutions from community circle participants on the best ways the metropolitan community can collectively address issues of educational access and achievement, and school and housing segregation. Round two will help inform the policy and action agendas of partners in the collaborative as well as public decision-making bodies in 1999 and beyond.

Relationship with other organizations

The Education & Housing Equity Project carries out its work by collaborating with other organizations. The Community Circle project was founded by a collaborative partnership of organizations. Collaborative partners

are identified on the attached lists. The collaboration is essential for (1) assuring racial, cultural, ethnic, generational and geographic diversity of voices in the conversations, (2) fulfilling the various tasks, objectives and leadership requirements of the project using the best possible resources, and (3) assuring that the results of the community circle conversations are widely dispersed and receive widespread attention. The Community Circle Collaborative includes:

- **Organizing partners**, who help to design the process, frame the discussion issues, prepare the discussion guide, recruit and train/orient sponsors, facilitators, scribes, and resource partners, publicize the project and work with the media, and assist with reporting and evaluation and the details of project follow-through.
- **Resource associates**, who supply expertise on the issues, written and audio-visual materials to inform the discussions and provoke spirited but thoughtful conversation, media coverage, project documentation, and/or financial backing of project activities.
- **Sponsors** (typically organizations) that supply meeting spaces (including child care, transportation, translators, hospitality and other services as needed) for the conversations, schedule the conversations, recruit community circle participants, convene the community circle dialogues, and provide scribes who will capture in written record the highlights of each conversation.
- **Facilitators**, who have professional experience in mediation and facilitation, who will moderate the community circle conversations (organizations such as the Society of Professionals in Dispute Resolution and the Minnesota Facilitator Network are partnering with EHEP to provide the facilitators).
- **Participants** from many diverse backgrounds who commit to 5 sessions of 2 hours each and participate with 8 to 15 other citizens in informed and deliberative dialogue. The participants are the heart and soul of the Community Circles project.

In-kind support from the organizing partners alone in the 1997 circles amounted to more than \$15,000 in documented resources. A similar or greater contribution has been made during the 1998 circles in Minneapolis and in preparing for the 1999 circles.

EHEP and the Community Circle Project are distinctive from other organizations and initiatives in their unique methodology and objective of engaging citizens and creating dialogue among disparate parts of the Twin Cities metropolitan area not only to discuss issues and problems, but also to create action registers or common solutions to those issues and problems. No other organization in the Twin Cities area is currently engaged in this kind of collaborative, grassroots, dialogue and education/consensus-building/mobilizing effort that specifically links housing, education and race.

Board, Staff and Volunteers

Number of Board members:	16
Number of full-time paid staff:	1
Number of part-time paid staff:	1*
Number of volunteer staff:	1**
Number of volunteers:	100's (see description of community circle collaborative, above)

* Student Intern for fall 1998; efforts will be made to secure a new intern for part of 1999

** Part-time volunteer professional, joining us in December 1998, who we expect to be able to pay and make full-time in 1999

B. PURPOSE OF GRANT

Situation and Need

There has been growing public concern in the Twin Cities metropolitan area that economic and racial segregation in housing is having a profound impact on the overall health and well being of the metropolitan region, and on education and employment opportunities in particular. A study by Douglas Massey and Nancy Denton in their publication *American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass* revealed that the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area is among the ten most segregated in the country. Studies have also shown that the Twin Cities ranks third highest among all U.S. urban areas in persons of color living in poverty. The work of State Representative Myron Orfield in his book *Metropolitics: A Regional Agenda for Community and Stability* and of Dr. John Powell of the Institute on Race and Poverty at the University of Minnesota in his study

Examining the Relationship Between Housing, Education and Persistent Segregation have also given testimony to the depth and breadth of issues of segregation, racial and economic isolation and growing disparities between inner and outer communities in the Twin Cities and their relationship to unlocking the doors to addressing other important issues facing the region.

Public actions to grapple with these issues have been growing in number. They include education and housing lawsuits (NAACP v. State of Minnesota, St. Paul School District v. State of Minnesota, and Holman v. Cisneros), legislation (the Metropolitan Livable Communities Act), the creation and expansion of civic and advocacy groups (e.g., Alliance for Metropolitan Stability, Interfaith Action and St. Paul Ecumenical Action Council, the Minnesota Right to Housing Campaign and the Metropolitan Interfaith Council on Affordable Housing), formation of new compacts of school districts (West Metro Education Program and the East Metro Office of Interdistrict Initiatives), and new state rules addressing school desegregation, educational diversity and criteria for inclusive schools, and standards for multicultural competency in teacher licensure requirements.

These actions, and the frequently divisive debates over these actions, have revealed the need for developing a common understanding and a common ground, or common basis of action, for moving forward on these serious issues. Public conversation about the possibilities for inclusive and integrated communities has been rare, usually divisive and poorly informed, not conducted on a sustained or systematic basis and with too few groups or individuals involved, and virtually no broad public consensus or support. We believe these adverse conditions imperil the chances of building inclusive communities and integrated institutions in the Twin Cities metropolitan area.

The principal danger is that public discourse fast settles into simplistic, distorted polarities – neighborhood schools versus forced busing, quality education versus school desegregation, deconcentration of poverty versus preservation of existing affordable housing, cultural identity versus assimilation, individual choice versus collective responsibility, core cities versus suburbs, rich versus poor, and of course, whites versus communities of color (especially African American). A climate of public opinion poisoned by these divisions inevitably limits what policy makers (and, as we have found in our initial discussions, advocates and community leaders as well) feel they are able to do; we speculate that this climate even limits what judges feel *they* are able to do. In this kind of environment, the issues are captured by the most extreme and negative voices, which are then amplified by the media. The public sits and listens. Few want to get involved, because of the fear of getting burned in the heated controversy and because of the not-unreasonable judgment that little will be accomplished by these conditions. Those who *do* take action typically call for reforms without touching on the vital questions of race and segregation.

There is a need to involve many groups and the broader public in civil, informed conversations about the possibilities for and benefits of integrated communities. There is a need to expand the serious discussion of these issues beyond the courtrooms, the academic halls and partisan legislative debates. As many people as possible, from as many different stations in life should be participating in the conversation about this issue. The discourse should not be limited to the invectives of "talk radio," the well-intentioned opinions of newspaper editorials, the sociological jargon of academia or the legal technicalities of the courts.

The issue is developing rapidly. The question is who will be involved in the public discourse, and how will that discourse be framed. Unfortunately, past experience shows that these issues are easily polarized – and stay polarized. We believe that this familiar yet unfortunate outcome can be averted by organizing a wide range of groups that have a potential stake in integration, by engaging broad-based public participation in informed conversations about what segregation and integration involves and by offering promising practices and assistance to communities and community institutions as they seek to become more inclusive and better integrated.

Our Response

In response to this need, and after gaining valuable information and experience consulting with potential partners, we proposed and implemented a first round of community conversations about racial, economic and residential segregation and unequal opportunity and achievement in our schools. The conversations proved to be productive and have resulted in building public understanding and expanded support for educational equity and inclusionary housing legislation. We learned a great deal from the conversations, including what can be

done to make them more effective in subsequent rounds. The project has also helped to inform the proposed mediation process for settlement of the educational lawsuits. The "public voice" that came out of the conversations reflected the complexities of the issues citizens were grappling with.

We want to build on the experience of the first community circles and, using what we learned, again, take the conversation about segregation and integration to neighborhood centers, public libraries, schools, places of business, living rooms, and backyards - the places where ordinary people live their lives and where the real task of building inclusive communities must take place. We wish to encourage and inform public conversations and deliberation that will help lead people to a more informed, more effective understanding of the effects of segregation, why the choice to integrate is important, and how removal of barriers to choice can be accomplished. Through this process, we hope that people come to move beyond "tolerance" and understand the value of inclusion and of an integrated society for themselves, for other people, and for society as a whole.

Experience has shown and we have no illusions that all people will be persuaded, or be willing to participate. There are, after all, real conflicts of interest and conflicts of values about these issues. These will not be dissolved by talk alone. But without a concerted, *and sustained* effort to bring people together for informed and civil conversations, the most extreme voices will remain to frame the issue. Public-spirited conversation will be drowned out by shrill debate; our common interests and values will get lost in a sea of opposition and conflict. Informed action must be preceded by informed and collective conversation.

Specific Project Activities, Goals and Objectives

The *Choices for Community* Community Circle Project has and continues to be developed and organized by a partnership of organizations representing diverse segments of the community. To enable the kind of civic conversation we envisioned, the Collaborative developed "Community Circles," an approach to community dialogue that draws from elements of three different, nationally and locally recognized models for civic discussion: the "study circles" promoted by the Study Circles Resource Center in Pomfret, Connecticut; the National Issues Forums, a public deliberation project begun by the Kettering Foundation in Dayton, Ohio; and the Communities of Color Empowerment Model (COCEM) from the Minnesota Minority Education Partnership in Minneapolis, Minnesota. The Community Circle Dialogues (or conversations) combines the unique elements from each of the above approaches to bring community members together, to engage them in discussion, to provide educational and technical resources that inform their conversations, and to develop action agendas and connect citizens to action opportunities and promising practices.

The Education and Housing Equity Project and the community circle collaborative it coordinates intend to engage a broad cross-section of the Twin Cities metropolitan community to study, discuss, and build a common understanding of the issues of racial and economic segregation in the region and their effect on education, employment, and broader "life opportunities." The Community Circle project will be a catalyst for greater community involvement in these issues and increased efforts to decrease housing segregation and increase educational achievement and integrated education opportunities. They will engage a broad cross-section of the both "non-traditional" participants (low-income families and communities of color) and "traditional" participants in a community-wide dialogue about these complex, interconnected issues. Experience in the first round of conversations suggests that community circles can provide unique settings for collaborative learning, for working through often polarizing social and political issues like these, for facilitating honest conversation, and for building more inclusive organizations and communities. As similar projects elsewhere in the country have shown, such "circles" broaden perspectives, deepen understanding, and inspire participants to become more involved in public life.

The second round of community circle conversations will build on the experience and lessons of the first round conversations. The conversations will use a newly revised and improved discussion guide to help further focus the conversations; more experienced facilitators resulting from a collaborative partnership with the Society of Professionals in Dispute Resolution; a broadened recruiting effort to expand participation by populations under-represented in the first round, such as communities of color (in addition to African Americans), the business community, Saint Paul area communities, and outlying suburban communities; new partnerships to build the community circle dialogues into existing venues for community involvement, such as the Wilder Foundation's "Cities At Work" Forum Series; and an emphasis on actions that can be taken at or near the conclusion of the discussions.

Specific activities and a timeline for accomplishing the 1999 Community Circles and the results they are intended to realize include the following (many of these activities are already underway):

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|---|------------------------|
| ➤ Evaluation of the first round of community circles | Completed 1997 |
| ➤ Report sharing the results of the first round of discussions | Completed April 1998 |
| | Printing, January 1999 |
| ➤ Preparation of revised <i>Choices for Community</i> discussion guide | May - September 1998 |
| | First Printing, 10/98 |
| | Second Printing, 1/99 |
| ➤ Recruiting new partners and sponsors | Fall/Winter 1998/99 |
| ➤ "Building Inclusive Communities" Conference and Dinner Event | Sept. 17 & 18, 1998 |
| ➤ Minneapolis Community Circles (pilots for 1999 circles) | Oct. - Dec. 1998 |
| ➤ Informational/training sessions for sponsors | December 9, 1998 |
| | January 13, 1998 |
| | Dec. - Jan. 1998/99 |
| ➤ Letter to mayors, press advisories to media, etc. | January 15, 1999 |
| ➤ National Conversation about Race (co-sponsored by EHEP with NCCJ) | January 21, 1999 |
| ➤ Community Circle "Kick-Off" Forums (West Metro) | February 4, 1999 |
| | (East Metro) |
| | January 22, 1999 |
| ➤ Facilitator Orientation Session | January 23, 1999 |
| ➤ Workshop on Understanding Community and Institutional Racism
(for community circle facilitators and scribes) | |
| ➤ MICAHA fair housing theatre events (co-sponsored by EHEP) | Feb. - May 1999 |
| ➤ Metro Area Community Circles are convened by sponsors | February 1999 |
| Community Circles meet 5 times for 2 hours each session | Feb - April 1999 |
| ➤ "Cities at Work" Forums and "Call to Action" (one each month) | February - May 1999 |
| ➤ Community Circles Action Forum | April or May 1999 |
| ➤ "Citizens Summit" with the Minnesota Meeting and Minnesota Public Radio | May or June 1999 |
| ➤ Prepare Report to Community | June - August 1999 |
| ➤ Evaluation of circles process and results | Summer/Fall 1999 |
| ➤ Optional second round of 1999 community circles (focusing on integration) | Sept. - Nov. 1999 |
| ➤ Year 2000 Action Agenda | December 1999 |

Those involved in achieving these activities include the following:

Dick Little, Executive Director of the Education and Housing Equity Project, who is responsible for all aspects of the organization and project. He has an extensive background in housing, education, race relations and use of study circles. For 20 years he was a planning and housing official with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. More recently he has been a research associate with the International Institute for Interracial Interaction (INTER-RACE) at Augsburg College, a technical assistant with the Community Policing Institute, a member of the strategic planning team for the City of New Orleans Empowerment Zone and Enterprise Community program, and a consultant to the Minneapolis Public Schools. He has also been active as policy chair, parent representative on the site leadership council, and co-founder of the foundation at Ramsey International Fine Arts School in Minneapolis. He is in his tenth year of serving as mayoral appointee on the Minneapolis Planning Commission, and has a graduate degree in urban planning. He also serves as an officer on the boards of several non-profit organizations including the Metropolitan Interfaith Council on Affordable Housing.

Pam Jewson, acting administrative assistant at EHEP, who brings previous experience as an administrative assistant and field producer at KSTP, a graphic artist with the Star Tribune, and as a project development coordinator with the Linden Hills Neighborhood Revitalization Program (at present, voluntary)

Paul Kiley, a media, communications and marketing consultant with experience as head of the California Literacy Program (at present, 'pro bono')

Barbara Blackstone, State Mediator with the Minnesota Office of Dispute Resolution and Mediation, and an officer of the Society of Professionals in Dispute Resolution (SPIDR), Minnesota Chapter. Barbara is heading up the process of recruiting, training and assigning facilitators. She and a cadre of facilitators from SPIDR facilitated the Minneapolis Community Circles in fall of 1998. Up to 100 facilitators will be moderating or co-moderating the 1999 Community Circles (voluntary/in-kind)

Representatives from the sponsor organizations that will be convening the circles and/or providing the meeting places for the circle dialogues, and scribes who will be recording and preparing reports on the dialogues (voluntary/in-kind).

A working group of individuals from the EHEP board and community circle partner organizations that will assist in carrying out the details of implementing the community circle dialogues (voluntary/in-kind).

Jeff Swenson, Augsburg College business and financial accountant, who will be providing payroll and fiscal services to EHEP in 1999.

EHEP has made extensive and creative use of interns, volunteers and consultants (paid and in-kind) in the past and will continue to do so in 1999 (writers, graphic designers, training professionals, speakers, etc.). James and Nadine Addington and staff of Crossroads and the Minnesota Churches Anti-Racism Initiative will be providing the workshop on understanding community and institutional racism. Karima Bushnell of Intercultural Communications Workshops, Inc. will be providing cross-cultural communications training to the facilitators. Feigenbaum Design Group and Community Media Services provide our graphic and design services. Interns from HECUA (the Higher Education Consortium for Urban Affairs) and CURA (the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs) have provided research and writing services. Nikki Carlson of Interfaith Action and principal of EYDYA, Inc. has provided 'pro bono' services for developing our data base and communications plan.

We are also being assisted by some of our collaborating partners with the organization of the project. In Saint Paul, we are carrying out the community circles as an integral part of the 'Cities at Work' Forums co-sponsored by the Wilder Foundation. Barb Rose, editor of Community Matters at Wilder, is working with us hand-in-glove on organizing the community circles in Saint Paul. Staff of the League of Human Rights Commissions is working with us to enable suburban human rights commissions to take the lead role in sponsoring community circles in their communities and partnering with other organizations to implement the circles. Our national partner, the Study Circles Resource Center, has and will continue to provide substantial in-kind support to our project.

There comes a moment of truth, however, when it becomes clear that the project and collaboration won't work unless EHEP is adequately staffed. Our success to date demands that we expand beyond a one-person non-profit. To effectively carry out its objective of expanding the community circle project and promoting the successful development of inclusive communities and schools, EHEP must create two new, permanent positions in 1999: (1) an administrative assistant to assist the director and to manage the daily operations of EHEP projects including the community circles project, and (2) a community circles coordinator to oversee and manage the community circles project and coordinate activities with the community circles collaborative. A study has been prepared that has identified and recommended the addition of these staff positions as essential to the continued success of our work. For this reason, we are expanding our budget and funding requests in 1999.

Impact of activities

The proposed activities will benefit the communities we are serving by advancing the agenda and prospects for integrated and equitable education in Twin Cities area public schools, and for integrated and inclusive communities that are open and affordable to all Twin Citizens.

The first round of conversations has already been used to inform the areas for mediation of the education lawsuits between the NAACP, Saint Paul Schools and the State of Minnesota. The second round of conversations will present a timely opportunity to "test" and discuss the recommendations to the legislature

coming out of the first round of mediation talks, focusing on schools. The second round conversations also present an opportunity to inform a possible second round of mediation meetings that will focus on external factors, such as housing, transportation, family and community services, and jobs. The community circle conversations should directly contribute to an informed, mediated settlement that will lead to more equitable, inclusive and integrated education for Twin Cities area students.

The first round of conversations also have contributed to building public awareness, support and commitment to fair and affordable housing throughout the metropolitan region. Barriers to affordable housing created by exclusionary zoning and other regulatory practices was identified by over two-third of the circles as a major factor influencing economic, if not racial segregation in the Twin Cities. Fair housing violations were also identified as more prevalent than the public generally acknowledges. NIMBYism, frequently displayed at public hearings and planning commission meetings in suburban communities was also highlighted in the conversations. Twelve of the sponsor organizations are or have become members of the Metropolitan Interfaith Council for Affordable Housing. In addition, some of the circle sponsors and participants were members of Interfaith Action or Saint Paul Ecumenical Action Council, who went on to model our discussion process among their member congregations and to expand their mission to include city-suburban segregation and racial-economic disparities.

Partly as a result of our project, there are a record number of affordable housing proposals that will be submitted to the State Legislature in 1999. The proposed Inclusionary Housing Initiative is an example of a concept that was discussed in the community circle conversations. EHEP is one of the endorsers and sponsors of this proposal.

The second round of circle conversations will highlight promising practices for expanding housing choices and will build greater public education, awareness and desire to become involved in supporting practices identified by circle participants as the most promising.

We think that our project will also lead to the already growing agreement, resulting from our first round of conversations and other EHEP initiatives, on the importance of linking school desegregation/integration with the broader issue of housing (and related issues of public transportation and jobs). This is leading to greater support by advocate organizations for broader coalitions that embrace both housing and education and other related issues. The Alliance for Metropolitan Stability is an example. Through our coalition building activities we expect that there will be broader public support of housing *and* education reforms that lead to more inclusive schools *and* communities.

The conversation results will be presented as findings, conclusions and possible recommendations to the legislature and other decision-making bodies, and hopefully contributes to better policy making. The circle conversations should also result in greater participation in the civic life of the community by community circle participants, many of whom have not been actively involved in these issues in the past.

C. EVALUATION

How effectiveness will be measured

We intend to measure success in tangible ways. We have been and will continue track specific data about the process and results. We have already used surveys to evaluate the first round and will use focus groups to evaluate the second round of community circle discussions.

Criteria for a successful program and the results you expect to have achieved

Measures of success include the breadth and depth of participation in the study circles by citizens. Measures of breadth and depth include diversity of participants in terms of perspectives and viewpoints, race and ethnicity, place of work or residence, age or generation, family status and economic status. It also includes locations and numbers of participants and conversations. A participant comments about what they got out of the circles experience and how they grew or changed as a result of the experience will also be considered.

The project's impact will also be measured by the extent that our process and the circle findings, conclusions

and recommendations are considered and incorporated by stakeholder and sponsor organizations, and by public decision-making bodies, such as school boards, planning commissions, city councils and the State Legislature. Another important measure will be the number of new participants that become involved in the work of one of the promising practices or one of the participating non-profit or community organizations as one way of moving from discussion to action.

We hope to at least double the number of participating community circles that successfully complete a dialogue in the second round from 25 circles to over 50 circles. We intend to have representation of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, Native Americans, and Latino/Chicanos and Mexican Americans as well as African Americans in the circles in numbers reflecting their percentage of the population of the metropolitan area. We are also striving through pairing of circles, cross-culturally competent recruiting and outreach practices, and partnerships with organizations reflecting diverse populations to achieve richly diverse community circle groups. If these circle discussions receive public attention, raise the level of public awareness, understanding and engagement in creatively addressing issues at the intersection of race, housing and schools, and prompt civically informed actions that lead to more integrated schools and communities through a "bubbling up" of informed discussion and action from the community circles and participants, then our project will have been successful.

Who will be involved in the evaluation

The EHEP board and staff and the organizations that participate in the Community Circle project will continue to be involved in evaluating the project. The Study Circles Resource Center, one of our national partners is already assisting us in the preparation of evaluation measures and criteria before we begin the second round of community dialogues.

How evaluations will be used

The results of the first round of community circle conversations are being used primarily to plan the second round of conversations and also to inform the agendas of participating partners (e.g., MICAH). As previously mentioned, they have also been used in the process of designing the process for mediation of the educational lawsuits.

The results of the second round of conversations will be used to define subsequent strategies for moving toward achievement of more inclusive, equitable and integrated schools and communities and to more specifically inform public policy action that moves to desegregate the Twin Cities metropolitan area.

Grant Application Cover Sheet

COVER SHEET

Date of Application:

ORGANIZATION INFORMATION

Education and Housing Equity Project

Legal Name of Organization

Augsburg College, CB 185, 2211 Riverside Avenue

Address

Minneapolis, MN 55454

(612) 330-1505

(612) 330-1507 or 1649

City, State, Zip

Telephone

FAX

Individuals Responsible:

Dick Little

Executive Director

(612) 330-1505 or 724-5662

Name of top paid staff

Title

Direct dial phone #

Contact person (if different from top paid staff)

Title

Direct dial phone #

Organization Description:

The Education and Housing Equity Project was founded in 1995 to promote racially and economically inclusive communities and schools that work for all children in the Twin Cities metropolitan area. Its primary focus is on expanding public understanding and informed public action on the relationship between residential, economic and racial segregation and educational achievement in our public schools. To accomplish its mission, EHEP has initiated the Community Circles Collaborative, a project that brings together citizens and community organizations from throughout the metro area in public conversations focused on the challenges of housing segregation, educational achievement and racial equity in the Twin Cities metropolitan region.

Is your organization an IRS 501(c)(3) not-for-profit? YES NO

If no, is your organization a public agency/unit of government
or religious institution: YES NO

If no, name of fiscal agent (fiscal sponsor) _____

AMOUNT AND TYPE OF SUPPORT REQUESTED

The dollar amount being requested:

\$ _____

Funds are being requested for:

_____ general operating support

_____ capital

_____ other: _____

_____ project support

_____ endowment

_____ start-up costs

_____ technical assistance

If a project, give project duration:

January Month 1999 Year to

January Month 2000 Year

If operating support, fiscal year:

January Month _____ Year to

January Month _____ Year

BUDGET

Total annual organization budget:

\$ _____

Total project budget (for support other than general operating):

\$ _____

PROPOSAL SUMMARY

(If operating or start-up support relate to the organization. If project and other support, relate to the project.)

Project name (if applying for project support):

Conversations at the Crossroads: Community Circle
Conversations on Education, Housing and Segregation

Please give a 2-3 sentence summary of the request:

We are requesting support for launching and completing the second round of community circles that will be convened in 1999 focusing on the challenges of achieving racially and economically inclusive schools and communities. Our goal is to engage over 1,000 citizens from 75% of the municipalities in the metro area participating in up to 100 study circles. These circles will consist of 8 to 15 participants each who will meet at least 5 times for 2 hours each meeting. Each circle will meet on specific dates and at specific locations, use a prepared discussion guide, and will be moderated by experienced facilitators. In addition to providing meeting places and/or recruiting diverse participants, sponsoring organizations will provide scribes to record and report the results of each circle conversation. A report to the community will be produced. A citizens summit and action forum will bring participants together at the conclusion of the circle conversations to discuss findings and conclusions/recommendations to public officials(who will also be invited to participate in the circles) and to connect participants with action agendas and opportunities (promising practices and action organizations).

Geographic area served: The Twin Cities Metropolitan Area

Population served: Adults and children from many different walks of life in schools and communities in the Twin Cities area. Communities of color and lower income residents and students from inner urban areas as well as suburban communities will be emphasized and targeted in this project. Diversity of participants is a key consideration of this project.

AUTHORIZATION

Name of top paid staff and/or Board Chair:

Richard C. Little, Executive Director
Matthew Little, President

Signature

EHEP 1998 ORGANIZATION BUDGET

Adopted by the Board of Directors 3-27-98

<u>Expenses</u>	<u>Base</u>	<u>Priorities</u>
Staff Salary and Wages		
Executive Director	24,000	6,000
Administrative Assistant		15,000
Payroll Taxes	2,640	2,310
Fringe Benefits		3,600
Professional/Contract Services	10,600	3,500
Transportation (Local Auto)	500	800
Staff Expenses		200
Conferences and Meetings		
Citizens Summit	8,000	
Other	1,000	500
Staff and Board Development (Training)	250	250
Educational Resources (Publications, Subscriptions, Memberships)	100	100
Fiscal Agent Fee (MICAH) (incl. rent & utilities, phone and fax lines, use of fax/printer/copier, and payroll, financial reporting and other fiscal management services; audit to be included in 1999 budget)	3,960	
Office Supplies	500	
Equipment	1,800	
Phone and Fax Service (Long Distance)	200	
E-mail Service	240	
Postage	1,500	500
Printing and copying		
Program	3,000	1,000
Non-program	250	250
Insurance	2,000	
Miscellaneous	50	
<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>\$60,590</u>	<u>\$34,010</u> <u>(\$94,600)</u>

<u>Support and Revenue</u>	<u>Current</u>	<u>Committed</u>
Retained earnings (from 1997) (Minneapolis and Saint Paul Foundations)	9,931	
Otto Bremer Foundation	25,000	
Cowles Media Foundation		10,000
National Council for Community and Justice (Formerly Natl. Council of Christian and Jews)	252.50	
Norwest Mortgage-Maple Grove Branch		500
Individual Donations (Thomas Stanley)	500	
<u>TOTAL</u>	35,683.50	10,500 (46,183.50)

TOTAL PROJECTED EXPENDITURES \$60,590 (minimum) to \$94,600

TOTAL CURRENT AND COMMITTED INCOME \$46,183.50

FUND RAISING TARGET (rounded) \$14,500 (minimum) to \$48,500

Common Grant Application - Narrative

PROPOSAL NARRATIVE

A. ORGANIZATIONAL INFORMATION

Brief History

The Education & Housing Equity Project was created in 1995 to link the issue of school desegregation/integration with the broader issue of segregated housing and neighborhoods and to build an informed citizenry to advance public understanding and action on these issues.

In 1996, it partnered with some 20 other organizations, including the Minnesota Minority Partnership, the Metropolitan Interfaith Council on Affordable Housing, the Minneapolis Initiative Against Racism, the Minnesota Fair Housing Center and the Minnesota Churches Anti-Racism Initiative to create the Community Circle Collaborative, a multisector initiative to promote multi-community dialogue on the critical issues of education, housing race and segregation in the Twin Cities metropolitan area. In 1997 and early 1998, approximately 500 citizens from different walks of life joined together in community circles and forums convened in 25 different communities focusing on the challenges of affordable housing, the achievement gap in our schools, the locattional mismatch between employees who need jobs and employers who need workers, and the role that race and segregation play in exasperating these challenges. Each circle was supplied with a facilitator recruited and trained by the collaborative and a discussion guide prepared by the collaborative. The discussions culminated in a metropolitan citizen's forum held at Macalester College and a report on the results of the conversations published in 1998.

Based on the experience with these initial conversations, EHEP and other Collaborative partners approached additional organizations about the conversations and used the results of the conversations to further define their own agendas and strategies to advance the shared mission of expanding housing, education and economic choices and opportunities for all citizens in the metropolitan area.

A second round of Community Circle conversations began in late 1998 and is currently underway in 1999. Based on the evaluation of the first round of conversations in 1997, we have substantially revised the discussion guide, partnered with professional facilitator organizations to facilitate the conversations, and have greatly expanded partnerships with potential sponsor groups. In the fall of 1998, Community Circles were held in Minneapolis, co-sponsored by the Minneapolis Public Schools, the Minneapolis Urban League, the Neighborhood Revitalization Program, the Park and Library Boards (providing meeting spaces), the Jefferson Center (providing scribes) and the Society of Professionals in Dispute Resolution (facilitators). In February 1999 we launched a metropolitan-wide round of community circles. We also entered into a major partnership with the Wilder Foundation and "Cities At Work" partners innaugurating "Cities at Work" community circle conversations on education, housing and race in Saint Paul. As of the date of this grant request, approximately 75 community circles in 20 different cities, engaging approximately 1,000 citizens are underway this spring or are planned to be held next fall.

At the end of 1998, our Community Circles dialogue project was selected by The President's Initiative on Race as a "Promising Practice" for advancing race relations and progress on issues of race in the United States.

Mission & goals

The mission of the Education & Housing Equity Project is to act as a catalyst to build broad-based partnerships that engage citizens and communities in public discussion, analysis and advocacy that advances the prospects for realizing racially and economically inclusive institutions and communities that give families of all incomes, races, and cultural backgrounds access to quality schools and affordable housing choices throughout the metropolitan area.

EHEP pursues its mission through a three-part strategy:

- Coalition and partnership building and advocacy;
- Community education and informed public conversation; and
- Assistance to communities in becoming more inclusive and integrated

Programs, activities, and major accomplishments

Coalition Building and Advocacy to Inform Public Decision Making

Since its inception, EHEP has spent a significant portion of its energies in discussions and collaborations with other organizations and groups. These have led to several jointly sponsored projects as well as a fuller understanding of the need for an organization and collaborative that can link the issues of housing and education and develop the much needed consensus and leadership to move the metropolitan community forward and to connect these issues to the challenges of race, poverty and segregation. After a year of creating the organization, the second and subsequent years have been devoted to extensive research of the literature, one-on-one interviews and multi-participant focus group meetings with a broad range of community leaders and experts in the fields of housing, education, anti-racism and metropolitan stability, and building a broad-based coalition and partnerships that can work on these combined issues. Our unique contributions have been (1) to encourage the linkage of housing and school issues in the work of existing organizations and connecting this work to issues of race and (2) to promote civil, informed dialogue across economic, racial and political lines as one important way to make progress on these issues. Some of our major accomplishments have included:

- Coalescing with both housing and education organizations to focus on the re-drafting of the State Board of Education's desegregation rule, to link school desegregation issues with the broader issues of housing segregation and metropolitan stability (1996 and 1998).
- Encouraging a coalition working with the newly formed Minnesota Fair Housing Center on a fair housing testing campaign in suburban Hennepin County to frame the issue of housing discrimination in the context of schools and broader life opportunities (beginning in 1996).
- Engaging the Minneapolis Public Schools and the Mayor of Minneapolis to support and assist in the development of the community circles project and, following a presentation sponsored by the Family Housing Fund, encouraging a study of the linkage between housing/household stability and educational achievement in Minneapolis, which led to *The Kids Mobility Project* (1997).
- Collaborating with and supporting MICAH's (Metropolitan Interfaith Council on Affordable Housing) fair housing initiative proposal to HUD to jointly develop, with the Illusion Theater, a series of theater events that highlight the need for metro-wide fair and affordable housing for people of all backgrounds and to deal forthrightly with community resistance, discriminatory practices, stereotypes and fears that impede the development of affordable housing. EHEP is represented at each of the theater events and is specifically co-sponsoring the Minneapolis and Saint Paul performances (1997 - 1999).. The suggestion of a series of theatre events came out of the first round of community circles.
- Participating by invitation as an advisor to the consulting teams working with interested parties to mediate the currently pending educational adequacy and educational equity lawsuits (NAACP v. State of Minnesota and St. Paul School District v. State of Minnesota). Community circle partners also participated in the mediation planning retreat organized by the principal parties in the lawsuits (1997 and 1998). In early 1998, EHEP's director testified in support of the mediation process before the Minneapolis School Board, which subsequently endorsed the same position. EHEP has been asked to continue to be a resource group to the

mediation process and is participating in mediation workshops in 1999. Many of the ideas that came out of the first round of community circle conversations have been used to contribute to settlement proposals for mediation of the lawsuits.

- Working with the Alliance for Metropolitan Stability and the Right to Housing Campaign to develop an Inclusionary Housing legislative proposal that could provide the basis for a new approach to expanding affordable housing choices and mixed income housing development in state housing legislation (1998 and 1999).. The inclusionary housing and zoning concept was one of the major ideas generated by the 1997 Circle conversations.
- Jointly sponsoring with the Urban Coalition and the Minnesota Minority Education Partnership a series of issue forums on the State's proposed new Desegregation Rule, the Inclusionary Education Program Rule (revision of the originally proposed Diversity Rule), and requirements for teacher licensure. The EHEP board also contributed substantive written testimony to the State Board of Education on the proposed changes to the Profiles of Learning (1998). and the revised desegregation rule (1999)..
- Contributing to the work of the Minneapolis Affordable Housing Task Force through its Director who serves on the Task Force (1998 - 1999). Our message have been that (1) recommendations focus not only on providing needed housing but also on expanding people's locational choices and access to economic, social and educational opportunities, (2) recommendatins focus on barriers related to race, not only income, and (3) recommendations focus on metropolitan as well as local remedies. Our message to reverse or at least avoid concentrating poverty has also been heeded.

Assisting Communities in Becoming More Inclusive and Integrated

EHEP has been less involved with this strategy since it largely evolves from the other two strategies. However, at least two examples stand out.

Following the first round of community circles, we were invited by the Minnesota Fair Housing Center to assist them in planning and implementing a Hennepin County and Metropolitan Council funded workshop for suburban housing and planning officials and human rights commissions on promising tools and practices for implementing fair and affordable housing. In September 1998 over 100 city officials and developers attended the "Building Inclusive Communities" Conference in Bloomington. EHEP worked with the Fair Housing Center and the Alliance for Metropolitan Stability to sponsor programs that highlighted promising practices in other parts of the country. EHEP helped to bring the Vice President of Chicago's Leadership Council for Metropolitan Open Communities to the Twin Cities to discuss the Oak Park experience in becoming and sustaining one of the most successful racially integrated cities in the United States.

In the East Metro Area we were invited by the Office of Interdistrict Initiatives to participate in the planning process to develop a multi-school district governance structure to expand inter-district and integrated education initiatives involving Saint Paul and suburban East Metro school districts. We participated in planning workshops in late 1998 early 1999. Future inter-district initiatives will depend on state funding.

Following the second round of Community Circle conversations, we anticipate increasing opportunities to collaborate with, broker and provide assistance to communities and school districts attempting to become more multiculturally, racially and economically inclusive..

Civic Engagement and Community Conversation

By far the most significant and distinctive work of EHEP is the "Choices for Community" Community Circle Project, recently renamed 'Conversations at the Crossroads.' In 1997, the Community Circle Collaborative launched dialogue project in which citizens from different walks of life came together, 5 to 15 at a time, in community circles throughout the metropolitan area to discuss the future of the Twin Cities area with a focus on two central questions:

- "What are the impacts of existing patterns of residential, economic and racial segregation on the educational achievement and life opportunities to Twin Cities area children and families?" and
- "What can or should we do, as individuals and as a community, to enhance educational success, and

housing and economic opportunities for *all* children and adults in the Twin Cities metropolitan area?"

Community Circles of citizens from thirty-five localities were convened by a variety of local sponsoring organizations. All were provided with discussion guides, prepared by the Collaborative, and were moderated by facilitators, recruited and trained by the Collaborative. The conversations culminated in a Metropolitan Citizens Forum held at Macalester College Chapel, moderated by Saint Paul's George Latimer and Minneapolis' Vivian Jenkins Nelsen. A report that synthesized the findings, conclusions and action recommendations coming out of the community circles was prepared and has been shared with the project partners and various decision makers in the metropolitan area.

Since the conclusion of the first round of conversations, EHEP and its collaborative partners have been evaluating the first round, identifying promising practices that advance educational success and expand affordable housing choices, sharing the results of the conversations with various stakeholders (e.g., the West Metro Education Program, Minnesota Minority Education Partnership, Inc.), and revising and improving the process for a second round of conversations.

During 1997 and 1998, we also assisted with the launching of other civic engagement projects with similar objectives, including the Interfaith Action/Saint Paul Ecumenical Action Council's interfaith dialogue and circles and action forums on poverty, segregation and sprawl, the National Conference of Community and Justice town hall meetings on education and race (we co-subsided two forums in Minneapolis and Saint Paul), the National Days of Dialogue on Race Relations (we sponsored three forums in the Twin Cities) and the Saint Paul Pioneer Press civic journalism project "Poverty Among Us." In April, 1998 we co-sponsored a Study Circles training workshop with the national Study Circles Resource Center, which greatly increased local capacity for spawning additional civic engagement projects. The workshop also attracted new partners interested in launching the second round of community circles and conversations about education, housing and race.

The second round of Community Circle conversations is now underway. A round of Minneapolis Circles, co-sponsored by the Minneapolis Public Schools Office of Family and Community Services and 5 other partner organizations, took place in the fall of 1998 and served as a prototype for metropolitan-wide conversations which began in February.

The second round (1999 Community Circle Dialogues) is built on the lessons learned from the first round. It includes a broader marketing effort and additional groups not represented in the first round, such as the business community, labor unions, outer suburban residents and employers, significantly more residents and leadership groups in Saint Paul and East Metro, and a wider range of participants from communities of color. These conversations are more clearly focused on systemic barriers and changes needed to better integrate our metropolitan community and housing patterns across barriers of race and class, and, in the process, bring children from different backgrounds to more integrated and diverse learning environments. The discussions also include an action component, including an Action Forum, that will focus on promising practices already underway in various parts of the the country and the Twin Cities (e.g., East Metro Interdistrict Initiatives), connect participants with opportunities for involvement in their community, and more directly connect the work of the community circles with the work of key decision makers and decisions-making bodies.

The quality and scope of the discussion process has also been improved. Thirty different organizations contributed to the development of a new discussion guide. A faith compendium has been prepared by the Metropolitan Interfaith Council on Affordable Housing for use in community circles sponsored by congregations. We are also developing an optional session on race and economic development, to be used in conversations sponsored by chambers of commerce and business associations. To assure better reports on the conversation results, we have developed reporting forms for use by the scribes. A partnership with the Society of Professionals in Dispute Resolution and Minnesota Facilitators Network has resulted in a more user-friendly discussion guide and a facilitator's version of the guide. These two groups are recruiting and training the facilitators, most of whom are experienced facilitators from their own ranks. This is also contributing to more productive conversations. We have also secured training opportunities for the facilitators, scribes and sponsors, including a workshop on understanding community and institutional racism delivered by James and Nadine Addington of the Minnesota Churches Anti-Racism Initiative, and a workshop on cross-cultural

communications provided by Intercultural Communications Workshops, Inc., another community circle partner. These opportunities serve as volunteer compensation and as useful tools for deepening and enhancing the conversations.

At the conclusion of Round Two, EHEP and the Community Circle Collaborative will co-sponsor a Citizens Summit with the Minnesota Meeting and Minnesota Public Radio. The Summit will bring together participants from the community circles, who use electronic response technology to discover areas of consensus and to prioritize action steps. Many local policy makers will attend the Summit. Round two will help inform the policy and action agendas of partners in the collaborative as well as public decision-making bodies.

Organizational Structure and Administration

Project Partners

The success of EHEP's efforts rest largely on an active and committed board of directors and the strong partnership of organizations and volunteers that are part of the Community Circle Collaborative. The Community Circles project was founded by the Collaborative. Collaborative partners (past and present) are identified in the attachments. The Collaborative has been essential for (1) assuring racial, cultural, ethnic, generational, political and geographic diversity of voices in the conversations, (2) fulfilling the various tasks, objectives and leadership requirements of the project using the best possible resources, and (3) assuring that the results of the community circle conversations are widely dispersed and receive widespread attention. The Community Circle partners include:

- **Organizing partners**, who help to design the process, frame the discussion issues, prepare the discussion guide, recruit and train/orient sponsors, facilitators, scribes, and resource partners, publicize the project and work with the media, and assist with reporting and evaluation and the details of project follow-through.
- **Resource associates**, who supply background research and expertise on the issues, written and audio-visual materials to inform the discussions and provoke spirited but thoughtful conversation, media coverage, project documentation, and/or financial and in-kind backing of project activities.
- **Sponsors** (typically organizations) that supply meeting places (may include child care, transportation, translators, hospitality and other services as needed) for the conversations, schedule the conversations, publicize the circles, recruit circle participants, convene the circle dialogues, and secure scribes who will capture in written record the highlights of each conversation.
- **Facilitators**, who have professional experience in mediation and facilitation, who moderate the community circle conversations (organizations such as the Society of Professionals in Dispute Resolution and the Minnesota Facilitator Network are partnering with EHEP and the Wilder Foundation to provide facilitators and co-facilitators for each circle conversation).. The facilitator organizations also participate in delivering facilitator training to all participating facilitators.
- **Participants** from many diverse backgrounds who commit to 5 sessions of 2 hours each and participate with 8 to 15 other citizens in informed and deliberative dialogue. The participants are the heart and soul of the Community Circles project..

In-kind support from the organizing partners alone in the 1997 circles amounted to more than \$15,000 in documented resources. A similar or greater contribution has been made during the 1998 circles in Minneapolis and in preparing for the 1999 circles. We expect to double this figure in 1999.

Diversity of Participation

EHEP works through its partners in many diverse settings throughout the metropolitan area. It is important to us that the groups we work with are representative of the communities with which we work, and reflect the diversity of the metropolitan community. Nine of the original twenty organizing partners are groups representing primarily interests of communities of color. Many of the new groups recruited for the current round of conversations are culture specific and multicultural organizations. Partner and sponsor organizations include congregations, non-profits, human rights commissions, neighborhood associations and community councils, youth groups, schools, family and community councils, university and college groups, a union local, a chamber of commerce, voter organizations, and city governments. Although there has been a reasonably good demographic and geographic balance of sponsors, we are striving to achieve better representation of the outer

suburbs, the business community recent immigrants and students. Public officials are also being actively invited to participate in second round of circles. Thanks to our principal partnership with "Cities at Work" and the Wilder Foundation, we have achieved excellent representation of Saint Paul communities. With the help of Saint Paul United Way, participation of communities of color will be significant in the Saint Paul conversations..

EHEP and the Community Circle Project are distinctive from many other organizations and initiatives in their unique methodology and objective of engaging citizens and creating dialogue among disparate parts of the Twin Cities metropolitan area not only to discuss issues and challenges, but also to generate ideas and suggestions that can lead to common solutions to those issues and challenges. No other organization in the Twin Cities area is currently engaged in this kind of sustained, collaborative, grassroots, dialogue and education/consensus-building and mobilizing effort that specifically links housing, education and race.

Board of Directors

Our success also rests on an active, committed and diverse board of directors. The board of directors has been expanded each year and now includes 16 members.; all are key leaders in fields and institutions related to the mission of EHEP. The board has direct and extensive leadership experience in addressing issues of education, housing and race. Board member's connections and contacts in the community facilitate EHEP's ability to accomplish its objectives. The board is responsible for setting policy direction for the organization; it also plays an active role in advancing the community circle project and in bringing new partners into the collaborative.

Board members come from business, civic, legislative, community service, housing advocacy, civil rights, media, education and law backgrounds. Seven of the sixteen board members, including the president, are African Americans. Southeast Asian Americans, or Latino Americans. Four additional African Americans and Asian Americans have served on the board.

A list and brief description of the board of directors is included in the attachments.

Staff and Volunteers

Two individuals currently staff EHEP: a full-time executive director and a part-time administrative assistant. EHEP has also been successful in procuring the services of three part-time student interns and research assistants over the life of our project, and we expect to do so again. The Center for Urban and Regional Affairs, the University of St. Thomas, the Higher Education Consortium for Urban Affairs, and Augsburg College are our principal internship partners. Use of consultants and 'pro bono' services has also augmented the ability of EHEP to carry out its work. Most important are in-kind staff and volunteer resources that have been provided by partner organizations. EHEP has a fiscal services agreement with Augsburg College to assure that all financial services are carried out.

Two of the five staff who have worked for EHEP are persons of color (African American and Asian American).. Currently staff include:

Dick Little, Executive Director of the Education and Housing Equity Project, who is responsible for all aspects of the organization and project. He has an extensive background in housing, education, race relations and use of study circles. For 20 years he was a planning and housing official with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Since 1990, he has been a research associate with the International Institute for Inter-racial Interaction (INTER-RACE) at Augsburg College, a technical assistant with the Community Policing Institute, a member of the strategic planning team for the City of New Orleans Economic Empowerment Zone and Enterprise Community program, and a consultant to the Minneapolis Public Schools. He has also served as policy chair, parent representative on the site leadership council, and co-founder of the foundation at Ramsey International Fine Arts School in Minneapolis. He is in his eleventh year of serving as a mayoral appointee on the Minneapolis Planning Commission, and has a graduate degree in urban planning. He also serves as an officer on the boards of several non-profit organizations including the Metropolitan Interfaith Council on Affordable Housing (MICAH)..

Pam Jewson, Administrative Assistant at EHEP, who brings previous experience as an administrative

assistant and field producer at KSTP, a graphic artist with the Star Tribune, and project development coordinator with the Linden Hills Neighborhood Revitalization Program

Other staff, organizational and resource partners participating in this grant are described as part of the grant project request.

Summary:

Number of Board members:	16
Number of full-time paid staff:	1
Number of part-time paid staff:	1
Number of volunteers:	100's (see description of community circle collaborative, above)

* Student Interns (2) were part of the staff in 1998; efforts are underway to secure new interns for 1999

B. PURPOSE OF GRANT

Situation and Need

As the Twin Cities have become increasingly diverse in the 1990's, there has been growing public concern that economic and racial segregation in housing and among our communities is having a profound impact on the overall health and well being of the metropolitan region, and on education and employment opportunities in particular. At the same time, our institutions, especially our schools, have been tested by this diversity and have been found wanting: over half of students, mostly students of color, in core city schools are failing pass the graduation standards tests. While the overall economy has steadily improved, the unemployment rate among communities of color in the central cities and the lack of affordable housing metro-wide is at crisis levels.

A study by Douglas Massey and Nancy Denton in their publication *American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass* revealed that the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area is among the ten most segregated in the country. Studies have also shown that the Twin Cities ranks third highest among all U.S. urban areas in persons of color living in poverty. The work of State Representative Myron Orfield in his book *Metropolitica: A Regional Agenda for Community and Stability*, and of Dr. John Powell of the Institute on Race and Poverty at the University of Minnesota in his study *Examining the Relationship Between Housing, Education and Persistent Segregation* have also given testimony to the depth and breadth of issues of segregation, racial and economic isolation and growing disparities between inner and outer communities in the Twin Cities, and their importance in "unlocking the doors" to addressing other important issues facing the region.

Public actions to grapple with these issues have been growing in number. Examples include:

- education and housing lawsuits (NAACP v. State of Minnesota, Saint. Paul School District v. State of Minnesota, and Holman v. Cisneros)
- legislation (the Metropolitan Livable Communities Act)
- the creation and expansion of civic and advocacy groups (e.g., Alliance for Metropolitan Stability, Interfaith Action and St. Paul Ecumenical Action Council, the Minnesota Right to Housing Campaign and the Metropolitan Interfaith Council on Affordable Housing)
- formation of new compacts of school districts and inter-district initiatives (West Metro Education Program and the East Metro Office of Interdistrict Initiatives), and
- new state rules addressing graduation standards, school desegregation, educational diversity and criteria for inclusive schools, and standards for multicultural competency in teacher licensure requirements.

These actions, and the frequently divisive debates they have generated, have surfaced the need for developing a common understanding and basis of action for moving forward on the issues of education, housing and race in the Twin Cities metropolitan area..

Public conversation about the possibilities for inclusive and integrated communities has been rare, usually divisive and poorly informed, not conducted on a sustained or systematic basis and with too few groups or individuals involved, and virtually no broad public consensus or support. We began our project in the belief that such adverse conditions imperil the chances of building more inclusive communities and integrated

institutions in the Twin Cities metropolitan area.

The principal danger is that public discourse about these issues fast settles into simplistic, distorted polarities – neighborhood schools versus forced busing, quality education versus school desegregation, deconcentration of poverty versus preservation of existing affordable housing, cultural identity versus assimilation, individual choice versus collective responsibility, core cities versus suburbs, rich versus poor, and of course, whites versus communities of color (especially African Americans). A climate of public opinion poisoned by these divisions inevitably limits what policy makers (and, as we have found in our initial discussions, advocates and community leaders as well) feel they are able to do; we speculate that this climate even limits what judges feel *they* are able to do. In this kind of environment, the issues are captured by the most extreme and negative voices, which are then amplified by the media. The public sits and listens. Few want to get involved, because of the fear of getting burned in the heated controversy and because of the not-unreasonable judgment that little will be accomplished under these conditions. Others do not get involved because they do not perceive that these issues are their problem (i.e., they are somebody else's problem). Those who *do* take action typically call for reforms without touching on the vital questions of race and segregation.

There is a need to involve many groups and the broader public in civil, informed conversations about the possibilities for and benefits of integrated and inclusionary communities. There is a need to expand the serious discussion of these issues beyond the courtrooms, the academic halls, emotional public hearings and partisan legislative debates. As many people as possible, from as many different stations in life should be participating in the conversation about this issue. The discourse should not be limited to the invectives of "talk radio," the well-intentioned opinions of newspaper editorials, the sociological jargon of academia or the legal technicalities of the courts.

The issue is developing rapidly. The question is who will be involved in the public discourse, and how will that discourse be framed. Unfortunately, past experience shows that these issues are easily polarized – and stay polarized. We believe that this familiar yet unfortunate outcome can be averted by reframing the issues in terms of their importance to health of the entire community, by organizing a wide range of groups that have a potential stake in integration, by engaging broad-based public participation in informed, civil conversations about what segregation and integration involves and by identifying and articulating promising practices and sources of support to communities and community institutions as they seek to become more inclusive and better integrated.

Our Response

Our response has been to implement informed community conversations about the challenges of racial, economic and residential segregation and unequal opportunity and achievement in our schools. The conversations have proven to be worthwhile and have contributed to building greater public understanding and expanded support for educational equity and inclusionary housing initiatives. We learned a great deal from the conversations, most importantly what can be done to make them more effective in subsequent rounds. The "public voice" that came out of the conversations reflected a growing understanding of the complexities of the issues citizens were grappling with, but also the need to move toward informed public action. The project is helping to inform the proposed mediation process for settlement of the educational adequacy lawsuits and has expanded public understanding and support for affordable housing.

We want to build on the experience of the first round of community circles and, using what we learned, again, take the conversation about segregation and race, the gap between the cost of housing and what people can afford, and achievement gap in education to neighborhood centers, public libraries, schools, places of business, living rooms, and backyards – the places where ordinary people live their lives and where the real task of building inclusive communities must take place. We wish to encourage and inform public conversation and deliberation that will help lead people to a more informed, more effective understanding of the effects of segregation and lack of choice, why the choice to integrate is important, and how removal of barriers to choice can be accomplished. Through this process, we hope that people move beyond "tolerance" to understand the value of inclusion and of an integrated society for themselves, for other people, and for society as a whole. We also hope to see new kinds of action and interaction across racial, ethnic and economic boundaries to make our communities livable for all citizens.

Experience has shown and we have no illusions that all people will be persuaded, or be willing to participate. There are, after all, real conflicts of interest and conflicts of values about these issues. These will not be dissolved by talk alone. But without a concerted, *and sustained* effort to bring people together for informed and honest conversation, the most extreme voices will remain to frame the issue. Public-spirited conversation will be drowned out by shrill debate; our common interests and values will get lost in a sea of opposition and conflict. Informed, collective action must be preceded by informed and mutual conversation.

Specific Project Activities, Goals and Objectives

The *Choices for Community* Community Circle Project has and continues to be developed and organized by a partnership of organizations representing diverse segments of the community. To enable the kind of civic conversation we envisioned, the Collaborative developed "Community Circles," an approach to community dialogue that draws from elements of four different, nationally and locally recognized models for civic engagement and discussion:

- "Study circles" promoted by the Study Circles Resource Center in Pomfret, Connecticut;
- The National Issues Forums, a public deliberation project begun by the Kettering Foundation in Dayton, Ohio; and
- The Communities of Color Empowerment Model (COCEM) of the Minnesota Minority Education Partnership in Minneapolis, Minnesota, and
- The ORID model developed by the Minnesota Facilitators Network and the Society of Professionals in Dispute Resolution.

The Community Circle Dialogues (or conversations) combines the unique elements from each of the above approaches to bring together community members from diverse backgrounds, to engage them in deliberative discussion, to provide educational and technical resources that inform their conversations, and to develop action agendas and connect citizens to action opportunities and promising practices.

The Community Circle Project is engaging a broad cross-section of the Twin Cities metropolitan community to study, discuss, and build a common understanding of the issues of racial and economic segregation in the region and their effect on education, employment, and broader "life opportunities." It is intended to be a catalyst for promoting greater community involvement and action on these issues, including expanded efforts to decrease housing segregation and increase affordable housing choices, decrease the gap in educational achievement along racial and economic lines and increase opportunities for successful education in an integrated setting. The circles include a broad cross-section of the both "non-traditional" participants (low-income families and communities of color) and "traditional" participants in a community-wide dialogue about these complex, interconnected issues. Experience in the first round of conversations suggests that community circles can provide unique settings for collaborative learning, for working through often polarizing social and political issues like these, for facilitating honest conversation, and for building more productive exchanges about the proposals for building more inclusive organizations and communities. As similar projects elsewhere in the country have shown, such "circles" broaden perspectives, deepen understanding, and inspire participants to become more involved in the public and civic life of their community. They can also lead to new ways to address difficult and complex issues and to constructive community and legislative initiatives.

The second round of community circle conversations build on the experience and lessons of the first round conversations. We have developed a newly revised and improved discussion guide (based on consultation with and participation of 32 organizations) with a facilitator's version and a participant's version to help further focus the conversations; We are using more experienced facilitators resulting from a formal partnership with the Society of Professionals in Dispute Resolution and the Minnesota Facilitators Organization; We have broadened our recruiting effort to expand participation by populations under-represented in the first round, most notably through a formal partnership with the Wilder Foundation and Saint Paul "Cities At Work" partners, and we have placed a greater emphasis on follow-through and action that citizens, organizations and the community or region can take following the discussions. At the conclusion of the conversations, we will hold an Action Forum. The Wilder Foundation will also conduct a "Call to Action" Forum for circle participants and the public as part of the "Cities at Work" forum series.

Specific activities and a timeline for accomplishing the 1999 Community Circles and the results they are intended to realize are outlined in the attachments.

Project Resources

In addition to EHEP staff, those involved in achieving these activities include the following:

Paul Kiley, a media, communications and marketing consultant with past experience as head of the California Literacy Program. He is providing 'pro bono' services to help market the project to potential sponsors and participants, the public and the media..

Barbara Blackstone, State Mediator with the Minnesota Office of Dispute Resolution and Mediation, and an officer of the Society of Professionals in Dispute Resolution (SPIDR), Minnesota Chapter. Barbara is heading up the process of recruiting, training and assigning facilitators. She and a cadre of facilitators from SPIDR facilitated the Minneapolis Community Circles in fall of 1998. Over 50 facilitators are moderating the 1999 Community Circles. They are performing this service voluntarily. In return for their services, we are providing training workshops for the facilitators on subjects ranging from "Understanding Community and Institutional Racism" to "Cross-cultural Communications Skills.."

Sponsor representatives, who host the circles and/or arrange the meeting places for the circle dialogues, and *scribes* who record and prepare reports on the discussions. Sponsors and scribes are volunteers or paid staff providing in-kind services..

A *Community Circle working group* of individuals from the EHEP board and volunteers and staff from community circle partner organizations assist planning and carrying out the details of implementing the community circle project (voluntary/in-kind)..

Jeff Swenson, Augsburg College business and financial accountant, who will be providing payroll and fiscal services to EHEP in 1999.

EHEP has made extensive and creative use of interns, volunteers and consultants (paid and in-kind) in the past and will continue to do so in 1999 (writers, graphic designers, training professionals, speakers, etc.). James and Nadine Addington of the Minnesota Churches Anti-Racism Initiative are delivering the workshops on understanding community and institutional racism. Karima Bushnell of Intercultural Communications Workshops, Inc. is providing cross-cultural communications training to the facilitators. Feigenbaum Design Group and Community Media Services provide our graphic and design services. Interns from HECUA (the Higher Education Consortium for Urban Affairs) and CURA (the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs) have provided research and writing services. Nikki Carlson of Interfaith Action and principal of EYDYA, Inc. has provided 'pro bono' services for developing our data base and communications plan.

We are also being assisted by some of our collaborating partners with the organization of the project. In Saint Paul, we are carrying out the community circles as an integral part of the 'Cities at Work' Forums co-sponsored by the *Wilder Foundation*. Barb Rose, editor of *Community Matters* at Wilder, and her staff is working with us to organize 'Cities at Work' community circles in Saint Paul. They have also developed their own discussion guide adapted from the *Choices for Community* guide. Staff of the *League of Human Rights Commissions* is working with us to enable suburban human rights commissions to take the lead role in sponsoring community circles in their communities and partnering with other organizations to implement the circles. Our national partner, the *Study Circles Resource Center*, has and will continue to provide substantial in-kind support to our project. Cable TV networks such as *Saint Paul Neighborhood Network (SPNN)* are providing videographic services for documenting and broadcasting the project (e.g., the East and West Metro "Kick-Off" Forums).

A list and description of the work of the principal project partners is included in the attachments.

An organizational and project budget is also included in the attachments.

There comes a moment of truth, however, when it becomes clear that the project and collaboration won't work unless EHEP is adequately staffed. Our success to date demands that we expand beyond a one-person non-profit. To effectively carry out its objective of expanding the community circle project and promoting the successful development of inclusive communities and schools, EHEP must create two new, permanent positions in 1999: (1) an administrative assistant to assist the director and to manage the daily operations of EHEP

projects including the community circles project, and (2) a community circles coordinator to oversee and manage the community circles project and coordinate activities with the community circles collaborative. A study has been prepared that has identified and recommended the addition of these staff positions as essential to the continued success of our work. For this reason, we are expanding our budget and funding requests in 1999.

Impact of activities

The proposed activities will benefit the communities we are serving by advancing the agenda and prospects for integrated and equitable education in Twin Cities area public schools, and for integrated and inclusive communities that are open and affordable to all Twin Citians.

The first round of conversations has already been used to inform the areas for mediation of the education lawsuits between the NAACP, Saint Paul Schools and the State of Minnesota. Ideally, the second round of conversations will present a timely opportunity to "test" and discuss the recommendations to the legislature coming out of the first round of mediation talks, focusing on schools. The second round conversations will also present an opportunity to inform a possible second round of mediation meetings focusing on external factors, such as housing, transportation, family and community services, and jobs. The community circle conversations should directly contribute to an informed, mediated settlement that will lead to more equitable, inclusive and integrated education for Twin Cities area students. If mediation does not continue, the results of the circle conversations will nevertheless benefit voluntary initiatives to assure educational success for all students.

The first round of conversations also have contributed to building public awareness, support and commitment to fair and affordable housing throughout the metropolitan region. Barriers to affordable housing created by exclusionary zoning, other regulatory practices, and lack of public resources was identified by over two-third of the circles as a major factor influencing economic, and racial segregation in the Twin Cities. Fair housing violations were also identified as more prevalent than the public generally acknowledges. NIMBYism, frequently displayed at public hearings and planning commission meetings in suburban communities was also highlighted in the conversations. Twelve of the sponsor organizations are or have become members of the Metropolitan Interfaith Council for Affordable Housing and have joined its Housing Advocate Network. In addition, several of the first round sponsors and participants were members of Interfaith Action or Saint Paul Ecumenical Action Council, who went on to model our discussion process among their member congregations and organize a metrowide social justice and action initiative to move the legislature to address city-suburban segregation and racial-economic disparities.

Partly as a result of our project, there were a record number of affordable housing proposals submitted to the State Legislature in 1999. The proposed Inclusionary Housing Initiative is an example of a concept that was "baked" in the community circle conversations. EHEP is one of the endorsers and sponsors of this proposal, which is being spear-headed through the legislature with the assistance of the Alliance for Metropolitan Stability, one of our community circle project partners..

The second round of circle conversations will highlight promising practices for expanding housing choices and will build greater public education, awareness and desire to become involved in supporting practices identified by circle participants as the most promising.

We think that our project will also lead to the already growing agreement on the importance of linking school desegregation/integration issues with the broader issue of housing (and related issues of public transportation and jobs). The project is contributing to greater support by advocate organizations for broader coalitions that embrace both housing and education and other related issues. The Alliance for Metropolitan Stability is an example. Through our coalition building activities we expect that there will be broader public support of housing *and* education reforms that lead to more inclusive schools *and* communities.

The conversation results will be presented as findings, conclusions and possible recommendations to the legislature and other decision-making bodies, and hopefully contribute to better policy making. The circle conversations should also result in greater participation in the civic life of the community by community circle participants, many of whom have not been actively involved in these issues in the past.

C. EVALUATION

How effectiveness will be measured

We intend to measure success in tangible ways. We have been and will continue track specific data about the process and results. We have already used surveys to evaluate the first round and will use focus groups to evaluate the second round of community circle discussions.

Criteria for a successful program and the results you expect to have achieved

Measures of success include the breadth and depth of participation in the study circles by citizens. Measures of breadth and depth include diversity of participants in terms of perspectives and viewpoints, race and ethnicity, place of work or residence, age or generation, family status and economic status. It also includes locations and numbers of participants and conversations. Participant comments about what they got out of the circles experience and how they grew or changed as a result of the experience will also be considered.

The project's impact will also be measured by the extent that our process and the circle findings, conclusions and recommendations are considered and incorporated by stakeholder and sponsor organizations, and by public decision-making bodies, such as school boards, planning commissions, city councils and the State Legislature. Another important measure will be the number of new participants that become involved in the work of one of the promising practices or one of the participating non-profit or community organizations as one way of moving from discussion to action.

We hope to at least double the number of participating community circles that successfully complete a dialogue in the second round from 25 circles to over 50 circles. We intend to have representation of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, Native Americans, and Latino/Chicanos and Mexican Americans as well as African Americans in the circles in numbers reflecting their percentage of the population of the metropolitan area. We are also striving through pairing of circles, cross-culturally competent recruiting and outreach practices, and partnerships with organizations reflecting diverse populations to achieve richly diverse community circle groups. We also aim to engage citizens from outer ring suburbs who presently do not see these issues as their issues. This may be the more difficult, but equally if not more important, challenge..

If these circle discussions receive public attention, raise the level of public awareness, understanding and engagement in creatively addressing issues at the intersection of race, housing and schools, and if they prompt civically informed actions and strategies that lead to more integrated schools and communities, then our project will have been successful.

Who will be involved in the evaluation

The EHEP board and staff and the partner organizations that participate in the Community Circle project will continue to be involved in evaluating the project. The Study Circles Resource Center, one of our national partners is already assisting us in the preparation of evaluation measures and criteria before we begin the second round of community dialogues. In addition, the Wilder Foundation research department is preparing an evaluation strategy for the 'Cities at Work' forums and community circle dialogues in Saint Paul. Their experience and expertise with evaluation will be used to inform the evaluation process for the metro-wide circles project.

How evaluations will be used

The results of the first round of community circle conversations are being used primarily to plan the second round of conversations and also to inform the agendas of participating partners (e.g., MICAH). As previously mentioned, they have also been used in the process of designing the process for mediation of the educational lawsuits.

The results of the second round of conversations will be used to define subsequent strategies for achieving more inclusive, equitable and integrated schools and communities and to inform public policy actions that help to break down barriers to more opportunities and to desegregate the Twin Cities metropolitan area.

PROJECT TIMETABLE

- | | |
|---|---|
| ➤ Evaluate the first round of community circles | Completed 1997 |
| ➤ Co-sponsor National Days of Dialogue groups in the Twin Cities | February 1998 |
| ➤ Issue report sharing the results of the first round of discussions | Completed April 1998 |
| ➤ Co-sponsor study circles informational and training workshop | April 25, 1998 |
| ➤ Prepare revised <i>Choices for Community</i> discussion guide | May - September 1998 |
| ➤ Publish revised discussion guide <i>Conversations at the Crossroads</i> | March 1999 |
| ➤ Recruit new partners and sponsors | Fall/Winter 1998/99 |
| ➤ Co-sponsor "Building Inclusive Communities" Conference and Dinner Event | Sept. 17 & 18, 1998 |
| ➤ Launch Minneapolis Public Schools Community Circles (pilots for 1999 circles) | Oct. - Dec. 1998 |
| ➤ Hold Sponsor Information Workshops | December 9, 1998
January 13, 1998
January 4, 1999 |
| ➤ Issue letter to mayors of Twin Cities area. | January 15, 1999 |
| ➤ National Conversation on Race (co-sponsored by EHEP with NCCJ) | January 21, 1999 |
| ➤ Hold Community Circle "Kick-Off" Forums (West Metro)
(East Metro) | February 4, 1999 |
| ➤ Conduct facilitator and scribe training workshops | January 22, 1999
March 5, 1999 |
| ➤ Hold workshops on Understanding Community and Institutional Racism
(for community circle sponsors, facilitators and scribes) | January 23, 1999
March 6, 1999 |
| ➤ MICAH fair housing theatre event "Like Waters Rolling Down"
Central Presbyterian Church, Saint Paul (co-sponsored by EHEP) | February 7, 1999 |
| ➤ Sponsors convene first community circles | February 1999 |
| Community Circles meet 5 times for 2 hours each session | Feb - June 1999 |
| ➤ Hold mid-point sharing session with facilitators and scribes | April 1999 |

- Co-sponsor "Cities at Work" Forums held in Saint Paul April 28, 1999
May 18, 1999
- Co-sponsor MICAH fair housing theatre event - in Minneapolis April 19, 1999
- in northern metro suburbs May 23, 1999
- Community Circles make presentations to sponsoring organizations' governing bodies April/May 1999
- Hold action forum May/June 1999
- Prepare report to community June - August 1999
- Begin evaluation of circles process and results Summer/Fall 1999
- Begin fall round of 1999 community circles Sept. - Nov. 1999
- Co-sponsor "Cities at Work" Forums III and IV October & Nov. 1999
(includes "Call to Action" Forum at conclusion of Community Circles)
- Hold "Citizens Summit" with the Minnesota Meeting and Minnesota Public Radio Nov. or Dec., 1999
- Complete evaluation process and issue final report to community and January 2000
and metropolitan decision makers
- Set forth Year 2000 Action Agenda Jan. - Feb., 2000

Minnesota Common Grant Application Form

COVER SHEET

Date of application: _____

ORGANIZATION INFORMATION

Community Circle Collaborative (through its Program Sponsor: Metropolitan Interfaith Council on Affordable Housing)

Legal Name of Organization

122 West Franklin Avenue, Suite 320

Address

Minneapolis, MN 55404

(612) 871-8980

(612) 871-8984

City, State, Zip

Telephone

FAX

Individuals Responsible:

Michael Anderson

Director, MICAH

(612) 871-8980

Name of top paid staff

Title

Direct dial Phone #

Contact person (if different from top paid staff)

Title

Direct dial Phone #

Organization Description: (2-3 sentences)

The Community Circle Collaborative (CCC) is a collaborative of numerous organizations and individuals formed specifically to organize a metro-wide dialogue project in which at least 200 people from all walks of life will join together – 5-15 at a time – in “community circles” held throughout the Twin Cities metropolitan area to discuss the question: “How does racial and economic segregation of housing affect educational achievement and opportunities?” The CCC was initiated in the Fall of 1995 by a coalition of community-based organizations, public staff, and individuals working in a variety of fields, including anti-racism, housing, education, religious advocacy, law, and social research.

The Project Sponsor (and fiscal agent) is the Metropolitan Interfaith Council on Affordable Housing (MICAH). MICAH was founded in 1989 by a group of religious leaders, housing advocates, and low income housing developers. It is now a coalition of over 100 Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish congregations and housing organizations dedicated to the vision that every Minnesotan should have a decent, safe, and affordable place to live.

Is your organization an IRS 501 (c) (3) not-for-profit: _____ YES _____ X NO

If no, is your organization a public agency, unit of government:
or religious institution: _____ YES _____ X NO

If no, name of fiscal agent (fiscal sponsor) Metropolitan Interfaith Council on Affordable Housing

AMOUNT AND TYPE OF SUPPORT REQUESTED

The dollar amount being requested: \$ _____

Funds are being requested for (make sure the funder provides the type of support you are requesting, then check the appropriate line).

_____ general operating support _____ capital _____ Other: _____
X _____ project support _____ endowment
_____ start-up costs _____ technical assistance

If project, give project duration 5 Month 1996 Year to 4 Month 1997 Year

If operating support, fiscal year: _____ Month _____ Year to _____ Month _____ Year

Extra copies
signed by
Mike

BUDGET

Total annual organization budget (MICAH): \$ 228,877.00
Total project budget (for support other than general operating). \$ 69,850.00

PROPOSAL SUMMARY

(If operating or start-up support relate to the organization. If project and other support, relate to the project)

Project name (if applying for project support): The Community Circle Collaborative

Please give a 2-3 sentence summary of the request:

This request solicits support for the Community Circle Collaborative (CCC), a collaborative, metro-wide dialogue project for Fall 1996 that will focus on the question: "How does racial and economic segregation of housing affect educational achievement and opportunities?" The project will include the formation of additional partnerships to expand the Collaborative, the development of a *Discussion Guide*, the coordination of 20 diverse, metro-wide community circles, a Kick-Off Event and follow-up Conference, facilitator training, and evaluation and reporting.

Geographic area served:

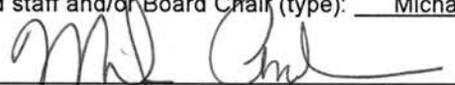
Seven county metropolitan area

Population served:

A minimum of 20 community circles will be convened throughout the metropolitan area. Each community circle will include 5-15 members who represent economically and racially diverse segments of the Twin Cities population. In addition community circle participants will represent a diversity of ethnicity, politics, perspectives, age, etc.

AUTHORIZATION

Name of top paid staff and/or Board Chair (type): Michael Anderson (for Program Sponsor MICAH)

Signature: 

Minnesota Common Grant Application Form

COVER SHEET

Date of application: _____

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Community Circle Collaborative (through its Program Sponsor: Metropolitan Interfaith Council on Affordable Housing)

Legal Name of Organization

122 West Franklin Avenue, Suite 320

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Minneapolis, MN 55404

(612) 871-8980

(612) 871-8984

City, State, Zip

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FAX

Individuals Responsible:

Michael Anderson
Name of top paid staff

Director, MICAH
Title

(612) 871-8980
Direct dial Phone #

Contact person (if different from top paid staff)

Title

Direct dial Phone #

Organization Description: (2-3 sentences)

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Is your organization an IRS 501 (c) (3) not-for-profit: YES NO
If no, is your organization a public agency, unit of government:
or religious institution: YES NO
If no, name of fiscal agent (fiscal sponsor) Metropolitan Interfaith Council on Affordable Housing

AMOUNT AND TYPE OF SUPPORT REQUESTED

The dollar amount being requested: \$ _____

Funds are being requested for (make sure the funder provides the type of support you are requesting, then check the appropriate line).

general operating support capital Other: _____
 project support endowment
 start-up costs technical assistance

If project, give project duration 5 Month 1996 Year to 4 Month 1997 Year
If operating support, fiscal year: Month Year to Month Year

BUDGET

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Geographic area served:

Seven county metropolitan area

Population served:

A minimum of 20 community circles will be convened throughout the metropolitan area. Each community circle will include 5-15 members who represent economically and racially diverse segments of the Twin Cities population. In addition community circle participants will represent a diversity of ethnicity, politics, perspectives, age, etc.

AUTHORIZATION

Name of top paid staff and/or Board Chair (type): Michael Anderson (for Program Sponsor MICAH)

Signature: _____

I. Executive Summary: Principal Findings and Directions for the Future

II. Background: The Community Study Circle Collaborative

"It couldn't happen here." Not in Minneapolis-St. Paul, the political home of Hubert Humphrey: Minnesota, America's sane heartland. . . . The Twin Cities was immune to urban decline, inner-suburban decay, urban sprawl -- and the polarization that has devastated and divided older, larger regions. After all, we were not Chicago, Detroit, or Milwaukee. We were reform minded, and our philanthropic and governmental centers were coordinated and responsive. Then the 1980s hit, marking our Twin Cities with identical patterns of regional polarization. . . . If it could happen here, no American region is immune. Once polarization occurs, the concentration of poverty, disinvestment, middle-class flight, and urban sprawl grow more and more severe.

-- Myron Orfield, Metropolitcs (1997: 1, emphasis added)

State Legislator Myron Orfield was one of the first citizens in the region to realize that Twin Cities communities were becoming increasingly polarized along the lines of race and class. Changes in regional school districts pointed to serious issues of equity in both housing access and public education.

It is within this context that the Community Circle Collaborative (CCC) was launched. CCC is a metro-wide dialogue project that engages citizens from all walks of life, 5-15 at a time, in study circles held throughout the metro area. Originally a partnership among EHEP, the Minneapolis Initiative Against Racism (MIAR), the Minnesota Minority Education Partnership (MMEP), and the Minnesota Fair Housing Center, the CCC initiative has expanded into a wide-ranging coalition of community-based organizations, public staff and officials, and individuals working in a variety of fields, including social justice, race relations, housing, education, religion, law and social research.

CCC's study circles have been charged with discussing two central questions:

- What are the impacts of existing patterns of residential, economic and racial segregation on the educational achievement and life opportunities of Twin Cities area children and families?
- What can or should we do, as individuals and as a community, to enhance educational success and housing and economic opportunities for *all* children in the Twin Cities area?

These are the two critical questions facing the Twin Cities region as it moves toward the 21st Century.

The diversity in our state is greatest among children So this is a long curve. We'd better start getting some of the answers right now, because they're going to affect an entire generation. -- Vivian Jenkins Nelson, INTER-RACE

A. What is a Community Study Circle?

The Community Circle Collaborative process is one way to sample the broadest possible spectrum of opinions within a community. It is also an effective way to generate informed conversations that can lead to new levels of citizenship and civic action. This process has been used all over the country to create a public voice about important issues and to help ensure that that voice is heard by decision-makers. Without the effort to bring people together for informed and civil conversation, the most extreme voices are free to frame the issues. Public-spirited conversation will be drowned out by shrill debate, our communities will become even more polarized, and our common interests and values will get lost in a sea of opposition and conflict. There is a need to create a public voice that recognizes our common interests and generates consensus about, or at least informed consent to, policies and actions designed to further the common good.

Why is this public conversation important? In part, it's because most of what we see today in the media and in public meetings is "positioning" or "posturing" -- that is, highly stylized communication. The purpose of this style is to advocate one point of view or another, at the expense of dialogue and, often, of decorum. Although widely accepted in the media, this type of communication ultimately leads to public cynicism and withdrawal from the political process. Not many people wish to become strident enough to compete in such a contrived forum. Community circles offer a refreshing change from the narrow and often restrictive discussions of the past and the competitive debates encouraged by the political process.

To "converse" means to "share words with others". It carries the implication of equality of opportunity and status, and of the give-and-take of exchange. Conversations, which shares ideas, thoughts and perspectives, are intended to lead to understanding. They help to clear the air by honestly reflecting the differences and similarities among the conversants.

The study circle is a well-tested, practical method for adult learning and social change. In a study circle, 5-20 people meet several times to discuss the various choices the community might make concerning a social or political issue. Complex issues are broken down into manageable pieces, and controversial topics are dealt with in depth. Each discussion lasts about two hours and is directed by a well-prepared discussion leader whose role is to aid in lively but focused discussion. The process is informal, democratic and highly participatory, so that the group can capitalize on the experience of all its members.

People acting as citizens create new ways of working together and new ways of taking responsibility for what is publicly all of ours. -- Dick Little, Education and Housing Equity Project

The community circles process recognizes that agreement is not necessary in order for a conversation to be successful. What *are* necessary are listening, reflecting, and speaking from both the head and the heart. Mutual respect and a belief in the enlightening and healing nature of sharing ideas -- across boundaries of ethnicity, geography, age, gender, socioeconomic status and even language -- can go a long way toward making a conversation rewarding for the community as well as the individuals involved. Moreover, they can become vehicles for community problem-solving and development of action coalitions, composed of individual citizens, community organizations, the business community and government, that are better able to effect meaningful change for the better.

In many cultures, circles are symbols of equality, fairness and completeness. The underlying premise of the Community Circles Collaborative process is that solutions to serious and often divisive issues can be found if we put aside our fears and prejudices and work together.

B. The Need: Residential and Educational Segregation in the Twin Cities

The Education and Housing Equity Project (EHEP) was created in early 1995 by a group of education and housing advocates who shared a belief in the pressing need to link the issue of school desegregation with

the broader issue of housing and neighborhood segregation. EHEP's mission is to act as a catalyst to build broad-based coalitions and engage the community in public conversations about and advocacy for promotion of racially and economically inclusive communities that give families of all incomes, races and ethnic backgrounds access to schools and housing throughout the metropolitan area.

The reason it's critical that we talk is because words have different meanings to different people, and we have different levels of interpretation and reflection from our own experience, our history, our expectations, our own knowledge of where we can go.
-- Dr. Josie Johnson

A few alarming facts highlight the nature and depth of the concerns they wished to address:

- The proportion of people of color who live in poverty is higher in Minneapolis/St. Paul than in any other central city in the nation: 37 percent of African-Americans, 40 percent of Native Americans, 32 percent of Latinos.
- Concentrations of poverty and income disparities between the region's central cities and its suburbs are also among the highest in the nation. The poverty rate in Minneapolis is 18.5 percent, in St. Paul 16.7 percent, but in the suburbs it is only 4.5 percent.
- The central cities are home to only 22 percent of the children enrolled in regional schools, but to 55 percent of the region's impoverished elementary school children.
- Between 1970 and 1984, the population of the metro area increased by 9.7 percent but the land it occupied increased by 25.1 percent.

C. Chronology of CCC Events

The Community Circle Collaborative is now more than a year old. A brief chronology of its activities and related events appears below.

December 1996: The "Beyond Busing" Kick-Off Forum was held for project sponsors. This event was attended by more than 100 people representing a wide variety of organizations: churches, advocacy groups, academia, public agencies and foundations. Significantly, the event took place in the suburbs (in the St. Louis Park City Council chambers), making it clear from the beginning that this was not a central-city effort but a metro-wide effort. The first two speakers, former St. Paul Mayor George Latimer and education expert Josie Johnson, Ph.D., helped to set the context of the project and to encourage and motivate participants. The two speakers who followed them, Curt Johnson, chair of the Metropolitan Council; and Yusef Mgeni, President of the Urban Coalition, provided information and insights regarding the breadth and depth of segregation problems and costs in the metropolitan area. Following the speakers, individuals representing the state legislature, an outer-ring suburban church, an inner-ring suburban school, a nonprofit housing developer, the media and the Minneapolis Mayor's Office all described why they planned to participate in the project and urged others to join them. As the event concluded, many new sponsors submitted their pledges to participate by organizing study circles.

February 1997: Training for study-circle facilitators was held, and the first Discussion Guide for participants was issued.

March-June 1997: Study circle discussion groups met 3-5 times each to discuss the two questions given above. Each group produced a brief report summarizing its discussion and findings. Nearly 350 people

participated in these discussions.

May 1997: CCC held a Community Forum at Macalester College in St. Paul. This forum was attended by many of the individuals who had participated in study circles and gave them a chance not only to share the results of their deliberations and but also to explore the extent of commonalities among the different groups. The Forum featured Martha McCoy, the Executive Director of the (national) Study Circles Resource Center, whose presentation was followed by two "conversations." The first, moderated by Vivian Jenkins Nelsen, President and CEO of INTER-RACE, focused on the first study-circle question (regarding impacts); the second, moderated by George Latimer, addressed the second question, which focuses on potential solutions. (Section III of this report summarizes the findings of all the study circles.)

June 1997: The Institute on Race and Poverty delivers to the McKnight Foundation a report entitled "Examining the Relationship Between Housing, Education, and Persistent Segregation." This report identifies the Twin Cities region as one of the ten most segregated metropolitan regions in the United States.

The Twin Cities have reached an important time to consider which path it will follow. This community has already begun to creep down the path so familiar to many large urban areas. If the Twin Cities community is to reverse its course, it must begin now. This community must seriously examine and confront what is happening here, and it must come together for real, proven solutions. -- The Institute on Race and Poverty, University of Minnesota

July 1997: All study circle reports were submitted to EHEP. In addition, facilitators and group organizers completed a questionnaire intended to help the study-circle organizers to learn more about the process -- successes as well as difficulties -- and to glean suggestions concerning how better to proceed in the next round of discussions.

July-October 1997: Individual participants who represented interested groups made presentations to their respective organizations, local communities and constituencies.

September 1997: The National Conference on Race Relations and America's Public Education System takes place. One of the discussion sites is the Twin Cities. Among the practical issues identified are housing segregation, economic inequity, and the need for long-term solutions rather than quick fixes.

April 1998: The final report of the first round of study circles, "Beyond Busing: The First Metrowide Dialogue on the Challenges of Education and Housing Segregation," is issued.

III. Study Circle Reports

A. Issues

We are in very deep denial. We believe we aren't like Detroit, but we are; it's just happening more slowly here.

The necessary first step in trying to solve thorny social problems is to ensure that those problems are understood in much the same way by all. The Community Circles Collaborative therefore focused its study groups' initial attention on issue identification and discussion.

The issues identified by CCC participants fell into four fairly distinct groupings:

- Issues related to regional growth and equity in terms of investment, employment and social relations;
- Systemic issues related to housing segregation and neighborhood quality;
- Systemic issues related to education; and
- Issues that arise primarily at the level of the individual.

A small degree of liberty has been taken to clarify meaning or to combine similar thoughts expressed in different ways by more than one participant or study circle. Every effort has been made, however, to retain the essence of what appeared in the study circle reports.

Issues shown in italic type were identified by more than one study group.

1. *Issues of regional growth and equity*

When asked to determine how many societies the Twin Cities have become, people responded in two different ways. One group suggested that we have become "three societies: The very rich, working people, and the poor." Another described it differently: "Two -- those who work and those who don't." Regardless of how it is said, though, there was a strong recognition among participants that the region has become polarized into distinct, and often mutually distrusting, camps.

The issues that appear in this grouping deal with the broad context of regional equity -- and inequity. They cluster around three topics: investment, employment and social relations.

Investment:

Spatial mismatch between available fiscal and economic resources and high-order fiscal and social needs -- for example, northern part of region needs more infrastructure

Biases in business lending that shortchange women- and minority-owned businesses

Need for more entrepreneurship programs, e.g., micro-loans, money circles

Perceived and real disadvantages of central-city sites, due to crime, presence of pollutants and an unskilled workforce

A focus on the short-term and the bottom line, disregarding long-standing evidence that a "rising tide" does not lift all boats

Shortage of businesses that are committed to being good corporate citizens

Growth containment affects provision and cost of infrastructure

*Suburbanites like to have the benefits of the city
but do not like to pay for them.*

Employment:

Spatial mismatch between available jobs and many of the unemployed -- e.g., the northern part of the region needs to provide more jobs
Biases in job hiring and wage-setting practices
Shortage of reverse-commute options that can take inner-city workers to suburban jobs
Shortage of quality affordable child care, especially at "non-traditional" work times
Changing workforce demographics: more persons of color, more seniors, more women supporting households
Challenge presented by people who are physically or psychologically unable to "work a 9-5 job"
Underrecognition by business that well-trained employees lead to greater profitability
Lack of benefits with many part-time and low-wage jobs
Jobs accessible to residents of poor communities often go to outsiders
Lack of sufficient interest in and support for entrepreneurship in minority and poor communities

Social relations:

Distortions and stereotypes in media reporting
Reporting of crime that is disproportionate to its occurrence
Need for true justice that is timely, fair and makes wise use of parole and community-service options
Polarization reinforced by racial categories on government forms
General breakdown of family structure and cohesion due to economic demands, lifestyle choices, decline in community support
Perceived need to keep track of people with criminal records (e.g., community right-to-know regulations for known sex offenders)
Tendency for people to remain close to their support networks
Decline in traditional values, especially a decline in personal integrity and responsibility
Lack of courage to make wise but unpopular decisions

*Churches can perpetuate values
but are not always good role models*

2. Systemic issues related to housing and neighborhoods

There was a generally high level of consensus on housing and neighborhood issues, which clustered around two topics: housing stock and neighborhood environment. By far the most often-cited issue was that of exclusionary suburban zoning and development practices, which were mentioned specifically by one-fourth of the reporting groups.

*The people who can afford to pay taxes live out in the suburbs,
and the inner city has been getting poorer and poorer. It will continue
until there is some massive political determination
that we're going to make our inner cities the most attractive places to live,
or at least as attractive for all kinds of people as the suburbs are.*

Housing:

- Lack of investment in poor or declining neighborhoods
- Poor housing stock that repels stable families, discourages investment
- Lead-based paint and other health hazards
- Lack of neighborhood diversity in housing types, which leads to homogeneous populations
- Inflexible central-city zoning and other regulations that prohibit use of many vacant/abandoned buildings as shelter*
- Shortage of affordable housing*
- Punitive rental property taxes
- High cost of land
- Poor enforcement of existing fair housing laws
- Lack of awareness of opportunities and options among low-income households

In Minneapolis, the government is sponsoring the destruction of affordable housing, through zoning, through licensing, through housing codes. The city has destroyed countless affordable neighborhoods.

Neighborhood environment:

- Unequal power in neighborhood/community relations*
- Inadequate resources for general maintenance, including trash pick-up and yardwork
- Lack of resources to facilitate neighborhood involvement
- Transience caused by poor housing stock, low incomes*
- Land-use plans that give highest priority to accommodating cars (e.g., intrusive highway routes)
- Inadequate transit service (frequency, hours, direct routing and choice of destinations)*
- Exclusionary suburban zoning regulations (e.g., minimum lot size and square footage, garage requirements, development fees)*
- Redlining (insurance, lending, cab service, police response)*
- Crime and perceptions of crime*
- Need to improve conditions for those who "remain behind"

More affluent neighborhoods [have] essentially accepted socioeconomic redlining.

3. Systemic issues related to education

Perspectives on the shortcomings of the educational system were quite diverse but fall into two groupings: One focuses on the in-school experience, the other on the interaction between the school and the surrounding community.

The school as educational institution:

- Teachers not living in the community

Few opportunities to experience diversity
 Institutional discrimination: students receiving differential treatment due to race/color, learning ability, economic status, perceived intelligence, and/or athletic ability, which can lead to artificially raised or lowered expectations
 Focus on short-term results when long-term solutions are needed
 Failure to teach the basics
 Lack of adequate [curriculum] structure
 Classes that are too big
 Inability to sustain children's enthusiasm for school beyond 3rd or 4th grade
 Too few minority teachers
 Insufficient counselors and inadequate counseling
 Schools being asked to do far more than teach academics
 Lack of effective means of dealing with children from problem situations; at-risk children "falling through the cracks"

Where we do get the minorities to move out into the suburbs, they have the money, they have the wherewithal, but we . . . have a problem in the sensitivity of our teachers and our educational system . . . One of the biggest problems that [minority kids] are finding is that their teachers are prejudiced. So we move out into the suburbs, and what we encounter are teachers who will not be fair with these kids . . . They're also scared of being in school, because they're afraid of being called names, and if there's a fight, they get kicked out. So there's a racial imbalance.

The school in the community:

The school system is not user-friendly or parent-friendly
 Transience disrupting children's stability, ability to learn
 School violence (e.g., children carrying weapons)
 Unequal distribution of school resources, both within and between school districts
 Perception that central-city schools are underfunded
 Special challenges presented by schools impacted by concentrated poverty
 Lack of adequate transportation/transit, which results in reduced access to extra-curricular activities and school choice
 The public-school monopoly -- lack of competition and choice
 Poor nutrition among school children
 Language barriers among recent immigrants
 Under-educated, over-worked parents who cannot adequately help their children
 [Household] stability affects academic achievement
 Need for transitional housing to support schools

*You can't learn
 if you are hungry.*

4. Issues related to individuals

These issues reflect more general concerns about the state of our society as a whole as well as the plight of individuals within it. Some of these issues are pandemic -- that is, they plague people in all races, classes and locations; others are more specific to particular circumstances, especially the circumstances of those living in areas of concentrated poverty.

Society-wide issues:

- Substance abuse and addiction*
- Breakdown in the institution of marriage
- Lack of recognition for different family types, e.g., extended families
- Lack of self-esteem in children due to inadequate parenting
- Lack of respect for the rights, beliefs and property of others*
- Lack of respect for teachers and other elders*
- Fear leading to isolation, high levels of stress
- Negative stereotyping
- Racism
- Denial of racism/segregation problem
- Need for more welcoming in the community

*'The white teachers don't like us.
When a white kid does something good, they get praised.
When we do something good, they say nothing.'*

Issues more common in areas of concentrated poverty:

- Low incomes/joblessness leading to extralegal economic activity
- Poor parental supervision of children and lack of other supportive/responsible adults
- Lack of employed role models
- Individuals focused on day-to-day survival unlikely to make education a top priority
- Unwillingness or inability to take personal responsibility (e.g., in housing: use of illegal subleases and presence of unaccounted-for tenants)
- Lack of pride in surroundings
- High level of mobility leading to instability in family, education
- Inability to set and work toward goals
- Entitlement mentality promoted by welfare dependency
- Victim mentality promoted by discrimination and dependency

*Describing the problems of the inner city as a result of abstract 'racism' is not helpful
because fighting 'racism' seems a futile exercise.*

B. Potential solutions

We decided early on that the issues of housing, education and jobs were not mutually exclusive, and that if we had to do anything, we had to do all of them One of the things we said is that if the economic bottom line drives the process, then a rising economic tide should diminish segregation. But does it?

The potential solutions that appear here should be regarded as a valuable first cut. As the Community Circles Collaborative proceeds with its second round of discussions, every effort will be made to deepen participants' understanding of the connections among the issues and to help them develop meaningful and effective responses to those issues.

It is also important to remember that many potential solutions are implicit in the issue statements. For example, to address the issue described as “biases in business lending that shortchange women- and minority-owned businesses,” a potential solution might be to work to eliminate those biases, or to find other ways to make more investment capital available to women and minorities. In this sense, the issues lists should not be dismissed as potential sources of ideas.

Again, as was the case with the issues, every attempt has been made to capture the essence of what emerged from the discussants, while also combining and clarifying ideas where appropriate.

*When something isn't working,
try something new.*

1. Employment and opportunity

Suggestions for increasing employment and economic opportunity generally addressed broad topical categories, such as entrepreneurship and child care.

- Adopt the OxFam approach that sets up micro-loan and revolving credit programs (“money circles”) among groups of inner-city residents. This will help to foster entrepreneurship.
- Increase funding for women- and minority-owned businesses.
- Require basic benefits with all full-time jobs.
- Offer incentives to lenders to make business and home loans to low-income persons.
- Recruit corporations as community partners that can help to provide transportation to job sites, child care, and job offers to center-city residents.
- Improve the transit system by expanding reverse-commute options and using a wider variety of vehicle and service types (e.g., company vans, vanpools, dial-a-ride systems, bus-service rerouting).
- Expand the funding for and availability of adequate child care.

We found ourselves going back and forth. First, someone would say, well, it's an economic solution we need here, or it's an economic cause of this problem. And then right away someone else would counter with, it's lack of community, it's 'heart' things. What we eventually came up with is that we have to have solutions that are addressed to both sides of the problem, because one or the other isn't going to do it.

2. Societal relations and resources

Suggestions related to social relations focused on communities of faith and sources of information:

- Partner churches to offer and encourage multi-cultural experiences for their congregations.
- Provide anti-racism training and materials for media staff members.
- Work more through communities of faith and rely more on faith-based programs, which are [often] more successful than comparable secular programs.
- Keep public libraries open for longer hours, especially evenings and weekends.

*Congregations need to move
'outside the congregational walls.'*

3. Housing and neighborhoods

The most logical breakdown of potential solutions in this category is between housing and neighborhoods.

Housing:

- Mix small apartment buildings with other housing types in new developments.
- Allow mixed-use zoning that permits people to live, for example, above stores.
- Increase the flexibility of various codes to assist large families, for example by allowing three persons in each bedroom.
- Increase the number of duplexes and triplexes with resident owners.
- Fund experiments in shared living.
- Expand the supply of transitional housing.
- Experiment with ways to reduce the profit motive vis-a-vis construction and rehabilitation of affordable housing.
- Reinstitute some kind of fair-share housing requirement regionwide.
- Put teeth in the Livable Communities Act and the Community Reinvestment Act.
- Provide better and more consistent code enforcement.
- Increase resources to make landlords accountable for repairs and treatment of tenants.
- Offer more widespread down-payment assistance to persons of limited means.
- Couple household support programs with housing choice and subsidy.
- Test "money circles" as a source of funding for home improvements and other family/household needs.
- Experiment with payment-assistance programs, similar to existing utility-assistance programs (e.g., voluntary payments by utility customers to help those in need).

Neighborhoods:

- Pair seniors and young parents so they can get to know one another and exchange services, for example swapping occasional child care for lawn mowing
- Expand and support Neighborhood Watch programs.
- Improve emergency support systems, as well as awareness of and access to them.

People like to be with people like themselves.

4. Education

Ideas for improving public education ran the gamut from those promoting general improvement for all students, regardless of race or socioeconomic status, to those specifically targeting at-risk youngsters from a wide variety of backgrounds. These suggestions fell into several groupings: curriculum and teaching, student support, school choice, recognition of diversity and community relations.

If we go back to neighborhood schools, poverty areas must have the best, strongest teachers.

Curriculum and teaching improvements:

- Teach all students life skills, such as money management, parenting, how to look for a job and how to select appropriate housing.
- Eliminate state curriculum standards except for testing.

Require academic tests at the elementary, middle-junior high and senior high school levels.
Rate schools on academic achievement.
Develop different learning tracks, including at least one that provides a good education to those who will not go to [an academic]college.
Expand work-study opportunities that do not allow teen-agers to work in fast-food places -- for example, home construction/rehabilitation.
Encourage/recruit corporate sponsorships and internships. Involve businesses in helping students better visualize careers and career paths and learn the skills they will need.
Educate students for civic participation.
Require community-service hours, even before high school.
Equalize school-district spending per child.
Lengthen both the school day and the school year.

*It is time to leave the premise that everyone is qualified to attend college.
It is very important for our country to have mechanics, plumbers, carpenters
and others who perform such useful tasks. Dignity is in all work
and unfortunately that has been lost.*

Student support:

Move away from a “fix the kid” approach to a “fix the system” approach.
Enhance programs that prevent drop-outs.
Offer more tutoring.
Expand mentoring programs.
Expand after-school activities, especially in the fine and performing arts and other non-athletic program areas.
Get truants off the streets and into a community center, workplace or community-service setting.
Require uniforms (although not necessarily “traditional” ones).
Provide better and more plentiful counseling that is more holistic and incorporates help with chemical abuse.
Sponsor “burning issues” clubs, lunches or other time to help youngsters deal with issues at home.

Kids are afraid to go to school because of racism, they're afraid because of sexism, homophobia . . . When they're there, the children are so worried about, am I going to get to my next class, am I going to get home, am I going to get beat up on the way home, am I going to have my lunch money for lunch -- that learning is secondary.

School choice:

Allow children to go to any [public] school they want.
Support community schools -- “stop busing madness.”
“Bus for programs, not for numbers.”

*Teachers in the public school system are very unprepared for kids of color.
Training needs to address not only multiculturalism but it needs to address some of the factors of poverty and how they impact on kids. They need to look at learning styles.
They need to look at how they as teachers can facilitate involvement by parents*

and community members.

Diversity:

Fund learning opportunities that bring together or pair students from divergent backgrounds.
Use instruction and programs focused on the environment and ecology to bring together all groups

in the community in a common concern and in common enterprise.

Train teachers in cultural competency.

Imbue the curriculum with diversity, rather than making diversity a “special event” or giving it superficial treatment.

Offer scholarships to students of color who agree to come back and teach for a minimum period of time.

Community relations:

Experiment with “peer parent” and buddy programs that help newcomers feel less isolated and become more involved in their children’s schools.

Strengthen the non-educational/pre-school support system that helps to relieve problems in the schools, which consists of programs like Head Start, parenting education, mentoring, quality child care and non-school recreation.

Incorporate community facilities, such as community centers, social service centers and health-care facilities, within or adjacent to schools to give everyone a “stake” in the success of those schools.

*I remember when there were three black teachers in the Minneapolis public schools.
And yet there were students of color that were going through that school system,
combating racism as individuals, and going on to become successful participants in society.
We can blame a lot of things on racism, but let's not fall into the trap of using that
as an excuse for a lack of achievement.*

IV. Preparing for the Future

I think a lot of white people believe, but sometimes don't feel that we can say it, that racism is probably a relatively minor cause of the relatively poor performance of minority kids It would be incredibly naive to discount the impact of racism on minority kids in our schools, but it seems to me far more significant causes are the breakdown of the African-American family and the lack of role models for young kids. And the sports culture I think is even more important than racism, the idolization of athletes, and the belief that African-American boys in the Minneapolis public schools have -- something like 85 percent feel they can have careers in professional sports But we don't ever talk about any of those other issues.

A deeper look at the output of the study circles offers mostly good news: An important and meaningful dialogue has begun, all across the Twin Cities, and people of good will from all backgrounds are thinking about economic and racial disparities with an intensity not seen since the 1960s. Most of the participants grasp the gravity of the issues, understand at least in part their nature and connections to one another, and the necessity for action rather than passive acceptance.

Moreover, the dialogue has begun by generating a profile of many of the important issues. The Study Circle Reports (Section III of this report) contain a wealth of information, insights and ideas that can be used to propel further exploration of the role of race, changing economics and spatial segregation on housing and education throughout the region.

Having said that, though, it is worth taking a more critical look at the study circle output, and at the process itself, as a means of preparing the ground for another round of conversations. This section of the report is divided into two parts; the first focuses on issues of substance, both present and future, and the second focuses on issues of process.

A. Issues of Substance

One striking feature of the lists of issues is the virtually total absence of comments about gangs -- in spite of stories in the Minneapolis *Star-Tribune* and elsewhere relating gang activities to the recent upsurge in violent crime, particularly homicides. Perhaps more than any other event, the proliferation and expansion of gangs has contributed substantially to region-wide fears of violent crime. Although "violence in the schools" was mentioned, it was not connected to a broader recognition of the role of gangs in spreading fear in city neighborhoods and institutions.

Another minor shortcoming of the study-circles process is its failure to systematically explore causal connections. As a result, the study circles tended to produce, on the one hand, a litany of problems that is not prioritized, and, on the other hand, a litany of solutions that may be only haphazardly connected and responsive to the identified problems.

Nonetheless, several cause-and-effect relationships were noted by participants or by experts working with them. For example, one participant noted that solving problems of inequity would require a two-pronged attack: one directed at economics (for example, job training, adequate transportation and center-city investment) and the other directed at community (housing, public education and taxes). This approach recognizes that housing and educational segregation cannot be considered in a vacuum, but are affected by family incomes and community context. Similarly, the police chief of St. Louis Park noted that, based on the relatively high percentage of arrests that involve people of color, a great deal of racial "profiling" has taken place. Yet he was quick to add that the majority of such crimes are in fact crimes of *poverty*.

*Although the world has become a global village,
whites are not ready to accept us even though we are equally qualified
I think we should start a program where you interact
with us and get to know us a little better
Racism is alive.*

Unhappily, race and poverty too often go hand in hand in our society. As Douglas Massey and Nancy Denton said in their landmark book *American Apartheid*,

Most Americans vaguely realize that urban America is still a residentially segregated society, but few appreciate the depth of black segregation or the degree to which it is maintained by ongoing institutional arrangements and contemporary individual actions. . . . Residential segregation is not a neutral fact; it systematically undermines the social and economic well-being of blacks . . . [creating] a social environment where poverty and joblessness are the norm . . . (1993: 1-2).

Along the same lines, William Julius Wilson has said:

[T]he wage and employment gap between skilled and unskilled workers is growing partly because education and training are considered more important than ever in the new global economy. At the same time that changes in technology are producing new jobs, they are making many others obsolete. . . . More routine workers face the growing threat of job displacement. . . . The shift in demand has been especially devastating for those low-skilled workers whose incorporation into the mainstream economy has been marginal or recent. Even before the economic restructuring of the nation's economy, low-skilled African-Americans were at the end of the employment queue. Their economic situation has been further weakened because they tend to reside in communities that not only have higher jobless rates and lower employment growth but lack access to areas of higher employment and employment growth as well.

-- William Julius Wilson, *When Work Disappears*, 1996: 28-29

*We know that poverty isn't going anywhere, and racism isn't dead.
-- Vivian Jenkins Nelson, INTER-RACE*

*A lot of times the white culture accepts this one particular way of looking at life,
this very linear, Western type of norms and values, and they think that's reality
Imagine they see a horse and a moose. They don't say, 'Oh, that's a moose,'
they say, 'Oh, that's a bad horse.' We need to not have this invisible centering on
the white and everybody else is 'other,' who is sort of a failed white.*

There may be more agreement on the pernicious effects of economic disparity than on those of race and

discrimination. For example, one suburban group reported that “our circle cited ‘institutional racism’ as a myth created by many.” This group did “not feel that race is a large issue. People are people, no matter what color or culture they are.” One school worker remarked that “I don’t see racism in the schools. I think there is a generous feeling of people trying. Maybe not always succeeding, but trying.”

On the other hand, these remarks hint at what Curt Johnson calls the insidious nature of discrimination in Northern cities. At the “Beyond Busing” forum, he quoted from a letter received from an African-American friend upon his return to Houston after living in the Twin Cities for three years: “I left because of the racism . . . At least in the South, I could see the knife. In Minnesota, I didn’t find the blood until I got home. It was so subtle, and I didn’t realize until later and began to add it up”

Some connections between minority status, joblessness, educational opportunity and community decay do appear in the summaries of study-circle discussions. However, the fact that they are not clearly stated or explored suggests either (1) that few participants truly understand these relationships, or (2) that participants take them so for granted that they are no longer seen as salient.

This situation is further illustrated by two types of responses that, although not commonplace, view the region through ideological or unfocused lenses. One type essentially rejects all interventions intended to reduce segregation and income disparity: Since government has failed, everything associated with it should go. We should repeal taxes, end the prohibition on drugs, repeal labor laws and occupational licensing regulations, end the public-school monopoly, and rigidly separate business and state.

A second type of response takes the form of broad goal statements that move us no closer to real solutions:

- Limit growth and sprawl.
- Revitalize the urban core.
- Organize people at the grassroots level.
- Build partnerships among business, government and the community.
- Improve housing in the inner city.
- Develop a better public transportation system.

In a few cases, participants focused on “what we can do” without identifying the purpose in doing it -- for example, they said they would “meet with the mayor and the Board of Education,” but did not say why.

In short, many of the findings of the study circles cover the surface of the issues but do not probe very deeply. Suggested solutions are uneven in character, time frame, comprehensiveness, relevance and practicality. Moreover, there was as much emphasis on problems that plague everyone, particularly in the realm of public education, as upon problems closely associated with racial and economic segregation.

However, none of this is unexpected in the first round of a citizen effort of this type. Although the effort to develop solutions in the last round of discussions was necessary to give participants a sense of achievement and closure, it was premature in the sense that few people were ready intellectually and emotionally to propose truly innovative or meaningful solutions instead of reiterating “proven” ideas that may have little effect on the identified issues. This, too, is not unexpected: If housing desegregation were easy, it would have been achieved already.

Guidelines for Future Circles

- A packet of short readings should be sent to all prospective participants. Some should re-emphasize regional problems, while others might highlight programs and initiatives being undertaken elsewhere in the country. This may be supplemented by a reading list for those who want to explore further.

Suggestions for this list:

- Wilson, William Julius. 1987. *The Truly Disadvantaged*. One of the contemporary classics, this book links racial segregation and economic disadvantage in creative new ways. Wilson, almost single-handedly, reopened a debate that had been closed off for nearly twenty years.
- Wilson, William Julius. 1996. *When Work Disappears*. Wilson's follow-up presents data, extracts from interviews with inner-city residents, and policy suggestions.
- Massey, Douglas and Nancy Denton. 1993. *American Apartheid*. Another classic, this book takes issue with some of Wilson's conclusions and uses an impressive array of statistics to do so. An outstanding primer on the legacy of segregation.
- Orfield, Myron. 1997. *Metropolitics*. An alarming look at change in the Twin Cities region, which also gives a sense of what can be done at the state level to combat and channel that change.
- Sapphire. 1996. *Push*. A first-person account of the life of an inner-city teenager; this book offers a realistic inside look at the challenges of growing up in urban America.
- Downs, Anthony. 1973. *Opening Up the Suburbs*. Perhaps the seminal work in this series, it offers some ideas that are as fresh today as they were a generation ago.
- Barnett, Jonathan. 1996. *The Fractured Metropolis*. An urban designer's look at what can be done to heal the fractures in our society.
- American Planning Association. 1994. *Planning and Community Equity*. A collection of articles addressing the full range of equity issues: affordable housing, transportation, environmental degradation, social impacts, governance, capital investment and citizen participation.
- Focus discussions more tightly. The initial study questions were pretty broad and left a lot of room for interpretation without a lot of direction. Four or five more focused questions would help to structure the dialogue and produce more focused results as well. One question could be used for each study-circle meeting in the next series. Each question could look at a topical study area, perhaps in terms of specific linkages, e.g., economic opportunity and education, economic opportunity and community support (child care, transportation, etc.), affordable housing and desegregation/ deconcentration, public schools and the community, race relations, etc. Each study circle could be given the option of choosing the questions it addresses from a more comprehensive list.

B. Issues of Process

The study-circle process proved its value through not only the output of the discussions but the responses of most participants, who viewed it as a valuable experience they would like to continue or repeat. This occurred even though the process suffered from some initial organizational difficulties. Delays in getting the circles up and running, and in producing and finalizing participant materials, caused some frustration among coordinators, facilitators and participants alike. Scheduling meeting times seems to have been a problem for nearly every circle. In spite of these circumstances, however, there seems to be a general sense that the process was worthwhile, and productive as well.

Creating meaningful change is more art than science. Most organizations that undertake such change fall short of their initial goals. This should not be viewed as "failure." Rather, it should be treated as an invaluable learning experience that could not be gained in any other way -- an experience that should energize and shape ongoing efforts.

Three specific process-related issues arose as a result of the first round of study circles. The first issue relates to group diversity, the second to group facilitation, and the third to group scheduling. These issues are addressed below.

*What you're doing is not a nice thing. . . .
What you want people to say is not that it is a nice thing to do
but that's an absolutely necessary thing to do.
-- Martha McCoy, Study Circles Resource Center.*

Improving Diversity

Race and ethnicity: The full group of participants (350+) was fairly representative of the Twin Cities community as a whole in terms of race/ethnicity. However, individual groups did not reflect this diversity. As a result, some participants perceived that the process was not representative. A number of comments were made regarding how "the right people aren't here."

Several methods of improving racial and ethnic diversity might be used. One would be to invite the participation of secular service clubs and congregations that are known to appeal to members of particular groups. Another would be to pair congregations and other sponsoring organizations to promote racial and ethnic intermingling. A third would involve deliberately assigning volunteers of one heritage to join a discussion group dominated by another. Because it is safe to presume that the vast majority of participants are persons of good will and intent, finding volunteers willing to cross barriers should not be difficult. (Besides, isn't that the whole point of this exercise -- crossing barriers?)

Gender: The group of participants as a whole was not well-balanced by gender. Men made up only about one-fourth of the participants. The all-female memberships of a couple of study circles even remarked on the absence of male counterparts and asked what could be done to "get the men here."

Although gender imbalance is not uncommon for a volunteer group of this type, gender imbalance needs to be addressed in the next round of circles. One possible approach would be to specifically invite participation by the men's groups from various sponsoring faith communities. Another would be to invite participation by business owners and managers, who -- for better or worse -- are still predominately male.

*It's important to get the advantaged to understand how they're affected
by [the] plight of low-income minorities.*

Improving Group Facilitation

Good facilitation is the key to good results. The reports from the circles, and the surveys completed by the facilitators themselves, suggest that the quality of facilitation was uneven. This is one of the potential pitfalls of using volunteers, but it need not be a fatal one.

EHEP could turn to professional facilitators to conduct the next round of meetings, but this is not necessary nor even particularly wise. What is needed is better training and support for volunteer facilitators. For example, at least one facilitator complained that the group he or she led frequently strayed from the topic -- without any apparent understanding that it is the job of the facilitator to keep the group focused and moving so it can produce the results it wants within the allotted time.

The facilitator training process and packet reflect this failure to teach the basics. Training emphasized the content of the sessions and cultural considerations -- both critical topics, to be sure, but not to the

exclusion of learning how to lead a productive meeting, keep the group focused, mediate conflict, and handle difficult people ("difficult" here referring to any number of problems, including glibness, silence, stonewalling, attempts to dominate, etc.).

Given that some of the facilitators are relatively inexperienced, having a monitor present to step in and redirect the group's energy can be invaluable. A monitor can keep an eye on several groups at a time and keep tabs on the clock as well. The monitor's presence allows each facilitator to engage fully in the group's discussion and ensure that both substance and direction remain relevant. Moreover, should any facilitator encounter difficulty with a particular group -- belligerence, refusal to focus, etc. -- someone else is present to mediate and help the group get moving in positive ways again. The presence of a monitor can aid neophyte and experienced facilitators alike.

In CCC's case, the difficulties in using monitors are logistical: If each group is meeting at its own place and time, it is simply infeasible for a single monitor to be present. Neither would this be an efficient use of anyone's time. Moreover, the number of monitors available will necessarily be limited by the need for each one to be highly experienced in facilitation and/or team leadership. These difficulties could be overcome through a different approach to scheduling discussions.

Improving Study-Circle Scheduling

Ironically, it is possible that individual groups were given *too much* latitude in scheduling their own meetings -- which means that each person's dentist appointment, TV viewing habits, softball league, family demands, vacation and other prior commitments interfered with circle meetings. Multiply this effect by ten or fifteen circle members, and it becomes clear why scheduling was a problem.

Rather than leaving the scheduling decision wide open, it may be more effective to set up group meeting times in advance. For example, meetings in each round of discussions could be slated to take place at one of four or five predetermined times at one of four or five predetermined locations. Discussants would be asked to select one of those times and places to participate, either for the entire series or on a meeting-by-meeting basis. Advance sign-ups would probably be necessary in order to make sure that all time slots have enough participants; otherwise, intended participants would have to be notified of a change in plans.

Although this approach might entail some additional work on the part of the organizers, it might also eliminate some work by eliminating confusion about who is meeting where, and when. Moreover, sponsoring organizations would remain heavily involved in coordinating meetings and keeping track of participants.

Adopting an approach similar to this one could produce several benefits:

- It would impose some discipline on the groups and indicate that the study circles are not a social event that takes place only when everyone is free, but a formalized process with demands of its own.
- It would allow coordinators to balance the sizes of the circles, eliminating problems caused by poor attendance in some groups while others overflow.
- It would allow individuals who might miss one set time to "make up" a session at a different time, thus facilitating participation in the entire series of discussions.
- It would allow individuals to sample different locations, if desired, thus exposing them to a much wider range of viewpoints and ideas.
- It would enable the circle coordinators at any given location to balance racial and gender representation more effectively, either by pairing sponsoring organizations or by randomly assigning incoming individuals to different discussion groups.
- It would allow for the efficient use of monitors in support of facilitators.

- It would put everyone on essentially the same timetable, with a clear beginning and a clear end.

One potential drawback to this approach is that some groups would lose the continuity and, hence, the familiarity that foster trust and openness. However, the process itself can help to encourage such openness. Moreover, most discussion groups will probably remain essentially intact throughout the entire series due to individual choices.

V. Plans for the Future

VI. Appendices

- A. Background on EHEP, CCC
- B. Findings of facilitator questionnaire
- C. List of sponsors and participants