

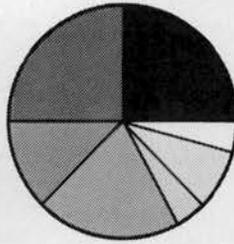


## Education and Housing Equity Project Records.

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# MINNESOTA COUNCIL OF NONPROFITS



250 COLONIAL OFFICE PARK  
2700 UNIVERSITY AVENUE WEST, ST. PAUL, MN 55114  
(612) 642-1904 FAX: (612) 642-1517 1-800-289-1904

June 20, 1996

Mike Anderson  
MICAH  
122 West Franklin  
Minneapolis, MN 55404

Dear Mike :

Thank you for your interest and support which make The MCN Civic Engagement Project possible.

We look forward to meet with you again on **Friday, July 12**. The meeting will be held at **MIGIZI Communications Conference Room, on 3123 East Lake Street #200, Minneapolis, from 11:00am to 2:00pm.**

At the July 12 meeting we will explore strategies for dialogue and action on public issues and different types of public discourse.

We will also start to discuss organizations' plans for civic engagement projects that will be followed by individual meetings in August.

The questions for each organization to be addressed before the next meeting are attached.

Lunch will be available for \$5, if ordered by **July 12**.

To confirm your participation, please call **Marcia Keller Avner** at **642-1904**, before **July 12**.

Sincerely,

Alexandra Petrescu

P.S. On June 27 I will fly back to Romania, as my Hubert Humphrey Fellowship is completed. I will miss Minnesota and its wonderful warm hearted people, and most of all, the enthusiastic, community-caring members of the Civic Engagement Working Group. Therefore I would like to stay in touch with you and to share our civic endeavors.

This is my office address in Romania: Alexandra Petrescu, Director  
Foundation for Pluralism  
Bd. M. Kogalniceanu no. 8, Sc. C, Ap.11, Sector 5  
70629 Bucharest, Romania  
tel/fax: 40-1-6135083  
e-mail: office@ifes.eunet.ro

Best regards,

## **CIVIC ENGAGEMENT WORKSHEET**

1. Name of organization:
2. Describe the organization's constituency in detail (geographic location, interests, demographic characteristics, etc.).
3. In what ways are these people now involved in your organization or in other civic activities?
4. What are the major opportunities for increased civic engagement in the organization? (Identify at least three.)

5. What barriers will the organization face in increasing civic engagement?

6. What resources are available for the organization to do this work?

7. Where is the inspiration and energy in your organization to do this?

8. Who would have to be involved in a decision for your organization to effectively launch a civic engagement plan?

MCN 1996

Date:

**Minnesota Council of Nonprofits**  
**Civic Engagement Project**  
**July 12, 1996**

Topic: Civil Discourse: Public Involvement in Dialogue and Debate on  
Issues

Agenda:

11:00 am Introductions

11:15- 12:30 pm Panel Discussion

Tim Penny, Senior Fellow and Director, Humphrey Institute Policy  
Forum

Rob Daves, *Star Tribune*

Denise DeVaun, Minnesota Community Action Association

15 minutes presentations will be followed by open discussion.

12:30 pm Lunch break!!

12:50 - 2 pm Video and discussion of the issue campaign: "National Dialogue on Poverty - *What Does America Want?*" - National Association of Community Action Agencies

2 pm Meeting concludes

But before you leave, please note:

\*\*\*There is no regularly scheduled meeting in August. The next meeting of the Civic Engagement Project will be on Friday, Sept. 6.

\*\*\*Please sign up for a small group discussion of workplans for your individual organization:

A. Looking inside: activating your organization's board and members

B. Voter participation campaigns

C. Study circles and issues discussion groups

D. Other workplan ideas

**The Minnesota Compact**  
**Humphrey Institute Policy Forum - Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs**  
**University of Minnesota**

The purpose of the Minnesota Compact is to raise the level of political discourse in Minnesota elections. Simply put, the Minnesota Compact aims to encourage candidates to participate in substantive, informative debates and follow-up press conferences; to persuade candidates to minimize attacks and maximize the presentation of issues and qualifications; to ask news organizations to commit to covering the substance of political campaigns instead of focusing on "horse race" stories, attacks and controversy; and to ask citizens to reinstate the tradition of debates and community discussions. The initial focus will be on the 1996 Minnesota U.S. Senate and House races, with a long term goal to eventually affect all Minnesota elections. We would hope the Minnesota Compact might serve as a model to be used in other states as well.

The Minnesota Compact is an experiment based on ideas suggested by American history and on research, recommendations and proposals advanced by scholars, journalists, candidates and citizens around the country. A synthesis of these ideas was first outlined in a June 1995 Minneapolis *Star Tribune* article authored by Tom Hamburger, Washington bureau chief.

In late 1995, a number of individuals and organizations came together in an attempt to implement the Minnesota Compact idea. The group is comprised of representatives from the Humphrey Institute Policy Forum; the Minnesota News Council; the Minnesota Newspaper Association; the Jefferson Center; the Minnesota Broadcasters Association; the League of Women Voters; and the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of St. Thomas. The Minnesota Compact Coalition, for lack of a better term, held its first meeting on November 8, 1995 at the Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs. The meeting was convened by Humphrey Institute Policy Forum co-director Tim Penny.

In order to implement the Minnesota Compact, sub-groups met independently to develop each of the four planks making up the Compact. Candidates and journalists are being challenged to change the way campaigns are conducted and covered. Debates are being organized. And more than a thousand small gatherings of citizens will be formed to enhance discussion of the candidates and the issues. The Humphrey Institute Policy Forum has offered to coordinate the project through the November 1996 elections.

## "The Ten Most Frequently Asked Questions about the Minnesota Compact"

### 1. What is the purpose of the Minnesota Compact? What do you hope to accomplish?

Our goal is to break the cycle of cynicism in Minnesota political campaigns by advocating practical standards that will change the behavior of candidates, the media and citizens on a sustained basis.

Simply put, the Minnesota Compact aims to encourage candidates to participate in substantive, informative debates and follow-up press conferences; to persuade candidates to minimize attacks and maximize the presentation of issues and qualifications; to ask news organizations to commit to covering the substance of political campaigns instead of focusing on "horse race" stories, attacks and controversy; and to ask citizens to reinstate the tradition of debates and community discussions. The initial focus of the Minnesota Compact will be the 1996 U.S. Senate and House races, with a long term goal to eventually affect all Minnesota elections.

It is clear from public opinion polls and focus groups that there is a strong public feeling about the need for changes like these. And numerous studies make clear how well-founded are the concerns with the current patterns of news coverage, ads, debates and citizen participation.

### 2. What is unique about the Minnesota Compact?

The Minnesota Compact is unique in that it is a comprehensive, coordinated effort to make elections more meaningful events in democratic life. All of the Compact components are functionally linked. It is not the candidates alone pledging to improve their conduct; it is not the media alone promising to do a better job; it is not the civic groups alone vowing to continue their good work. Instead, the Minnesota Compact is an effort to involve candidates, newspapers, television, radio and a wide array of organizations that can engage the broader public. Thus, the Compact's comprehensive effort to tackle news coverage, candidate debates, campaign ads and citizen participation also makes it strikingly different from the various "civic journalism" projects around the nation.

The Minnesota Compact has inspired much discussion among Minnesotans as well as at the national level, including references about the Compact in articles by E.J. Dionne in the *Washington Post*, Chris Satullo in the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, and Mike Knepler of the *Virginian Pilot* in Norfolk.

### 3. How did the Minnesota Compact Coalition get started?

The Minnesota Compact is an experiment based on research, recommendations and proposals advanced by scholars, journalists, candidates and citizens around the country. A synthesis of these ideas was first presented in a June 1995 Minneapolis *Star Tribune* article authored by Tom Hamburger, Washington bureau chief.

In late 1995, a number of individuals and organizations came together in an attempt to implement the Minnesota Compact idea. Sub-groups began meeting independently to develop each of the four planks making up the Compact. The four planks released at a news conference on May 1, 1996 are the result of this work.

### 4. Who is involved in the Minnesota Compact Coalition?

The Humphrey Institute Policy Forum at the University of Minnesota is the principal organizer of the Minnesota Compact and will carry out the Compact with collaborating organizations in the coming months. The Minnesota Compact Coalition steering committee is comprised of representatives from the Humphrey Institute Policy Forum; the Minnesota News Council; the Minnesota Newspaper Association; the Jefferson Center; the Minnesota Broadcasters Association; the League of Women Voters of Minnesota; and the University of St. Thomas journalism and mass communication department.

Other organizations have since endorsed — or expressed interest in participating in — the Compact effort. These include the Minnesota Council of Churches, the Minnesota Extension Service, the Minnesota Education Association, the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce, the Minnesota Bar Association, the Minnesota Jaycees, the Minnesota Council of Non-Profits, the Jewish Community Relations Council, and others.

### 5. How will the Minnesota Compact be enforced?

The Compact is a voluntary effort to change the behavior of candidates, the media and citizens on a sustained basis. The participants in the Minnesota Compact collectively become the enforcers by providing the moral suasion and political climate needed to bring about this changed behavior.

The project offers a variety of opportunities and incentives for candidates and media to raise the standards of political discussion and for citizens to inform themselves. Those involved in the Compact will be making an effort to keep these standards and activities prominently in the public arena during campaign '96. One thing is clear. The

behavior of citizens is key to the success of this effort. The candidates and news media are not wrong when they explain that they try to respond to the public's wishes. If the public turns off superficial news coverage, then the media are likely to change their behavior accordingly. If the electorate rejects candidates who use unfair advertising, then candidates are likely to change their behavior accordingly. This result is more likely if citizens themselves have more opportunities to come together, to listen and learn and to hold one another responsible for their evaluations of the candidates and the media coverage

**6. What do the candidates and political parties gain from the Minnesota Compact? What is the political motivation for the Minnesota Compact? Is it a non-partisan effort?**

The Minnesota Compact has not been developed in connection with any of the parties or the candidates, though ex-politicians were involved in advising on the four planks and in pulling together the organizations associated with the project. The fact is, the campaign standards in the Minnesota Compact were developed with the voters' interests in mind. It is painfully evident that the interests of voters and politicians do not always coincide, and are often in conflict with one another. Candidates want to win. Voters want to be informed. The standards laid out in the Minnesota Compact which are related to the conduct of candidates and campaign coverage are there to give voters what THEY need.

**7. Plank #1 of the Compact calls for debates. Who is organizing the debates? And which are consistent with the objectives of the Minnesota Compact?**

A number of organizations around the state will be organizing candidate debates which are consistent with the standards and objectives set forth by the Minnesota Compact. The Minnesota Compact applauds these efforts to involve candidates in a discussion of their respective philosophies, qualifications for office, and stands on the issues. However, the Minnesota Compact Coalition has designated two sets of debates — those organized by the League of Women Voters of Minnesota and by the Star Tribune/KTCA Citizens Forum — as the centerpiece and focus of the citizen conversation groups. These debates will take place in September and October 1996. Citizen conversation group leaders will be asked to indicate to Compact Coalition organizers which debate the group members will watch together.

**8. Plank #2 of the Compact sets standards for campaign advertising. What is the difference between the Minnesota Compact ad code and the "Campaign Advertising Code" project chaired by Lee Lynch?**

One of the four Compact "planks" establishes principles of fair and meaningful campaign communications in political ads. These standards of better ad communications (also known as the "ten commandments of clean campaign ads") draw on social science research and are the product of much discussion among Compact Coalition principals and others. Considerable effort has been made to assure that the standards are fair to all candidates, and thus to each political party. The standards are intended to increase the amount of information useful to voters and to reduce the likelihood that attack politics will dominate the campaign discussion.

We are encouraging the news media to make use of the standards in their general coverage and ad critiques and are urging the public to use these standards in holding candidates, parties, and independent groups accountable for their campaign discourse. We are also encouraging candidates to use the standards in order to challenge one another to maintain a better level of campaign communication.

A separate advertising code has been developed independently by advertising executive Lee Lynch. Ultimately, the two "ad codes" have the same goal: to hold the candidates accountable for campaign communication and to encourage constructive, substantive, political discourse. Lee Lynch and his colleagues will take a more assertive approach, including asking candidates to sign a pledge to abide by the code, and asking citizens to sign a petition stating that they will not vote for or contribute to the campaign of any candidate who does not sign the pledge.

**9. Plank #3 sets standards for news coverage on the campaigns. What are the media going to do differently this time around?**

Plank #3 recognizes that the media have a significant role to play in improving the quality of political discourse in Minnesota elections. These standards have been designed to help journalists cover elections in such a way as to increase the amount of information useful to voters and to reduce the likelihood that horse-race stories, attacks and controversy will dominate the campaign discussion. Plank #3 also asks journalists to play another crucial role, which is to help candidates and citizens carry out their respective parts of the Compact.

Journalists will be reminded periodically of the standards outlined in plank #3, and will be provided with information (through memos, tip sheets, seminars, etc.) on how to meet those standards. Candidates and citizens will also be encouraged to use these standards as a guide to assess how well campaigns are being covered.

**10. Plank #4 calls for increased citizen participation. How is the Minnesota Compact Coalition going to bring that about?**

The goal of the Minnesota Compact Coalition is to involve at least 10,000 individuals statewide in group conversations focussing on the candidates, campaign issues, and other concerns related to the 1996 election. This would require identifying at least 1000 individuals who would each be willing to involve a group of ten individuals in political discussion. Each group will be asked to participate in at least one organized discussion to be held in conjunction with the Minnesota Congressional or Senate debates scheduled for late September/early October 1996. These groups would also be encouraged (though not required) to participate in informal conversations about politics in the weeks and months leading up to the general election. The format could range from a formalized studio setting to informal conversations in private homes.

Conversation groups will be formed in two ways. **First**, organizations and institutions throughout the state (churches, community organizations, service groups, the Minnesota Extension Service, labor unions, professional associations, etc.) will be encouraged to form groups comprised of their members. Other already-existing groups (such as study circles, book clubs, block clubs ...*even bowling leagues*) will be asked to dedicate a portion of their meeting time to discussion of the campaigns and issues of public concern. **Second**, individuals will be invited through the media to form their own discussion groups made up of family members, friends, co-workers, neighbors, etc.

All groups will be provided with a conversation-starter packet and, if desired, facilitator training. Some new materials for the conversation packets will be developed which will be specific to the 1996 campaign. Resources which have already been developed through the League of Women Voters, the Citizens League, the Kettering Foundation and others will also be made available. Packets might also include "tip sheets" which will provide background on how to watch a debate and what to look for in terms of how candidates are conducting their campaigns and how news organizations are covering them. (Since food and conversation are so closely linked, the Minnesota Compact will also try to identify a donor to provide pizzas to conversation groups on the occasion of their first meeting.)

The Minnesota Compact Coalition will serve as an information center/clearinghouse for all conversation groups meeting around the state. In addition, the Coalition will work with the media to 1) inform the public about the opportunities for participation and 2) to publish and broadcast stories about the issues and ideas raised by the conversation groups.

The Minnesota Compact Coalition  
Humphrey Institute Policy Forum  
301 19th Ave. S.  
University of Minnesota  
Minneapolis, MN 55455  
Tel: 612-625-2530 Fax: 612-625-3513  
e-mail: jhaug@hhh.umn.edu



Plank #1

**MINNESOTA COMPACT — DEBATES**

Recognizing that democratic elections require the open exchange of ideas, as a candidate for United States Senate (House of Representatives) I agree:

1. to participate in a minimum of two public debates;
2. to abide by the ground rules, format, and criteria set forth by a sponsoring organization which does not support or endorse political parties or candidates;
3. that such debates may incorporate a series of newspaper point/counterpoint articles;
4. that such debates may be carried on-line;
5. that the debates may include live audience participation and follow-up news conferences;
6. that one or more debates will be broadcast statewide (or district-wide) on radio and television

Plank #2

**MINNESOTA COMPACT — CANDIDATES' ADS  
(The "Ten Commandments of Clean Campaign Ads")**

Candidates for United States Senate or House of Representatives from Minnesota agree that some standards of practice in campaign communications are essential if we are to maintain a well-functioning democracy, rather than degrade that democracy. Those candidates should therefore adhere to the following code of conduct in campaign communications.

**I. General responsibility and ad format**

1. The candidate will take full and personal responsibility for all advertising created and placed on behalf of his/her campaign by its staff or related committees.
2. In television advertising, either the candidate's visual likeness, voice, or both will be in the ad at least 50% of the time.
3. In radio advertising, the candidate's voice will be in the ad at least 50% of the time.
4. The candidate will publicly renounce any independently financed ad that violates the standards set forth in this agreement.

**II. Ad content; other campaign communications**

5. The candidate will use no appeal to discrimination based on race, gender, or religious belief and will condemn those who do.
6. The candidate will refrain from false and misleading attacks on an opponent, staffer, or member of his/her family and shall do everything in her/his power to prevent others from using such tactics for his/her electoral benefit. ("Misleading attacks" include taking votes or actions significantly out of context and/or distorting the opponent's record by the use of demonstrably unrepresentative votes or actions.)
7. The candidate will document fully any claims made in his/her ads (including as much of that material as possible in the ad itself).
8. The candidate will refrain from using any still photos, film or video of the opponent that are designed to make him/her look personally unpleasant or contorted or that are taken significantly out of context.
9. The candidate will acknowledge that the principles detailed above apply to other sorts of campaign communications in addition to ads in the media, e.g., speeches, billboards, direct mail, etc.
10. The candidate will acknowledge that the principles detailed above also apply to campaign communications from his/her political party.

Plank #3

**MINNESOTA COMPACT  
THE ROLE OF JOURNALISTS**

Journalists agree:

1. to identify through polling and other methods the issues that concern their readers, viewers and listeners and to emphasize those issues in campaign coverage by:
  - covering the candidates' proposals and other policy options for dealing with citizen concerns
  - providing in-depth, explanatory articles on significant issues, such as taxes, health care, crime and education;
2. to de-emphasize the "horse race," or predictions about the outcome of the election in their stories and broadcasts;
3. to write and broadcast stories about candidate debates, citizen reaction to these debates, and follow-up news conferences;
4. to inform audiences of opportunities for participation in public discussion of campaign issues;
5. to review campaign ads for fairness and accuracy and publish and broadcast stories detailing their findings; and
6. to describe to readers the news organization's decision-making process on ethically challenging or controversial campaign stories.

Plank #4

**MINNESOTA COMPACT — CITIZEN PARTICIPATION**

1. As citizens, we acknowledge a responsibility to play an active role in the political process;
2. we expect candidates, as fellow citizens, to engage in constructive discussion of public concerns;
3. and we expect the news media to support this constructive discussion of public concerns.
4. Believing that public dialogue is essential to democracy, we commit to participating in both informal conversation and at least one organized discussion to be held in conjunction with the Minnesota Congressional or Senate debates (scheduled for Fall 1996).

Sample response form



Return to: The Minnesota Compact  
Humphrey Institute Policy Forum  
134 Humphrey Center  
301 19th Avenue South  
Minneapolis, MN 55455

I agree with the principles outlined in plank four of the Minnesota Compact. I would like to participate in the Minnesota Compact by hosting a citizen conversation group.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_\_\_\_\_ email \_\_\_\_\_

*Tax deductible contributions in support of the Minnesota Compact are welcome. Please make checks payable to the Humphrey Institute Policy Forum and write "Minnesota Compact" in the memo section.*

*Please include on the back of this form the name, address, and phone # of others you know who may be interested in hosting a citizen conversation group.*

## **The Minnesota Compact: Cleaning up Political Campaigns in Minnesota**

Just over a month ago, a broad-based coalition including the League of Women Voters, the Minnesota Broadcasters Association, the Minnesota Newspaper Association, the Minnesota News Council, the Jefferson Center, the University of St. Thomas, the Minnesota Council of Churches, the Minnesota Extension Service, and the Humphrey Institute Policy Forum announced the Minnesota Compact, a project designed to raise the level of discourse in political campaigns.

Even in our state, noted for its civic virtue, and where we pride ourselves on being "Minnesota nice," negative attack ads are on the rise, and sound bites are replacing substance. In short, we are getting more volume and less value out of the political discourse. The Minnesota Compact is about setting higher standards for political discourse. The Compact spells out a code of conduct for politicians and journalists. It asks candidates to take full responsibility for attacks leveled against their opponent, to refrain from distorting an opponent's record, and to participate in debates. It asks journalists to avoid "horse race" stories, to offer in-depth coverage of important issues and to publish articles examining the accuracy of campaign advertisements.

But at its heart, the Compact is designed to reinvigorate active citizenship. The goal is to encourage Minnesotans to form citizen conversation groups made up of friends, neighbors or co-workers. We hope these groups will engage in a lively discussion of the candidates and the issues, that they will watch the debates, and monitor the behavior of both candidates and journalists.

During the next two months, Minnesota Compact organizers will be trying to form over a thousand of these citizen conversation groups. If you would be willing to host a conversation group in your home on the night of the Senate and/or House debates scheduled for September and October 1996, please call the Minnesota Compact Coalition at 612-625-2530. Or write to the Compact, c/o the Humphrey Institute Policy Forum, Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs, 301 19th Ave. S., Minneapolis, MN 55455. You can also send e-mail ([compact@tc.umn.edu](mailto:compact@tc.umn.edu)) or visit our web page (<http://www.umn.edu/compact>).

George Bernard Shaw once said, "Democracy is a device that ensures we shall be governed no better than we deserve." In other words, if we want to clean up politics, we must first become better citizens.



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HHH #: 625-2530  
 Janea  
 hang - to get on list

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# MINNESOTA COMMUNITY ACTION ASSOCIATION

Denise DeVaun  
Executive Director

1997 Sloan Place, Suite 30  
Maplewood, MN 55117

(612) 776-5376  
Fax (612) 776-5940  
Pager: 650-1013

DENISED%MCAAJTPA@SMTPGWY.DES.STATE.MN.US

*Community Action: Investing In People, Building Community.*



## MINNESOTA COMMUNITY ACTION ASSOCIATION, INC.

1997 Sloan Place, Suite 30  
Maplewood, Minnesota 55117  
612-776-5376  
Fax 612-776-5940

Head Start  
Self-Sufficiency  
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Energy Assistance  
Home Delivered Meals  
WIC  
Housing Grants and Loans  
Economic Development  
Cottage Industries  
Job Training and Placement  
STRIDE  
Displaced Homemakers  
Child Care Resource and Referral  
Childcare  
Transportation  
Outreach  
Youth Employment  
Rural Initiatives  
Commodities Distribution (TEFAP)  
Tax Aid  
Home Repair/Rehabilitation  
Rental Housing Assistance  
Low Income Housing Development  
Transitional Housing  
Emergency Rental Assistance  
General Assistance Work Readiness  
Senior Oriented Services  
Senior Nutrition  
Family Services  
Health Care Aid  
Budget Counselling  
Crisis Intervention  
Food Assistance  
Advocacy

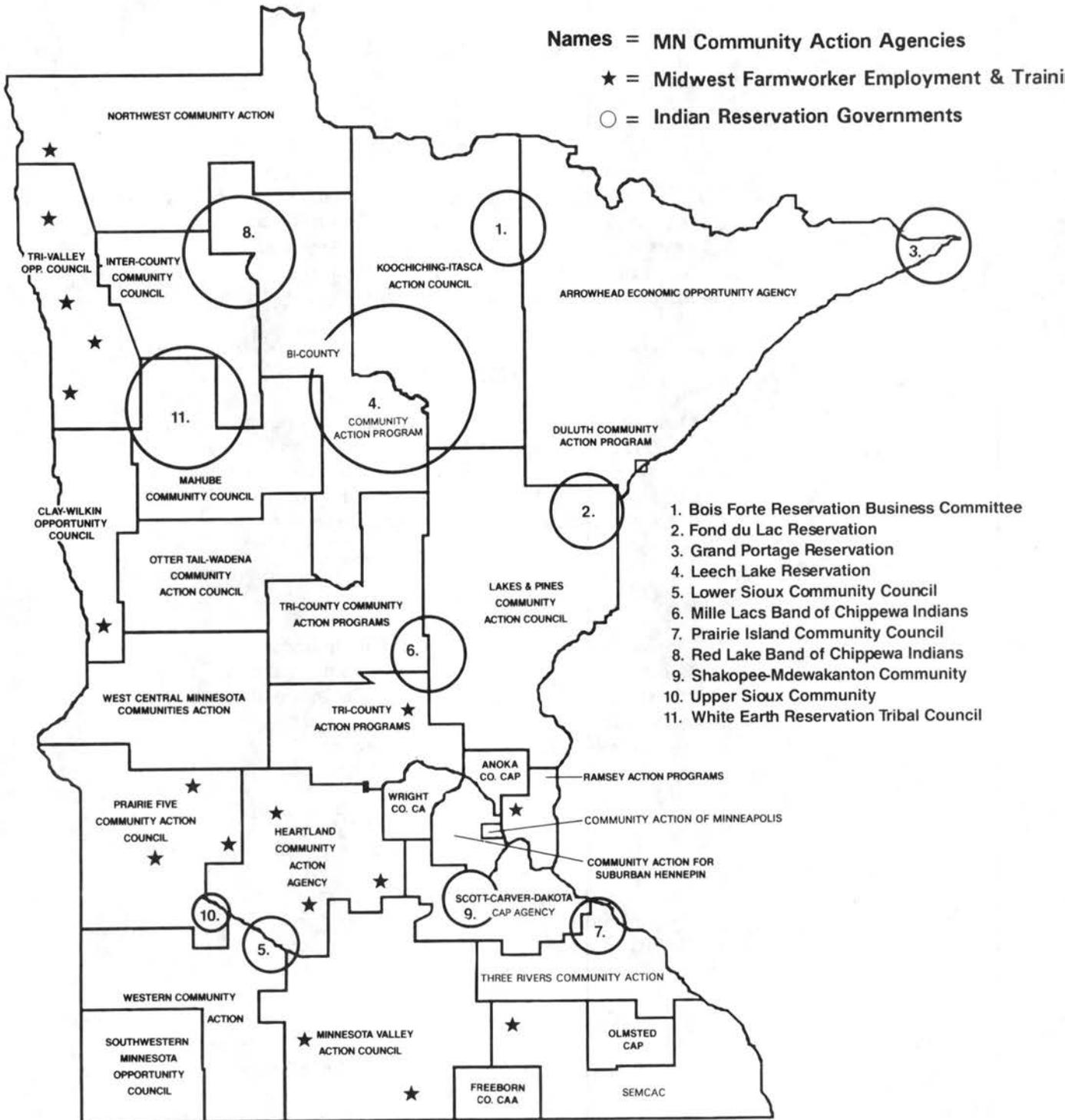
# Civic Engagement Project

July 12, 1996

\* Community Action Agencies

\* Dialogue on Poverty Model

# Minnesota Community Action Programs



**MINNESOTA COMMUNITY ACTION ASSOCIATION**

**REGIONAL CLUSTERS**

**NORTHWEST CLUSTER**

\*Bi-County Community Council  
Clay-Wilkin Opportunity Council  
Inter-County Community Council  
Mahube Community Council  
Northwest Community Action  
Otter Tail-Wadena Community Action Council  
Tri-County Community Action Program  
Tri-Valley Opportunity Council  
West Central Minnesota Communities Action

**NORTHEAST CLUSTER**

\*Arrowhead Economic Opportunity Agency  
Duluth Community Action Program  
Kooch-Itasca Action Council  
Lakes & Pines Community Action Program  
Tri-County Action Programs

**CENTRAL CLUSTER**

Heartland Community Action Agency  
Midwest Farmworker Employment and Training  
Prairie Five Community Action Program  
Southwestern Minnesota Opportunity Council  
\*Western Community Action  
Wright County Community Action

**SOUTHERN CLUSTER**

Freeborn County Community Action Agency  
Three Rivers Community Action  
\*Minnesota Valley Action Council  
Olmsted Community Action Program  
Semcac

**METRO (URBAN/SUBURBAN) CLUSTER**

Anoka County Community Action Program  
Community Action for Suburban Hennepin  
Community Action of Minneapolis  
\*Ramsey Action Programs  
Scott-Carver-Dakota CAP Agency

\*Denotes Lead Agency

ASSOC\CLUSTER

## DIRECTORY OF MINNESOTA COMMUNITY ACTION PROGRAMS

Anoka County Community Action Programs, Inc.  
(ACCAP)  
1201 89th Avenue N.E., Suite 345  
Blaine, MN 55434  
(612) 783-4747 FAX 783-4700  
**Executive Director: Patrick McFarland**

Arrowhead Economic Opportunity Agency (AEOA)  
702 Third Avenue South  
Virginia, MN 55792-2797  
(218) 749-2912 FAX 749-2944, 1-800-662-5711  
**Executive Director: Harlan Tardy**

Bi-County Community Action Programs, Inc.  
2715 15th Street NW  
P.O. Box 579  
Bemidji, MN 56601-0579  
(218) 751-4631 FAX 751-8452, 1-800-332-7161  
**Executive Director: Lucille A. Moe**

Clay-Wilkin Opportunity Council, Inc.  
715 - 11th Street North  
Suite 402  
Moorhead, MN 56560-2088  
(218) 233-7514, 1-800-452-3646, FAX 299-7210  
**Executive Director: Dennis R. Heitkamp**

Community Action of Minneapolis  
Norwest Midland Building  
401 Second Avenue South, Suite 500  
Minneapolis, MN 55401  
(612) 348-8858 FAX 348-9384  
**Executive Director: Bill Davis**

Community Action For Suburban Hennepin (CASH)  
33 - 10th Avenue South  
Suite 150  
Hopkins, MN 55343  
(612) 933-9639 FAX 933-8016  
**Executive Director: Sharon A. Johnson**

Duluth Community Action Program, Inc.  
1305 London Road  
Duluth, MN 55805  
(218) 724-8538 FAX 728-6815  
**Executive Director: Katherine Peterson**

Freeborn County Community Action Agency  
411 South Broadway (mailing address)  
101 West College (office address) *County Courthouse (office)*  
Albert Lea, MN 56007  
(507) 377-5199 FAX 377-5160 *52100*  
**Executive Director: Collette Turcotte**

Heartland Community Action Agency, Inc.  
310 South Frist Street, Mid-Town Plaza  
P.O. Box 1359  
Willmar, MN 56201  
(612) 235-0850 FAX 235-7703, 1-800-992-1710  
**Executive Director: Eileen Wallace**

Inter-County Community Council, Inc.  
P.O. Box 189  
Oklee, MN 56742  
(218) 796-5144 FAX 796-5175  
**Executive Director: Robert Melby**

Kooch-Itasca Action Council, Inc.  
413 13th Street S.E.  
P.O. Box 828  
Grand Rapids, MN 55744  
(218) 326-0344 FAX 326-0348  
**Executive Director: Barb Dorry**

Lakes and Pines Community Action Council, Inc.  
1700 Maple Avenue East  
Mora, MN 55051  
(612) 679-1800 FAX 679-4139, 1-800-832-6082  
**Executive Director: Roger E. Corbin**

Mahube Community Council, Inc.  
Highway #59 South  
P.O. Box 747  
Detroit Lakes, MN 56502  
(218) 847-1385 FAX 847-1388  
**Executive Director: Don McGillis**

Midwest Farmworker Employment & Training  
P.O. Box 1231  
St. Cloud, MN 56302-1231  
(612) 253-7010 FAX 255-1215  
**Executive Director: Roberto Reyna**

Minnesota Community Action Programs, Inc. (MCAA)  
1997 Sloan Place, Suite 30  
Maplewood, MN 55117-2051  
612-776-5376 FAX 612-776-5940  
**Executive Director: Denise DeVaan**

Minnesota Dept. of Economic Security (MDES)  
Community Based Services Division  
390 N. Robert Street  
St. Paul, MN 55101  
(612) 296-4657 FAX 296-0994  
General Information 296-8004, 1-800-456-8519  
Assistant Commissioner: Byron Zuidema

- Minnesota Valley Action Council, Inc. (MVAC)  
 410 Jackson Street, 3rd Floor  
 P.O. Box 3327  
 Mankato, MN 56001  
 (507) 345-6822 FAX 345-2414. 1-800-767-7139  
**Executive Director: William T. FitzSimmons**
- Northwest Community Action, Inc.  
 Main Street, P.O. Box 195  
 Badger, MN 56714  
 (218) 528-3258 FAX (218) 528-3259, 1-800-568-5319  
**Executive Director: Katie Laffin**
- Olmsted Community Action Program  
 1421 Third Avenue S.E.  
 Rochester, MN 55904  
 (507)-285-8785 FAX 285-8401  
**Executive Director: Michael Gerber**
- Otter Tail-Wadena Community Action Council, Inc.  
 Box L  
 New York Mills, MN 56567  
 (218) 385-2900 FAX (218) 385-9903  
**Executive Director: Stephen Nagle**
- Prairie Five Community Action Council, Inc.  
 7th Street & Washington Avenue, Suite 302  
 P.O. Box 695  
 Montevideo, MN 56265  
 (612) 269-6578 FAX 269-6570, 1-800-292-5437  
**Executive Director: Debbie Larson**
- Ramsey Action Programs, Inc. (RAP)  
 215 East Sixth Street  
 St. Paul, MN 55101  
 (612) 220-1820 FAX 220-1828  
**Executive Director: Dale Anderson**
- Scott-Carver Dakota CAP Agency, Inc.  
 1257 Marschall Road  
 Shakopee, MN 55379  
 (612) 496-2125 FAX 496-0698  
**Executive Director: Mary Sullivan**
- SEMCAC  
 101B North Mill Street  
 P.O. Box 549  
 Rushford, MN 55971-0549  
 (507) 864-7741 FAX (507)-864-2440  
**Executive Director: Bruce Hartert**
- Southwestern Minnesota Opportunity Council, Inc.  
 (SMOC)  
 515 10th Street  
 P.O. Box 787  
 Worthington, MN 56187  
 (507) 376-4195 FAX 376-3636, 1-800-658-2444  
**Executive Director: Neal Steffl**
- Three Rivers Community Action, Inc.  
 1414 North Star Drive  
 Zumbrota, MN 55992  
 (507-732-7391 FAX 732-8547  
**Executive Director: Michael Thorsteinson**
- Tri-County Action Programs, Inc. (Tri-CAP)  
 700 Mall Germain  
 St. Cloud, MN 56301  
 (612) 251-1612 FAX 251-7786, 1-800-777-6020  
**Executive Director: Richard E. Holm**
- Tri-County Community Action Program, Inc. (TCC)  
 501 LeMieur Street  
 P.O. Box 368  
 Little Falls, MN 56345  
 (612) 632-3691 FAX 632-3695  
**Executive Director: Joseph Ayers**
- Tri-Valley Opportunity Council, Inc.  
 102 North Broadway  
 P.O. Box 607  
 Crookston, MN 56716  
 (218) 281-5832 FAX 281-6681, 1-800-584-7020  
**Executive Director: Dennis DeMers**
- West Central Minnesota Communities Action, Inc.  
 307 8th Avenue West  
 Alexandria, MN 56308  
 (612) 762-3010 FAX 612-762-2305  
**Executive Director: Audrey A. Kolnes**
- Western Community Action, Inc.  
 203 West Main Street  
 P.O. Box 246  
 Marshall, MN 56258  
 (507) 537-1416 FAX 537-1849  
**Executive Director: Carol Moseng**
- Wright County Community Action, Inc.  
 130 West Division Street  
 P.O. Box 787  
 Maple Lake, MN 55358  
 (612) 963-6500 FAX 963-5745  
**Executive Directors: Mark Sexton**

**NATIONAL DIALOGUE ON POVERTY**  
*WHAT DOES AMERICA WANT?*

**OUTCOME SURVEY**



**ISSUE AREAS**

- A. HOUSING and BASIC NEEDS
- B. HEALTH
- C. INCOME AND WORK
- D. EDUCATION
- E. FAMILY DEVELOPMENT
- F. CRIME
- G. CITIZENSHIP
- H. ANTI-DISCRIMINATION and INCLUSIVENESS
- I. OTHER: \_\_\_\_\_

**A. HOUSING AND BASIC NEEDS**

- 1. Increased percentage of citizens who have their basic needs met (adequate clothing, food, and shelter).
- 2. Increased percentage of housing units that are physically safe and affordable.
- 3. Increased availability and affordability of public transportation.
- 4. Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**B. HEALTH**

- 5. Increased percentage of citizens who have adequate health insurance coverage.
- 6. Decreased incidence of AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases.
- 7. Decreased drug abuse in our community.
- 8. Decreased alcohol abuse by adults and elimination of alcohol and tobacco use by children.
- 9. Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**C. INCOME AND WORK**

- 10. Increased numbers of fulltime jobs with wages adequate to support the individual and offering health insurance and other benefits.
- 11. Increased numbers of low income people who become self-supporting through self-employment or by starting a business.
- 12. Higher monthly payments of welfare and other income transfer benefits to families and individuals.
- 13. Reduced income taxes and increased tax benefits for low-wage workers, e.g., the Earned Income Tax Credit.
- 14. Increased quality, affordable child care and other supports necessary to obtain and maintain employment.
- 15. Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**D. EDUCATION**

- 16. Increased number of adults who have basic skills in reading, math, and communication.
- 17. Increased number of persons who attain a high school diploma or GED.
- 18. Increased number of persons who complete special technical training, college, or other post secondary education.
- 19. Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**E. FAMILY DEVELOPMENT**

- 20. Increased family capacity to solve problems effectively and non-violently.
- 21. Reduced need for foster care placements.
- 22. Increased percentage of non-custodial parents who make regular child support payments.
- 23. Increased percentage of marriages that do not end in divorce.
- 24. Reduced numbers of births to teenage and/or single parents who lack the skills and resources to care for children.
- 25. Increased percentage of children who are able to participate in developmental activities, including sports, recreation, scouting, community service, and music.
- 26. Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**F. CRIME**

- 27. Increased ability of people to protect themselves from violent crime.
- 28. Decreased incidence of violent crime.
- 29. Increased opportunities for people who commit crimes to be re-socialized and re-integrated into society.
- 30. Decreased incidence of fraudulent commercial practices.
- 31. Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**G. CITIZENSHIP**

- 32. Increased citizen participation in formal and informal community organizations.
- 33. Increase percentage of persons who vote.
- 34. Increased percentage of citizens who serve on local boards and commissions.
- 35. Increased percentage of citizens who volunteer their time in service to the community.
- 36. Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**H. ANTI-DISCRIMINATION and INCLUSIVENESS**

- 37. Reduced acts of discrimination based on race, ethnicity, sex, disability, or other factors.
- 38. Increased tolerance, acceptance, and appreciation, of all cultures.
- 39. Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**I. OTHER: \_\_\_\_\_**

- 40. Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- 41. Other: \_\_\_\_\_



# National Dialogue on Poverty

## *What Does America Want?*

### Personal Priority Form

I would most like to see the following three outcomes in my community over the next few years:

**First Priority Outcome:** \_\_\_\_\_ (Please use numbers from the outcome survey.)

How best to achieve this outcome: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Second Priority Outcome:** \_\_\_\_\_ (Please use numbers from the outcome survey.)

How best to achieve this outcome: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Third Priority Outcome:** \_\_\_\_\_ (Please use numbers from the outcome survey.)

How best to achieve this outcome: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Additional Comments:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

# Community Action Basics

## **Community Action acts locally to fight poverty.**

Local Minnesotans determine local solutions for Minnesotans experiencing poverty.

## **Local citizens govern local nonprofit Community Action Agencies.**

Community Action uses the principle of "maximum feasible participation" in their local agency by people experiencing poverty. Community Action boards are mandated to include:

- 1/3 people experiencing poverty
- 1/3 public officials
- 1/3 at-large local citizens

Most community action agencies in Minnesota are private nonprofit corporations.

The State of Minnesota has a unique partnership with Reservation Governments. Eleven Indian Reservation Governments have chosen to be part of the community action network in Minnesota. Their tribal governments operate their local community action programming as grantees of the State of Minnesota.

## **Community Action is a block grant program.**

Community Action receives funding from a wide range of private and public sources at the local, state and federal level. Core funding for community action agencies is provided by a

block grant, the Economic Opportunity Grant, totaling \$6.5 million from the State of Minnesota and \$5 million from the federal government in 1995. The federal block grant was established in 1981, the state block grant in 1991. In 1995, this \$11.5 million block grant leveraged an additional \$175 million. (See *Summary of 1995 Agency Funding*, pages 10-11 for funding details.)

## **Community Action Agencies are strengthened by the resources of their state and national networks.**

Each local agency is part of Minnesota's forty-one member statewide anti-poverty network of Economic Opportunity Grant grantees.

Each local agency is part of a national anti-poverty network of federal Community Service Block Grant grantees.

Many community action agencies in Minnesota, and nationally, participate in both a state level and a national level association.

## **Community Action Agencies provide a comprehensive range of services.**

The following programs are offered somewhere within Minnesota's community action network. Each local Community Action Agency provides a unique combination of programming to meet locally determined objectives.

- **Economic Development**—Business start-up
- **Energy**—Conservation and Assistance
- **Housing**—Construction, Rehabilitation and Assistance
- **Jobs**—Youth, Adults, and Seniors
- **Senior Services**—Independent Living and Volunteer Placement
- **Family Services**—Case Management and Crisis
- **Nutrition**—Gardening, Dining and Assistance
- **Shelter**—Crisis and Transitional Housing
- **Child Development**—Programs and Referrals
- **Advocacy**—Education and Outreach

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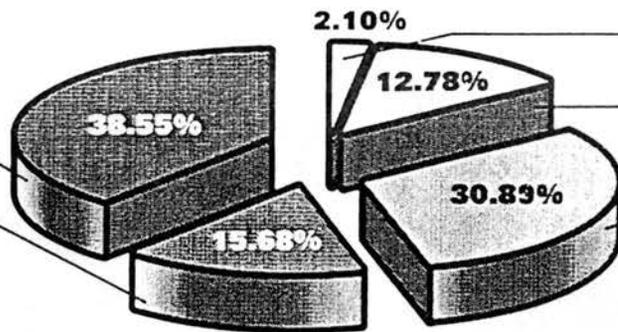
### **DID YOU KNOW?**

Community Action serves as many two parent families as single parent families.

**Community Action Agencies generally serve working families who have fallen on hard times and seniors.**

**Client Education**

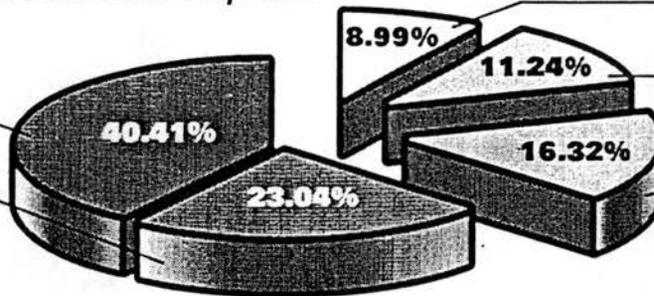
Less than high school  
Some high school



2 or 4 year college graduate  
Some postsecondary  
High school grad/GED

**Family Income as a Percent of Poverty Level**

Up to 75%  
76-100%



over 151%  
126-150%  
101-125%

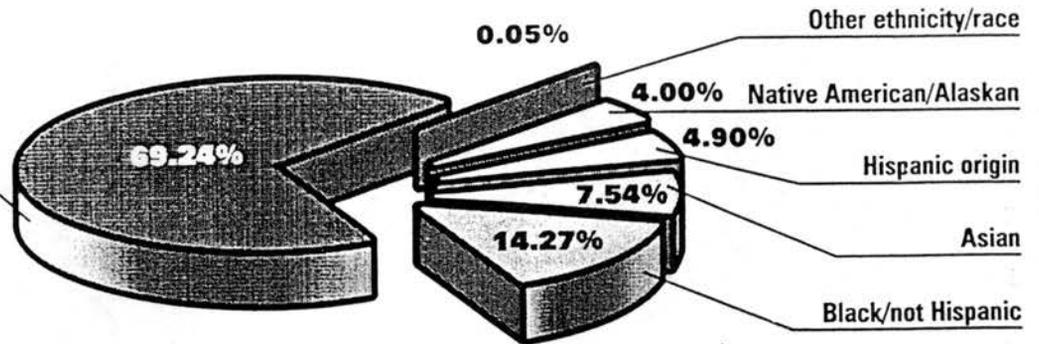
Size of Family Unit	1995 Poverty Level
1	\$ 7,470
2	10,030
3	12,590
4	15,150
5	17,710
6	20,270
7	22,830
8	25,390

**DID YOU KNOW?**

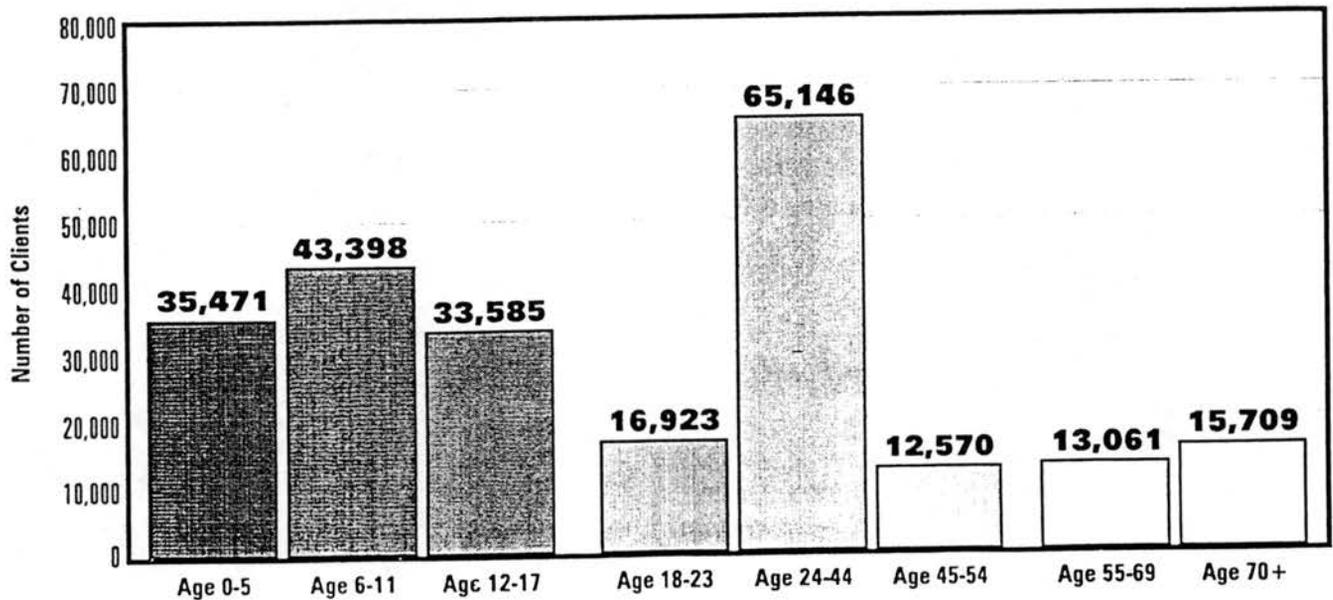
Earned wages are the only source of income for one-third of community action's clients.

## Client Ethnicity

White/not Hispanic



## Client Age Groups



### DID YOU KNOW?

The majority of community action clients own their home.

For MIKE

**Urgent**

Date 4/30

Time 10:15 AM

## While You Were Out

M Alexandra

Of MCN - Civic Eng. Project

Phone 642-1904

AREA CODE

NUMBER

EXTENSION

Telephoned

Please Call

Came To See You

Will Call Again

Returned Your Call

Wants To See You

Message Attending 5/3 mtg?

pls

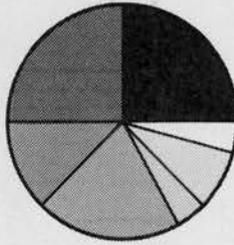
Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Darcy,

Please talk to  
me about this.

M

# MINNESOTA COUNCIL OF NONPROFITS



250 COLONIAL OFFICE PARK  
2700 UNIVERSITY AVENUE WEST, ST. PAUL, MN 55114  
(612) 642-1904 FAX: (612) 642-1517 1-800-289-1904

April 19, 1996

Mike Anderson  
MICAH  
122 West Franklin Avenue #320  
Minneapolis, MN 55404

Dear Mike:

This letter is to inform you about The Civic Engagement Project MCN organized on April 5th. Enclosed is a summary of that meeting and a list of participants.

The next meeting of The Civic Engagement Project will take place on **Friday May 3<sup>rd</sup>**, in **MCN building, 2700 University Avenue West, Conference Room A (lower level)**. An agenda and short descriptions of the two models to be discussed on May 3<sup>rd</sup> are also included.

This is a brown bag session, however, lunch boxes will be available for \$5.

To confirm your participation and to indicate your lunch preferences, please call me at **(612)642-1904**, or send **e-mail** at: **luminita@mtn.org** before **May 1<sup>st</sup>**.

I am looking forward to meeting you on May 3rd.

Sincerely,

Alexandra L. Petrescu  
Program Officer

# MCN

## The Civic Engagement Project

### April 5, 1996

#### 1. What is civic engagement?

The following words were stated in response to the question above. The list is provided to assist you in considering what a common vocabulary might consist of for participants. The list is not exhaustive so we may add to it as the project progresses. It is interesting to note some words which reoccur, e.g., change, conflict, decision and responsibility. Emerging from staff perspectives are words such as awareness, celebration, deliberation, judgement, listening, mutual, negotiation and skepticism.

ability to make change	mutual responsibility
awareness	negotiation
belief in individuals	obligation
caring	peace making
celebration	problem solvers
change	progress
citizens, regular folks are involved	protecting freedom
common good	public judgement
conflict	public service
confrontation	reducing helplessness
deliberation	resolution of conflict
dialogue	responsibility
empowerment	skepticism toward authority
hopelessness	taking charge
influencing decision	teach and learning
involvement in multiple institutions	tradition
listening	trouble makers
<u>making</u> decisions	voluntary action
making time to work in a group	

#### 2. What is the difference between active and passive civic engagement?

It is interesting to see that client and voting appears as both active and passive. What assumptions do we make about what is active or passive? For example, are the two categories exclusive of each other? In times of scarce resources can the passive forms of civic engagement be put to use in a positive manner?

ACTIVE

PASSIVE

←.....need full spectrum.....→

situational  
mix enriches  
organizations and individuals  
activities in the community interest

making decisions  
taking action  
time  
self-advocacy  
voting  
influencing the process  
being a citizen  
being a client  
negotiation  
self -education  
public citizens  
responsibility  
advocacy  
organizing  
conflict  
collaboration

influencing  
whining  
money  
whining  
voting  
belief in making changes  
being a customer  
being a client  
belief in ability to make change

awareness  
listening

**3. How is civic engagement influenced by different cultures?**

What are the different cultures active in your organization? How do they affect the definition of civic engagement in your organization? How do they affect the opportunities for civic engagement between your organization and the community it serves or the general public?

consensus vs.voting, as positive act  
gender factor in what is appropriate behavior  
organizational cultures  
power of volunteers  
power of experts  
class level/differences  
charity.....common good/responsibility  
unit of ownership  
alms.....common good  
private  
urban and rural-cultural differences

urban civic engagement: larger group dynamic  
rural: one to one  
    also takes the mass  
discussion: urban is one to one too!  
status: sense of importance  
cultural value on tradition, elders, roots  
change in culture from isolation to collaboration  
different forms of communication  
different types of civic engagement  
different assumptions

#### 4. What contributes to the decline of social/civic engagement?

The response was made that maybe we are operating from an inaccurate perspective, are we? Examine the list below for indicators of such a decline. If our perception is accurate, how do you react to the described contributors of this decline? Is there one specific reason or is the effect a cumulative phenomena?

voting ↓  
church attendance ↓  
parent involvement in school's activity ↓  
2 job household (jobs require more time and energy)  
don't see civic engagement as a part of work  
child care issues  
time spent in cars doubled → isolation  
no common set of values other than money  
(cul de sacs is O.K....it's about people)  
displaced responsibility for \*problem solving  
push to experts and government → spurred by media exaggeration  
    → makes problems seem too big  
media(+) and (-)  
physical geography of community → isolation  
    → separation  
TV/passivity → computers  
    → net  
    → technology  
survival needs (housing)  
lack of morality on economic issues ↓ stability

**Minnesota Council of Nonprofits  
Civic Engagement Working Group Members  
April 1996**

Thomas Zoet	180 Degrees, Inc.
Gayle Zoffer	Active Citizenship School
Margaret Boyer	Alliance of Early Childhood Professionals
Susan Dicker	Alliance of Early Childhood Professionals
Ann McCully	American Cancer Society
Therese Cain	Cabrini House
Don Reeder	City Vote
Karen Kingsley	Community Action for Suburban Hennepin
Frank Altman	Community Reinvestment Fund
Katy Lowery	Cooperating Fund Drive
Elizabeth Di Cola	Cornerstone c/o Popham Haig
R. David Miller	Cuyuna Range Economic Development Inc.
Reid E. Zimmerman	Family Resource Center
Don Evbanks	Fathers' Resource Center
Thomas Proulk	Freedom Place
Anna Sochocky	Harriet Tubman Center
Anne Arthur	Lake Street Council
Janet Gendler	League of Women Voters of Minneapolis
Elizabeth Foy	League of Women Voters of Minneapolis
Shawn Fremstadt	Legal Services Advocacy Project

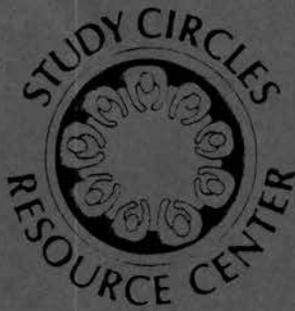
Kathy Williams	Minneapolis YWCA
Susan Kafka	Minnesota Academy of Science
Sheila Smith	Minnesota Citizens for the Arts
Denise Devaan	Minnesota Community Action Association
Dave Nelson	Minnesota Food Association
Jan O'Donnell	Minnesota Food Association
Bruce Vandal	Minnesota Minority Education Partnership, Inc
Benjamin C. Wright	Minnesota OIC State Council
Kathy Wilken	Neighborhood Health Care Network
Barbara Gerten	Neighbors, Inc.
Steve Moga	New Foundations Inc.
Joan Gerten	North Suburbs Community
Timothy R. Domke	North Suburbs Community
Debra Caron	Open Your Heart to the Hungry and Homeless
Susanne Eisenberg Murray	Parents Anonymous of Minnesota
Cindy Phillips	Rainbow Research
Michael Guest	Resource Center of the Americas
Steven Thovson	Rural Enterprises for Acceptable Living, Inc.
Virginia Greenman	St. Paul Council of Churches
Kerrie Blevins	Teens Alone
Peter Rode	The Urban Coalition of The Twin Cities

# Minnesota Council of Nonprofits

## The Civic Engagement Project

**Agenda**  
**May 3, 1996**

- |             |  |
|-------------|--|
| 11:00-11:15 | Introductions. Overview of The Civic Engagement Project  |
| 11:15-12:30 | "Commons' Dilemma": Simulation/Discussion  |
| 12:30-12:45 | Lunch break  |
| 12:45-1:10  | Two models of bringing citizens together to study, define and solve public interest issues: <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Study circles</li><li>2. Neighborhood Initiatives</li></ol> |
| 1:10-1:45   | Small group discussion: Choose the model that interests you  |
| 1:45-2:00   | Planning: Next steps for your organization   |



## What is a study circle?

A dozen people are comfortably seated around a living room or meeting room, one speaking, several others looking like they would like to make a point, one skimming an article as if searching for a particular item, another scanning the group, and the others listening attentively. This is a study circle in action.

A study circle is made up of 5–20 people who agree to meet together several times to learn about a social or political issue in a democratic and collaborative way. Complex issues are broken down into manageable subdivisions, and controversial topics are dealt with in depth. While single-session programs can result in meaningful and productive dialogue, multiple sessions generate continuity and camaraderie within the group. Reading material serves to catalyze the discussion and provides a common reference point.

### Philosophy and background

As an informal, practical, and effective method for adult learning and social change, the study circle is rooted in the civic movements of 19th century America, and the use of study circles and similar small-group discussion programs is growing rapidly in the United States and many other places around the world.

Study circles are voluntary and highly participatory. They assist participants in confronting challenging issues and in making difficult choices. Study circles engage citizens in public and organizational concerns, bringing the wisdom of ordinary people to bear on difficult issues. Cooperation and participation are stressed so that the group can capitalize on the experience of all its members.

The study circle is small-group democracy in action; all viewpoints are taken seriously and each participant has an equal opportunity to participate. The process – democratic discussion among equals – is as important as the content.

### Roles

*The study circle leader* is vital to the group's success. The leader makes sure the discussion is lively but focused. He or she models respectful listening and encourages participants to share their knowledge, experiences, and opinions. Some people find it helpful to share leadership tasks with a co-moderator.

*The study circle organizer* – who may be the same person as the leader – selects the reading material, recruits participants, arranges the logistics for the meetings, and chooses the discussion leader.

*Participants*, whose commitment and interest are essential for a study circle's success, ultimately "own" the study circle. Their clear understanding of both their role and the leader's role helps create a democratic and collaborative environment.

## **Goals**

The goal of a study circle is to deepen participants' understanding of an issue by focusing on the values that underlie opinions. Perhaps the most important question a study circle leader can ask is: "What experiences or beliefs might lead decent and caring people to support that point of view?" The group works through difficult issues and grapples with the choices that society or their organization is facing. Study circles seek "common ground" – that is, areas of general agreement – but consensus or compromise is not necessary.

Study circles differ from typical meetings in that they do not begin with a specific desired outcome. *Deliberation* is the goal. However, study circles often lead to social and political action, both by individual participants and by the group. In the final session, leaders may encourage participants to share information about what is going on in their community or organization and to discuss action they might take after the study circle ends.

## **Suitability to a variety of organizations**

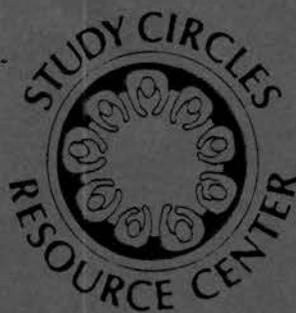
Churches and synagogues, civic and community groups, businesses, advocacy organizations, schools, and unions have all used study circles to help their members consider vital issues. Sponsorship of study circles provides opportunities for members to gain knowledge, empowerment, and improved communication skills in an enjoyable and challenging setting.

## **Variations on the basic format**

There are many variations to the basic format for a study circle. Though ideal study circles meet once a week for at least three sessions, other schedules can also work well. Some groups may want to combine a study circle with their regular monthly meetings. For those groups that cannot meet regularly, a workshop format can be used at a conference or a retreat, with the entire study circle taking place in one or two days.

Videotapes or audiotapes as well as written material can be used to spark discussion. Small-group activities and exercises are included in some study circles to add variety to the sessions.

The strength of the study circle is its flexibility. Every group's situation is unique, and study circle organizers are encouraged to adapt the basic format to the needs and goals of their community or organization.



## Overview of a typical study circle

What follows is an outline for a single study circle session. It may be helpful to have this handy for reference as you lead a study circle.

1. **Introductions.** Start by giving group members the opportunity to briefly introduce themselves. If you've already met several times, at least go around the room to give names.

2. **Ground rules.** Remind everyone of the ground rules for study circles, and ask the group for their consent or possible additions to these ground rules. Be more elaborate in your first meeting, but even in subsequent meetings the leader can provide a brief reminder by saying, "My role is to keep discussion focused and moving along. Your role is to share your concerns and beliefs and to listen carefully to others. You should be willing to examine your own beliefs in light of what others say."

3. **Discussion of personal connection to or interest in the issue.** Ask group members to discuss why this issue is important to them. "Why are you concerned about this issue?" "How have your experiences or concerns influenced your opinions about this issue?" This is especially useful if this is your first session, or if the topic of discussion is a new one for the group.

4. **Laying out a range of views.** If the reading material you are using lays out well-defined and distinct views on the issue, this part will be straightforward. One useful way to make sure all the views are adequately presented is to ask for an explanation of each view. To accomplish this you can divide the participants into small groups of three to five people. Give each group the task of preparing a brief presentation of the best possible case for one of the views; when time is called, the small groups reassemble to make their brief presentations. This exercise may call for some degree of role playing, but it helps make sure that a variety of ideas will be considered in the discussion. Make it clear that this is just a way to give each view a fair hearing, that this isn't yet the time for an open discussion of the views.

If the reading material does not distinctly lay out a range of views, you may wish to ask participants to volunteer what they see as the main views on the issue based on the reading material and their knowledge of the issue. Here the leader's acquaintance with the subject will be necessary, so that he or she can help to raise views that did not come forth from participants.

**5. Discussion and deliberation.** This part of the study circle is devoted to wide-open discussion. Encourage participants to explore their true beliefs, as opposed to those that might have been assigned in small groups. One useful way to proceed is to ask group members to comment on what they find appealing and unappealing about the various views that have been put on the table for discussion: "Do you find yourself more in agreement with a supporter or a critic of that view, and why?" If the group neglects a major point of view, the leader should raise it for consideration and ask, "What are the concerns that underlie this view?"

**6. Summary and common ground.** Ask participants to summarize the most important results of their discussion. "Did any common concerns emerge?" "In what ways do you see the issue differently as a result of considering others' views?" Participants will likely have some common concerns and goals even though they have different ideas about how to address or achieve them.

**7. Evaluation and next steps.** Ask participants for their thoughts on the group process. What did they like or not like about the discussion? You may wish to ask for this in writing to give participants the opportunity to respond anonymously. If you'll be meeting again, remind the group of the reading for the next time. If this is your last session, give participants the opportunity to discuss how they could become further involved in the issue.

# N R P

A snapshot of the Minneapolis Neighborhood Revitalization Program

The Minneapolis Neighborhood Revitalization Program is an innovative effort to bring residents into the priority-setting process of their city. It is based on the belief that the empowerment of residents and the mobilization of untapped resources, energy and creativity can make our progressive vision of the future a reality.

*Robert D. Miller*  
Director



NRP funded improvement programs help neighborhood residents fix-up their homes with low-interest loans and grants.

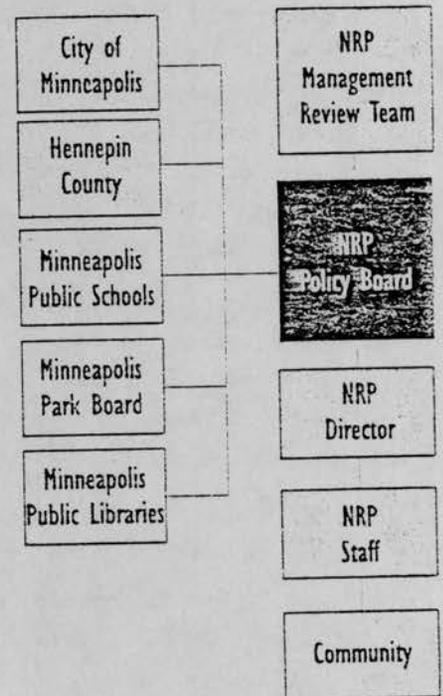
## THE CONCEPT

The Minneapolis Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP) is a unique effort to change the future of the City's neighborhoods, making them better places to live, work, learn and play. Neighborhood-based planning and priority setting are the heart of the NRP.

Residents and other neighborhood stakeholders identify and address resident concerns in partnership with government and others by developing a Neighborhood Action Plan. Discovering new partnerships and renewing old ones can lead to creative solutions. The partnerships created through involvement in the NRP are as varied as the people and interests involved in the planning process. Residents are learning to work with City, County, Parks, Library and School staff to tap new resources in their neighborhood.

Involvement in the NRP has grown from six neighborhoods in February 1991, to 79 of the city's 81 neighborhoods in January 1995. Thousands of Minneapolis residents are using the NRP planning process to identify and meet their neighborhood's housing, safety, economic development, recreation, health, social service, environment and transportation needs. They build a foundation for their future by organizing residents, gathering information, prioritizing needs, brainstorming solutions and implementing the Neighborhood Action Plan that they develop.

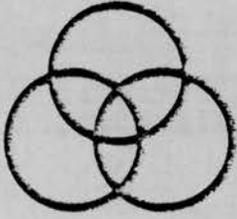
From increasing the amount of quality housing to improving the environment, building community centers to job creation, Minneapolis residents are the creators and catalysts of change - change aimed at renewing a sense of common purpose in their community. ■



## THE GOALS

Four primary goals are addressed through the development and implementation of Neighborhood Action Plans:

**Building Neighborhood Capacity.** When people organize and become more knowledgeable about how government works, they can help meet their community's



## THE FIRST STEP PROGRAM

In 1993, the NRP developed the First Step Program to simplify the beginning of the neighborhood planning process and allow for more immediate implementation of activities that address pressing neighborhood needs.

"First Step," is the initial, strategic planning phase of what will ultimately be a multi-year Neighborhood Action Plan. In "First Step" the neighborhood identifies broad goals and objectives, then focuses on developing specific strategies for addressing the top 2-3 neighborhood priorities.

First Step funding, a portion of the funding available for the entire Neighborhood Action Plan, is limited based on neighborhood type:

- Redirection Neighborhoods receive up to \$450,000
- Revitalization Neighborhoods receive up to \$350,000
- Protection Neighborhoods receive up to \$250,000

needs. Their energy and creativity, combined with other public and private resources, are needed to offset declining federal, state and local funds. A diverse group of residents working together in each neighborhood can mobilize new assets and generate positive change.

**Redesign Public Services.** The people who live and work in a neighborhood are excellent judges of their neighborhood's priorities, opportunities and needs. The NRP gives residents a forum where unique neighborhood needs can be voiced to public officials and government staff. This dialog will lead to the reexamination of budget priorities and new methods of public service delivery.

**Increase Government Collaboration.** New efforts to communicate and to coordinate services within and among the five local government jurisdictions serving Minneapolis will provide residents with more benefit for each public dollar spent on their needs.

**Create a Sense of Community.** Neighborhood revitalization ultimately depends on a sense of neighborhood identity and a commitment by all residents to make their neighborhood a better place to live, work, learn and play. The NRP gives neighborhood residents a framework for working together to enhance their sense of community. ■

## THE PROCESS

The NRP uses a six-step process to help residents define what they want for their neighborhood, prepare their Neighborhood Action Plan and begin successful implementation. In cooperation with NRP and government staff, residents:

- **Develop a Participation Agreement.** The neighborhood organization prepares a Participation Agreement that spells out

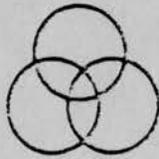
how they will: 1) elect a neighborhood NRP steering committee to coordinate the planning process, 2) get a diversity of people and interests involved, 3) gather background information for the planning effort, 4) define neighborhood issues and opportunities and 5) structure meetings and events to develop their plan.



*One neighborhood planned for the health of its children by opening a clinic in the local elementary school.*

- **Build a diverse citizen participation effort and gather information.** Issues, needs and opportunities are identified through outreach to a variety of individual residents and neighborhood groups. Outreach activities include meetings, surveys, events, focus groups and other efforts managed by the neighborhood's NRP steering committee.
- **Draft a plan.** Using information gathered through outreach efforts, the neighborhood NRP steering committee identifies the top issues, needs and opportunities. A draft plan with a vision statement, broad goals and clearly defined objectives is prepared. Assistance from government staff, nonprofit organizations and the private sector helps the committee to establish the strategies, timelines, costs and

The NRP Logo



The three rings reflect each of the stakeholders involved in Minneapolis neighborhood revitalization: residents, government and the private sector. The focus of the Neighborhood Revitalization Program is where the three rings intersect. NRP staff work to bring residents, government and private interests together to share resources and talents, address problems and take advantage of opportunities.



Improving the environment is a priority that often emerges during a neighborhood's NRP planning process.

## THE NRP GLOSSARY

**Common Project:** Pooled revenue from a combination of some tax increment districts and MCDA development accounts that can be used for neighborhood redevelopment.

**Joint-Powers Agreement:** The contract between the NRP's five participating jurisdictions that establishes the NRP Policy Board as the governing body of the program and defines its composition and power.

**Management Review Team:** A group of neighborhood residents and senior managers from the NRP's five governing jurisdictions that meet regularly to coordinate staff involvement and ensure effective

review, approval and implementation of the Neighborhood Action Plans. The MRT, created in April 1995, replaces the Implementation Committee, which fulfilled similar functions during the initial years of the program.

**Neighborhood Action Plan:** The multi-year, neighborhood-based plan that identifies the

visions, goals, objectives and strategies that will address neighborhood priorities and direct the expenditure of NRP funds.

**Participating Jurisdictions:** The five governmental units that are involved in the NRP. Specifically, the City of Minneapolis, Hennepin County, Minneapolis Public Schools, the Minneapolis Library Board and the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board.

**Participation Agreement:** A workplan and budget that defines how a neighborhood will conduct its planning efforts.

**Policy Board:** The NRP's governing body, made up of 19 representatives from the neighborhoods, participating jurisdictions and other community interests, which provides overall direction for the Program and has primary responsibility for review and approval of Neighborhood Action Plans.

**Protection Neighborhoods:** Neighborhoods experiencing few social, physical and economic problems, but require attention to maintain the quality of life.

**Redirection Neighborhoods:** Neighborhoods experiencing serious social, physical and economic problems.

**Revitalization Neighborhoods:** Neighborhoods that are fundamentally sound, but are beginning to experience some social, physical and economic problems.

**Tax Increment District:** A geographic area where the tax capacity is frozen for a defined amount of time. The property taxes resulting from any increase in tax capacity above the frozen level are used to pay debt service on bonds, fund the NRP and to carry out other redevelopment projects.

Questions are always welcome at the:

Minneapolis Neighborhood Revitalization Program,  
Crown Roller Mill, Suite 425, 105 Fifth Avenue South,  
Minneapolis, MN 55401

Phone: 612-673-5140 • FAX: 612-673-5138

responsibilities required for successful plan implementation.

- **Review and approve the plan at the neighborhood level.** The NRP steering committee presents the draft plan to neighborhood residents and other stakeholders for their review, comment and approval.
- **Submit the plan to the government jurisdictions for review, approval and funding.** The plan goes to the NRP's Management Review Team, Policy Board and the five participating jurisdictions for review and approval. A portion of the review focuses on using NRP money to leverage other resources to fill funding gaps in the plan.
- **Implement the plan.** The neighborhood organization staff and resident volunteers help carry out, monitor and revise the plan as it is implemented. Cooperation with government staff, nonprofit organizations and the private sector ensures successful and timely implementation of the Neighborhood Action Plan. ■

## THE HISTORY

In 1987, with signs of neighborhood decline in Minneapolis becoming increasingly apparent, the Mayor and City Council launched a process that eventually created the Minneapolis Neighborhood Revitalization Program. First, a Housing and Economic Development Task Force reported in May 1988 that a) physical revitalization of the city's neighborhoods would cost over \$3 billion; b) many successful revitalization efforts feature flexible, efficient use of public resources and a strategically coordinated approach, tailored to specific neighborhoods; and c) the city should initiate a citywide planning effort with guidance from neighborhood residents.

Next, an Implementation Advisory Committee was established to determine how to

finance and execute such a plan. By May 1989, they outlined an approach to "protect" fundamentally sound neighborhoods, "revitalize" those showing signs of decline and "redirect" those with extensive problems. They suggested a neighborhood-based planning process focused on new strategies rather than new programs. The committee concluded that "neighborhood revitalization is the most urgent long-term challenge facing Minneapolis over the coming two decades."

By October 1989, a Technical Advisory Committee composed of key local government staff was working out the mechanics of the NRP. They developed a process by which the jurisdictions serving Minneapolis could work cooperatively to maximize existing resources to support neighborhood priorities.

Finally, in 1990, the Minnesota Legislature and the City Council established the NRP and dedicated \$20 million a year for 20 years to fund it. On February 15, 1991, the first six neighborhoods were selected to begin their Neighborhood Action Plan. ■

## THE FUNDING

The NRP's annual revenue of \$20 million comes from the Minneapolis Community Development Agency's (MCDA) Common Project. The Common Project was established in 1989 by the Minneapolis City Council so that the revenue generated from particular tax increment districts could be used to meet some of the critical redevelopment needs of Minneapolis neighborhoods. The NRP revenues received from this fund are public and must be used for public pur-

poses, in accordance with the Minnesota State Law that established the NRP.

Because the cost of physical revitalization alone is estimated at over \$3 billion, the NRP's 20-year funding of \$400 million cannot meet all the needs of City neighborhoods. Therefore, NRP funds function as "start-up" money for the revitalization

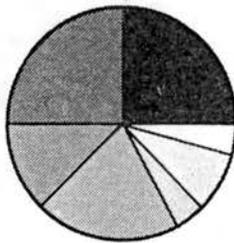


*Through the NRP, neighborhoods are strengthening their connections with City departments, including the Minneapolis Police.*

of Minneapolis neighborhoods and the Program emphasizes:

- identification of human resources and other assets that can be used to implement the Action Plans;
- increased intra- and intergovernmental collaboration to prevent duplication of efforts and to streamline the delivery of public services;
- redirection of jurisdictional budgets (the City, the County, the Public Schools, Parks and Libraries) to address strategies in Neighborhood Action Plans; and
- using NRP funds to leverage other community resources to fill funding gaps remaining in Neighborhood Action Plans. ■

# MINNESOTA COUNCIL OF NONPROFITS



250 COLONIAL OFFICE PARK  
2700 UNIVERSITY AVENUE WEST, ST. PAUL, MN 55114  
(612) 642-1904 FAX: (612) 642-1517 1-800-289-1904

March 27th, 1996

Mike Anderson  
MICAH  
122 West Franklin Avenue #320  
Minneapolis, MN 55404

Dear Mike:

Congratulations! We are pleased to invite you to the first meeting of the Minnesota Council of Nonprofits' Civic Engagement Project on April 5th. We look forward to a challenging and rewarding eight month exploration for every participant. It is our hope that the work begun in your organization will not end in December but will continue as an ongoing strategy to increase citizen participation.

To be successful in this endeavor you will need to have your organization's full support and understanding. It is important that your board be supportive of the efforts for you to be effective as a member of The Civic Engagement Working Group.

Please take the time to reflect upon the following questions. They will serve as a background of discussions for the remainder of the year.

1. What is civic engagement?
2. Why should my organization promote it?
3. What are the differences between active and passive civic engagement?
4. How is civic engagement different in different cultures?
5. What are the causes Americans are less involved in public life?
6. How do you promote civic engagement in your organization?
7. What are the barriers to implementing civic engagement initiatives in nonprofits?
8. How does a nonprofit organization's income sources encourage or discourage community involvement?
9. In spite of the obstacles, how can nonprofits move forward?
10. What specifically can your organization do?
11. How can you provide opportunities for your organizations' board and staff to take part in the civic engagement effort and receive information?
12. How can civic engagement be incorporated as a permanent element of the overall working style, governance and activity of the nonprofit sector?

The Civic Engagement Project first meeting will take place on Friday April 5th, 1996 from 11:am-2:00 pm, in MCN building, 2700 University Avenue West, lower level Conference room D.

Enclosed you will find a list of participants and an article about social capital by Robert Putnam.

Unfortunately we are not able, as we thought we might be when we sent our previous notice, to provide free lunch and mileage reimbursement for this meeting. Lunch will be available for \$5. Please let us know if this new situation will create a problem for you.

We are looking forward to seeing you on April 5th.

Sincerely,



Jon Pratt  
Executive Director



Marcia Keller Avner  
Public Policy Director