



# COMMUNITY NEWS

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&  
VIEWS

*THEME: University and Community*

## Historical Evolution of University-Community Partnerships

*By Ira Harkavy*

Since the early 1990s, universities have increasingly come to recognize and accept their responsibilities to their local communities and acted to fulfill them. For example, my own institution, the University of Pennsylvania (Penn), is doing far more in 2000 than it did in 1990 to improve the quality of life in its local community, West Philadelphia. Penn, like other urban universities, should, could, and will do more in the future to contribute to its local community in ways that simultaneously benefit both its enlightened institutional self-interest and the moral and civic education of its students. Indeed, in my judgment, urban universities should make university-community partnerships among their very highest institutional priorities.

Why should American universities actively and wholeheartedly adopt collaboration with communities as their categorical imperative for the new millennium? Because they will then be better able to fulfill their primary mission to advance and transmit knowledge in a democratic society.

### *Historical overview*

University presidents of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries worked to develop the American research university into a major national institution capable of meeting the needs of a rapidly changing and increasingly complex society. Progressive academics also viewed the city as their arena for study and action. They seized the opportunity to advance knowledge, teaching, and learning by working to improve the quality of life in cities experiencing the traumatic effects of industrialization, immigration, and large-scale urbanization. This mission is readily identified in the histories of four leading urban universities at the turn of the twentieth century.

**Johns Hopkins.** Johns Hopkins president Daniel Coit Gilman was the guiding force behind the organization of the Charity Organization Society (COS). Designed to

provide a scientific approach to helping Baltimore's poor, COS studied the causes of poverty, collected useful data, and worked to get at the root causes of destitution. A number of Gilman's leading faculty members had close ties to Lederal Hall, the campus YMCA, which was deeply engaged in work with Baltimore's poor.

**Columbia.** Seth Low, president of Columbia from 1890 through 1901, promoted a decidedly democratic approach in dealing with New York City and its communities. No other university president had so clearly articulated a morally inspired, instrumental, active approach to research, teaching, and learning. In effect repudiating Plato's notion of the groves of academe with its physical and

intellectual separation of town and gown, Low linked the two, identifying a mutually beneficial, interactive relationship between Columbia and the city as crucial to intellectual and institutional advancement.

**The University of Chicago.** Work emanating from Hull House – the social settlement founded by Jane Addams and Ellen Starr on Chicago's West Side in 1889 – was enormously significant in forming ties between the University of Chicago and its city. In addition to various residents' programs, Hull House was a site for labor union activities; a forum for social, political, and economic reform; and a center for social science research. Chicago's first president, William Rainey Harper, described the mission of his university as "service for mankind wherever mankind is, whether within scholastic walls or without those walls and in the world at large." The most notable work at Chicago during this period was the development of the "Chicago School of Philosophy," which emerged from the action-oriented engagement of John Dewey and his colleagues in the real-world problems of the city within which they lived and worked.

"No more prizes for predicting rain. Prizes only for building the arks."

- Lewis V. Gerstner, Jr.

*HARVAKY, continued on next page*

## UNIVERSITY AND COMMUNITY RESOURCES ON-LINE

MSU Community and Economic Development Program  
<http://www.msu.edu/unit/cua>

MSU Extension  
<http://www.msue.msu.edu>

MSU University Outreach  
<http://www.msu.edu/unit/outreach/>

HUD Office of University Partnerships  
[www.oup.org](http://www.oup.org)

Fannie Mae Foundation University Community  
Partnership Initiative  
<http://www.fanniemaefoundation.org/partner/index.htm>

EDA University Centers Program  
(requires Adobe Acrobat reader)  
<http://www.doc.gov/eda/html/prgtitle.htm>

Kellogg Commission on The Future of State And Land  
Grant Universities  
<http://www.nasulgc.org/Kellogg/kellogg.htm>

USDA's Cooperative State Research, Education and  
Extension Service  
<http://www.reeusda.gov/>

## HARVAKY, continued from cover

The University of Pennsylvania. In Philadelphia, the early Wharton School most fully exemplified an entire "college" within a wider university devoted to integrating research and teaching with political activity. Endowed in 1881 as the School of Finance and Economy, the Wharton School quickly developed under Edmund James into a school devoted to providing a social scientific response to the problems of industrialization. James' innovations went beyond fashioning the direction of the Wharton School. In 1889, he established the American Academy of Political and Social Science; together with colleagues, James played key roles in establishing the Municipal League of Philadelphia and the National Municipal League.

## *From the Post-World War I "Ivory Tower" to the New American Civic University*

The historical examples presented above are not designed to evoke images of a paradise lost. Among other things, except for Seth Low's Columbia, these efforts were neither participatory nor democratic. More centrally, they failed to become the dominant model for the American university. They were, quite simply, far in advance of their time.

World War I began a new chapter in the history of community-urban university relationships. The brutality and horror of that conflict ended the buoyant optimism and faith in human progress and societal improvement that marked the Progressive Era. American academics were not immune to the general

disillusion with progress, and despair led many faculty members to retreat into a narrow scientific approach. Scholarly inquiry directing toward creating a better society was increasingly deemed inappropriate. Faith in the expert and in expert knowledge was separated from its reformist roots.

New conditions, however, now prevail that make it both essential and highly likely that university-community partnerships will become a hallmark of the American university. Stated directly, "real-world" developments are "forcing" higher eds, particularly urban higher eds, to become genuinely civic institutions devoted to solving the pressing problems of our society. The democratic promise of the American university sharply and disturbingly contrasts with the reality of American society.

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On the web at <http://www.msu.edu/user/cua>.

*MSU is an affirmative action, equal opportunity institution.*

The problem of the city has, in my judgment, already become the most pressing problem facing urban colleges and universities. Simply put, higher eds cannot move (as other more mobile institutions have increasingly done) to escape poverty, crime, and physical deterioration at their gates.

Self-interest rooted in the day-to-day impact of physical location is only part of the explanation for the changing stance of urban higher eds toward their localities. The financial, public relations, and political costs of institutional aloofness are becoming too steep to bear. It is untenable to be perceived as a distant island of affluence in a rising sea of poverty and despair. It is particularly untenable given the major role universities play in shaping modern society.

### ***The University as an Essential Partner in Community Building***

The growing movement from isolated, insulated ivory towers toward societally connected, socially responsible higher eds engaged in university-community partnerships is largely a response to the marked disjunction between the promise and power and the actual performance of American higher education, particularly its research institutions. Although an increasing number of universities and colleges are actively trying to find ways to collaborate effectively with their neighboring communities, as of now, proclamations and public relations far outstrip what is really being done and achieved. To make further progress, all higher eds should rank among their highest priorities helping to create the local coalitions needed to establish, develop, and maintain community-university partnerships. Unless universities learn from their history and go “back to the future,” the crisis of our communities will necessarily grow more severe.

To make the case for university-community partnerships is easy to do. The hard thing is to figure out how to do it. The hardest thing of all, of course, is to actually get it done. To stimulate discussion and debate as to how we might effectively “get it done,” I propose a strategy in which university-community partnerships function as the core means to create an effective compassionate, “democratic devolution revolution.” Such an approach would involve government serving as a catalyst, providing funds to create stable, ongoing partnerships. Government would, however, be a second tier deliverer of services, with universities, community based organizations, unions, communities of faith, other voluntary associations, school children and their parents, and other community members serving as the core partners.

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### ***Toward Implementing “The Noah Principle”***

At a 1988 education summit convened by Fortune magazine, Lewis V. Gerstner, Jr. (then President of American Express, now chairman and CEO of IBM) called for the adoption of “that famous Noah Principle:” “No more prizes for predicting rain. Prizes only for building the arks.” The severe conditions in America’s urban communities, I contend, require that government, foundations, and universities immediately, specifically, systematically, and collaboratively implement the Noah Principle.

This article asserts the “radical” proposition that universities should not be rewarded for their capacity to produce lofty rhetoric, but only for their actual performance in helping to solve America’s most pressing problems. The question for grant seeking universities should be: “What have you actually done for and with your community – and for and with your students?”

Conditions seem to be ripe for a change in evaluating and rewarding America’s colleges and universities. Central among them is the gap between the university’s enormous promise, prestige, and power and its actual performance in producing the knowledge, personnel, and democratic practice required to solve the problems confronting American society. If the American university is to fulfill its mission and promise and help to create a decent, just, and genuinely democratic society, it should give full-hearted, full-minded attention to solving our complex interrelated problems, particularly the problems of the city. The benefits of doing so would be considerable for the university, the American city, and American society in general.

*Ira Haravy is Associate Vice President and Director of the Center for Community Partnerships at the University of Pennsylvania. This article is abridged with permission of the author, from papers prepared for the 1999 Fannie Mae Foundation Roundtable, “Past and Present: Evolution of University-Community Partnerships,” and the 1998 U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Joint Forum on “Connecting Community Building and Education Reform.”*

# Accomplishing Outreach Scholarship Through University-Community Collaborations

*Robert L. Church*

As a land-grant research university, Michigan State University has a special obligation to make its expertise readily and constructively available to those seeking to strengthen their capacities or those of the various communities to which they belong. This obligation is best fulfilled in close collaboration with individuals, groups, organizations, and communities.



These university-community collaborations are most successful when university faculty combine their, often tentative, understandings—developed in laboratory or library—with the ideas and experiences of community and agency partners to create and test innovative strategies for addressing real problems—whether they are found in start-up businesses in an urban neighborhood or in an urban health clinic or school.

In these collaborations, all partners are both learners and teachers. What the community partners learn from the collaboration they apply and, often with the university's help, use to advocate changes in social or organizational policy that would promote generalization of the strategy to other communities or neighborhoods. What the university faculty learn from the collaboration they use to expand their understandings and to disseminate them in their classrooms and publications. And often the university partners further refine those understandings through additional research, thus continuing the cycle of collaboration between the land-grant research university and the public that so generously supports it.

When the university participates in this cycle of collaborative exploration, it engages in what we at MSU call outreach scholarship. In 1990, MSU created the Office of the Vice Provost for University Outreach to promote outreach scholarship across the campus in order to improve the university's response to the needs of society. That office works to build partnerships with communities as a basis for achieving the collaborations essential to outreach scholarship.

Successful collaborations require great skill and much time. Formalized and on-going relations with community institutions—such as that developed with the Wayne County FIA and the Dexter-Elmhurst community described below—facilitate faculty involvement in collaborative work.

Successful outreach partnerships:

- are long term
- are multifaceted
- are jointly managed by a community-university administrative team
- engage faculty from many disciplines over time
- result in co-learning for all partners

In Detroit's Dexter Elmhurst neighborhood of over 100,000 residents, a newly formed Community Council decided to establish a multi-generational, community-operated, human service community center in an empty, 20,000 square foot, state-owned building. This effort was a joint project of the Wayne County Family Independence Agency, the Wayne County Human Service Coordinating Board, and community leaders. The group asked the university to join in this effort and a formal partnership agreement was signed. While University Outreach signed that agreement and managed the partnership, most of the direct involvement with the community partners came from faculty and students from the School of Social Work, Urban Affairs, MSU Extension, MSU Museum, and the departments of Microbiology, Criminal Justice, and Geography. After two and a half years of effort, over 32,000 children and families have been involved in the Center. More than 20 service partners provide recreation, learning, connection, and vibrancy for all residents from newborn babies to seniors.

What is the university's role in this kind of partnership? Why does a community or agency contact the university for assistance? What value does the university add to community-based projects? Each of the partners brings to the table its own expertise. For the university, that expertise is

## *Church, continued*

research-based. MSU brought to the Dexter Elmhurst project its expertise in evaluation, technology, business development, cultural inventorying, and training. The School of Social Work worked on the evaluation component, helping the community develop an evaluation plan and tools and building the Center's capacity to maintain and expand evaluation activities on its own. Faculty in the Department of Criminal Justice collaborated with the Detroit Police Department in helping to evaluate a specific center program for youth. The MSU Museum crafted an inventory of the cultural assets in the community, now stored in a digital database housed at the community center. These disks contain oral histories gathered from 35 community members that convey rich detail of the experiences of the residents during historically important eras. The Department of Microbiology sent 12 interns to Dexter Elmhurst as "Detroit Spartans" to help 125 local youth at the Center with lunch programs and other community activities. MSU Extension will provide a continued MSU presence at the Center through its programs in parent training, horticulture, 4-H, and others. The project succeeded in enhancing community self-sufficiency, developing an archive of community cultural assets, and establishing a Center that serves as a guardian of the community's interests.

In addition to the scholarly expertise the university participants brought to the table, scholarly artifacts are being produced as an outcome of the project. Five reports were produced for community use. Two faculty members conducted research on leadership issues in such a partnership, which they then turned into a scholarly paper and presentation at a professional association. The project is being used as a case study in a larger piece on "points of outreach partnerships." This long-term partnership is serving as a model of community renewal and self-determination as well as a model of outreach scholarship.

*Robert L. Church is Acting Vice Provost  
for University Outreach  
at Michigan State University.*

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## ***Kellogg Commission Statement on University Engagement***

*The following excerpt is from the 1999 Kellogg Commission release, "Returning To Our Roots: The Engaged Institution" (pp. 9-10).*

*The complete text may be found on-line at  
<http://www.nasulgc.org/Kellogg/kellogg.htm>.*

One challenge [universities] face is growing public frustration with what is seen to be our unresponsiveness. At the root of the criticism is a perception that we are out of touch and out of date. Another part of the issue is that although society has problems, our institutions have "disciplines." In the end, what these complaints add up to is a perception that, despite the resources and expertise available on our campuses, our institutions are not well organized to bring them to bear on local problems in a coherent way. . . . Against that backdrop, this Commission concludes that it is time to go beyond outreach and service to what the Kellogg Commission defines as "engagement." By engagement, we refer to institutions that have redesigned their teaching, research, and extension and service functions to become even more sympathetically and productively involved with their communities.

Engagement goes well beyond extension, conventional outreach, and even most conceptions of public service. Inherited concepts emphasize a one-way process in which the university transfers its expertise to key constituents. Embedded in the engagement ideal is a commitment to sharing and reciprocity. By engagement the Commission envisions partnerships, two-way streets defined by mutual respect among the partners for what each brings to the table. An institution that responds to these imperatives can properly be called what the Kellogg Commission has come to think of as an "engaged institution." We believe an engaged university can enrich the student experience and help change the campus culture. It can do so by enlarging opportunities for faculty and students to gain access to research and new knowledge and by broadening access to internships and various kinds of off-campus learning opportunities. The engaged institution must accomplish at least three things:

**It must be organized to respond to the needs of today's students and tomorrow's, not yesterday's.**

**It must enrich students' experiences by bringing research and engagement into the curriculum and offering practical opportunities for students to prepare for the world they will enter.**

**It must put its critical resources (knowledge and expertise) to work on the problems the communities it serves face.**

*The Kellogg Commission was created in 1996 by the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges (NASULGC) to help define the direction public universities should go in the future and to recommend an action agenda to speed up the process of change.*

# A Framework For University Outreach With Distressed Communities

by Rex L. LaMore

Our ability to successfully address the problems that confront our communities largely depends on our intellectual capacity to understand the causes of these problems and to conceive of effective strategies that eliminate or minimize the sources of our distress. The human capacity to understand the nature of our social, psychological, political, environmental, biological and spiritual existence is perhaps the fundamental evolutionary advantage that has allowed our species to survive and prosper. However, our future is not secured by past accomplishments. New and more complex issues confront us, challenging humanity to devise creative ways of addressing new or persistent problems.

Edwin Markham, an English poet of the 19th century described this ever-present challenge in his prose:

*“We are blind until we see,  
that in the human plan.  
Nothing is worth the making  
unless we make the man.  
Why build our cities glorious,  
if man unbuilded goes.  
In vain we build the world;  
unless the builder also grows.”*

Few institutions in our society have both the capacity and the responsibility to generate and apply new ideas to address community problems. The ability to design experiments based on sound evidence and to take measured risk in applying new techniques to persistent problems is a unique role generally reserved to institutions like universities. Government agencies and non-profit organizations that pilot untested or ideologically ill-conceived ideas risk being eliminated or having their budgets reduced if they fail to produce the outcomes desired by society, the politically empowered or their funding sources.

The private sector, driven in a large part by competitive market forces, has greater incentive for risk taking in activities that have the potential to show a profitable margin of return in a relatively short period of time. Where there exists no reasonable expectation of profitable return, the capacity of private sector institutions in developing and testing new methods declines. This is particularly true in areas of social and community development. Few private

market driven institutions are committed to developing and applying new problem solving techniques to address the problems confronting distressed communities. It is in this environment that the unique role of universities – to develop and test new intervention strategies to address the problems of our most challenged communities – becomes extremely important.

The Michigan State University, Center for Urban Affairs, Community and Economic Development Program (CEDP), in adhering to a set of guiding Community Development Principles (see sidebar) has developed an extensive portfolio of projects, concepts and strategies intended to improve the quality of life in our most distressed neighborhoods. In implementing these concepts, the projects developed by the CEDP have generally fallen into six categories. These categories of activity are training, technical assistance, capacity building, networking, demonstration projects and applied research.

With an expressed mission of addressing the problems confronting distressed communities, the MSU CEDP has built a number of partnerships with other units and colleges throughout the university. In 1992, the CEDP established a Working Group for Distressed Communities to expand the university’s commitment to low-income areas. Composed of deans and directors from several colleges and institutes, the group met monthly to discuss and develop strategies to improve cooperation and increase the effectiveness of university outreach to distressed communities. In these informal discussions the following principles of good practice were proposed and developed.

## ***Principles of Good Practice***

**Empowering:** Emphasize problem solving research, instruction, and outreach such that those experiencing the problem are equipped to more fully understand the causes and possible alternative solutions to their situation. University practices should strive to include and involve broad-based and diverse stakeholders so that communities can affect their situation.

**Holistic:** Address the fundamental causes of poverty and community distress through interdisciplinary approaches because these issues are multifaceted and complex.

# Community Development Society Principles of Good Practice

**Sustainable:** Create a sustainable plan of action that brings about substantive long-term systematic change in the community, recognize and reduce ad hoc approaches that treat symptoms but not causes of distress.

**Partnership:** Build collaborative relationships in the community that are based on the mutual interest of the community and the university, recognizing that a reciprocal relationship is an essential element to a true partnership.

**Equitable:** Recognize that politics, resources and science often affect our relationship and commitment to working with communities; where forces conflict with a community's self-interest, reassess activities that are likely to adversely effect distressed communities.

**Catalytic:** Catalyze the community by bringing together differing views and providing a forum for debate, discussion and reasoned inquiry. Recognize that the "success" of an effort will be both defined and experienced by the community and its families. Catalysts facilitate but do supplant community plans.

## **Conclusion**

Michigan State University has begun to articulate a set of guiding principles to assist the university in developing and implementing successful outreach efforts in distressed communities. This paper has briefly introduced these principles and their possible applications in creating healthy communities.

It is important to acknowledge the immense barriers that urban communities face in their efforts to create jobs and provide needed goods and services. It is unlikely, given the complexity and interrelatedness of the challenges, that any single public policy initiative, no matter how well conceived or funded, will overcome the significant financial and social barriers these communities face. These seemingly overwhelming barriers have convinced some critics that nothing can be done to stimulate revitalization. The experience and track record of higher education institutions in addressing a variety of initiatives contradicts this conclusion. Establishment of long-term, comprehensive commitment to building an effective partnership between HUD and universities committed to empowering communities has the demonstrated potential to change the downward spiral of decline in our cities. The challenge confronting policy makers today is to implement the new institutional structures based on this changing paradigm.

*Rex LaMore is State Director of the  
Michigan State University, Center for Urban Affairs,  
Community and Economic Development Program.*

## ***Adopted by the Society's Membership in July, 1985***

- Promote active and representative citizen participation in decision making so that community members can meaningfully influence decisions that affect their lives.
- Engage community members in problem diagnosis so that those affected may adequately understand the causes of their situation.
- Help community leaders understand the economic, social, political, environmental, and psychological impact associated with alternative solutions to the problem.
- Assist community members in designing and implementing a plan to solve agreed upon problems by emphasizing shared leadership and active citizen participation in that process.
- Disengage from any effort that is likely to adversely affect the disadvantaged segments of a community.
- Actively work to increase leadership capacity (skills, confidence, and aspirations) in the community development process.



### ***EDA University Center Program***

The U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration (EDA) was established in 1965 to generate jobs, help retain existing jobs, and stimulate growth in economically distressed areas of the United States. In fulfilling its mission, EDA is guided by the principle that distressed communities must be empowered to develop and implement their own economic development and revitalization strategies. EDA helps distressed communities identify and address problems associated with long-term economic distress, as well as sudden and severe economic dislocations including natural disasters, closure of military installations and other federal facilities, changing trade patterns, and the depletion of natural resources.

The EDA University Center Program is a Federal/academic partnership that makes resources at institutions of higher education available to the economic development community. Such institutions have a variety of resources including faculty, staff, students, laboratories, and computer systems. EDA's University Center program helps institutions of higher education in establishing and operating outreach programs that use those resources to provide technical assistance on economic development projects and programs. EDA considers the University Centers long-term partners in fostering local economic development.

University Centers generally work with units of local government and nonprofit organizations. Frequently, a Center will work to complete a preliminary feasibility study of an economic development project a nonprofit organization is considering, analyze socio-economic data to help a community project future demand for infrastructure expansions, or conduct a specialized workshop or seminar, such as strategic planning. Some University Centers target their efforts on technology transfer assistance to small and medium sized firms. For example, a Center may help a firm to redesign a product to meet a specific standard, to identify energy savings improvements, or to solve a technical or engineering problem in a manufacturing process.

Michigan State University has been an EDA University Center since 1987. With EDA support and matching contributions from partners within the university, MSU established the Michigan Partnership for Economic Development Assistance (MP/EDA). MP/EDA conducts research and provides training and technical assistance to economic development agencies and community-based organizations serving distressed communities throughout Michigan. MP/EDA's principal partners currently include the Michigan Association of Regions, an association of regional planning organizations.

## National Programs that Support University-Community Partnerships



Since passage of the 1862 Morrill Act, the federal government has provided support to land-grant colleges throughout the nation. The second Morrill Act in 1890 established 17 Historically Black colleges. As full-fledged universities developed around these land-grant and historically black colleges, these institutions have continued to have a unique relationship with the public and the federal government – one that has lasted more than 130 years.

Today, the U.S. Department of Agriculture serves as the primary federal partner in this relationship. State and local governments are also significant partners by providing matching support for the programs and services provided by land grant colleges and Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

Agricultural experiment stations and statewide Extension services are the principal community outreach programs supported by USDA funding, although the USDA also administers numerous additional grant programs for university research in agriculture and related fields.

## HUD's Office of University Partnerships



Recognizing the crucial role that America's institutions of higher education can play in rebuilding communities large and small, HUD established the Office of University Partnerships (OUP) in 1994 to encourage and expand the efforts of institutions of higher education that are striving to make a difference in their communities through funding opportunities. Whether the institution has a venerable history of reaching out to lower income neighborhoods or is just beginning to explore the potential of such partnerships, OUP can help increase the scope, effectiveness, and sustainability of its community-building effort.

The Office has three goals:

To recognize, reward, and build upon successful examples of universities' activities in local revitalization projects;

To create the next generation of urban scholars and encourage them to focus their work on housing and community development policy; and

To create partnerships with other Federal Agencies to support innovative teaching, research, and service partnerships. OUP serves institutions of higher education, researchers, and students through grant programs, interactive conferences and related research.

## MSU Serves as COPC Prototype

In 1992, Congress approved the Community Outreach Partnership Act, which authorized financial support for universities to engage in outreach to assist urban communities. Sponsored by former Michigan Senator Donald Riegle, this legislation was modeled after existing community outreach programs, including Michigan State University's Center for Urban Affairs, Community and Economic Development Program (CEDP). CEDP State Director Rex L. LaMore assisted Senator Riegle in defining the purpose of the Community Outreach Partnership Centers (COPCs) that were funded by the Act. The act requires that COPCs maintain a primary focus on outreach that serves the community, rely on community advisory committees to help define university activities, and conduct applied research rather than theoretical research.

Together with Wayne State University and the University of Michigan, MSU was funded in the first round of COPC funding to engage in a community outreach partnership in Detroit, an effort that resulted in a continuous MSU CEDP presence in the city of Detroit since 1995. As a past COPC grantee, Dr. LaMore and MSU continue to be involved in advising HUD on ways to effectively facilitate partnerships between universities and communities.



The Fannie Mae Foundation recently established a University-Community Partnerships Initiative (UCPI) to help achieve its goal of expanding affordable housing opportunities. In November 1998, the Foundation announced a series of grant awards for UCPI and sponsored a roundtable to further the dialogue on university-community partnerships.

The Foundation's initiative takes a two-pronged approach. First, it seeks to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of nonprofits and other housing providers in housing development and housing-related service delivery for distressed communities. Second, it seeks to implement comprehensive community partnership

projects in targeted neighborhoods—with a strong affordable housing production and rehabilitation component—that can be replicated throughout the country. All partnership programs are expected to integrate technical assistance, education, training, research, and evaluation.

The UCPI grant program seeks to develop model community partnership programs that are anchored at universities or four-year colleges. The Foundation has awarded \$5 million in grants to fifteen partner universities. The Foundation considered four major criteria in selecting grant recipients: whether the proposed partnership activities would directly address the housing needs of targeted communities; presence of a comprehensive neighborhood strategy; sustainability of the effort in the long term; and institutional competence to implement the proposed initiative.

# The Problem of Homelessness in America

by Jeff Frommeyer

The April HUD Regional Conference on Housing for Homeless People, held in Chicago, and the recent Michigan Conference on Homelessness in Lansing provided valuable information about the crisis of homelessness and affordable housing in the United States. These conferences promoted knowledge of the seriousness of these issues and offered solutions to alleviate homelessness and provide more affordable housing.

Homelessness statistics cited during the conferences are startling. In the United States, 3.5 million people experience homelessness during the course of a year. Families are the fastest growing segment of the homeless population, accounting for almost 40 percent of the nation's homeless. More than 85 percent of homeless families are headed by single mothers, with the typical homeless family comprised of a young mother and her two young children, most of whom are below the age of six. Homeless mothers have an average annual income of 63 percent of the federal poverty for a family of three, around \$8,000.

Where did all of these homeless families come from? In many ways, they represent a new social problem. Except during the Great Depression, women and children have never before been on our nation's streets in such significant numbers. During the 1980s, cutbacks in government benefits coupled with rapidly increasing rents and a dearth of low income housing jeopardized the

**More than 85% of homeless families are headed by single mothers.**

stability of all people on reduced or fixed incomes. At the same time, the number of female-headed households dramatically increased. As a result, the nation's population of homeless families swelled from almost negligible numbers to nearly 1.4 million. The United States is unique among industrialized nations in that women and children comprise such a large percentage of our country's homeless. Some common characteristics of homeless families include greater incidence of childhood illnesses, more stressful and traumatic events, higher frequency of violence, and more difficulty in school for children.

Although counting the exact number of homeless children is difficult, a consensus is emerging among researchers. According to the National Coalition for the Homeless, 1.2 million children are homeless on any given night. Supporting this figure are estimates from the U.S. Department of Education that report over 400,000 homeless children were served by the nation's public

schools last year. Since more than half of all homeless children are not yet of school age, a minimum of 800,000 children can be presumed to be homeless. On the basis of these data, the Better Homes Fund concludes that more than one million American children are homeless today.

Looking beyond current numbers, the Better Homes Fund predicts that tight housing markets accompanied by decreasing availability of cash benefits as a result

of welfare reform will lead to a continuing increase in family homelessness.

Statistics were also offered to explain the lack of affordable housing in the U.S. Looking back to 1970, there was a surplus of affordable housing units by 0.3 million. Just twenty-five years later in 1995, there was a shortage by 4.4 million units. The largest cut was from 1993 through 1995, when there was a loss of 900,000 or 10 percent of affordable housing units. In order to find an explanation for the shortage, we can simply look to Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) budget in 1995, which is one-third of what it was in 1980. Furthermore, rents in the United States are rising at twice the rate of general inflation, and minimum wage workers, of which there are over ten million, would need to work an average of 86 hours per week to make enough for a two-bedroom apartment at the median.

Participants at the HUD and Michigan Housing conferences offered several solutions for ending the crisis of homelessness and increasing the availability of affordable housing. An obvious solution to the problem is that more money needs to be allocated for affordable housing. In 1977, money authorized for housing for low-income people was \$65 billion. That funding has since declined. With projected federal and state budget surpluses, an opportunity exists for advocates of low-income housing to demand more money from government. In addition, there must be community will. Communities need to be open to neighbors using HUD Section 8 vouchers to help pay their housing costs. Local governments need to make their housing products affordable to low-income people. Next, homeless people must have a voice in policies that are made. Finally, we need to create supportive places where homeless and low-income people can have access to services so that policy and services connect.

*Jeff Frommeyer is a graduate student in Social Work and Urban Studies at Michigan State University and a Program Assistant at the MSU CEDP.*

**3.5 million people are homeless in the United States during the course of a year.**

## CEDP Works With Public Housing Community

*Celeste Starks and Cathy Stauffer*

Since 1992, MSU Center for Urban Affairs, Community and Economic Development Program (CUA/CEDP) has had a strong commitment to support public housing resident initiatives in Michigan. In 1995, with the support of HUD, MSU assisted in the development of the Michigan Residents Leadership Network (MRLN). For over five years, this organization was able to help build resident capacity within the public housing community through networking opportunities, information services and training programs.

In 1996, CUA/CEDP recognized another opportunity to support public housing communities when the State of Michigan passed Public Act No. 338. This act requires all public housing authorities with over 250 units to have a resident of public housing as a participating member of their housing committees. The purpose of the act is to enable public housing residents to have a voice in the affairs of their own communities and create the changes necessary to improve their communities. In order for residents of public housing to play an active part in the decisions that are affecting their future, however, they must be knowledgeable and informed about current housing issues and programs. After passage of PA 338, the CUA/CEDP surveyed public housing authorities within the State of Michigan to determine which areas were complying with the act and the reasons why some Public Housing Authorities were unable to comply with the act.

MSU also surveyed resident commissioners to determine their current training needs. The results from the survey sent to Resident Commissioners indicated a severe lack of training, as well as a strong interest in a comprehensive training program to help strengthen their leadership abilities and participate more effectively in their communities. Based on these results, the CUA/CEDP prepared a proposal to HUD for support in order to offer Michigan Resident Commissioners training on housing issues in Michigan.

In March 2000 the CUA/CEDP conducted a day-long conference at the State Capitol. Over 60 public housing resident leaders and interested parties attended the conference and were given an opportunity to hear about current changes in public housing policy, meet their state legislators, and begin networking with each other in an effort to find feasible solutions to common problems. CEDP is currently planning another meeting of Resident Commissioners in an attempt to continue the networking that was begun in March. MSU CUA/CEDP will continue its statewide partnerships with public housing resident to engage exclusively in encouraging networking and providing information, training and technical assistance for resident organization housing commissions and others who serve the public or subsidized housing community.

*Celeste Starks earned her Master's Degree in Urban Planning - Urban Studies and is an Academic Specialist at the MSU CEDP. Cathy Stauffer is an MSU graduate student in Parks and Recreation - Urban Studies. The two are members of the CEDP Public Housing Team.*

## MSU Conducts Kent County Homeless Research

In cooperation with the Kent County Health Department, Kent County Department of Community Development, and the Salvation Army, the MSU Center for Urban Affairs is conducting research into the characteristics of homeless shelter occupants and trends in shelter use in Kent County.

The project team – Dr. John Schweitzer, Dr. Rex LaMore, and CEDP program assistants Jeff Frommeyer and Tammy Holt – is analyzing data from shelter intake forms collected since 1995. Over 11,000 shelter stays were documented for the five-year period.

The team will report its findings in community presentations this autumn, as well as in a written report of recommendations for an improved homeless network system.

# Low Income Credit Unions and Individual Development Accounts

A CUA - VISTA - Michigan FIA - Community Credit Union - Community Partner Initiative  
by Susan Cocciarelli



The Michigan State University Center for Urban Affairs (CUA) recently completed the first phase of its Low Income Designated Credit Union – Individual Development Accounts initiative. Supported by a two-year contract with the Michigan Family Independence Agency, this project is intended to assist credit unions to better understand and, if interested, to effectively plan and implement, Individual

Development Account (IDA) programs in their local communities. Such programs would help low-income credit union members to save money for investments in education, business development, or homeownership by providing basic financial education and matching contributions to designated savings accounts. In addition, credit unions offering IDA programs through this program could recruit VISTA volunteers to assist them in developing and administering these programs.

## ***Credit Unions Serving Low Income Individuals***

In cooperation with the Michigan Credit Union League (MCUL) and the Credit Union League Association (CUNA), the Center recently contacted all twenty five low-income designated credit unions in the state. The project team visited fifteen low-income designated credit unions that had expressed interest in Individual Development Accounts. They traveled throughout Michigan to meet with managers of credit unions located in: Kalamazoo, Lansing, Saginaw, Flint, Alpena, Oscoda, Dearborn, Cheboygan, Marquette, Trenary, Houghton, Baraga, Pelke, and Sault Ste Marie. Future meetings are pending in Crystal Falls and Fife Lake.

Each of the credit unions included in the project offer savings accounts and other services to members of whom the majority are individuals and families with incomes below 80% of the median income. Most are staffed by fewer than two persons, occupy space inside another business (one room in the community grocery store or within a church or neighborhood organization building) and have very limited physical space. The goals of the IDA program, to assist members to achieve a goal of home ownership, small business development, or an education for themselves or their children, resonates with the managers of such credit unions. The financial education component of IDAs is seen as especially critical in rural communities where casinos flourish and impoverished people risk their small savings, thinking they will get lucky and depleting their savings accounts through on-site ATM machines.

## ***Strengths and Challenges in Offering IDA Programs***

Determining whether to offer a complete IDA package presents both challenges and opportunities to low-income credit unions. Managers must weigh the opportunities presented against the challenges of providing IDAs to their members. The capacity of a credit union to actually design, implement, and sustain such a program plays the largest role

in considering whether to recommend the IDA idea to the credit union boards. Common questions the team heard from credit union managers include: Who will do it? How much time will it take? Who will raise the match funds? How would members be screened for eligibility when eligible members exceed the capacity to raise match funds for the savings accounts? How would member privacy be respected? Would people have to attend every financial class? Would the VISTA member need to be bonded? What type of reports would have to be written? Even with these basic questions, each credit union manager with whom we spoke was interested in such a savings account program. As noted above, time constraints, were the single biggest obstacle. Who would do it, and what would it take to do it right?

Credit union managers considered how IDAs would add value to their efforts to shore up outstanding loans, recruit new members, keep young members, and create new products for home or business improvements. Except where membership was limited to a specific employee group, each credit union could accept new community members if a community based organization could bring its constituent group as IDA holders. Targeting a specific use of the IDAs helps to identify the pool of potential community based partners. For example, in Marquette, the Government and Railroad Federal Credit Union could work with the local Community Action Agency for home ownership or with Northern Initiatives for business development IDAs. In Dearborn, the Metro Federal Credit Union talked about contacting the Detroit Southwest Detroit Business Development Association as a potential partner.

## ***The Role Of The University In Community IDAs***

The Center for Urban Affairs approached each credit union with an understanding that, either formally or informally, communities are trying to address the housing, employment, and educational needs and opportunities for local residents. Through its relationship with the Michigan Family Independence Agency, MSU is in a position to assist each credit union and its potential community partners in thinking through both the feasibility and design of an IDA program. By adhering to principles of community development practiced by the MSU Center for Urban Affairs, the project team facilitates open discussion among the partners to develop their own processes for creating a program that meets their local needs. As it continues this project, the Center for Urban Affairs will spend considerable time supporting the building of relationships within each community. This will be done by encouraging the credit unions to both identify and mobilize local resources and assets to build a sustainable IDA program within their community, with credit unions playing a critical role as a membership-driven financial institution for low income community residents.

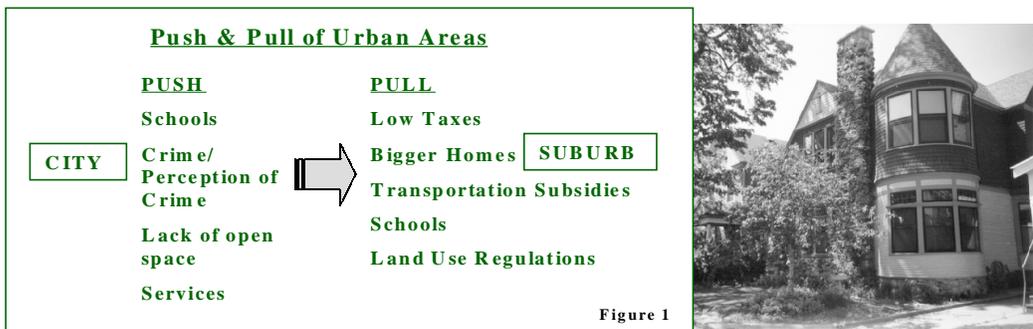
*Susan Cocciarelli is an Academic Specialist at CEDP and Project Leader of the FIA-CDCU IDA initiative.*



**Project Mission:**

*To contribute to the development of a vibrant and sustainable west Michigan region by forming a coalition of rural and urban citizens focused on promoting positive land use.*

*In March of 1999, the United Growth for Kent County project was implemented as an educational outreach initiative on mitigating the “push” and “pull” factors that lead to the abandonment of the urban core. These factors have been identified by researchers around the country as the primary causes of what we refer to as “urban sprawl”.*



MICHIGAN STATE  
UNIVERSITY  
EXTENSION

*For more information, visit the United Growth website at [www.msue.msu.edu/unitedgrowth](http://www.msue.msu.edu/unitedgrowth)*

**Urban Committee Target Neighborhoods:**

- Creston Neighborhood Association
- Garfield Park Neighborhoods Association
- Heritage Hill Neighborhood
- Grand Rapids REACH, Inc.

**Rural Committee Initiatives:**

- “Better Designs for Growth in Michigan” Seminars
- Cost of Development Analyses
- Mapping Prime Farmland in Kent County
- Broad-Based Farmland Preservation Education

# The Community Income and Expenditures Model

by *Melissa Huber*

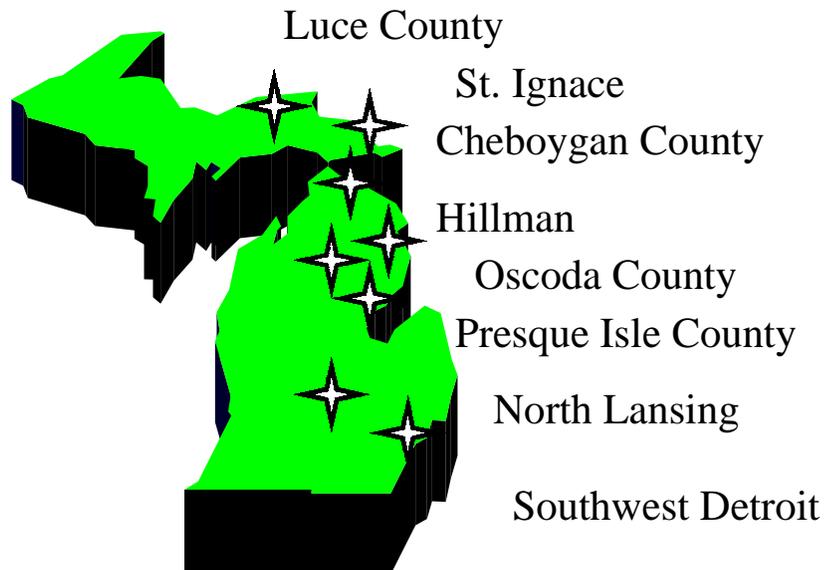
The Community Income and Expenditures Model (CIEM) is a community economic development tool dedicated to arming communities with the information required to develop effective development strategies and policies. It is a tool to measure asset flows and economic leakage in communities.

CIEM was developed from the belief that low-income communities remain poor for reasons other than having a lack of accumulated wealth:

- The problem is not just that low-income communities have too little income, rather, the problem is that a substantial amount of money enters the neighborhoods then quickly leaves due to non-local purchases, non-local hiring, and non-local ownership of homes and businesses.
- The problem is intensified by the lack of commercial institutions (e.g., businesses, financial, etc.) that are located within poor communities and responsive to their needs. Dollars circulating outside of the community do not contribute to local economic wealth.

CIEM helps identify these missed opportunities for increasing local economic wealth. To do this, CIEM uses a community-based survey to gather information about the spending patterns of consumers, businesses, non-profit organizations, and government agencies within the community.

## Communities that have completed CIEM projects:



The CIEM survey assesses four major features of the economy:

- ◆ *How much income is received by individuals and organizations within the community?*
- ◆ *How much of this income originates from within the community?*
- ◆ *How much money is spent within the community by individuals and organizations within the community?*
- ◆ *How much of this money is spent within the community?*

*A self-guided CIEM handbook will be available this winter on the MSU CEDP webpage ([www.msu.edu/~cua](http://www.msu.edu/~cua)). For additional information on how your community can conduct its own Income and Expenditures Project, contact Melissa Huber at [hubermel@msu.edu](mailto:hubermel@msu.edu).*

# CEDP UPDATES

## Metzger Article Featured in Housing Policy Debate

MSU's John T. Metzger, Ph.D., recently authored the lead article in a forum published by the Fannie Mae Foundation in its journal, *Housing Policy Debate*. Metzger's article, titled "Planned Abandonment: The Neighborhood Life-Cycle Theory and National Urban Policy" addresses theories of cyclical neighborhood decline.

Metzger is a professor of Urban and Regional Planning at Michigan State University and a member of the MSU CEDP Affordable Housing Research team. Metzger's article, along with others in the forum, may be viewed online at:

<http://www.fanniemaefoundation.org/research/index.htm>.

## Syal Awarded Fullbright Fellowship

MSU's Matt Syal, Ph.D., was recently awarded a highly competitive Fullbright Fellowship to conduct housing research in southern Asia. Syal will study the adoption of new technologies in housing in India and Nepal.

Syal is an Associate Professor and Graduate Coordinator of Building Construction Management, and Research Director of the Housing Education and Research Center (HERC). He serves on the Affordable Housing Research team at the MSU CEDP.

## Community and Economic Development Program Directory

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