



Strategic Plan

Hunts Point Community Partnership

February 2020

The Hunts Point Community Partnership — supported by Hunts Point Alliance for Children and funded by the New York City Administration for Children's Services

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Community Partnerships were first established in 2007 to provide community-based support for children and families involved in the child welfare systems. With ACS expanding its array of services to include primary prevention through the establishment of a new division, the partnerships were relaunched in 2019 with a focus on engaging with families to address preventable, poverty-driven challenges that can lead to allegations of child maltreatment, thereby reducing the need for child welfare system involvement.

Founded in 2007, Hunts Point Alliance for Children (HPAC) is an organization devoted to promoting the intellectual, social, emotional, and physical health and well-being of the children of the Hunts Point section of the South Bronx, NY, via academic and family programming, collaborative resource development and the expansion of access to existing services.

In 2019, HPAC was awarded a multi-year grant through New York City's Administration of Children's Services (ACS) to build capacity in primary prevention and deepen the collective work they've begun in Hunts Point through the Community Partnership. To inform this project and maximize impact to the community, HPAC engaged in a collaborative planning effort between Alliance member organizations, ACS staff, community thought leaders, and neighborhood residents to develop a comprehensive strategic plan to guide the Hunts Point Community Partnership's collective impact efforts over the next three years.

The strategic planning process began with the team's solicitation of diverse community perspectives via survey and publicly held community forums, as well as one-to-one interviews with key stakeholders and a comprehensive review of community data and trends. The collected data was then analyzed by the planning team to identify the key opportunities for mission-aligned, sustainable community impact.

Thus, the team identified **two high-impact goals** for the Hunts Point Community Partnership to pursue:

- **Build social capital in Hunts Point to increase access to and participation in program and services, formal and informal, by families with children.** This includes the mobilization of key community members to build supportive networks, the implementation of regular community forums as a means of increasing awareness of and participation in existing services, and the promotion of an advocacy agenda devoted to the development of new programming.

- **Increase family and caregiver access to early child development services, particularly for addressing mental health and behavioral issues.** This includes connecting families and caregivers of young children with timely communications on properly supporting children through each developmental stage, as well as targeting efforts to increase access to and use of community-based family services such as early intervention and mental health programming.

These goals will be realized through the **five high-impact strategies** and measured via the **four metrics of success** further outlined in this plan. This targeted initiative, was named **Our Children's Journey by the community led planning committee**. Leadership and staffing for Our Children's Journey will be provided by HPAC, as partner and grantee of the ACS Community Partnership. In the Hunts Point Community Partnership's role as the backbone of Our Children's Journey initiative, staff will hold responsibility for recruiting for and convening regular meetings of the **Our Children's Journey Governance Committee**. This body will be comprised of 15-25 community members and local organizational staff, and will hold the following four initiative responsibilities: 1) Helping to implement the identified strategies; 2) Regularly review initiative progress and recalibrating as needed; 3) Providing community feedback and identifying shifting needs that could impact implementation; 4) Championing the initiative within the Hunts Point community. Further, the Governance Committee will be additionally supported by a Community Partnership appointed Advisory Board, comprised of thought leaders and technical experts within the early childhood landscape.

The initial launch of the Our Children's Journey initiative will occur within 120 days of finalization of this strategic plan and will be implemented over the next three years. While the Our Children's Journey initiative will start as a sub-program of the Hunts Point Community Partnership, the Governance Committee is also tasked with identifying a vision and dedicated pathway towards developing Our Children's Journey into a free-standing and independently funded effort within the next six years.

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

In 2007, the Administration for Children's Services (ACS) funded 11 Community Partnership sites across New York City. The partnerships were designed to serve as a hub for local community stakeholders – from service providers to individual residents and community leaders – to find ways to contribute to the safety of community children. This early effort was primarily focused on supporting children already involved in the child welfare system through monitored community visiting time, sending community representatives to family team conferences to provide referrals to community resources, and providing respite and peer-to-peer support for foster parents. The earlier model also focused on increasing family access to early care and education resources.

In 2017, ACS founded the Division of Child and Family Well-Being (CFWB) to develop primary prevention programs for families in NYC. Rooted in the belief that all New Yorkers should have access to quality resources and opportunities that enhance their capacity to thrive, CFWB provides direct connections to primary supports for families to improve the well-being of children, families, and communities. The primary prevention approaches supported by CFWB expands ACS' continuum of services to engage with families to address preventable, poverty-driven challenges that can lead to allegations of child maltreatment, thereby reducing the need for child welfare system involvement.

In 2019 the Community Partnerships were relaunched with a redesigned program model focused on primary prevention. This new cycle of funding includes several major changes, including the use of three foundational frameworks that ground the work of each Community Partnership: 1) **Two-Generation Approach**, 2) **Collective Impact**, and 3) an **Equity Lens**, the latter intended to ensure governance and leadership are accountable to community and to inform strategies that address disparities in service provision and child welfare. Community Ambassadors – residents with lived

experience in the partnership's community – are hired to help carry out the redesigned model's core strategies, which are: 1) coordinating **service referral and utilization** among local providers and city programs; 2) building **community capacity and social capital** by supporting Community Ambassador leadership; 3) supporting **community knowledge** share in Community Partnership-led events and hosting city trainings or workshops; and 4) informing **city policy and practice** related to child and family well-being.

In 2019, HPAC was awarded a multi-year grant through New York City's Administration of Children's Services (ACS) to build capacity and deepen the collective work they've begun in Hunts Point through the Community Partnership. In order to guide this transition and further maximize impact of the work, the Hunts Point Community Partnership engaged in a participatory planning effort in collaboration with community-based organizations and residents. The result of this process was the development of a comprehensive strategic plan spanning over the subsequent three years and designed to address some of Hunts Point's most pressing family service needs, as determined in conjunction with community residents. The goal of the resulting plan is to increase the use of strategic thinking and assessment processes based on community-level data and community input to create transformative impact in the lives of Hunts Point's children and families for years to come. The planning process was facilitated by Shamekia Gordon Director of the Hunts Point Community Partnership and Jill Roche Gomez, Executive Director of the Hunts Point Alliance for Children, with support from Darrell Williams of ACS, Stephanie Portillo, Community Organizer, Kalema Boateng, Administrative Assistant and consulting firm Civitas Strategies. The Hunts Point Community Partnership would sincerely like to thank these individuals for their guidance and leadership throughout the process. Additionally, they would like to thank the following community members and organizational leaders who formed the planning team for their participation and feedback in the creation of this plan:

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Five Core Strategies



Build Partnerships

with members & leaders who plan and work together



Facilitate Service Referral and Utilization

by knowing what help and resources exist for families



Build Social Capital and Community Capacity

of local leaders and Community Ambassadors



Support Community Knowledge Sharing

through events and workshops to promote well-being and ACS' programs



Inform City Policy and Practice

through learning collaboratives and sharing what works

- Silvia Alemany, Literacy Inc.
- Denise Carr, Family Enrichment Center (Graham)
- Pamela Cora, New York Public Library
- Sabine Desir, Community Health – Urban Health
- Monique Farrington-Dennis, Community Member
- Reina Garcia, Hunts Point Alliance for Children
- June Glaze, La Peninsula Head Start
- Cynthia Green, Community Member
- Girlie Mercado, La Peninsula Head Start
- Marietou Ndiayu, Community Member
- Tabatha Rivera, Community Member
- Neisha Roberts, MICHC – Urban Health Plan
- Patricia Rodas, Hunts Point Alliance for Children
- Carmen Rodriguez, Community Member
- Shanique Santana, Community Member
- Camille Smalling, Community Health – Urban Health Plan
- Chitara Waiters, School Health – Urban Health Plan

All of the participants have been invited to be inaugural members of the Governance Team to continue to share their wisdom and experience.

Hunts Point Alliance for Children

The mission of the Hunts Point Alliance for Children (HPAC) is to inspire hope and empower community through transformative relationships that build skills, instill confidence, and ensure children and families have access to the resources and opportunities they deserve. The twenty-five Alliance member organizations provide resources for the intellectual, social, emotional, and physical health and well-being of children in the Hunts Point neighborhood, located in the South Bronx, NY. Since 2007, the Alliance has supported the schools and

organizations in this community by providing programs that meet critical educational and college readiness needs, creating programmatic links among existing services, schools, and families of the neighborhood, and attracting high-quality service providers to the area. The Hunts Point Alliance for Children accomplishes these goals by leveraging resources within and outside of Hunts Point, providing varied learning options for children ages birth to college, and identifying educational opportunities beyond Hunts Point.

As a co-creator of and the backbone organization for the Alliance, HPAC has a successful history of serving as a program initiative incubator in the Hunts Point community. This includes initiating and overseeing the start-up of new service programs for local families, and then building capacity to the point where the program can become an independent initiative. For example, in 2008 schools shared with HPAC leaders the lack of early childhood services in Hunts Point and the low kindergarten readiness of incoming students. HPAC partnered with Jumpstart, a national literacy program, and the New York Center for Child Development, a city-wide social-emotional provider, to bring services to Hunts Point schools and programs. Simultaneously, HPAC launched its own direct services for early childhood, beginning a community-wide conversation about the importance of early childhood that resonates today and has empowered parents and providers to seek more wrap-around programming.

More recently, Urban Health Plan and HPAC launched an Alliance Action Group that directly engaged community members in advocating for community improvements and building social capital. The group of residents now known as Healthy Hunts Point achieved several important victories, including new stop signs and stop lights to protect pedestrians. The group is now a free-standing initiative that continues to meet monthly to continue their advocacy agenda, monthly community clean-ups, and participate in local initiatives, such as Participatory Budgeting.



LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Our Children's Journey is to connect families with the capacities and knowledge needed to support the development of their children from prenatal to age eight.

VISION STATEMENT

The vision of Our Children's Journey is a community where all families with young children have equal access to the resources needed for healthy, successful children.

PRIORITY AREA STATEMENT

Our Children's Journey will address two priority areas – building social capital and advancing early learning using a multi-generation approach that will also promote racial equity.

Participants defined social capital as the cumulative relationships, trust, and shared understanding and values in a community. Greater social capital means that families in a community are more likely to rely on each other for help and support.

They collectively defined the term 'early childhood,' for the purpose of the strategic plan, determining that for their purposes "early childhood" equates children ages prenatal to eight.

Specifically, we will target our efforts to children in the following three developmental stages: prenatal to age three, ages 4–5, and ages 6–8. As each stage provides a different level of services needed for Hunts Point children and supports for their families to thrive, contributing to family stability.

We increase the utilization of existing resources in Hunts Point to provide children with the vital developmental skills while also engaging parents in knowledge sharing which leads to an increase in family understanding of developmental ages and stages. So that families experience increased levels of participation in leading and advocating for the needs of children prenatal to age eight.

PRIORITY AREA SELECTION

The development of the 2019 Hunts Point Community Partnership strategic plan was conducted in three essential phases: Phase One (Discovery), Phase Two (Planning), and Phase Three (Finalization). In order to provide the strategic planning team with the data needed to determine the current family service priorities in Hunts Point, HPAC leadership and their partner consulting firm Civitas Strategies engaged in a

comprehensive analysis of both the current state of services in Hunts Point, as well as the key opportunities to improve and expand.

Discovery Phase efforts included the following:

- A review of relevant documents (such as HPAC organizational guidance documents and current economic, educational, social, and cultural landscape research).
- A review of ACS guiding frameworks and documents.
- 19 One-to-one interviews with Alliance leadership, representatives from the Administration of Children's Services, community thought leaders, local residents, and ACS staff members.
- 33 surveys of Alliance staff and community members.
- 3 focus groups, including a total of 63 community member participants.
- Convening of Alliance members, local providers and leaders from the community (41 in total).
- Convening of 56 Community Residents at Community Meeting.

The data was collected and analyzed by the planning team to identify the opportunities for greatest impact that are best aligned with the Community Partnership's mission, core values, and current assets. The data were also analyzed for alignment to the ACS framework, which values goals and strategies that utilize the collective impact model, take a multi-generational approach to impact, and seek to improve community equity. In this process, the following was revealed:

- The Hunts Point community faces challenges in multiple arenas of the family services landscape, creating a key opportunity for expanded impact via Collective Impact.
- Hunts Point is a diverse and culturally vibrant community offering unique and innovative programming for families. However, not all residents participate and not all opportunities are capitalized on, primarily due to a lack of awareness and understanding of what is available.
- Quality education is a top community priority for a multitude of community members and local leaders and is perceived as the single most significant opportunity to improve the lives of children and families in Hunts Point.
- Increased access to mental health supports is also perceived as a top community priority for Hunts Point children and families, particularly in light of the significant gap in resources available in Hunts Point compared with other NYC neighborhoods.

- Alliance member organizations view membership as a significant benefit. Furthermore, there is strong support from member organization leadership and staff to further define and utilize the Collective Impact model as a community partnership.
- Access to nutritional food is viewed by stakeholders as a primary barrier to the health and wellness of Hunts Point residents.

Upon review of the initial findings, Civitas Strategies narrowed the potential priorities to the top 6 themes that emerged from the discovery phase. They then joined the Community Partnership Director to present the data in two Community Meetings. The first meeting consisted of 41 Alliance and community leaders, in which participants had the opportunity to ask questions regarding the data collection process, share their thoughts on initial reactions, and vote on their perceived priorities for the Community Partnerships focus area. Our Community Ambassadors invited all community members the second meeting, which was attended by 56 residents. The Director led an in-depth discussion of the findings from each meeting which helped to further identify and discuss the priority areas they believed would have the greatest impact on their children's future, and vote. Through this process, the partnership team was able to definitively select **early childhood programming** as the key **priority area** to be addressed.

Once the focus was determined, the process moved into the second phase — Planning. The Community Partnership Director was tasked with establishing a strategic planning team, comprised of partner organization staff and community members identified by a broad group of community members as having relevant and valuable insight into the focus area. This team of 17 participants then met in a series of four planning sessions to work towards the development of the aligned goals, strategies, and measures.

In the first and second planning sessions, the team engaged in two critical tasks: First, they collectively defined the term 'early childhood,' for the purpose of the strategic plan, determining that for their purposes "early childhood" equates children ages prenatal to eight.

Second, the team further honed the planning focus by assessing the Hunts Point community's key existing early childhood assets and opportunities for impact. This exercise proved significant in highlighting the extent of the access issue initially identified in the Discovery phase. Upon review of the developed list of current early childhood assets, planning team members expressed significant concern at how little awareness there is of existing services, even for long-standing residents. Many noted that they had never heard of the majority of programs listed, and furthermore, that outreach from community-based organizations is low. As one planning team member stated:

“Unless you walk into a place and inquire [about services] on your own, it's hard to know about these things. No one's ever said [to me] 'oh you have a small child — do you know we have this program?' It's not advertised. If you aren't close to other people in the neighborhood who are attending these things, I don't know how you would ever know about them.”

These insights about the need for greater social capital and access to services led the team to determine that improving community awareness of available family services should be a primary goal of the strategic plan and, that while Hunts Point currently has service gaps in all aspects of early childhood education, the expansion of mental and behavioral health services is both urgently needed and desired by families.

As a result, the team came to consensus on the following two goals:

- **Build social capital in Hunts Point to increase access to and participation in program and services, formal and informal, by families with children.**
- **Increase family and caregiver access to early child development services, particularly for addressing mental health and behavioral issues.**

The remaining planning sessions were devoted to the development of the strategic actions most likely to result in attainment of the above goals, as well as the measures of success that the team will use to determine progress and the resources needed to successfully achieve the goals.

We then worked together to name our initiative, using a group activity and word generator to elicit community voice as represented in the word cloud to the right. The exercise identified several frequently suggested themes to

We used this tool to help the planning committee generate three names (Our Children's Journey, Children's ToolBox & Learn With Me). Finally, the Community Partnership team tabled in front of PS 48 and asked families to vote on which name they liked the best. Together these components comprise **Our Children's Journey: An Initiative to Improve the Lives of Our Youngest Children & Their Families**, the strategic course chartered by the planning team and community to achieve the established goals. Both the goals and the aligned strategies are outlined in greater detail in the section titled "Strategic Goals."

MISSION, VISION & DESIGN PRINCIPLES

The Hunts Point Community Partnership's vision statement is: *We envision a community where every family embraces their power towards self-sufficiency, to thrive and uplift Hunts Point.* Our Children's Journey initiative is the next step toward realizing that future.

The vision of **Our Children's Journey** is a community where all families with young children have equal access to the resources needed for healthy, successful children.

The mission of **Our Children's Journey** is to connect families with the capacities and knowledge needed to support the development of their children from prenatal to age eight.

In the design of all systems, strategies, and supports, **Our Children's Journey** planning team will adhere to the following principles:

- Though we acknowledge there are many needs for children, youth, and families in Hunts Point, our priority is to address the needs of children ages prenatal to eight.
- Specifically, we will target our efforts to Hunts Point children in the following three developmental stages: prenatal to age three, ages 4–5, and ages 6–8.

- Community members in the roles of parent, guardian, caretaker, and first educator for children ages prenatal-eight will play a central role in leading the initiative, including designing and implementing all strategies.
- Experts and providers will support this community developed initiative through their research, experience and knowledge.
- We will leverage existing resources to the fullest extent possible.
- We will advocate for new sources for funding and programming, on par with other communities in New York City, and make policy recommendations to improve child well-being.
- We will take a multi-generation approach improving outcomes for families by supporting children and adults.
- We will advance racial equality by ensuring equal access to resources and combating institutional racism.



STRATEGIC GOALS

The **Our Children's Journey** will realize its vision for collective action and impact by focusing the partnership's resources and efforts on two long-term goals, strategically aligned with our design principles and core values.

Goal 1: Build social capital in Hunts Point to increase access to and participation in programs and services by families with children.

Goal 2: Increase family and caregiver access to early child development services, particularly for addressing mental health and behavioral issues.

GOAL 1

Build social capital¹ in Hunts Point to increase access to and participation in programs and services by families with children.

As noted in the Design section of the plan, the Community Partnership team conducted a lengthy community data collection process to identify community priorities. Participants consistently identified the Hunts Point neighborhood as having a range of innovative programs and services available to local families. However, it was also repeatedly noted that a large contingency of eligible families are not consistently accessing the range of services available, primarily due to a lack of awareness on residents' part, as well as reduced capacity of under-staffed organizations to follow up on referrals. In fact, some long-term community members who took part in the planning sessions expressed significant surprise to learn the extent of the resources currently available in Hunts Point for families of children ages prenatal through eight.

As one community member stated during the asset identification exercise, "I've never heard of 95% of these programs and I am the parent of five kids in this community. There is no knowledge, no communication." Others expressed significant regret that they hadn't realized there were supportive services for families in Hunts Point, particularly for children with special needs: "If I'd known about these [services], my son would have had a much easier time in elementary school and middle school. He had a really hard time." These comments,

along with similar statements collected during the Discovery phase of planning greatly underscore the criticality of improving communication and awareness of programming in order to expand utilization.

To be clear, the services needed included those for young children, but also other members of the family, including adults who may need mental health and employment support in particular. As a result, there was an opportunity to not only meet the needs of children prenatal to age eight but also to improve outcomes for the family as a whole by connecting adults and older siblings with supports at the connection point for young children.

The Discovery Phase explored community perspective on the most effective means for communicating opportunities to local families. Community members consistently cited peer-to-peer contact as the preferred mode of communication, noting that parents tend to trust other parents over alternative referral sources. This may be particularly true for parents who are new to the community, to the United States or for whom language barriers are a primary barrier to service access. Peer referrals also have the benefit of being highly accessible to all individuals regardless of their literacy level (as opposed to print communications) and do not necessarily require access to technology (as email and social media do). Community residents also identified fairs and other community events as an important venue for sharing program information, as these occasions are highly attended in Hunts Point, and can be an excellent forum for social capital among peers to be developed.

Finally, while underutilization of existing services was seen as the primary factor in low rates of service access, community members and organizational leaders also noted the need for service expansion. Participants collectively identified a range of program-types readily available in nearby communities but currently unavailable in Hunts Point. Services noted include dental care, early learning center-based programs, specialist services for children with special needs, and family cultural/education institutions such as children's museums. Therefore, the mobilization of local families to advocate for expanded resources is also necessary to the achievement of this goal.

¹ During the first facilitated planning session, participants defined social capital as the cumulative relationships, trust, and shared understanding and values in a community. Greater social capital means that families in a community are more likely to rely on each other for help and support.

STRATEGY ONE:

Mobilize the “Mayors” to engage and activate families as governance team members.

RATIONALE

The planning committee members who provided feedback and prioritization for the development of this strategic plan repeatedly stated that parents and other caregivers of young children are most likely to listen to and trust information received from their peers. Residents and organizational staff noted that in Hunts Point, there is a small subsection of the population that are known throughout the community for having the respect and trust of their neighbors, as well as extensive and active social networks within the neighborhood. These residents have been identified as a potentially highly effective conduit for communicating critical program information throughout the community. For the purpose of this report, we will refer to this subgroup of residents as the “Mayors.”

The strategic planning team determined that if the local Mayors can be recruited, they will be highly effective communication pathways for sharing current family service opportunities with families and for helping to connect families to much-needed services. Additionally, the Mayors will provide the Community Partnership and Governance Team with real-time feedback on the communities’ consistently evolving needs and priorities to ensure the currency and impact of community goals and strategies. The result – families typically disengaged from the human and education services system because of a lack of trust or information will be connected to the services they need and deserve.

IN ACTION

We build partnerships by mobilizing the mayors to engage and activate families as governance team members. Our community ambassadors will also serve as the catalyst to expand resources with local residents that are widely known in the community as self proclaimed “mayors” who have access to disengaged families.



YEAR 1 ACTIONS

- Establish the roles and responsibilities defining “Mayors” with the Governance Team.
- Identify and recruit initial mayors with the Governance Team; these will include current Community ambassadors. Also consider staff in the community who are at highly familiar, well-trusted “hub” organizations such as Head Start and Urban Health Plan.
- Create incentive structure for community members in coordination with the Governance Team.
- Onboard Mayors to understand the purpose and structure of the program.
- Engage Mayors members in designing information and resources to be shared within the community in coordination with the Governance Team.
- With the Governance Team, Identify and implement the most effective pathways and scenarios for Mayors to communicate with residents.
- Collect data on impact from Mayors and local families.
- Monitor progress using established measures (see Indicators of Success) using data collected from Mayors and local families.
- Modify the duties/roles of Mayor in accordance with community feedback from the Governance Team.
- Conduct one on one meetings with each Mayor to determine their impact and desire to continue in the role.
- Develop and implement quarterly celebrations in recognition and appreciation of the Mayor’s voluntary contribution.

YEAR 2 ACTIONS

- Identify and recruit new Mayors as needed with the Governance Team.
- Onboard new Mayors to understand the purpose and structure of the program.
- Engage new Mayors members in designing information and resources to be shared within the community in coordination with the Governance Team.
- Continue to monitor progress and make adjustments as needed and in accordance with community feedback from the Governance Team.
- Conducting one on one meetings with each Mayor to determine their impact and desire to continue in the role.
- Continue to implement quarterly celebrations in recognition and appreciation of the Mayor’s voluntary contribution.

YEAR 3 ACTIONS

- Identify and recruit new Mayors as needed with the Governance Team.
- Onboard new Mayors to understand the purpose and structure of the program.
- Engage new Mayors members in designing information and resources to be shared within the community in coordination with the Governance Team.
- Continue to monitor progress and make program adjustments as needed and in accordance with community feedback from the Governance Team.
- Conducting one on one meetings with each Mayor to determine their impact and desire to continue in the role.
- Continue to implement quarterly celebrations in recognition and appreciation of the Mayor's voluntary contribution.

STRATEGY TWO:

Provide engaging and effective forums for families to communicate directly with community-based organizations.

RATIONALE

Across the board, community members identified the importance of improved communication on available services to local families. This can readily be accomplished by the partnership staff committing to host regular service fairs and forums, to help local families build awareness of the programs available. Direct contact with staff members can provide the personal connection needed to forge residents' interest; furthermore, it provides service providers with the information they will need to follow up, a critical component in the expansion of access, as research shows that the more "touches" a potential participant receives, the more likely they are initiate access.

However, trust is a crucial component for effectively conveying information and it is imperative that community-based organizations seek out the vehicles that are respectful of families' privacy and lifestyle and will not feel intimidating to residents that may be hesitant to access. Furthermore, for the sake of efficiency, it is also important that the pathways established provide the opportunity for families to access multiple providers at once. Therefore, when planning community forums and communication events, the partnership staff should ensure that all barriers to attendance and that the event environment is as welcoming and engaging to families as possible. This should include considerations such as ensuring childcare is available, scheduling events for dates/times when working parents are most likely to attend, providing refreshments and other incentives to attend, ensuring event venues are welcoming and easily accessible by public transportation, and ensuring translation services are available.

To incentive participation there will be a Community Passport Program, in which families are able to earn points towards a reward by accessing services (such as the public library, PTA meetings, etc.) and attending community events. This will be a multi-year effort to analyze and scale if effectively rolled out, starting with two trusted partners.

IN ACTION

We support community knowledge sharing by providing engaging and effective forums for families to communicate directly with community based organizations.

YEAR 1 ACTIONS

- Governance team will lead all planning of effectively publicizing events to the targeted demographic (families with children ages prenatal to eight), including:
 - Identifying shared public venues for holding events that are easily accessible via public transportation and non-intimidating to residents who may be reluctant to engage with government agencies or institutions.
 - Establishing scheduling criteria (both date and time) that allow the maximum number of targeted families to attend.
- Develop the model for the Community Passport Program, including the establishment of criteria for community-based organization participation with the Governance Team.
- Launch the Community Passport Program, including planning of a kickoff event.
- Create a cross-organization calendar available to community residents that lists **Our Children's Journey** and partner events
- Recruit appropriate CBOs, educational providers, and city agencies for participation.
- Secure the necessary resources to hold an accessible and engaging community event (refreshments, childcare, prizes and other incentives for attendance).
- Organize and execute the event plan with a goal of holding two events during Year One of implementation (spring/summer and fall/winter).

YEAR 2 ACTIONS

- Work with the Governance Team to expand scope to include events held quarterly throughout Year Two, in varying locations across Hunts Point.
- Revisit the list of vendors and service providers invited to add additional opportunities and programs.
- Expand the Community Passport Program to include new actions and/or incentives for a second year of participation.

YEAR 3 ACTIONS

- Work with the Governance Team to expand scope to include events held quarterly throughout Year Two, in varying locations across Hunts Point.
- Revisit the list of vendors and service providers invited to add additional opportunities and programs.
- Expand the Community Passport Program to include new actions and/or incentives for a third year of participation.

STRATEGY THREE:

Establish an advocacy agenda and develop the infrastructure to realize the goals outlined within the agenda.

RATIONALE

As noted above, the planning committee provided Community Partnership staff with multiple examples of services and programs that would greatly benefit the families of Hunts Point, but that are only available in or accessible to other communities. The development of a thoughtful, resident-initiated advocacy agenda would provide a critical means to both improve service offerings in Hunts Point and empower community members to realize the power of their collective action efforts. There is a clear opportunity for Community Partnership to play a pivotal role by helping local families gain the skills, knowledge, and confidence to educate policy-makers regarding their needs and more fully participate in City government processes, while also achieving more equitable access to public resources.

IN ACTION

We inform city policy and practice by establishing an advocacy agenda and development infrastructures to realize the goals within the agenda.

YEAR 1 ACTIONS

- Governance team Identifies policy objectives that would most benefit the families of Hunts Point, including (but not limited to) the expansion of available mental and behavioral health supports, services for children with special needs, and free/reduced cost early learning programs (see Goal 2).
- Community Partnership staff lead research and design of advocacy training for all governance team members. Identify and review proven, scalable models and/or curriculums for conducting the trainings and select the model most appropriate to the partnership's vision.
- Secure funding to launch a series of parent leadership/advocacy training, including stipends for participants.

YEAR 2 ACTIONS

- Engage the Governance Team in the recruitment for and implementation of the leadership/advocacy training.
- Launch the identified model with the identified participants.

YEAR 3 ACTIONS

- Governance Team members that have completed the leadership /advocacy training series to collaborate with the community to implement their advocacy agenda.
- Solicit feedback from participants on their experience and modify the leadership/advocacy training model accordingly.
- Implement community wide trainings for all local community member to participate in and learn advocacy skills.

GOAL 2

Increase family and caregiver access to early child development services, particularly for addressing mental health and behavioral issues.

In the Citizens Committee for Children of New York's December 2018 Community Risk Rating report, Hunts Point was rated as the highest risk community for child wellbeing out of the 59 neighborhoods comprising New York City². According to the data, the children of Hunts Point are more likely than their peers to experience significant life stressors, such as poverty, parental employment instability, homelessness, and violence. They are also less likely to have access to health insurance or be enrolled in a high-quality early learning program. Early exposure to these risk factors can be a strong predictor of behavioral or mental health issues later in life if preventative measures and supports aren't accessible. Improving family and caregiver capacity to better support young children and address their developmental, intellectual, emotional, and behavioral needs is a critical step the Community Partnership, and specifically **Our Children's Journey** participants can take towards mitigating the impact of community risk factors.

² Community Risk Ranking: Child Well-Being in New York City's 59 Community Districts. Citizen's Committee for the Children of New York, 2018.

STRATEGY FOUR:

Connect families to broader information about developmental stages and how to support each other and their children at each stage.

RATIONALE

Although access to existing services is a serious issue, it is equally true that Hunts Point has fewer options available to families than other NYC communities. Until (and even when) services are more readily available and are consistently accessed by residents, one of the best investments the Community Partnership can make is in building capacity of parents to serve as their children's own best teacher and advocate. A critical step in this process lies in ensuring parents are aware of and can identify their child's current developmental stage, both to engage in supportive best practice and to help identify signs of a developmental issue, so that preventative and/or early interventive measures can be taken.

There are several milestones in children's lives that naturally lend to introducing parents and caregivers to best practice for supporting their children's developmental needs. Examples include birth, entry into early learning, and entry into elementary school. By targeting appropriate developmental resources to parents at these crucial junctures in their children's lives when parents already tend to be engaged with local systems (healthcare, schools, etc.), [Our Children's Journey](#) could more efficiently expand access to the most appropriate and effective resources.

IN ACTION

We build social capital and community capacity by connecting families to broader information about developmental stages and how to support each other and their children at each stage.

YEAR 1 ACTIONS

- Initiate partnerships with local venues that can provide access to parents and caregivers at the highlighted junctures (hospitals and birthing centers, pediatricians' offices and health clinics, early learning centers, local elementary schools, etc.). Focus on familiar, well-respected "hub" organizations such as Head Start and Urban Health Plan, as well as currently existing home visitation programs.
- Coordinate with the Governance Team to develop a "toolbox" of parent/caregiver resources for each developmental stage and translated into commonly-spoken local languages, including information on the stage and corresponding milestones, local programs and services appropriate to the age group, and resources to access if challenges arise, including contact information for the identified mayors (see Strategy One) and ambassadors who are available to assist with referrals and access.

- Establish a dispersal plan for the information, utilizing key partnerships formed as well as other community forums and events (see Strategy Two).
- Identify existing and new opportunities for parent support activities, including Parent Cafés in partnership with the Hunts Point Family Enrichment Center, OUR Place.

YEAR 2 ACTIONS

- Update the developmental stage toolboxes yearly to include new resources available in the community.
- Expand access through the development of further partnerships by the Governance Team with local systems providers.
- Engage individuals (local mental health providers, parent ambassadors) to facilitate a pilot series of parent/caregiver "cafés" – forums for parent/caregivers of children in the same developmental stage to socialize, share information, and actively problem-solve childcare-related challenges with their peers. Encourage participation by providing childcare and refreshments (see Strategy Two), scheduling events for days/times conducive to working parents and utilizing parent ambassadors and other trusted peers to recruit.

YEAR 3 ACTIONS

- Continue to update and promote the developmental stage toolboxes in coordination with the Governance Team.
- Expand the café model to include a parental education component. For example, one session might begin with a local educator speaking to parents about advocating for their child's academic needs (what their rights are in regards to special services, who to speak to within the school system when they have concerns, etc.), and end with a share-out where parents can help one another problem-solve school-related problems they are experiencing.



STRATEGY FIVE:

Increase the access to and use of community-based services, particularly for early intervention and Medicaid managed mental health services.

RATIONALE

Community members reported, and research supports, the critical impact of mental and behavioral health on every component of family life. Further, they noted four key challenges in accessing these services: a) lack of information on what is available and how to utilize it most effectively, b) the ability to access services they know about (because of application requirements or operating hours), c) navigating and receiving assigned services, and d) a lack of locally available services entirely. Accordingly, the initiative will utilize a three-phase approach starting with educational activities, then increasing access to services through the coordination of CBOs, and finally a connection to Strategy Three in advocating for additional services.

IN ACTION

We facilitate service referral and utilization by increasing the access to and use of community based services particularly for early intervention and Medicaid managed mental health services.

YEAR 1 ACTIONS

- With the Governance Team, identify and map government mental health and behavior services, availability, opportunities, etc., particularly Early Intervention and Medicaid-funded programs, but also service providers that may be able to use newly flexible funding opportunities to provide mental health/behavior services in home or at community locations.
- Support the Governance Team in creating an informational flyer on accessing mental health services.

YEAR 2 ACTIONS

- Update community list of mental health and early intervention providers and services and distribute to the Mayors, the Governance Team, and other community partners.
- Develop and field workshops with the Governance Team for understanding how to access mental health services and how to advocate for your child's needs.
- Appoint an ad hoc committee including Governance Committee members and CBOs providing mental and behavioral health supports to identify ways to increase access to and utilization of existing services and create an action plan.
- Continue to distribute informational flyers on accessing mental health services through the Mayors, the Governance Team, and other community partners.

YEAR 3 ACTIONS

- Update community list of mental health and early intervention providers and services and distribute to the Mayors, the Governance Team, and other community partners.
- Continue to distribute informational flyers on accessing mental health services through the Mayors, the Governance Team, and other community partners.
- Continue to implement workshops for understanding how to access mental health services and how to advocate for your child's needs.
- Execute an action plan to increase access to and utilization of existing mental and behavioral health and early intervention services.
- Work with the Governance Team to identify the most pressing needs for increased services and weave them into the advocacy efforts undertaking in Strategy Three.

ACS FIVE CORE STRATEGIES

Our Children's Journey goals and activities are aligned with the five core strategies developed by ACS which all 11 Community Partnerships share. They are:

- 1 Build partnerships: build a diverse network of public and private partners that include city agencies, community-based organizations, service providers, faith-based organizations, and volunteer civic associations.
- 2 Coordinate service referral and utilization: develop a comprehensive understanding of resources available in the community, with an emphasis on the selected priority area.
- 3 Build community capacity and social capital: recruit and train established and emerging grassroots leaders to support families and design and implement peer supports for residents that strengthen ties among family, friends, neighbors, and local institutions.
- 4 Support community knowledge share: serve as a hub for disseminating information, resources, and promoting public information campaigns, with an emphasis on the selected priority area.
- 5 Inform city policy and practice: serve as a mechanism for sharing community voices and perspectives to inform city policy and programs related to child and family well-being.

INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

Our Children's Journey will use the following metrics to measure the success of this strategic plan over the next three years of implementation. All of the metrics were identified by the planning team as having a positive impact on the lives of Hunts Point's youngest children, salience to the community, and would be likely impacted by successfully implementing the selected strategies.

Our Children's Journey will develop a plan within the first 90 days of implementation to collect baseline data. The plan will also address collecting at least annual data and sharing the results with the community and partners. The resulting data will also be used by the Governance Team to have an annual session focused on using the data to refine implementation, as appropriate.

Metric One: Increased utilization of existing resources in hunts point for families with children from prenatal to age eight

Sources: Utilization rates and waitlists from partner CBOs and community surveys and feedback

Metric Two: Number of contacts with the most disconnected families

Sources: Data from the Mayors, Ambassadors, and CBOs on contacts at shelters and typically disconnected geographies (as identified by the Governance Team)

Metric Three: Increased family understanding of developmental ages and stages and appropriate resources in Hunts Point

Sources: Attendance and pre- and post-testing at Community Partnership and Partner workshops, data from the health system as identified by HPAC Staff

Metric Four: Increased levels of participation by adult family members in leading and advocating for the needs of children prenatal to age eight

Sources: Numbers of family members engaged in participatory budgeting processes, parent teacher organizations, and community-based family advisory boards

INSTITUTIONALIZATION & IMPLEMENTATION

Historically, the Hunts Point Alliance for Children (HPAC) serves as the convener for the Hunts Point Alliance collective impact initiative. In this role, HPAC has effectively assembled leading local non-profit organizations and a broad spectrum of community members in common cause to improve the lives of the area's children, youth and families. HPAC's strong infrastructure and capacity for facilitating this convergence, combined with the ability to incubate and spin off sustained community initiatives (such as Healthy Hunts Point) make them the ideal backbone organization for **Our Children's Journey**.

Staffing for the Hunts Point Community Partnership is provided by the Hunts Point Alliance for Children (HPAC) as the grantee for the ACS Project and which will also provide leadership and staffing for **Our Children's Journey**.

INITIATIVE VISION: OUR CHILDREN'S JOURNEY

The initiative outlined within this strategic plan — **Our Children's Journey** — will start as a sub-program of the Hunts Point Community Partnership, with a vision and dedicated pathway towards developing into a free-standing and independently funded effort within the next six years. This will allow for a greater focus on the issue area by the initiative and in turn, allow the Hunts Point Alliance for Children to turn their focus and resources to other key issue areas.

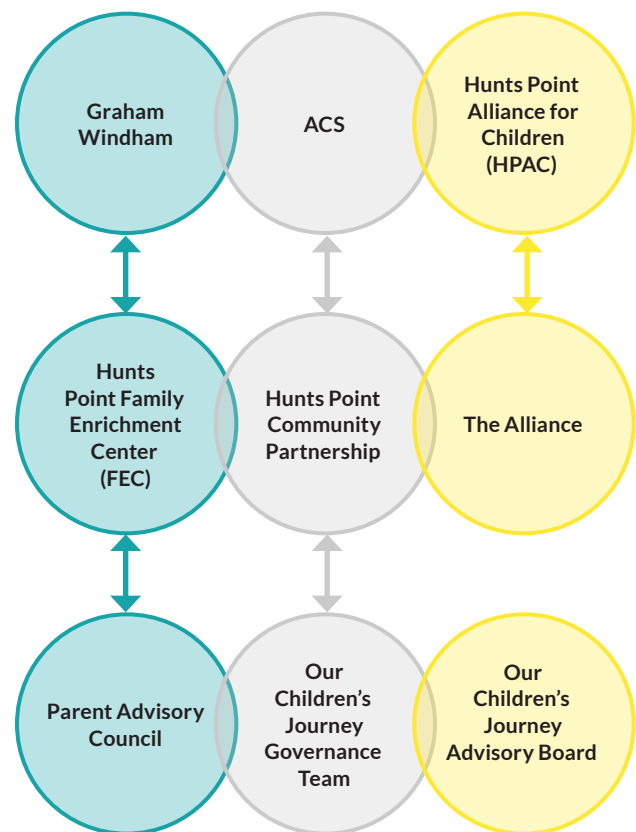
ROLE OF THE HUNTS POINT ALLIANCE COLLECTIVE IMPACT INITIATIVE

HPAC will continue to regularly convene meetings of the Hunts Point Alliance to share information on needs and programming for children and youth from birth through employment across members. Appropriate organizations within the Hunts Point Alliance will make up the membership of the **Our Children's Journey** Initiative, specifically to share information on programming for children ages prenatal to eight. This will allow the **Our Children's Journey** Initiative to benefit from broader community efforts happening within the Hunts Point Alliance, while also maintaining a focus on the community's youngest children.

The Hunts Point Community Partnership will continue to:

- 1 Communicate with peer organizations on resources in order to maximize usage;
- 2 Share information across the community, city and national landscape that could have impact for Hunts Point families;
- 3 Develop partnerships to leverage existing community and national assets; and
- 4 Create an agenda for deeper issue-based initiatives and incubate them in preparation for expansion and/or development into new programming opportunities.

HUNTS POINT COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP FLOW CHART



*please see the detailed description of each group in Attachment A.

OUR CHILDREN'S JOURNEY STRUCTURE & GOVERNANCE

Our Children's Journey will be governed by a steering committee, comprised of 15–25 local community members and local organizational staff. Half or more of the membership will be composed of community members nominated by community-based organizations generally, and particularly some members of the Hunts Point Family Enrichment Center's Parent Advisory Board. After nominations, each person will be contacted for a follow up presentation from the Hunt Point Community Partnership team. This presentation will give an in-depth description of **Our Children's Journey** as it relates to the initiatives past (planning committee and process), present (current efforts), and future (annual goals). After gaining a full understanding of **Our Children's Journey**, each person will receive a copy of the MOU to review. Only selected members will be asked to sign and become a governance team member. All possible candidates to the governance team will be confirmed by the Hunts Point Community Partnership team. However, once presenting each candidate to the governance team, they can either deny or accept with a majority vote. This Governance Team will also include representatives of community-based organizations, the local schools and elected officials.

The Governance Team for **Our Children's Journey** will hold the following responsibilities:

- 1 Help to implement strategies.
- 2 Review progress and recalibrate the strategic plan components as needed.
- 3 Provide community feedback and work to identify shifting needs that could affect or impact implementation.
- 4 Champion the initiative within the community.

Our Children's Journey will also have an Advisory Board recruited from the key thought leaders and technical experts, who can be called upon to advise on key issues as they arise. Initial member is Tovah Klein, PhD, Author & Professor at Barnard College. Additional members are in the process of being recruited.

Finally, in the collective impact landscape, a backbone organization is defined as the organization serving as the primary infrastructure for the effort, providing guidance of vision and strategy, supporting initiative activities, and establishing common measures of success. Throughout the three years of implementation, Hunts Point Alliance for Children staff (Community Partnership Team) whose primary responsibility will be serving as the will serve as the backbone for the **Our Children's Journey** initiative.

IMPLEMENTATION

To achieve successful implementation, the new strategic plan will need to permeate every level and activity undertaken by the Hunts Point Community Partnership over the next three years. The move from strategic planning to implementation requires the facilitation of three distinct phases: design, launch, and implementation.

The **design phase** was completed as part of this plan development. In this phase, key internal and external actors were engaged in the planning to ensure buy-in, relevance, and practicality. Specifically, this was achieved by:

- Collecting and assessing information on the state of the alliance and the current landscape in the community from a cross section of HPAC leadership, alliance member leadership and staff, and community members;
- Engaging both alliance member staff and community members in the planning phase;
- Testing the plan as it was being crafted with both membership representation and a spectrum of community members representing the diversity of Hunts Point; and
- Engaging full alliance and community representation in the final review and approval of the plan.

Once this plan is completed, the next phase – the initial launch – will be implemented within 120 days of finalization. In this phase, the HPAC Community Partnership Director will review the plan and its implications with Alliance representatives. The HPAC Executive Director and Community Partnership team will also hold responsibility for communicating the plan (including subsequent progress updates) to key identified external stakeholders and elected officials.

During the **implementation phase**, the Hunts Point Community Partnership Director will track the plan's progress with Alliance members at least quarterly and also host monthly Hunts Point Community Partnership meetings. These sessions will review progress on implementation, evaluate the measures of success, identify and problem-solve implementation risks and challenges, and make adjustments to the plan as needed and in accordance with feedback provided by Alliance and community members. The Alliance will consider the strategic plan when making any major decisions to ensure that all efforts and allocation of resources are aligned with the goals within.

As part of an ongoing effort to ensure mission alignment, the Hunts Point Alliance for Children will also examine their current and future governance structure to ensure maximum suitability towards achieving the established goals.

ATTACHMENT A: DESCRIPTION OF HUNTS POINT COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP GROUPS

OUR CHILDREN'S JOURNEY GOVERNANCE TEAM

The Governance Team is seen as a group of experts who help to guide and direct the work of the organization, while keeping us connected to the current, relevant challenges of the Hunts Point families. The Governance Team is central to the planning and execution of all major events and key decisions made by the **Our Children's Journey** initiative.

More than 50% of our governance team members are community residents, parents, caregivers and grandparents whom have or help children age 0-8. And as a result, have a direct understanding of family needs, how they can be best met, both on a day-to-day basis and the larger structural and policy shifts necessary for system-wide change.

The remaining members of the governance team will all support children prenatal to age 8 and their families, represent the needs of families, or be affiliates with Community Based Organizations (CBOs) and partner agencies throughout Hunts Point.

Each member will be asked to sign an MOU.

This body meets monthly around Early Childhood Education issues, specifically to:

- 1 Help to implement strategies.
- 2 Review progress and recalibrate the strategic plan components as needed.
- 3 Provide community feedback and work to identify shifting needs that could affect or impact implementation.
- 4 Champion the initiative within the community.

This unique design is consistent, intentional and effective. We rely on all members for their lived experience and wisdom keeping **Our Children's Journey** mission at the forefront. This will ensure that the initiative remains community centered and their unwavering voices will speak to levitating the Hunts Point Community.

OUR CHILDREN'S JOURNEY ADVISORY BOARD

All members of the Our Children's Journey Advisory Board either work, develop, or advocate for improvements regarding Early Childhood Education, including at intersections of family wellbeing and mental health. For years, these individuals have

been invested and involved in the Early Childhood Education field, representing sector or agencies throughout the state of New York. We rely on our advisory board members for their in-depth knowledge, wisdom and experience in an effort to stay aligned with not only the Hunts Point Community Partnership's vision, but also the mission of Our Children's Journey. The Hunts Point Community Partnership will have access to these members for course correction during the implementation phase of **Our Children's Journey** initiative. They may also be called on for presentations, deep dives with Our Children's Journey Governance Team and resources as needed. Each member will receive monthly updates so they are consistently in the loop as we progress in this work with the community. Although they will receive invitations to each Community Partnership and Alliance Meeting, their presence is not required. All advisory board members are voluntary and will serve for three years with a signed LOA (Letter of Agreement).

PARENT ADVISORY BOARD (FEC)

The Hunts Point Family Enrichment Center (FEC), named OUR Place by community members, is the hub for family engagement. Also funded by ACS and implemented by Graham Windham, the FEC has created a Parent Advisory Council which operates as the Hub of Parent Leadership in Hunts Point. Two selected members of the FEC's Parent Advisory Council will sit on the governance team. These individuals will leverage our Mayors by being another point in the community for information and connection to services. They will also play an intricate part in molding our leadership/advocacy model for trainings open to the whole community.

HUNTS POINT COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP TEAM

The Hunts Point Community Partnership is the hub of intentional resources for community members. Funded by ACS and implemented by Hunts Point Alliance for Children, the Hunts Point Community Partnership has been the driving force for the creation and support of the **Our Children's Journey** initiative. The team is comprised of one Director, one Community Organizer, one Administrative Assistant, and four Community Ambassadors and community volunteers. Each person plays an integral part in the continuous development of services provided by the partnership to all Hunts Point residents. As well as the facilitation and coordination of this new community developed initiative. The Hunts Point

Community Partnership's vision statement is We envision a community where every family embraces their power towards self-sufficiency, to thrive and uplift Hunts Point.

The Community Ambassadors play a critical role in the function of Hunts Point Community Partnership Team and have the following primary responsibilities:

- Engaging with Community Partners to support goals and strategies of the chosen priority area, connecting with our partner schools (6) to ensure that students, parent coordinators and PTA participants have the opportunity to engage in community resources and partnership efforts.
- Establishing relationships with parents by meeting them at the schools.
- Conducting recruitment and facilitation action group meetings in the community by increasing engagement and support among family, friends, neighbors, schools, local organizations and institutions.
- Serving as members of the self-governance team and on community or provider advisory boards including those of ACS and other City Agencies.
- Assisting in the planning and implementation of events, outreach and programs.
- Supports the overall efforts of the Community Partnership and Our Children's Journey governance team and stakeholders, including all other tasks as assigned.
- Attend community events on behalf of the Hunts Point community partnership.
- Attending professional development trainings (Collective Impact forum, Basic Community Organizing, Grassroot fundraising, Navigating City Government, Media Tools and Group Structure).
- Giving referrals/resources to community members.
- Brainstorm community events based off community trends/needs.
- Conduct community outreach for all community events or meetings.

ALLIANCE

Since 2007, Hunt Point Alliance for Children (HPAC) has brought together the schools and child-serving organizations of the Hunts Point community to create relationships, partnerships, and work collaboratively towards a neighborhood where all children have a path to school success. Serving as the incubator of community initiatives, this body of people (generally 30-40) is comprised of community members, community-based organizations, parents, government officials, schools, government agencies and now ACS. Organized by HPAC staff, these quarterly meetings will be available to all and have no limit in size. Quarterly meetings will include a

recap presentation from the two projects that grow out of this collaborative effort (Healthy Hunts Point Action Group & Hunts Point Community Partnership).

HUNTS POINT ALLIANCE FOR CHILDREN (HPAC)

In January, 2019, the Hunts Alliance for Children (HPAC) officially became the backbone organization for the Hunts Point Community Partnership to work in partnership with the New York City Administration of Children's Services (ACS) to support and strengthen families. Founded in 2006, HPAC's mission is to inspire hope and empower community through transformative relationships that build skills, instill confidence and ensure children and families have access to the resources and opportunities they deserve.

ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES (ACS)

The Community Partnership represents ACS' ongoing commitment to partner with communities to advance primary prevention strategies. Community Partnerships are coalitions that serve as local hubs for providers, community leaders, and other stakeholders to: 1) collaborate and share resources, 2) increase family access to information and resources, and 3) design primary prevention strategies. Community Partnerships ensure that everyone – from government agencies to community providers, faith-based groups, and local leaders – are involved in efforts to improve child and family well-being.

