This workshop was held at the 2019 Equal Justice Conference in Louisville, Kentucky.

Title:

Using Data to Identify and Improve Delivery of Rural Legal Services

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Legal Services Alabama (LSA) undertook a project to map poverty and free legal services offered to Alabama citizens. The data revealed that rural areas were significantly under-served, and LSA developed a plan to begin a Rural Economic Improvement Project. Presenters will provide guidance on utilizing data to identify needs and develop creative solutions.
A Guide for Community Redevelopment & Economic Improvement Projects:

A Replication Guidebook for Legal Aid & Community Organizations

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Introduction

Community development is a process conducted by community partners where local residents may collaborate with stakeholders and vested groups to create more income, opportunities and infrastructure. A major part of planning for a community redevelopment project involves pulling together the right funder(s), engaged community partners, volunteers and staff excited about the project and goals set for the targeted communities.

The purpose of the Community Redevelopment Guidebook is to provide Legal Aid organizations and other not for profit organizations with a planning guide to assist underserved communities with an emphasis on rural areas. This guide does not draw heavily from other sources, but instead offers instruction and best steps for organizations to create and build, propose, and implement a successful Community Development, or Redevelopment Project. The primary source is from the creation, steps and planning involved in Legal Services Alabama’s Rural Economic Improvement Project and from the author’s years of experience in writing in expository, narrative and persuasive grant writing styles. The hope is that your organization can build upon the necessary steps and examples to create projects that enrich, revitalize and improve underserved and low income communities in your organization’s service areas.

Special Thank You to the following funders, partners and staff:

Legal Services Corporation

The Alabama Civil Justice Foundation

The Alabama Appleseed Center for Law and Justice

Legal Services Alabama REIP staff, Director of Advocacy, Development Department, Resource Development Coordinator, and Grants Manager whose work has been critical to the implementation and success of this project.
Planning and Preparation

The Alabama Civil Justice Foundation (ACJF) made the grant funds available to Legal Services Alabama (LSA) for Community Redevelopment. When LSA initially learned of this opportunity, I met with the Foundation’s Director and discussed the scope of the project, specifically what the award amount may be able to fund. The application process began with the submission of a Letter of Inquiry (LOI). Following review of the LOIs by the ACJF Settlement Grants Committee, invitations to submit full applications were sent to select agencies. I then began the project development process by discussing how a project would work and what advocacy would be required with LSA’s leadership. After working with the Director of Advocacy on staffing and project ideas, I began drafting a plan to create what would be Alabama’s Rural Economic Improvement Project (REIP). Although LSA choose redevelopment in the form of Rural Economic Improvement, other choices for projects may include:

- Policy and social impact work
- Economic transformation work that involves partnering with financial institutions on credit report improvements, small business building blocks, and smart money 101.
- Transactional law to protect property (estate planning, property transfers)
- Community lawyering which actively elicits community involvement when working with government, and private sectors to build strong communities, industries, and markets.
- Traditional legal services that include community partnerships targeting underserved areas
- New and innovative models for providing legal services that significantly impact community transformation for low-income citizens
- Non-profit legal assistance for organizations serving low-income communities.
- Training or educational services for low-income community members to advocate on behalf of their community.
- Legal services focused on workforce development and/or removing barriers to employment, housing, or other community development needs.

The core aspect of the project is important and can be more than one. For the project funding, Legal Services Alabama was required to provide an abstract, which I summarized in two parts:

**LSA proposes a Rural Economic Improvement Project (REIP) to provide economic stability and improvement to rural Alabama communities. The project consists of two service components: (1) Statewide REIP Coordinating Lead Attorney (CLA): will coordinate services in rural areas among various service partners; address obstacles among civil legal service providers in delivering services in rural areas; work with partners to address economic and consumer issues statewide tracking rural trends, finding innovative, collaborative ways to address them; develop systematic solutions to economic development issues primarily facing rural populations; lead efforts to**
organize legal clinics in rural, underserved counties; create and distribute REIP material to appropriate community groups; educate the groups about their existence and use to educate and empower citizens in rural areas of the state. (2) REIP Staff Attorney focusing on services in the black belt service area: will work in the Selma Regional service area to address pressing economic issues including student loans, access to credit, business opportunities, mobile home repossessions and factors limiting the financial success of individuals. The REIP attorney will operate as a front line service provider to the most underserved Alabamians living in the Black Belt.

Once your organization has decided on a project it may be a good time to revisit the scope of the project, mentioned earlier, and evaluate if the possible project seems too ambitious. If so, begin to narrow your focus, and instead of doing nine things, for example, you may feel your organization should be more focused on the top three issues. This re-evaluation of the project should occur at several steps in the process and should not be considered a setback; in fact this is a useful approach to streamlining the planning and implementation.

When planning a redevelopment project it is essential to begin with the project goals after deciding what the project will do and the problems it will address. The goals should be the anchor to every successful project. According to The Five Golden Rules for Successful Goal Setting your organization should set S.M.A.R.T. goals, meaning it will be Specific, Measurable, Attainable/Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound:

1. **Set Specific Goals:** Your goal must be clear and well defined. Make it as easy as you can to get where you want to go by defining precisely where you want to end up.
2. **Set Measurable Goals:** Include precise data, dates, and other measurable specifics in your goals so you can measure your degree of success.
3. **Set Attainable Goals:** Make sure that it's possible to achieve the goals you set but also ensure the goals are challenging as well a realistic.
4. **Set Relevant Goals:** Goals should be relevant to the direction your organization wants to take. Keeping goals aligned with the direction of your organization will assist project participants to stay focused on the ultimate goals.
5. **Set Time-Bound Goals:** Ensure all goals have a deadline.

https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/
The project goals will lead you to create a viable project, set objectives and timelines, set quantifiable deliverables, and will ultimately lead your organization to the how, when and why meaning:

- **What is needed for my organization to meet the goals?**
- **How will I set objectives to achieve the goals?**
- **How will these objectives be carried out? Staff, volunteers, partners?**
- **Who will be an essential partner to achieve the goals?**
- **What other collaborations may be needed?**
- **How will the project begin?**

- **What is needed for my organization to meet the project goals?**

  When determining what is needed to meet your project goals it is important to be realistic but also list everything that will aid your organization in meeting the goals you set; there may be components that need to be scaled back but early in the process it is important to capture everything that may make the proposed project a success:

  1. **Funding:** Usually this requires an overview of your organization’s budget and/or donations and contributions. If there isn’t sufficient funding to launch a project, the next step would be to seek funding for the project. If this specific funding is not available, move forward with planning for the project; there are likely regional funders in your area interested in funding community development projects. Possible funders include City and County Governments (including City Development Block Grants) and Foundations

      The objective is to match your community development project with the correct funder(s) to meet the project goals.

- **How will I set objectives to achieve the goals?**

  Goals are important primary statements that provide overall context for what your project is trying to achieve, and should align with your organization’s overall mission and established service goals. Objectives are secondary statements that should describe the specific, tangible products and deliverables that your project will deliver to meet the goals.

  The goals and objectives section of your project and subsequent grant proposal can make or break your request for funding. This part of your proposal describes what your organization hopes to accomplish with your project. It also spells out the specific results or outcomes you plan to achieve.
How will these objectives be carried out? Staff, volunteers, partners?

Your chosen objectives should be concrete and describe what your community development project is trying to achieve. The objectives should be drafted so that they can be evaluated during the review stages of your project and at the conclusion of your project to see whether it has been achieved or not.

An example of an objective statement might be:

*Closing the gaps in services to low income, rural communities in Alabama set in the second quarter of year two of the project. This example coincides with a project goal of providing more access to services, specifically more free legal aid to improve economic development.*

Remember that the objective is much more concrete and specific than the goal and it should be measurable in most instances, using the example above, the service measurement would be the anticipated number of rural client served.

Who will be an essential partner to achieve the goals?

An essential partner is one whose participation is critical to the project’s success. When choosing partners select those who will be essential and then contact these selected partners early on. If they commit to partnering, they will need to write a letter of commitment, sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or sign a sub-grant agreement. In all of these instances they will be committing to fulfill their active role in the grant project.

If there are other needed partners who are a good fit for your project, but they are not essential, they would be collaborating project partners.

What other collaborations may be needed?

The right collaborations make a project run better and balances the work required from any one organization. A collaborative partnership should make your project stronger and achieve goals that would be difficult for any partner working on their own. A collaborative grant project therefore encourages collaboration that proposes diverse approaches to achieving goals and offers more objective views and methods to achieving goals.

How will the project begin?

Your organization must begin with understanding that most under-developed communities face many layers of barriers that have prevented growth, including social,
educational, economic, and cultural challenges as well as feelings of distrust of outside assistance. Knowing the barriers your organization will need to overcome early on, is essential to the success of any community project if real, lasting redevelopment is expected.

A second priority should be deciding the input necessary for a successful outcome. This means setting realistic goals and ensuring the man power and resources are available to facilitate those goals. This doesn’t mean your organization will not face obstacles; it means putting the maximum amount of time and energy into ensuring success in terms of meeting goals that improve community.

The goal is community driven planning and decisions that result in sustainable services and development. By planning ahead, organizations may act on new possible funding opportunities and be prepared for challenges associated with economic development, lack of service and/or service providers, and the obstacles associated with rural service delivery.
Jaffe’s Top 10 Community Redevelopment Project Preparation Tips

1. Define the community need and geographic boundaries
   - What needs to be done and who will do it
   - What area(s) will be targeted for services

2. Set Goals and Objectives around the needs and targeted areas to be serviced

3. Identify Project Partners (individuals or organizations) who share a similar mission or who would add to the project in some meaningful way
   - Create a list of essential partners and a timeline to engage each possible partner

4. Form a project partnership group (sometimes called a steering committee) that can meet regularly to evaluate ideas, proposed staffing, budgeting, and funding and timelines
   - Discuss your statement of need, goals and targeted focus areas with the group
   - Provide a face-to-face forum in which interested individuals are invited to learn of the vision of the steering committee

5. Attend neighborhood events and meet with city officials to ensure your statement of need is targeting the proper areas and to get early buy-in from community members
   - Share your vision informally with community members and with any community leaders you believe might be supportive, and incorporate their criticisms and priorities
   - Make necessary changes to the project planning based on feedback
   - Discuss the possibility of a Community Covenant

6. Schedule a project planning meeting
   - Invite possible partners
   - Invite Community stakeholders
   - Share an outline of the project
   - Leave time to make changes to the outline
   - Share RFPs for possible project funding
   - Formulate Letters of Requests to funders

7. Draft Project Agreements
   - A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) explains the specific roles and commitments of project partners
   - A Community Covenant, while not legally binding, reinforces the seriousness and necessity of each member of the community playing their part to accomplish their overall goals.
   - A service agreement or contract with an outside resource provider, for example an agreement with a community library to hold project meetings or trainings
   - Outlines the various expectations and goals in each agreement

8. Decide if you will replicate an existing project from another organization or create a new model. If replicating a project it will need to be tailored to meet your organization’s needs and the needs of your respective communities to be serviced.

9. Budget for the project
   - Brainstorm about how you will fund the project or break out funding to complete one or two early objectives of the project
   - Include staffing for the project
   - Include sub-grantees if necessary
   - Work with a volunteer attorney or with a volunteer lawyer program to find attorneys who will commit to working on your project pro bono, this may include drafting agreements, determining how to incorporate small businesses in your targeted area and applying for non-profit status for small businesses as well as actually serving as a member of the project planning group

10. Prepare to begin You Community Redevelopment services
    - Ensure Systems readiness
    - Seek funding
    - Hire Staff and execute agreements
    - Market project services
Partnerships

Partnerships and collaborations are an essential part of a community redevelopment project. Most funders will expect some type of collaboration since there is no one organization that can fill gaps in all services areas needed for proper redevelopment. This may include social services, faith based services, medical care, economic improvement and legal services. Leaders in most organizations, know, or should know, how to approach new initiatives. Sometimes it means working with a credit union or maybe a local university will have either faculty or students who will be interested in helping your organization start a community development project, and there’s nothing wrong with using that expertise.

Partners are essential for most organizations who are seeking grant money for a new community development initiative. Partnerships bolster a project’s viability and are more attractive to a granting entity. Partnerships also increase your credibility; reflecting on a project that will improve or address a need that is apparent in a community needs a partnership to show that it isn’t just a lone endeavor. Three tips for finding and working with grant partners to successfully launch and implement a grant funded project include: (1) Finding the right people; (2), establish the roles and responsibilities of your grant partners early in the planning process; and (3) Understanding that leadership and communication are key to strengthening the health of your relationships with your partners for future funding possibilities.

It is essential to establish the roles and specific responsibilities of your project partners early in the planning phase. This includes taking an inventory of the resources (staff, financial, technology, communications, etc.) that your partners will provide. The Request for Proposals (RFP) and the subsequent award amount will establish specific requirements and or suggestions as to what types of partnerships you may have, but there will be some level of flexibility in the resources you can use in a project. Usually, funders like to see proposed projects where there are multiple partners offering a myriad of different services to the proposed project.

Partnerships and collaborators can come from many type of organizations and there are several ways to find them. Your organization should look at current partnerships and also strategically add partners with the key being to pursue grant partners with similar interests and outreach so that the project goals can be met organically without a major shift in the mission of the organizations you chose to work with.
For Alabama’s Rural Economic Improvement (REIP) Project, we sought a partnership with an advocacy agency, The Alabama Appleseed Center for Law and Justice. This partnership was key since they provide services that LSA does not, including regular data collection and reporting as well as legislative changes that improve the overall economic well-being of underserved rural communities. LSA also enlisted long time partners including Central Alabama Fair Housing, Alabama Disabilities Advocacy Program, Tombigbee Regional Aging Commission and many other partners who collaborated with LSA on community education at full service legal clinics specific to each agency’s area of expertise. LSA also collaborated with Credit Unions on the Economic Improvement part of the project to address alternatives to high interest loans, a financial literacy component and empowerment on saving and long term financial planning.

After you find the right partners for your project, request that they prepare a letter of commitment (LOC). If your organization will be the lead on the grant application, you will want to include LOCs of all the partners that will be an essential part of the community development project. Additionally, you will need to develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or Memorandum of Agreement (MOA). These are working agreements that detail the scope of services you and your partners will perform to achieve your project’s goals and objectives.

**Staffing a Community Development Project**

The staffing plan is usually one of the easier and shorter parts of the grant proposals. That’s because the project description will usually imply the staffing plan. For example, a project that is composed of community outreach, case supervision and management and partnership and collaboration is likely going to consist of a manager or supervisor and a staff advocate of some sort, and an outreach specialists. There may also be an administrative assistant or data clerk who compiles cases and reports.

For redevelopment projects run by a community focused organization, a staffing plan might consist primarily of Legal Aid staff, partnering service organization or advocacy organization staff, and fellows or legal Interns; volunteers such as pro bono attorneys and community volunteers are needed but should not be included in the staffing, however, unless an agreement has been made in advance and a commitment to dedicate a minimum number of
hours on your project is agreed upon in writing. If so their time could be used as a match for funding. The commitment aspect of staffing is critical to ensure project goals are met and particularly if a proposal requires key indicators to meet objectives with designated assignments. Even if this is not required by a grant it is a good idea to assign tasks directly relating to the goals to ensure project success.

It is always a good idea to assign a full-time Project Manager or Project Coordinator or Program Director to oversee your community development project unless the budget is too small. Many federal RFPs require a full-time manager or an explanation of why this is not considered necessary. Even if your organization’s budget will not allow for a designated project manager, you may choose to assign staff in the targeted service area to be the project “lead”. I have used this model in many successful grant projects in the past and it helps when and if your organization ultimately decides to seek funding for your project.

For LSA’s REIP the critical staff included in our original proposal were:

1. A Project Manager
2. A Coordinating Lead Attorney (CLA):
3. A Project Paralegal

Some staffing plans follow a generic bulleted format in which a position is listed, a percentage of time devoted to the project is listed, and other minimum qualifications are established; however in staffing plans for new projects, most grant funded staff members, with the exception of a project manager, may be unknown.

**Staff Chart Example:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staff</th>
<th>Time Designated to Grant</th>
<th>Duties</th>
<th>Qualifications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Project Manager</td>
<td>Will dedicate 100% of time worked to the proposed project</td>
<td>Will oversee grant activities, collaborate with partners, and ensure goals and objectives are met</td>
<td>Must have at least three years of relevant management experience; B.A. is required, M.A. is preferred, preference given to candidates with a law degree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
If a funder requires detailed information about all staff expected to work on your proposed project, you may add a statement or asterisk and note, “The project paralegal will be hired in the first quarter of grant funding and will work directly under the supervision of the Project Manager”. Some funders will also require an equal opportunity statement, a good example that may be changed as needed follows:

The project staff members will be hired following an open and fair recruitment process. Although preference is given based on experience working with low income communities and in rural or underserved areas, Your Legal Aid (YLA) is committed to the principle of equal employment opportunity for all employees and to providing employees with a work environment free of discrimination and harassment. All employment decisions at YLA are based on business needs, job requirements and individual qualifications, without regard to race, color, religion or belief, sexual orientation, or age.

Staff positions in most proposals should have three to four short sentences about what the staff person will do. An example taken from the REIP project reads:

*LSA staff and its service partners, aided by the assistance of two full time fellows, will work together to ensure services and improvements in the targeted area as well as ensuring the overall success of the project.*

The staff plan should be large enough to ensure coverage of your proposed goals but should not go over the budget (unless your organization is showing an in-kind match). For particularly small programs, like those with less than $1 million operating budget per year, hiring limited staff even with large one time grant awards is best. Your organization may always create more staffing opportunities with different grant sources, however one mistake with community development projects is placing too much weight on staffing and not enough on committed project partners.

If, for example, an established credit service agency will partner with your organization to provide financial literacy services as a part of their commitment to the grant project and as a legal aid organization, you do not have that capacity, it is better to partner with the credit service agency and provide a sub-grant than to try to handle that service in house; understanding the sub-grant will mean one less full-time employee for your organization, but
will also mean better community services for the project overall. Therefore throughout the staff planning phase your organization may ask:

1. **What staff is essential to reaching the project goals and to the overall success of this proposed community Redevelopment project?**

2. **Which of the project goals are better served by outside partnerships that in house staff?**

This is very important to do as your organization charts out staffing required for your project. In most legal aid and some other service organizations, personnel costs will likely be your largest budget line item, usually about 80% of the overall budget for salaries and benefits, with 20% for activities supporting direct services. Relatively few proposed grant projects have large, non-personnel budget cost, however your Community Redevelopment grant may be an exception for your organization. If, like LSA, your organization choses to target rural underserved areas, a large part of the budget will be traveling in support of circuit riding or taking services into the community. Another line item will encompass marketing and outreach to ensure the residents in underserved areas know the services that will be made available through the project. Yet another cost will involve equipment for rural delivery of services which may include, laptops, portable printers and scanners, cellular phones for project staff committed to community improvement and development which will involve a great deal of communication and collaboration.

One of the most important things to remember is when seeking funding for your redevelopment project - or if you are planning the staffing with the goal of seeking funding to cover staff at a later time- in large state or federal budgets the most important part of proposal staffing plans/budgets is that the proposed services discussed in the project description be realistic. Staffing plans and budgets don’t have to be perfect and they will likely change since most require a detailed final budget after the grant award and will allow set budget revisions. Although the budget may change after funding is awarded, it should be realistic and not ask for costs unrelated to or substantially out of line with your community redevelopment project. The budget is a financial plan that supports the proposed project activities, not a detailed operational overview of your organization, so it is always best to keep it as simple as possible.
How to write a proposed grant budget for your project:

- Keep the number of line items short and do not include small line items. A good rule of thumb is to never have more than 15-20 line items.
- Only include staff and line items that will be charged to the grant (and match, if required or helpful to show).
- Personnel line items must match the staffing plan in the narrative. Do not lengthen the budget with small percentages of time budgeted for staff (example: 5% of time for existing administrators/managers).
- Unless the RFP requires it, don’t line-item fringe benefits. These can usually be lumped together as the percent of salaries your fringe benefit package equates to. For most nonprofits, this will be in the 18% to 30% range. Anything above 30% will probably generate unwanted attention from grant reviewers, even if that is what you pay. If the fringe benefit rate is relatively high, this should be explained in the budget narrative (e.g. lower salaries, high local costs, need to retain staff, etc.).
- For multi-year budgets, do not include expected yearly salary increases or annual inflators; this is too detailed and will result in a very complicated budget justification. Inflation in the current environment is low. In a high-inflation environment like the ‘70s, this advice would be different.
- Try to consolidate. For the “Other” Object Cost Category, it’s unnecessary to break down line items too far. For example, lump together facility costs (rent, utilities, security, maintenance), or technology (landline, laptops, cell phones, portable printers, etc.) into single line items.
- If feasible, try to make the total annual budget level for each project year. This can be a bit challenging, if, for example, the project involves start-up costs (e.g., buying staff furniture, hiring a web designer/social media consultant, etc.) in year one. The way to do this is to increase some other line item(s) in the out years to keep the budget level. Level annual budgets will make the budget easier to write and understand.
- Make one line item your plug number to enable reconciliation to the maximum allowed grant and/or level annual amounts in multi-year grants. The plug number should be in the Other Object Cost Category and could be advertising, communications, or similar line items that look OK with an odd number in different years. Reviewers are aware of plug numbers and won’t hold reasonable plug numbers against you. [http://seliger.com/tag/budgets/](http://seliger.com/tag/budgets/)

Sample Budgets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Budget</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>EXPENSES</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personnel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Assistant (50% of full time expense)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fringe Benefits (15%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Personnel Expense</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Personnel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporary Employees:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Coordinator (15 hrs/week @ $15.00 per hour)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Assistant (20 hrs/week @ $9.50 per hour)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fringe Benefits (15%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Readiness Workshop Materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office Supplies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff Travel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Non-personnel Expense</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Project Expense</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Budget – Food for the Elderly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>EXPENSES</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salaries (a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Coordinator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Worker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Benefits (b)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(20% of salaries)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office Rent (c)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office Supplies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel (c)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Expenses</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(a) A program coordinator is necessary to manage the program and ensure that services are delivered efficiently. A social worker is needed to work with the elderly participating in this program.
(b) Benefits include employer-paid taxes, dental insurance, health insurance and long-term disability insurance.
(c) Rent for the office is calculated as 30% of the total rent.
(d) Social worker will attend the annual conference of the National Association of Social Workers.

After staffing and budgeting it may be helpful to draft an activities chart to begin a redevelopment grant project. This chart is where I aligned plans and project goals with objectives and staff assignments:

### Example of Activities Chart

**Rural Economic Improvement Project Proposed Activities Chart**

**First & Second Quarter Goal for Statewide REIP Coordinating Attorney**

**Goal:** The Project Manager/Coordinating Lead Attorney will work with the Director of Advocacy on identifying two areas of focus within the CED spectrum to begin collaborating with project partners, which will have the greatest impact and return to our targeted client communities.

**Activities**

1. The Coordinating Lead Attorney (CLA) will organize and increase the number of legal clinics in rural underserved areas involving pro bono attorneys, to provide consumer defense, foreclosure assistance, and other on-site consumer services.

2. The CLA will work with community groups to identify the most pressing needs that can be filled with pro se help and create a comprehensive array of materials to make sure that no rural citizen is left without any help. The Rural Lead Attorney would also distribute the materials to appropriate community groups and educate the groups about their existence and use.

3. The CLA will work with Banks and Credit Unions and other identified partners to host financial literacy training, alternate credit options to high interest loans, work with consumers owing court fines and fees and assist with first time home buyers.

4. The CLA will work with grant Partner Alabama Appleseed to collect relevant data on the driver of the racial wealth divide in the Black Belt (i.e. legal financial obligations, disproportionate contact with the criminal justice system, lack of access to fair credit, lack of access to counsel, etc.) and collaborate on legislative education for long term solutions to these issues.

5. The CLA will ensure credit counseling and repair, small business services (such as incorporation where appropriate) and financial counseling is offered by LSA’s staff and partners through this project collaboration.

**Third & Fourth Quarters**

**Evaluation and Continued Services**

- Data on services and community clinics
- Document the number of people who have received economic focused services community education, or financial literacy training
- The CLA will increase access to economic improvement services to rural areas statewide

**Responsible Staff:** CLA, Director of Advocacy and Alabama Appleseed

**First & Second Quarters for REIP Staff Attorney**

**Goal:** The REIP Staff Attorney will work with the Director of Advocacy, Selma Managing Attorney and the CLA on ways to extend the consumer and financial services currently available in the Black Belt.

1. The REIP Attorney will organize a Black Belt Financial Investment Collaborative to address student loans issues, high interest loans, issues affecting access to credit, business opportunities and other factors limiting the financial success of individuals. Although this position would coordinate services with all of LSA’s staff, the position would be located in the Selma office and focus on providing direct services throughout the Black Belt.

2. The REIP Attorney will work with community groups in the black belt and with LSA staff to identify and implement a financial component to our advice including providing consumer financial investment literacy materials to add legal and financial education component to LSA representation.

3. The REIP Attorney will coordinate at least two community clinics and/or workshops in the black belt to provide education and empowerment. The REIP will work to reduce the land loss prevention issues in the black belt which remain a major issue indicating a need for a collaborative review and response working with aging networks and other partners.

**Third & Fourth Quarters**

**Evaluation and Continued Services**

- Data on services and community clinics
- Increased access to financial improvement services in the black belt
- Evaluate project goals
- The Managing Attorney and Director for Advocacy will monitor case closing results and client satisfaction input

**Responsible Staff**

LSA REIP Attorney, Selma Regional Office Managing Attorney, Director of Advocacy
The overall focus of the project, including budgeting, staffing and goals set, should be directed toward community needs in which the lack of financial resources, employment opportunities or other special needs of its citizens impact their capacity to equitably participate in community life. Services may target low-income families and communities or groups that face significant barriers to self-sufficiency. The next step is to ensure your organization understands any obstacles to services and then has the infrastructure required to begin a successful community redevelopment project.

**Understanding Rural Delivery Obstacles**

When implementing a Rural Community Redevelopment plan it is extremely important to understand delivery obstacles and why the targeted areas selected are underserved and or underdeveloped to begin with as explained in an exert from the REIP project:

People in rural areas face a much higher probability of having legal issues that are not addressed and face several obstacles including, a lack of knowledge about available services, transportation barriers, fear of sharing information and a general barrier to seeking assistance because many people are still struggling for survival. “*In fact, for many rural communities, conditions are worse than ever. Of the state’s 15 counties with the highest percent population over 65 years of age, 14 are rural. Of the 12 counties with double-digit unemployment, all are rural. Of the 20 counties with the lowest household incomes, all are rural. Of the 20 counties with the lowest percentage of high school graduates, all are rural.*” (*Crossroads and Connections: Strategies for Rural Alabama* [www.auburn.edu/outreach/ecdi/whatwedo/research/publications].) One solution offered in this research publication was creating more service partnerships to help those in isolated areas, which your organization’s Community Development Project should provide. “But far too often individuals and organizations work independently rather than in concert with one another. We are accustomed to working on the equivalent of one-way streets. We need more crossroads”. (*Crossroads and Connections: Strategies for Rural Alabama*).

LSA’s REIP project proposed a myriad of bridged services ranging from: (1) legal; (2) social and community services; and (3) business and financial education and assistance under one
A vital justification for funding this project is that the REIP services will fulfill an unmet need throughout the state in general and specifically throughout the rural black belt. Although there are other organizations that assist low income people in Alabama, there is no other entity that fulfills the task of providing a full scope of holistic legal services and community services. One of the primary goals of the REIP is to ensure people in rural areas have access to the services necessary to develop and improve their communities, focusing on consumer and economic empowerment and improvement. The partnership mission through LSA and the Volunteer Lawyer Programs is to ensure pro bono services are accessible in every corner of Alabama and that rural areas will have the same access to quality free legal services as the more populated areas in our state.

The CLA will address obstacles among civil legal service providers to providing services to low-income people living in the most rural areas. The CLA will not be assigned to any one LSA office, but instead will work statewide with LSA and its partners to address economic and consumer issues statewide tracking rural trends, finding innovative, collaborative ways to address them and working on developing systematic solutions to economic development issues primarily facing rural populations. The CLA will lead efforts to organize and execute legal clinics in rural, underserved counties including clinics on wills/property loss prevention, drafting contracts, reviewing leases, handling tax controversies, offering alternatives to high interest loans and providing consumer defense, credit repair for first time home buyers and foreclosure prevention. The CLA Attorney will do outreach at rural libraries, senior centers, family and community centers, municipalities and public accommodations, seeking out vulnerable people in most rural and underserved counties. The Attorney will also collaborate with and train partners by providing limited legal education to members of the service community. This particular work would focus on people serving vulnerable populations like food banks, Boys and Girls clubs, clergy and members of faith based organizations, schools with a high percentage of students receiving free lunch. The CLA would also work with
community groups to identify the most pressing needs that can be filled with pro se help and create a comprehensive array of materials, distribute the materials to appropriate community groups, and educate the groups about their existence and use. The REIP staff attorney will work in the Selma service area to address economic issues including student loans, access to credit, business opportunities and factors limiting the financial success of individuals. This attorney will operate as a front line service provider to the most underserved Alabamians living in the Black Belt. The attorney would help LSA staff provide a financial education and competency component to our representation, ensuring credit counseling and repair, small business services (incorporation where appropriate) and financial counseling is offered by LSA’s staff. Partners will collaborate with LSA on community empowerment events, legal clinics, financial literacy workshops, and other non-conventional ways of reducing the economic burden that often plagues rural, underserved communities.

**Systems Readiness**

Having a clear understanding of the needs is not enough, your organization must translate the need, staffing, budget and funding into system readiness. System readiness is based on the details of your planning and how well your organization’s planning transitions into implementation. Sometimes the planning is perfect but since the systems aren’t in place to support the project, goals may not be realized. If, for example, your organization has planned the perfect plan to meet food insecurity needs for the elderly and service clinics are marketed and planned with the idea of taking services into the communities all systems must be in place to support this project. If on the first day of the full service clinics there are no laptops or internet to perform intake that full service clinic may not be considered a success. In this instance the difference in a successful and unsuccessful launch was systems readiness, specifically technology equipment.
Once your organizations systems are in place and partners, staff and the targeted communities are aware of the project services to be offered it is finally time to begin the work.

**Closing**

Your organization will be successful in creating and planning as well as preparation and beginning your redevelopment project if you have committed to following steps for success. This may be in the form of a model plan or guidebook like this one or some organizations may opt to work with a consultant to map out steps for a successful project, but whatever the avenue, the most important take away for your organization is tailoring a project plan to fit your organization and the client targeted areas and communities to be served.
The REIP project was funded for 18 months providing funding for two dedicated attorneys, one dedicated paralegal and outreach and marketing to ensure client in rural communities were aware of available services and services are readily available to them. There was a measurable project goal set to assist at least 100 individuals and their families which stated:

“Since families and communities will all benefit from these critical REIP services, the impact will be far reaching and impact hundreds more throughout the state. The long term benefits will include an increase in services (clinics, workshops, community education, etc.) in rural areas, reducing obstacles to obtaining services, a reduction in the number of people stuck in predatory lending cycles and/or without access to financial institutions, and occurrences that impact victims and prevent them from living in a safe and stable...
environments; compilation of data on services, root causes and effects of economic depression in rural areas and effective ways to address the causes and effects.”

Now that you have a blue print begin working on funding and sustained funding for your project. **The last thing your organization wants to do is begin a successful project building on successes and then abruptly end the project due to a discontinuation of funding. For this reason it is important to plan for sustainable funding.** This means even as services continue, your organization should always have in mind ways to continue to sustain the project through a diversified funding base, including expansion after the first year.

Possible Foundations that may fund your project include The Protective Life Foundation which contributes to the welfare and quality of life of the local community; Walmart (Sam Walton) Foundation, which encompasses Community Engagement Giving; and the Ford Foundation which has seven program areas focused on challenging inequality.

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Author’s Bio: Jaffe S. Pickett became Deputy Director of Legal Services Alabama in 2018 and has served as Director of Development since 2013 writing successful grants totaling over $45 million dollars. Prior to that, Pickett led various departments at Legal Services including Director of Training, Call Center Director and Director of Alabama’s first Elder Law Helpline. Pickett was hired at LSA in 2005, specializing in Elder Law working with the Central Alabama Aging Consortium in the Montgomery Office. Pickett was named LSA Employee of the Year in 2009, and joined the Executive Leadership Team in 2009. Pickett graduated from Troy University, Cum Laude, and Louisiana State University School of Law, where she received dual degrees in Civil Law Studies and a Juris Doctorate degree.

Pickett was selected as a member of the Alabama State Bar Leadership Forum in 2013 and was appointed to serve on the Board of Trustees (Middle District) for the State Bar Lawyer Referral Service (2014-2017) and the Pro Bono Public Service Committee (2014-2018). Pickett was appointed to the Alabama WINGS Steering Committee and taskforce in 2017, and serves on the Board of Directors of the Central Alabama Alliance, Resource & Advocacy Center and The Council for the Prevention of Elder Abuse.

Pickett served as Interim Executive Director of Legal Services Alabama in 2016 and 2017 and oversees partnerships and collaborations, disaster services, grants, donations, external and internal publications and communications and continues to highlight LSA’s advocacy and impact statewide.

As a Community Advocate, Pickett has spoken locally, regionally and nationally on the Criminalization of Poverty and the need for criminal justice reform including wrongful arrest, disparities in sentencing and incarceration, asset forfeiture and the burden of court fines and fees on low income people.

Dedication: I dedicate this and all of my project creations, grant writing, collaborative work and successful funding to Terrell and Victoria Pickett who have made sacrifices to allow me to pursue the protection, justice and access to every Alabama Citizen through advocating for funding to expand advocacy.
A Guide for Community Redevelopment & Economic Improvement Projects: A Replication Guidebook for Legal Aid & Community Organizations

By: Jaffe S. Pickett, Esquire
Deputy Director, Legal Services Alabama, Inc.
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Introduction

Community Redevelopment generally is a process that may be conducted by groups or organizations collaborating with community partners, stakeholders, local residents, vested groups, and sometimes working with government agencies and financial institutions to create
A major part of planning for a community redevelopment project involves pulling together the right essential partners, collaborators, engaged community partners or residents, funder(s), volunteers and staff excited about the project and goals set for the targeted communities.

The purpose of the Community Redevelopment Guidebook is to provide Legal Aid organizations and other not for profit organizations with a planning guide to assist underserved communities with an emphasis on rural areas. This guide does not draw heavily from other sources, but instead offers instruction and best steps for organizations to create and build, propose, and implement a successful Community Development, or Redevelopment Project. The primary source is from the creation, steps and planning involved in Legal Services Alabama’s Rural Economic Improvement Project and from the author’s years of experience in writing in expository, narrative and persuasive grant writing styles. The hope is that your organization can build upon the necessary steps and examples to create projects that enrich, revitalize and improve underserved and low income communities in your organization’s service areas.

Special Thank You to the following funders, partners and staff:

Legal Services Corporation
The Alabama Civil Justice Foundation
The Alabama Appleseed Center for Law and Justice

Legal Services Alabama REIP staff, Director of Advocacy, Development Department, Resource Development Coordinator, and Grants Manager whose work has been critical to the implementation and success of this project.

Planning and Preparation

The Alabama Civil Justice Foundation (ACJF) made the grant funds available to Legal Services Alabama (LSA) for Community Redevelopment. When LSA initially learned of this opportunity, I met with the Foundation’s Director and discussed the scope of the project, specifically what the award amount may be able to fund. The application process began with the submission of a Letter of Inquiry (LOI). Following review of the LOIs by the ACJF Settlement Grants Committee, invitations to submit full applications were sent to select agencies. I then
began the project development process by discussing how a project would work and what advocacy would be required with LSA’s leadership. After working with the Director of Advocacy on staffing and project ideas, I began drafting a plan to create what would be Alabama’s Rural Economic Improvement Project (REIP). Although LSA choose redevelopment in the form of Rural Economic Improvement, other choices for projects may include:

- Policy and social impact work
- Economic transformation work that involves partnering with financial institutions on credit report improvements, small business building blocks, and smart money 101.
- Transactional law to protect property (estate planning, property transfers)
- Community lawyering which actively elicits community involvement when working with government, and private sectors to build strong communities, industries, and markets.
- Traditional legal services that include community partnerships targeting underserved areas
- New and innovative models for providing legal services that significantly impact community transformation for low-income citizens
- Non-profit legal assistance for organizations serving low-income communities.
- Training or educational services for low-income community members to advocate on behalf of their community.
- Legal services focused on workforce development and/or removing barriers to employment, housing, or other community development needs.

The core aspect of the project is important and can be more than one. For the project funding, Legal Services Alabama was required to provide an abstract, which I summarized in two parts:

**LSA proposes a Rural Economic Improvement Project (REIP) to provide economic stability and improvement to rural Alabama communities. The project consists of two service components: (1) Statewide REIP Coordinating Lead Attorney (CLA):** will coordinate services in rural areas among various service partners; address obstacles among civil legal service providers in delivering services in rural areas; work with partners to address economic and consumer issues statewide tracking rural trends, finding innovative, collaborative ways to address them; develop systematic solutions to economic development issues primarily facing rural populations; lead efforts to organize legal clinics in rural, underserved counties; create and distribute REIP material to appropriate community groups; educate the groups about their existence and use to educate and empower citizens in rural areas of the state. (2) REIP Staff Attorney focusing on services in the black belt service area: will work in the Selma Regional service area to address pressing economic issues including student loans, access to credit, business opportunities, mobile home repossessions and factors limiting the financial success of individuals. The REIP attorney will operate as a frontline service provider to the most underserved Alabamians living in the Black Belt.
Once your organization has decided on a project it may be a good time to revisit the scope of the project, mentioned earlier, and evaluate if the possible project seems too ambitious. If so, begin to narrow your focus, and instead of doing nine things, for example, you may feel your organization should be more focused on the top three issues. This re-evaluation of the project should occur at several steps in the process and should not be considered a setback; in fact this is a useful approach to streamlining the planning and implementation.

When planning a redevelopment project it is essential to begin with the project goals after deciding what the project will do and the problems it will address. The goals should be the anchor to every successful project. According to The Five Golden Rules for Successful Goal Setting your organization should set S.M.A.R.T. goals, meaning it will be Specific, Measurable, Attainable/Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound:

1. **Set Specific Goals**: Your goal must be clear and well defined. Make it as easy as you can to get where you want to go by defining precisely where you want to end up.
2. **Set Measurable Goals**: Include precise data, dates, and other measurable specifics in your goals so you can measure your degree of success.
3. **Set Attainable Goals**: Make sure that it’s possible to achieve the goals you set but also ensure the goals are challenging as well a realistic.
4. **Set Relevant Goals**: Goals should be relevant to the direction your organization wants to take. Keeping goals aligned with the direction of your organization will assist project participants to stay focused on the ultimate goals.
5. **Set Time-Bound Goals**: Ensure all goals have a deadline.

https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/|

The project goals will lead you to the creation of a viable community development project; to setting objectives, quantifiable deliverables and timelines; and will ultimately lead your organization to the how, when and why meaning:

- What is needed for my organization to meet the goals?
- How will I set objectives to achieve the goals?
- How will these objectives be carried out? Staff, volunteers, partners?
- Who will be an essential partner to achieve the goals?
- What other collaborations may be needed?
- How will the project begin?

- What is needed for my organization to meet the project goals?
When determining what is needed to meet your project goals it is important to be realistic but also list everything that will aid your organization in meeting the goals you set; there may be components that need to be scaled back but early in the process it is important to capture everything that may make the proposed project a success:

1. Funding: Usually this requires an overview of your organization’s budget and/or donations and contributions. If there isn’t sufficient funding to launch a project, the next step would be to seek funding for the project. If this specific funding is not available, move forward with planning for the project; there are likely regional funders in your area interested in funding community development projects. Possible funders include City and County Governments (including City Development Block Grants) and Foundations.

The objective is to match your community development project with the correct funder(s) to meet the project goals.

➢ How will I set objectives to achieve the goals?

Goals are important primary statements that provide overall context for what your project is trying to achieve, and should align with your organization’s overall mission and established service goals. Objectives are secondary statements that should describe the specific, tangible products and deliverables that your project will deliver to meet the goals.

The goals and objectives section of your project and subsequent grant proposal can make or break your request for funding. This part of your proposal describes what your organization hopes to accomplish with your project. It also spells out the specific results or outcomes you plan to achieve.

➢ How will these objectives be carried out? Staff, volunteers, partners?

Your chosen objectives should be concrete and describe what your community development project is trying to achieve. The objectives should be drafted so that they can be evaluated during the review stages of your project and at the conclusion of your project to see whether it has been achieved or not.

An example of an objective statement might be:

*Closing the gaps in services to low income, rural communities in Alabama set in the second quarter of year two of the project. This example coincides with a project goal of providing more access to services, specifically more free legal aid to improve economic development.*
Remember that the objective is much more concrete and specific than the goal and it should be measurable in most instances, using the example above, the service measurement would be the anticipated number of rural client served.

> **Who will be an essential partner to achieve the goals?**

An essential partner is one whose participation is critical to the project’s success. When choosing partners select those who will be essential and then contact these selected partners early on. If they commit to partnering, they will need to write a letter of commitment, sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or sign a sub-grant agreement. In all of these instances they will be committing to fulfill their active role in the grant project.

If there are other needed partners who are a good fit for your project, but they are not essential, they would be collaborating project partners.

> **What other collaborations may be needed?**

The right collaborations make a project run better and balances the work required from any one organization. A collaborative partnership should make your project stronger and achieve goals that would be difficult for any partner working on their own. A collaborative grant project therefore encourages collaboration that proposes diverse approaches to achieving goals and offers more objective views and methods to achieving goals.

> **How will the project begin?**

Your organization must begin with understanding that most under-developed communities face many layers of barriers that has prevented growth, including social, educational, economic, and cultural challenges as well as feelings of distrust of outside assistance. Knowing the barriers your organization will need to overcome early on, is essential to the success of any community project if real, lasting redevelopment is expected.

A second priority should be deciding the input necessary for a successful outcome. This means setting realistic goals and ensuring the man power and resources are available to facilitate those goals. This doesn’t mean your organization will not face obstacles; it means putting the maximum amount of time and energy into ensuring success in terms of meeting goals that improve community.

The goal is community driven planning and decisions that result in sustainable services and development. By planning ahead, organizations may act on new possible funding
opportunities and be prepared for challenges associated with economic development, lack of service and/or service providers, and the obstacles associated with rural service delivery.

**Jaffe’s Top 10 Community Redevelopment Project Preparation Tips**

1. **Define the community need and geographic boundaries**
   - What needs to be done and who will do it
   - What area(s) will be targeted for services

2. **Set Goals and Objectives** around the needs and targeted areas to be serviced

3. **Identify Project Partners** (individuals or organizations) who share a similar mission or who would add to the project in some meaningful way
   - Create a list of essential partners and a timeline to engage each possible partner

4. **Form a project partnership group** (sometimes called a steering committee) that can meet regularly to evaluate ideas, proposed staffing, budgeting, and funding and timelines
   - Discuss your statement of need, goals and targeted focus areas with the group
   - Provide a face-to-face forum in which interested individuals are invited to learn of the vision of the steering committee

5. **Attend neighborhood events** and meet with city officials to ensure your statement of need is targeting the proper areas and to get early buy-in from community members
   - Share your vision informally with community members and with any community leaders you believe might be supportive, and incorporate their criticisms and priorities
   - Make necessary changes to the project planning based on feedback
   - Discuss the possibility of a Community Covenant

6. **Schedule a project planning meeting**
   - Invite possible partners
   - Invite Community stakeholders
   - Share an outline of the project
   - Leave time to make changes to the outline
Partnerships

Partnerships and collaborations are an essential part of a community redevelopment project. Most funders will expect some type of collaboration since there is no one organization that can fill gaps in all services areas needed for proper redevelopment. This may include social services, faith based services, medical care, economic improvement and legal services. Leaders in most organizations, know, or should know, how to approach new initiatives. Sometimes it means working with a credit union or maybe a local university will have either faculty or students who will be interested in helping your organization start a community development project, and there's nothing wrong with using that expertise.

Partners are essential for most organizations who are seeking grant money for a new community development initiative. Partnerships bolster a project’s viability and are more attractive to a granting entity. Partnerships also increase your credibility; reflecting on a project that will improve or address a need that is apparent in a community needs a partnership to show that it isn’t just a lone endeavor. Three tips for finding and working with grant partners to successfully launch and implement a grant funded project include: (1) Finding the right people;
(2), establish the roles and responsibilities of your grant partners early in the planning process; and (3) Understanding that leadership and communication are key to strengthening the health of your relationships with your partners for future funding possibilities.

It is essential to establish the roles and specific responsibilities of your project partners early in the planning phase. This includes taking an inventory of the resources (staff, financial, technology, communications, etc.) that your partners will provide. The Request for Proposals (RFP) and the subsequent award amount will establish specific requirements and or suggestions as to what types of partnerships you may have, but there will be some level of flexibility in the resources you can use in a project. Usually, funders like to see proposed projects where there are multiple partners offering a myriad of different services to the proposed project.

Partnerships and collaborators can come from many type of organizations and there are several ways to find them. Your organization should look at current partnerships and also strategically add partners with the key being to pursue grant partners with similar interests and outreach so that the project goals can be met organically without a major shift in the mission of the organizations you chose to work with.

For Alabama’s Rural Economic Improvement (REIP) Project, we sought a partnership with an advocacy agency, The Alabama Appleseed Center for Law and Justice. This partnership was key since they provide services that LSA does not, including regular data collection and reporting as well as legislative changes that improve the overall economic well-being of underserved rural communities. LSA also enlisted long time partners including Central Alabama Fair Housing, Alabama Disabilities Advocacy Program, Tombigbee Regional Aging Commission and many other partners who collaborated with LSA on community education at full service legal clinics specific to each agency’s area of expertise. LSA also collaborated with Credit Unions on the Economic Improvement part of the project to address alternatives to high interest loans, a financial literacy component and empowerment on saving and long term financial planning.

After you find the right partners for your project, request that they prepare a letter of commitment (LOC). If your organization will be the lead on the grant application, you will want to include LOCs of all the partners that will be an essential part of the community development project. Additionally, you will need to develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or Memorandum of Agreement (MOA). These are working agreements that detail the scope of services you and your partners will perform to achieve your project’s goals and objectives.
Staffing a Community Development Project

The staffing plan is usually one of the easier and shorter parts of the grant proposals. That’s because the project description will usually imply the staffing plan. For example, a project that is composed of community outreach, case supervision and management and partnership and collaboration is likely going to consist of a manager or supervisor and a staff advocate of some sort, and an outreach specialists. There may also be an administrative assistant or data clerk who compiles cases and reports.

For redevelopment projects run by a community focused organization, a staffing plan might consist primarily of Legal Aid staff, partnering service organization or advocacy organization staff, and fellows or legal Interns; volunteers such as pro bono attorneys and community volunteers are needed but should not be included in the staffing, however, unless an agreement has been made in advance and a commitment to dedicate a minimum number of hours on your project is agreed upon in writing. If so their time could be used as a match for funding. The commitment aspect of staffing is critical to ensure project goals are met and particularly if a proposal requires key indicators to meet objectives with designated assignments. Even if this is not required by a grant it is a good idea to assign tasks directly relating to the goals to ensure project success.

It is always a good idea to assign a full-time Project Manager or Project Coordinator or Program Director to oversee your community development project unless the budget is too small. Many federal RFPs require a full-time manager or an explanation of why this is not considered necessary. Even if your organization’s budget will not allow for a designated project manager, you may choose to assign staff in the targeted service area to be the project “lead”. I have used this model in many successful grant projects in the past and it helps when and if your organization ultimately decides to seek funding for your project.

For LSA’s REIP the critical staff included in our original proposal were:

1. A Project Manager
2. A Coordinating Lead Attorney (CLA):
3. A Project Paralegal

Some staffing plans follow a generic bulleted format in which a position is listed, a percentage of time devoted to the project is listed, and other minimum qualifications are established; however in staffing plans for new projects, most grant funded staff members, with the exception of a project manager, may be unknown.
### Staff Chart Example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staff</th>
<th>Time Designated to Grant</th>
<th>Duties</th>
<th>Qualifications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Project Manager</td>
<td>Will dedicate 100% of time worked to the proposed project</td>
<td>Will oversee grant activities, collaborate with partners, and ensure goals and objectives are met</td>
<td>Must have at least three years of relevant management experience; B.A. is required, M.A. is preferred, preference given to candidates with a law degree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If a funder requires detailed information about all staff expected to work on your proposed project, you may add a statement or asterisk and note, “The project paralegal will be hired in the first quarter of grant funding and will work directly under the supervision of the Project Manager”. Some funders will also require an equal opportunity statement, a good example that may be changed as needed follows:

The project staff members will be hired following an open and fair recruitment process. Although preference is given based on experience working with low income communities and in rural or underserved areas, Your Legal Aid (YLA) is committed to the principle of equal employment opportunity for all employees and to providing employees with a work environment free of discrimination and harassment. All employment decisions at YLA are based on business needs, job requirements and individual qualifications, without regard to race, color, religion or belief, sexual orientation, or age.

Staff positions in most proposals should have three to four short sentences about what the staff person will do. An example taken from the REIP project reads:

*LSA staff and its service partners, aided by the assistance of two full time fellows, will work together to ensure services and improvements in the targeted area as well as ensuring the overall success of the project.*

The staff plan should be large enough to ensure coverage of your proposed goals but should not go over the budget (unless your organization is showing an in-kind match). For particularly small programs, like those with less than $1 million operating budget per year,
hiring limited staff even with large one time grant awards is best. Your organization may always create more staffing opportunities with different grant sources, however one mistake with community development projects is placing too much weight on staffing and not enough on committed project partners.

If, for example, an established credit service agency will partner with your organization to provide financial literacy services as a part of their commitment to the grant project and as a legal aid organization, you do not have that capacity, it is better to partner with the credit service agency and provide a sub-grant than to try to handle that service in house; understanding the sub-grant will mean one less full-time employee for your organization, but will also mean better community services for the project overall. Therefore throughout the staff planning phase your organization may ask:

1. What staff is essential to reaching the project goals and to the overall success of this proposed community Redevelopment project?
2. Which of the project goals are better served by outside partnerships that in house staff?

This is very important to do as your organization charts out staffing required for your project. In most legal aid and some other service organizations, personnel costs will likely be your largest budget line item, usually about 80% of the overall budget for salaries and benefits, with 20% for activities supporting direct services. Relatively few proposed grant projects have large, non-personnel budget cost, however your Community Redevelopment grant may be an exception for your organization. If, like LSA, your organization choses to target rural underserved areas, a large part of the budget will be traveling in support of circuit riding or taking services into the community. Another line item will encompass marketing and outreach to ensure the residents in underserved areas know the services that will be made available through the project. Yet another cost will involve equipment for rural delivery of services which may include, laptops, portable printers and scanners, cellular phones for project staff committed to community improvement and development which will involve a great deal of communication and collaboration.

One of the most important things to remember is when seeking funding for your redevelopment project - or if you are planning the staffing with the goal of seeking funding to cover staff at a later time- in large state or federal budgets the most important part of proposal staffing plans/budgets is that the proposed services discussed in the project description be realistic. Staffing plans and budgets don’t have to be perfect and they will likely change since most require a detailed final budget after the grant award and will allow set budget revisions.
Although the budget may change after funding is awarded, it should be realistic and not ask for costs unrelated to or substantially out of line with your community redevelopment project. The budget is a financial plan that supports the proposed project activities, not a detailed operational overview of your organization, so it is always best to keep it as simple as possible.

How to write a proposed grant budget for your project:

- Keep the number of line items short and do not include small line items. A good rule of thumb is to never have more than 15-20 line items.
- Only include staff and line items that will be charged to the grant (and match, if required or helpful to show).
- Personnel line items must match the staffing plan in the narrative. Do not lengthen the budget with small percentages of time budgeted for staff (example: 5% of time for existing administrators/managers).
- Unless the RFP requires it, don’t line-item fringe benefits. These can usually be lumped together as the percent of salaries your fringe benefit package equates to. For most nonprofits, this will be in the 18% to 30% range. Anything above 30% will probably generate unwanted attention from grant reviewers, even if that is what you pay. If the fringe benefit rate is relatively high, this should be explained in the budget narrative (e.g. lower salaries, high local costs, need to retain staff, etc.).
- For multi-year budgets, do not include expected yearly salary increases or annual inflators; this is too detailed and will result in a very complicated budget justification. Inflation in the current environment is low. In a high-inflation environment like the ’70s, this advice would be different.
- Try to consolidate. For the “Other” Object Cost Category, it’s unnecessary to break down line items too far. For example, lump together facility costs (rent, utilities, security, maintenance), or technology (landline, laptops, cell phones, portable printers, etc.) into single line items.
- If feasible, try to make the total annual budget level for each project year. This can be a bit challenging, if, for example, the project involves start-up costs (e.g., buying staff furniture, hiring a web designer/social media consultant, etc.) in year one. The way to do this is to increase some other line item(s) in the out years to keep the budget level. Level annual budgets will make the budget easier to write and understand.
- Make one line item your plug number to enable reconciliation to the maximum allowed grant and/or level annual amounts in multi-year grants. The plug number should be in the Other Object Cost Category and could be advertising, communications, or similar line items that look OK with an odd number in different years. Reviewers are aware of plug numbers and won’t hold reasonable plug numbers against you. [http://seliger.com/tag/budgets/](http://seliger.com/tag/budgets/)

Sample Budgets
After staffing and budgeting it may be helpful to draft an activities chart to begin a redevelopment grant project. This chart is where I aligned plans and project goals with objectives and staff assignments:

**Example of Activities Chart**
The overall focus of the project, including budgeting, staffing and goals set, should be directed toward community needs in which the lack of financial resources, employment opportunities or other special needs of its citizens impact their capacity to equitably participate in community life. Services may target low-income families and communities or groups that face significant barriers to self-sufficiency. The next step is to ensure your organization
understands any obstacles to services and then has the infrastructure required to begin a successful community redevelopment project.

Understanding Rural Delivery Obstacles

When implementing a Rural Community Redevelopment plan it is extremely important to understand delivery obstacles and why the targeted areas selected are underserved and or underdeveloped to begin with as explained in an exert from the REIP project:

People in rural areas face a much higher probability of having legal issues that are not addressed and face several obstacles including, a lack of knowledge about available services, transportation barriers, fear of sharing information and a general barrier to seeking assistance because many people are still struggling for survival. “In fact, for many rural communities, conditions are worse than ever. Of the state’s 15 counties with the highest percent population over 65 years of age, 14 are rural. Of the 12 counties with double-digit unemployment, all are rural. Of the 20 counties with the lowest household incomes, all are rural. Of the 20 counties with the lowest percentage of high school graduates, all are rural.” (Crossroads and Connections: Strategies for Rural Alabama [www.auburn.edu/outreach/ecdi/whatwedo/research/publications].

One solution offered in this research publication was creating more service partnerships to help those in isolated areas, which your organization’s Community Development Project should provide. “But far too often individuals and organizations work independently rather than in concert with one another. We are accustomed to working on the equivalent of one-way streets. We need more crossroads”. (Crossroads and Connections: Strategies for Rural Alabama).

LSA’s REIP project proposed a myriad of bridged services ranging from: (1) legal; (2) social and community services; and (3) business and financial education and assistance under one umbrella. The following is an example of language used to justify funding for LSA’s Rural Economic Improvement Project:

A vital justification for funding this project is that the REIP services will fulfill an unmet need throughout the state in general and specifically throughout the rural black belt. Although there are other organizations that assist low income people in Alabama, there is no other entity that fulfills the task of providing a full scope of holistic legal services and community services. One of
the primary goals of the REIP is to ensure people in rural areas have access to the services necessary to develop and improve their communities, focusing on consumer and economic empowerment and improvement. The partnership mission through LSA and the Volunteer Lawyer Programs is to ensure pro bono services are accessible in every corner of Alabama and that rural areas will have the same access to quality free legal services as the more populated areas in our state.

The CLA will address obstacles among civil legal service providers to providing services to low-income people living in the most rural areas. The CLA will not be assigned to any one LSA office, but instead will work statewide with LSA and its partners to address economic and consumer issues statewide tracking rural trends, finding innovative, collaborative ways to address them and working on developing systematic solutions to economic development issues primarily facing rural populations. The CLA will lead efforts to organize and execute legal clinics in rural, underserved counties including clinics on wills/property loss prevention, drafting contracts, reviewing leases, handling tax controversies, offering alternatives to high interest loans and providing consumer defense, credit repair for first time home buyers and foreclosure prevention. The CLA Attorney will do outreach at rural libraries, senior centers, family and community centers, municipalities and public accommodations, seeking out vulnerable people in most rural and underserved counties. The Attorney will also collaborate with and train partners by providing limited legal education to members of the service community. This particular work would focus on people serving vulnerable populations like food banks, Boys and Girls clubs, clergy and members of faith based organizations, schools with a high percentage of students receiving free lunch. The CLA would also work with community groups to identify the most pressing needs that can be filled with pro se help and create a comprehensive array of materials, distribute the materials to appropriate community groups, and educate the groups about their existence and use. The REIP staff attorney will work in the Selma service area to address economic issues including student loans, access to credit, business opportunities and factors limiting the financial success of individuals. This attorney will operate as a front line service provider to the most underserved Alabamians living in the Black Belt. The attorney would help LSA
Staff provide a financial education and competency component to our representation, ensuring credit counseling and repair, small business services (incorporation where appropriate) and financial counseling is offered by LSA’s staff. Partners will collaborate with LSA on community empowerment events, legal clinics, financial literacy workshops, and other non-conventional ways of reducing the economic burden that often plagues rural, underserved communities.

**Systems Readiness**

Having a clear understanding of the needs is not enough, your organization must translate the need, staffing, budget and funding into system readiness. System readiness is based on the details of your planning and how well your organization’s planning transitions into implementation. Sometimes the planning is perfect but since the systems aren’t in place to support the project, goals may not be realized. If, for example, your organization has planned the perfect plan to meet food insecurity needs for the elderly and service clinics are marketed and planned with the idea of taking services into the communities all systems must be in place to support this project. If on the first day of the full service clinics there are no laptops or internet to perform intake that full service clinic may not be considered a success. In this instance the difference in a successful and unsuccessful launch was systems readiness, specifically technology equipment.
Once your organization’s systems are in place and partners, staff, and the targeted communities are aware of the project services to be offered, it is finally time to begin the work.

**Closing**

Your organization will be successful in creating and planning as well as preparation and beginning your redevelopment project if you have committed to following steps for success. This may be in the form of a model plan or guidebook like this one or some organizations may opt to work with a consultant to map out steps for a successful project, but whatever the avenue, the most important take away for your organization is tailoring a project plan to fit your organization and the client targeted areas and communities to be served.

**Community Redevelopment Project Wheel**
The REIP project was funded for 18 months providing funding for two dedicated attorneys, one dedicated paralegal and outreach and marketing to ensure client in rural communities were aware of available services and services are readily available to them. There was a measurable project goal set to assist at least 100 individuals and their families which stated:

“Since families and communities will all benefit from these critical REIP services, the impact will be far reaching and impact hundreds more throughout the state. The long term benefits will include an increase in services (clinics, workshops, community education, etc.) in rural areas, reducing obstacles to obtaining services, a reduction in the number of people stuck in predatory lending cycles and/or without access to financial institutions, and occurrences that impact victims and prevent them from living in a safe and stable environments; compilation of data on services, root causes and effects of economic depression in rural areas and effective ways to address the causes and effects.”

Now that you have a blue print begin working on funding and sustained funding for your project. The last thing your organization wants to do is begin a successful project building on
successes and then abruptly end the project due to a discontinuation of funding. For this reason it is important to plan for sustainable funding. This means even as services continue, your organization should always have in mind ways to continue to sustain the project through a diversified funding base, including expansion after the first year.

Possible Foundations that may fund your project include The Protective Life Foundation which contributes to the welfare and quality of life of the local community; Walmart (Sam Walton) Foundation, which encompasses Community Engagement Giving; and the Ford Foundation which has seven program areas focused on challenging inequality.
Author’s Biography: Jaffe S. Pickett became Deputy Director of Legal Services Alabama in 2018 and has served as Director of Development since 2013 writing successful grants totaling over $45 million dollars. Prior to that, Pickett led various departments at Legal Services including Director of Training, Call Center Director and Director of Alabama’s first Elder Law Helpline. Pickett was hired at LSA in 2005, specializing in Elder Law working with the Central Alabama Aging Consortium in the Montgomery Office. Pickett was named LSA Employee of the Year in 2009, and joined the Executive Leadership Team in 2009. Pickett graduated from Troy University, Cum Laude, and Louisiana State University School of Law, where she received dual degrees in Civil Law Studies and a Juris Doctorate degree.

Pickett was selected as a member of the Alabama State Bar Leadership Forum in 2013 and was appointed to serve on the Board of Trustees (Middle District) for the State Bar Lawyer Referral Service (2014-2017) and the Pro Bono Public Service Committee (2014-2018). Pickett was appointed to the Alabama WINGS Steering Committee and taskforce in 2017, and serves on the
Board of Directors of the Central Alabama Alliance, Resource & Advocacy Center and The Council for the Prevention of Elder Abuse.

Pickett served as Interim Executive Director of Legal Services Alabama in 2016 and 2017 and oversees partnerships and collaborations, disaster services, grants, donations, external and internal publications and communications and continues to highlight LSA's advocacy and impact statewide.

As a Community Advocate, Pickett has spoken locally, regionally and nationally on the Criminalization of Poverty and the need for criminal justice reform including wrongful arrest, disparities in sentencing and incarceration, asset forfeiture and the burden of court fines and fees on low income people.

**Dedication:** I dedicate this and all of my project creations, grant writing, collaborative work and successful funding to my children Terrell and Victoria Pickett who have made sacrifices to allow me to pursue the protection, empowerment and access to justice for every Alabama citizen through advocating for funding to expand advocacy.
Rural Economic Improvement Project

Equal Justice Conference
May 9, 2019
The Problem

- Access to justice in rural areas
- Barriers:
  - Lack of lawyers
  - Transportation
  - Technology
The People

Coordinating Attorney
Farah Majid

Staff Attorney
Elizabeth Hollie

Paralegal
Iris Portis
Utilizing Non-Lawyers
Utilizing Non-Lawyers

- Service providers
- Public libraries
- Self-help center
Going Where the Clients Are
Black Belt Specific Initiatives

- Alabama’s Black Belt
- Lawyer for a Day clinics
- Office hours in rural counties
- Community partnerships
Discovering Solutions
Listening Sessions

- Listening sessions around the state with communities
- Partnership with Alabama Appleseed – in-depth listening sessions in the Black Belt
Other Innovations
Tele-Legal Services

- Partnership with AIDS Alabama Outreach
- Using existing tele-medical technology
Outreach to Judges/Clerks

- Tracking results
- Case advocacy in rural counties/problem areas
Questions?

Farah Majid, Coordinating Project Attorney
Rural Economic Improvement Project
(205) 328-3540 ext. 3515
fmajid@alsp.org
Using Data to Identify and Improve Delivery of Rural Legal Services

Equal Justice Conference
May 9, 2019
Introduction

- Identifying the Problem by Using Data
  - Director of Advocacy, Michael Forton
- Developing a Community Redevelopment Project
  - Deputy Director, Jaffe Pickett
- Implementing a Solution: Improving Delivery of Rural Legal Services
  - Coordinating Project Attorney, Farah Majid
Identifying the Problem by Using Data
Why is Data Important to Advocacy?

- It’s the truth.
- It gives perspective.
- It challenges conventional wisdom.
- It helps serve clients better.
Who is Legal Services Alabama?

- At the beginning of 2018 LSA had about 53 attorneys, with about 48 of those being front line staff.
- LSA is a statewide program with eight offices and a call center that does between 60-70% of our intake.
- In 2018 Legal Services Alabama was able to:
  - Close 11,100 total cases.
  - Secured over $27,800,00.00 in help to clients.
2018 Strategic Planning

- Reviewing the Data
  - What does it tell us?
  - Is it useful?
  - Is it actionable?
## What Kind of Data Didn’t Work

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## What Kind of Data Didn’t Work

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What Kind of Data Didn’t Work

Table So Complicated I Had A Hard Time Explaining Them

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### What Kind of Data Didn’t Work

*Not Too Complicated But Kind of Overwhelming*

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</tbody>
</table>

Averages Exclude Call Center
What Kind of Data Didn’t Work

The Most Depressing, Least Actionable Table I Could Come Up With

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County of Dispute</th>
<th>Statewide Extended Cases Closed</th>
<th>Statewide Total Cases Closed (All)</th>
<th>Percentage of Cases Closed as Extended</th>
<th>Population Living in Poverty</th>
<th>Percent of State Poverty Population</th>
<th>Percent of Statewide Extended Cases</th>
<th>Percent of Statewide Total Cases</th>
<th>Percentage of Equality Met for Extended Cases</th>
<th>Percentage of Equality Met for Total Cases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Autauga</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>27.0%</td>
<td>6702</td>
<td>0.75%</td>
<td>0.94%</td>
<td>0.93%</td>
<td>126.1%</td>
<td>125.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baldwin</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>253</td>
<td>33.6%</td>
<td>27815</td>
<td>3.10%</td>
<td>2.96%</td>
<td>2.36%</td>
<td>95.6%</td>
<td>76.2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Barbour</td>
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<td>7178</td>
<td>0.80%</td>
<td>0.17%</td>
<td>0.16%</td>
<td>21.8%</td>
<td>19.8%</td>
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<td>Bibb</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>30.8%</td>
<td>4073</td>
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<td>0.14%</td>
<td>0.12%</td>
<td>30.7%</td>
<td>26.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blount</td>
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<td>26</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
<td>9119</td>
<td>1.02%</td>
<td>0.07%</td>
<td>0.24%</td>
<td>6.9%</td>
<td>23.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>0.14%</td>
<td>0.08%</td>
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<td>32.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Butler</td>
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<td>25</td>
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<td>5764</td>
<td>0.64%</td>
<td>0.24%</td>
<td>0.23%</td>
<td>38.0%</td>
<td>36.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calhoun</td>
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<td>344</td>
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<td>25385</td>
<td>2.83%</td>
<td>2.23%</td>
<td>3.21%</td>
<td>78.9%</td>
<td>113.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chambers</td>
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<td>59</td>
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<td>8212</td>
<td>0.91%</td>
<td>0.49%</td>
<td>0.55%</td>
<td>53.3%</td>
<td>60.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cherokee</td>
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<td>16.7%</td>
<td>5519</td>
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<td>0.17%</td>
<td>0.28%</td>
<td>28.4%</td>
<td>45.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chilton</td>
<td>6</td>
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<td>23.1%</td>
<td>8566</td>
<td>0.95%</td>
<td>0.21%</td>
<td>0.24%</td>
<td>21.9%</td>
<td>25.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choctaw</td>
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<td>7</td>
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<td>2864</td>
<td>0.32%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0.07%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>20.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What Kind of Data Didn’t Work

- Hard to understand.
- Hard to visualize.
- No clear lesson.
- No clear solution.
What Kind of Data Did Work

- Easily communicated.
- Digestible.
- Actionable.
Alabama is a medium-sized state but top ten in almost any poverty-related statistic you can imagine. We have about 900,000 people living below the poverty line and about 1.7 million living below 200 percent of poverty.
Alabama Degree of Urbanisation

- Blue: Water
- Green: Mostly Uninhabited Rural
- Dark Green: Dispersed Rural Areas
- Yellow: Villages
- Orange: Towns
- Orange: Suburbs and Urban Edges
- Red: Urban Centres

Photo Provided by United States Census
North Alabama
Metro Alabama
Black Belt
Gulf Coast
Wiregrass

Photo Provided by Yellow Hammer News
A single question kept coming up during our assessment:

To what extent is LSA over/underserving rural areas in comparison to their eligible population?
Analyzing the Data

Super Exciting GIS Mapping
Several Presumptions

- LSA can’t fully serve every eligible client.
- LSA should make every effort to make decisions about service based on the merit of the case.
- LSA will serve more clients in urban areas because there are more people.
- That every eligible individual deserves the same access to LSA’s services as every other individual regardless of where they live in Alabama.
First Question

- Where are the concentrations of poor people in Alabama?
Second Question

- Exactly how well are we serving the people outside of the cities where our offices are located?
Takeaway

- LSA was drastically underserving the rural populations who lived outside of cities where our offices were located.
Possible Solutions
Can we use pro bono attorneys in the rural counties to make up for the lack of service?
LSA’s Call Center

Would adding to LSA’s state-wide Call Center improve our services to rural areas?
Heat Map of Cases
Closed by LSA Call Center
Takeaway

- LSA needed to drastically re-evaluate how we provided services in order to make sure we were serving the entire state in an equitable manner.
The Rural Economic Improvement Project

How to Develop a Community Redevelopment Project
Planning

Community Redevelopment PrepStep Chart

Community Problem(s) ➔ Realistic Solutions ➔ Positive Outcomes
The Five Golden Rules for setting S.M.A.R.T. GOALS: Specific, Measurable, Attainable/Achievable, Realistic & Time-bound:

1. **Set Specific Goals**: Your goal must be clear and well defined. Make it as easy as you can to get where you want to go by defining precisely where you want to end up.

2. **Set Measurable Goals**: Include precise data, dates, and other measurable specifics in your goals so you can measure your degree of success.

3. **Set Attainable Goals**: Make sure that it's possible to achieve the goals you set but also ensure the goals are challenging as well a realistic.

4. **Set Relevant Goals**: Goals should be relevant to the direction your organization wants to take. Keeping goals aligned with the direction of your organization will assist project participants to stay focused on the ultimate goals.

5. **Set Time-Bound Goals**: Ensure all goals have a deadline.

Tips for Redevelopment Planning

Ten Tips for Community Redevelopment Planning

1. Define the community need and geographic boundaries
   - What needs to be done and who will do it
   - What area(s) will be targeted for services?

2. Set Goals and Objectives using your StepChart (Problems-Reasonable Solutions-Positive Outcomes) as a guide

3. Identify Project Partners (individuals and/or organizations) who will add to the project in a meaningful way
   - Create a list of essential partners and a timeline to engage each possible partner.

4. Form a project partnership group (sometimes called a steering committee) that can meet regularly to evaluate ideas, proposed staffing budgeting, and funding and timelines.
   - Discuss your statement of need, goals and targeted focus areas with the group
   - Convene a face-to-face forum in which interested individuals are invited to learn about the project

5. Attend neighborhood events and meet with city officials to ensure your statement of need is targeting the proper areas and to get early buy-in from community members
   - Share your organization’s vision with community members and with any community leaders you believe may be supportive, and incorporate their criticisms and priorities
   - Make necessary changes to the project planning based on feedback
   - Discuss the possibility of a Community Covenant
6. **Schedule a project planning meeting**
   - Invite possible project partners
   - Invite Community stakeholders
   - Share an outline of the project
   - Leave time to make changes to the outline
   - Share RFPs for possible project funding
   - Formulate Letters of Requests to funders

7. **Draft Project Agreements**
   - A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) explains the specifics roles and commitments of project partners
   - A community covenant, although not legally binding, reinforces the seriousness and necessity of each member of the community playing their part to accomplish their overall goal.
   - A service agreement or contract with an outside resource provider, such as an agreement with a community
   - Library to hold project meetings or trainings for example
   - Outline the expectations and goals, objectives – involving the partner, and timeline in each agreement.

8. **Decide if you will replicate an existing project** or create a new model. If replicating a project, your organization will need to tailor your project to meet the needs of the community to be served

9. **Budget for the Project**
   - Brainstorm how you will fund the project or alternatively, funding to complete early objectives of the project
   - Include staffing for the project and include sub-grantees if necessary.
   - Work with volunteer attorneys who will commit to working on your project pro bono, this may include
   - drafting agreements, determining how to incorporate small businesses in your targeted area and applying for non-profit status for small businesses as well as actually serving as a member of the project planning group

10. **Prepare to launch your Community Redevelopment Project**
    - Ensure Systems readiness
    - Implement a project management system to captures project timelines, services, goals, and objectives
    - Hire Staff and execute agreements
    - Market project services in the targeted community
Systems Readiness

**PLANNING**
- Developing a Community Redevelopment Project
- Researching the Need
- Pulling together Partners
- Brainstorming Funding solutions

**PREPARATION**
- Setting Goals
- Creating a project Budget
- Selecting specific populations and area(s) to serve
- Drafting staffing charts
- Project marketing plan

**SYSTEMS READINESS**
- Contracts executed
- Budgeted funding
- Staff in place
- Equipment purchased and operational
- System to track grant services, capture data
- Project launch date
Community Redevelopment

- Project Planning & Preparation
- Project Staff
- Successful Community Redevelopment Project
- Committed Project Partners
- Overcoming Rural Delivery and other Obstacles
- System Readiness
- Measurable Goals Objectives
Implementing a Solution: The Rural Economic Improvement Project
The State
Utilizing Non-Lawyers
Utilizing Non-Lawyers

- Service providers
- Public libraries
- Self-help center
Going Where the Clients Are
Black Belt Specific Initiatives

- Alabama’s Black Belt
- Lawyer for a Day clinics
- Office hours in rural counties
- Community partnerships
Discovering Solutions
Listening Sessions

- Listening sessions around the state with communities
- Partnership with Alabama Appleseed – in-depth listening sessions in the Black Belt
Other Innovations
Tele-Legal Services

- Partnership with AIDS Alabama Outreach
- Using existing tele-medical technology
Outreach to Judges/Clerks

- Tracking results
- Case advocacy in rural counties/problem areas
Questions?

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