



### *From Recommendations to Implementation - Help Create OneAthens*

During the past year the community has come together through Partners For A Prosperous Athens (PPA) to develop comprehensive strategies to address poverty. Ten initiatives have been identified that will have a long-term, high impact on reducing poverty. In addition, the community's 155 recommendations will continue to be implemented as these initiatives unfold.

A successor organization called OneAthens is being recommended. A primary role of OneAthens will be to align the strategic planning processes of the co-conveners so that funding can address the most important community needs. OneAthens will also assure accountability and the continued implementation of the community's recommendations.

Actions are proposed that challenge our community to end the status quo and think in new ways as we create a future without persistent poverty. The initiatives offered by the Steering Committee represent an opportunity to break the cycle of poverty as dramatically and as quickly as possible. Only the people of Athens can make these initiatives a reality by staying with the process until all recommendations are addressed.

# OneAthens Initiatives

## **1. Regional Economy:**

**Create a regional economic development organization by July 2008 under the leadership of the Athens Area Chamber of Commerce.**

The focus of this initiative is to develop a regional economic development organization to proactively market the region to prospects interested in bringing new industry to the region as well as to encourage the retention and expansion of existing businesses. This initiative will reduce poverty by bringing more industry and jobs to the region, and will encourage a regional workforce development strategy.

## **2. Early Learning:**

**Provide access to quality child care and other school-readiness programs for all children age 0-5 years by August 2010.**

The focus of this initiative is to provide every child ages 0-5 years with access to a quality school-readiness program. This initiative will reduce poverty in the short run by providing quality early learning sites for children so that parents can work. The long-term impact on poverty will be to improve our schools by having students entering kindergarten at or above grade level.

## **3. Education and Workforce Development:**

**Convert two schools, preferably Fourth Street and Chase Street elementary schools, to new school models (charter, magnet, etc.) and develop them, with shared decision-making by the school district, parents, community leaders, and neighborhoods, by August 2008. Consider additional new model schools as well.**

The focus of this initiative is to create new public education models in Athens that reflect extensive community involvement, shared governance, and new partnerships to meet the diverse needs of our children and communities. This initiative will have a long-term impact on poverty by creating new educational choices that will improve the public education outcomes in Athens, and ultimately improve the quality of our workforce.

**Create a workforce development school by August 2009, in collaboration with the Clarke County School District, area employers, and Athens Technical College to provide vocational technical education (modeled after the Newnan, GA, Central Educational Center) to meet the needs of youth and adult students and address the workforce demands of the region.**

The focus of this initiative is to create a state-of-the-art career training center, for youth and adults, that draws on the resources and expertise of our school system, Athens Technical College, and our business community. This initiative will reduce poverty by preparing students for the workforce, increasing their options, and reducing the drop-out rate.

## **4. Family Engagement:**

**Pilot a comprehensive family resource center at/near Fourth Street Elementary School to provide one-stop-access to supportive services and to facilitate family engagement by August 2008. Consider additional family resource centers as well.**

The focus of this initiative is to provide a single place where families can access education, healthcare, social services, and job training resources. This initiative will reduce poverty by making services more available to families, enhancing ongoing efforts aimed at making children more successful in school, and providing parents with better access to job opportunities.

## **5. Public Transportation:**

**Increase dramatically the hours, frequency, and coverage of Athens Transit and develop a regional system by January 2009.**

The focus of this initiative is to increase coverage and accessibility of public transportation in Athens and the surrounding region. This initiative will reduce poverty by providing people access to more jobs in the city and region. A regional bus system will also support the development of our regional economy.

**6. Affordable Housing:**

**Develop an innovative housing strategy by July 2008 that preserves diverse communities and increases the supply of affordable housing across the continuum of housing needs, from homelessness to rental to homeownership, so that every resident is living in adequate, safe, and affordable housing by 2015.**

The focus of this initiative is to develop a comprehensive housing strategy to address the housing needs of the entire Athens community. This initiative will reduce poverty by helping families to have safe places to live so that they can focus on their families and their jobs.

**7. Health:**

**Create a community health foundation (with a Board including, but not limited to, healthcare providers) to coordinate funding and basic health services for those in poverty and near poverty by January 2008.**

The focus of this initiative is to create a health foundation to support comprehensive delivery of primary and specialty health services for those in poverty and near poverty. This initiative will reduce poverty by providing better health services to the poor, thus reducing late stage care as well as keeping workers healthy and in the workforce. Efficient use of our health providers will also reduce the inefficient use of high cost emergency rooms for minor medical needs.

**8. Teen Pregnancy:**

**Reduce the teen pregnancy rate 25% by December 2010, providing comprehensive teen pregnancy prevention programs at schools, in places of worship, and in neighborhoods.**

The focus of this initiative is to acknowledge that teen pregnancy continues to be a major issue in our community and needs teens, parents, churches, healthcare providers, schools, and other groups to become more pro-active in developing solutions. As this initiative reduces the number of teen pregnancies, poverty will be reduced. More teen-agers will remain in school and in the workforce, and fewer children will be born into poverty.

**9. Human and Economic Development:**

**Support the Department of Human and Economic Development so that by July 2008 it becomes a driving force to reduce poverty by building the capacity of service providers and empowering individuals and neighborhoods to solve their problems; restructure HED to act beyond being a pass-through agency for federal funds.**

The focus of this initiative is to encourage and help the Athens Clarke County Department of Human and Economic Development (HED) design and implement a comprehensive program that will secure the resources needed to enhance the services provided to disadvantaged communities. This initiative will reduce poverty because a revitalized HED will empower people and communities to overcome poverty and increase the capacity of service providers.

**10. OneAthens:**

**The Co-conveners and Steering Committee will create OneAthens as the successor organization that will provide leadership from the community to ensure the implementation of these initiatives and other remaining PPA recommendations.**

This initiative will help reduce poverty because it will provide an organization to oversee the accountability and implementation of the PPA recommendations.

**Create the OneAthens Foundation by January 2008 to help implement the OneAthens vision.**

The focus of this initiative is to provide Athenians with a vehicle to help support the vision of OneAthens. This initiative will reduce poverty by providing resources and strategic giving to fill funding gaps and seed new models.

# OneAthens Statements of Support

## In addition, PPA recommends that:

- the University of Georgia, Athens-Clarke County Government, Clarke County School District, Family Connection Partnership, and the Athens Area Chamber of Commerce (the five co-conveners) support living wage policies;
  - the five co-conveners commit resources and expertise to support specific initiatives growing out of PPA;
  - the community support Community Connection's Hands On Northeast Georgia volunteer center;
  - faith-based organizations join the new Ministerial Alliance to support the work of PPA;
  - faith-based organizations and the business community continue to support Jobs for Life;
  - social service providers follow a collaborative approach to filling gaps, eliminating duplication, and fundraising;
  - children's mentoring and tutoring programs be expanded. Additionally, family mentoring programs be developed and instituted as quickly as possible;
  - the community provide consistent, quality after-school and out-of-school-time educational opportunities for all students in need;
  - the community develop and support a comprehensive re-entry initiative for ex-offenders that includes expanded job training and placement services, transitional housing, and family mentoring services;
  - the community support the Athens Justice Project;
  - the community support the development of the Athens Area Food Policy Council which will assess and increase the affordability and accessibility of food resources;
  - the community support Athens becoming a Certified Work Ready Community of Excellence, a Certified Entrepreneur Friendly Community, and a Certified Literate Community;
  - OneAthens work to ensure that the needs of special populations (people of color, persons with disabilities, homeless, immigrants, elderly, etc.) are addressed as the recommendations are implemented.
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## Next Steps

The Steering Committee is committed to implementation. This Next Steps section shows the immediate actions that will be taken following approval of the initiatives. Success depends on the continued involvement and commitment of the community.

1. PPA will review and incorporate results from the PPA March 19 meeting by March 26.
2. PPA Steering Committee will affirm the final set of OneAthens initiatives by March 26.
3. PPA Steering Committee will meet with the governing bodies of the five co-conveners within thirty days to get their support of the final set of OneAthens initiatives.
4. PPA will hold Community Conversation sessions in neighborhoods, schools, community centers, service clubs, etc., to discuss initiatives and strategies for implementation. These meetings will be scheduled between March 26 and April 30.
5. PPA continues to define implementation strategies through July 1:
  - a. Convenes collaborators, affirms time lines, and due dates
  - b. Identifies action agendas
  - c. Performs cost/benefit analyses
  - d. Identifies and pursues potential funding sources
  - e. Identifies successful models used elsewhere
  - f. Organizes site visits as necessary
  - g. Develops a transition plan- PPA to OneAthens
6. PPA community meeting will be held within six months to provide an update on the OneAthens initiative set.