



December 4, 2006

Dear All:

Attached you will find the complete set of recommendations that has been received from the community so far. You have worked very hard to create these solutions to address poverty in our community and to improve the quality of life for all Athenians. Thank you for your work!

There are 155 recommendations addressing a variety of issues including Education, Early Learning, Dependent Care, the Economy, Housing, Health, Workforce, Mentoring, Service Providers, Transportation, and Adult Education.

Your participation and recommendations have made several things very clear. First, poverty affects all of us. It reflects negatively on our community and limits economic growth. Poverty makes government, education, health care, and social services more expensive not just for the poor, but for everyone.

As a community we have learned that the issues of poverty are interrelated and must be addressed with a holistic approach. High expectations must be maintained not only of our citizens, but also of our institutions. Business as usual is not working. To break the cycle of poverty we need innovation and creativity.

During the next two months we will continue working with the committee chairs and Steering Committee to research and refine the recommendations. The Steering Committee will agree upon the set of PPA recommendations at its retreat in February. These PPA recommendations will be posted on the web and discussed with you at Town Meetings in March prior to them being sent to the Co-Conveners for their approval. Your continued involvement is critical to ultimate success.

Thank you for your commitment to our community!

Sincerely,
Steve Jones
Chairman
Partners For A Prosperous Athens

ECONOMY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS (20)

Economic Development Sub-Committee (4)

1. Athens-Clarke County should partner with other area counties to create a regional economic development entity responsible for proactively marketing the region to prospects interested in establishing new operations in the region.
2. Develop adequate strategies and funding alternatives to encourage retention and expansion of existing businesses. Action steps:
 - Survey existing businesses to determine gaps in desired services and barriers (real and perceived) to expansion. Utilize the resources of SBDC and EDF for existing information.
 - Establish a council group (such as a coalition of area Chambers of Commerce) to meet regularly and work cooperatively to develop programs to nurture existing businesses. Athens Area Chamber of Commerce should take the lead in organizing this council.
 - Establish a function in Athens-Clarke County government to serve as a central resource for new businesses startups and expansions. This entity would provide information and technical assistance for issues such as permitting, licensing, process, etc.
 - Develop and execute a formal program for community leaders to make in-person visits to corporate offices of every major business or industry in ACC, inviting them to expand their operations.
 - Explore possibilities of new business capital through “bond funds” or “investors clubs.”
 - Widely publicize the removal of barriers to new business expansion or creation.
 - Encourage ACC citizens to support the local economy through “buying local.”
 - Enhance recognition programs for ACC businesses through the media and existing organizations.

Related recommendations from other working sessions/website:

3. Pursue Passenger Rail (Brain Train) between Athens and Atlanta as an economic opportunity for Athens.
4. When seeking new businesses for the community, attend to the impact of the business on quality of life. Target recruitment efforts for "desirable businesses."

Entrepreneurship Sub-Committee (5)

5. To foster a culture of entrepreneurialism, Athens must support training programs for low-income adults and remove barriers to growth for start-ups and existing small businesses in Athens-Clarke County. Entrepreneurs and low-income Athenians who do not know that they could become entrepreneurs need out-reach, on-going business support/training, and access to capital. The committee recognizes that many potential entrepreneurs are not able to be successful- due to a lack of time, capital, belief-in-self, English language skills, computer training, or literacy- to access current resources. The committee recognizes that many entrepreneurs who have already begun their businesses fail due to a similar set of problems (e.g. lack of capital) that commonly affect small businesses. We understand that there are multiple ways for Athens policy to support small businesses through zoning, taxes, and permitting. The committee recognizes that there are several organizations (e.g., EADC, Goodwill Industries, SBDC) which have undertaken foundational work on these needs by providing business training, access to capital, and technical assistance. The Committee recommends:
 - a. Increased funding for existing services including business development consultants, local training programs, and pools of capital.
 - b. Identify and Fund gaps in services including small business incubators, Bilingual Business Development Consultants, Fast-track Engagement Program for potential entrepreneurs, a SWAT Team/Business Mentoring Program, Access to Capital/Community Investing, Small Business support through Zoning/Taxing/Permitting Changes, and acquiring the Business Friendly Designation
6. Market small business development services and news to raise awareness about Entrepreneur resources and opportunities in Athens using the following strategies:
 - a. House, at the Chamber of Commerce and on the Chamber's website, a One-stop-shop and Database of business opportunities, local products, etc. for local businesses to use to network and grow – Could be administered through the Chamber (J House Media – made Chamber website)
 - b. Daily Business Section in ABH with a Q&A column
 - c. "211" Information phone line for businesses – under Community Connections, EADC or SBDC
 - d. Monthly newsletter – part of the ABH business section OR distributed in Athens (i.e. Flagpole) OR electronic (see Appalachian Community Enterprises, Inc.); Featured Business of the Month, new business listings, business tips
 - e. Bi-lingual translator/consultant in association with UGA, Catholic Social Services
 - f. Market services of SBDC, EADC, Goodwill Industries, and HED's Athens Growth Fund
 - g. Buy Local Campaign: Flagpole currently published annual "Guide to Athens" with local restaurants and other retailers listed. A local retailers guide with such info as part of a Buy Local Campaign could support local businesses
 - h. Marketing to low-to-moderate income individuals
 - i. Increase social services to improve skills among low-to-moderate income individuals (computer literacy, job skills, business skills)

- j. Job Fairs – incorporate small business marketing at job fairs
 - k. Peer Network for Business Competency (sales/marketing, finance, human resources/training, management, technology)
7. Create a program to teach entrepreneurialism and build hope at each level of the youth educational system.
 - a. Build on/expand existing programs through the Chamber of Commerce, School District’s Career Technical Agricultural Education Department, Georgia REAL (Paul Delargi- at Timothy Road and PLC’s Jittery Joe’s), Department of Labor’s Workforce Investment Board, SBDC, UGA Terry College of Business (students worked on Jittery Joe’s), Junior Achievement, etc.
 - b. Create new programs utilizing:
 - i. Certified Entrepreneurship Teachers program through the National Foundation for Teaching Entrepreneurship
 - ii. A K-5 integrated financial literacy program- Replicate Georgia REAL Program, Use the Lemonade Stand competition (like Inc. Magazine)
 - iii. Hold a Business Proposal Fair like a Science Fair, offer apprenticeships with local businesses for Middle Schoolers
 - iv. Have High School students go through the SBDC course for class credit, continue the Business Proposal Fair
 - v. Create a Super Summer Program- where youth shadow a local business person for the summer, Expand capacity of EADC’s Allen Executive Youth Entrepreneurship camp (first summer 2007)
 8. Develop a youth leadership program, “Partners Building Leadership to Create Legacies,” in order to develop strong leadership skills and to help follow-up on youth-centered PPA recommendations. The purpose of this program would be to develop a community-wide youth leadership program to help maintain youth and student involvement in the short-term and long term implementation of the PPA recommendations.
 9. Create a program that fosters entrepreneurship and small business around farming in Athens. If implemented *creatively* and *persistently* a local gardening and farming initiative could incorporate and address most of the components leading to persistent poverty that we have identified so far. Key features of this program would include:
 - a. Farmer’s Markets
 - i. In accessible locations as determined by the results of a comprehensive food assessment such as has been proposed by the *Culture of Poverty* sub-committee.
 - ii. Able to accept Food Stamps
 - iii. Used as a center of community activity to increase a sense of community ownership over the market
 - iv. Used to create networks through the exchange of goods and ideas
 - v. Have an educational component- regular programming could occur during market times educating people (of all ages and backgrounds) on how to prepare and plan meals inexpensively and that are healthier. Groups like La Leche could mentor mothers and assist them with diet and nutrition issues.

- b. Fostering a Culture of Entrepreneurialism via Farming:
 - i. Develop programming for youth in schools like Garden-to-table projects
 - ii. Facilitate access to resources that allow people to process and package value-added products from their or their neighbor's produce- certified kitchens, community owned packaging facility, etc.
 - iii. Include programming on entrepreneurial resources and opportunities in farmer's market and community gardening activities.
 - iv. Incorporate youth leadership program into farming program
- c. Community-wide Reinforcement:
 - i. Businesses, churches, and other organizations can synergistically reinforce the above objectives, thereby increasing their rate of success.
 - ii. Barriers to growth for start-ups and existing small businesses in Athens-Clarke County must be removed.
- d. Build on existing resources/strengths including:
 - i. Goodwill Industries – many graduates of their Hispanic Entrepreneurship classes are interested in farming. Many Hispanic people have some kind of horticultural experience.
 - ii. There are a lot of resources and institutions present in the county that can provide advice and facilitate projects (UGA, Local Food Banks, Locally Grown, Full Moon Farm Cooperative, Cooperative extension, Daily Grocery, Tim Johnson with Communities in Schools/Family Connection.)
 - iii. Local Food and organic farming is a growth market.
 - iv. ACC School District just adopted a new Food Policy.
 - v. There are currently foundations seeking to fund these kinds of initiatives

Living Wage Sub-Committee (6)

- 10. Regarding the University of Georgia, we recommend that (a) \$11.55 be promoted at UGA as the minimum wage, resulting in an annual income of \$24,000. We also recommend that (b) auxiliary services which maintain full time and year-round workers should not treat them as "temporary" workers, but as "regular payroll" people with full benefits. Data are needed on the number of full time workers classified as "temporary." We recommend that health benefits be made affordable to the lowest paid employees in the university and that (d) those who are truly "temporary" employees be paid at a minimum of \$14 per hour, so that they are able to afford health care. At the same time, (e) employees classified as temporary should receive social security benefits, not the GDCP funds which takes money from the workers, but to which the University does not contribute. This may require a change in state law. Meanwhile, when workers leave, they should routinely be notified of their right to request their GDCP funds. Finally, we propose that (f) the University avoid outsourcing any routine jobs to contracted companies.
- 11. Regarding the Chamber of Commerce, we recommend that the Chamber a) educate its membership, large and small businesses, on the advantages of respectful wages and benefits--advantages to the business, to the family, and to the community at large; b) ask their member businesses to give preference to participants in the workforce committee's programs when respectable jobs at the blue collar level become available; c) work on training business leaders, especially small business

leaders, in their styles of management regarding employee sustainability; and d) offer technical assistance in growing and streamlining a business so that it can pay living wages and put into place “Worker Friendly” policies and procedures. A key factor in worker anxiety is job security. A key factor in management relates to the various ways of expressing respect for their workers.

12. Given that the State Preemption Law prohibits local governments from enacting any policy that affects wages or benefits of contracted workers, we recommend that the Clarke County Government terminate the contracts and bring the employees back into the county payroll. They could then be paid respectful wages and benefits, as are other employees in the county government.
13. Additional institutions should be encouraged to raise their wages and benefits. These institutions include, but are not limited to: the local hospitals, the Board of Education, social agencies, churches, and the Regional Library.
14. Regarding the state minimum wage of \$5.15, we propose that the PPA conveners and steering committee add their voices to the members of the legislature who might consider raising that level. Each of the partners in the PPA can be advocates for a minimum wage of \$7.25 per hour or more, as proposed by Senator Brown and Rep. McKillip.
15. We propose that a positive, consumer-minded assessment be made for those businesses that are willing to present themselves as Worker Friendly and Fair Wage businesses. Criteria will be established, and the higher scoring businesses will then be advertised, so that consumers and workers can be encouraged to give favor to those businesses. This will be an entirely voluntary program.

Culture of Poverty Sub-Committee (5)

16. Conduct systematic community food assessments, develop food policy, establish better grocery markets that are within walking distance of key low income areas, set up ability to use food stamps in farmers market, conduct cooking demonstrations at market, develop community gardens, etc.
17. Cultivate entrepreneurs and subsidize them with low interest loans to build and operate neighborhood markets that serve low-income areas.
18. To reduce the high drop out rate, utilize the new Graduation Coaches to encourage trend setters to serve as mentors to other kids for positive change.
19. Establish a mentoring program for families in poverty.
20. Have community based assistance that augments the Department of Children and Family Services, etc. Case loads for social workers need to be smaller, mental health issues need to be better identified and understood by caseworkers.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT RECOMMENDATIONS (7)

1. Develop a comprehensive workforce strategy to address the emerging workforce needs of Athens and the surrounding counties. (“Emerging workforce refers to young people such as k-12 students. It is also refers to our future workforce)
2. Develop a comprehensive workforce strategy to address the current workforce needs of Athens and the surrounding communities.
3. Develop a comprehensive career education policy to support current and future workforce needs. This policy has to be jointly developed and owned by the following institutions: Athens-Clarke County School System, Athens Area Chamber of Commerce, Athens Clarke County Unified Government, University of Georgia, Athens Technical College, and local Service Providers.
4. Develop an initiative to help assure that all recommendations from PPA will be pursued and that there will be all appropriate advocacy to assure implementation of the recommendations.

Related recommendations from other working sessions/website:

5. Set up trades schools to provide students with the chance to learn trades and skills.
6. Have the city employ persons who have recently been released from jail to help provide community improvements. Reform for prisoners could be tied into other business opportunities. Diversion Centers could be part of this strategy. (i.e. Jobs for Life)
7. Provide strategies to address the needs of those who have gone to prison. Develop strategies, including workforce strategies, to reduce the recidivism rate.

EDUCATION COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS (85)

Family Engagement Sub-Committee (9)

1. In order to promote the academic achievement and success of all students and address the holistic needs of children and families living in poverty, we recommend the establishment of Family Engagement/Comprehensive Community in Schools Models in Clarke County Schools with high poverty rates.

This model would include a family support center with a full time coordinator in every high poverty school. These centers would support the well being of parents and families as well as their participation in every facet of their child's education and development from birth to adulthood.

We would recommend that a Community Board be developed to determine the focus and partners for Community Schools that provide Family Support. This Community Board will be made up of parents, a representative from each of the PPA Committees (to help assure comprehensive service delivery), school system representative, as well as other community groups interested in developing the Community in Schools model in Clarke County. This Board, in cooperation with Clarke County Schools, would determine the ongoing organizational structure of the schools.

2. Develop a comprehensive communication strategy to share information about schools and the community that includes parents, schools, and the community.

Related recommendations from other working sessions/website:

3. Implement customer friendly, one-stop resource centers to coordinate services for individuals and families, allowing more resources (including staffing) to be used for direct services to the people who need them. Working with Community Connection-211, services to be coordinated and collaborative would include both public (DFCS, Department of Labor, Public Health, Advantage, School District early learning and other programs, Athens Tech, et al.) and private (Healthy Families, Athens Neighborhood Health Center, Catholic Social Services, mentoring, homeless services, et al.).
4. Provide parenting opportunities that focus on providing resources and support to parents.
5. Implement comprehensive Fatherhood Programs focused on promoting student achievement through:
 - a. Increasing the engagement of fathers and other primary male caregivers with their children and schools;
 - b. Providing ongoing professional development to staff working with families to understand how to engage fathers and male caregivers within complex and diverse family configurations.
6. Provide a Meta-Learning Center to help families achieve life-long learning opportunities.
7. Use social workers (community and school) to deal with truancy and family problems that result in truancy.
8. An emphasis needs to be placed on developing strong families and providing good role models.
9. Provide school based and district wide parenting opportunities that:

- a. Focus on providing resources and support to parents;
- b. Are comprehensive and coordinated in nature; and that
- c. Result in higher student achievement.

Early Childhood Sub-Committee (4)

- 10.** Early Childhood Learning Objective I: Increase access to high quality early care and learning programs for children living in poverty and near poverty.

Recommendations for Objective I:

- a. Educate the community about the need for quality early care and learning programs for all children.
- b. Increase financial assistance for child care.
 - i. Advocate for increased federal funding for child care.
 - ii. Create "Hope" Scholarships for Babies.
 - iii. Seek employer support for child care for their employees (collaborate with the PPA-Work Force Committee regarding employer support for child care, research ways in which employers can do this, support development of child care center at UGA for employees/faculty).
 - iv. Seek support from faith communities for child care for children living in poverty or near poverty and/or for children of their parishioners
- c. Increase number of high quality private early care and learning centers and homes.
 - i. Provide training followed by on-site technical assistance to improve quality.
 - ii. Ask UGA and Athens Tech to find faculty and graduate students willing to volunteer free professional development for child care settings serving low income children.
 - iii. Encourage civic clubs and faith communities to "adopt" early care and learning centers and homes and provide resources to improve the program/facility and to cover costs of seeking accreditation.
- d. Preserve and expand government-funded programs (Early Head Start, Head Start, pre-K) to serve all eligible children in the community.
- e. Provide Head Start for 3-year olds
- f. Develop an annual agenda for early childhood development in the Athens area. This agenda could include:
 - i. Legislation and/or school policies that need to be addressed
 - ii. Funding needs and where the funding can come from
 - iii. Invite elected officials to events at early childhood sites and share our agenda with them and ask for their support
 - iv. Maintain ongoing contact with our elected officials to help assure their ongoing support

- 11.** Early Childhood Learning Objective II: Increase the supply of programs that are effective in developing parenting skills and behaviors that promote healthy early child development in all developmental areas to facilitate children's success in school and life. Recommendations for Objective II:

- a. Educate the community about the need for opportunities for parents to enhance their parenting skills and for adult education.
 - b. Support the continuation and expansion of comprehensive family literacy programs such as Even Start. (See note below for a description of Even Start.)
 - c. Increase accessibility of effective parent education programs; preserve the best practices of Even Start within these programs
 - i. Expand the adult education, family literacy, and parenting skills components of Early Head Start, Head Start, and other early care and learning programs.
 - ii. Write a grant for the new federal Reading First Program and supplement the best practices it excludes by partnering with others in the community to offer adult education and family engagement.
 - iii. Build a core of advocates who will work to secure funding for adult education and parenting skills programs.
 - d. Increase supply of effective programs for addressing challenges to parenting such as lack of education and job skills, homelessness, chemical dependency, teen parenthood, mental illness and domestic violence.
 - e. Develop a Family Mentoring Program with an emphasis on supporting parents from birth.
 - f. Develop a nurturing environment in Clarke County for young children and their families through provision of mentoring and faith-based initiatives.
- 12.** Ask UGA and Athens Tech to find faculty and graduate students willing to volunteer free professional development for child care settings serving low income children. This could be assistance with the development of family literacy programs or in professional development of the staff.
- 13.** Develop a Family Mentoring Program with an emphasis on supporting parents, with and without disabilities, and their children, with and without disabilities, from birth on.

New Models Sub-Committee (26)

- 14.** Athens Clarke County School System develop a K-8 Neighborhood School Model.
- 15.** Create a K-8 Neighborhood School at Chase Street School to promote educational cohesion, increase student achievement, encourage neighborhood engagement and build a strong community of life long learners.
- 16.** Develop a Bio-Science K-8 magnet or charter school.
- 17.** Organize a meeting with Athens Clarke County School System, Athens Technical College, and the University of Georgia to develop the most effective means of incorporating a strong area of focus in the biosciences within the existing Career Academy. This could also involve hosting the facility at a location other than the Athens-Clarke County High School campus.
- 18.** Athens Clarke County School System and the University of Georgia pursue an Early College Program.
- 19.** Explore an Early College Program beginning at 7th grade.
- 20.** Implement a Charter School Forum to introduce the charter school concept and investigate charter schools as a possible tool for improving public education in Athens.

21. Implement a Charter Montessori School.
 22. Explore the possibility of a Bi-Lingual charter school.
 23. Create a 3 yrs. to first grade community school that would grow through fifth grade. The school would focus on developing language and would be operated as a community charter school.
 24. Look at Magnet Schools, with a focus on parental involvement, as an option as we seek new public education solutions.
 25. Implement a comprehensive remedial reading program, with comprehensive teacher training, for all students beginning in fourth grade who do not meet CRCT expectations. Recommended comprehensive programs include Corrective Reading, Wilson, and Language!
 26. Implement a comprehensive (elementary through high school) Junior Achievement Program in Clarke County.
 27. Seek web-focused entrepreneurship opportunities in order to introduce students to tap into the global economy.
 28. Explore opportunities to improve the Juvenile Justice System and Criminal Justice System as they relate to education and poverty.
 29. Study the reasons why UGA education graduates choose to stay in Athens or go elsewhere.
 30. Explore Teach For America as a possible source for teachers in Clarke County.
 31. Develop incentives to recruit and retain high quality teachers in Athens Clarke County.
 32. Explore the merits of using the Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education's strategic planning process for school improvement (www.GPEE.org) as a possible tool to guide our strategic planning efforts, incorporating the education /workforce development recommendations derived through the PPA initiative.
 33. In career development programs, use GACollege411.org as a career development/management tool, beginning no later than the middle school grades. Note that plans to further expand the scope of GACollege411.org are being considered, and, eventually, this could be used to by all students as soon as they enter school and maintained indefinitely, facilitating a life-long learning process.
 34. Develop a Boarding School to serve students who are at-risk of dropping out of school.
 35. Explore vouchers as a means of reallocating public education dollars.
 36. Have an open enrollment policy in public universities for Georgia high school graduates.
 37. Provide education programs and counseling to prison/jail inmates.
 38. Incorporate Green Principles as new schools are built in Athens.
- Related recommendations from other working sessions/website:**
39. To aggressively confront negative/destructive icons, images and life-style choices that lead to the adoption of behaviors and mindsets that discourage personal responsibility, perseverance, self-discipline, good citizenship, respect for self and others, and a recognition of the importance of education. This recommendation would include an education program focusing on the advantages of working hard in school, waiting to have children after marriage, staying away from drugs, etc. In comparison, statistical material focusing on the results of poor life choices

including the effects of father absent homes would also be made available. Churches, schools, community groups, and individual role models could work together to develop programs and strategies to implement this recommendation.

Career Development Sub-Committee (5)

40. Provide ACC students with broader exposure to career and college choices at an earlier (i.e. elementary school) age.

Related recommendations from other working sessions/website:

41. Ensure all ACC students have access to post secondary education.
42. Develop a comprehensive vo-tech, life skills, career development program for all students starting at an early age. An emphasis would be placed on the Chamber playing a proactive role and empowering employers to develop programs to address real workforce needs.
43. Provide more workforce planning for students with employers coming into the classrooms as well as providing real work internships.
44. Provide a comprehensive Career Pathways program in our schools which would include collaboration with employers to provide apprenticeship opportunities for students.

K-12 Sub-Committee (29)

45. Provide professional learning that promotes reflective practice and cultural proficiency to help educators connect diverse students and families to learning.
46. Implement a Teacher/Mentoring Program.
47. Provide professional learning that would encourage teachers getting advanced degrees as well as support with behavior management strategies.
48. The faculty of Athens Clarke County Schools be solicited for a wide-ranging list of the critical needs as to what these teachers need to do their teaching jobs better.
49. Develop a supportive administration to help increase the longevity of teachers in Athens.
50. Develop a nurturing environment in Clarke County for young children and their families.
51. (1) Increase assistance for students under the current Five Graduation Test Requirement, and (2) Work to level the playing field between Georgia and other states.
52. Lobby the legislature to reduce the number of graduation tests.
53. Secure permanent funding to support after-school and summer programs so parents don't have to pay the \$6/per day/per child fee, which prohibits many struggling students from getting the extra instructional time they need.
54. Secure permanent funding to support community based and other after-school and summer programs such as The Athens Tutorial Program so parents don't have to pay the \$6/per day/per child fee, which prohibits many struggling students from getting the extra instructional time they need. The Athens Tutorial Program has provided free after-school community-based tutorial services for low-income at-risk students for the past twenty-five years.
55. Develop a partnership between the Clarke County School District, Athens Clarke County Regional Library, and UGA's Grady College of Journalism and Mass

Communication to create "catch-up and keep-up" curricula that will bridge one school year with the next. These video programs will be shown on Channel 16 during summers.

56. All school students of Athens Clarke County School System wear uniforms consisting of khaki slacks or skirts and knit shirts with collars in white or yellow or blue.
57. Develop K-12 reading intervention strategies that work.
58. Every student in Athens/Clarke County schools should participate in high quality service-learning each year as an integral part of his/her education experience. The Clarke County Community should partner with the Clarke county schools in identifying topics and issues that students can work on while using their academic learning to help make improvements in our town. To do this well, service learning must be incorporated into the curriculum via school board policy, financial and instructional support, ongoing professional development, and partnerships with community agencies.
59. Provide Peer-Tutoring as a component of service learning.
60. Work with the Public Library System to expand its role in providing support for public education.
61. Survey counselors and school personnel to determine what type of kid drops out of school; also survey graduates to find out what motivated them to finish.
62. UGA College of Education analyze the dropout rate/pattern in Athens Clarke County schools.
63. Rethink and Revamp retained classes.
64. Provide on-going communication with families on how they can help their children with schooling.
65. Involve students in "grassroots" efforts to develop/implement recommendations—give them a venue to use their schooling (i.e. applied learning).
66. Implement a Big Sister/Big Brother Program in High School.
67. Develop a broader scope of positive leisure activities for children (i.e. chess, checkers, tennis, golf, photography, bee-keeping, woodworking, cooking, shop, etc.)
68. Encourage perfect attendance by providing a car (by lottery) to a student who achieves this goal.

Related recommendations from other working sessions/website:

69. Partners for a Prosperous Athens consider setting up Plaza Comunitaria's in several locations in Athens, in addition to the one now functioning in Pinewood.
70. Support efforts by the Clarke County Parent Advisory Board to pursue cost effective efforts to provide Drivers Education for eligible (16 years old and above) students in Clarke County.
71. Offer the option of participation in the Teacher Retirement System to classified plant services and other staff.
72. Utilize the PPA Education Committee to assist and work collaboratively with the co-conveners, PPA committees and other participating community members and organizations in the development of implementation and evaluation strategies for adopted recommendations

73. Align PPA recommendations, implementation and evaluation strategies with the District Continuous Improvement Plan, CCSD Improvement Plan, CCSD Multicultural Task Force Recommendations, and other organizational evaluations.

Adult Education/Cont. Ed. Sub-Committee (6)

74. Conduct a community-wide needs assessment to determine the educational needs of adults and out of school youth in Athens Clarke County.
75. Conduct a survey of agencies and services currently being provided to address the educational needs of adults in Athens Clarke County.
76. Create a community literacy organization, staffed by a paid coordinator, that brings together civic, government, educational, faith-based, and business leadership for the purpose of improving the community's adult literacy and education attainment levels.
77. Align Adult Education goals with Workforce goals, guided by the Career Pathway model of creating avenues to better jobs.

Related recommendations from other working sessions/website:

78. PPA would support the Adult Literacy Council in its efforts to have Athens become a Certified Literate Community.
79. PPA would support efforts to coordinate adult education programs in Athens and encourage a coordinated strategy which would include collaboration with Athens Tech, the Adult Literacy Council, Clarke County School System, Athens Clarke County Government, University of Georgia, and the Department of Labor. This strategy would include clearly defined goals.

Mentoring Sub-Committee (3)

80. Pursue a Family Mentoring Program to Address the Holistic Needs of a Family.
81. Develop a Volunteer Center to provide support for quality training, coordination, recruitment, and communication for mentoring and other volunteer agencies in Athens and surrounding areas.
82. Involve businesses in mentoring students.

Community/Capacity Building Sub-Committee (3)

83. Develop leadership programs at the grassroots level to build leadership among parents and communities. Work with existing organizations such as the YMCA, Chamber, Community Centers, etc. This leadership focus would be to achieve a shared vision among all community stakeholders.
84. Develop programs that focus on cultural awareness and understanding of our different cultures in Athens.
85. Register 18 year olds to vote when they register for Selective Service.

HEALTH COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS (4)

1. Increase funding for existing primary and specialty medical services through:
 - a. Seeking alternative funding and grants with the help of MPA students, nonprofit resource center, Grant Station, etc.
 - b. Working to increase State funding for mental health services
 - c. Moving hospital dollars towards local clinics to support wellness visits and other care to limit unnecessary emergency room care (Mercy Clinic, Nurses' Clinic Neighborhood Health Clinic, Palm Housing Recovery Center, and Others)
 - d. Supporting Neighborhood Health Center's Federally Qualified Health Center grant
 - e. Creating a local pooled health insurance policy for small businesses to offer their employees
 - f. Addressing the disparity in public health nurse salaries through scholarships, loan forgiveness and other incentives
2. Address gaps in primary and specialty health medical services by:
 - a. Establishing a one-stop clinic providing primary care, dental care, mental health, pharmacy and physical/occupation therapy services, including case management, that is open generous hours and convenient to public transit
 - b. Creating a community outreach and education program and a Mobile Health Clinic for the uninsured and underinsured
 - c. Utilizing a "Health SPLOST" for capital investments
 - d. Seeking volunteers to assist in local clinics (the use of volunteers can help extend limited funding)
3. Establish an Internet referral/resource center including information gathered by L.E.A.D. Athens survey.
 - a. include information gathered by Lead Athens survey
4. Reduce incidence of Teen Pregnancy and improve outcomes through:
 - a. Gain commitment of PPA Co-Conveners to 1) research to understand the problem and scope of teen pregnancy in Clarke County, 2) evaluate, research, and develop effective sex education for teens in grades 6 through 12, and 3) Develop and implement methods to aid in the prevention of repeat teen pregnancy
 - b. Establish educational activities that 1) develop self-esteem, self-respect, dignity, and leadership, 2) train parents on sex education for children, and 3) inform the community about the number of teen pregnancies in Clarke County relative to the district, Georgia, US and Europe by the use of a diagram. Plus a call for community participation to address the problem.
 - c. Allow teen's greater access to pregnancy prevention services by 1) setting up and operating teen health clinics adjacent to high schools, 2) granting access to family planning clinics during school hours, and 3) providing public health educators in each of the county's schools.
 - d. Provide access to currently available resources by 1) establishing a protocol to identify pregnant and parenting teens in schools, 2) setting up a process to provide students the needed information on school policies and schedule referrals, 3) allowing students to access these resources during school hours when necessary, and 4) Attaching Early Learning Centers to all public high schools

HOUSING AND TRANSPORTATION RECOMMENDATIONS (20)

Affordable Housing Sub-Committee (5)

1. Affordable housing should be dispersed throughout the community, not concentrated in a few areas. Neighborhoods should be integrated with different house and unit sizes, types, and prices (to rent and buy), to provide opportunities for housing choice throughout the community. At the same time, to be truly affordable for those at the lowest income levels, housing must be accessible by public transportation.
Strategies:
 - i. Athens-Clarke County Comprehensive Land Use Plan should place an emphasis on housing choice and opportunity for all residents of Athens. *Specifically, the Plan should state that Athens-Clarke County will adopt policies to facilitate dispersal of affordable rental and homeownership units throughout the community and to prevent creating concentrated areas of poverty.*
 - ii. ACC should encourage the development of mixed-income and mixed-use neighborhoods through all available means, including zoning, development standards, tax policies and planning policies, *such as inclusionary zoning, density bonuses, allowing accessory dwellings, a fast-track planning approval process for affordable housing, limitations on construction of luxury apartment complexes, revisiting the Definition of Family ordinance.*
- Use inclusionary zoning and density bonuses to entice developers to build affordable rental and homeownership units.
- Allow for accessory uses, granny flats, in-law suites, mixed-use, mixed-income housing to create more appropriate housing choices.
- Develop a fast track planning approval process for developments creating housing that is affordable for low to moderate income residents.
- Place limitations on construction of new high-end apartment complexes to help keep existing apartment complexes from falling into disrepair. Increase the number of units reserved for income-eligible families and individuals within existing and new apartment buildings.
- Encourage the redevelopment of existing apartment complexes by providing incentives.
- Re-examine the Definition of Family Ordinance. *The Definition of Family ordinance has the unintended consequence of driving up rents for smaller, non-family households such as low-income elderly and disabled people who need assistance and discourages small unit assisted living.*
- Protect existing lower-income, elderly homeowners from losing their homes by providing a targeted property-tax freeze or other means to slow gentrification.
2. Our community should provide adequate funds to ensure that our Affordable Housing needs are met for the entire housing continuum from rental to homeownership. ACC should create a flexible, dedicated Affordable Housing Fund that will be funded locally through appropriations from the general budget. This fund could be supplemented by a variety of methods including voluntary citizen donations, initiatives such as a check-off donation on utility bills, interest on real estate related escrow accounts, etc.

3. ACC and local nonprofit housing providers should develop a comprehensive housing strategy to increase homeownership among families with low to moderate incomes. A comprehensive strategy must take into account that different families are starting at different points on the housing spectrum, and a wide variety of programs is needed to help them progress while allowing them to live in safe, decent affordable housing now. These include affordable rentals; limited-equity, permanently affordable home ownership opportunities; affordable open-market home ownership opportunities; and programs to help families with low to moderate incomes who already own homes retain them. Access to public transportation must be considered as part of the affordability equation. Strategies:
 - ACC and local nonprofit housing providers should ensure an adequate supply of affordable rental housing for those for whom homeownership is not yet a viable option.
 - ACC should protect existing affordable housing stock by supporting a rehab program for elderly and low-income homeowners.
 - Use the Community Land Trust Model to develop a significant percentage new affordable housing that remains permanently affordable.
 - ACC should create a Land Bank for future affordable housing. County surplus property should be used for affordable housing when appropriate.
 - Large employers should help increase homeownership by providing down payment assistance or matching funds for their employees.
 - Residents of Athens-Clarke County must make the commitment to accept their neighbors.
 - Bankers and lenders must make a commitment to support the underserved by utilizing available loan programs to assist lower income, first-time homebuyers.
4. ACC, local nonprofit service providers, and the other PPA conveners should develop a comprehensive affordable housing marketing and education plan. The goals of this program should include informing residents about affordable housing opportunities and services and informing the community at large about affordable housing issues.
5. Our county government, the other PPA partners, and the general public should take active steps to support the creation and retention of affordable housing.
 - *ACC should use SPLOST to fund a building to locate all the housing service providers in Athens-Clarke County. The building should be centrally located, provide affordable rent for nonprofits, and be seen as the place for the community to go when they need help.*
 - *The PPA Conveners should establish a “Prosperity Corps” which could be based in the housing service providers’ building. The Prosperity Corps would organize volunteers and follow up on these strategies. They would advocate for the PPA’s vision and recommendations.*
 - *ACC should implement the strategies described in Recommendations 1, 2, 3, and 4 to increase the supply and retention of affordable housing.*
 - *Clarke County schools should provide financial literacy education as part of the curriculum beginning in elementary school.*
 - *Members of the community at large should hold the PPA conveners accountable for following through on these recommendations. People must show up at*

commission meetings, talk to their commissioners, keep these recommendations in the public eye and not let them be forgotten.

Transportation Sub-Committee (6)

6. Establish a regional public transportation system. Expanding the geographical scope of public transportation to include our neighboring counties, as well as access to the Atlanta area, would expand the economic opportunities of those who rely on public transportation to get to work, shopping, and services.
7. Increase the capacity of Athens Transit within Athens-Clarke County. Athens Transit does a good job of providing public transportation with the resources it has, but those resources are not sufficient to allow it to fully meet the needs of those who depend upon it as their sole means of transportation. Athens Transit needs additional resources to allow it to:
 - Increase hours, extent, and frequency of The Bus (general fixed-route service) to 24 hour per day, 7 days per week.
 - Increase the number of available vans and drivers for The Lift (on-demand service for people with disabilities) and expand coverage times and area.
 - Expand county-wide routes (The Link).
 - Increase marketing and advertising of routes, services, etc. Create, post at bus stops, and distribute comprehensive route map and schedule.
 - Make the Multi-Modal center more accessible to downtown. It is currently difficult for elderly people and those with disabilities to get to downtown locations from the Multi-Modal Center.
 - Be affordable to those with low incomes. *And Athens Transit should make it easier for elderly people and those with disabilities to get from the Multi-Modal Center to downtown locations, possibly by running a shuttle or adding regular stops at City Hall to more routes.*

Strategies:

- *ACC should increase local funding for Athens Transit. Public transportation should be considered a vital public service, like police or fire protection, that the community can not afford not to adequately fund.*
- *PPA conveners and participants should lobby the General Assembly to enact legislation proposed by the Georgia Transit Association, the Georgia Municipal Association, and the Association of County Commissioners of Georgia to increase the amount and flexibility of state funding available to Athens Transit.*
- *ACC should seek additional sources of funds for Athens Transit.*
- *ACC Planning Department should take public transportation into account as the Comprehensive Land Use Plan is updated. Park and ride facilities, bus shelters, accessible bus stops and sidewalks, and existing or proposed bus routes should be included in the coordinated and comprehensive planning process.*
- *Athens community organizations should fund more transit passes to be distributed by local agencies such as the Athens Area Homeless Shelter, the Ark, etc.*

- *ACC and other large employers should make arrangements, similar to UGA's, for their employees to take Athens Transit to work without having to pay at the fare box.*
8. Increase safety and infrastructure for pedestrians and cyclists. For some low-income Athenians, walking or biking are their only means of transportation.
 9. Explore ways to make local taxi service more affordable to low income families.
 10. Explore other innovative alternatives to individual automobile ownership (i.e. car-sharing, van pools, low-cost ownership programs, etc.).
 11. UGA should establish a graduate-level interdisciplinary service learning course to provide support for PPA committees as they continue to explore solutions to Athens-Clarke County's poverty problem.

Special Populations Sub-Committee (9)

People with Disabilities and Older Adults

12. Promote the construction and retro-fitting of homes to be accessible and visitable for people with disabilities. Create incentive for contractors, re-modelers, or builders to build accessibility features as they build or re-model.
13. Create a Housemate Match Service for older adults and people with disabilities.
14. Expand a home repair program for older adults and people with disabilities. Youth Build should be explored for the Athens community.

Homeless People

15. Create a Small Houses program to support transitioning the Homeless into permanent housing. An organization, akin to Habitat for Humanity and Hands on Athens, will identify projects, perform new construction and rehabs, and coordinate volunteers and sponsorship to provide shelter for the immediate needs of homeless families and individuals in Athens and to provide services for their transition into a safe and stable place to live. The families and individuals will be connected to the web of existing service providers. This program will include the creation of a matching list web site to provide a connection point between people who have things to give, i.e. volunteer hours, donations, mentoring / training, and household items, with those who have specific needs.
 - *Support creation of additional shelter space for families and individuals.*
 - *Explore alternatives for those who are unable to access traditional shelters.*
16. If the Navy School is used for residential development, require that a percentage be set aside as affordable, accessible, and visitable housing.
 - *Support the proposals of the Homeless Coalition for re-use of the Navy School Property to include transitional housing and services for homeless people.*

Recent Immigrants

17. Create one-stop-shop for immigrant and ESL translated information on rights when buying a site-built house or manufactured home, borrowing money, seeking a mortgage, opening a bank account, getting an ITIN, or accessing the building permit process for rehabbing manufactured homes and dilapidated structures.
18. Support the conversion of local manufactured housing parks into resident controlled parks, including support for the People of Hope, Inc. program.

Formerly Incarcerated

- 19.** Create a housing program with support services for formerly incarcerated individuals.
- *Explore a “bonding” program for housing, similar to the employment program where formerly incarcerated employees are bonded to encourage companies to hire them. This could be part of the initiative started by the pastors’ group to vouch for job seekers.*

General

- 20.** Have UGA create a Community Housing Resource Assistance Center (both a website and physical location) for information including an:
- a. Inventory of Affordable Rental and Homeownership opportunities
 - b. Inventory of Special Assistance programs
 - c. Inventory of Accessible dwellings for people with disabilities

DEPENDENT CARE RECOMMENDATIONS (2)

1. In order to meet the growing needs of caregivers for elderly and developmentally disabled adults, the dependent care committee recommends that an outreach and education program be implemented to train individuals living in Athens Clarke County with an income of no more than 150% of the federal poverty line to become Certified Nurse Assistants (CNA).
 - a. This recommendation seeks to address the needs of the ACC community in three ways and help break the cycle of poverty in three ways.
 - i. This program provides a marketable skill for people living at or near poverty.
 - ii. This program provides increased availability of skilled caregivers who can provide respite for persons providing dependent care to elders or disabled adults.
 - iii. This program decreases the likelihood that the dependent caregiver will need to reduce her or his own work hours (a pattern that can place the caregiver at increased risk for impoverishment).
 - b. This recommendation will allow dependent caregivers to receive emergency care and regularly scheduled respite care because it provides training specifically for elders and adults with disabilities.
2. There are needs in our adult dependent care community such as lawn care, home repair, transportation, and meal preparation that can not be fulfilled using traditional methods. Hence, there needs to be a system by which these everyday needs can be filled without overlapping with already existing services. We propose the development and implementation of a time/service barter system to meet these needs.

SERVICE PROVIDER RECOMMENDATIONS (9) *Social Service Providers have been meeting as a PPA Learning Community for the past 6 months.*

1. Develop and implement a community wide strategic planning, funding, implementation, and evaluation process to assure all community members have access to resources and opportunities for success.
2. All funding and service delivery organizations prioritize their funding (including HED, United Way, foundation support, private charities, government funding, etc.) to implement this strategic plan and service delivery systems will focus their resources to support implementation of this strategic plan.
3. To organize a Community Foundation in Athens to provide donors with the opportunity to achieve their charitable goals while facilitating strategic community growth. This Community Foundation would initially target the top two priorities as indicated from the Partners For A Prosperous Athens.
4. To develop a comprehensive communication strategy among service providers, their clients, and the community through shared information, infrastructure, and other resources. Initial Priorities being:
 - support creation of comprehensive Volunteer Center,
 - have a “pink” section in the phone book for service providers divided by service type,
 - have a single location for information,
 - create a common intake form,
 - have an easily searchable database whose site could become a common homepage for local service providers,
 - tie this with a Community Foundation to ensure broad participation from service providers.
5. We recommend that service providers develop an organized grassroots and political advocacy agenda in order to help assure community support and adequate funding.
6. A culture of competitiveness, duplication, inefficiency, donor fatigue and political wrangling has been created by the way service providers have to compete to raise funds locally. One entity needs to be created to build the capacity of all local service providers; help service providers seek funding collectively; coordinate joint planning for CDBG, HOME, and United Way funds; and give service providers a voice in local funding decisions.

Related recommendations from other working sessions/website:

7. Develop a comprehensive volunteer program to strategically use volunteers throughout the community. To effectively implement this recommendation the appropriate infrastructure would be developed to help assure quality volunteer support.
8. Implement a summit for service clubs (i.e. Kiwanis, Rotary, Kiwanis, etc.).
9. Implement customer friendly, one-stop resource centers to coordinate services for individuals and families, allowing more resources (including staffing) to be used for direct services to the people who need them. Working with Community Connection-211, services to be coordinated and collaborative would include both public (DFCS, Department of Labor, Public Health, Advantage, School District early learning and other programs, Athens Tech, et al.) and private (Healthy Families, Athens Neighborhood Health Center, Catholic Social Services, mentoring, homeless services, et al.).

GOING FORWARD: Advice from PPA to the Steering Committee (8) *These recommendations were made during the December 4th PPA closing forum, moderated by Judge Jones.*

1. Co-Conveners, and other community groups and individuals must work together if recommendations will be implemented successfully.
2. Help to assure that recommendations are developed and pursued in a timely manner and that we pursue 1, 3, and 5 year goals.
3. Need to make sure there is a process for evaluating the implementation of recommendations. (We need to keep track of what gets done and modify them as we find out what works and what doesn't work.)
4. We need to make sure that the recommendations check out with the perceptions and actual needs of people in poverty. We need to check to see if it works or meet their needs. (Community Conversations in March)
5. Make sure we look at comprehensive reform. We want persons in poverty to "graduate" from poverty and then become mentors to others. We cannot simply look at "health" solutions, but comprehensive solutions.
6. Study the impact of race, gender, ability, class, and sexuality as they relate to poverty and our community.
7. Look at the HED web-site as a tool to help with strategic planning of recommendations.
8. Develop a procedure for allowing groups to present their recommendations to the Steering Committee.