



ADVOCACY &  
COMMUNICATION  
SOLUTIONS, LLC



# Little Rock Master Plan for Children, Youth, and Families Advisory Committee Meeting Summary

---

## April 2015

On April 9, 2015 the Little Rock's Master Plan for Children, Youth, and Families Advisory Committee met for the first time. It was the first of four meetings to be held between April and September 2015 to guide the development of a Master Plan for Children, Youth, and Families.

After the group went through purpose and process, the Advisory Committee provided substantial guidance on additional data they would like to see and feedback on the initial draft of the promising practice report. The Advisory Committee also participated in a brainstorming session to help guide the vision, to help determine the programs and organizations to leverage in the city and state, and to start to think through areas in which there are gaps.

This summary is organized into six parts:

1. Scope
2. Data and promising practices
3. What success looks like
4. Leverage points/resources
5. Gaps
6. Next steps

The Advisory Committee has the following tasks to complete by May 15:

- **TASK 1:** Review the Data and Promising Practices section, and add additional data points and let us know if you have the data readily available to you.
- **TASK 2:** Review and respond to the promising practice draft report and weigh in on additional evidence-based practices. Are there specific models that you have been collecting information on that consistently demonstrate an impact?
- **TASK 3:** Review the successes. Ensure that these are accurately captured from our discussion.

- **TASK 4:** Answer the question: What other resources (programs, organizations, etc.) are available in the City of Little Rock and in the state that should be included in the environmental scan?
- **Task 5:** Review the gaps in the City of Little Rock as they pertain to children, youth, and families. Respond if this does not accurately capture our conversation or if you have additions.
- **Task 6:** Answer the question: What are potential solutions that you want the plan to incorporate to fill the gaps and to help reach success for children, youth, and families?

### **SCOPE**

There were questions regarding the scope of the plan: Will the plan be larger than PIT funding areas? What should be considered in the plan? In addition specific questions were asked about early childhood readiness and how early education programs may have an impact on later outcomes.

For this initial three-year plan, the City of Little Rock is prepared to address areas outside the scope of PIT funding as they relate to connecting to, leveraging, partnering, and/or collaborating with other systems (i.e. mental health, early childhood [ages 0-4], etc.). For example, the plan may identify a gap between community programs and another system, and the strategy would be to bolster referrals between the two. Programmatic strategies or quality enhancements in those other systems would not be addressed in this initial three-year plan. Other issues like diversion or cross-cultural competencies also were discussed and can be integrated within the current PIT scope.

The Advisory Committee brought up several examples in which the city and the state have invested funds toward PIT issues. The environmental scan will consider resources available at the state level. The plan may consider ways to connect or leverage those resources. It was suggested that the plan address the connections of how each system touches children, youth, and families.

### **DATA AND PROMISING PRACTICES**

The Advisory Committee requested the following data be addressed at the next meeting:

1. **Program standards:** Current RFP/RFQ standards and practices for PIT/YIP programs.
2. **Program Outcomes:** How well are programs doing? How are children, youth, and families affected by \$5 million? What big picture outcomes may be tracked by funded programs.
3. **Program Funding:** How is funding being spent right now? (Big picture categories such as age groups or categories of services.)

4. **Youth Community Indicators:** How well are children doing in general? Gather from data sources such as Kids Count, Census, etc.
  - a. How many are in school?
  - b. How many are on grade level?
  - c. Arrested? In DYS?
  - d. Living with families?
  - e. In single-parent households?
  - f. Have a medical home?
  - g. Cross-cultural competencies?
5. **Service location by type:** Where services are located geographically? (Pulaski County may have a report online).
6. **Program funding:** How much PIT funding/community program resources have been spent in Little Rock in total over since the PIT funding started?

The Advisory Committee noted that just because something has been done before, does not mean that it has good outcomes. The group urged the consultant team to look at evidence-based practices. For example, the Statewide Afterschool Foundation, which is supported by the Mott Foundation, is a good resource for evidence-based practices and scalable models.

**TASK 1: The Advisory Committee will review the data list above, add additional data points, and note where they have ready access to the data.**

**TASK 2: The Advisory Committee will review the promising practice report and weigh in on additional evidence-based practices. Are there specific models that you have been collecting information on that consistently demonstrate an impact?**

### ***WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE***

The Advisory Committee weighed in on what success of children, youth, and families looked like to them. The committee wants to look at the plan comprehensively and acknowledges the interconnectedness of different city departments on children, youth, and families. The following categories were discussed:

1. **ENGAGEMENT OF YOUTH AND PARENTS:** Improved engagement with youth and parents would allow all citizens to be aware of and access available services and programs that are relevant to their needs.
2. **COLLABORATION:** The institutions serving children, youth, and families (including government, churches, schools, and business) will commit to a shared vision around their role.
3. **PROGRAMMING:** Includes specific types of programming (afterschool counseling and services, mentoring, etc.) that are effective and show positive outcomes for children, youth, and families.

4. **OUTCOMES/INDICATORS:** Reach outcomes through indicators that show improvement for children, youth, and families in Little Rock. These include big picture outcomes such as being productive and contributing members of their communities, achieving self-actualization, building positive cross-cultural relationships, and being prepared for future careers and lives. It also included specific indicators such as lower crime rate, reduced relationships with the juvenile justice system, and increased high school graduation rates.

**TASK 3: Review the successes. Ensure that these are accurately captured from our discussion.**

#### **LEVERAGE POINTS/RESOURCES**

Several assets were identified in the city of Little Rock. These include local programs such as Vine and Village, Promise House, Kiwanis, Rice Depot, Our House and PARK; churches and faith-based institutions; libraries; the state's AR Kids Read program; and programs through UALR. Funding streams such as the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning Center, NSLA funds for afterschool programs, and the Arkansas Department of Education were mentioned. Finally, a few data sources and assessments were noted that may be useful for data collection. These include the Archival Risk Factor Data, the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths Assessment, and the Arkansas Prevention Needs Assessment. These leverage points will be further researched for the environmental scan.

**TASK 4: What additional resources (children and youth-serving programs, organizations, etc.) are available in the City of Little Rock and state that should be included in the environmental scan?**

#### **GAPS**

The Advisory Committee discussed several issues or barriers for children, youth, and families. They identified gaps in youth and family engagement, programs, and communication and collaboration that, if filled, would go a long way toward success. Gaps or issues that are missing from the conversation include the following:

1. **YOUTH AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT:** The committee confirmed the need for a greater effort to engage youth voices, including outreach to non-resident youth who spend time in the city. Family engagement, including engagement with grandparents, was identified as a huge gap. General community interest and involvement is still missing.
2. **PROGRAMS:** The Advisory Committee discussed specific programs and ways to ensure an effective continuum of care – including affordable childcare, quality education, family literacy, cross-cultural relationship building, college and career readiness, and out-of-school programs – is in place for all children, youth, and families. The reporting and effectiveness of programming was also discussed.

Transportation was mentioned as a barrier for accessing services in other areas of the city. It was also noted that youth programming and engagement requires energy and resources. Funding for excellent programs and capacity building for youth workers remains a gap in the community.

- 3. COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION:** The discussion included gaps in awareness of programs, transparency of outcomes and funding decisions, effective referral networks, and cross-system communication and collaboration. Additionally, tensions between the Hispanic and African American communities were mentioned. The committee asked which organizations might be able to pick up the work that would not be covered in PIT funding? Greater system-level coordination was discussed, with potential strategies being case management and coordination for families.

**Task 5: Review the gaps or what is missing in the City of Little Rock as they pertain to children, youth, and families. Respond if this does not accurately capture our conversation or if you have additions.**

#### ***NEXT STEPS***

The Advisory Committee agreed to the following next steps:

- ACS will send the summary from the April 9 meeting and promising practices report by April 17, 2015.
- ACS will send all contact information to members by May 1, 2015.
- The Advisory Committee will complete tasks 1-6 and send responses to Rebecca Cohen at [Rebecca@advocacyandcommunication.org](mailto:Rebecca@advocacyandcommunication.org) by **May 15, 2015**.