

# Centralville Friends for Improvement, Revitalization & Enforcement (C-FIRE) Lowell, MA

Funded by the Byrne Criminal Justice Innovation Program,  
US Bureau of Justice Assistance



Lead Agency: Lowell Police Department

Research Partner: University of Massachusetts Lowell  
Center for Community Research & Engagement



# Centralville Neighborhood

## ▶ Lowell MA

- 108,800
- 60% white, 20% Asian, 7% Black/AA, 17% Hispanic
- Home to many immigrants and refugees
- 17% below the poverty level (11% state)
- 7.4% unemployment rate (5.6% state)

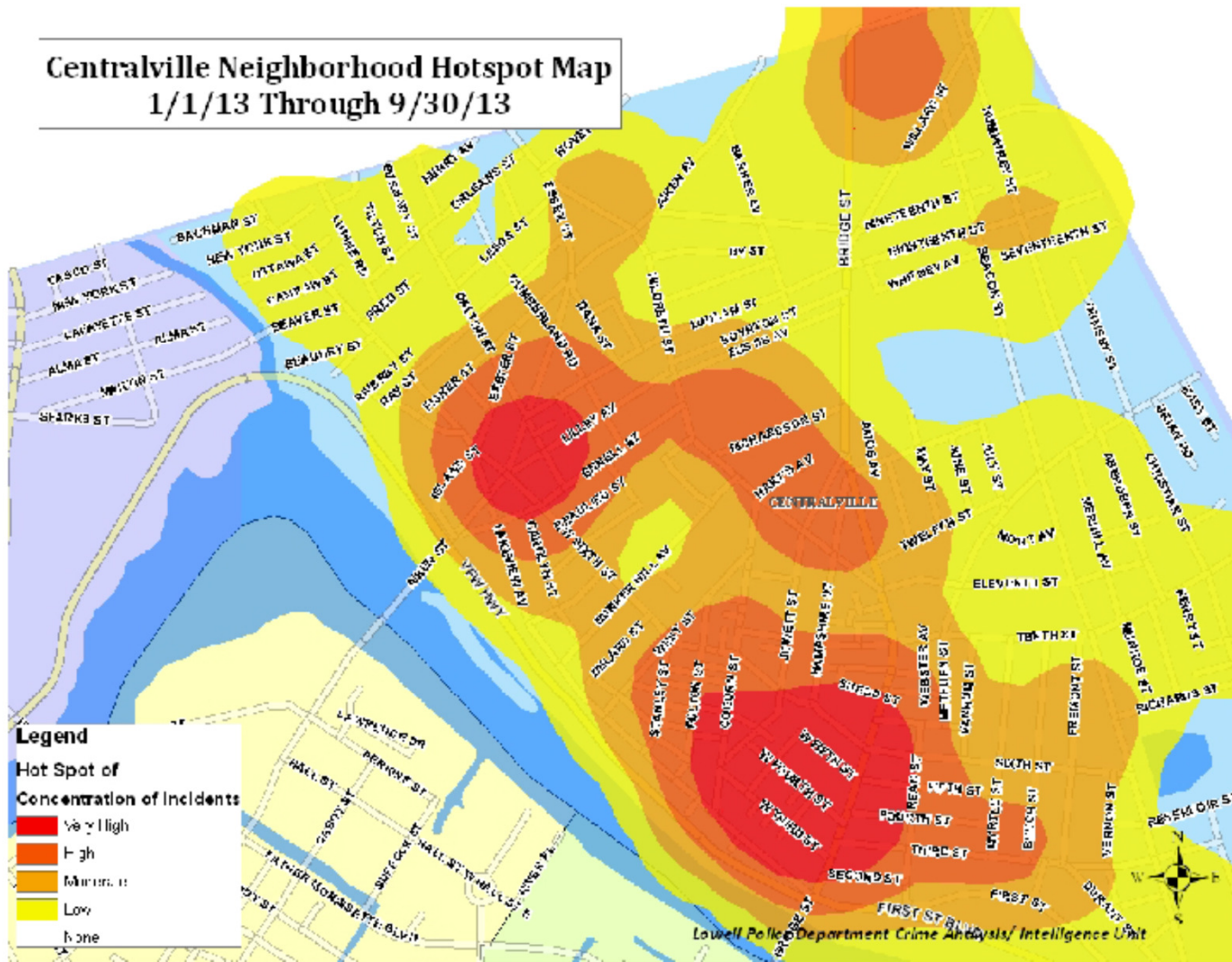
## ▶ Centralville Neighborhood

- Influx of working class immigrants
- 12,536
- 58% white, 14% Asian, 8% Black/AA, 21% Hispanic
- 16% below the poverty level
- 8.2% unemployment rate

# Why Centralville

- In 2011:
  - Accounted for nearly 20% of all crime;
  - Highest number of code violations;
  - Highest number of foreclosures; lot of absent landlords
  - 21% of all ex-offenders released from incarceration return to Centralville; and
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> highest rate of juvenile crime
- Strong neighborhood support
- Pre-existing collaborations

**Centralville Neighborhood Hotspot Map**  
 1/1/13 Through 9/30/13



Hotspot Crime's include: Aggravated Assault, Burglary, Car Breaks, Drug Offenses, Robbery, Shoplifting and Vandalism

# CFIRE Goals

- Decrease violent and property crime by 15%
- Decrease drug crime by 10%
- Reduce recidivism rate of ex-offenders by 25%
- Create neighborhood safety awareness and activism
- Provide positive opportunities for at-risk youth
- Provide opportunities for at-risk youth to gain work experience
- Reduce truancy by 20%
- Intervene with at-risk youth to deter future criminal behavior
- Decrease foreclosure rate by 10%
- Reduce neighborhood disrepair
- Increase neighborhood revitalization efforts



# Partners Working with Youth

- ▶ United Teen Equality Center - Outreach, Reentry and Youth Services
- ▶ Boys & Girls Club of Greater Lowell - After-school Programming
- ▶ Career Center of Lowell - Summer Jobs
- ▶ International Institute - Truancy Prevention
- ▶ Parks and Recreation Department - Sports Programs

# Revitalization Partners

- ▶ Mill City Grows - Community Garden
- ▶ Coalition for a Better Acre - Foreclosure Prevention & Financial Literacy Training
- ▶ Department of Planning and Development Neighborhood Impact Team - Code Enforcement
- ▶ Centralville Neighborhood Association Group - Planning & Input



# Suppression Partners

- ▶ Lowell Police Department - Suppression, Enforcement & Home Visits
- ▶ United Teel Equality Center - Outreach, Reentry and Youth Services



# Research Partner Roles

## Planning Period

- ▶ Facilitate planning meetings of the three committees (youth, revitalization, suppression)
- ▶ Assist groups with overarching logic model
- ▶ Help identify evidence-based and innovative crime prevention and reduction strategies
- ▶ Assist each partner with their own logic models including measurable objectives
- ▶ Document/Gather baseline data (existing and new)



# Logic Model 1

YOUTH COMMITTEE LOGIC MODEL

CONTEXT:

- Home to 3,341 youth between the ages of 5 to 19 and youth violence is a significant concern
- Nearly 7% of all 2011 arrestees were juveniles; Centralville experienced the second highest rate of Juvenile crime in the City
- Fifty-one students from Centralville schools were absent for 25 days or more at the end of the 2010-2011 school year

INPUTS	OUTPUTS		OUTCOMES - IMPACT		
<i>Investments</i>	<i>Activities</i>	<i>Participants</i>	<i>Long Term</i>	<i>Mission</i>	<i>Vision</i>
<p>Resources for surveys, staff, online resources, workshops and community forums</p> <p>Substantial resources from City of Lowell, citizens, community agency and academic partners</p> <p>Promotion by our partners to increase participation and feedback on projects</p>	<p>BGCGL Club orientations, youth development programs, free memberships, meal program, Centralville based community service projects Career Center Summer employment for youth ages 14-21, orientation, employment related workshops, personal finance workshops GLTHS Mentorship, educational programming for MCAS, community service projects IINE Home visits, culturally appropriate school orientations for parent(s) and student(s) LPD Park programs to deter drug use, criminal behavior, and truancy; anti bullying and gang presentations Parks and Rec Various activities with a focus on sports fitness and recreation, the arts, and youth employment UTEC Workforce Development, street outreach, transitional coaching, wraparound services, conflict resolution.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lowell PD</li> <li>• Community Partnerships</li> <li>• Centralville Neighborhood Action Group (CNAG)</li> <li>• Parks &amp; Rec</li> <li>• LPSS</li> <li>• Career Center of Lowell</li> <li>• Boys &amp; Girls Club of Greater Lowell (BGCL)</li> <li>• United Teen Equality Center (UTEC)</li> <li>• International Institute of New England (IINE)</li> <li>• Coalition for a Better Acre (CBA)</li> <li>• Mill City Grows (MCG)</li> <li>• UMass Lowell-Academic researcher</li> </ul>	<p><i>Provide positive opportunities for at-risk Centralville youth to engage in creative programming, physical activities, &amp; interact with peers in a positive &amp; safe environment</i></p> <p><i>Provide opportunities for at-risk Centralville youth to gain work experience</i></p> <p><i>Reduce truancy of Centralville students by 20%</i></p> <p><i>Intervene with at-risk youth to deter future criminal behavior &amp; decrease crime rate</i></p>	<p>The mission of the youth subcommittee and its partners is to create and facilitate the development of community based programs in order to promote the voice and interests of Centralville youth; expand prevention and intervention services; and offer youth workforce development and opportunities to achieve a better quality of life for Centralville residents.</p>	<p>To make Centralville a better place to live, work, learn, and play by creating a future that secures and maintains a higher quality of life for residents.</p> <p>Centralville strives to be one of the best urban environments in Lowell by addressing the roots of crime and poverty and creating opportunities for sustainable growth and development.</p>

# Logic Model 2

REVITALIZATION COMMITTEE LOGIC MODEL

**CONTEXT:**  
Centralville

- historically working class neighborhood, has been severely impacted by the recent economic recession
- highest foreclosure percentage of any other neighborhood in Lowell
- highest number of Sanitary Code, Building Code, Zoning Code and Trash complaints occurred in Centralville
- highest overall crime rate in the City

NPUTS	OUTPUTS		OUTCOMES - IMPACT		
<i>Investments</i>	<i>Activities</i>	<i>Participation</i>	<i>Long Term</i>	<i>Mission</i>	<i>Vision</i>
<p>Resources for surveys, staff, online resources, workshops and community forums</p> <p>Substantial resources from City of Lowell, citizens, community agency and academic partners</p> <p>Promotion by our partners to increase participation and feedback on projects</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Trash receptacles on the streets that have the most trash</li> <li>Large dumpster</li> <li>Recycling containers</li> <li>Solid waste containers</li> <li>Event around the receptacles</li> <li>Include local businesses in the neighborhood cleanup efforts</li> <li>Outreach, speak to owners about why it is important</li> <li>Provide cleaning products/tools if necessary (I think this was said)</li> <li>Recognize business that show improvement or choose to participate in the clean-up initiative</li> <li>Micro Grants to residents to cleanup</li> <li>18 bed community garden to be built on west 3rd St on April 27th</li> <li>Kickoff event for community development</li> <li>Mobil Market pilot program - classes, workshops, demonstrations, samples,</li> <li>Healthy Corner Store Initiative</li> <li>Residents will be trained to become community trainers &amp; become the eyes and ears of the garden</li> <li>30 foreclosure workshops</li> <li>20 post purchase workshops</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community Partnerships</li> <li>Centralville Neighborhood Action Group (CNAG)</li> <li>Parks and Recreation</li> <li>LPSS</li> <li>Career Center of Lowell</li> <li>Boys &amp; Girls Club of Greater Lowell (BGCL)</li> <li>United Teen Equality Center (UTEC)</li> <li>International Institute of New England (IINE)</li> <li>Coalition for a Better Acre (CBA)</li> <li>Mill City Grows (MCG)</li> <li>UMass Lowell - Academic researcher</li> </ul>	<p><i>Decrease foreclosure rate in Centralville by 10%</i></p> <p><i>Reduce neighborhood disrepair</i></p> <p><i>Increase neighborhood revitalization efforts</i></p>	<p>The mission of the revitalization subcommittee and its partners is to encourage community involvement, foster positive community development, and promote a culture of revitalization and reinvestment to achieve a better quality of life for Centralville residents.</p>	<p>To make Centralville a better place to live, work, learn, and play by creating a future that secures and maintains a higher quality of life for residents.</p> <p>Centralville strives to be one of the best urban environments in Lowell by addressing the roots of crime and poverty and creating opportunities for sustainable growth and development.</p>

**ASSUMPTIONS:** High rate of absentee landlords, foreclosures, juvenile delinquency, returning ex-offenders, drug and drug-related crime and chronic crime hotspots

**EXTERNAL FACTORS:** Changes in community economic climate (recession effects); reduced staffing levels at City Depts.; demographic shifts

# Logic Model 3

LAW ENFORCEMENT COMMITTEE LOGIC MODEL

**CONTEXT:**  
Centralville

- Highest overall crime rate in the City
- LPD operates a staffing level at 13% below the average for comparable depts. (forced reduced staffing)
- Many crime hotspots are located in densely populated areas along north & south Bridge Street
- In 2011, 22% of the City's total drug arrests were made in Centralville (highly disproportionate)
- In 2011, over 200 ex-offenders returned to Lowell, 21% of whom returned to Centralville (highly disproportionate)

INPUTS	OUTPUTS		OUTCOMES - IMPACT		
	Activities	Participants	Long Term	Mission	Vision
<p><b>Investments</b></p> <p>Resources for surveys, staff, online resources, workshops and community forums</p> <p>Resources from City of Lowell, citizens, community agency and academic partners</p> <p>Promotion by our partners to increase participation and feedback on projects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LPD Crime data, analysis, mapping</li> <li>• POP patrols</li> <li>• UTEC Street workers &amp; Trans Coach</li> <li>• Assessment surveys</li> <li>• Social service agencies</li> <li>• Resources from City of Lowell, residents, community agencies, academic partners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct crime analysis</li> <li>• Identify 5 crime hotspots</li> <li>• Deploy 80 problem-oriented policing patrols in hotspots</li> <li>• Street workers complete 30 conflict resolutions between gang sets</li> <li>• Street workers engage 30 youth involved in crime and gang violence (UTEK)</li> <li>• Conduct 74 home visits for chronic drug offenders</li> <li>• Conduct 50 surveillance &amp; crackdowns of drug-nuisance properties</li> <li>• Conduct 300 home-visits of ex-offenders reentering Centralville and connect them to available social services (LPD)</li> <li>• Utilize assessments &amp; surveys to evaluate 80% of returning ex-offenders (LPD)</li> <li>• Street workers refer 15 ex-offenders to wraparound services (UTEK TC)</li> <li>• Community awareness activity</li> <li>• Community activism activity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lowell PD</li> <li>• Community Partnerships</li> <li>• Centralville Neighborhood Action Group (CNAG)</li> <li>• Parks &amp; Rec</li> <li>• LPSS</li> <li>• Career Center of Lowell</li> <li>• Boys &amp; Girls Club of Greater Lowell (BGCL)</li> <li>• United Teen Equality Center (UTEK)</li> <li>• International Institute of New England (IINE)</li> <li>• Coalition for a Better Acre (CBA)</li> <li>• Mill City Grows (MCG)</li> <li>• UMass Lowell – research partner</li> </ul>	<p><i>Decrease violent and property crime by 15%</i></p> <p><i>Decrease drug crime by 10%</i></p> <p><i>Reduce recidivism rate of returning ex-offenders by 25%</i></p> <p><i>Create neighborhood safety awareness and activism</i></p>	<p>The mission of the law enforcement subcommittee and its partners is to create and facilitate the development of community based programs in order to prevent crime; to intervene where there is a need and opportunity; to reduce factors and activities that lead to criminal activity; and to encourage resident involvement to achieve a better quality of life for Centralville residents.</p>	<p>To make Centralville a better place to live, work, learn, and play by creating a future that secures and maintains a higher quality of life for residents.</p> <p>Centralville strives to be one of the best urban environments in Lowell by addressing the roots of crime and poverty and creating opportunities for sustainable growth and development.</p>





# Research Partner Roles

## Implementation

- ▶ Work with LPD and partners to develop customized reporting tools, assist with reporting
- ▶ Work with partners to develop/refine [data collection tools](#)
- ▶ Develop [database](#) to document/analyze [outputs and outcomes](#)
- ▶ Collect and analyze process evaluation data from partners
- ▶ Facilitate community conversation with CNAG and residents about neighborhood priorities
- ▶ Troubleshoot with LPD on challenges/issues
- ▶ Analyze data to ensure that a comprehensive continuum of solutions is implemented
- ▶ Create [infographics](#)



# Data Collection Tool Example

## Gardener: Pre-Evaluation



1. What neighborhood of Lowell do you live in? (check one)

<input type="checkbox"/> The Acre	<input type="checkbox"/> Back Central	<input type="checkbox"/> Belvidere	<input type="checkbox"/> Centralville
<input type="checkbox"/> Downtown	<input type="checkbox"/> Lower Highlands	<input type="checkbox"/> The Highlands	<input type="checkbox"/> Pawtucketville
<input type="checkbox"/> Sacred Heart	<input type="checkbox"/> South Lowell	<input type="checkbox"/> The Other:	

2. You are:

<input type="checkbox"/> Male	<input type="checkbox"/> Female	<input type="checkbox"/> Transgender	<input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say
-------------------------------	---------------------------------	--------------------------------------	--

3. Age range:

<input type="checkbox"/> 18-25	<input type="checkbox"/> 26-35	<input type="checkbox"/> 36-45	<input type="checkbox"/> 46-55	<input type="checkbox"/> 56-65	<input type="checkbox"/> 65 or more	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
--------------------------------	--------------------------------	--------------------------------	--------------------------------	--------------------------------	-------------------------------------	------------------------------

4. What country were you born in and what is your primary spoken language?

Country:	Language:
----------	-----------

5. What is your current employment status?

<input type="checkbox"/> Employed (fulltime)	<input type="checkbox"/> Employed (parttime)	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Employed	<input type="checkbox"/> Homemaker
<input type="checkbox"/> In Armed Forces	<input type="checkbox"/> Retired	<input type="checkbox"/> Student	<input type="checkbox"/> Disability
<input type="checkbox"/> Other:			

6. What is your primary mode of transportation? (check one)

<input type="checkbox"/> Walk	<input type="checkbox"/> Drive myself	<input type="checkbox"/> Someone else drives me	<input type="checkbox"/> Bus
-------------------------------	---------------------------------------	---	------------------------------

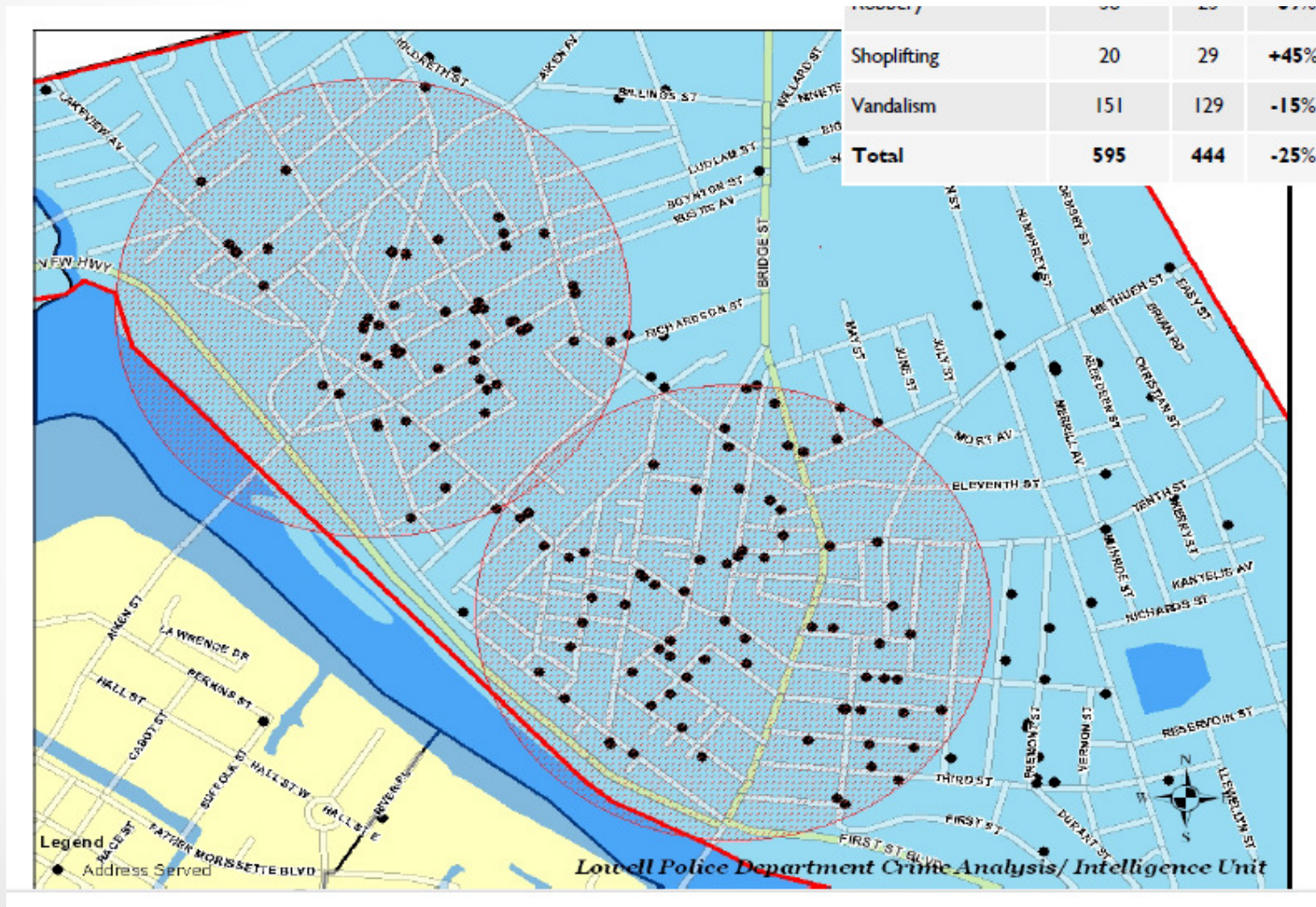
# Database Excerpt

Greater Lowell Boys and Girls Club							
Outcomes	Measures	Baseline	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Totals
Increase the # of new parents of Centralville youth who participate in an orientation at BGCGL	# of new parents of Centralville youth who participate in an orientation at BGCGL	0	3	15	30	66	114
Increase in #s of Centralville youth who participate in BGC programs	# of Centralville youth who participate in BGC programs	0	23	61 (38 new)	75 (14 new)	107 (32 new)	107
Increase in school engagement/ expectation of success	# of youth participating in educational programming including homework help, Project Learn, & other educational programs	0	23	61 (38 new)	75 (14 new)	107 (32 new)	107
Increase level of Physical Activity of Centralville youth	# of youth participating in 4 hours of physical activity through sports fitness and recreational programming	0	23 youth; 4 hours activity	55 youth (32 new); 4 hours activity	67 youth (12 new); 6 hours activity	99 youth (32 new); 6 hours activity	99 youth; 6 hours activity
Increase in # of youth receiving a fresh, healthy meal daily	# of youth receiving a fresh, healthy meal daily	0	23 youth served 920 meals/snacks	38 youth served 2166 meals/snacks	14 youth served 747 meals/snacks	32 youth served 768 meals/snacks	107 youth served 4601 meals/snacks
Increase in # of volunteer service hours working on Centralville neighborhood community service projects	# of volunteer service hours working on Centralville neighborhood community service projects	0	0	2 volunteers, 12 hours	5 volunteers; 25 service hours	10 volunteers; 20 service hours	17 volunteers; 57 total service hours
Increase in # of Centralville neighborhood service projects completed	# of Centralville neighborhood service projects completed	0	0	0	0	10 youth; 2 service projects	10 youth; 2 service projects
Increase in leadership roles of Centralville youth	# of youth participating in BGC leadership clubs	0	10	15	15	15	55



# Residents Served by CFIRE

## Hot Spots in Circles



# Outcomes & Recommendations

## Centralville Friends for Improvement, Revitalization and Enforcement (C-FIRE) Program Report: Youth Efforts

### FOCUS AREAS & OUTCOMES

 Environment	 Work Experience
 Truancy	 Criminal Behavior

#### Outcomes:

- Provide positive opportunities for at-risk youth to engage in creative programming, physical activities, and interact with peers in a positive and safe environment.
- Provide opportunities for at-risk youth to gain work experience
- Reduce truancy of Centralville students by 20%
- Intervene with at-risk youth to deter future criminal behavior

**DID YOU KNOW?**  
When the community focuses on youth, everyone benefits!



### KEY FINDINGS & ACHIEVEMENTS

152 Centralville youth participated in Boys and Girls Club activities:

- 144 involved in physical activities and fitness
- 152 in after school educational programming
- 152 received healthy meals/snacks

60 youth participated in leadership clubs at Boys and Girls Club

22 youth participated in a community service event



15 Centralville youth also completed 3 community service projects

The Career Center of Lowell has provided summer jobs to 36 youth since the start of the grant. These youth work for an average of 25 hours per week for 6 weeks in the summer and earn on average \$1,000-\$1,200.



38 youth participated in financial and employment workshops in order to learn skills and techniques that will help them better prepare for future employment opportunities

The International Institute has focused on school retention and reduction of truancy for non-native youth and families and has conducted 45 home visits and 62 contacts with parents and students in an effort to increase their school attendance rates and grades.



The City of Lowell Parks and Recreation Department has provided 618 youth with extensive summer programming in Centralville. Youth were able to take advantage of arts and crafts and various recreational activities. 109 Centralville youth were hired to support these programs.

Youth volunteering has increased steadily over the past 10 years, with 30% of youth participating in volunteer activities at least once a month. Teens in the US volunteer 2.4 billion hours annually – worth an estimated \$34.3 billion to the US economy.

Each young person who disconnects from school or work costs an estimated \$704,020 over his or her lifetime in lost earnings, lower economic growth, lower tax revenues and higher government spending.



# MILL CITY GROWS

Fosters food justice in the city of Lowell by creating urban food production sites, food access through markets, and empowering residents through education to grow their own food.

## Centralville Community Gardens

**18**  
Families

**2420**  
lbs of vegetables grown

18 garden plots were assigned to 18 gardeners and their families, totaling 69 individuals that benefited from the garden

**1700**  
hours worked

**School Garden**

A school garden with 5 raised beds was designed, planned and installed for the Robinson & McAuliffe Schools, making it two new gardens built in one year!

## Centralville Mobile Markets

over 220 lbs of produce distributed

Over 60 residents have attended mobile markets

**Mobile Market is up and running!**  
Mill City Grows distributed over 220 lbs of produce at two mobile markets between the period of August 2013 and June 2014.

**Many contributions of time, funds & skills!**  
Mill City Grows has contributed over 150 hrs of in-kind staff time. Also contributed were 100 hours of volunteer time, 100 hrs of intern time, & \$100 of seeds & plants contributed to the school garden.

All short term goals leading to the long-term outcomes of reducing neighborhood disrepair and increasing neighborhood revitalization efforts have been achieved by 75% or better

C-FIRE is a collaborative project funded by a Byrne Criminal Justice Innovation grant to decrease crime, increase resident safety, provide positive alternatives for at risk youth and enhance the Centralville neighborhood revitalization efforts

## Gardener Training Workshops

Mill City Grows offered 11 workshops on organic gardening techniques to the West Third Street gardeners at no cost.

**25** Centralville residents attended gardening workshops.

**11**

- WORKSHOP TOPICS**
- Safe Gardening in the City
  - Planning Your Small Garden for Big Results
  - Organic Pest & Disease Management
  - Building Better Soil
  - Extending the Growing Season
  - Preserving the Harvest

C-FIRE: Centralville Friends for Improvement,  
Revitalization and Enforcement

# COALITION FOR A BETTER ACRE



C-FIRE is a collaborative project funded by a Byrne Criminal Justice Innovation grant to decrease crime, increase resident safety, provide positive alternatives for at-risk youth and enhance the Centralville neighborhood revitalization efforts.

**\$1,563**  **\$18,756** 

## Mortgage Modifications



Seven homeowners achieved mortgage modifications resulting in a combined reduction in mortgage payments of \$1,563/month, or \$18,756 annually. The average reduction is \$300/month, ranging from \$24 to \$480/month per homeowner.

### 15 Centralville homeowners received 51 hours of counseling

They were able to discuss their financial situation and the options available for them to achieve sustainable homeownership. Seven achieved a positive outcome, 6 received modifications to their mortgage and 1 received a forbearance.



### 43 residents

43 Centralville residents were positively impacted by foreclosure counseling received. Most are low-income residents.

### C-FIRE CBA Program Mission

The Coalition for a Better Acre provides foreclosure prevention education, counseling and financial literacy to residents of Centralville

### Program At a Glance

**\$16,583**



1 homeowner saw a principal reduction of \$16,583

**67%**



of counseled homeowners are more likely to remain current on their mortgage 9 months after receiving a modification

**100%**



of counseled homeowners are expected to have sustainable home ownership over the long-term

**\$300**



average mortgage reduction received

# CITY OF LOWELL PARKS AND RECREATION



## TINY TOTS DAY PROGRAM

**20 CHILDREN ENROLLED**

11 of the 20 are from Centralville

## ACTIVITIES

Tiny Tots offers various activities including sports, gym, and arts & crafts projects. Parks and Rec contributed equipment to the program, like sports balls, jump ropes, and arts & crafts items.

**5-10 YEARS OLD**

**10-2PM WEEKLY ON SATURDAYS**

**40 YOUTH HIRED**

Lowell Parks and Recreation hired 40 Centralville youth with a goal of providing positive opportunities for at-risk youth and increasing youth attitudes and views of responsibility towards work. The number of Centralville youth hired increased from 17.1% last fall to 18.3% this year.



**90%** of youth felt very confident about their work readiness skills

**56 JOBS**

There were 56 summer & winter job opportunities available for Centralville youth. These positions were filled by 40 Centralville youth.

**90%**

of youth were confident about their communication skills on the job

**95%**

youth attendance rate during summer employment

The majority of youth hired had positive feelings about their job placement (85%). 80% thought they had improved their time management skills.

## SPORTS AND ARTS & CRAFTS

The number of children participating in programming increased with C-FIRE funding

**TENNIS**

47 youth participated in tennis: 41 at the Gage site & 6 at the McPherson site.



**SWIMMING**

61 youth participated in swimming at the McPherson site

**ARTS & CRAFTS**

88 youth participated in arts & crafts: 43 at the Gage and 45 at McPherson



**TAE KWON DO**

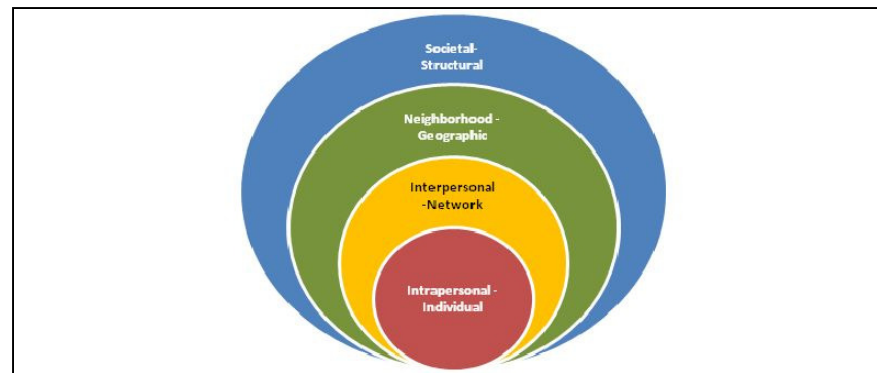
41 youth participated in tae kwon do at the Gage site

C-FIRE is a collaborative project funded by a Byrne Criminal Justice Innovation grant to decrease crime, increase resident safety, provide positive alternatives for at-risk youth and enhance the Centralville neighborhood revitalization efforts.

**C-FIRE**

# Our Approach

- ▶ Community Social Psychology background



- ▶ Partnership that developed over time
- ▶ Built on mutual respect and trust