



STRATEGIC PLAN

2008-2011

Past and Present

HISTORY

The Foundations of East Chicago have worked to improve the quality of life in East Chicago since first making grants in 1998 with funding of 2% of revenues from gaming partners and benefactors: first Showboat, then Harrah's and most recently Resorts East Chicago. As of late 2007, the Foundations have invested more than \$28 million in grants and contributions to East Chicago nonprofits, municipal agencies and scholarship recipients. The Foundations have also invested \$8.6 million to build an endowment now valued at \$ 13.5 million.

1997-2006

During the first decade, two separate foundations: The Twin City Education Foundation and the East Chicago Community Development Foundation operated with separate governing boards and grants committees. Large boards were established in the original articles of incorporation to ensure representation of diverse constituencies in the community. The two foundations have shared a single staff since inception.

Today

In 2007, with input from the Indiana Gaming Commission and the Indiana Attorney General, the Foundations instituted a number of reforms designed to reduce operating costs while preserving the non-political, community-based control of the gaming funds. This included the formal merger of the two foundations while preserving clear funding commitments to education and community development. New by-laws specify a governing board of no more than nine members with new limits of three terms.

While making changes to reduce operating costs and increasing grantmaking, the Foundations have also demonstrated increased transparency and accountability in all aspects of the financial stewardship of gaming revenues and the grantmaking process. The new website at <http://foundationsofeastchicago.org> and the expanded newsletters in 2007 reflect this commitment.

Pending appeal of a November 2007 decision by Marion County Superior Court on the City of East Chicago's action to withhold funds from the Foundations of East Chicago, new revenues from Resorts East Chicago are being held in escrow.

OVERALL STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

Members of the staff and the governing boards of the Twin City Education Foundation and the East Chicago Community Foundation met in retreat in the summer of 2006. During discussions held at that time, they recognized the need for a strategic plan to guide their work.

In early 2007 a Special Evaluation Committee of the newly merged foundations engaged JHR Resources to provide outside counsel to facilitate a strategic planning retreat and lead follow-up work with a volunteer committee to complete this strategic plan.

Members of the Board of Directors, the four grant sub-committees and senior staff members participated in the development of this plan.

Citizens who attended a Foundation-sponsored Town Meeting on June 18, 2007 enriched and informed the strategic planning process. Participants selected one of four discussion groups where they addressed issues and possible solutions to community needs. Topics were: education, community development, art and culture, and social services. Consultants also conducted interviews with a number of community leaders following the Town Meeting.

Board, staff and grant committee members next came to a consensus on East Chicago's critical priorities and drafted mission and vision statements for the Foundations during a retreat held August 16 and 17, 2007.

A smaller, volunteer strategic planning committee completed the planning document during meetings held throughout the fall and early winter of 2007.

After a final review by all participants, the board approved the strategic plan at its February 2008 meeting.

Lead consultants from JHR Resources engaged in this process were Jean Hardy Robinson, Alyson Parham and Marlanda English.



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Critical Priorities

VISION WITH VALUES

Vision Statement

A philanthropic force and community partner in East Chicago committed to building and sustaining a viable and safe community.

Mission

To strengthen and improve the quality of life in East Chicago through strategic grant making, providing leadership and serving as a community resource.

Core Values

The Foundations of East Chicago believe in:

- Trust, accountability, honesty and integrity
- A non-partisan spirit
- Responsible stewardship
- Education for advancement and self-sufficiency
- Cooperation
- Positive leadership
- Respectful treatment of applicants/grantees

CRITICAL PRIORITIES

The strategic planning committee analyzed data collected from the town meetings, board retreats and other sources to identify a number of issues affecting the East Chicago community. In several instances, nonprofit organizations or public agencies are already working to address these issues. After compiling a lengthy list of issues, the planning committee identified a number of critical priorities to be the focus of the Foundation over the next three years.

TOP PRIORITIES

The two top priorities identified by the planning committee are education and public safety. Other key priorities

include youth development, family support, health, financial independence and community development, and internal infrastructure and governance.

Education

The Foundation recognizes that education at all levels remains a critical issue for East Chicago and has supported educational achievement for more than ten years (granting \$5.8 million to the School City and a total of \$9.3 million to all education and scholarship programs).

However, this issue of an under-educated community is complex. The fact that the public schools are on statewide

administrator effectiveness

- c. Effective academic intervention programs for needy/at-risk students
- d. Vocational and technical education programs that prepare a more qualified workforce
- e. Increased parental involvement and understanding
- f. Increased community support for education
- g. More non-traditional students completing a GED or a post-secondary degree.

Public Safety

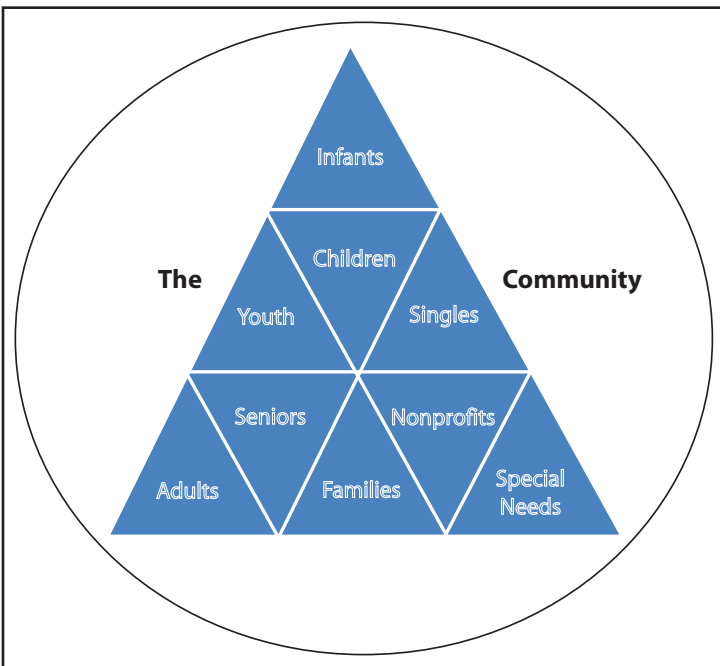
Public safety remains one of the common areas of concern for residents; yet, the Foundation has not received many grant applications seeking to address this critical community need. Some of the identified issues causing the community to feel unsafe include:

- a. People are fearful of the growing number of gang members.
- b. There is a perception that crime is rising in the community.
- c. Neighborhood watches and other community-based prevention programs have collapsed.
- d. There is a perception that police response to crime is inconsistent, and that communication about crime and police activity is unsatisfactory.
- e. Widespread building code violations create dangers such as home fires.
- f. Drug-related crimes are widespread.

The City's overall crime data for the past 6 years reinforce the perception that crime is high in East Chicago relative to state and national averages.

probationary status is evidence that East Chicago must address the challenges with the quality of the pre-K through grade 12 public education. The Foundation identified the following community needs:

- a. A reduction in the number of high school drop outs and an increase in the percentage of high school students graduating with a 'Core 40' diploma
- b. Improved teacher and school



Responding to the Community

The Foundations of East Chicago remain committed to serving the needs of individuals in the community.

Other Priorities



*Foundations of East Chicago’s Areas of Focus
As indicated by residents attending town meeting.*

OTHER PRIORITIES

Youth Development

The future of East Chicago rests on the development of today’s youth. Many residents believe local youth are being increasingly exposed to potential criminal activity and other antisocial behavior versus positive activities. Though a number of nonprofit and faith-based organizations strive to provide an array of out of school time sports, arts, cultural and mentoring programs for youth, residents believe there are insufficient and inconsistent access to quality programs and services targeting youth. Evidence of need includes:

- a. Continuing gang killings
- b. High school suspension and expulsion rates (>700 high school suspensions in 95-06).

Family Support

While local schools play an important role in educating area youth, the strength of the family structure is essential for reinforcing positive skills and behaviors among youth. Despite the number

of programs identified by community residents, most still agree that more programs are needed that specifically focus on helping to educate parents to support stronger families.

Residents of East Chicago also recognize that many young adults, when given the opportunity, will leave East Chicago upon graduation from high school or college to start their professional careers in other communities. The “brain-drain” occurring in East Chicago must be stopped and more young adults encouraged to stay in the community and assume one of many leadership roles in the community. Issues include:

- a. Poor connection between parents and schools
- b. Concern about inadequate support for seniors
- c. Lack of sustainable jobs weaken the family structure.

Health

The health and vitality of a community is linked to the health of its residents.

Disease, substance abuse, access to quality healthcare and environmental factors continue to impact the health of residents. Some of the key health needs identified include:

- a. Strong “umbrella” health-related programs (e.g., diabetes, substance abuse, food pantries)
- b. The shortage of health care professionals (especially nurses and technicians)
- c. Few education and prevention programs that support good health.
- d. Poor air and water quality
- e. Current levels of lead-based paint, asbestos, brown fields and pollution caused by dredging.

Financial Independence and Community Development

Viable communities foster environments that support individuals to remain or become financially independent and deploy a variety of community development strategies to become a sustainable community. Some of the needs impacting the level of financial independence for individuals and the success of community economic development strategies include:

- a. The high rate of unemployment and a growing number of people who rely on public aid for assistance.
- b. Rising taxes threaten to negatively impact the number of homeowners as more residents risk losing their homes.
- c. People are increasingly shopping in other communities for groceries and other household needs, resulting in a number of small businesses closing in the community.
- d. More residents in the community should be encouraged to start their own businesses as a strategy for creating new jobs and providing needed products and services in the community.
- e. Creation of an East Chicago “incubator” to support the development of new businesses.

Goals and Strategies

GOALS AND STRATEGIES

The Foundations of East Chicago will seek to achieve 9 primary goals supported by a number of key strategies. The strategies for each goal remain consistent with the three tenets of the mission statement:

- > *Strategic Grantmaking*
- > *Community Leadership*
- > *Community Resource*

1. Foster grantmaking excellence in serving the community of East Chicago with priorities of education and public safety.

> *Strategic Grantmaking:*

- a. Deploy a variety of grantmaking vehicles to reach the broadest possible group of organizations committed to addressing the critical needs in the community.

Consider:

- Requests for Proposals (RFPs) to address needs identified
- Invitations to apply for competitive/non-competitive grants in targeted areas
- Requests for Qualification (RFQs) to identify community resources
- Announcement of a multi-year Strategic Initiative with significant funding attached

- b. Increase the number and quality of site visits to grant applicants by Foundation staff and grant committee members.

> *Community Leadership:*

Identify and convene leaders in a full range of agencies, organizations and institutions offering programs and services consistent with the education and public safety priorities.

> *Community Resource:*

Train and inform members of grant committees on community issues and methods of evaluating proposals and programs.

2. Increase the capacity of local organizations and institutions to meet the needs of East Chicago's residents.

> *Strategic Grantmaking:*

- a. Offer capacity building grants.
- c. Offer general operating support grants.

> *Community Leadership:*

Bring leaders and models of 'best practices' into the community.

> *Community Resource:*

- a. Implement capacity building training and technical assistance designed to strengthen the operations and improve programmatic outcomes of service providers.
- b. Work with local libraries and community colleges to ensure that publications are available on topics of nonprofit management, resource development, etc.

3. Measure the impact of funding and leadership through ongoing evaluation.

> *Strategic Grantmaking:*

- a. Retain an outside resource partner (an educational institution or firm) to design this community assessment process and to develop appropriate evaluation tools.
- b. Utilize evaluation tools to benefit the Foundations and the community.

> *Community Leadership:*

Engage community leaders annually to assess community needs and the collective progress in addressing these needs.

> *Community Resource:*

Develop effective tools and training to help grantees evaluate their programs and their mission fulfillment.

4. Broaden respect for the Foundations through improved communication and dialogue with the community.

> *Strategic Grantmaking:*

Increase reporting of grants into the community using a variety of methods to enhance understanding of these investments.

> *Community Leadership:*

- a. Model openness and transparency through the publication of an annual report.
- b. Increase communication with constituencies including service providers, advocates and other funders.

> *Community Resource:*

Establish web links between the Foundations website and those of community service providers to increase community knowledge of available programs and services.

5. Strengthen partnerships with local, regional, statewide, and national entities.

> *Strategic Grantmaking:*

Provide funding opportunities to implement new collaborative initiatives that address critical priorities in the community.

> *Community Leadership:*

Bring in speakers and information about successful partnership models outside of East Chicago.

> *Community Resource:*

Serve as a convener in bringing together groups and individuals who are working on East Chicago issues.

6. Leverage additional public and private resources.

> *Strategic Grantmaking:*

Issue challenge grants or matching funds to support qualified nonprofits pursuing additional funding.

> *Community Leadership:*

Facilitate meetings with public and private funders and local nonprofits to encourage greater diversity in the funding base of community nonprofits.

Goals and Strategies (continued)

> *Community Resource:*

Provide links on the Foundation website that will provide easy access to public information and resources for nonprofit service providers and residents.

7. Improve internal operations and processes to ensure maximum efficiency and utilization of human and financial resources.

- a. Ensure that board members and grant committee members have sufficient tools, training and understanding of their roles and responsibilities.
- b. Clearly define staff roles in interfacing with the board and grant committees to ensure optimum efficiency.
- c. Staff will provide the board and grant committees with ongoing communication regarding the broader work of the Foundations of East Chicago.
- d. The board and staff will be guided by sound financial management and budgeting practices to reduce operating costs.
- e. The board will establish clear endowment building time-frames and goals.

8. Review board and grant committee selection guidelines to ensure diverse community representation for governance and grantmaking.

- a. Communicate the organizational representation of board and grant committee members on print and website listings.

- b. Catalog board and grant committee diversity by factors such as age, gender, ethnicity, work, and neighborhood residency, and work to fill gaps with subsequent invitations to serve in these roles.

9. Review this strategic plan annually to assess progress toward goals and to revise strategies as appropriate.

Staff will prepare statistics and documentation of progress toward goals for board review and action.

Internal Infrastructure and Governance

The merger of the two Foundations of East Chicago in 2007 has reduced operating expenses while maintaining representation by the diverse population of East Chicago. New by-laws have created a smaller board, fewer grant committees and term limits for board and grant committee members.

Even though it is a private foundation, it is important that those in decision-making roles are trained in best practices of community-based foundations and are engaged in discussions about East Chicago's critical priorities.

MEASUREMENTS FOR TOP PRIORITIES

2007 Retreat participants identified these possible measurements for evaluating top priorities:

Education Information

1. More information from the school system to the community on student academic progress and school improvement plans.
2. More information from nonprofits regarding educational support systems and programs.

Action

1. Monitor the graduation rate (core 40 diplomas) at Central High School.
2. Monitor and analyze the ISTEP scores and the % passing at each testing level.
3. Assess the number of high school graduates who enroll in a post-secondary education or training program.
4. Support efforts to increase and measure the number of non-traditional students from East Chicago who earn a GED or a post-secondary diploma.

5. Assess the number of kindergarten students who are prepared for school, either through early-childhood education programs or parent preparation.

Public Safety Information

1. More prompt, reliable information made available to the community about incidents of crime in East Chicago.
2. More information from the Police Department about gang activity and the successes of the gang unit in addressing gang activity.
3. More information from the Police Department about levels of domestic violence versus crime against strangers.

Action

1. Promote more neighborhood networks and initiatives to provide a sense of greater safety.
2. Support pilot programs to reduce crimes that have been proven successful in other communities.