

Other Completed Projects



Former HIV Prevention Community Capacity-Building Assistance (CBA) Projects managed by MURC coordinated HIV prevention capacity-building in African-American communities throughout the South and in Delaware, Maryland and the District of Columbia. While these projects had many goals in common, they each served different populations.

MSDH COVID-19 Survey Project

MURC assisted the Mississippi State Department of Health (MSDH) in developing, administering, and tabulating results from over 5,000 respondents providing feedback on the current Coronavirus COVID-19 health crisis in Mississippi. (May/June, 2020)

Delta Health Initiative HIV/AIDS Prevention Project

Delta Health Initiative HIV/AIDS Prevention Project was funded by the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services Health Resources and Services Administration through the Delta Health Alliance to provide HIV/AIDS prevention education to community-based organizations that provide HIV/AIDS prevention care and treatment services in the

Mississippi Delta. The project served the following counties: Bolivar, Coahoma, Carroll, DeSoto, Holmes, Humphreys, Issaquena, Leflore, Panola, Quitman, Sharkey, Sunflower, Tallahatchie, Tate, Tunica, Washington, Warren and Yazoo, and offered training to community-based organizations to increase their capacity to operate more efficiently, improve their organizational infrastructure and train staff to implement effective HIV/AIDS prevention programs. Training was offered on HIV 101, Small Group Facilitation for Youth and the following HIV/AIDS prevention behavioral interventions: Sisters Informing Sisters about Topics on AIDS (SISTA) and Video Opportunities for Innovative Condom Education and Safer Sex (VOICES/VOICES). These programs had been proven effective in reducing the acquisition and transmission of HIV/AIDS, and were approved for use by the U. S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

High Impact Program (HIP)

The High Impact Program (HIP) was designed to improve the health status of African-Americans in Hinds County, Mississippi who are disproportionately affected by HIV/AIDS, STDs, TB and substance abuse and where gaps in services and funding existed. Through the Mississippi Urban Research Center, HIP operated the Linked Network of Services (LNS), which made all services equally available. The LNS utilized a database of providers who identified the services they provided as well as their linkage collaboration needs. This database clustered together a network of providers to facilitate services and improve efforts to deal with consumers holistically. HIP operated a 24-hour toll-free hotline, which allowed consumers to access assistance in prevention, treatment and care. The hotline was managed by professional HIP staff who made referrals based upon consumers' needs.

Partnership to Reduce Fatalities in Minority Communities

The Mississippi Urban Research Center partnered with the Mississippi Department of Transportation and the Governor's Office of Highway Safety to respond to the national crisis of seatbelt nonuse by African-Americans, which results in a higher rate of motor vehicle fatalities for them than for other groups. The Center focused on assessing the knowledge, attitudes and behaviors of African-Americans in Mississippi with regard to seat belt use and motor vehicle safety. Additionally, MURC conducted research, and created and promoted health education resources to motivate drivers and passengers to use seat belts and child safety seats more often and more correctly.

MURC Special Report

Mississippi Urban Research Center

College of Public Service

Jackson State University

Using Innovation to Build a Better Jackson



Summary of the September 26th, 2018 MURC

Community Development Forum

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Introduction

On Wednesday, September 26, 2018, the Mississippi Urban Research Center (MURC) hosted a forum on community development entitled “Using Innovation to Build a Better Jackson” at the Downtown Campus of Jackson State University. The event was part of a series of activities focused on Community and Economic Development as a MURC research priority. These research efforts are designed to determine how community development models can be explored, adjusted, and applied to help solve socio-economic challenges facing the City of Jackson and other urban areas in Mississippi. MURC’s purpose for this particular event was to bring together community development professionals and organizations, community members, academics, and other stakeholders to discuss innovative community development solutions to help improve the quality of life in Jackson.

Background

Since the late 1980s, community development in Jackson has largely utilized the community development corporation (CDC) model. The CDC model focuses primarily on housing, as well as economic and infrastructure development via public services. There is mixed evidence regarding the effectiveness of some community development efforts in Jackson, with some ongoing projects like Farish Street and West Jackson struggling to produce tangible results. A review of city-wide quality of life indicators also raise questions regarding the effectiveness of current community development models (Source: U.S. Census Bureau American Fact Finder, MS Department of Education, and Moody’s Analytics).

Survey Findings

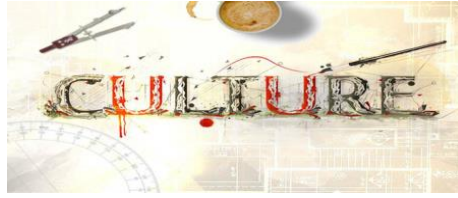
The forum began with a short presentation giving a brief overview of the evolution of community development in Jackson, and discussing the results of a survey of local community development organizations conducted by MURC in the summer of 2018. Following this report was a panel discussion and a “talkback session” with the audience.

Conclusion

For the City of Jackson, the evolution of community development represents a unique opportunity to analyze outcome evidence and create a new agenda, which is more informed, more inclusive, and more strategic than ever before. The challenges facing the City of Jackson and other urban areas require stakeholders and decision-makers to be prudent and bold in adapting models for community development, and to continue creating new models using data and the growing knowledge base which built the existing models. MURC plans to benefit the people and communities of the city of Jackson by facilitating numerous stakeholders in working together in new and unprecedented ways to craft innovative approaches to community development. In addition to the upcoming work group meetings, there are also plans for another forum (to be held at a different venue, and comprised of more community members as participants) in the spring of 2019.

Jackson Medical Mall

Arts & Cultural Assets Mapping Project



This is a collaborative project with the Jackson Medical Mall Foundation and Jackson State University/Mississippi Urban Research Center to determine what arts and cultural activities currently exist, and are needed in a target area surrounding the Jackson Medical Mall located in Jackson, Mississippi. The Mississippi Urban Research Center (JSU/MURC) will perform the following activities in support of the “Arts & Cultural Assets Mapping Project”:

- * Review of Existing Inventory Materials --- including secondary data sources identifying existing cultural assets in targeted area (e.g., census data, government records, tourism records, business records)
- * Survey Public, Private, and Non-Profit Organizations --- including designing and administering survey instruments to organizations regarding existing and desired cultural assets in targeted area (e.g., city/county officials, neighborhood, homeowners, business associations & community groups)
- * Conduct Neighborhood Canvassing --- to identify neighborhood specific arts and cultural assets at the community level.
- * Conduct Neighborhood Focus Group Meetings --- to gather citizen/community input on existing and desired arts and cultural assets.
- * GIS Mapping of Assets --- where possible, geo-code identified cultural assets and prepare maps identifying the assets and their location.
- * Report Analysis and Preparation --- collect, analyze, and interpret findings from inventorying, canvassing, and focus group activities.

RAND Corporation/Jackson Public Schools/JSU-MURC

Research Initiative

“Developing Knowledge about What Works to Make Schools Safe: Implementation and Evaluation of Tools for Life (TFL) in Jackson Public School District in Mississippi”



This Project will determine whether the “Tools for Life (TFL)” intervention, when integrated into existing school practices with fidelity, can positively affect school climate and safety in Jackson (Mississippi) Public School District. The research project will be conducted over a period of two years beginning January 01, 2016.

The Mississippi Urban Research Center (JSU/MURC) will perform the following activities in support of the “Tools for Life (TFL)” intervention:

- Primary data collection for RAND’s in-depth case studies in 12 purposefully selected treatment and control elementary and middle schools to document variation in implementation of “Tools for Life” among treatment schools and to contextualize findings from the effectiveness evaluation.
 - Conduct individual interviews and collective focus group sessions with key school administrative, instructional, and support staff for the purpose of gathering information as to effective strategies for making schools safe.
 - Conduct structured observations of open spaces, hallways, and classroom activities to observe methods and practices being used to facilitate and/or promote school safety.
- These structured observations will occur at two points in time during the academic school

year (i.e., fall and spring semesters) over two academic years (2016-17 and 2017-18).

- Recruit, train, and supervise personnel needed to conduct data collection, interviews, focus groups, and structured observational activities.

2016 Survey of Jackson



The City of Jackson is the capital city for the State of Mississippi. It serves as the state's major hub in the areas of government, finance, education, transportation, and medical facilities. It is home to more than 173,000 people. After seeing its population peak around 202,000 residents in the early 1980s, the City of Jackson's population has seen a steady decline while its surrounding suburbs have grown significantly. I Jackson has loss approximately 82,000 White residents between 1970 and the year 2010; while gaining approximately 76,000 Black residents during this same period. As suggested by these opposing migration patterns, there seems to be a difference in viewpoints regarding the desirability of living in Jackson.

The goal for undertaking this survey project was to gather statistically valid evidence that could help analyze socio-economic changes occurring in the City of Jackson. By collecting, analyzing, and reporting this study's findings, the Mississippi Urban Research Center at Jackson State University seeks to fulfill its mission of using basic and applied research to help solve problems facing Mississippi's urban areas. One of the first steps in solving these problems is to be able to separate perceptions-from-reality, facts-from-myths. This first step was taken with the

2016 survey of the City of Jackson. The survey of 578 persons has a margin of error of +/- 4.67 with a 95% confidence level .

From the perspective of local policymakers, it is often difficult to separate perceptions, myths, and facts when developing and implementing public policy initiatives. Therefore, research briefs emerging from the survey are designed to help accurately gauge, analyze, and interpret citizens' perceptions in terms of their public policy implications.

Findings were very positive for quality of life, standard-of-living, safety, and trust in police officers, the police department, and the judicial system including courts. Approximately 91% of the respondents reported a good to very good quality of life. However, a smaller percentage (67%) reported an improved standard of living. Although this percentage is smaller, it is noteworthy that over three fourth of the respondents expressed that their standard of living improved.

U.S. Census Bureau Decennial Population Data --- 1970, 1980, 1990, 2000, 2010.

ii Blacker and Poorer? An Examination of White Flight from the City of Jackson. Amechi Bowser and Sam Mozee, Jr. The MURC Digest. Volume 7, Issue 1. March, 2012. 7, Issue 1. March, 2012.