

Creating a **Community Agenda** for Volusia & Flagler Counties:

Community Stakeholders Utilizing Data to Define a Shared Community Vision

Primary Goal

The Volusia/Flagler **Community Agenda** project will engage a broad group of community stakeholders in the process of examining empirical data and establishing priorities to create a shared vision for local health and human services that will be used to determine local funding and planning decisions.

Key Elements for Success

- The project must be led by a broad and balanced group of community stakeholders representing:

citizens of all ages	elected officials
consumers	community/neighborhood leaders
funding agencies	faith community
providers/human service professionals	business people
- Critical issues and targets must be based on a review of empirical data, not anecdotal information
- Local funding bodies must commit to utilizing the **Community Agenda** as their guideline for funding allocations
- Long term resources must be committed to support the project and the annual reviews/updates
- Local planning efforts must utilize or be complementary to the established **Community Agenda**

Why conduct this project?

- **We can:** the technology and data is available to us
- **We should:** all great communities do it
- **We must:** our limited resources demand the most effective utilization possible

Parameters of the Community Agenda

The **Community Agenda** will examine the health and human service issues that impact Volusia and Flagler County citizens, according to the following framework:

Creating a Brighter Future for Our Children and Youth

- Preparing Children to Enter School Ready to Learn
- Providing Opportunities for Positive Youth Development
- Assisting Children and Youth in Crisis

Building Stronger Families and Neighborhoods

Creating Independence for Elderly and Disabled

- Caring for At-Risk Elderly Individuals
- Helping Individuals with Disability and Special Needs

Responding To Personal Crisis and Disaster

- Helping Victims of Abuse and Neglect
- Meeting Basic Needs for Food, Shelter and Clothing

Promoting Wellness and Protecting Our Health

Process to Create and Implement a Community Agenda

"indicators . . . are most effectively used when imbedded in a process of civic engagement that includes visioning, strategic planning, advocacy, implementation, and assessment of program results."

—David Swain, JCCI

1. CIVIC ENGAGEMENT: convene a group of community stakeholders to participate in the project

Stakeholders must include a balance of:

- citizens of all ages
- consumers
- funding agencies
- providers/human service professionals
- elected officials
- community/neighborhood leaders
- faith community
- business people

2. DIAGNOSIS: analyze data to identify priority areas of concern

Step One: Decide on a set of indicators to review

Step Two: Collect trusted empirical data for each indicator (5⁺-year trend data)

Step Three: Stakeholders analyze data trends and identify priority areas of concern

3. VISION: determine desired outcomes for priority areas of concern. Set 3-5 year targets for priority areas of concern.

4. ACTION: develop and implement solutions to the areas of concern to reach desired outcomes.

Action steps include:

- determining local funding allocations
- advocating for policy, practice or system improvements
- leveraging outside funding
- improving, enhancing or expanding current programs and services
- improving outcome measures for programs and services

REPEAT ANNUALLY

Evaluate

The Catalyst: In the beginning of 2004, the One Voice for Volusia coalition created a directory of 26 local coalitions concerned with children and families as part of their strategic plan. A meeting was convened in February to explore collaborative opportunities among the various organizations. After much discussion, the group decided to pursue a county-wide, data-based needs assessment as their key project.

Project Model: The initial needs assessment committee formed by the “Connecting Coalitions” group reviewed several implementation models from across the country. The model that was selected was utilized by the community of Jacksonville Florida for over 8 years before it was merged into their broader “Quality of Life Progress Report.” Jacksonville Community Council, Inc. (JCCI) led their Community Agenda project and is not only a neighbor to Volusia and Flagler Counties, but is a nationally recognized leader in the field of social indicators and community based studies.

About JCCI: JCCI is a nonpartisan civic organization that engages diverse citizens in open dialogue, research, consensus building and leadership development to improve the quality of life and build a better community in Northeast Florida and beyond. For over thirty years, JCCI has been serving as a "citizen think tank" and their staff and citizen volunteers have published over 60 community based studies.

- JCCI has been named a Solution for America and a United Nations Best Practice.
- Suzanne Morse, in Smart Communities (2004), says that " the type of dialogue created and the methods used by the Jacksonville Community Council Inc. are transferable to and usable in any community, whatever its composition, character, problems, and issues."
- The Pew Partnership for Civic Change announced that JCCI's work "is essential for every community."

The Jacksonville Human Services Council: The Human Services Council (HSC) was created in 1982 as a result of a JCCI study on the coordination of human services. The Human Services Council, staffed by JCCI, is made up of the major funders of human services in Duval County and Northeast Florida. HSC partners include:

City of Jacksonville	Department of Juvenile Justice
Duval County Health Department	Jacksonville Regional Chamber of Commerce
Duval County Public Schools	Jacksonville Children’s Commission
WorkSource	Northeast Florida Area Agency on Aging
Department of Children & Families (D4)	United Way of Northeast Florida

The purpose of the HSC is to ensure efficient delivery of human services through ongoing communication, coordination and planning of its major funders. Lead staff from each of the HSC partners meet regularly to discuss human service issues, to coordinate plans and to collaborate on joint projects.

For More Information

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