

Des Moines Iowa Site  
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The following are recommendations for future projects to be supported or hosted on behalf of the OCBI.

During the last six months numerous meetings have been both held and attended by the project coordinators of the Des Moines OCBI.

After careful analysis of meeting minutes and conversations, the following areas are recommended for further concentration going forward.

It is also recommended that the commission look at a local access television show, to look at the work being done around the state, and ways to promote statewide collaborations and opportunities for knowledge sharing and outreach, also looking at potential projects to be implemented throughout the state. A marketing campaign needs to be implemented immediately.

The below outlined (5) points are the recommended areas of concentration for the OCBI.

- **Health---Statewide HIV/Aid Screening and Education.**
- **Health---Hepatitis C--Statewide Screening and Education**
- **Community---Statewide Calendar with community links**
- **Education---EBT--Educational Brain Trust**
- **Community/Legacy--- Statewide Mentorship Program--Leadership building--passing the torch.**

#### 1. Health--Statewide HIV/Aid Screening

There is nothing new to the statement that HIV/Aids is rapidly growing in the African American community. What can be unique is some different strategies to address education and screening within the community. There has always been a stigma that HIV/Aids is a gay disease. What we have also seen historically is that funding has brought groups together to address this issue, and the moment that

the funds dry up, the rallying cry becomes silent. We do not have the luxury of silence. What is needed is a statewide conference or gathering hosted on behalf of the OCBI to look at accessing both churches and local non-profits to host events and seminars to offer free and confidential testing on an ongoing basis, not just at event. There is a need to develop a speaker's bureau of those living with and affected by HIV/Aids, to be available statewide to travel the state and personalize the affect(s) of not knowing ones status, and being a reference point for the groups that we hope to bring together with this permanent call to action. The Department of Health and Human Services Regional office is in Kansas City; the Deputy Director is Mr. Tommy Amico, he would be the one to contact about potential funding, to host a statewide educational event. There has been a conversation held with him and he is interested. The majority of cities with large African American populations have Black Ministerial Alliances, or groups of our Pastors that could come together, under the umbrella of the OCBI to talk about prevention and education.

Back in the early 90's there was a group that was meeting to review the numbers of new cases, looking for pockets of new people contracting the disease and indentifying areas where both outreach and education need to be increased. This group had members at the table from around the state, and they met quarterly.

Through conversations and meetings attended it has been recommended that a meeting or group such at this be convened and that community level supports be given to local non-profits with the requesters being the local Minister/Pastor lead groups or associations.

On a local level, we are encouraging the OCBI to work with the Department of Public Health, to re-convene the minority health coalition to work at addressing this urgent concern.

An additional strategy would be to test men and women that are returning to the community following an incarceration. This could be an interesting indicator, with the high number in over representation

The following are people that should be contacted to have additional conversations related to this potential project.

- Janice Edmonds-Wells -Des Moines, Iowa-DM Public Health
- Janice Lane- Des Moines, Iowa - Children and Families of Iowa
- Steve Fields-Des Moines, Iowa - Employee and Family Resources
- Rick Kozin -Des Moines, Iowa -
- Dedric Doolen- Cedar Rapids, Iowa -NAACP
- Debra Carr-- Des Monies, Iowa-ISED
- Ora McQueen - Des Moines, Iowa

- TC -Davenport, Iowa --NAACP
- Tommy Amico--Kansas City, Department of Health and Human Services.
- Aid Project of Central Iowa, Des Moines
- Other State Aids Projects, statewide

A connection also needs to be made with the American Red Cross, to look at opportunities to host classes geared at African Americans throughout the state, we need to be certified as both instructors and trainers on the curriculum and program specifically targeted at African Americans.

Planned Parenthoods through the state should be contacted to support this effort. The request to them would be to make condoms available for free at events, non-profits and churches to help slow the numbers of new case within the state.

- Contact: Mrs. Jill June, President and CEO of the State of Iowa Planned Parenthood. (Des Moines)

## 2. Hepatitis C--Health --Statewide Screening and Education

The number of African Americans contracting Hepatitis C that we are aware of is alarming. The numbers that we are not aware of are of grave concern.

With the increasing number of the population returning from an incarcerated status, it is unfortunate that we are also seeing an increase in the number of reported cases of Hepatitis C cases.

The recommendations are as follows, as there does not appear to be any agency or organization, designating time to address this issue.

This concern falls under the category of health and education.

- Compose an educational piece that can come out in the OCBI newsletter.
- Convene a group of people interested in working on education and knowledge sharing in regards to Hepatitis-C.
- Host events in tandem with events like take a loved one to the doctor day, health fairs, etc.
- Find a person(s) living with Hepatitis C around the state and profile them in articles, events, public access television.

This area has generated a lot of conversation, but appears at least locally, not to have has a lot of attention paid to outreach and education.

Working with the group potentially convened for the HIV/Aids outreach throughout the state makes sense in combination with this effort.

The following are people to contact in this effort:

- Mikki Steirs, Des Moines, Iowa, Broadlawns
- Penny Dickey, Des Moines, Iowa, Planned Parenthood
- Joyce Townser, Kansas City, Deputy Director Women's Department of Public.

### 3. Community-Statewide Calendar with community links

Numerous people in the community have large email lists, and are requested to send out community updates and events. There needs to be a central location that can be accessed throughout the state, of events and information. The Status of African American website could develop statewide links that would put together a statewide community calendar. This effort would be helpful to support all events, encourage planning ahead, could list save the dates for planning purposes and facilitate events being spread out instead of events schedule on the same date and time, when the opportunity might exist for them to be spread out on calendars, hence encouraging better attended at all events. This effort can be worked on in conjunction with a potential television show, radio spots or a month press piece that would have a statewide community calendar. It would be beneficial to have local African American based media at the table such as the following.

- KJMC ---Larry Neville's-Des Moines
- KBBG---Lou Porter or Deborah Berry-Waterloo
- The Bystander---Jerald Brantley, Jonathan Narcisse, Des Moines

Community -Statewide information sharing could also be encourage through a bi-annual meeting being hosted with elected officials around the state, to discuss events and issues that happening around the state, this would also encourage, collaboration.

### 4. Education-Educational Brain Trust

A group of concerned citizen came together this fall to address the disparities in education of our African American youth. We are over represented in suspension and disciplinary action on all levels. Our children are not graduating and those looking toward post secondary education are being adequately supported.

The Des Moines School District mirrors the majority of like school districts throughout the state in the above mentioned concerns.

Parents, concerned citizens and community leader came together along with the local school administration with a plan to encourage advocating of the parents, to support their children.

Town hall type meeting were held to identify the problems, and once the group came to some consensus it was determined that the first step was to bring parent and community together along with school officials.

These meeting where held at varied times and locations to encourage attendance. Parents that were able to attend, committed to training, and then received a t-shirt and a \$25.00 stipend. The training consisted of ways for parents to advocate for their children and their educational opportunities. Parents were encourage to then be a parent of a computer class that taught them how to access, the infinite campus, or computer related materials, to find out their children's grades, attendance and correspondence opportunity for their children.

Parents will continue to receive trainings, and be coached and mentored to attend conferences, school board meetings and other school functions that could best serve their child(ren).

This process is planned to and can be easily replicated throughout the state. Parent empowerment, can lead to lasting involvement in the educational systems. This opportunity will lead to systemic change.

The following are people to contact to work with other communities around the state to replicate this model.

- Paulette Wiley, Director-EBT-Des Moines
- Gretchen Woods, OBCI project coordinator, Cabinet Member EBT, NAACP Youth Council-Des Moines, Iowa
- Kim Carr-Irvin, OBCI project coordinator, Cabinet Member EBT, COO, Creative Visions.
- Bobretta Brewton, Cabinet EBT, Des Moines, Iowa
- Nancy Woods, Ask Resource, Cabinet EBT, Des Moines, Iowa

5. Community-State Legacy Building mentorship/opportunities to pass the torch.

There have been many opportunities to honor and document the legacy of our leaders. What is not happening locally and statewide, is a formal effort to build individual legacies of our leaders through mentorship and passing of the torch. Looking around the state it can easily be noted that the majority of our leaders are more senior than youthful. If we do not make a formal effort to take mentor our leadership, it will be both inexperienced and ineffective in the very near future. The OBCI has the opportunity through the leadership of the Status of African American, to host a gathering, to bring the elders together, along with some that either they identify or the community identifies to pass the torch too. The pairing would be documented and agree to work together on community issues, and meet for at least 24 months, bi-weekly. These pairings and meetings would give the opportunity for mentorship, coaching and real knowledge based learning that would lend itself to real grass roots growing of up and coming leadership. This would also give the blessing of elders which is needed in several of our communities.

The recommendations in this preliminary report are pretty simplistic. The need to go from talk to action was very apparent in the meetings and conversations that were held over the last six months.

The project coordinators throughout the state have had the opportunity to meet and convene multiple meetings to request the thoughts and suggestions of others within their communities. The above list of suggestions is just a starting point of where to begin, and areas that can be impacted with little funding. Bringing together resources and collaborating throughout the state will allow us to make a big impact in a short amount of time.

I would like to see the opportunity for the project coordinators to come back together and share the findings in each of the locations.

I would also suggest that a small amount of funding be sought to address at least one of the suggestions for projects at each site.