

**The Lower East Side
Community Partnership Initiative (CPI)
Coalition Strategic Plan: Strengthening Our Families
September, 2007
D-R-A-F-T**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Lower East Side is made up of several communities representing extraordinary cultural, social and economic diversity. Throughout the neighborhood a rich array of community organizations exists that is capable of supporting and enriching the lives of all individual and family residents. However two major improvements would significantly advance their effectiveness: first, more effective collaboration among all the community organizations; and second, stronger communication between these organizations and the government agencies responsible for funding and/or ensuring the delivery of these programs and services. In this first phase of work, University Settlement and the Chinese American Planning Council co-convened the formation of a new Coalition and coordinated the development of recommendations to achieve these objectives.

The Lower East Side Community Partnership Initiative (CPI) has utilized an inclusive approach to considering these major challenges in response to the objectives outlined by the NYC Administration for Children's Services (ACS). This draft plan outlines our approach and represents the ideas of many dedicated professionals. When approved, this plan will serve as the framework upon which to conduct a more rigorous planning and implementation process over the coming year.

Several principles/objectives guided our interactions and discourse:

- Promote a strengths-based orientation towards all people, particularly families, immigrants, low-income persons, and children and youth, valuing their contributions to their own lives and to the broader community.
- Accelerate family reunification through greater community participation and support of the family visitation process, encouraging all stakeholders involved with the child in placement to utilize additional family visiting venues identified among the LES CPI partner agencies.
- Encourage cultural and linguistic competency among service providers and City agencies, through training and the recruitment of bilingual and culturally competent staff at foster care agencies, preventive contractors, at ACS and other City agencies.
- Actively work to break down the "silos" that currently separate child care programs, early intervention initiatives, preventive services, foster care agencies, and other service providers within our neighborhoods. Promote information sharing and active cross-referrals on an ongoing basis.

- Encourage prospective foster/adoptive parents in the neighborhood (particularly those who are Spanish- and Chinese-speaking) to take in children and youth, and advocate for policies that would maximize the number of quality foster homes available on the Lower East Side.
- Promote mutual accountability and evaluation in order to improve the outcomes for at-risk children, youth and their caregivers in this community.

In alignment with ACS’ contract deliverables, the LES CPI Coalition proposes to work together to implement the following strategies:

A. Work Group #1

Organizational Structure and Governance

Strategy #1: Establish an Advisory Committee for the LES CPI Coalition that represents the various service providers and stakeholders, cultural and linguistic competencies, and areas of expertise that strive to provide a strong safety net for at-risk children, youth and caregivers/parents in this community. Empower the Committee to oversee the activities of the CPI Coalition.

Strategy #2: The Advisory Committee and the Community Liaison/Coordinator will work together to create an action plan for outreach and public education on behalf of the CPI Coalition.

Strategy #3: Empower and support the Community Liaison/Coordinator to solicit the feedback of relevant community members (caregivers/parents, children and youth, and service providers), recognizing their distinctive viewpoints and encouraging ongoing communication with all constituent groups.

Strategy #4: Develop creative, nontraditional outreach strategies to broadly disseminate the products of the coalition’s work, including a suggested resource directory. Create new opportunities for service providers and parent/caregiver groups to work together.

B. Work Group #2

Bridging the Gap between Community-Based Child Care, Preventive Services, Foster Care, and Other Critical Services

ACS Contract Deliverables:

1. Promote innovative approaches to a coordinated service delivery system that will bridge the gap between Head Start, child care and community-based preventive services.

5. Enable child care and Head Start programs to refer a minimum of ten (10) community residents per quarter to preventive services agencies or other community based organizations and/or enable preventive service agencies or community based organizations to refer at least ten (10) community residents per quarter for child care and/or Head Start programs.

Strategy #1: Develop a mechanism and procedure to promote cross-referrals between preventive service providers and early childhood programs.

Strategy #2: Develop and implement a training action plan for early childhood providers, caregivers/parents, and other providers unfamiliar with preventive services to enhance knowledge about culturally and linguistically competent family support services.

Strategy #3: Facilitate at least quarterly meetings between early childhood providers and preventive service providers to promote relationship building and cross-referrals.

C. Work Group #3

Greater Community Participation in Family Conferences

ACS Contract Deliverable:

2. Participate in family conferences regarding the needs, services, and safety plans appropriate to particular families' circumstances. The Contractor shall attend no less than ten (10) family team conferences held in the community and/or make referrals to provide resources to support families.

Strategy #1: Work with preventive contractors, ACS Family Permanency Unit and foster care agencies to understand the particular challenges for families engaged at different stages of family conferences.

Strategy #2: Tap into the best practices and outcomes from the Casey Team Decision Making (TDM)/Family Team Conference Model in anticipation of a new family conference model that will come online for the Lower East Side/Chinatown in the future.

D. Work Group #4

Supporting Foster/Adoptive Parents and Recruitment

ACS Contract Deliverables:

3. Support existing foster and adoptive parents and recruit new ones in communities where they are needed.

6. The Contractor shall recruit at least twenty (20) new foster parents in one year and/or recruit 10 new foster parents in one year and host at least four (4) events to recruit foster parents from the community per quarter.

Strategy #1: Develop stronger systems of support for existing and prospective foster/adoptive parents.

Strategy #2: Engage existing foster/adoptive parents in an effort to recruit new foster/adoptive parents.

Strategy #3: Solicit feedback from service providers and caregivers/foster parents about foster/adoptive parent needs specific to the LES.

E. Work Group #5

Supporting Family Visits and Family Reunification

ACS Contract Deliverable:

4. *Facilitate visits between parents, children, and siblings in foster care. The Contractor shall participate in ten (10) visits and/or provide at least two (2) venues within which such visits may be conducted.*

Strategy #1: Have service providers partner with foster care agencies and The New York Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (The NYSPCC) if appropriate to recruit individuals for the Visit Coach Training Program. In this partnership, ACS' Office of Family Visits and/or foster care agencies working on the LES can train and certify Visit Coaches to facilitate family visits.

Strategy #2: Develop a list of LES community-based organizations that are currently providing family activities who are willing to provide fun and nurturing activities and serve as 'hosts' for family visits.

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I. INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

A. Demographic Profile

Manhattan's Community Board 3 covers the Lower East Side (LES) and part of Chinatown, with the boundaries being: 14th Street on the north, the East River on the east and the south; Fourth Avenue and the Bowery on the west, extending to Baxter and Pearl Streets and the Brooklyn Bridge south of Canal Street. Community Board 3 is one of the largest and most densely populated districts in New York City according to Community Board 3 (CB 3) Manhattan's District Needs Statement for FY 08.

The image of this community as a rapidly-gentrifying area is contradicted by the more complex reality of considerable economic and social diversity. Seventeen percent of CB 3's population is under 18 years of age. According to the 2000 US Census, 35% of the population is Asian/Pacific Islander; 28% are white non-Hispanic, 27% are Hispanic, and 7% African American/Other. The NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) reports that 67.0% of mothers in the LES are foreign-born, far above the NYC average of 52.3%.

The Lower East Side and Chinatown community has a 28% poverty rate, vast tracts of public housing for the lowest-income residents (those near, at or below the poverty level), and many families new to the United States. The neighborhood has high drop-out rates in local high schools, low educational levels for a majority of adults, and 37.8% of individuals over age 5 reported that they were not proficient in English. Of these, 62% reported that their primary language is Chinese while 28.9% reported that their primary language is Spanish or Spanish Creole, according to the latest profile for this community produced by Community Board 3.

Development and gentrification have rapidly accelerated over the last ten years, causing pressure on low-income residents and changing the flavor of the neighborhood. The FY 08 Needs Statement concurs that "gentrification in Community Board 3 and the severe lack of affordable housing for individuals, families and seniors" pose major challenges for the area.

Despite the clustering of existing early childhood and daycare programs in this area, the CB 3 FY 08 Needs Statement notes that "Participation levels for pre-school programs could benefit tremendously from improved outreach and education for parents of young children." Moreover, the Needs Statement highlights that "our young people would benefit greatly from expanded employment opportunities, training and mentoring for youth, more DYCD BEACON and OST programs, alternative schools and trade schools."

Major health problems are common on the Lower East Side and include asthma, HIV, TB, Hepatitis, and substance abuse. In zip code 10009, 22% of LES residents reported to the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) that their health is fair or poor, as compared with 19% overall for NYC residents and 12% in the U.S. The average annual HIV-related death rate on the Lower East Side was 50% higher than the NYC overall rate. DOHMH reported that 1,740 LES residents were living with HIV/AIDS.¹

The LES has a high prevalence of alcohol and substance abuse. The NYC Office of Alcohol and Substance Abuse (OASAS) ranked zip code 10009 (Lower East Side) as above average risk for Adult Drug Exposure, with 199 adult drug related hospital discharges, 43 adult drug arrests and 62 OASAS drug abuse treatments.

Many children on the Lower East Side suffer from abuse and neglect, with 7,288 abuse and neglect reports filed in Manhattan in 2003.² In the same year, 11% of new preventive service cases in Manhattan were initiated on the LES by the NYC Administration for Children's Services (ACS). In 2003, 409 children were placed in foster care on the LES, such that 34% of children entering foster care in Manhattan were from the LES.³

These figures have decreased in more recent years, but are still cause for concern. According to ACS figures compiled as of May 14, 2007, there were 170 foster care placements from the LES in Calendar Year 2006, with 291 children currently in foster care from this area as of March, 2007, of which 44% are 13 years old or older. Of the LES children in foster care as of January 2007, 53.3% are ages 12 and over; 26.7% are ages 1-5; 16.9% are ages 6-11; and 3.1% are under the age of 1. The racial/ethnic breakdown of the 195 LES children in foster care as of January, 2007 is as follows: 44.1% African American; 42.6% Hispanic; 3.6% White; 4.1% Asian; and 11% Other. According to ACS staff, there are currently 8 Chinese American children from the Lower East Side out of 371 Chinese American children in foster care in Manhattan. The types of facilities in which the LES children in foster care are broken down as follows: 42.6% in foster boarding homes; 28.5% in kinship homes; 15.4% in congregate care; and 1.2% in other facilities.

B. History of Collaborations

The Lower East Side's community-based organizations have developed a rich tradition of collaboration, both locally and among city-wide coalitions. A primary challenge continues to be that many of these coalitions work in isolation, based on specific subject matter, and there has not been a sustainable mechanism for promoting relationships on an ongoing basis.

Partners in the new LES CPI Coalition have collaborated/played lead roles in the following collaborations:

- ACT NOW Coalition
- Addiction Treatment Provider Association
- Adolescents Pregnancy Prevention on the Lower East Side

¹ New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.

² The Citizens' Committee for Children, *Keeping Track of New York City's Children 2005*.

³ Ibid.

- Asian American Federation of NY
- Charles B. Wang Community Health Center’s Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Program
- Child Care Inc.’s Early Childhood Initiative
- Child Welfare League of America
- Chinese Community Social Service and Health Council (CCSSHC)
- Coalition of Asian American Children & Families (CACF)
- Coalition of Behavioral Health Agencies Children's Committee
- Coalition of Urban Youth
- Committee of Methadone Program Administrators
- Council of Family & Child Caring Agencies
- Early Intervention Coalition
- Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies
- Grand Street Settlement Health Committee
- Harlem Neighborhood-Based Service Providers Network
- Human Services Council
- Immigrant Children’s Legal Network
- In Depth Technical Assistance (IDTA)
- Lower Manhattan Health Care Coalition
- National Network of Social Work Managers/NYC Chapter
- NY Anti-Trafficking Network
- NY Association of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Providers
- NYC Bar Association
- NYC Department of Mental Health Children and Adolescent Committee for Manhattan
- NY Downtown Hospital Community Advisory Board
- NY Family Justice Center
- NY Immigration Coalition
- NYC Early Intervention Outreach Committee
- NY State Coalition against Domestic Violence
- Rebuild with a Spotlight on the Poor
- SIJS Advocates Working Group
- Supportive Housing Network
- Task Force on Mental Health Issues of the Elderly
- United Way of NYC
- University Settlement Health Advisory Committee
- Women’s HIV Collaborative of New York
- Zero to Three Network

A number of community-based organizations active in the LES CPI Coalition have played a major role in SPA 5 and the Child Welfare Collaborative of BLUM (Battery Park, Lower East Side and Chinatown, Upper East Side, and Murray Hill); a collaborative of 14 organizations initiated by ACS and dedicated to preventing abuse and neglect by strengthening human service delivery.

In addition, the six LES settlement houses have long histories of working together and making both internal and external referrals to provide integrated human services to residents of all ages. They also have strong track records for successfully advocating for more resources and greater reforms through their umbrella agency, United Neighborhood Houses (UNH), and individually as Chinese-American Planning Council (CPC), Educational Alliance, Hamilton-Madison House, Grand Street Settlement, Henry Street Settlement, and University Settlement. Two UNH collaborations have recently focused on improvements to the City's child care system: the *Child Care Initiative*, seeking to expand the availability of affordable, quality, regulated child care; and advocating for a seamless city-wide early childhood education system in family and center-based child care; and the *Hedge Fund Cares Initiative* to support efforts to alleviate child abuse and neglect.

Prior to the formation of the LES CPI, several agencies partnered as part of the *Bridging the Gap Between the Asian American Community and ACS* group: Chinatown YMCA, Chinese-American Planning Council, the Chinese Community Social Service and Health Council, the Coalition for Asian American Children and Families, Educational Alliance, the Lower East Side Family Union, New York Asian Women's Center, University Settlement, and the NYC Department for the Aging.

Within the faith-based community, Chinese-American Planning Council has a strong relationship with the Chinese Christian Herald Crusade; Abounding Grace Church/GenerationXcel and University Settlement have collaborated with Graffiti Community Ministries; and FamilyCook Productions has a history of working with the YMCA and Salvation Army.

C. ACS Foster Care Agencies and ACS Preventive Contractors Serving the Lower East Side and Chinatown

Currently, the four foster care agencies that serve Community Board 3 are:

- Catholic Guardian Society & Home Bureau
- Edwin Gould Services for Children and Families
- Ohel Children's Home & Family Services
- Salvation Army of Greater New York

Additionally, The New York Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (The NYSPCC) accepts referrals from ACS and six to ten other foster care agencies for LES high risk foster care cases; they provides space and personnel to facilitate therapeutic/supervised visits and supervised transfers, where restrictions have been placed on the child's contact with parents.

University Settlement's subsidiary, The Door – A Center of Alternatives, has a general preventive contract with ACS and is working in partnership with ACS and a number of foster care agencies on two initiatives:

- A partnership with ACS and Arbor Career Center to develop Passport 2 Success, a flexible workforce development program for young people in or aging out of foster care. Passport 2 Success is now serving 105 young people.
- The Door was selected by the Heckscher Foundation and a coalition of foster care agencies to develop a comprehensive program for the aging-out population in partnership

with FECS, a comprehensive job training and employment agency. The Academy now provides 100 young people aging out of foster care with the full range of services they need to transition to independence, with an emphasis on supported career and education services.

The current ACS preventive contractors serving Community Board 3 are:

- Chinatown YMCA Family Support Program – I.S. 131
- Chinatown YMCA HUG Program –
- Chinese-American Planning Council Asian Family Services
- Lower East Side Family Union - Teams 1, 3 and 4 – Jon Frankel, Director of Manhattan Programs
- Puerto Rican Family Institute Child Placement Prevention Program

These programs provide linguistically and culturally appropriate services to primarily immigrant families living on the Lower East Side and Chinatown. Through their ACS preventive contracts, these organizations provide services that include: counseling, advocacy, and group work, with the primary objective of helping strengthen families. Group services include parenting classes that teach child development and child rearing in the U.S., as well as ACS rules and regulations regarding child abuse and neglect; and adolescent support groups.

II. THE LOWER EAST SIDE COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP INITIATIVE (LES CPI) COALITION STRATEGIC PLAN

In accordance with the contract deliverables set forth by ACS, we have developed strategies and actions in alignment with the four overall objectives highlighted by ACS. These strategies and actions emerged from the diligent efforts of four designated work groups. A fifth work group was formed to address the very important issues associated with creating and maintaining an effective coalition. At this time, we chose not to specify outcomes for each of the five work group areas. Development of viable outcomes would be a key component of the planning process that will follow approval of this document.

A. Work Group #1 Organizational Structure and Governance

As the co-conveners of this CPI Coalition, University Settlement and the Chinese-American Planning Council (CPC) recognized that more attention needed to be paid to organizational issues. These include: how the Coalition would be run effectively and with transparency; hiring and overseeing the work of the Community Liaison/Coordinator; conducting the community assessment process; and ensuring the participation of as many partner organizations as possible.

Strategy #1: Establish an Advisory Committee for the LES CPI Coalition that is representative of the various types of service providers and stakeholders, represents cultural and linguistic competency, and incorporates areas of expertise as they relate to creating a strong safety net for at-risk children, youth and caregivers/parents in this community. The Advisory Committee will be responsible for overseeing the activities of the CPI Coalition.

Actions:

- a. Recruit at least one member from each work group to serve on the Advisory Committee and ensure representation from six programmatic sectors: foster care, preventive services, education/youth, health, mental health/substance abuse, and affordable/specialized housing (prioritizing NYCHA participation). Two ex-officio seats will be available for the co-conveners. It is anticipated that the Committee will have between ten and twelve members.
- b. Ensure that persons with cultural and linguistic competency in Spanish and Chinese are represented on the Advisory Committee.
- c. Recruit parents/caregivers from the Lower East Side/Chinatown community to play an active role in the Coalition and actively explore the feasibility of recruiting more than one parent (representative of the Spanish- and Chinese-speaking constituencies) to serve on the Advisory Committee.
- d. Continue the use of work groups responsible for the major CPI strategic areas. Consider having co-chairs of each work group to maximize inclusiveness and representation.
- e. Ensure that there is a balance between large and small organizations on the Advisory Committee.
- f. Request that organizations serving on the Advisory Committee designate a specific representative who would commit to attending meetings consistently to ensure continuity and chair or co-chair one of the four work groups.
- g. Prioritize the development of a CPI Coalition budget, to be broadly overseen by the Advisory Committee but administered on a day-to-day basis by University Settlement as fiscal agent.
- h. Develop criteria and/or guidelines within the budget process for determining appropriate stipend amounts and prioritizing which activities should be rewarded with stipends.
- i. Develop and finalize a job description for the Community Liaison/Coordinator to be hired by the Coalition. Broadly disseminate, and interview and hire this staff person.
- j. Meet monthly as an Advisory Committee and create the mechanisms for ensuring regular reporting on progress and challenges by each work group so as to be able to assess ongoing progress towards meeting the contract deliverables.

Strategy #2: Joint development by the Advisory Committee and the Community Liaison/Coordinator of an action plan for outreach and public education on behalf of the Community Partnership Initiative (CPI).

Actions:

- a. Develop outreach strategies for engaging constituents (e.g. parents, children and youth) served by our organizations, so that they are an integral part of planning, identification of gaps in services and making suggestions.
- b. Ensure participation of organizations with cultural and linguistic competency reflective of the demographic make-up of residents on the Lower East Side.
- c. Create a listserv and web site that will facilitate communications between the Advisory Committee and work group members.
- d. Conduct outreach to and maintain contact with other CPI Coalitions, ACS representatives, the Annie E. Casey Foundation, ACT, and ACS evaluator Chapin Hill to maximize information sharing about best practices.
- e. Read reports such as The Coalition for Asian American Children and Families' "Connecting the Dots," relating to the experiences of Asian American families in the child welfare system in New York City; and The Committee for Hispanic Children and Families, Inc.'s "Bridging the Cultural Divide: Building a Continuum of Support Services for Latino Families." Explore potential partnerships with them and as appropriate, incorporate their recommendations into the Coalition's strategies.

Strategy #3: Empower and support the Community Liaison/Coordinator to solicit the feedback of various community members (caregivers/parents, children and youth, and service providers), recognizing their distinctive viewpoints, and maximizing ongoing communications with all constituent groups.

Actions:

- a. Support the Community Liaison/Coordinator in conducting community assessments. Consider the feasibility of partnering with a local university to develop and administer such a community assessment to help identify unmet needs and gaps. This will be achieved through convening different focus groups (caregivers/parents, youth and children, child care providers, etc.) and speaking with individuals.
- b. Develop straightforward, multilingual survey instruments, using them as tools for engaging more constituents to participate in CPI; develop a distribution system for the survey that is accessible and encourages participation.
- c. Have the Community Liaison/Coordinator recruit and oversee a diverse team of volunteers to gather information for a directory of services for the Lower East Side/Chinatown community. This directory should highlight the resources of service providers, their cultural and linguistic competency, and relevant contact information. All four work groups will contribute information in this effort.
- d. Create a Service Map for the Lower East Side, detailing the services available, who provides them and in what languages, etc., so that all partners could more effectively refer constituents to services; expand the "Bridging the Gap" mapping to make it more inclusive.
- e. Secure lists of child-serving organizations, focusing on child care providers (including group and family child care, UPK, and Early Head Start programs), as well as older children/young adults, adult and family services, in order to support the whole family. Tap national and regional resources such as the National Association for Family Childcare, the National Institute for Early Childhood Professional Development, the Early Childhood Professional Council, the United Federation of Teachers, ACORN, the local childcare resource and

- referral centers (which includes CPC, the Committee for Hispanic Children and Families, and Child Care Inc.), family child care networks and regulatory bodies.
- f. Compile a pocket size phone directory of LES service providers relevant to families. Use as a model the “Partners in Healing” booklet developed by the Partnership for After School Education (PASE, found at www.pasesetter.org), a directory of mental health programs and services for youth and families in New York City, in three languages (Chinese, Spanish and English).
 - g. Consider including a stipend in the CPI budget to hire LES youth to create the booklet (design the cover and artwork, gather and input the information about service providers) and distribute it, together with any additional publications or flyers produced by the CPI Coalition.
 - h. Put the directory online and secure resources to keep it regularly updated. Create a menu of options for workshops and services to choose from.

Strategy #4: Develop creative, nontraditional strategies for disseminating the resource directory and for creating opportunities for service providers and parent/caregiver groups to work together in new ways.

Actions:

- a. Recruit and train *parent* leaders and *youth* leaders to reach out to communities.
- b. Recognize that different groups require different outreach strategies.
- c. Broadly disseminate the resource directory at traditional and non-traditional sites, including early childhood centers, parent resource centers, health clinics and hospitals, libraries, schools, laundromats, bodegas, community gardens, recreational centers, and beauty salons.
- d. Develop concrete strategies for accessing hard-to-reach populations, including older children and young adults who do not participate in recreational or educational programs.
- e. Host regular networking opportunities for social service providers to build stronger linkages and better understand the expertise and resources of other organizations (including the BLUM SPA, the Chinese Community Social Service & Health Council, the Bridging the Gap Between the Asian American Community and ACS group, the Healthy Families New York network, and other existing collaborations).
- f. More comprehensively engage public and parochial schools on the LES in this Coalition, tapping into the Beacon and faith-based relationships of a number of LES CPI partner agencies.

B. Work Group #2

Bridging the Gap between Head Start, Child Care and Community-Based Preventive Services

ACS Contract Deliverables:

- 1. *Promote innovative approaches to a coordinated service delivery system that will bridge the gap between Head Start, child care and community-based preventive services.*

5. *Enable child care and Head Start programs to refer a minimum of ten (10) community residents per quarter to preventive services agencies or other community based organizations and/or enable preventive service agencies or community based organizations to refer at least ten (10) community residents per quarter for child care and/or Head Start programs.*

Strategy #1: Develop a mechanism and procedure to promote cross-referrals between preventive service providers and early childhood programs.

Actions:

- a. Have the Community Liaison/Coordinator survey parents/caregivers, preventive service providers and early childhood program providers to assess where the service gaps are.
- b. Recognize the important role of early childhood centers as key points of entry to engage parents, but also conduct focused outreach to other organizations (especially those working with adolescents).
- c. Approach entities that administer family day care programs and work to incorporate information about preventative care, supportive services, early signals of child abuse/neglect, and child development trainings.
- d. Survey parents served by them to determine where/how they could be best introduced to service agencies and induced to attend coaching and workshop events.
- e. Establish drop-in hours for preventive service entities at child care organizations on a rotating basis, with a strong linkage to the broader Community Coalition referral system.
- f. Identify leaders/motivators in each organization (e.g., the executive director) who would disseminate information to constituents of that particular organization.
- g. Explore opportunities to partner with grandparents who serve as caregivers through the NYC Dept. of Aging's Grandparents Resource Center.
- h. Adapt existing linkage agreements between partnering service providers; develop forms and training that will help improve the tracking of referrals.
- i. Encourage ACS's Child Care and Child Welfare Divisions to collaborate in designing a preventive services campaign similar to its anti-child abuse and neglect campaign and in developing a hotline and comprehensive training about what preventive services are and what key indicators caregivers and service providers should look for (in detecting very early signs of possible abuse).

Strategy #2: Develop and implement a training action plan for early childhood providers, caregivers/parents, and other providers unfamiliar with preventive services to enhance knowledge about culturally and linguistically competent family support services.

Actions:

- a. Develop a working guide which details which service providers have expertise in specific types of training, the languages in which these trainings are offered, and how often they or State and/or City agencies are in contact with day care providers under their jurisdiction.

- b. Work with preventive service contractors to encourage their participation in mandated trainings (with bi-lingual capacity) for day care providers and parent groups.
- c. Reach out to parent groups to encourage them to join the Coalition and participate in trainings. Develop materials for parents that incorporate more visual aids and which respect different levels of literacy.
- d. Develop a word of mouth strategy to reach unlicensed day care providers and provide training about preventive services to them.
- e. Consider training MSW graduate student interns to help preventive service providers by holding office hours at day care centers.

Strategy #3: Facilitate at least quarterly meetings between early childhood providers and preventive service providers to promote relationship building and cross-referrals.

Actions:

- a. Plan major outreach activities on the LES, including outreach to the local Community Board, with the primary goal of conveying the CPI Coalition’s desire to be a partner and resource.
- b. Hold “meet and greets” and open houses at child care centers to help de-stigmatize preventive services and establish openness to future training from preventive services providers.
- c. Develop a clearinghouse so that childcare providers can easily access preventive service providers, and vice versa.
- d. Consider pairing representatives from preventive services agencies with Head Start and child care providers to facilitate information sharing and relationship building.

C. Work Group #3: Greater Community Participation in Family Conferences

ACS Contract Deliverable:

2. Participate in family conferences regarding the needs, services, and safety plans appropriate to particular families’ circumstances. The Contractor shall attend no less than ten (10) family team conferences held in the community and/or make referrals to provide resources to support families.

Strategy #1: Work with preventive contractors, the ACS Family Permanency Unit, and the foster care agencies to understand the particular challenges for families engaged with different formats for convening and at different stages of family conferences.

Actions:

- a. Work with ACS staff, preventive contractors and foster care agencies to understand the mechanics of family conferences related to placement preservation, discharge/reunification, and pre-adoption.

- b. Recruit a broad-based group of service providers, parents/caregivers, and other caring individuals who are willing and able to strengthen and support families participating in family conferences and address issues like cultural and linguistic barriers, overcrowded living conditions, substance abuse, and physical abuse.
- c. Encourage ACS and the foster care agencies working on the LES to make trainings for community advocates more convenient by holding them in venues offered by CPI LES partner agencies.
- d. Explore incentives that would be conducive to keeping community advocates active and engaged in family conferences on an ongoing basis.

Strategy #2: Tap into the best practices and outcomes from the Casey Team Decision Making (TDM)/Family Team Conference Model in anticipation of a new family conference model that will come online for the Lower East Side/Chinatown in the future.

Actions:

- a. Encourage a broad service range of members of the LES CPI Coalition to be trained on the Casey Team Decision Making (CTDM) /Family Team Conference Model and tap other resources provided by ACS.
- b. Ask preventive agencies and/or foster care agencies and ACS to train community advocates who can then effectively advocate for families participating in such conferences.
- c. Tap resources of CPI partner agencies that have particular expertise in negotiation, conflict resolution, psychology, and linguistic and cultural competency, that can advise on how to further enhance the effectiveness of the CTDM model.

D. Work Group #4: Supporting Foster/Adoptive Parents and Recruitment

ACS Contract Deliverables:

- 3. *Support existing foster and adoptive parents and recruit new ones in communities where they are needed.*
- 6. *The Contractor shall recruit at least twenty (20) new foster parents in one year and/or recruit 10 new foster parents in one year and host at least four (4) events to recruit foster parents from the community per quarter.*

Strategy #1: Develop stronger systems of support for existing and potential foster/adoptive parents.

Actions:

- a. Promote awareness among foster parents of a 24-hour crisis hotline (in English) through Edwin Gould Services for Children and Families, Catholic Guardian Society and Home Bureau, and other foster care agencies; encourage ACS to make resources available to provide bilingual staffing (Spanish and Chinese as well as English) for the hotline.
- b. Work with ACS to establish a teen circle of support, and a foster parent circle of support specifically for the LES.
- c. Provide a shorter term community resources list (and later, the LES resource directory discussed earlier) for prospective and existing foster/adoptive parents living on the LES; identify specialized services being provided by various community-based organizations, including cultural and linguistic competency training (CPI partner agencies can explore training partnerships with foster care agencies).
- d. Conduct focus groups with Chinese speaking families as a pilot project to better understand what level of outreach, training and support would be necessary to recruit and retain Chinese speaking foster/adoptive parents.

Strategy #2: Support existing foster/adoptive parents in recruiting other foster/adoptive parents.**Actions:**

- a. Recommend ethnic media outreach and resources for developing Public Service Announcements (PSA) in Spanish and Chinese, with inquiries directed to foster care agencies.
- b. Recruit LES CBOs (especially child care organizations) and parent organizations to provide venues for hosting foster parent orientations and Model Approaches to Parenting (MAP) classes.
- c. To enhance cultural and linguistic competency, have LES CBOs make space available to hold job fairs several times a year to recruit for bilingual staff for the foster care agencies.
- d. Recruit LES CBOs to host foster parent recruitment sessions several times a year in Spanish, Chinese and English.
- e. Provide review and feedback to ACS for translation of new foster parent recruitment materials into Chinese.
- f. Discuss with foster care agencies what types of foster parent and community partner referral incentives might be helpful.

Strategy #3: Solicit feedback from service providers and caregivers/foster parent about foster/adoptive parent needs specific to the LES.

Actions:

- a. Convene one to two focus groups of LES service providers to identify the unique needs of foster/adoptive parents: e.g., cluster housing to meet legal requirements, cultural and linguistic concerns, community resources regarding conflict resolution/negotiation training, etc.
- b. Encourage the development of a LES adoptive parents support group that can also be utilized for recruitment purposes.
- c. Convene several focus groups for prospective adoptive/foster parents (in Spanish, Chinese and English) in several LES CBOs, to find out what support they would need to consider adopting or taking in adolescent foster children.
- d. Consider developing a mechanism for tracking cases in which potential foster parents are encountering barriers that are precluding them from taking a placement.
- e. Consider ways in which resources or materials from various CPI partner agencies, the Bridging the Gap Between the Asian American Community and ACS group, The Coalition for Asian American Children and Families, the Hispanic Committee for Children and Families, Inc., and/or ACS could help improve the cultural sensitivity orientation materials provided by the foster care agencies to prospective foster parents involved in cross-cultural placements.

E. Work Group #5

Supporting Family Visits and Family Reunification

ACS Contract Deliverable:

4. Facilitate visits between parents, children, and siblings in foster care. The Contractor shall participate in ten (10) visits and/or provide at least two (2) venues within which such visits may be conducted.

Strategy #1: Have service providers partner with foster care agencies and the New York Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NYSPCC) to recruit individuals for the Visit Coach Training Program. In this partnership, ACS Office of Family Visits and/or foster care agencies working on the LES can train and certify Visit Coaches to facilitate family visits.

Actions:

- a. Conduct broad outreach among CPI Coalition members to recruit those interested in becoming Visiting Coaches (trained and certified by ACS or foster care agencies) or Visit Hosts (trained by a contracted foster care agency).
- b. Further explore with The NYSPCC how community volunteers or CBOs might be helpful in supervised exchanges.

- c. Recruit Visit Hosts via community volunteers from faith-based groups, civic associations, corporate volunteer organizations, college and university internships programs, houses of worship, settlement houses, YMCAs, and organizations working with seniors, to provide assistance and support during the family visits, and be sensitive to cultural and linguistics needs of each particular family. Sites serving as host locations should be committed to promoting healthy interactions, family bonding, and the nurturing of mind, body and spirit.
- d. Explore the possibility of offering stipends to Visiting Coaches and Visit Hosts through the CPI.
- e. Explore the possibility of holding these trainings in community-based organizations on the Lower East Side.

Strategy #2: Develop a list of sites among LES community-based organizations (CBOs) that already provide family activities, who are willing to provide a range of fun and nurturing activities and serve as ‘hosts’ to facilitate family visits.

Actions:

- a. Encourage service providers to coordinate with foster care agencies to provide a range of fun and nurturing activities from which the families can select, which may include:
 - Cooking: including family cooking classes (e.g., through FamilyCook Productions, which now works with the YMCA and Salvation Army), and barbecues at local parks sponsored by community-based organizations
 - Gardening: tapping resources like “Green Thumb,” where families can work together on a small community garden plot and grow food used to prepare meals together; and engaging the NYCHA gardening program for NYCHA families
 - Fitness: tapping resources like the YMCAs and Parks & Recreation activities in the community.
 - Literacy/Cultural Activities: partnering with libraries, museums and local theatre companies for visits and the many CBOs that provide activities through their Beacon and other after-school programs.
 - Walking Tours of the LES
 - Faith-Based Activities
 - Free Tours and Visits Outside the LES (as appropriate)
- b. Ensure that these activities occur within families’ natural support systems, by recruiting participation by local community gardens, YMCAs, libraries and museums, theatres, parks and playgrounds, churches, settlement houses, the NYSPCC, Lower Eastside Service Center, Salvation Army’s 14th Street location, and local community centers.
- c. Work with Parks and Recreation, NYCHA and “Green Thumb” to explore participation in its gardening programs and contact Whole Foods and the Deputy Mayor’s Office about possible food donations.

- d. In planning for the family visits, do so with the goal of a maximum travel time of a half hour for the families in question, recognizing the stresses the families are already experiencing and that a large proportion of the children from the LES who are in foster care are currently living outside the neighborhood.
- e. Create a calendar of events/activities.
- f. Establish one or two pilot activities and sites within the areas listed under Action Item #a.
- g. Recruit coaches/supervisors.
- h. Develop a training plan for Visit Hosts, Coaches and Supervisors, working closely with ACS, foster care agencies, and, when appropriate, The NYSPCC.

III. PROPOSED COALITION BUDGET AND BUDGET NARRATIVE

The following narrative supplements the Proposed CPI Budget (Attachment A):

Personnel Costs refer to the ACS-mandated salary and fringe cap of \$65,000/year for the Community Liaison/Coordinator position and the in-kind contribution of either University Settlement or the Chinese-American Planning Council with regard to day-to-day supervision and support of the Liaison.

The **Training** line item will include a variety of topics, particularly highlighting cultural and linguistic competency. In light of the broad array of expertise that CPI partner agencies would bring to this Coalition, it would be impossible to list all of the areas, but training topics might include:

- Better understanding the role of preventive services and how early childhood and daycare providers might more effectively collaborate with them;
- How the ACS family conference process works and where and how input from other community members might be helpful;
- What barriers currently prevent potential foster parents from taking in children/youth and how foster care agencies can be more effective in doing outreach to Spanish- and Chinese-speaking communities

Agency Support for Special Activities is intended to support a wide variety of activities that will enable the Coalition to meet its goals. There is an understanding that there must be “give-and-take” in this category, as many of the CPI partner agencies are currently funded by other sources to promote community building and healthy families. Activities may include:

- Conducting broad outreach among CPI Coalition members to recruit those interested in becoming Visiting Coaches (trained and certified by ACS or

foster care agencies) or Visit Hosts (trained by a contracted foster care agency).

- Exploring the possibility of offering stipends to Visiting Coaches, Visit Hosts, community members willing to be trained to participate as advocates for families in a family conference context, and/or agencies that recruit parents to attend outreach events and training sessions for prospective foster parents or host bilingual staff recruitment events on behalf of foster care agencies.
- Hosting regular networking opportunities for social service providers to build stronger linkages

Marketing/Printing expenses are related to electronic and written outreach materials as well as compilation of the resource directory for families and service providers in Spanish, Chinese and English.

Office Support refers to costs associated with maintaining an office, telephone, cell phone and fax, copier/scanner, and the means for the Community Liaison to be readily accessible to CPI partner agencies, families, ACS and other interested parties.

Fiscal Agent Expenses refer to the standard costs of administering a grant, particularly making sure that an audit is completed on a timely basis and records are maintained to facilitate satisfactory reporting for the purposes of this grant.

IV. CONCLUSION

The Lower East Side Community Partnership Initiative Coalition adopted an inclusive participatory strategy, bringing together a wide array of resources and expertise. The LES CPI is therefore confident that it will be able to meet all of the contract deliverables required by ACS within the contract period. As stated earlier, a significant number of CPI partner agencies are active in the “Bridging the Gap Between the Asian American Community and ACS” and other effective coalitions, and we are committed to bringing the experiences from these groups to this collaborative process to enhance our effectiveness. We are also studying the recommendations provided by The Coalition for Asian American Children and Families’ new report, “Connecting the Dots,” relating to the experiences of Asian American families in the child welfare system in New York City, and The Committee for Hispanic Children and Families, Inc.’s new report, “Bridging the Cultural Divide: Building a Continuum of Support Services for Latino Families” and are looking forward to incorporating their recommendations in our strategic plan as appropriate.

V. APPENDIX

Please see attachments related to a list of participating partner organizations and a summary of the coalition-wide meetings and various work group meetings convened since the provisional approval of the \$150,000 grant from the ACS Community Partnership Initiative (CPI).