Officials from the state of Kansas, Sedgwick County, and the City of Wichita are joining together to form the New Communities Initiative (NCI). Focusing initially on one area within Wichita, these public and private sector leaders' mission is to design strategies that integrate state, county, city, and private resources to increase public safety, enhance educational opportunities for residents of all ages, improve housing conditions for neighborhood residents, and spur economic development.

**Background**

With the number of people in prison rising, state legislators and corrections officials are searching for cost-effective ways to prevent crime beyond just building and operating additional prison beds. Through a detailed analysis of where people admitted to prison come from, corrections administrators identified a handful of neighborhoods across the state and within Wichita that accounted for a disproportionate share of prison admissions.

At the same time, representatives of other state, county, and city agencies have been analyzing where their resources and services are being deployed. When these officials came together, they realized that despite deploying a disproportionate share of their resources in the same set of neighborhoods, they were missing opportunities to coordinate and integrate these public resources, and align them with private efforts, to achieve a common set of outcomes for residents.

In response to this situation, community-based leaders, together with officials from...
state and local government, have decided to pursue a justice reinvestment strategy. Justice reinvestment is a data-driven strategy to reduce spending on corrections, increase public safety, and improve conditions in the neighborhoods to which most people released from prison return (please visit justicereinvestment.org/home for more on the strategy). To implement the strategy in Wichita, state, county, and city leaders, with the assistance of the Council of State Governments Justice Center and Urban Strategies, formed a working group and designed the New Communities Initiative. This initiative will use existing and reinvested resources to integrate a human capital plan with public and private sector investments in certain neighborhoods to create safer, stronger, and more self-reliant communities.

The Strategy

To guide the New Communities Initiative, a policy group of state, county, and city leaders from the public, private, and philanthropic sectors was established. This group agreed upon five outcome areas that would be the focus of its mission: provide quality housing for people of all incomes; create employment opportunities for those needing and seeking jobs; enhance the learning environment across all age groups; address safety and security concerns in the neighborhood, and improve quality of life for children and youth. Ultimately, state and local leaders hope their efforts in one area within Wichita will serve as a model for other communities in the city and across Kansas.

New Communities Initiative Policy Group

Carl Brewer, Mayor, City of Wichita
Sharon Fearey, Council Member, City of Wichita
George Kolb, City Manager, City of Wichita
Roger Werholtz, Secretary, Kansas Department of Corrections
Roderick L. Bremby, Secretary, Kansas Department of Health & Environment
Don Jordan, Acting Secretary, Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services
Jim Garner, Secretary, Kansas Department of Labor
David Kerr, Secretary, Kansas Department of Commerce
Kathy Greenlee, Secretary, Kansas Department of Aging
J. Russell Jennings, Commissioner, Kansas Juvenile Justice Authority
Winston Brooks, Superintendent, Wichita Public Schools
Bill Buchanan, County Manager, Sedgwick County Courthouse
Keith Lawing, Executive Director, Workforce Alliance of South Central Kansas
Dr. Donald L. Beggs, President, Wichita State University
John Moore, Former Lieutenant Governor
Rob Allison, President, Bank of America
James N. Barber, President, Via Christi Foundation
S. Edwards Dismuke, MD, MSPH, Dean KU School of Medicine-Wichita

Anne Corriston, Program Director, John S. and James L. Knight Foundation
Susan Addington, Community Relations Manager, Koch Industries, Inc.
Larry Schumacher, President & CEO, Via Christi Wichita Health Network
Hugh Tappan, CEO, Wesley Medical Center
Lyndy Wells, Executive Vice President, Intrust Bank

Collaborating Agencies

Wichita Housing and Community Services Dept.
Wichita Police Department
Wichita Public Schools
Sedgwick County Reentry Program
Sedgwick County Division of Human Services
Sedgwick County Department of Corrections
COMCARE of Sedgwick County
Kansas Housing Resources Corporation
Kansas Department of Corrections
Kansas Department of Health & Environment
Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services
Kansas Juvenile Justice Authority
Kansas Department of Commerce
Kansas Department of Labor
Kansas Parole Board

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2. A national nonprofit that supports similar efforts in other cities like Wichita and is helping to staff the project.