

## **THE ENHANCER: CORNERSTONE ASSISTANCE NETWORK**

by Deanna Carlson

### **Introduction**

Cornerstone Assistance Network (Cornerstone) celebrated its ten-year anniversary March 31, 2002. It is a nationally recognized, locally focused, broad-based, faith-based organization dedicated to serving needy individuals and families in Fort Worth and Tarrant County, Texas. It began as one church member's response to a neighborhood family that went hungry for a weekend. That churchgoer (Mike Doyle, Cornerstone's executive director) and his pastor developed Cornerstone as the way for their congregation, North Richland Hills Baptist Church, to reach beyond its walls.

Today, Cornerstone, a 501c3 organization separate from North Richland Hills Baptist Church, assists and empowers churches to serve the needy in their neighborhoods and to develop new programs in direct response to gaps in services in the community. Its ministry context is within an ethnically and economically diverse county, where African-Americans and Hispanics comprise half of the population. In its attempts to serve the County's disadvantaged residents, Cornerstone works with many other agencies, faith-based and secular. In 2001, for example, Cornerstone collaborated with five government agencies, 43 community nonprofits, and 19 faith-based organizations, including 36 churches. Cornerstone's church and ministry partners are diverse—from urban, suburban, and rural areas in the county. These partners tend to be more Caucasian-led ministries and churches, which is primarily attributed to Mike Doyle's own personal network (for example, he serves as the Governor's appointee for the Interagency Council for the Homeless). The individuals referred to Cornerstone through the social service delivery system are predominantly African-American and Latino while referrals from area churches reflect the ethnic diversity of their neighborhoods.

### **Cornerstone's Work: Direct Provider and Intermediary**

Cornerstone shares a two-fold identity, as both as a community intermediary and as a direct service provider. All of Cornerstone's direct service programs, though, support its larger mission of pointing congregations to their own ability to do community ministry. Cornerstone serves as model for churches and churches, in fact, are Cornerstone's main clients—not the poor and needy.

Nonetheless, Cornerstone's direct services for struggling individuals and families are wide-ranging; "rent and utility assistance all the way to housing for homeless people and every step along the way," as Mike Doyle puts it. In 2001 alone, the ministry helped 15,801 individuals through its varying direct service programs located in four neighborhoods across the county. These programs are described below.

*The Cornerstone Community Center* is a two-story building that provides direct services to the Samuel Avenue/Rock Island neighborhood, a low-income Hispanic community on the North side where 95 percent of the children participate in the government school lunch subsidy program. The Center provides direct services that include a food pantry and clothes closet, GED and ESL classes, and the Christian Women's Job Corps, computer labs, after-school programs (including tutoring), and mentoring. The Center also runs a free medical clinic, offers youth and adult Bible Studies, and operates a summer lunch program.

*Cornerstone Housing* focuses on providing housing for the homeless. Its two main operations are Cornerstone's New Life Center, a residential home for homeless men, many of whom are recovering from addictions and/or time in prison, and the Dwelling Place, a residential home for eight women coming out of prison. Cornerstone's New Life Center is located on the Southwest side of Fort Worth in the "Hospital District", a couple miles from downtown, in an older, residential neighborhood. This program has a very high success rate. In 2001, 68 percent of the residents left fully employed, drug free, and with permanent housing. The Dwelling Place, started in 1999, is located in the same neighborhood as Cornerstone Community Center.

The ministry also serves the homeless through the *Cornerstone Comprehensive Care Program (3CP)*. Since its inception in 1997, 3CP has become the primary intake agency for the homeless in the county, helping over 3,500 people. 3CP is strategically located in "The Community of Hope," a non-residential area five blocks around and one-tenth of a mile from downtown Fort Worth where the homeless congregate and where the majority of the city's homelessness services are offered. 3CP also administers a Tenant Based Rental Assistance Program (TBRA) that provides rental vouchers for 25 families a year. Eighty-five percent of those who complete TBRA's two-year program go on to independent living.

Additional service divisions at Cornerstone express its dual character as a ministry to ministries as well as a direct service provider. *Cornerstone Resource Network, or C.O.R.E. Net*, for example, exists to help churches do ministry more effectively. With another 100 partners, C.O.R.E. Net operates a warehouse and thrift store across the street from Cornerstone's North Richland Hills

headquarters (a northeast suburb of Fort Worth). The warehouse offers resources to non-profit agencies as well as individual persons in need; for example, it has recently started providing financial assistance to individuals facing rental and utility costs. Staff from this division also provide training on-site at churches.

*Network Development*, started formally as a division in 2002, is Cornerstone's networking service for churches. Its mission is to call participating churches (who are also a part of Cornerstone's C.O.R.E. Net) every quarter to acquaint them with community resources and involve them in Cornerstone's activities. This division is located at Cornerstone's headquarters in North Richland Hills.

Finally, *Cornerstone's Intermediary Services* division, launched in 2001, manages and administers program funds as "pass-throughs" to other organizations serving the poor. In 2002, funding for this work consists entirely of a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation and matched by local foundations. Through this "Fort Worth Initiative," Cornerstone will receive \$1.5 million dollars over three years and engage in sub-granting to five area social service agencies. Intermediary Services has a staff of two, a director and an administrative secretary, with offices at the North Richland Hills site. This division hopes to grow in providing technical assistance and intermediary support to non-profits.

With just below a two million dollar budget for 2002, Cornerstone has a full-time staff of 16 and a part-time staff of 12. Twenty percent of its 2002 budget is from local, state and federal government grants, with the majority from HUD. As mentioned, Cornerstone is currently managing and administering the \$1.5 million dollar "Fort Worth Initiative" (funded 50 percent by the Rockefeller Foundation and 50 percent by local foundations) to build capacity in five participating social service agencies in Tarrant County through 2004. This grant exemplifies the director's belief that "we are always willing to take leadership roles in the development of new resources." The ministry also has a \$300,000 dollar endowment.

## **Cornerstone's Constituent Ministries**

To determine the valued-added of Cornerstone as an intermediary, on-site interviews were conducted in April 2002 with six of its faith-based partners and two of its subgrantees through the Fort Worth Initiative. Most of this case study is focused on interviews with six of Cornerstone's faith-based partners. The detailed chart in Appendix A documents Cornerstone's contribution to these partners as an intermediary. Detailed information on Cornerstone's new Fort Worth Initiative and its relationship to two of the subgrantees is captured in Appendix B. The six faith-based partners are described below.

**Family Relief Outreach (FRO)** provides emergency intervention for neighborhood families in the South Haltom City Neighborhood. This community, located in Northeast Fort Worth, is composed primarily of low-income, ethnically diverse, single and two-parent families. Started in 1999 as a vision of Glenview Baptist Church (located five miles away), FRO operates out of a small building purchased by the church. This facility is adjacent to two other Glenview Baptist ministries and the original building in which the congregation started meeting in 1998.

FRO's emergency relief programs include cash assistance for basic food and clothing, rent and utility bills, gas vouchers, and basic home furnishing. FRO also makes referrals for housing and employment. Most of the supplicants come to FRO having heard about their services by word of mouth. In 2001, FRO served 680 families. Its 2001 operational expenses were about \$30,000 dollars. FRO has only one paid staff person; this director receives his salary as the Missions Coordinator at Glenview Baptist Church. He spends 80 percent of his time with FRO. He manages 18 volunteers at FRO from Glenview Baptist Church, four of them serving full-time.

**The Salvation Army Family Center (TSA Family Center)**, established in the late 1980s, is a program designed to stabilize homeless families with children and teach them skills to live independently in the community. Located in the "Community of Hope" neighborhood, the Center offers both emergency shelter and a transitional housing program that allows families to stay in the facility from 10 to 14 weeks. Alongside food, shelter, and clothing, the Center provides parents with counseling, parenting classes, job coaching, and budgeting classes. The children participate in after-school tutoring, self-esteem, and social skills classes. The Center also provides day care and transportation. The Center is free for families, but they are required to look for employment or save 75 percent of their income. They must meet with a case manager every week, be motivated to change their current situation, be employable, be drug free, and participate in required programs.

The Center can house up to 115 people or 26 families. It employs three full-time staff and the Center's director oversees 28 people and three programs, including the Family Center. They estimate their annual budget at approximately \$500,000 (four percent of it comes from the United Way). Families that are successful at the Family Center are referred to Cornerstone's Comprehensive Care Program (3CP) for intense case management and supports. Roughly seventy-five percent of Cornerstone's 3CP's clients are referred from TSA Family Center.

**Salvation Army Adult Rehabilitation Center (ARC)** is a live-in treatment center for indigent, drug-addicted men. Located on the North side of Fort Worth, the Center houses up to 107 men. The Center costs around \$150,000 dollars per month to operate and employs 45 individuals, including 15 who are residential. The Center serves men who are homeless and jobless, with the majority having a serious cocaine addiction. The Center's basic requirements include remaining drug free and working 40 hours per week at one of the Salvation Army work sites. The program emphasizes work therapy and life skills to prepare men for successful reintegration into the community. It is both twelve-step and Bible-oriented and lasts a maximum of nine months. Men who succeed in this program receive referral information on Cornerstone's New Life Center.

Indeed, the New Life Center is the number one resource ARC recommends to its successful graduates. The New Life Center provides these men with transitional semi-independent living that they can afford, shares the same values as ARC, and offers the men the opportunity to move back into mainstream society from a secure, protected environment.

Founded in the mid-1950's, **North Richland Hills Baptist Church** is a middle class, suburban congregation with 3000 members (1500 in attendance weekly). Located in a Northeast suburb of Fort Worth, the church is neighborhood-based with most members living within a five-mile radius, and is primarily Caucasian (a reflection of the neighborhood). With an operating budget of \$3.1 million dollars for 2002, the church employs 13 ministerial staff, 30 full-time staff, and over 50 part-time staff.

The church has a demonstrated commitment to reaching out to the poor and needy. As mentioned, it founded Cornerstone Assistance Network in 1992 and selected the executive director, Mike Doyle, from its own ranks. Cornerstone was designed as a community wide effort that the church would participate in alongside other groups that could offer long-term solutions to the destitute, such as life skills and accountability.

Since Cornerstone's founding, North Richland Hills Baptist Church has been one of its biggest financial supporters. In 2001, the church's support reached \$36,000 dollars. Additionally, the church operates under the principle that if the tithe and offerings given are above \$3 million dollars, Cornerstone receives 1.5 percent of everything the church receives. The church also has printed a "check-off" box on their offering envelopes labeled for Cornerstone. Cornerstone is often considered the "charity of choice" according to the church's business administrator. Individuals choosing to give to Cornerstone through this means grant the ministry an additional \$50,000 to \$70,000 dollars annually.

The church is dedicated to serving members and non-members. Any non-member in need is referred to Cornerstone. The needs of members are typically met directly by the church itself, primarily through the Sunday School classes. Perhaps the most obvious example of member care is demonstrated among the singles class, which takes a weekly offering specifically for the needy in their own class.

Reaching over one million people worldwide through its television broadcast, **Kenneth Copeland Ministries (KCM)** is the Bible teaching ministry of Oral Roberts' mentee Kenneth Copeland. The ministry headquarters is located down a two-lane road in a sparsely populated rural area, thirty miles outside of Fort Worth, on land donated to the ministry. The ministry stays in contact with 30,000 people on a monthly basis, mainly through written correspondence and mailings. KCM's prayer department responds to all calls and letters requiring personalized answers. Thirty-five staff persons (28 of them are ministers) work in this department. KCM was founded in 1967 and currently employs 490 people. The ministry also has a church on-site called Eagle Mountain International Church.

With an undisclosed budget in the millions, the ministry gives ten percent of its income to outreach, according to Annette Taylor, the prayer department supervisor. KCM supports Cornerstone financially with \$2,000 dollars per month. In turn, the ministry relies on Cornerstone for its local outreach response. Their local outreach usually means helping both homeless people in Tarrant County who sometimes call or hitchhike out to the ministry headquarters and prisoners the ministry corresponds with who are paroled in Tarrant County. KCM will respond itself if the person being helped desires to attend the on-site church or KCM will refer these individuals to Cornerstone.

**St. Andrews Episcopal Church** is a historic downtown church founded in 1875. It considers itself a "low church evangelical" congregation. Its members are primarily middle- and upper-class professionals. The church counts 2500 on its membership rolls, though about 500 are regular Sunday worshippers. The congregants are very socially active, with many serving on various boards of directors of community organizations. Church leaders hope to start a Ministry Council in the near future to connect the congregation with community activities individual members are already involved in.

The church's budget for 2002 is \$2.2 million dollars, with a hefty proportion earmarked for outreach. Benevolence activities are overseen by the ministry outreach committee, which stewards both the outreach budget and the annual interest earned on the church's \$500,000 trust fund. The church employs 16



full-time staff, three whom are clergy, and 20 part-time staff. Due to its downtown location, the church daily receives knocks on the door and phone calls asking for assistance. St. Andrews has a targeted ministry to the homeless, called East Door Ministries. This program is the only one in Tarrant County that helps indigents to secure legal documents, such as birth certificates and social security cards, that are required for employment or for government welfare benefits. East Door Ministries' 2001 budget was \$20,000 dollars.

## **Cornerstone's Intermediary Services**

Cornerstone's mission has always been to serve the poor by assisting churches and nonprofits in their own community ministries. Today, one word typifies all that Cornerstone does for other groups—ENHANCE. In short, Cornerstone's work enhances others' good work, whether those others are individuals, faith-based organizations, social service agencies, or churches.

The field research revealed five chief ways in which Cornerstone Assistance Network enhances the work of others:

- ❖ Cornerstone adds to community resources;
- ❖ Cornerstone improves organizational sustainability;
- ❖ Cornerstone increases community and organizational capacity;
- ❖ Cornerstone develops needed networks and relationships; and
- ❖ Cornerstone boosts organizational impact.

These areas are explored in depth below.

## **The Enhancer of Community Resources**

One of the key ways that Cornerstone serves other organizations is by providing services and resources that these groups cannot themselves provide. When asked why, leaders of these community organizations cited several reasons—lack of funding, limited resources to serve a particular need or population, lack of expertise, and lack of time. All the faith-based organizations interviewed cited more than one resource they depend on that Cornerstone provides.

*Programs.* Cornerstone's role as a supplier of community resources is most visibly seen in the programs that it operates. Each Cornerstone program serves a vulnerable population; yet, these initiatives also serve the needs of other faith-based organizations. This is demonstrated through the relationship of Corner-

stone's New Life Center to the Salvation Army ARC and Cornerstone 3CP's relationship to the Salvation Army's Family Center.

As mentioned, Cornerstone's New Life Center is one of six "halfway houses" in the community, serving men coming out of drug addiction. New Life Center is unique from the other "halfway houses" in the area in that it shares the values of the Salvation Army ARC. As counseling director Jim Musgrave states, "[The New Life Center] is a wonderful place because it can offer the men much more than most halfway houses have to offer. Part of that is because they are spiritually oriented like we are." This provides a seamless value transition from the Salvation Army's program to New Life.

Additionally, the Salvation Army ARC depends on the New Life Center to meet their goal of successfully transitioning men into mainstream society. With a 68 percent success rate, the New Life Center makes the goals of ARC attainable. Without it, ARC's Director of Counseling, Jim Musgrave, reflected:

*Right now when you try to relocate homeless and indigent people, it is difficult. If we didn't have Cornerstone, we would have one less place. It is better than most of the places I know about...places [that are] more like slave labor [and where the men] live in a community that does not require them to be abstinent [from drugs].*

Likewise, TSA Family Center is dependent on Cornerstone's 3CP program. TSA Family Center refers every family that is successful in their program to 3CP. In the last six months alone, 42 families have been referred. Six families are currently in the program. TSA Family Center depends on 3CP to provide a continuum of care that they cannot provide. Cornerstone's larger financial base allows it to house families longer than TSA and to provide comprehensive case management.

3CP allows TSA Family Center to meet its mission "to help families reenter into the community and become stable and self sufficient." Yolanda Miles, the program director, states:

*Their [Cornerstone 3CP's] case management provides at least a 50 percent improved success rate than the Salvation Army's because families know they are going to be there. They also provide the support system for them. . . For example, I have a client who has been through our program; she is a good candidate for Cornerstone because they will give her a case manager, support, and will help her continue with the things she started at the Salvation Army. Cornerstone has list of apartment complexes, landlords. We can't provide case management because of limited resources. In my mind, they are able to truly help the clients be self-sufficient."*



The Salvation Army considers 3CP the provider of choice in Tarrant County. It is the first place the TSA Family Center refers to when transitioning their clients. As Miles explains,

*They are able to know their clients better. I think their clients have a sense of security with them...I think other case managers in the community are doing a job. I think Cornerstone does a ministry. I think that even if they had 25 families on a caseload they would watch out for them. Their faith makes them different...[T]heir actions show that they have a mission, are doing God's work, and it is about the family. It isn't just a job.*

Various FBOs and churches depend on Cornerstone for other services as well. Sometimes Cornerstone conducts initial intake and needs assessment of supplicants that have contacted the churches. Cornerstone can also be called upon to provide crisis counseling and intervention as well as comprehensive case management for individuals and families needing such in order to better their situation.

*Benevolence Resources.* An additional way that Cornerstone serves the faith-based community is through providing organizations and churches with tangible resources such as clothing, furniture, and other household items through C.O.R.E. Net. Two ministries mentioned this as an important resource that helps them to serve their clients. For example, Mel Karger, Director of FRO stated,

*We have had families call for help. Some of those families needed more than what we have—maybe furniture for their house. Cornerstone had a big warehouse [C.O.R.E. Net has since moved] and we could take our clients over there and they could pick out furniture from Cornerstone's warehouse.*

*Funding.* Family Relief Outreach also gives an example of two other substantive ways that Cornerstone has served the greater faith-based community.

First, Cornerstone helped FRO launch its ministry by sharing a grant with them. Karger explains:

*When we first started three years ago, we didn't have any money to assist people with rental assistance and utility bills. Cornerstone stepped in and Mike Doyle said, 'We want you guys to use a portion of our grant.' Without that I am sure God would have provided, but I don't know what we would have done without that money.*

Second, Cornerstone paid for FRO's license to join Safety Network, a county-wide network sponsored by Tarrant County Access for the Homeless, that shares information on clients, particularly on services they have accessed in the

last 30 to 90 days. Cornerstone has in fact paid for these licenses for 16 ministries at a total cost of \$21,000 dollars. Cornerstone's only criterion was that the groups for whom they purchased licenses had to be helping the homeless as well as networking with Cornerstone.

Cornerstone has no formal structure in place to assist groups with fundraising. However, the field research showed that Mike Doyle's philosophy is to offer his business expertise at no cost when asked. With over twenty years of private sector experience, he generously shares his knowledge base with others—including tips on potential funding sources. This advice comes in the context of trusted personal friendships ministry leaders develop with Doyle. As Karger reports:

*I sat down with Mike Doyle a month ago and we talked about ways Family Relief Outreach could get a grant, like a government grant to be sustainable. We are in the process of looking at that but we aren't ready. Mike offered to do the grant application for [us].*

**Mentoring.** Beyond its programs and its concrete resources (money, household products), Cornerstone also provides intangible resources to faith-based organizations in the community. The biggest area mentioned was on-the-spot consulting. All the groups interviewed said they could call Cornerstone at any time about anything. Many call daily. For example, Reverend Maneikis at St. Andrews Episcopal Church said that he calls Raquel or Michael at 3CP every day about people who come to the door of the church:

*Yesterday there were three people at the front door. There is no telling who we are going to see. These people are chronically mentally ill, homeless, substance abusers. . . I ask them [3CP] 'What do you think is going on here? What can we do? What can we not do? Can I refer them to you or to another agency?'*

Additionally, the faith-based organizations interviewed were dependent on Cornerstone's staff for their knowledge of community resources and their general social work expertise. Even the Salvation Army depends on their knowledge base. Says Yolanda Miles, "They are able to network with more people, such as the business owner, private home owner, that we might not even be able to know exists."

## **The Enhancer of Organizational Sustainability**

**Mission Clarification.** Cornerstone has benefited faith-based organizations in Tarrant County by investing in their work in ways that help these FBOs to

maintain their core calling and even institutionalize their efforts. The chief way that Cornerstone does this is through helping groups focus on their declared mission. Four of the groups mentioned this help as an informal byproduct of being associated with Cornerstone. For example, Mel Karger at FRO, the smallest organization interviewed, said that Cornerstone generally, and Mike Doyle's one-on-one coaching specifically, had helped them stay true to their purpose and scope:

*Sometimes I think we just need to be bigger and do more. But God has called us to do emergency assistance, not to be Cornerstone. Cornerstone has helped us focus our vision on what we do. Cornerstone has helped us stay true to our vision in that we don't have to be as big as Cornerstone. God has called us to do emergency assistance. If [the need] is bigger than we [can meet], we could send them to Cornerstone. Without Cornerstone, I would have thought we needed to be bigger.*

*Strengthening Churches.* Cornerstone's work with churches clearly evidences its role in enhancing organizational sustainability. Cornerstone helps churches to stay true to their global purpose and mission in three important ways.

First, Cornerstone allows partner churches to focus on outreach to their members without ignoring non-members. Staff at St. Andrews Episcopal Church and North Richland Hills Baptist unashamedly refer non-members in need to Cornerstone. With 5500 members between both churches, this allows their pastoral staff to focus attention on their members in need, as well as other core responsibilities, while ensuring non-members are receiving quality help within the same value-set of the churches. And Cornerstone's expertise and experience go beyond what the typical pastor can offer to supplicants. Jerry Stamps of Richland Hills Baptist comments:

*When you are ministering to a large body of people, your time is limited for each and every person. The pastor can't minister to all 1500 people who show up on a Sunday morning on an individual basis, much less all those who have benevolence needs outside the church. I think that we were just limited, very limited, because of time and because of our own training. Even though our pastors do a good job and have good discernment, it is hard for them to qualify a person [i.e., conduct an assessment] to know how they can best help them.*

Second, Cornerstone's existence means that partner churches do not have to hire more staff or receive in-depth social work training. Maneikis, the Associate of Pastor Care at St. Andrews, explained, "If we did not have Cornerstone,

it would increase our budget substantially to bring a social worker on staff at the church. Our current staff doesn't feel equipped."

Third, Cornerstone keeps partner churches true to their Christian mission to reach out to the poor and needy in a Biblical, action-oriented way. As Stamps of North Richland Hills Baptist explained:

*It helps us with keeping these kind of needs at the forefront. If you don't see these things happening, it is easy for them to get lost and you don't think about them. . . They help keep before us [the reminder] that we need to be reaching and helping a lot of people beyond our immediate community. I think that is a great help to our church.*

*Encouraging Leaders.* In addition to Cornerstone's value in helping churches to fulfill their mission, Cornerstone also plays an important role in sustaining faith-based leaders themselves. While it is hard to measure this finding, it was evident from the interviews that the relationships ministry leaders have with Cornerstone staff protected these leaders from ministry burnout and allowed them to persevere in their work.

Cornerstone helps to "re-fuel" ministry leaders in the midst of their draining jobs by allowing them to focus on their calling; protecting them from the sadness of wishing they could do more for others who have such vast needs; providing a safer work environment; giving staff trusted professional friendships around shared concerns and individuals; and being a source of personal encouragement and inspiration to leaders. Everyone had a story to share. Yolanda Miles from the Salvation Army reported:

*I am personally encouraged by them. I think that unknowingly they are able to provide support or inspiration. If I have a family [in need] and I don't know what to do, I can call Rodi or Nan [staff at Cornerstone's 3CP program] and tell them what is going on. They are a support system to us as well as the clients. This relationship is different than with others in the community. I call Cornerstone before I call anyone else.*

Mel Karger of FRO agrees with Miles' assessment. He commented:

*They are some of the most wonderful people. . . They have been the type of program that we could look to in a personal way and call them when we have a problem. We could run by there and say, 'I have this situation with a family that I don't know how to handle.'*

And Pastor Maneikis from St. Andrews adds:

*They prevented me from burnout and have allowed us to function with increased pressures without having to add staff.*

*Institutionalizing Ministry.* Another key way that Cornerstone assists faith-based organizations in sustainability is by helping them to institutionalize their efforts. Cornerstone has turned ad-hoc efforts into formal, thought-through, proactive programs. As mentioned, Cornerstone was started after a family at Doyle's church spent a weekend without food. At that time, North Richland Hills' benevolence efforts were random and there was no guarantee that a person in need would get help. Today, with Cornerstone as the lead agency, the church has a mechanism that allows the church to serve any need at any hour of the day with a goal of changing lives, not just temporarily changing circumstances.

There is no systematic way that Cornerstone institutionalizes programs and ministries. When a struggling program approaches Cornerstone with a need, Cornerstone will do what it can to help. Executive Director Mike Doyle said he did not know how many groups he has helped this way. Kenneth Copeland Ministries, St. Andrews Episcopal Church, and Family Relief Outreach's current ministry with the homeless all started from these ministries approaching Cornerstone for advice about this hard-to-serve population.

In the case of KCM, the prayer supervisor and her husband used to get up in the middle of the night and assist the homeless individuals who showed up at KCM's headquarters. Says Taylor, "Before [Cornerstone] I would just put them in a hotel and give them some food. As far as helping them to change their daily lives, I didn't do that." Now Taylor calls Cornerstone when a homeless individual shows up at KCM and Cornerstone provides comprehensive, holistic intervention with an aim to making the person self-sufficient.

At St. Andrews Episcopal Church, the ministry to the homeless was emotion-driven and reactive before Cornerstone became involved. A ministry staff person's inexperience and lack of sophistication was sorely revealed when the church lost several thousand dollars to a scam. Today, the church does not give out money directly but supports East Door Ministries which Cornerstone manages.

Cornerstone institutionalized Family Relief Outreach through providing extensive technical assistance in its start-up phase to FRO's leader. Cornerstone has even provided "seed money" to FRO by sharing a grant that pays FRO' rent and utility bills until the ministry becomes self-sustaining.

It is clear that some faith-based organizations have been sustained, in part, because of Cornerstone's efforts, particularly by the one-on-one investment of Cornerstone's staff with like-minded professional peers. Without Cornerstone, some efforts would have failed and it is easy to assume that some leaders may have burned out in their jobs.

## **The Enhancer of Capacity**

Effective intermediaries help to build the capacity of local ministries so that these groups continue in operation, regardless of the economy, their leadership, or board, staffing, or community concerns. Capacity building increases an organization's ability, capability, and competence. The quality to strengthen others is the defining characteristic that turns an organization into an intermediary. Cornerstone seems to understand this. When asked what has made Cornerstone an effective intermediary, Doyle stated, "It is the fact that we are more interested in building and strengthening the organizations we work with rather than what it will do for us." Cornerstone's overall approach is not to tell groups, "I am going to make you strong whether you like it or not" or, "I am going to tell you what your need is," explains Doyle. Rather, he describes, "We come in and say, 'How can we help you serve your people?'" Doyle believes that intermediaries that eschew their own agenda and embrace the concerns and felt needs of the FBO being served win credibility and appreciation. The words are hard to actualize, yet Cornerstone appears committed to this approach, and has demonstrated its commitment to capacity building for faith-based organizations in three ways.

*Leadership Development.* Cornerstone is committed to leadership development and peer-to-peer mentoring. Cornerstone has done this, mainly, through modeling for faith-based leaders, by example, how to reach out to people in need in the community.

An example of Cornerstone's leadership development approach can be seen in the way it is field testing a new program for KCM. Cornerstone will be establishing an outreach booth for KCM at their South West regional meeting in Fort Worth. (This conference gathers thousands of church and ministry leaders annually.) The booth will be staffed by Cornerstone and will receive referrals from KCM's staff throughout the meeting. Cornerstone's program director and support staff will be on-site responding to each situation, with KCM's prayer supervisor and project specialist minister shadowing them. This approach is designed to field test whether this is the best outreach model for KCM at the regional conference; however, an indirect result is that two KCM



leaders will be mentored. The benefit of this mentoring is multiplied since both these women are outreach leaders at their local churches even beyond their leadership roles at KCM.

Cornerstone's informal mentoring of Reverend Stanley Maneikis has dramatically shaped the way he does outreach at St. Andrews Episcopal Church. Even as a 35-year resident of Fort Worth, Maneikis readily admits how much he doesn't know about helping his neighbors, particularly the homeless. "I was too generous and softhearted." Maneikis tells the story of the first time he asked Cornerstone for professional advice:

*We [the church] were taken in a scam with a rental housing unit. A slum landlord took advantage of us. I gave the slum landlord several thousand dollars and it was wasted. When I went to Michael [Cornerstone 3CP staff], he knew right away that this was a scam. That was when the church decided they wouldn't handle giving away money any more, unless they went through Cornerstone.*

Cornerstone continues to be an on-call mentor for Reverend Maneikis. He also regularly reads their mailed updates informing him on important changes in the local social services community.

Cornerstone is also informally involved in mentoring an entire congregation, North Richland Hills Baptist Church, as well as the ministerial staff:

*They help me individually and our other pastors. . . If I have a question, I can call and talk to them. I have this issue. How would you handle it?' [That] kind of thing. It is a one-to-one type of training. I don't think of it as training as much as [that] we are in this together to try to help each other. They mentor a lot of people within our congregation. People in our congregation know someone who has a need. They either work with them or the family or whatever. They will call Mike, Kay, Dick, Margaret Young and say 'Hey, I have this situation. How is the best way to help this person?' (Jerry Stamps, Business Administrator)*

It is possible that, one by one, Cornerstone is transforming an entire congregation's views on the poor and needy through its hand-in-hand, visible partnership with this church.

*Sharing "How-To" Expertise.* Cornerstone is also committed to providing "how to" expertise on all the programs they run. It is important to note that the main reason Cornerstone operates direct service programs (such as New Life Center and 3CP) is to demonstrate to churches how they could conduct such

ministries themselves. This “modeling” approach makes Cornerstone unique among many intermediaries.

The field research revealed that Cornerstone is teaching faith-based organizations “how to” do the following things: basic needs assessment, crisis intervention, networking, and starting an emergency intervention program modeled after Cornerstone’s. In the last example, Cornerstone gave the organization, Family Relief Outreach, copies of all their start-up paperwork including their application and requirements. Additionally, Doyle spent at least eight one-hour session with Karger to show him how to start the program.

Cornerstone does not offer any formal training. Rather, it does its “how to” training one-on-one by request, informally, or when a need presents itself.

*Strengthening Financial Accountability.* A third way Cornerstone has enhanced other organizations’ capacity is by helping them to become more financially accountable. In the case of Kenneth Copeland Ministries, before Cornerstone, [they]

*were spending more than two thousand a month just hit and missing people . . . giving them bare essentials to live, housing, food. It made sense to give what we were spending to them [Cornerstone]. He [Mike Doyle] could be more effective and reach a whole lot more people than we could. (Annette Taylor, prayer department supervisor)*

Now KCM gives Cornerstone two thousand dollars per month and both KCM and Cornerstone can account for how it is used.

In the case of St. Andrews Episcopal Church, their outreach to the homeless, East Door Ministries, was struggling to connect with the homeless in meaningful ways. At Cornerstone’s suggestion, they moved the ministry site to the 3CP headquarters (located in “The Community of Hope” where the majority of services to the homeless are located) and gave a Cornerstone staff person, Michael, checkwriting authority over the church’s allocated funds (he was formerly operating the ministry out of the church building). The funds now are used solely for transportation for the homeless to day treatment centers and any allowances are used for housing benefits or transition resources for the homeless. Michael reports to the church finance officer monthly on how these funds are used by turning in all receipts and check duplicates. This partnership has been successful in decreasing administrative costs and increasing effectiveness.

Cornerstone’s mission statement could easily read, “A Christian organization showing love to people in need,” including faith-based organizations in need.

Their commitment to making others stronger is very high and was voiced several times by Mike Doyle.

## The Enhancer of Networks and Relationships

Cornerstone's role in capacity building is possible because of their strong presence in Tarrant County as an enhancer of networks and relationships. The biggest value Cornerstone has in this area is connecting faith-based leaders and organizations with new professional networks. As already mentioned, Cornerstone's executive director is well-connected across the state on homelessness issues and chairs three local boards—the Tarrant County Homeless Coalition, Tarrant County Access for the Homeless, and the Day Resource Center for the Homeless. He also serves as the Governor's appointee for the Interagency Council for the Homeless and is the immediate past chair of the Texas Homeless Network. Additionally, he has key relationships with individuals working for the President's Faith-Based and Community-Based Initiative. If there is a problem on any level of government, he generally knows whom to call to design a remedy. Anyone partnered with Cornerstone benefits from these relationships, whether directly and indirectly.

Jerry Stamps of North Richland Hills Baptist reflected on the value of these relationships:

*It has been very significant. Because our church supports Cornerstone and they have so many other connections with other churches, with other organizations, with governmental agencies, they greatly expand the ability to serve a lot of people that we as a church cannot do by ourselves. It takes a great cooperative effort to serve as many people as they do.*

Likewise, Reverend Maneikis at St. Andrews Episcopal Church noted that Cornerstone is the connecting point for his church to the broader social service community. He was not involved in homelessness issues and networks before the church partnered with Cornerstone around East Door Ministries. Today he sits on the Samaritan's House board of directors and is informed on homelessness issues that affect East Door Ministries' clients and the church.

Additionally, Mel Karger at Family Relief Outreach has become involved in one of the homeless networks that Mike Doyle chairs at Doyle's invitation. The information he receives at these meetings has been a tremendous value to him. Karger reports:

*At Tarrant County Homeless Coalition [meetings] they talk about what is happening in [the] state, county, and city—rules, needs. It lets us know what is*

*going on in the system. This information has helped us to better serve people. The one example I can think of with how this has benefited us is if there is a program somewhere that we have not been able to network into, we have found out. The general information we get there helps us communicate better here.*

**Because of Cornerstone's help, five of the organizations interviewed said they have been able to serve more people with fewer resources and increased results.**

Karger also benefits from Doyle's regular invitations to new networks, conferences and seminars on homelessness. All these connecting points have built FRO's network.

Cornerstone's investment in strategic relationships and networks is not self-serving; it is apparent that they are trying to benefit the entire community by serving the needy. As Jerry Stamps of North Richland Hills Baptist Church commented:

*It is a partnership of the spirit so to speak. . . We are together on a mission. I think likewise in the community other churches feel the same thing. They have a lot of the same interests as we do as a church. We*

*want Cornerstone to succeed. I think Cornerstone has a good reputation in the community.*

## **The Enhancer of Organizational Impact**

Cornerstone's work in helping other organizations to enhance their reach and influence has been extraordinary. Because of Cornerstone's help, five of the organizations interviewed said they have been able to serve more people with fewer resources and increased results. Enhanced impact is seen in the clients the groups served, how much it cost, and how their statistics improved.

Stamps of Richland Hills Baptist Church reflected on the scope and depth of the church's outreach now as compared to before Cornerstone. He stated,

*There are thousands of people that they serve that we couldn't do as a church by ourselves. [Before] I would assume we would focus on those within the church, first, that have some real needs and try to help them, and as people stopped by the church or someone within our church knew*

*someone with a need and referred them to us, they would try to do the best they could. But I don't think the quality of service would be as good.*

Cornerstone enabled most of the ministries interviewed to expand their work with the homeless. FRO's ministry reaches over 100 percent more homeless individuals due to Cornerstone's and another group's financial support. According to Mel Karger, in 2001:

*We serviced 680 families. We did have a private donation from someone at Glenview that gave us 36,000 [dollars] designated for FRO. Without that money and Mike Doyle's money [sharing a grant], we probably could have only helped 300 families.*

St. Andrews Episcopal Church estimates that they were able to serve 30 percent more homeless individuals last year due to lower administrative costs from Cornerstone overseeing the East Door Ministries funds. These visible successes have allowed them to make East Door Ministries a line item in their budget this year.

The Salvation Army Family Center cites the 3CP program as TSA's first referral source. 3CP also improves TSA's long-term success rate in transitioning families into gainful employment and permanent housing. As already mentioned, the 3CP program has a 50 percent better success rate than other providers transitioning families from homelessness.

Kenneth Copeland Ministries is indebted to Cornerstone for expanding their ministry with prisoners and parolees. Now, whenever they receive a letter from a prisoner who is being paroled to Tarrant County, they contact Cornerstone. They are so supportive of Cornerstone's ministry that they featured them in their February 2002 *Victory* magazine. This is also a way to let prisoners across the country know that there is a group such as Cornerstone that can be a resource to them.

Cornerstone currently has one parolee in one of their homeless facilities who is a KCM referral. In this situation, Cornerstone was able to intercede on levels KCM couldn't due to lack of expertise, relationships, and resources. Besides providing this man with a residential program, Doyle has been his advocate. He helped the man get released from jail and permitted to remain in the residential program after the man had been imprisoned by his parole officer for failing to attend a meeting.

Of Cornerstone's impact on their work with the homeless and parolees, Annette Taylor, prayer department supervisor, surmised,

*Where we could help three people [before], they can reach a whole lot more people. . . The way we were doing it [before] there was no measurement of success. If you take 2000 [dollars] a month and give it to someone and they go to another church there is no way of knowing what they did with that money.*

As already mentioned, now KCM gives Cornerstone \$2000 monthly and this has made KCM's successes with the needy visible, tangible, and measurable.

Cornerstone also serves as a mechanism for mobilizing and channeling the assets of churches for productive investment in ministry. North Richland Hills Baptist Church invests its outreach dollars in Cornerstone—providing annual financial support as well as office space for Cornerstone's headquarters, warehousing space, and household goods and furniture for the warehouse. This targeted aid then, through Cornerstone's multiple programs, reaches many low-income families enfolded in the web of support Cornerstone offers. The alternative would be for the church's benevolence dollars to go directly to needy families in a hit or miss fashion, with little or no follow-up and no protections against fraud.

Likewise, Cornerstone allows the congregation at St. Andrews Episcopal Church to share their ample financial resources with the homeless community in specific, accountable ways. This is done on top of St. Andrews' underwriting of East Door Ministries and some of Cornerstone's operational costs. Cornerstone also refers individuals back to St. Andrews when specific situations merit short-term financial assistance. These persons are then helped from a separate discretionary fund in St. Andrews budget. Recently the church helped a single mom who needed to relocate into new housing to avoid a crack-addicted boyfriend.

Additionally, St. Andrews has collected 15,000 pounds of food for Cornerstone Community Center. By providing a distribution system, Cornerstone offers a means for faith-based groups to impact their community in a significant way with the resources they have to share.

## Conclusion

Cornerstone's Mike Doyle summarizes the ministry's approach as an intermediary in these words: "We focus on what is best for the community and how God can best be glorified rather than [on] how we can build our kingdom." Doyle judges the merits of his work on whether or not Cornerstone's constituent ministries are strengthened. When asked whether his organization is an effective intermediary, Doyle responded, "Yes, I think we are effective because we have made other groups effective." He adds:



*I think that we do bring some business skills to the table; some practical how-to's; we bring a love of people to the table. And we bring some resources to the table. While we may not have the resources ourselves, we have a network. We have relationships that others don't have.*

Doyle also emphasizes how Cornerstone's staff are always trying to share the lessons they have learned with their ministry partners. This includes sharing mistakes made, in the hopes of helping others to avoid them. "That we are freely willing to transfer [these lessons] to other people is a big asset," Doyle says. "Most of the time we are called so that others can learn from our successes and failures." Successful intermediaries, Doyle continues, must be available. His staff walks grassroots leaders through the "day to day challenges of doing ministry."

Comments by ministry leaders made during interviews clearly show that Cornerstone is considered a highly effective intermediary. Most were effusive about Cornerstone's work with them. As one stated, "I think every big county ought to have something that measures up to Cornerstone." And a leader at St. Andrews concluded that, "They really helped this church. I have never experienced anything like this. We couldn't do the job we are doing without them." Cornerstone's unique role in serving both the helpers and helped is captured best in Mel Karger's concluding comments:

*I have been in the ministry for 29 years but I have never been involved in a ministry like Family Relief Outreach. When I took this on there was a whole lot I didn't know. But Cornerstone has broadened my vision, given me insight, they have physically helped us, spiritually helped us, and financially helped us. They have been like a big brother to me. Just a tremendous, tremendous partnership.*

Based on the evaluations of its constituent ministries, Cornerstone is attaining its end goal of "increasing churches' capacity so they are serving more people who are in need."

**A leader at St. Andrews concluded that, "They really helped this church. I have never experienced anything like this. We couldn't do the job we are doing without them."**

## Appendix A: Value-Added By Cornerstone Assistance Network for Faith-Based Organizations and Churches

<b>PROVIDES NEEDED RESOURCES</b>	<b>FAITH-BASED GROUP HELPED</b>
Initial Intake/Screen For Other Groups	RH, ST
Provide Direct Service To Underserved Populations	ST, ARC, FRO
New Life Center	ARC, KCM
3CP	TSA
The Dwelling Place	KCM
Resources For Transitional Homeless	TSA
Shared Grant	FRO
Crisis Intervention Counseling	RH
Need Assessment	RH
Social Work Expertise	KCM, RH
Comprehensive Case Management	ST, TSA
Record Keeping	ST
Expertise Of Community Resources	ST, TSA, FRO
Information On Community Resources	FRO
Written Updates & Referral Lists	ST
Crisis Intervention For Major Events	KCM
Accountable Financial Resources For Clients	TSA, ARC, FRO
On The Spot Consulting For Other Providers/Groups/Churches	KCM, RH, ST, TSA, FRO
Maintain C.O.R.E. Net	KCM, FRO
Paid membership into "Safety Network"	FRO + 16 other FBOs
<b>INCREASES SUSTAINABILITY</b>	<b>FAITH-BASED GROUP HELPED</b>
Helps Them Focus On Their Mission	KCM, RH, ST, TSA, FRO
Fulfilled Vision/Mission With Shared Goals	RH, ARC, TSA, FRO
Necessary Part Of Continuum Of Care For Drug Addicted Moving To Independence (To New Life Center)	ARC
Necessary Part Of Continuum Of Care For Homeless Moving To Independence (3CP)	TSA
Frees Up Staff To Do Their Job/Calling	KCM, RH
Allows Pastor To Focus On Calling	RH
Safer Work Environment	KCM, RH
Protects Staff From Burnout	KCM, ST
Decreased Staff's Own Sadness	KCM
Trusted Friendship With Cornerstone Staff Around Shared Concerns/Individuals	ARC, TSA, FRO
Inspiration/Personal Encouragement To Leader	TSA, FRO
Social Work Expertise Without Having To Hire	KCM, ST

Keeps Congregation Connected With The Needy Beyond Immediate Neighborhood (Keeps Them True To Their Christian Mission)	RH
Church Can Focus On Members More While Referring Non-Members To Cornerstone	RH, ST
Prevented Church/Ministry From Turning People Away (Keeps Them True To Their Christian Mission)	ST, FRO
Have Line Item In Budget Now For East Door Ministries (Institutionalized Ministry)	ST
Administer East Door Ministry Fund/Checkbook	ST
TSA Family Center Used Their Homeless Survey For A Recent Grant Application	TSA
Development Advice For Long-Term Sustainability	FRO
Protection From Overburdening Under- Resourced Churches (Indirect)	KCM
<b>ENHANCES IMPACT</b>	<b>FAITH-BASED GROUP HELPED</b>
Can Give Specifically To Group They Know Through Offerings And Budget	RH, ST
Allows Church To Give Financially In A Meaningful, Accountable Way To A Few Individuals	ST
Better Return On Their Money	KCM, RH, ST
Provides Accountability With Money They Give To The Needy	ST
Provides Concrete Way To Give Money	KCM, RH, ST
Able To Help People They Couldn't Before	KCM, RH, ST, FRO
Makes Success Visible And Tangible	KCM, TSA
Helping More People, Particularly Prisoners	KCM
Helping More People, Especially The Homeless	RH, ST, TSA, FRO
Can Respond To Homeless In Effective Way. Increased Results.	ST, TSA
Connected Them With Community Resources	TSA, FRO
Provides Place To Give Extra Giving	RH
Provided Way For Church To Give Tangibly What It Did Have	RH, ST
Improved Quality Of Church's Ministry	RH
Adapted Program Methods To Make Them More Successful	TSA
Able To Help 100% More Families Due To Web Resources (Cornerstone Paid For Membership For One Of These)	FRO

KCM = Kenneth Copeland Ministries  
 RH = North Richland Hills Baptist Church  
 ST = Saint Andrews Episcopal Church

ARC = Salvation Army Adult Rehabilitation Center  
 TSA = The Salvation Army Family Center  
 FRO = Family Relief Outreach

<b>BUILDS CAPACITY</b>	<b>FAITH-BASED GROUP HELPED</b>
Expanded/Changed Vision	KCM, TSA, FRO
Able To Measure Success	KCM, TSA
Leadership Development (Strategic Mentoring Of Leaders In Multiple Roles)	KCM, RH, ST, TSA (informal), FRO (formal)
Mentoring For Leaders	ST, ARC, TSA, FRO
Lowered Administration Costs Of East Door Ministries	ST
Increased Budget	ST, FRO
Builds Community Capacity Through New Life Center – Meets A Community Need	ARC
Builds Community Capacity Through 3CP – Meets A Community Need For Transitional Housing And Case Management For Homeless With Low Turnover For Staff And Clients	TSA
Builds Community Capacity Through Participation In Safety Network Website	FRO
Lower At-Risk Population (Help To County, As A Whole)	KCM
Field Testing New Ideas	KCM, FRO
Informal Training (Basic Needs Assessment And Emergency Intervention)	KCM, RH
General Education To Congregation	RH, FRO
Program Model To Learn From	TSA (3CP), FRO
Start Up Consulting/Program Consulting	FRO
Showed How To Network	FRO
Showed How To Start Emergency Intervention Ministry – Gave Us Their Paperwork For Applications And Requirements	FRO
<b>BUILDS RELATIONSHIPS AND NETWORKS</b>	<b>FAITH-BASED GROUP HELPED</b>
Provides Government Relationships	KCM, RH
Provides Business Relationships	KCM, RH
Provides Church Collaboration	KCM, RH
Part Of Extensive Local Network Now	KCM, RH, ST, FRO
Connected Church With Greater Homeless Community	ST
Able To Network For Client More Extensively	TSA, FRO
Professional Collaboration On Clients	ARC, TSA
Increased Outreach Pastor's Professional Network	ST, FRO
Invitation To New Networks/Conferences/ Seminars On Homelessness	FRO

KCM = Kenneth Copeland Ministries  
RH = North Richland Hills Baptist Church  
ST = Saint Andrews Episcopal Church

ARC = Salvation Army Adult Rehabilitation Center  
TSA = The Salvation Army Family Center  
FRO = Family Relief Outreach

## **Appendix B: Analysis of the Potential Value-Added of “The Fort Worth Initiative”**

Cornerstone Assistance Network is the one of three lead agencies in a three-year, \$1.5 million dollar project focused on workforce development. In 2001, the Rockefeller Foundation chose Fort Worth, Boston, and Nashville as pilot sites for a new initiative. As the lead regional agency for “The Fort Worth Initiative,” Cornerstone is working with five Tarrant County non-profits to build their organizational capacity and program capacity. These non-profits were selected through a competitive process (utilizing Requests for Proposals) administered by Cornerstone. Applicants were asked to demonstrate their strengths in the areas of employment and workforce issues, since the project’s end goal is to see more urban, secluded job seekers placed into higher paying jobs.

The financial arrangement between Rockefeller, Cornerstone and the subgrantees is still under development. The Rockefeller Foundation has granted Cornerstone \$250,000 for year one of a potential 3-year grant. The entire \$250,000 is being matched by local foundations. Most of these funds will be distributed to the five participating subgrantees. (The Year 2 and Year 3 proposals for renewal are currently under review, and Cornerstone is confident, given the Year 1 outcomes achieved, that funding will be continued.) All five of the subgrantees are receiving \$55,000 for three years (subject to The Initiative receiving Year 2 and Year 3 funding). According to Mike Doyle, the disbursement schedule is based on their organizational assessment and subsequent work plan.

Cornerstone is responsible for communicating with the Rockefeller Foundation and the subgrantees. The subgrantees are responsible for reporting to Cornerstone; they do not expect to have any direct communication with Rockefeller. The subgrantees are reporting at undetermined intervals to Cornerstone regarding their use of the money. Mike Doyle said the reporting is “monthly or quarterly” and one of the subgrantees said “regularly.” The subgrantees are required to do their own accounting and they have some latitude as to how they spend the grant money, as long as it is based on their work plan goals and timelines. Cornerstone will regularly review the subgrantees’ budgets and expenditures. The subgrantees are responsible for keeping records of all their expenses. If the subgrantees cannot explain adequately something they have done, Cornerstone will work with them on strengthening that capacity. The organization will receive training when necessitated. According to Doyle, this may be in accounting systems, generally accepted accounting principles, or on how to hire or outsource a bookkeeper.

Cornerstone is administering this “Fort Worth Initiative” through its newly established Intermediary Services Division. Monna Loftis, the director, was hired from the Center for Non-Profit Management in Dallas to manage the project. To examine Cornerstone’s contribution, two of the Fort Worth Initiative subgrantees were interviewed. Leaders at each were asked to discuss the potential value-added they believed their relationship with Cornerstone would bring to their work, and to describe the mechanics of the partnership. Background information on these subgrantees is detailed below, followed by their responses to specific questions about their involvement in the initiative.

### **Fort Worth Initiative Sub-Grantees**

The *Community Learning Center (CLC)*, established in 2000, is part of the Tarrant County Central Labor Council, a coalition of 57 labor unions in the county. CLC works with individuals who have barriers to employment or who have had difficulty keeping employment through no fault of their own. The organization’s goal is to establish these individuals on a solid career path. CLC’s budget is roughly \$500,000 annually; in addition, they are also a “pass through” organization for two years for \$2.86 million dollars for agencies that provide services for dislocated workers. Besides the Rockefeller grant, all of CLC’s funding comes from the U.S. Department of Labor. CLC employs eleven full-time staff. Their field operations director, Jan Daniels, reports to a volunteer executive officer.

The *Near North Side Partners Council (NNSPC)* is a community-based organization, established in 1996, focused on improving the quality of life for the near North side neighborhood. This is a community of approximately 17,000 residents, primarily Latinos, who are under-employed and working in low-skill, low-paying jobs. NNSPC’s 2002 project budget is \$1.4 million, with 70 percent coming from foundations and 30 percent from the U.S. Department of Labor’s Work Advantage Board. The agency employs ten full-time staff and two volunteers. Abby Gambo, a resident of the neighborhood, serves as Director.

### **Expected Value of the Fort Worth Initiative**

Cornerstone’s role in the Initiative is as a financial intermediary, handling the distribution of funds and the monitoring/reporting role with Rockefeller. Additionally, Cornerstone will be assisting the sub-grantees in documenting and evaluating their effectiveness in meeting the goals of the project (for example, by helping the agencies to define specific outcomes measurements and assess their level of success in achieving them).



The two sub-grantee agencies interviewed expressed enthusiasm for the opportunity to grow in their capacity for documenting their process and progress and to increase their general administrative/organizational strength. CLC staff noted that theirs is a new organization, and that partnership with Cornerstone through this initiative will help them to build a solid foundation and presence in the community. In addition, they hope to develop their capacity so as to be able to flourish even beyond the funding cycle of the Rockefeller grant. CLC is also excited that the Initiative offers them the opportunity to work with individuals who in the past they had to turn away. Now CLC can broaden their eligibility rules and serve individuals who need remediation but who do not meet requirements to get into CLC's AITP (Aerospace Industry Training Partnership) program.

NNSPC's director added that she believes her agency will learn many lessons through the collaboration, through the meetings she will have with organizations from Fort Worth and the other two cities piloting the same work. Specifically, NNSPC believes they will learn how to manage the ever-growing demand on their organization through their partnership with the four other community-based organizations in Fort Worth. Gambo expects that the other agency directors will talk with her about their experiences in managing projects, lessons learned, what to avoid, and pitfalls they have experienced. She sees that as highly valuable for improving the work of NNSPC. She says, "It will save us a lot of time and resources if we can learn what others have done and how they have done it. Then we don't have to go through the same experience. It will really provide a way to help our performance and our service delivery. We can be experts in addressing where resources go." Additionally, the initiative will give NNSPC time to reflect on what it has done and how it should continue. Gambo said she is also pleased to be able to share with other partners the unique learning experiences NNSPC has gathered over its years of operation.

CLC mentioned two areas where they believe they will acquire some valuable lessons through the collaboration—best practices and taking the organization to the next level. Director Daniels explains that "taking the organization to the next level" means five things. First, it means having a paid executive director. Currently, they have a volunteer executive director. Second, it means establishing a sound funding base. Daniels states, "It is all short-term cycles right now. I would like for us to develop alternative funding sources for our mission. We want to build sustainability." Third, it means offering additional or higher quality services to individuals that come to their program. Fourth, CLC wants to learn from Cornerstone's model. Fifth, they want to make their parent

organization proud of them. Daniels says, “We want to pay them back by showing them what they thought was possible, we are able to do through their support.”

## **Additional Benefits**

At least for CLC, there have been additional “ripple effect” benefits through the collaboration with Cornerstone. Jan Daniels noted that Cornerstone keeps her abreast of upcoming meetings on topics relevant to CLC’s work—and also broader issues. Moreover, Cornerstone is sharing its network with her, including many organizations not participating specifically in the Rockefeller initiative. She also reported that the staffs of CLC and Cornerstone are strategizing together about shared community issues and programs they can offer to one another. Already they have collaborated on assisting one homeless, jobless man.

NNSPC’s relationship with Cornerstone is not as extensive. The main point of contact is between Gambo and Cornerstone’s Monna Loftis; these two had a long-standing professional relationship prior to this joint project. NNSPC’s involvement with the Initiative came largely through this relationship (Loftis is a former volunteer and consultant to NNSPC). Gambo feels confident that Loftis will be able to help NNSPC identify resources and technical assistance/consultants. She hopes she will also learn about new models that could enhance NNSPC’s performance and about methods of evaluation that Loftis knows from her strong expertise in the non-profit world. And she knows Loftis will be a sounding board as NNSPC goes through the process of implementing its new programs in workforce development.

Both sub-grantees discussed the complementarities arising in the collaboration, where their weaknesses could be bolstered by the strengths of Cornerstone and the other partner organizations. CLC, for example, mentioned four areas of weakness that will be strengthened through the partnership with Cornerstone. First, they want a stronger image in the community. Cornerstone is, as Daniels put it, “well respected, known as a leader, ethical, and they have a strong reputation.” Second, CLC wants to develop stronger organizational “hard skills.” CLC sees itself in a toddler stage while Cornerstone is already developed and more mature, and thus has much wisdom to share. Third, CLC wants to establish a strong board of directors. According to Daniels, Cornerstone has a more developed, structured board than CLC, so here again is an area where they can glean advice and insights from Cornerstone. Fourth, they are excited about the opportunity to be professionally mentored by a more experienced organization like Cornerstone. CLC also mentioned that they

expect to “glean” from the other four Fort Worth agencies participating in the Fort Worth Initiative.

NNSPC anticipates benefiting mostly from the strengths of the other subgrantees in Fort Worth and in Boston and Nashville. They want to increase their skills in strategic planning and board development and are eager to learn from other grassroots groups that have progressed in these areas. As NNSPC’s Abby Gambo explains, “Most of the people on [our] board are residents of the neighborhood. While that is great for providing vision, we need to prepare them for the next level of operation. That is really putting a lot of demands on them.” NNSPC also wants to grow in its fundraising abilities, its marketing prowess, and its ability to evaluate its programs.

### **Expected Impact of the Collaboration**

Both organizations were asked what they hoped would be some practical applications from their participation in the Fort Worth Initiative in the short to mid-term future. In one year, CLC hopes to see people who were initially turned away from their program go through their training, be served, and ultimately employed. Jan Daniels believes they will have greater visibility in the community and be known for more than “aerospace industry training partnerships,” their biggest and most visible program. (It is funded through the U.S. Department of Labor and helps dislocated workers in the aerospace industry.) Also, she is hopeful they will have “strategized enough with alternative funding” to be able to hire an executive director. Last, she is expecting they will be able to help more employers who are trying to find individuals trained in specialized areas.

NNSPC hopes in one year to have a more committed, trained staff who understand the mission of the organization. Gambo explained that in order to improve results and have better performance, she needs to have staff “that are ready to go.” In three years, Gambo hopes the organization will be more identified with the neighborhood, have increased partnerships, and be leveraging more resources. Optimally, in three years, she hopes to see more people in the neighborhood obtaining better skills, advancing in their jobs, and securing better jobs.

# case studies

---