



# Moving the Needle Impact Brief: Place-Based

Moving the Needle (MTN) is a multi-year strategic plan that builds on WRF’s more than 35 year commitment to improve the lives of Arkansans in three interrelated areas—economic, racial, and social justice; economic development; and education.



Our ultimate goal is to move from being among the nation’s bottom five in economic and education indicators to becoming one of the nation’s highest ranking states in measures of family and child well-being. To accomplish this, WRF has adopted four strategic plan goals:

- Reduce the number of families living below 200 percent of the federal poverty line.
- Increase high school, vocational, and college graduation rates in the state.
- Increase educational attainment and economic mobility in select communities in Arkansas.
- Build Arkansas nonprofit infrastructure.

## INCREASE EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT AND ECONOMIC MOBILITY IN SELECT COMMUNITIES IN ARKANSAS BY SUPPORTING LOCAL COMMUNITY CHANGE EFFORTS

WRF’s investments in select communities across Arkansas are building local capacity to engage a broad base of community stakeholders in comprehensive community change initiatives that address poverty at the local level. To date, WRF has provided both technical assistance and grants in eight communities. Grants have supported both project implementation as well as organizational development and general operating support for nonprofits whose core functions are community organizing and engagement.

### WRF Comprehensive Community Change Strategy

- Identifies self-motivated communities engaging a cross-section of stakeholders
- Supports communities to develop comprehensive community change strategies and initiatives
- Provides technical support and implementation grants
- Creates community change learning community to increase local capacity and develop resident leadership

#### Technical Assistance Support

Pine Bluff 20/20  
Alzheimer

#### TA Implementation

Mountain Home  
MISS CO PRIDE  
North Jonesboro  
Neighborhood Initiative  
Central Arkansas Food Bank  
– Bradley  
– Chicot  
– Desha

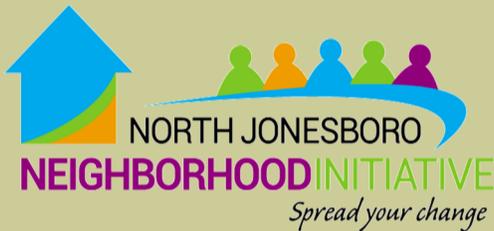
#### Organizational Support

Rural Community Alliance  
Arkansas Public Policy Panel  
Delta Citizens Alliance  
Houseaboutit  
Local Initiatives Support Corporation

## CHANGE IN ACTION:

### NORTH JONESBORO NEIGHBORHOOD INITIATIVE (NJNI)

While the city of Jonesboro's population has grown 21 percent over the last decade the poverty rate has also increased to 19.5 percent, slightly above the state average of 18.4 percent. A large proportion of the poverty in Jonesboro is concentrated in the majority low-income, African American, and Latino neighborhoods on the north-side of the city. With technical assistance provided by the Foundation through WRF consultant Mobilizing Communities and support from the City of Jonesboro, NJNI developed a strategic plan in partnership with residents and community stakeholders to effectively address the problems plaguing the community and improve the quality of life in north Jonesboro. In 2012, through additional support from the City of Jonesboro and a grant from WRF, NJNI began implementing its strategic vision.



2009

- WRF meets with Jonesboro city officials to discuss the need for community development.

2010

- Resident leaders, supported by staff from the City of Jonesboro Office of Community Development, are trained by Mobilizing Communities in resident engagement techniques. Residents host “dinner circles” in their homes and identify community assets and community issues they want to address.
- Neighborhood network model initiated.
- NJNI Planning Committee established.
- Fisher Street Community in Action and Garden Manor NJNI neighborhood networks established.

2011

- WRF provides technical assistance resources for the development of the NJNI Strategic Plan.

2012

- NJNI secures implementation grant from WRF .
- NJNI hires first full-time staff, Emma Agnew, as the Community Services Coordinator.
- NJNI initiates year one of strategic plan .
- NJNI secures funding for AmeriCorps program – 16 part time AmeriCorps service members enlisted.
- Fisher Street Community in Action receives 501(c) 3 status
- The Ministers Alliance NJNI neighborhood network established
- NJNI hosts first National Night Out event
- NJNI hosts first community fair. 500 residents and 30 organizations participate.

2013

- NJNI Board approves bylaws and two-year strategic plan
- NJNI secures funding from Hunger Relief Alliance of Arkansas
- NJNI hosts classes in Jonesboro on job readiness, cooking and nutrition, life skills, and financial literacy
- NJNI secures Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Area status from federal department of Housing and Urban Development

## VISION

Collaborative community change strategies where engaged residents, local businesses, faith communities, social service providers and funders work together to build vibrant neighborhoods, foster community cohesion, and build a strong infrastructure of services and supports for families.

## MISSION

To encourage two-way communication between residents, stakeholders, and city officials in the decision-making process to enhance safety, strengthen families, and transform neighborhoods through involvement and engagement.

## CORE VALUES

- Healthy Families
- Quality Education
- Financial Stability
- Working Infrastructure
- Community Support Systems



## WRF COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY CHANGE STRATEGY

## CHALLENGES

- Building infrastructure to convene cross-sector stakeholders and support comprehensive community change
- Developing authentic community leadership to effectively engage and mobilize residents
- Focusing initiatives on organizing stakeholders for change versus delivering services and programs

## WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED

- Communities must be self-motivated and invested
- Technical assistance is critical to build leadership capacity and strategy development
- Successful comprehensive community change initiatives are built on a set of best practices that transcend a specific place

## WHAT'S NEXT

- Convene place-based grantees for peer learning exchange
- Create opportunities for place-based grantees to learn from national models
- Expand the strategy and approach to include community organizing grantees and community-based service organizations