



***Building Communities,
Changing lives***

www.commteam.org

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COMMUNITY INVESTMENT PLAN 2020 – 2022 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Established in 1965, Community Teamwork, Inc. (CTI) is a private non-profit 501-C3 Community Action Agency (CAA) serving the City of Lowell and the seven surrounding towns of Billerica, Chelmsford, Dracut, Dunstable, Tewksbury, Tyngsboro, and Westford. Community Teamwork also serves as a Community Development Corporation and as the Regional Housing Agency for the Merrimack Valley and the rest of Northeastern Massachusetts, including 71 cities and towns along the North Shore and Cape Ann. Our mission is ***to serve as a catalyst for social change. We strengthen communities and reduce poverty by delivering vital services and collaborating with key stakeholders to create housing, education and economic opportunities.***

Through a comprehensive community needs assessment, CTI sought input directly from the community at-large regarding their views of the most salient community needs. Our Community Needs Assessment process consisted of three levels of direct feedback, in addition to analysis of other data tools about our community and the residents we serve. Our internal process includes the use of key informant interviews, focus groups, and surveys, both community surveys and internal CTI staff surveys. Over and above this three year process, Community Teamwork also conducts annual customer surveys to analyze our successes and areas we need to improve. Community Teamwork also utilizes data from our partner coalitions to inform our planning. The Greater Lowell Health Alliance recently released its 2019 Community Needs Assessment, which noted that the top priority community resource for all participants was Affordable Housing (35.9%). Community Teamwork continues in its leadership role in the City of Lowell's Working Cities program, funded through the Boston Federal Reserve Bank's Working Cities Initiative. Working Cities is cross-sectoral initiative focused on improving opportunities for low-income people in Massachusetts' Gateway Cities. The findings from our planning process, quantitative data analysis, and our partners, have informed CTI's Community Investment Plan (CIP) and strengthened our ties to our community. In response to what we have heard and learned, we have narrowed the focus of this Community Investment Plan (CIP) to the three broad areas including Affordable Housing and Homelessness, Financial Self-Sufficiency and Workforce Development. Additionally, for the 2020-2022 CIP, we have added a Board approved new area of focus. The following strategic goals will serve as our primary efforts over the next three years:

AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS

Goal 1: Increase access to quality affordable housing for low-income families and individuals in the Merrimack Valley.

Goal 2: Increase the number of homeless families moving out of shelter and decrease the length of stay that families reside in shelter.

Goal 3: Enhance the efforts of the Merrimack Valley Consortium to expand homelessness prevention services for low-income individuals and families and youth experiencing housing instability.



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FINANCIAL SELF-SUFFICIENCY

Goal 1: Assist low-income individuals to increase their financial knowledge to better position themselves to invest in their future and that of their children.

Goal 2: Assist low-income individuals to increase their income, improve their ability to save and acquire an asset.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Goal 1: Increase the number of unemployed individuals who become gainfully employed.

Goal 2: Increase the number of individuals who retain employment for 12-months.

Partnering with Healthcare: ADDRESSING THE SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH

Based on our prior two years of activities with our healthcare partners, and the recognition that both the Community Teamwork Community Health Needs Assessment and the Greater Lowell Health Alliance Needs Assessment highlight that the number one need in our communities is affordable housing, it is critical that we address and focus on a new area for growth – that of connecting to our healthcare partners in the cross-referral of customers and the alignment of resources to meet the housing, health, and wellness needs of our constituents.

The Board approved this new area for growth – that of connecting to our healthcare partners in the cross-referral of customers and the alignment of resources to meet the housing, health, and wellness needs of our constituents. Based on our year of experience with our healthcare partners and the co-location of CTI staff, the new strategic goal is as follows:

Partnering with Healthcare: Addressing Social Determinants of Health (SDOH):

Goal 1: Increase Community Teamwork Support to expand our partnership with Affordable Care Organization (ACO) partners.

Goal 2: Increase Referrals of ACO Partners Patients to Community Teamwork Resources to address SDOH Issues of Co-Constituents.

Goal 3: Build and Strengthen Systems for referrals, follow-up, and reporting between Community teamwork and ACO partners to facilitate SDOH efforts.