



Envisioning a Nonprofit Center in Howard County Town Hall Meeting and Planning Committee Meeting Summary

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Executive Summary:

These notes summarize the key concepts presented and discussed during the Town Hall Meeting and Planning Committee Meeting convened by the Association for Community Services of Howard County on Wednesday, January 15, 2014. Please also see the Powerpoint slides from both meetings for more detailed information.

The stated goals of the meetings included:

- Discuss multi-tenant nonprofit centers (MTNC) and the potential to develop a center that serves Howard County
- Explore the vision for the nonprofit center
- Review project timeline and next steps

A Town Hall meeting convened 70 community members representing diverse constituents primarily involved with nonprofit organizations serving Howard County. Immediately following the Town Hall meeting, the Planning Committee met to further discuss the statement of purpose, strategic goals and potential network of the nonprofit center. Findings from both meetings will be used to draft a statement of purpose and customize the demand survey, focus group and interview questions to be undertaken in Feb – April, 2014.

Scope of the Feasibility Assessment:

Deliverable	Supporting Activity	Timing
Vision and Strategic Goals	Town Hall and Planning Committee Meeting	January
Assessment of market demand	Survey of nonprofit organizations	February
Refinement of findings	Focus Groups	April
Interim presentation of findings	Planning Committee Meeting	April
Real estate, governance and operations data	Research, personal interviews	April - early May
Final presentation of recommendations	Analysis of findings	May



Town Hall Meeting Notes

1. Welcome from the Association of Community Services of Howard County

2. Participant Demographics

- Majority (~50) from nonprofit organizations
 - 5-10 from public/governmental agencies
 - 5 from for-profit services
- Majority (~60) from human services
 - few from arts, environmental, LGBT and management support organizations
- Majority (~30) were Executive Directors; 10 Board Members; ~5 funders; 3 consultants
- ~30% had previous involvement with shared space; 2 had previous involvement with shared services; 50% had previous involvement with shared programming

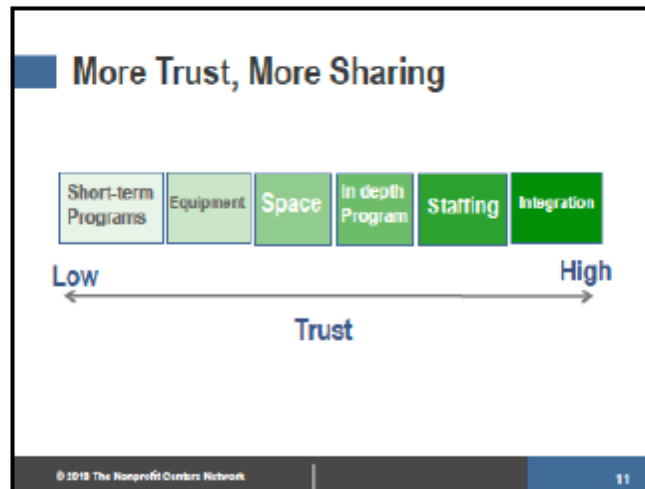
3. Introduction to Nonprofit Centers Network: see www.nonprofitcenters.org

4. Nonprofit Centers, background information

Nonprofit centers involve the collaborative use of space and resources across traditional organizational boundaries:

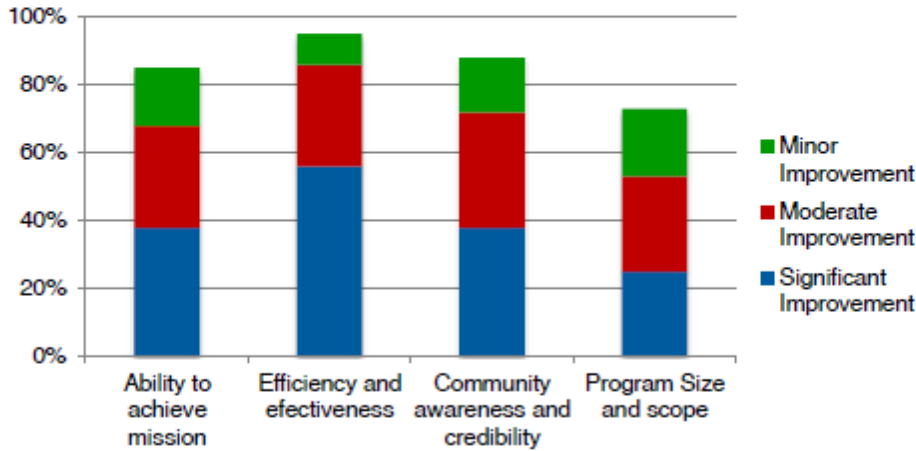
- Shared space and equipment: office space, conference rooms, IT
- Shared services: admin, communications, accounting, advocacy
- Shared programming: 1-day co-trainings, shared intake and referrals, artistic collaboration

The complexity of shared resources increases as cross-organizational trust and experience grow.





In a recent NCN study, nonprofit centers created benefits for participating organizations and the community including:



5. Case studies of nonprofit centers, national and local

Nonprofit Center	Strategy
Children & Family Services Charlotte, NC	Co-location of essential human services; spin-off of LLC to provide shared financial management and HR services
Magnolia Place Los Angeles, CA	Geographic focus on neighborhood through an intensive network of support; shared evaluative measures for network partners
TSNE Nonprofit Center Boston, MA	Building capacity for large and small social change orgs
The Union Mill Baltimore, MD	Community revitalization through affordable space
Carroll Nonprofit Center Westminster, MD	Affordable office space and shared resources including shared foundation development directory
The Nonprofit Village Rockville, MD	Shared and virtual office space with growing interest in shared communications and professional development

6. Successful nonprofit centers typically share some of the following characteristics:

- Adequate resources for start-up
- Standardized offerings with some customization
- High-touch customer service
- Space is appropriately sized for demand
- Agreements are clearly defined in writing
- Financially self-sustaining



7. Envisioning a Center in Howard County – Participant Feedback

What are the challenges facing constituents or clients?

- Lack of awareness about services and resources (2)
- Limited access to services due to lack of transportation and time

What are the challenges facing nonprofit organizations?

- Lack of shared information, shared referrals and access to clients (3)
- Limited capacity to meet increasing demand for services
 - Cost and lack of funding for back office services (2)
 - Funding volatility
 - Cost of space
- NIMBYism (not in my back yard)
- The large number of nonprofit organizations makes it harder to:
 - Achieve public awareness about services
 - Reach and receive funding from major donors

What is the most important outcome for a nonprofit center in Howard County to achieve?

- Increase economic stability and continuity of nonprofits including grassroots nonprofits (3)
- Foster collaborative and/or coordinated services and programs (3)
- Increase visibility and awareness for the nonprofit sector
- Increase efficiency for organizations and the services offered

When you envision your “dream” nonprofit center, what does it look and feel like?

- The center is an accessible, one-stop shop in central location with extended hours beyond 9 - 5
- The center offers comprehensive client services including emergency services:
 - At reception, clients complete one intake; shared data and seamless client services ensure clients are referred to the right services, across organizations
 - Clients entering the center have support from a companion, navigator, advocate and/or community promotora
- The center has multiple floors to strengthen client services and administrative operations for both large and small-sized organizations
- The center is more than a physical space with virtual and remote services
 - Center has a huge information/call center with counselors who refer clients to outreach workers in the field
- The center facilitates collaboration among public and private organizations to increase service provision and raise awareness; offers something for everyone:
 - Co-working, auto shop, computer room, medical services, art display
 - “Pop up” space with incubation services for nonprofits
- The center builds organizational capacity, is a learning community
- Words to describe how it feels: welcoming, light, safe, high-tech, green, confidential, collaborative, facilitative,
- It includes art, is diverse in all ways, has child-friendly, caring supporting staff, and is accessible
- The center involves (and is potentially integrated with) other local efforts including the: Welcome Center, Family and Children’s Services Center, North Laurel Health Center, other local nonprofit centers

Are there specific locations for the center in Howard County that come to mind?

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|--------------------------|------------------|
| • Where the clients are | • One Mall North |
| • Downtown near the mall | • Ascend One |



- Red Branch Road
- Longreach village center
- Columbia Flier
- Outside Columbia