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**Measuring the Effectiveness of the Statewide Initiative: “The Maturing of Illinois”
(Final Review Format)**

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Politics and Government 495

Dr. Nancy Lind

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I. Introduction

The federal government continues to mandate and fund non-profit organizations to provide social services in local communities around the United States. Social services such as healthcare, education and poverty relief have been “privatized” to non-profit organizations (Boris and Steuerle 25). In the case of aging services, the East Central Illinois Area Agency on Aging (ECIAAA) has been mandated and funded by the federal government and the state government of Illinois based on appropriations in Title III from the Older Americans Act (OAA). This area agency and others around the country provide program and planning services and support to service providers for older adults, caregivers and their families (Jurkowski 125). “The Maturing of Illinois: Getting Communities on Track for Aging Communities” is a statewide initiative being implemented by the Area Agencies around the state of Illinois. The main purpose of this initiative is to evaluate the services and needs of older adults in communities located throughout regional counties. Since this community assessment initiative is a service mandated and assigned directly by the federal and state governments, ECIAAA has the responsibility to analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of the initiative to report back the achieved goals and outcomes among the communities. The measurement of effectiveness for the statewide initiative serves as an evidence-based study that would persuade the federal and state governments to continue trusting and funding the social services provided by ECIAAA to local communities in east central Illinois.

II. Independent and Dependent Variables:

Based on comprehensive research with academic literature and analytical observations through a Peace Corps Fellowship with ECIAAA, two main variables were identified to develop and establish a testable hypothesis on the topic of program evaluation and effectiveness. The

independent variables are the facilitation and assessment services provided by the Planning and Program Department (PPD) of the East Central Illinois Area Agency on Aging (ECIAAA). This organization was designated and established by the Department of Aging in the state of Illinois in 1972. The mission of the agency is to enable older people to live with dignity, safety and independence in their homes, prevent unnecessary institutionalization and uphold their rights. Under the federal Older Americans Act and the Illinois Act on Aging, ECIAAA is required to “plan, coordinate and advocate for the development of a comprehensive service delivery system for the 138,592 older persons living in the sixteen counties of east central Illinois” (www.eciaaa.org). The agency provides access and funds to a variety of services such as information assistance, senior dining programs, home delivered meals, senior centers, transportation, in-home respite care, legal assistance, elder rights programs, and senior employment programs. In the case of the Planning and Program Department, the main services include grant management assistance to over 30 community-based programs and technical assistance on program development directed towards the aging population (www.eciaaa.org – For Service Providers section). The main services presented and analyzed from the Planning and Program staff for this paper will be the community assessment training and support services for the statewide initiative: “The Maturing of Illinois.”

The statewide initiative entitled: “The Maturing of Illinois – Getting Communities on Track for an Aging Population” is being implemented and evaluated by a Peace Corps Fellow from the Stevenson Center in collaboration with the Executive Director, and Planning and Program staff at ECIAAA. Based on these planning and program activities, the dependent variable is the effectiveness of the training and support services provided to community partners and stakeholders in east central Illinois. During the next three years, ECIAAA and the rest of the

area agencies will assess selected communities to determine their “aging readiness” to provide programs and services that address the needs of older adults and caregivers (O’Donnell 2007). The selected communities include Bloomington-Normal in McLean County, Decatur in Macon County, Champaign-Urbana in Champaign County and Danville in Vermilion County. The key aspect of this initiative is to identify local leaders and stakeholders to collaborate in the assessment of their community’s preparedness for the aging population through the year 2030. These partners and stakeholders will identify and recruit key informants to provide information about the services and facilities available in their communities. The Peace Corps Fellow will assist these partners and stakeholders to assess their communities in the following areas: health care, human services, land use, housing, transportation, public safety, workforce and economic development, recreation, education, civic engagement, and emergency preparedness (O’Donnell 2007). In the long-term, the Peace Corps Fellow will work with the Planning and Program staff and each focus group to develop action plans and address the winnable areas and needs of elder residents in selected communities. The final effectiveness of the assessment initiative will be determined by a set of goals and objectives established by the collaborative work between ECIAAA staff and the community partners.

III. Literature Review on Program Evaluation Theories

The measurement of effectiveness needs to be based on previous theories from academic professionals with experience in the field of program evaluation. Huey-Tsyh Chen is an academic that presents two different theories on program evaluation and the measurement of effectiveness. The first model is the Change Model. This model is composed of the following components: goals, outcomes, determinants and interventions. Goals are developed and based on

the desire for an organization to fulfill unmet needs (Chen 20, 2005). Programs within organizations are justified by accomplishing their established goals. These goals are developed in broad terms to gain support from different partners. Outcomes are concrete and measurable aspects included within goals. These outcomes are composed of components and activities with short or long term tasks. Program stakeholders and evaluators will be expecting unintended outcomes. Program evaluators encourage organizations and their stakeholders to identify specific problems and define the expected level of success. Every goal within an organization requires a focus to define the limitations for achievement and effectiveness (Chen 21, 2005).

Chen explains that programs need to identify the root of a problem that would allow programs within an organization to develop an intervention to meet a need that is created by this problem (2005). Programs develop determinants that address the cause of a problem by evaluating and analyzing the susceptibility, seriousness and challenges of community-based problems. Furthermore, these determinants assist program managers and stakeholders to review the benefits of specific strategies and actions to alleviate the causes of problems. Some examples of determinants include identifying the factors that determine health behavioral changes and the family factors that involve parents with the education of their children. Once these determinants are identified, programs can focus on a specific problem and develop an intervention strategy to address this problem. An intervention program reviews and analyzes one or a few determinants that program stakeholders and evaluators consider to be the major cause of a problem or the most feasible to address based on resources and time (Chen 22, 2005).

After programs presume the cause or causes of problems and which determinants will be addressed by stakeholders and community members, an intervention strategy will be developed

and implemented. An intervention is composed of program activities that are aimed at changing determinants (Chen 21, 2005). It is expected that these interventions and its activities will change the present determinants and achieve its goals in the long-term. In many cases, an intervention contains several elements that are implemented during a period of time. The majority of intervention programs are focused on changing knowledge, beliefs, behaviors, and skills (21, 2005). After implementing the Change Model, interventions will change determinants and achieve established goals or outcomes.

The second model is the Action Model. This model is defined as a systematic plan for organizing staff, resources, and settings within an organization or community. Furthermore, the Action Model is developed to support organizations to reach a target population and deliver intervention services within communities. Some major activities that a program needs to carry out include ensuring a supportive environment, recruiting target group members for intervention, training program staff and designing a coordinated system to provide services (Chen 22, 2005). The impact of the Action Model is measured by the effect of the intervention and other particulars from the implementation of the program intervention. Program evaluators may include the following elements to apply this model: the implementing organization, program implementers, community partners, the environment surrounding the program, the target population and intervention protocols (22, 2005). It is crucial to compare the Change and Action Models to other program evaluation theories used in organizations.

Peter Rossi is another academic in the field of program evaluation who supports a systematic approach to the measurement of effectiveness within organizations. This approach is composed of two main subdivisions: defining the social problems and defining the targets of interventions.

The first subdivision is developed by program stakeholders and community members that create and define a particular issue as a recognized social problem (Rossi 125, 2004). Program evaluators need to study and analyze local information such as policy proposals, community hearings, and other sources that help with defining a social problem. After reviewing policies and programs, evaluators can provide a critique of problem definition within organizations and communities. Furthermore, program stakeholders, community members and evaluators need to reach consensus on the size, distribution and density of the defined problem to develop an effective intervention.

The second subdivision is defining and identifying the targets of intervention. This subdivision is crucial to the success of social programs. When targets are not clearly identified, a program will lose its focus on the intervention strategy and fail to operate with effectiveness. Some examples of targets of an intervention include persons, groups, organizations and social living conditions (126, 2004). In the long-term, these targets will assist with the strategic planning of possible interventions. The definition of targets will affect the potential effectiveness of any policy or program because that definition will influence the emphasis and intervention strategy in a program. Besides Rossi, Holden and Zimmerman apply the systematic program evaluation approach based on measuring effectiveness through outcomes during different periods of completion.

Holden and Zimmerman emphasize the tracking and evaluation of program development periods (21, 2009). From their perspectives, program evaluators review and report the type of outcomes achieved during the implementation of programs in organizations. There are three main outcomes: short-term, intermediate and long-term. Short-term outcomes are measured

within the first year of program implementation. This outcome measurement evaluates the process of program implementation. Intermediate outcomes are measured during the first years of program implementation. These outcomes are usually applied to review behavior or policy changes among group participants, large organizations and/or communities. Long-term outcomes are measured during the ending periods of the programs to evaluate how activities have resulted in multi-year changes. These three types of program evaluation outcomes require input from sponsors to specify time periods for expected outcomes, the focus of the program, and the long-term existence of the program (Holden and Zimmerman eds. 2009, 24). The inclusion of program sponsors will assure that an evaluation plan will include only the necessary outcomes based on requested expectations. While Holden and Zimmerman apply a systematic evaluation approach based on outcomes, Fetterman and Wandersman apply empowerment evaluation principles to measure effectiveness.

Empowerment evaluation focuses on increasing the probability of program success (Fetterman and Wandersman eds. 2005, 28). Program success is based on providing stakeholders with tools to plan and implement programs and integrated these programs with evaluation processes. This type of evaluation is based on the following key principles: improvement, community ownership, inclusion, and democratic participation. Additional principles include social justice, community knowledge, evidence-based strategies, capacity building, organizational learning and accountability. The first principle of improvement focuses on social programs achieving positive results in the lives of people being served (Fetterman and Wandersman eds. 2005, 30). Private and public funders are requesting empowerment evaluations that demonstrate the effects of programs on people, organizations and communities. The second principle is based on community ownership. Empowerment evaluators advocate for communities

to make decisions that direct the evaluation process and lead to program improvement. As compared to other program evaluation theories, decision-making during the program evaluation process is established by community stakeholders. Communities apply knowledge shared among key stakeholders to make informed and accountable decisions. The value of community ownership fosters self-determination and responsibility through the development of direct evaluation decisions (Fetterman and Wandersman eds. 2005, 32). Community stakeholders will review findings and follow recommendations when they have full access to make decisions on program evaluation and resulting effectiveness. Besides these two principles, there are additional principles that involve communities through empowerment evaluation.

Community ownership is guaranteed through inclusion and direct participation of key stakeholders during decision-making processes. The broad representation of community stakeholders in the planning and decision-making processes results in solid communication, collaboration among partners and shared human resources among program stakeholders (Fetterman and Wandersman eds. 2005, 32). The principle of democratic participation emphasizes transparency, collaboration, fairness and due process. This participation maximizes the application of the skills and knowledge available from community stakeholders. Furthermore, program evaluations based on clarity and openness will develop trust among community stakeholders. These stakeholders involved in the decision-making process will modify programs based on trust, needs and values developed through democratic participation. Besides democratic participation, empowerment evaluation supports and stimulates the fifth principle of social justice among organizations and communities.

Through the emphasis on social justice, empowerment evaluation addresses the social inequalities in communities and is directed at improving programs to positively impact social conditions and communities (Fetterman and Wandersman eds. 2005, 32). This type of evaluation recognizes these inequalities as restraints to the confidence, self-determination and long-term improvement of communities. The ultimate commitment of social justice is guaranteeing equitable allocation of resources, opportunities, obligations and bargaining power among community members. In conjunction with social justice, community-based knowledge and wisdom are also encouraged through empowerment evaluation. This knowledge is based on community stakeholders knowing their local challenges and having the ability to develop their own solutions to these challenges (Fetterman and Wandersman eds. 2005, 34). During the evaluation process, local community knowledge can be reinforced and modified through developed tools that collect and distribute best practices for future community-based programs. In addition to community knowledge, empowerment evaluation values evidence-based strategies and capacity building among communities and organizations.

The seventh principle of evidence-based strategies is valued by community-based programs to apply existing knowledge to challenges and problems present within communities. This application of existing knowledge avoids the repetition available program evaluation strategies and builds up best practices based on empirical information. The last three principles of empowerment evaluation include capacity building, organizational learning and accountability. Capacity building increases the knowledge and skills of community stakeholders to plan, implement and monitor program activities. Organizational learning supports a process, where it is crucial to learn new tools and methods to improve program processes. Accountability is based on programs being reviewed and evaluated by administrators and communities through

process- and outcome-oriented data within an evaluation framework (Fetterman and Wandersman eds. 2005, 37). This last principle is dependent on collaboration and support among funders, community stakeholders, and evaluators. In similarity to this principle, collaborative evaluation is based on community coalitions and partnerships among stakeholders and evaluators.

Collaborative evaluation supports participatory action research among community stakeholders, and evaluators working within communities. The key values of collaborative evaluation include grassroots-based research, democratic participatory processes, identification of community assets and outline of community priorities (Backer ed. 2003, 59). These four values guarantee social learning, community investment and problem solving interactions among community stakeholders and evaluators. The main goal of collaborative evaluation is training and empowering community stakeholders to evaluate the status of their communities and develop grassroots-based solutions (Smith and Brandon eds. 2008, 140). These program evaluation theorists conclude that the main purpose of program evaluation is to measure the effectiveness of programs and empower community stakeholders to identify the main program interventions that address social problems within a balanced budget and on schedule.

IV. Conceptual Framework:

Based on the previous literature review, the Change Model has been identified as the measurement framework to evaluate the effectiveness of the training and support services provided to community partners and stakeholders in east central Illinois for “The Maturing of Illinois.” Program evaluation focused on this model is defined as “a specification of what must be done to achieve the desirable goals, what other important impacts may also be anticipated,

and how these goals and impacts would be generated” (Chen 19, 2005). The framework from the Change model was applied by the Peace Corps Fellow and the Planning and Program staff to monitor the progress and achievements during the first and second years of the statewide initiative. This program evaluation framework was operationalized by developing an annual work plan which included similar components found in the Change Model: goals, objectives and planned activities. The work plan will assist the Planning staff working together with the Peace Corps to measure the progress of its established goals and the long term effectiveness of the initiative.

V. Delimitations

The first delimitation was focused on presenting and analyzing the community assessment training and support services for the statewide initiative: “The Maturing of Illinois.” While the Planning and Program Department (PPD) provides a variety of services, this paper focused exclusively on the technical assistance available for regional service providers and community partners to assess the preparedness of communities for the aging of the population. Some other services provided by the PPD include technical assistance in grant management, human resource management, and workforce development. This delimitation was necessary to limit the scope of the data collected from the facilitating and assessment services presented through focus group meetings for the “The Maturing of Illinois” initiative. This technical assistance was provided to city planners, community development specialists, senior service providers, community leaders and neighborhood associations in four selected counties in east central Illinois.

The Change Model was used in the work plan to evaluate the progress of the initiative in selected communities in the following counties in east central Illinois: Champaign, Macon,

McLean and Vermilion. In the case of this capstone paper, the information and analysis provided will be limited to the progress of the initiative in the selected communities of Bloomington-Normal in McLean County, Danville in Vermilion County, Decatur in Macon County, and Urbana in Champaign County. The Change Model will be presented and reviewed within the context of the previously mentioned communities participating in the statewide initiative in east central Illinois.

VI. Collection of Data:

The information collected to measure the effectiveness of the initiative was based on two main sources: “The Maturing of Illinois” Work Plan and notes from focus group meetings in Bloomington-Normal, Danville, Decatur and Urbana. In the case of the first source, the work plan is composed of goals, objectives and activities that were established at the beginning of the planning phase in August 2007. This work plan was based on the main components from the Change Model. Each goal, objective and activity was planned and implemented based on the determinants and interventions that were present in each one of the communities. Local partners and stakeholders were trained, guided and supported based on the specific goals and objectives stated within the work plan. Another source was used to monitor and review the progress and effectiveness of training and supporting services from the Initiative.

The second source was based on personal notes from monthly meetings with community partners and assessment teams. As requested by the Institutional Review Board (IRB), these personal notes were summarized and integrated into assessment completion and action plan tracking tables developed by the Peace Corps Fellow. Training on interview and assessment techniques was provided by the Peace Corps Fellow and Executive Director. After completing

these trainings, community partners and stakeholders provided feedback and input about their achievements and challenges during the process of conducting assessment interviews for the initiative. Each meeting was facilitated by a two member facilitation team, composed of the Executive Director from ECIAAA and Peace Corps Fellow from the Stevenson Center. In the absence of one member, the other member would facilitate alone and update the second member. During follow up meetings, inquiries were raised to evaluate the progress of accomplishing the established objectives and activities from the work plan. Vocal responses and completed survey assessments provided by the partners and stakeholders served as solid evidence that the work plan was carried out by the facilitation team from ECIAAA. This second source assisted the Peace Corps Fellow to track the progress of the initiative and reporting this progress to the Executive Director on a monthly basis. These two key sources were used to evaluate the effectiveness of the facilitating, training and support services for the Initiative in the selected communities.

VII. Analysis of Data:

The formative evaluation method was used to provide a narrative evaluation about the progress of each goal and objective for “The Maturing of Illinois” initiative in Bloomington-Normal, Danville, Decatur and Urbana. Formative evaluation focuses on validating which goals and objectives are being accomplished within a program and/organization (jan.ucc.nau.edu). The purpose of formative evaluation is to obtain user feedback during the design and development stages of a project. This evaluation method is usually carried out by internal staff members and conducted during the development or improvement of a program (www.elearnmag.org). Furthermore, this method is a useful planning tool to verify and design planning decisions to increase effectiveness in the facilitation and assessment services provided by the Peace Corps

Fellow and the ECIAAA staff through the “The Maturing of Illinois” Initiative. After updating and completing the following narrations, the formative evaluation will identify the limitations, contributions and conclusions about the Change Model within the context of the initiative: “The Maturing of Illinois.”

“The Maturing of Illinois” Work Plan (August 2007-March 2009):

Based on the Change Model

Goal I: Understand the structure and workings of the ECIAAA
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Objective A: Gain insight into the services and programs that the agency provides within the surrounding counties.

Activity Plan:

1. Study and review the Agency’s report titled: “State of the Planning and Service Area No. 05 (PSA)”
2. Review the Agency’s annual report and website
3. Review additional information provided by Business Services Manager

Narrative Evaluation:

During the month of August 2007, ECIAAA’s planning and program reports were provided by the executive director and administrative staff. These reports served as background information about ECIAAA and its service provisions. They provided detailed insight into the funding sources, service priorities and local initiatives of the agency serving the counties surrounding east central Illinois. The Activity Plan for Objective A was accomplished as follows:

The first activity plan was accomplished by reviewing the agency’s report titled: “State of the Planning and Service Area No. 05 (PSA).” This report served as a comprehensive overview of the programming and funding services provided to senior service providers. Furthermore, this

report provided information about the statewide initiative: “The Maturing of Illinois – Getting Communities on Track for an Aging Population.” Some of the specific sections under the statewide initiative include background information, demographic data, best practices for communities working with the aging population and past experiences from local partners working with the initiative.

The second activity plan was accomplished by reviewing the information available on ECIAAA’s website and the annual report from the Corporate Board. The website provided information about the historical background, organizational structure, service programs and the service providers assisted by ECIAAA. The annual report presented the organizational achievements of the following programs: Planning and Program Development, Elder Abuse, Long Term Care Ombudsman and Senior Employment.

The third activity plan was gaining additional insight and information about ECIAAA from the Business Services Manager at ECIAAA. She provided information about staff assistance and office supplies available at ECIAAA to work with the statewide initiative. Furthermore, she provided a report about the current financial structure at the Area Agency and how Long-Term Care Services for Older Adults are funded in Illinois.

Objective B: Get to know the ECIAAA's staff and some of their roles within the Area Agency.

Activity Plan:

1. Meet with Executive Director of ECIAAA
2. Meet with Program and Planning Specialists (PPS)
3. Collaborate and work together with Business Services Manager

Narrative Evaluation:

In August 2007, three introductory meetings and follow up monthly staff meetings were scheduled and carried out with the Program and Planning Specialists. A work plan was developed and organized to carry out the statewide initiative with the support and assistance of local partners and stakeholders in Bloomington-Normal, Decatur, Danville and Urbana. The first Program and Planning Specialist provides grant assistance and program development services to senior service providers located in McLean County, including the communities of Bloomington-Normal. The second Program and Planning Specialist provides grant assistance and program development services to senior service providers in the counties of Macon and Vermilion, including the communities of Decatur and Danville. The Peace Corps Fellow met with the Program Specialists to identify and recruit community stakeholders and service providers to participate in the assessment initiative in each of the selected communities. In addition, training was provided by the Business Services Manager to the Peace Corps Fellow to review the final state budget and present a report about the line item increases and decreases for statewide program services for older adults and their caregivers.

Goal II: Assist ECIAAA with the organization and implementation of the initial stages for the Statewide Initiative: “The Maturing of Illinois”

Objective A: Review and develop survey drafts for the needs assessment tool – “The Maturing of Illinois”

1. Work together with ECIAAA’s Executive Director to organize and submit observations and comments about survey drafts.
2. Meet with ECIAAA Program and Planning Staff to include their final observations and findings for the needs assessment tool.
3. Present final comments to AgeOptions, Inc. before final assessment tool is used by the Area Agencies on Aging (AAA).

Narrative Evaluation:

During the month of September 2007, the first objective was accomplished by reviewing and preparing recommendations for the survey drafts that were used to assess the preparedness of communities to address the needs of older adults, their caregivers and families. The survey sections include health and human services, land use, transportation, housing, workforce/economic development, public safety, recreation, lifelong education, civic engagement and emergency preparedness. After reviewing and adding comments to the drafts, the Planning and Program Department (PPD) was consulted for additional observations and findings for the survey assessment tool. The Peace Corps Fellow in collaboration with the Planning and Program Team presented the following recommendations: integration of assessment questions addressing the needs of older adults with limited English proficiency, provide alternative answer options such as “I don’t know” and develop a glossary of terms with the assessment tool. The final findings and recommendations were presented to the Planning

Specialist at the Area Agency on Aging in the Cook County Region, Age Options Inc. on September 14, 2007

Objective B: Identify the main communities and/ or neighborhoods in the four selected communities that will be evaluated with “The Maturing of Illinois” assessment tool.

Activity Plan:

1. Research and study Geographic Information System (GIS) report maps titled: Aging in Place to determine key demographic data and census blocks in the counties of Champaign, Macon, McLean and Vermilion located in east central Illinois.
2. Identify and meet with key community leaders, informants and planners at the city level in Bloomington-Normal, Danville, Decatur and Urbana.
3. Based on information and advice from community and city informants, select preliminary communities and/or organizations to address community stakeholders and introduce the needs assessment tool.

Narrative Evaluation:

The second objective was accomplished by identifying census blocks in each county and contacting the key local partners and stakeholders during the month of October 2007. The Geographic Information System (GIS) report titled *Aging in Place* prepared by the Department of Geology and Geography at Illinois State University was used to study and identify key census blocks with a high concentration of older adults at the city and county levels. The GIS reports identified the following demographic variables: areas with high concentrations of seniors living alone, mixed generation communities, seniors with disabilities, poverty among seniors and ethnic diversity. Based on the GIS report and advice from local partners, preliminary communities were identified for the assessment initiative and key stakeholders were contacted to schedule focus

group meetings. In Champaign County, the eastern region in Urbana was identified as the preliminary target area for the assessment initiative. In the rest of the counties, larger city areas were identified as the target areas to conduct community-based assessments.

In Macon County, most of the city of Decatur was tentatively identified as the target assessment area. In McLean County, the west side in the city of Bloomington and the uptown region in Normal were identified as the preliminary target areas for the assessment initiative. In Vermilion County, the downtown region in the city of Danville was preliminary selected as the target assessment area. After studying the GIS report, local leaders and service providers were contacted to verify these target areas and coordinate focus group meetings to introduce the statewide initiative to key community leaders and stakeholders in the selected communities.

Objective C: Develop and establish focus groups with key stakeholders, community leaders, and city planners in the selected communities.

Activity Plan:

1. Establish focus groups with key community leaders, stakeholders and planners in the four selected communities.
2. Prepare and update a database of information about the composition of the local focus group.
3. Organize and carry out follow up meetings with community leaders and planners from the focus groups.
4. Introduce the final assessment tool to focus group members for the assessment of “aging preparedness” in Bloomington-Normal, Danville, Decatur and Urbana.
5. Discuss with focus groups and decide which community site would be targeted with the needs assessment tool.
6. Schedule future focus group meetings for the following year.

Narrative Evaluation:

The third objective was accomplished by establishing four focus groups with local community partners during kick-off meetings. The Peace Corps Fellow and the Executive Director at ECIAAA worked with Family Service of Champaign County, a regional non-profit agency, to identify and recruit community development specialists, residence leaders, planners and service providers to participate in a focus group. In Macon County, the Senior Coalition organized through the Macon County Community Health Foundation integrated the Maturing of Illinois initiative into their annual agenda to address the present issues of rural transportation and housing rehabilitation for older adults and their families. The Senior Coalition is composed of community partners from local senior service provider agencies, neighborhood associations, and city government. While existing community partnership groups participated in Champaign and Macon County, new partners had to be recruited and new focus groups were organized for the Maturing of Illinois initiative in McLean and Vermilion counties.

In McLean County, the Peace Corps Fellow worked together with the Planning and Program Specialists and the Executive Director to identify key stakeholders in the City of Bloomington and Town of Normal. These stakeholders included community development specialists, community planners, service providers, church leaders and community leaders in both communities. In Vermilion County, ECIAAA worked with Community Research, Resource, Information and Services for Seniors (CRIS) to identify and recruit the community stakeholders interested in joining the assessment initiative. In the city of Danville, the following stakeholders were recruited: public officials, city management staff, economic development specialists, community development specialists, and community volunteers.

During the kick-off meetings, the focus group members from the four groups were introduced to the statewide initiative: The Maturing of Illinois. A PowerPoint presentation of the initiative was shared among each group and copies of the assessment tool were distributed. The final target areas in each selected community were reviewed and approved by each focus group. In Champaign County, the Philo Road Business District was confirmed as the target area based on present community planning and economic development initiatives from the city of Urbana. In Macon County, the Senior Coalition reached consensus and agreed to complete community assessments evaluating the needs and services of older adults through the city of Decatur. In McLean County, the focus group discussed and reached consensus by selecting the Old Town area in west Bloomington and the Uptown area in Normal as the target areas. In Vermilion County, the focus group agreed to expand the assessment to the whole city of Danville based on recommendations from the mayor and staff. Each focus group was provided with an assessment training to plan and conduct key informant interviews with professionals and experts in each of the assessment sections. Please review Appendix A - Target areas for the Maturing of Illinois for further details. The first meetings were carried out on the following dates and at the following locations:

Champaign County: October 9th, 2007 in Champaign, Family Service

Macon County: December 4, 2007 in Decatur, Macon County Health Department

McLean County: November 15, 2007 in Bloomington, First Christian Church

Vermilion County: October 29, 2007 in Danville, City Hall Building

After these kick-off meetings, contact information was collected from each focus group and e-mail contact lists were developed through Microsoft Outlook. These e-mail lists served as the key communication network between ECIAAA and community partners with the Maturing of Illinois initiative. Follow up meetings were scheduled to facilitate and monitor the progress of the initiative in each county. The meetings were scheduled for the following dates:

Champaign County: November 13, 2007 in Champaign, Family Service of Champaign County

Macon County: February 5, 2008 in Decatur, Macon County Health Department

McLean County: January 10, 2008 in Bloomington, First Christian Church

Vermilion County: January 30, 2008 in Danville, City Hall Building

For further details, please review Appendix B - Assessment Completion and Action Plan Tracking Tables. These tracking tables were developed by the Peace Corps Fellow to track and report the progress of the assessment initiative in each county. In addition, key meeting notes and discussions were summarized through these tracking tables to maintain the confidentiality of information collected from focus group members and other community partners. This confidentiality was requested by the Executive Director and Institutional Review Board (IRB) to the Peace Corps Fellow managing and tracking the assessment initiative. The assessment results, meeting agendas and some notes are documented at ECIAAA inside confidential files. These files will serve as reference documents for future assessment initiatives and progress reports requested by the Illinois Department on Aging.

Goal III: Present preliminary results and findings from the initial stages of the initiative to the ECIAAA Advisory Council and Corporate Board.

Objective A: Formulate staff recommendations for the selection of four communities to the ECIAAA Advisory Council and Corporate Board.

Activity Plan:

1. Meet with the executive director and planning and program specialists to discuss accomplishments and needed improvements after the initial months of the project.
2. Present preliminary accomplishments and findings to the Advisory Council and Corporate Board at the Annual Retreat (November 7, 2007).
3. Integrate the observations and findings from the Council and the Board into future plans for the initiative.

Narrative Evaluation:

On November 2nd, the Executive Director met with the Peace Corps Fellows and the Planning and Program staff to review the initiation process from each selected county. The Executive Director requested a tracking format to integrate the results and findings from the first and follow up focus group meetings. The ECIAAA team concluded that the assessment initiative successfully started in each of the selected counties based on initial and scheduled meetings with key community stakeholders. Furthermore, the Executive Director requested that the Peace Corps Fellow present the latest updates on the Maturing of Illinois to the Advisory Council and Corporate Board at the Annual Retreat on November 7, 2007. Several board members, especially from the selected counties, expressed their commitment and satisfaction with the progress of the statewide initiative. Additional updates were presented to the board during public hearings in 2008 and the following annual meeting in November 2008.

Objective B: Prepare a work plan for the following stages of “The Maturing of Illinois” initiative.

Activity Plan:

1. Meet with ECIAAA staff and discuss future plans for the project.
2. Follow up with focus group members and stakeholders.

Narrative Evaluation:

A follow up meeting was carried out with the ECIAAA staff on November 20, 2007 to discuss the progress and future plans for the initiative. We reviewed the future meeting dates and plans from the four focus groups. The members from the focus group were committed to recruiting key community informants and completing the assessment sections by December 2008. Based on community priorities, the ECIAAA staff agreed to allow ownership of the assessment initiative to the stakeholders and partners from each county. The Peace Corps Fellow continued to communicate and follow up with focus groups and community stakeholders via email and phone calls.

Follow up emails were sent out and calls were made to remind each focus group about the follow up meetings. Electronic copies of the assessment tool were sent out to each of the focus groups and meeting reminders were sent a week prior to each follow up meeting. In addition, community stakeholders were contacted for additional follow ups and discussion on the progress of the assessment initiative. In some cases, the Peace Corps Fellow contacted new community stakeholders to participate in key informant interviews. Some examples of the stakeholders included the police departments, county health departments and senior housing managers. Technical assistance and support was provided by the Peace Corps Fellow as needed by the focus group members and community stakeholders.

Goal IV: Facilitate and support the focus groups during the assessment process for the initiative: The Maturing of Illinois.

Objective A: Provide training and technical assistance to focus groups and key informants about the assessment tool and process.

Activity Plan:

- 1) Organize and carry out follow up meetings with focus groups and assessment teams.
- 2) Maintain direct communication with the coordinators from each focus group through email and conference calls.

Narrative evaluation:

Follow up meetings were carried out to provide training and technical advice on using the community assessment tool and interview techniques for the focus group members and their assessment teams. Furthermore, progress reporting meetings were carried out to review the progress and compile assessment responses from each focus group and their assessment teams. Training and follow up meetings were documented on the assessment completion and action plan tables requested by the Executive Director and Institutional Review Board (IRB). Direct communication was maintained through the email lists developed by the Peace Corps and conference calls conducted by ECIAAA staff. For further details, please review attachment B - Assessment Completion and Action Plans.

Objective B: Provide guidance to local partners about key informants and documentation for the ten sections of the assessment tool.

Activity Plan:

- 1) Assist focus groups by providing any additional information and guidance during the assessment process for the statewide initiative (i.e: lists of key informant and public service references).

Narrative evaluation:

Local partners, focus group members and assessment teams were provided with hard and electronic copies of the community assessment tool. In addition, key informant guidance and reference lists were provided during follow up meetings and email notices. Guiding assistance and consultation were also provided via conference and personal calls with community stakeholders and partners. In several cases, the Peace Corps Fellow scheduled and completed key informant interviews in Macon and McLean counties. Focus groups from both counties requested assistance in completing assessments. The following assessment sections were completed by the Peace Corps Fellow: public safety and recreation in McLean County and civic engagement in Macon County. This additional assistance supported the successful completion of the assessment process in the previously listed counties. After the assessment process, the Peace Corps Fellow updated the tracking table based on completed assessment sections and identified community priorities and/or winnable issues.

Goal V: Evaluate the progress and responses from the assessment documents presented by focus groups and assessment teams from each community.
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Objective A: Measure progress of the assessment process in each community.

Activity Plan:

- 1) Develop progress report table to track the efforts and priorities from the focus group.
- 2) Update the progress report based on meeting notes, emails and other information provided by the focus group members.

Narrative evaluation:

Based on requests from the Executive Director and the Institutional Review Board (IRB), a tracking table was developed to monitor the progress of the community assessment in each of the selected communities. This table includes the following sub-sections: status of assessment completions, local coordinators and partners, community meeting and follow up dates, community priorities, achievements and updates. This tracking table was updated based on information from meeting notes and assessment information provided by focus group members and assessment teams during follow up meetings. Key community priorities and/or winnable issues were identified by the Peace Corps Fellow and the ECIAAA staff through completed assessments and focus group discussions. These reported priorities assisted the Peace Corps to plan and strategize with the ECIAAA staff for the second year of the Maturing of Illinois initiative.

<p>Objective B: Analyze the responses and results from the assessment documents provided by each focus group.</p>
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Activity Plan:

- 1) Review and interpret the summary and progress reports with input and feedback from the executive director and focus group members.
- 2) Meet with executive director and focus groups to discuss the results from the assessment process during the first year of the initiative.
- 3) Develop future plans with the focus groups for the second year of the initiative.

Narrative evaluation:

The Peace Corps Fellow collected ten assessment results from the four focus groups and archived the findings in confidential files. After the results were evaluated, the Peace Corps Fellow summarized the assessment findings through an assessment report listing assessment activities, dates, key findings and community challenges raised by the key informants interviewed. Hard and electronic copies of the assessment reports were sent to the Planning and Program Department staff and focus group members. During follow up meetings, the Peace Corps Fellow reviewed and discussed these reports with focus group members and identified the community priorities and/or winnable issues from each community. These priorities were reported and summarized on the assessment completion and action plan tracking tables. For further details, please review Appendix B - Assessment Completion and Action Plans. The key community priorities included:

Champaign County – City of Urbana: Pedestrian and public safety for older adults and residents in the Philo Road Business District

Macon County – City of Decatur: Home repair, modification and safety; and rural public transportation

McLean County – City of Bloomington: Affordable housing; and home repair, modification and safety in west Bloomington.

- **Town of Normal:** Public Infrastructure; development of new senior center and grand family housing.

Vermilion County – City of Danville: Economic and workforce development; home repair, modification and safety; health care for older adults

The Peace Corps Fellow worked with the focus group members and the Executive Director to identify the key community stakeholders that would address and invest funds to address these community priorities. A work plan was developed for the second year of the initiative in collaboration with the Executive Director at ECIAAA and the focus groups from each county. In Champaign County, the Planning and Engineering Divisions from the city of Urbana were contacted to schedule future meetings with the “Maturing of Champaign County” Focus Group. These meetings were scheduled for the second year of the initiative and focused on addressing accessibility and walking safety issues for older adults. In addition, the Patrol Division from the City was also contacted to address the issue of public safety around the senior housing facilities in the Philo Road Business District. In Macon County, the Focus Group volunteered to fully participate in future meetings with the Macon County Rural Transportation Partnership to assist with the planning and development of a rural transportation system for the communities outside of the Decatur Public Transit System. Besides partners from Macon County, focus groups from

additional counties were integrated into local community and economic development initiatives that addressed directly the identified community priorities.

In McLean County, focus group members developed and organized the Senior Housing and Disabilities Sub-committee through the Code Enforcement Division at the City of Bloomington. This Sub-committee was developed based on assessment findings from the Maturing of McLean County and community summit meetings with the West Bloomington Neighborhood Partnership. Through this sub-committee, the city of Bloomington will invest Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds to rehabilitate and repair homes with older adults in west Bloomington. In addition, focus group members participated in additional community meetings to develop objectives and strategies to address the intergenerational issues of youth development, after-school programs, public safety and economic development.

In Vermilion County, focus groups members reached consensus and agreed to participate in the Vermilion Valley Pride initiative. Based on assessment findings, workforce and economic development was identified as the key community priority for local residents in Danville. Focus group members from CRIS Senior Services and city officials agreed to support the Valley Pride initiative. Formal meetings began in March 2009 and a strategic plan was developed by focus group members from Vermilion Advantage. This Plan emphasized workforce development for people of all ages, business retention and development, and increase in employment opportunities for residents of all ages. The first year progress from assessment and action plan processes were reported to the Illinois Department on Aging by the Peace Corps Fellow during the Fall of 2008.

Goal VI: Present a preliminary report about the findings and recommendations of the statewide initiative: “The Maturing of Illinois” in the four selected communities during the first year of implementation.

Objective A: Present findings from the first year of the assessment initiative.

Objective B: Present recommendations for the second year of the assessment initiative.

The Peace Corps Fellow reviewed the tracking reports and assessment results from the focus groups to develop a first year report to the Illinois Department on Aging (IDOA). One report was developed for each selected county and focus group in east central Illinois. Review drafts of the four reports were developed and reviewed by the Executive Director at ECIAAA. In addition, community stakeholders and focus group members with the Maturing of Illinois reviewed these drafts and provided feedback before submitting final reports. The final reports were sent to the IDOA by the end of September 2008 and included reports from the following counties: Champaign, Macon, McLean and Vermilion. Based on recommendations from the Peace Corps Fellow and findings from focus group members, the second year of the initiative would focus on addressing the community priorities identified through the assessment process with local initiatives and strategies developed by community leaders and stakeholders. Furthermore, potential future communities were identified by the Executive Director and listed by the Peace Corps Fellow to introduce the assessment initiative during the second and third years.

VIII. Limitations

The main limitation of this paper is the focus on the Change Model. There are additional program evaluations methodologies available to evaluate and analyze the “The Maturing of Illinois.” The program evaluation theorists and specialists listed in the literature review provide a plethora of techniques and methodologies, but the Change Model was selected by the Executive Director and the Peace Corps Fellow to track the complete process and progress of the initiative based on achieved goals and objectives. This program evaluation model serves as a unique tool to evaluate the effectiveness of the initiative and provide evidence-based research for the ECIAAA to request additional funding and appropriations from the federal government and state government in Illinois.

IX. Protection of Human Participants

The focus group members in each county were recruited and volunteered to participate during the planning and assessment process for the initiative. Information provided by the focus group meetings were maintained in confidentiality by the Peace Corps Fellow. The names and comments from the focus group members will be kept confidential between the ECIAAA and the Peace Corps Fellow. In addition, an Institutional Review Board revision for this capstone paper was reviewed and approved during the 2009 Spring semester. Focus group members and key informants were not named throughout the research paper. Completed assessments and other reporting documents with names are kept in confidential files at ECIAAA. As requested through the IRB document, the names and meetings comments from focus group members were maintained in confidentiality through the assessment completion and action plan tracking tables included in the appendixes section.

X. Contributions and Future Research

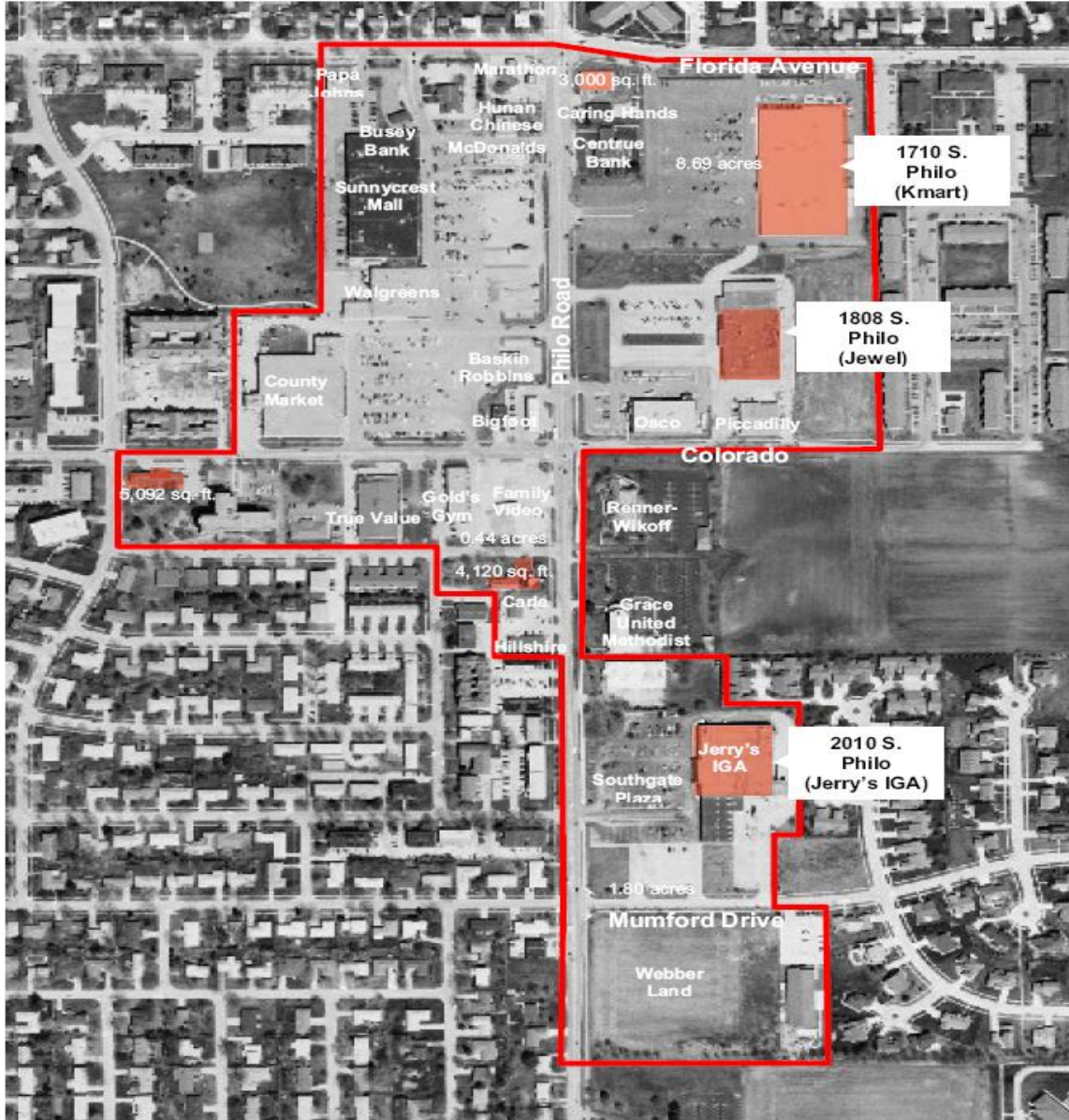
The main contribution from this research was the application of the Change Model and the formative evaluation to an assessment initiative in a local non-profit organization. The Change Model has been used mostly in the fields of business and education. In the case of the initiative, this model was applied to a community assessment initiative implemented in the non-profit sector. Furthermore, the formative evaluation was used to develop a comprehensive report and analysis of the goals and objectives developed through the Change Model and achieved through the work from the Peace Corps Fellow in team work with the Executive Director and Planning and Program Department at ECIAAA.

Future research is required to apply the Change Model and formative evaluation in the non-profit sector. This capstone paper was based on a foundation paper developed and presented during the POL 430: Seminar in Public Administration course in the Spring semester of 2008. This capstone paper presented and reviewed the Change Model within the context of the communities participating in the statewide initiative in east central Illinois: Urbana in Champaign, Decatur in Macon County, Bloomington-Normal in McLean County and Danville in Vermilion County. The combination of this model and the formative evaluation is a valuable tool for non-profit organizations that are planning to organize and implement a long term initiative such as “The Maturing of Illinois.” Non-profit organizations such as ECIAAA can apply this combination to measure the effectiveness of their community initiatives and present the results to key funding stakeholders such as the federal government and state government in Illinois. This evaluation model can be applied in future assessment initiatives focused on achieving community-based goals and objectives to improve the livability of communities from all ages.

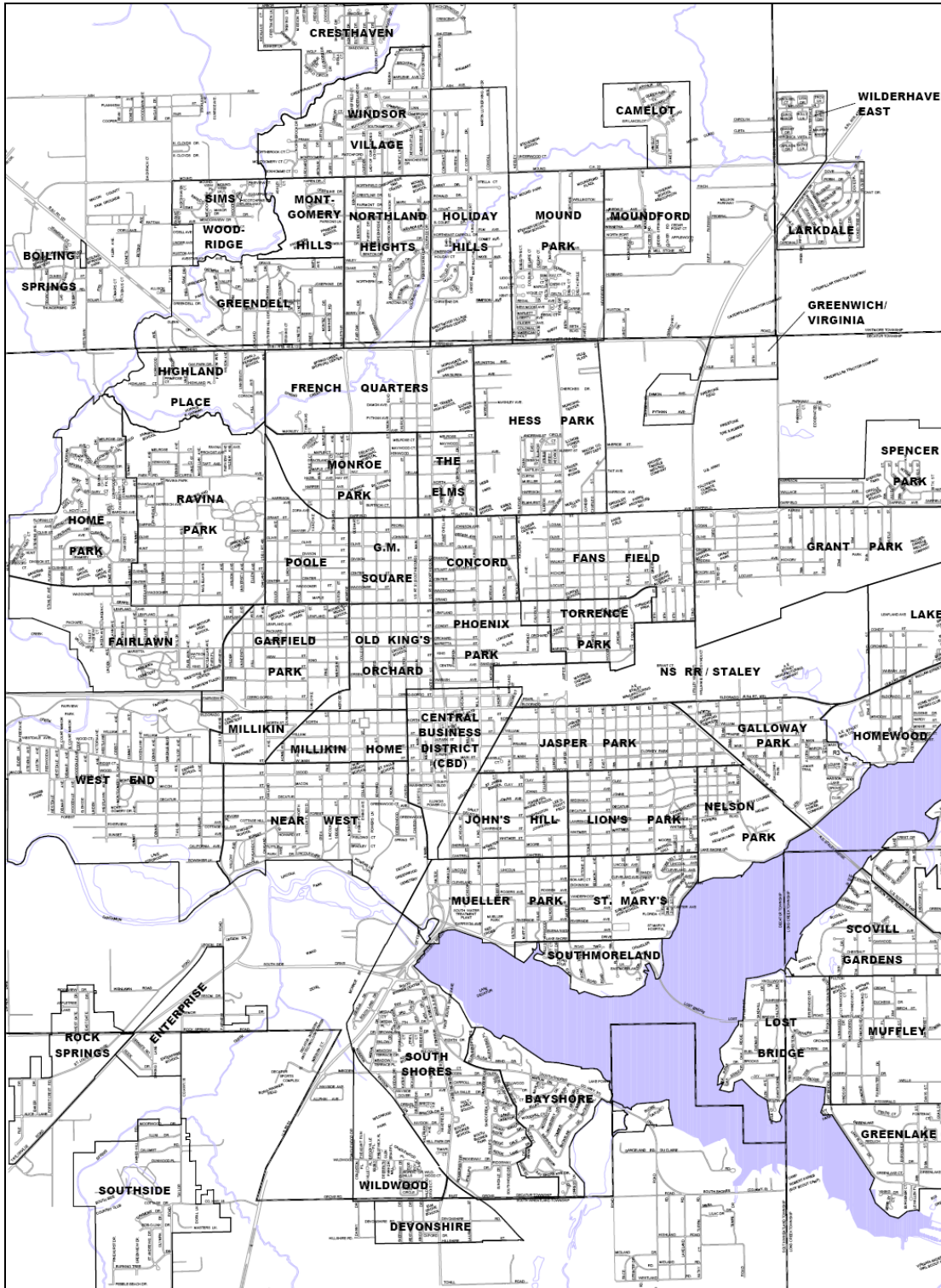
Appendixes

Appendix A: Target areas for the Maturing of Illinois

Philo Road Business District



Decatur Neighborhoods (Source: City of Decatur)



Boundaries of Target Area – West Bloomington

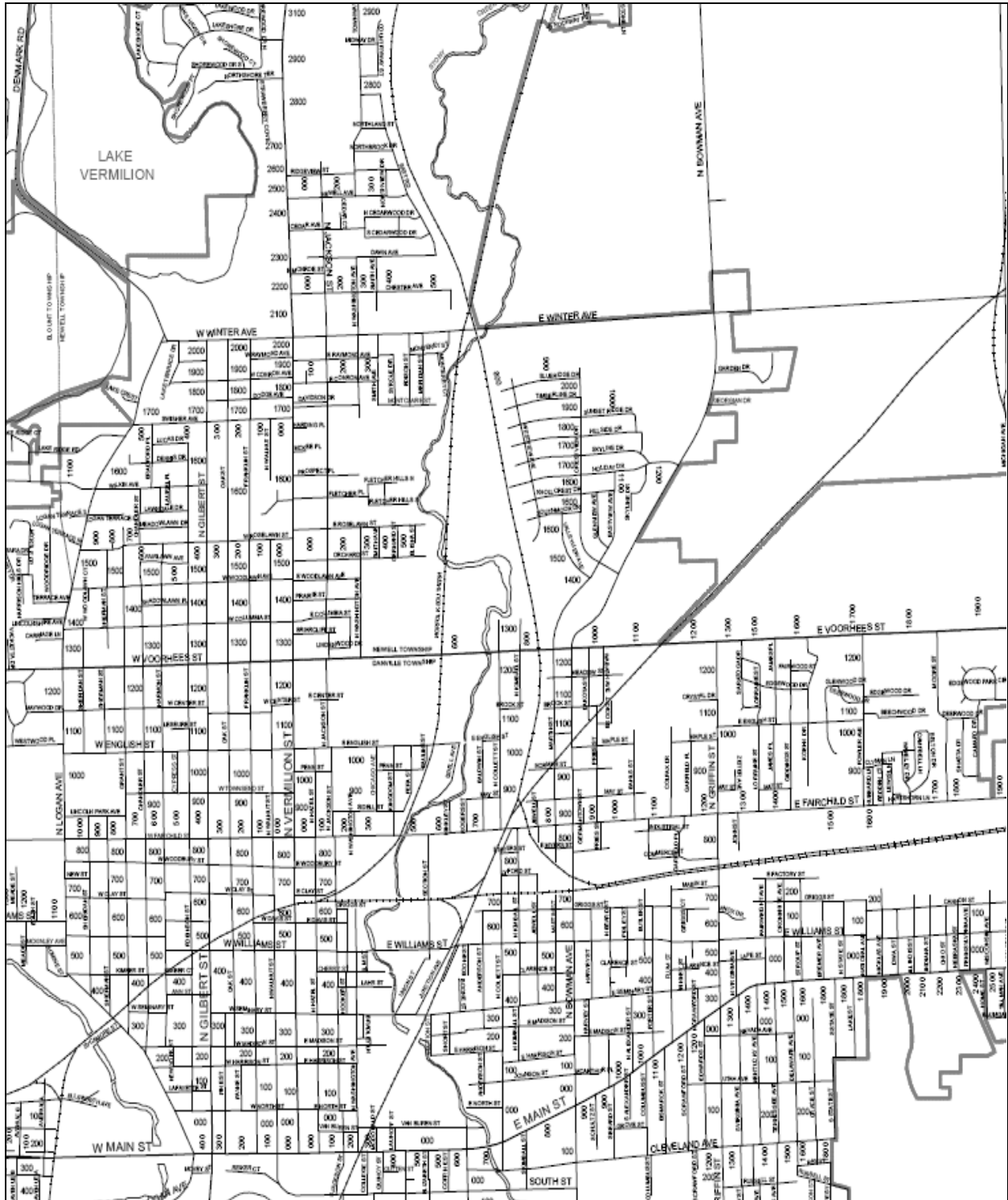
(Source: City of Bloomington)



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|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|
| 1) Mt. Pisgah Baptist Church | 12) Boy Scouts Corporate Office | 23) Chestnut Lighthouse |
| 2) Salvation Army Community Center | 13) United Methodist Church | 24) Regional Alternative School |
| 3) Jesus Coffeehouse | 14) Faith Baptist Church | 25) Bent Elementary School |
| 4) First Christian Church | 15) Mayor's Manor | 26) Recycling Furniture for Families |
| 5) Holy Trinity Church | 16) Lee's Barbershop | 27) Center for Performing Arts |
| 6) Home Sweet Home Ministries | 17) Project Oz | 28) US Cellular Colliseum/
Pepsi Ice Center |
| 7) St. Patrick's Church | 18) Western Avenue Community Center | 29) Law & Justice |
| 8) Harvest Family Worship Centre | 19) Irving Elementary School | 30) Vacant, City-Owned Parcel |
| 9) Wayman AME Church | 20) Youthbuild McLean County | |
| 10) St. Mary's School/Church | 21) Family Community Resource Center | |
| 11) Christ Temple Pentecostal | 22) Connections Community Center | |



City of Danville (Source: City of Danville, Street Block Map)



The Maturing of Illinois – Area 05

Action Plan and Strategy:

The Maturing of Champaign County

City of Urbana, Philo Road Business District – Ten assessment sections have been completed by focus group members. The final assessment findings were archived at ECIAAA together with meeting notes and agendas. The following key community priorities were identified through meeting notes and discussions:

Local coordinators and partners	Meetings and Follow up communications	Consensus Building and Community Priorities	Achievements	Updates from focus group members
1) Family Service of Champaign County and Grace United Methodist Church	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>2007</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">October 9 and November 13</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>2008</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">January 15, May 13, July 29, August 19, October 21, and December 16 (rescheduled for January 20, 2009)</p>	<p>Directory of services:</p> <p>Local older residents have requested information about programs and services available to older adults and their families</p>	<p>1) Distribution of help books - Help books have been provided to housing facilities in the Philo Road Neighborhood including Prairie Winds, Sunnycrest Manor, Florida House, Parkview and Canterbury</p>	<p>1) New help books have been developed and were distributed by focus group members on October 2008.</p> <p>2) Family Service reported that the new help book is also available online at the following website: http://helpbook.prairienet.org</p>
2) Public Works Department – Engineering Division	<p style="text-align: center;">August 19, October 21, 2008, and February 17, 2008</p>	<p>Pedestrian safety:</p> <p>1) Older residents in Florida</p>	<p>1) Recommendation letter submitted to Engineering Division, City of</p>	<p>1) “No turn on Red” signs were placed at the intersection of Florida Ave. and Philo Rd. before the submission of the letter with recommendations.</p>

<p>Public Works Department – Engineering Division</p>		<p>House have expressed concerns about drivers ignoring crosswalks at the intersection of Florida Ave. and Philo Rd.</p> <p>2) Need to extend timing for older pedestrians crossing roads with traffic control devices (Intersection of Philo Road and Florida Avenue).</p> <p>3) Concerns about pedestrian safety at the intersection of Philo Road and Colorado Avenue</p>	<p>Urbana.</p>	<p>2) Time extensions have been integrated into traffic control devices located at the intersection of Philo Road and Florida Avenue.</p> <p>3) Crosswalks have been renewed with pavement resurfacing work on Philo Road.</p> <p>Other present and future updates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “Road diet” reducing the lanes from four down to two - New bike lanes on Philo Road between Colorado Avenue and Florida Avenue - Two bus shelters on Philo Road - Future landscaping improvements and pedestrian street lighting - Future newsletters and brochures will provide information about older <p>In Process:</p> <p>1) Civil Engineer from the city of Urbana met with the focus group and presented the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Status of Brochure - Pedestrian Safety Education (Follow up from ECIAAA – Dissemination
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<p>Public Works Department – Engineering Division</p>				<p>proposal to Carle Foundation).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Urbana as a pilot community for the Watching Out for Us! Module – Pending approval from the Highway Safety Research Center at the University of North Carolina - Shared presentation related to "Pedestrian Safety Workshop: A Focus on Seniors"
<p>3) Urbana Police Department – Patrol Division</p>	<p>August 19 and October 21, 2008</p>	<p>- Older residents are concerned about public safety issues such as limited patrolling, noise disturbances, and potential for crimes against vulnerable seniors.</p>	<p>1) Patrol Division carried out information sessions on public safety and neighborhood watch at Sunnycrest Manor</p>	<p>1) Based on comments from Patrol Division, patrols have increased around the Philo Road/ Sunnycrest Neighborhood</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - More education and awareness sessions are required for the senior housing facilities. - Coordinator from SUNA will follow up with Patrol Division on public safety workshops for the senior housing facilities.
<p>4) East Central Illinois Refugee</p>	<p>September 15, 2008</p>	<p>- Information and services for older resident with limited</p>	<p>1) Coordinator from the Assistance Center met with the focus group to provide</p>	<p>1) Coordinator raised awareness of needs and challenges facing older adults with limited English proficiency</p>

<p>Mutual Assistance Center</p>		<p>English proficiency levels</p>	<p>information about the migrant population located within Champaign County and Urbana.</p>	<p>and undocumented status.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Some present needs include lack of access to affordable healthcare, increased limitations to apply for citizenship and fear of requesting government assistance.
<p>5) City of Urbana – Mayor</p>	<p>October 24, 2008 and January 20, 2009 (focus group meeting)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Snow removal assistance in front of homes with older adults 	<p>1) ECIAAA’s Executive Director raised the point to address the need for programs to assist older adults with snow removal around their homes.</p>	<p>1) Updates were provided after meeting on January 2009.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Brainstorm ideas and resources available for volunteer initiatives such as Kiwanis, student volunteers, adopt a senior/ sidewalk and faith-based volunteers. - Information about Teen Link program from the Village of Skokie was shared with focus group members and forwarded to Grants Management Representative from the City of Urbana.

Action Plan and Strategy:

The Maturing of Macon County

City of Decatur – All sections of the assessment tool have been completed. The final assessment findings were archived at ECIAAA together with meeting notes and agendas. The following key community priorities were identified through meeting notes and discussions:

Local coordinators and partners	Meetings and Follow ups	Consensus Building and Community Priorities	Achievements	Updates
<p>1) Senior Coalition at the Macon County Health Department</p>	<p><u>2007</u> December 4</p> <p><u>2008</u> February 5, April 8, June 11, August 13, and October 9, and December 9</p>	<p>1) Housing Repair, Modification and Rehabilitation – Information is required about funding programs available for home repairs and rehabilitations.</p>	<p>1) List of Neighborhood Redevelopment Programs was provided to the Senior Coalition</p> <p>2) List of Certified Aging in Place Specialists (CAPS) in Decatur was provided by ECIAAA</p> <p>3) Neighborhood Housing Survey from the City of Decatur was distributed</p>	<p>Neighborhood Redevelopment programs continue to be promoted through the City of Decatur</p> <p>- More information available here: www.ci.decatour.il.us</p> <p>To Do list:</p> <p>1) Inquire about the total number of older residents in the waiting list for the Neighborhood Redevelopment Programs (Winter and Spring 2009)</p>
<p>1) Macon County Transit Partnership Group</p>	<p>May 13th, October 6th, January 26th, February</p>	<p>2) Transportation – Rural transportation</p>	<p>1) Public forum to discuss a rural transportation system was</p>	<p>Meeting on January 26th:</p>

	23th, 2008	system is a key unmet need for older adults outside of the City of Decatur.	<p>organized by Homeward Bound on May 13, 2009.</p> <p>2)Macon County Transit Partnership Group has been developed to plan, coordinate and develop a public transportation system to serve rural Macon County.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduced Transportation Coordination Primer from the Rural Transit Assistance Center, Western Illinois University - More community partners and stakeholders were integrated to support the Transit Partnership Group <p>Meeting on</p> <p>February 23rd:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reviewed assessment documents and list assessment locations in Macon County. - Share assessments experiences from the Maturing of Illinois with Transit Partnership Group. <p>Next meeting,</p> <p>March 23rd:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review assessment updates completed and next planning process - Further
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				<p>information can be found here: http://www.iira.org/outreach/rtac.asp</p>
<p>1) Senior Coalition at the Macon County Health Department</p>		<p>3) Emergency Preparedness –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - More information is required about the tracking method available for individuals who would require special assistance during an emergency - Availability of Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) 	<p>1) Focus group meeting has been scheduled with emergency preparedness specialists to review and discuss the uncertain needs of at risk older adults</p>	<p>Meeting with Shannon Comer, Coordinator of Disaster Preparedness in MCHD</p> <p>(Accomplished on December 9th , 2008)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discussed questions from Senior Coalition and reviewed document from Illinois Terrorism Taskforce (Emergency Preparedness Tips)

Action Plan and Strategy:

The Maturing of McLean County

City of Bloomington – Ten assessment sections have been completed. The final assessment findings were archived at ECIAAA together with meeting notes and agendas. The following key community priorities were identified through meeting notes and discussions:

Local coordinators and partners	Meetings and Follow ups	Consensus Building and Community Priorities	Achievements	Updates
<p>1) The Maturing of McLean County Focus Group</p>	<p><u>2007</u> November 15</p> <p><u>2008</u> January 10th, February 14th, March 13th, April 10th, May 15th, July 9th, August 7th and October 2nd</p>	<p>1) West Bloomington Quality of Life priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Community Greening - Youth - Safety & Well-being - Economic Development - Housing - Education 	<p>1) West Bloomington Community Summits – Focus group members attended and participated in community summit meetings on May 8th, July 12th and October 14th, 2008</p>	<p>1) A draft of the Neighborhood Plan was distributed at the Westside Community Summit on October 14th, 2008.</p> <p>www.teskaassociates.com/</p> <p>2) This draft was reviewed and evaluated by the Maturing of McLean County focus group on November 13, 2008</p> <p>3) Code Enforcement Division Manager informed the group that a new city manager was hired and is in the process of revising the Neighborhood Plan.</p> <p>- Sub-committees have been assigned to certain sections of the Plan, including the winnable issue of senior housing in west Bloomington (January 29th, 2009).</p>

<p>1)Senior Citizen and Disabled Housing Subcommittee</p>	<p>September 2008</p>	<p>1) Priority Issue: Housing – Home repair, rehabilitation and modification are required in homes occupied by older adults in West Bloomington.</p>	<p>1)The Maturing of McLean County focus group members joined the Senior Citizen and Disabled Housing Subcommittee under the West Bloomington Revitalization Task Force</p>	<p>1) The sub-committee meets on a bi-weekly basis and continues to discuss and address the housing needs of older adults and people with disabilities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Further details are available on the action plan documented after this action plan from the Maturing of McLean County
<p>Senior Citizen and Disabled Housing Subcommittee</p>	<p>October 2nd, 2008</p>		<p>2)Team Building Workshop: <i>There's No Place Like Home</i> was organized and carried out to promote safe, affordable, accessible and energy efficiency housing for older adults in West Bloomington.</p>	<p>Information on housing loans, finance assistance, public safety, and case management services was shared among focus group members and participants of the team building workshop.</p>

Town of Normal – Ten Assessment sections completed. The final assessment findings were archived at ECIAAA together with meeting notes and agendas. The following key community priorities were identified through meeting notes and discussions:

Local coordinators and partners	Meetings and Follow ups	Consensus Building and Community Priorities	Achievements	Updates
Town of Normal and Normal Township	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>2007</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">November 15</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>2008</u></p> <p>January 10th, February 14th, March 13th, April 10th, May 15th, July 9th, August 7th and October 2nd</p>	<p>1) Redevelopment of public infrastructure in Uptown Normal including more accessible sidewalks, streets, parking decks, stores, restaurants and transportation options for residents of all ages.</p> <p>2) Development of New Senior Activity Center</p> <p>3) Senior housing project being planned near Cottage street</p>	<p>For specific information about daily redevelopment and construction projects, please review the following website:</p> <p>www.normal.org/Uptown/index.asp</p>	<p>American Planning Association – Illinois Chapter</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conference: The Plan – Energy, Water and the City (March 26th and 27th, 2009) - New information will be provided by the Normal Township during Summer 2009 <p>Pending environmental approval from state government</p>

Action Strategy and Plan:

The Maturing of Vermilion County

City of Danville – Ten assessment sections were completed by focus group members. The final assessment findings were archived at ECIAAA together with meeting notes and agendas. The following key community priorities were identified through meeting notes and discussions:

Local coordinators and partners	Meetings and Follow ups	Consensus Building and Community Priorities	Achievements	Updates
<p>1) The Maturing of Vermilion County Focus Group</p> <p>2) CRIS Senior Services</p> <p>City of Danville</p> <p>Vermilion Advantage</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>2007</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">October 29</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>2008</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">January 30, April 2, and May 7th</p>	<p>1) Economic and Employment Development</p>	<p>1) Economic Development Incentives available from the City of Danville:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enterprise Zone Program - Tax Increment Financing - Small Business Revolving Loan Fund - More information is available at the following website: www.cityofdanville.org 	<p>1) Priorities are focused on workforce and economic development through CRIS Senior Services and community partners</p> <p>Update:</p> <p>Meeting with Amy and Vicki Haugen, Vermilion Advantage on February 27, 2009</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ECIAAA will be working with Vermilion Advantage on the Vermilion Valley Pride Initiative to encourage civic engagement , lifelong

<p>The Maturing of Vermilion County Focus Group</p>				<p>education and economic development among residents of all ages.</p>
<p>The Maturing of Vermilion County Focus Group and CRIS Senior Services</p>		<p>2) Health and Human Services – Concern about the lack of doctors specialized in geriatrics for growing demand of medical services</p>	<p>1) Kick-off meeting with Valley Pride partners at Danville Community College, March 2009</p> <p>- Community plans and strategies integrated by Vermilion Advantage</p>	<p>1) Priorities will be addressed through the Vermilion County Valley Pride being organized by the local partner, Vermilion Advantage.</p>
<p>The Maturing of Vermilion County Focus Group and the City of Danville</p>		<p>3) Home Repair, Modification and Safety</p>	<p>These programs and initiatives are available through the Community Development Division at the City of Danville:</p> <p>1) Renaissance Danville program- Combines public and private funding to buy, restore, and resell homes in downtown Danville.</p> <p>2) New Day Initiative – Provides incentives for the construction of new housing on vacant properties in Danville’s traditional neighborhoods</p>	

			<p>3) Neighborhood Association Building</p> <p>4) Healthy Housing</p> <p>For more information, please review the following website:</p> <p>www.cityofdanville.org</p>	
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Narrative Interpretation

The application of the Change Model through the work plan for the Maturing of Illinois resulted in the development of these action plans and strategies from each selected community in the four counties. These action progress reports were developed by the Peace Corps Fellow to achieve the following objectives: track the number of completed assessment sections, identify local community priorities and report the community interventions to address the local priorities. Based on the Change Model, the Peace Corps Fellow tracked the progress of the assessment initiative in each county and maintained each focus group on track to complete the ten sections of the assessment. In similarity to the work plan for the assessment initiative, the components of these action plans and strategies emphasize the development and monitoring of goals, interventions and outcomes from the Change Model. This comprehensive tracking data served as a monitoring and evaluation tool for the Peace Corps Fellow to facilitate progress among focus groups and report achievements from each local initiative to the Executive Director. The Change Model is an adaptable program evaluation methodology that can be applied to assessment work plans and action plans developed by community stakeholders and leaders serving within the communities of all ages.

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