

Path-Way to Purpose® Overview

Path-Way to Purpose® (PWP) is the d.b.a. of Cynthia Mickens Ministries, Inc., a faith-based 501(c)(3) nonprofit established in 2002 to “provide the tools and resources to help individual live the life they were created to live.” PWP is a program that addresses a critical need in Dallas County: single mothers of young children who lack safe housing and adequate income to care for themselves and their children. Several thousand of these women have the capacity to become economically self-sufficient if provided services specifically designed to achieve this outcome. This is the focused mission of Path-Way to Purpose®.

Since created in 2002, PWP has:

- Acquired five acres of land in the City of Hutchins with existing buildings and ample room to expand the program;
- Recruited a 14-member active Board of Directors representing ethnic/cultural diversity and breadth of relevant expertise;
- Built strong and supportive relationships with community leaders, business owners, and interested citizens who are committed to seeing the program vision of PWP fulfilled;
- Generated significant numbers of volunteers helping with the program;
- Developed and copyrighted the Path-Way to Purpose® Course and demonstrated its effectiveness in empowering women for economic self-sufficiency;
- Developed a collaborative out-of-school program for 6-12 year-old children;
- Engaged partners who provide services to enhance the healthy lifestyles of clients;
- Obtained pro-bono architectural designs and cost estimates for a future phased-construction of a 50-unit shared occupancy townhome program complex.
- Created an organizational development and staffing plan; and
- Engaged a consulting firm to help build the organization’s program and capacity.

The founder of PWP, Cynthia Mickens, PhD, has provided the leadership for developing the concept for the program and community support with minimal financial resources. The organization is now ready to move to a new stage of development and build its capacity. Dr. Mickens oversees operations as Executive Director and will become a full-time paid employee in March of 2013. A consulting firm has been engaged to assist the Executive Director and Board with developing a strategic business plan and fund development strategy, program development within high standards of quality, policies and procedure and resource development.

Community Need Addressed: The latest U.S. Census data for Dallas County indicates there are 5,700 single mothers who *live in poverty* and whose *children are under six*. Single-mother families are nearly five times as likely to be poor than married-couple families; however, when single mothers have a full-time, year-round job, the poverty rate for these families falls from 40.7 percent to 14 percent. A local study commissioned by the Communities Foundation of Texas found that 39% and 36% of households in the City of Dallas and Dallas County, respectively, were in “asset poverty” (insufficient net worth to support itself at the federal poverty level for three months in the absence of income). Sixty-one percent of these families are single-parent households. A conservative estimate is that 60% of these women with small children and living in poverty (3,420) do not have developmental, substance use and/or mental disorders that would preclude their becoming economically self-sufficient if provided services specifically designed to achieve this outcome. These women could benefit from PWP services.

Path-Way to Purpose® Program: The program addresses six major challenges faced by the focus population with specific program elements:

1. **Housing Insecurity** – PWP’s **Celestial Lights Residential Housing** program provides safe, supportive housing for the women and their children while they pursue the goal of self-sufficiency. The model is to provide housing with two bedrooms, one mother and up to two young

children in each bedroom, and the two parents sharing responsibility for cooking and housekeeping. The women pay nothing or up to 30% of income if employed. This frees the mothers the burden of concern about their children living in an unsafe neighborhood and from fears of eviction or domestic violence, freeing up their energies to build their new lives.

2. **Children at Risk** – To ensure the women’s children’s needs for care and support in their social and academic development, volunteers will assist with children care and school age children are involved in PWP’s **Prime Time® for Kids**, a faith-based out-of-school program that is currently offered to neighborhood children through a partnership with Scripture Union. The new collaborative "Youth Safe Place™" program will be launched in 2013 to provide for youth a safe place of transparency, truth and development.
3. **Lack of Opportunity** – The mothers’ initial program involvement will be through the **Path Way to Purpose® Course**, which is specifically designed to help women achieve the goal of discovering their giftedness and opening doors of opportunity to exercise them.
4. **Asset Poverty** –PWP’s **Asset Building Program** provides through collaborations credit counseling, financial education, and wealth-building services to tailor a plan that fits each woman’s circumstances and earning potential to create an asset base to provide added economic security.
5. **Lack of Social Capital** - The **Path-Way to Purpose® Community** (housing program community and the on-site church that some clients may choose to become involved in) create the requisite context within which women can develop healthy and supportive relationships and provide a positive culture for their growing children.
6. **Health Disparity** - The PWP **Health and Wellness Program** will link women with health services (eventually on-site) and address the healthy nutrition and health care needs of the women and children.

Collaborating Partners: Path-Way to Purpose® has established supporters and partners among business, education, and public leaders that will bring major value to the program. Our intent is to leverage our own

resources by developing collaborative partnerships with community-based organizations whose services would benefit our clients. Business owners in Hutchins indicate their readiness to support the program financially and to provide employment for PWP clients.

Capacity-Building Consulting Services: The PWP Board had selected Community Services Builders to provide contractual services to build the capacity of PWP for quality operations and financial sustainability. There are five major elements of the consulting services:

- Assist the Executive Director in establishing sound policies and procedures for the PWP program and monitoring program development to maximize quality and efficiency
- Develop a Strategic Business Plan that includes a resource development and sustainability plan
- Develop a Case Statement and information modules for response to inquiries from the community or funders
- Design and support the implementation of marketing approaches to increase community knowledge and awareness
- Manage the implementation of the resource development plan, including grant applications, individual donor solicitation and fund development database management

Community Services Builders has solid experience in all aspects of the consulting services that will be provided and will draw on contractual Associates as needed to assure the objectives are met in a timely and quality manner. Specific performance expectations are set forth in the service agreement along with an aggressive timetable in order to move the process along.

Program Outcomes: Outcome measures are related to achieving the goal of economic self-sufficiency:

- 1) annual income equal to family budget, with a minimum goal of 150% of the federal poverty level;
- 2) liquid assets equal to three months’ income to protect against income loss;
- 3) permanent, affordable housing;
- 4) adequate plan for child care;
- 5) adequate supportive social network;
- and 6) healthy lifestyle and access to healthcare.

For additional information please contact Dr. Cynthia Mickens at Cynthia@CynthiaMickens.com or 888-419-0957.