Hartford Together

December 22, 2015

Attendance: Bob Blitzer, Caitlin Elsaesser, Deb Lewis, Kevin Borrup, Jo LaRocco, Laura Zimmerman, Tiana Hercules, Amneris Torres, Marisol Feliciano, Adrian Texidor, Chief Rovella, Luis Rivera, A.J. Johnson, Richard Frieder

Welcome and thank you to everyone for their work

Kevin presented a summary of the 3 meetings. The report is based on 170 comments and approximately 125 + participants. It was noted that had there been better community participation, different themes might have emerged. The comments resulted in 20 emergent themes with the top three being:

* Education - It is evident from these priorities that a representative from the Hartford Public Schools be present and a part of this steering committee. Is there a way to use the schools as a community resource?
* Partnership - need for collaboration between the community itself as well as with organizations was clearly identified.
* Resources - funding for training and programming was identified as insufficient

Other key areas that emerged included:

* Communication – within the community itself and between the community and the organizations. The need to highlight successes and good things happening was also noted.
* Economic conditions – such as poverty and homelessness were root causes
* Institutional change – such as racism and gun control are long term goals that should be addressed.
* Accountability – are we using the resources successfully; rewarding successful programs

There was a healthy conversation about what Hartford Together is, why is it different from other things going on in the City, who is participating and why now. This group is concerned with neighborhood violence and safety and is investing in collaboratively working on ways in which we can improve the quality of life in Hartford. There has been and continues to be an intentional effort to continually invite key stakeholders to the table to ensure long term success. It is an effort to support agencies doing the day-to-day work in the community.

ACTION STEPS

* Follow up with NRZs, schools and the faith community to host more community forums (Luiz)
  + It is important to go where the community is in order to further the conversation
  + Possibly have law enforcement talk about what steps they are taking to secure safer neighborhoods.
* Provide a call in number for those who can not attend the meetings in person
* Increase visibility of Hartford Together in order to build relationships and trust
* Utilize the contact sheet from the November 12th program to send a follow up wishing people a happy, healthy new year. Also, to remind them that we are here, share the website and gather information regarding other programs that can be placed on the website calendar.

Discussion also followed as to the viability of producing a policy paper or preliminary brief regarding issues we are thinking about based on the data we have. It was decided that we are not yet ready for this step, however, it is something we will work on once we have built more credibility and trust. It is evident that relationship building and policy work will be done through a parallel process.