

Abstract

As part of its growing relationship with the City of Hartsville, South Carolina, EdVenture seeks funding from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (Activating Community Opportunities Using Museums) to apply the best practices in collective impact and to serve as the backbone organization throughout a two-year, community-centered effort to identify local assets, bring together a unique cross-section of city stakeholders, and develop a locally-driven plan that addresses the pressing and interrelated issues of youth development and gang activity in Hartsville, South Carolina.

Following a collective impact model, EdVenture and the City of Hartsville's development team will convene leaders in city management, youth counseling, law enforcement, local foundations, religious lay leaders, and K-12, continuing, and higher education administrators. These workgroup members will be charged to develop "a common agenda, shared measurement, continuous communication, and mutually reinforcing activities"¹ that combat Hartsville's gang crisis. This initiative would also uniquely involve youth themselves: while supporting the workgroup, EdVenture will simultaneously lead its Future Leaders after school program at Hartsville Middle School and include the participants' voices in the development of the collective impact plan. To develop the proposed initiative, EdVenture turned to the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) *Comprehensive Gang Model*—a cross-sector and tiered-work model of action that, like a collective impact framework, utilizes a central leadership group and mutual goals to address youth gang activity.

The proposed project will have two overarching goals: 1) successful utilization of a social impact model to design a collective youth development and anti-gang strategy in Hartsville, South Carolina, and 2) the design of a plan for youth development and anti-gang programs that embraces collective impact, including collectively derived data, outcomes, and reporting. The use of a collective impact model to develop a meaningful plan for improving youth development and resolving gang activity in Hartsville is unprecedented. Community leaders across all sectors in Hartsville, believe the recent rise in gang-related violence is a consequential call to assess the situation at hand, map the community's assets to identify opportunities for support to Hartsville's youth, suppress the gang activity, and ultimately relinquish individual organization goals in order to develop an effective and collective plan of action.

EdVenture's participation in this effort underscores the important role libraries and museums—especially those in rural towns—can play in bringing together diverse community leaders and organizations to define collective goals and develop mutual strategies around key community issues, especially those involving children and families.

¹ John Kania and Mark Kramer, "Collective Impact," *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, Winter 2011.

Mission: To inspire children to experience the joy of learning.

Since opening in 2003, EdVenture is a model of national, state and local success for educational innovation and community impact. Celebrated as one of the best attended museums in the South, EdVenture has welcomed more than 2 million visitors from all 50 states and 20 foreign countries. The museum's target audience for exhibits and traditional museum programs is children ages 12 and younger and the adults who care for them, with adults comprising 50% of EdVenture's total audience. On an annual basis, EdVenture Columbia attracts a geographically diverse audience that includes 60% local visitation (from the museum's two-county area), 25% statewide visitation, and 15% out-of-state visitation. Pivotal to this success has been EdVenture's ability to impact its audience with exhibits and educational programs that address critical community needs and create opportunities for increased access for children and adults of diverse social and economic backgrounds.

Governed by a 16- member Board of Trustees, EdVenture's exhibits and educational programs are focused on the following key content areas of early literacy, health education, STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and math), fire and life safety, and environmental sustainability. While the museum experience itself is the most visible of EdVenture's brand, it is only one of many "tools" used to meet the needs of its audience. In 2017, EdVenture acquired the Children's Museum of South Carolina in Myrtle Beach and will open a location in Hartsville, SC in 2018.

Key programs include:

- **Museum Experiences** range from permanent, seasonal and traveling exhibits to public programs designed to inspire a lifelong love of learning across multi-generational audiences at three locations. EdVenture creates daily, weekly, monthly and seasonal experiences for its visitors. Average length of stay for visitors is 2.5-3 hours.
- **School Programs** offer teachers and students curriculum-based, hands-on learning experiences that complement classroom instruction. Programs are designed for pre-K to 6th grade audiences and serve 30,000 annually, from a three-state region.
- **Afterschool Programs** serve a critical need in our community by providing academic enrichment and out-of-school-time learning opportunities to over 500 students daily at 11 Columbia elementary schools.
- **Professional Development Programs** offer educational instruction to adults who interact in all facets of a child's life. From parenting classes, early childhood conferences to intensive instruction (40+hours) for South Carolina teachers to improve math and science education, EdVenture directly impacts more than 1,000 adults annually.
- **Workforce Preparation** involves leadership development, career exploration in the sciences, and volunteer opportunities at the museum for at-risk middle and high school students to prepare them for the 21st century workforce. EdVenture serves more than 200 youth annually.
- **Promise Zone** - In 2015, EdVenture partnered with the Southern Carolina Regional Development Alliance in leading the Promise Zone's education improvement strategy in the following counties: Allendale, Bamberg, Barnwell, Colleton, Hampton, and Jasper. EdVenture embraced the opportunity and has worked over the past six months to catalyze an education workgroup in the counties—a responsibility and area of focus that has become embedded into EdVenture's strategic plan for outreach.

EdVenture is regarded as a community-driven organization by its stakeholders and audience. By engaging in internal and external assessment, community dialogue, partnerships and collaborations, strong political relationships, and using community needs assessments, the museum is at the forefront of emerging community needs. In a state that consistently ranks among the lowest, nationally, in the areas of educational attainment, school readiness, and early literacy, and among the highest in obesity and chronic health conditions, EdVenture works to address these needs through innovative, research-based educational initiatives.

EdVenture's Strategic Plan Summary

Mission and Vision

To inspire children, and the adults and youth who care about them, to experience the joy of learning. We aspire to create new generations of lifelong learners by addressing the educational needs in the areas of science literacy and early learning through experiences that develop skills in critical thinking, inquiry, creativity and innovation.

EdVenture's four focus areas are early childhood literacy; health and wellness; STEAM education; and youth and family development.

Strategic Priorities 2017 - 2022

Priority One: Keep it Fresh – Make and keep the EdVenture experience remarkable.

Strategy: Invest in exhibits to engage audiences and meet community needs.

EdVenture opened "FLIGHT". The exhibits team purchased exhibits and travelled EdVenture-made exhibits including Snowville. Currently, EdVenture is building an exhibit on flight that will tie in work force development themes. Planning is under way for the next generation of exhibits (new installations and updating current exhibits). EdVenture is working to improve exhibit maintenance to maintain 95% functionality of all exhibits. EdVenture's next strategic plan will include plans to convert the administrative office space on the second floor into a youth development wing for children 8 and up that will focus on STEAM and workforce development.

Strategy: Develop and improve museum experiences (programs, events, amenities, customer service) for visitors. Through this strategy, EdVenture will implement the EdVenture Way to improve customer service, implement new Public Programs Plan to encourage new and repeat visitation, improve food and retail to support visitor experience, and implement semi-annual visitor/member survey to measure satisfaction and educational value. EdVenture had improved the guest services experience by developing and implementing new staffing structure and purchasing new ticketing software. The Museum is cleaner, friendlier and visitors are staying longer.

Priority Two: Secure our Future – Develop and grow revenues and financial support to strengthen the mission.

Strategy: Increase attendance/admissions revenues (general, group and member) and other visitor-related revenues.

Through this strategy, EdVenture will improve marketing/communications/sales to increase participation by schools, develop and implement repeat visitation plan, and increase visitation by target audiences.

Strategy: Grow revenues/support in core business areas to support mission.

Through this strategy, EdVenture will develop and implement communications strategies/business operations plan designed to promote and drive increased "sales", use public relations and social media to promote visitation and increased understanding of mission, increase donor support for education and exhibits.

Strategy: Develop leadership capacity of board, volunteers and staff.

Through this strategy, EdVenture will strengthen and engage Board of Trustees through leadership and training; expand and strengthen role and use of volunteers (youth and adults); and develop staff expertise in project management, business development and sales, educational program planning and other key areas. EdVenture's board has been transformed with the development of a Board Policy Manual and tracking systems to ensure that goals are met therefore ensuring that leadership and staff stay on track.

Priority Three: Impact our Community – Develop and implement early learning and science literacy educational programs and resources to meet community needs.

Strategy: Increase access for audiences.

Through this strategy, EdVenture will expand outreach to targeted audiences, implement exhibit collaboration with EdVenture satellite locations, other museums and community partners, and build on museum-wide accessibility plan to include scholarship and other fee-based accessibility initiatives. EdVenture's *Yes, Every Child* program has achieved this strategy, however, the program participation has grown so much that additional funding is needed.

Strategy: Expand services in core priority areas of educational impact for school, after school and teachers.

Through this strategy, EdVenture will implement distance learning programs, expand relationships with South Carolina school districts and schools to expand outreach and after school programs, strengthen relationship with State Department of Education officials to pursue new opportunities and increase services to schools, and expand early childhood programs, resources and partnerships. EdVenture has made great strides in this strategy from spearheading education reform and community outreach in South Carolina's Promise Zone (6 counties) to expanding teacher professional learning opportunities state-wide

Strategy: Identify and develop new opportunities to increase educational impact for target audiences.

Through this strategy, EdVenture will develop comprehensive plan and funding for youth development/workforce preparation program in STEAM, explore opportunities to develop programs, services and exhibits to promote creativity and innovation, and pursue partnerships and funding opportunities to support early learning activities.

1. Statement of Need

Project Proposal: Background

In Hartsville, South Carolina, a city repeatedly listed among the top five most dangerous cities in the state, young children are frequently the victims of absent parents, gang-associated family members, and uneducated and unemployed caregivers. From their seat in poverty, children regularly observe examples of risky behavior—dropping out of high school and seeking self-worth through drugs and gang membership, among other self-destructive choices—and then they, too, claim their place in a vicious cycle of generational poverty that has perpetuated for decades in an area of rural South Carolina known as the *Corridor of Shame*.

To an outsider, Hartsville, the county seat of Darlington County, South Carolina is a growing, rural city, home to Coker College, South Carolina’s Governor’s School for Science and Mathematics, and large industry like the Sonoco company, a paper and paper product manufacturer. To an outsider, however, a drive across the city’s divisive Lake Anthony Bridge will showcase Hartsville’s deep-seated economic and social challenges: wealth and elaborate homes on one side of the bridge, and poverty and dilapidated homes on the other; white, middle and upper-middle class families on one side of the bridge, and African American, financially-distressed families on the other.



The literal divide extends to the city’s Southside, where in recent months unprecedented gang-led violence has erupted. Within one week in March 2017, local news outlets reported multiple home break-ins, drive-by shootings, the escape of a gang-affiliated, teen-aged prisoner from the county jail, and a mysterious car accident believed to be linked to the escalating gang war. The visible violence and quick evolution of the new gangs has created a sense of urgency among lawmakers, community leaders, and residents who wish to finally unravel Hartsville’s social mores, and who support the development of a collective impact initiative to tackle the community’s crime concerns and prevent any further escalation of violence.

As part of its growing relationship with Hartsville—where EdVenture has opened a satellite museum in—EdVenture aims to utilize the best practices of collective impact and to serve as the backbone organization throughout a two-year, community-centered effort to identify community assets, bring together a unique cross-section of city stakeholders, and develop a locally-driven plan that addresses the pertinent and interrelated issues of youth development and gang activity in Hartsville. EdVenture will not *do* this project *to* the community of Hartsville, but rather *with* them.

Project Research: Youth Gang Activity, Poverty, and Education

In an effort to better understand the current gang developments in Hartsville, EdVenture has researched the U.S. Department of Justice’s Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP)’s *Comprehensive Gang Model* (See *Supporting Document 1*). The Model suggests that, “lack of social opportunities available...and the degree of social disorganization present in a community largely account for [a] youth gang problem. The Model also suggests other contributing factors including poverty, institutional racism, deficiencies in social policies, and a lack of or misdirected social controls.”¹ In a study specifically about rural towns like Hartsville, the OJJDP further explained that,

“an often-overlooked feature of youth gangs is that they are a symptom of deeper community problems, not an isolated problem in and of themselves (Huff, 2002). That is, gangs and related gang problems tend to

¹ United States, U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, *OJJDP Comprehensive Gang Model: A Guide to Assessing Your Community's Youth Gang Problem* (2002).

emerge from larger social and economic problems in the community... conventional socializing agents, such as families and schools, are largely ineffective and alienating....Second, the adolescents...have a great deal of free time that is not consumed by other healthy social development roles. Third, for the gang to become established, members must have limited access to appealing conventional career lines; that is, good adult jobs.”²

Considering the OJJDP’s studied relationship between poverty, access to high-quality education and gainful employment, and gang affiliation, it is not surprising that Hartsville finds itself combating youth and gang-related crimes. In Darlington County, which has a population of 67,265 (US Census), high levels of unemployment and lack of educational attainment are core issues that ultimately impact young people’s school performance and job readiness. With an unemployment rate of 6% (SC Department of Employment and Workforce) and median family income of \$34,773 (compared with \$46,898 statewide) (US Census), 9.6% of children live in a family where no parent is in the workforce; 19.1% of infants are born to mothers with less than a high school education. To make matters worse, in Darlington County, over half of all children live in single-parent families, and 32.3% of children live below the poverty line. Academically, 13% of students are failing first, second, or third grade, and 70% of third grade students do not meet the state standards for English Language Arts—with only 41.6% of students in third grade meeting them for mathematics.³ The statistics surrounding teenagers and young adults are equally troubling: 19.5% of 18 to 24 year-olds have not completed high school, and almost 13% of teens age 16-19 are not currently in school and are not working.

Mirroring the county’s flailing academic record and economic performance, and as expected per OJJDP’s Model, in the last five years Hartsville has witnessed an upward trend in total juvenile (ages 12-18) crimes committed annually (*Figure 1*).

Year	Total Juvenile Offenses (12-18)
3/1/12-3/1/13	153
3/1/13-3/1/14	128
3/1/14-3/1/15	152
3/1/15-3/1/16	159
3/1/16-3/1/17	187

Figure 1 — Source: City of Hartsville

Fiscal Year	Count	GED	High School Diploma
2012-2013	114	19	0
2013-2014	109	20	2
2014-2015	116	18	4
2015-2016	137	18	2
2016-2017	122	13	0

Figure 2 — Source: City of Hartsville

Adding to the dire picture, Hartsville city management has developed an alarming hypothesis about the relationship between increased enrollment in adult education courses over the last five years by students aged 16-22, and the increase in juvenile crimes and gang membership (*Figure 2*). City managers and community development officers believe that more poor-performing and disruptive students are getting expelled from the local high school and entering adult education programs which, unfortunately, do not offer the same student support programs that the public high school is mandated to provide. Reviewed together, these statistics indicate the need for a collective plan of action and programs that address youth development—specifically academic achievement, job readiness, and gang prevention—in Hartsville.

Project Overview: A Collective Impact Initiative for Hartsville and Leveraging EdVenture’s Assets

Although it is not referred to as a “collective impact model,” the OJJDP proposes a cross-sector and tiered-work model of action with a central leadership group and mutual goals to address youth gang activity. Based on the positive results of collective impact initiatives in public health, education, and community development, and

² U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, *Gangs in Small Towns and Rural Counties*, James C. Howell and Arlen Egley, Jr., vol. 1, National Youth Gang Center Bulletin (2002).

³ Kids Count Data Center, Annie. E. Casey Foundation, http://datacenter.kidscount.org/?gclid=CLrh0aK8iNMcFUKUaQod_dUOcw.

studies by the OJJDP that promote collective, community-based approaches to youth development, EdVenture seeks funding from the Institute of Museum and Library Services to support the application of best practices in collective impact, and the creation of a collectively-derived plan to address youth development and gang activity in Hartsville.

Through a collective impact model, EdVenture and the City of Hartsville's management team will bring together diverse individuals and organizations to tackle this urgent community problem. Leaders in city management, youth counseling, law enforcement, local foundations, religious lay leaders, and K-12, continuing, and higher education administrators will cooperate in an organized way and with a dedicated project staff to develop "a common agenda, shared measurement, continuous communication, and mutually reinforcing activities among all participants."⁴ Furthermore, while EdVenture has frequently worked with school districts and political leaders to advance its mission, through this project, EdVenture will engage sectors of the local community with whom it has not previously engaged—and who do not usually work together—including law enforcement, adult education administrators, and the local ministerial alliance.

This collective impact initiative for youth development and to combat gang activity in Hartsville would also uniquely include youth themselves. As a children's museum, EdVenture has a 12-year history providing leadership training and curriculum enrichment programming to middle and early high school students. While serving as the initiative's backbone organization, EdVenture will simultaneously lead its Future Leaders after school program at Hartsville Middle School. In the Future Leaders program, students will hone life and leadership skills through an integrated, project-based learning/teaching strategy, addressing the whole student. EdVenture promotes hands-on, informal learning experiences, and can uniquely engage youth in the important content of its Future Leaders program. Implementing Future Leader sessions throughout the grant period will allow EdVenture to provide interventive programming to underserved middle school students as well as gain the trust of these families most affected by the area's crime and poverty.

EdVenture's experiences in youth development programming will also be the foundation from which EdVenture educators and Project Team members will lead Hartsville's youth in conversations about issues faced by Hartsville teens, including what they believe might be effective resolutions to the city's rising gang problem. Parents of the students enrolled in Future Leaders will also have the opportunity to engage with EdVenture and the collective impact initiative's leaders during two roundtable sessions (*See: Project Design*)

EdVenture is eager to establish its role as a community convener in Hartsville. In assessing how EdVenture can have the greatest impact on children, families, and teachers in South Carolina, the establishment of satellite locations throughout the state emerged as a viable strategy. EdVenture, in partnership with the City of Hartsville, runs a satellite museum in Hartsville expanding EdVenture's services and programs into South Carolina's Pee Dee Region. Hartsville presents an ideal location to serve more rural, historically under-resourced communities with chronically underfunded public education programs. With the support and charge of this grant, EdVenture will undoubtedly cement its place as an integral part of the Hartsville community. EdVenture's participation in this effort underscores the important role libraries and museums—especially those in rural towns—can play in bringing together diverse community leaders and organizations to define collective goals and develop mutual strategies around key community issues.

2. Impact

A Meaningful Collective Impact Model

To create an effective plan of action addressing Hartsville's youth development needs and rising gang violence, EdVenture will serve as the backbone organization—in closest collaboration with the City of Hartsville community management team—for a collective impact-modeled initiative. The use of a collective impact model to develop a meaningful plan for improving youth development and resolving gang activity in Hartsville is

⁴ John Kania and Mark Kramer, "Collective Impact," *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, Winter 2011.

unprecedented. Community leaders across all sectors in Hartsville, believe the recent rise in gang-related violence is a consequential call to assess the situation at hand, map the community's assets to identify opportunities for support to Hartsville's youth, suppress the gang activity, and ultimately relinquish individual organization goals in order to develop an effective and collective plan of action.

Key Performance Outcomes

The proposed project will have two overarching goals: 1) successful utilization of a social impact model to design a collective youth development and anti-gang strategy in Hartsville, South Carolina, and 2) the design of a plan for youth development and anti-gang programs that embraces collective impact, including collectively derived data, outcomes, and reporting. More specifically, EdVenture turns to the Strive Partnership's *StriveTogether Theory of Action (See Supporting Document 2)* promoted by the *Stanford Social Innovation Review* which will be used as a guide to identifying high-quality outcomes for its collective impact initiative in Hartsville.⁵ As promoted by the *StriveTogether Theory of Action*, the collective impact initiative will:

- *Build a culture of continuous improvement:* A Project Team comprised of Hartsville city management, EdVenture staff, law enforcement, and community lay leaders (*See: Project Design—Community Member Roles and Sequence of Activities*) will guide a diverse group of individuals and groups to embrace mutually agreed upon and continuously updated data, so as to generate “user-friendly reports” and to regularly improve local youth development and anti-gang efforts.
- *Leverage existing assets:* The Project Team will ensure that rather than “import a new program,” it will use best practices in community asset mapping, data collection, and evaluation to “[understand] and [improve] the current system[s]” in Hartsville.
- *Engage local expertise and community voice:* Through the use of a collective impact model, the workgroup will bring together local expertise and diverse community voices to ensure partners who “represent a broad cross-section of the community [will] not only to shape the overall vision [for the initiative and its proposals], but also to help practitioners use data to change the ways they serve children.”

Scalable and Replicable Project Results

Prior to EdVenture's presence in Hartsville, South Hartsville—where the current gang wars have erupted—was selected by the American Planning Association (APA) to receive an APA designed, comprehensive community revitalization strategy, which was completed in January 2015. While the APA practitioners did thoroughly collect data, and spent some time interviewing local residents and leaders, City management believes that because the plan was developed by an outside organization and not by the community itself, the community has not embraced its recommendations. Ultimately, the goals and intended outcomes of the plan are significant, but recent attempts at implementation of the plan have already been observed as weak, and the gang violence underscores its ineffectiveness (*See: Supporting Document 3*).

The APA project's uninspiring impact encourages the development of an innovative, collective initiative utilizing a collective impact model—wherein the community itself is creating a plan for community improvement—should meet greater success. As previously discussed, the OJJDP's *Comprehensive Gang Model* encourages collective impact, citing that whether in a rural town or urban center, “A balanced and carefully developed strategy that is the product of a collective community effort is likely to be far more effective.”⁶ As suggested by the OJJDP, a localized collective impact framework utilized to improve youth development and gang violence is both replicable and scalable across rural towns or urban centers.

The anticipated success of EdVenture's service as the backbone organization to a collective impact initiative in Hartsville would also promote the role of libraries and museums in small towns across the country as ideal conveners and leaders of collective impact model-based community development projects. Especially in rural communities, public institutions such as a library or museum are often celebrated as community assets and

⁵ Jeff Edmonds and Ben Hecht, "Defining Quality Collective Impact," *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, Fall 2014.

⁶ *Gangs in Small Towns and Rural Counties*, Howell and Egle, Jr., National Youth Gang Center Bulletin (2002).

neutral gathering places, despite their typical lack of grandiosity. Children's museums in particular have the potential to develop meaningful partnerships, strengthen community resources, convene residents around critical issues affecting children and families, and enhance the quality of life in a community. This particular collective impact initiative to support Hartsville's youth and suppress gang violence could be just the first for EdVenture in Hartsville; it could also serve as an example to the community for how such a model can effectively bring diverse groups together to tackle pressing problems.

EdVenture heeds the calls of IMLS to demonstrate the effectiveness of museums' roles in community impact models. Developing a youth-focused collective impact initiative for the City of Hartsville would create a model for best practice: EdVenture believes this project will build the capacity of local leaders and service providers, while bringing new, collective ideas, expertise, and passion to youth development, all while immediately increasing students and families' knowledge of available health, career, and college resources.

3. Project Design

Conceptual Framework

To develop its project design, EdVenture turned again to the OJJDP's *Comprehensive Gang Model* which aligns with the key ideals of collective impact, and recommends the following five strategies to combat youth gang activity:

- 1. Community Mobilization:** *Involvement of local citizens, including former gang youth, community groups and agencies, and the coordination of programs and staff functions within and across agencies;*
Hartsville Collective Impact Project Plan: EdVenture will serve as the backbone organization of a two-tiered work group comprised of local citizens representative of diverse agencies and community groups, including, but not limited to city, law enforcement, youth program directors, faith-based leaders, and school administrators. Based on proposed committee function (*See: Project Design—Community Member Roles and Sequence of Activities*), committees will meet monthly, bi-monthly, or quarterly. Three times throughout the two-year grant period, Town Hall events will engage even more Hartsville residents. Finally, through its Future Leaders after school program, EdVenture will also include local youth and their parents in the initiative, and seek their feedback in the development of a collective plan to support Hartsville's youth and suppress gang violence.
- 2. Opportunities Provision:** *The development of a variety of specific education, training, and employment programs targeted at gang-involved youth;*
Hartsville Collective Impact Project Plan: Within the guidelines of a collective impact framework, the two-tiered workgroup will create a plan of action, complete with collectively-agreed upon strategies and outcomes, to support Hartsville's youth and to break the city's cycle of gang activity. Together, workgroup members will utilize data to identify needs, determine the best combination of school and community-based youth and workforce development programs, and target gang-susceptible youth.
- 3. Social Intervention:** *Youth-serving agencies, schools, grass-roots groups, faith-based organizations, police, and other criminal justice organizations should be 'reaching out' and acting as links among gang-involved youth, their families, and the conventional world and needed services;*
Hartsville Collective Impact Project Plan: As a result of Hartsville's collective impact initiative, diverse local agencies and organizations will define their role in supporting gang-affiliated and gang-susceptible youth and their families. Furthermore, while the plan is being developed, EdVenture will lead its 10-year, award-winning youth development program, Future Leaders, for 25 students (per semester) at Hartsville Middle School. The program includes family engagement nights with round-table discussions with their parents (*See: Project Design—Community Member Roles and Sequence of Activities*). Some of these students may be vulnerable to gang association. The program—as well as Hartsville's two existing, community-based youth development programs—will be thoroughly evaluated in order to develop a long-term and viable workforce training and personal development program for

Hartsville's youth.

4. *Suppression:* *Formal and informal social control procedures, including close supervision or monitoring of gang youth by agencies of the criminal justice system and also by community-based agencies, schools, and grass-roots groups; and*

Hartsville Collective Impact Project Plan: This initiative will bring attention to the lack of youth development supports and the rising gang issues in Hartsville, while creating a platform for community conversations and collective resolutions. Workgroup members will share data and current strategies with each other, embrace new, collective data, and work across agencies to identify strategies to suppress the increasing violence.

5. *Organizational Change and Development:* *Development and implementation of policies and procedures that result in the most effective use of available and potential resources, within and across agencies, to better address the gang problem.*⁷

Hartsville Collective Impact Project Plan: At the end of two years, the workgroup will have a series of new policies and procedures to combat the city's gang problem and to create a pipeline of supports to Hartsville's youth—policies, procedures and programs that have been developed and identified in a collective fashion to bring about mutually-desired outcomes. The initiative will also set a precedent for collective approaches to decreasing gang activity and maintaining outlets of support to the city's youth into the future.

The Model also suggests the following program development process to implement its five core strategies:

1. *Collective acknowledgment of the problem.*
2. *Collective assessment of the problem including identifying its causes and appropriate responses.*
3. *Setting collective goals and objectives.*
4. *Developing relevant services and activities, including collective rationales for services, tactics, and policies and procedures that involve each of the key agencies. OJJDP underscores that representatives of cross-sector agencies involved in crime and youth development should have "regular meetings to share critical information, plan, and act collaboratively..."*⁸
5. *Evaluation of outcomes, data, and progress toward shared goals.*

Community Member Roles & Sequence of Activities

A. Committee Development and Training

Aligned with the philosophies of collective impact, the OJJDP recommends a tiered and cross-sector workgroup to assess a community's youth gang problem, collect data and information, develop mutual definitions, strategies and outcomes, and to make decisions directing change. The OJJDP's *Comprehensive Gang Model* specifically recommends the participation of business leaders, faith-based leaders, job training agencies, grass-roots representatives, public housing, local neighborhood associations, representatives of government agencies, law enforcement, schools, and youth and family agencies in a *Steering Committee* and an *Assessment Team*.⁹

Using this model—which reflects best practices in collective impact—Hartsville's City Manager, as part of the City's commitment to this project, worked with EdVenture to organize two distinct committees within the larger workgroup:

The Project Team will meet monthly beginning in October 2018 during the two-year project period and be responsible for day-to-day project management to reach intended outcomes; develop and support internal and external communications, meeting organization, program development, and data analytics. Members are:

- Brenda Kelly, Development Project Manager (City of Hartsville)

⁷ *OJJDP Comprehensive Gang Model: A Guide to Assessing Your Community's Youth Gang Problem* (2002).

⁸ *ibid.*

⁹ *ibid.*

- Mary Catherine Farrell, Asst. to City Manager (City of Hartsville)
- To be Hired, Community Liaison Officer (City of Hartsville)
- Lt. Tenyonde Richardson, Hartsville Police Department, Community Outreach Division
- Pastor Reginald Floyd, Jerusalem Baptist Church
- Brian Hickman, Principal, Hartsville Middle School
- Ron Krein, Director, Department of Social Services Darlington County

The Advisory Committee will meet bi-monthly beginning in October 2019 during the two-year project period to offer guidance to the Project Team, adding diverse community voices and opinions to the initiative. Members are:

- Michael Weatherford, City of Hartsville Police Department
- Tilette Scott, Vocational Rehabilitation
- Dr. Alvin Heatley, South Hartsville Neighborhood Association, Butler Heritage Foundation
- Dr. Willie Boyd, Sr., Associate Superintendent for Administration, Darlington County Schools
- Casey Copeland, Workforce Development, Florence-Darlington Technical College
- Lunella Williams, President, NAACP and retired law enforcement officer
- Tony Chavis, Darlington County Sheriff's Department
- Melissa Devane, Director Darlington County Department of Juvenile Justice
- Two (2) parents of teens participating in Future Leader Programs

The Project Team and Advisory Committee will hold joint meetings throughout the two-year project, including planning meetings before each town hall meeting.

EdVenture will provide direct service and project management through the leadership of:

- **Project Director - Nikki Williams Hill, Executive Vice President**, will serve as the primary staff member responsible for oversight of the project's activities ensuring that all project goals and objectives are met and that IMLS grant requirements are met.
- **Project Coordinator – Marc Drews, Director of Education Programs and Partnerships**, will manage work group coordination and staff the Project Team and Advisory Committees completing daily work toward the initiative and regularly communicating with Hartsville's local representatives. Mr. Drews will contribute his knowledge of effective education programs and suggest any other program partners whose voices should be considered for effective project implementation.
- **EdVenture Future Leaders Educator - Kenny Smith, EdVenture Educator**, will lead EdVenture's Future Leaders youth development program at Hartsville Middle School and develop programming for family engagement activities.
- **Future Leaders Educator – Kobie Wilkerson (Contractor)** will serve as an educator for Future Leaders youth development program at Hartsville Middle School and for family engagement activities. Wilkerson is an award-winning author, poet, speaker, presenter, storyteller, edutainer, master teacher, and powerful transformer of schools and organizations.

Once the groups have been established and groundwork begins, EdVenture staff and members of both the Project Team and Advisory Committee will travel to Indianola, Mississippi. During the two-day summit, the delegation will learn about the Indianola Promise Community's effective use of collective impact frameworks to resolve challenges in their local public health and school systems. Created in 2009, the Indianola Promise Community (IPC) consists of nearly 30 programs and initiatives that work together to expand the health care and educational opportunities for Indianola children and their families. IPC unites health care, education, government, community, and faith-based organizations to develop a "pipeline" of academic, family, and community resources, from prenatal care through high school graduation, creating a path for students to gain meaningful careers and earn financial independence. IPC is governed by a local Steering Committee and makes use of a broad number of task forces and committees that bring together a number of different community organizations to collaborate on goals and objectives. From data integration, to partner and town hall meeting

design, the committee members' time spent receiving peer-generated technical assistance from IPC will be an important learning opportunity for Hartsville's youth development initiative leaders. As a result of the trip, the committee members will be better equipped to develop and enhance their own strategies for successful community development through collective impact.¹⁰

B. Future Leaders Youth Development Program

While EdVenture and local leaders work to develop a collective strategy for improving youth services and suppressing youth gang violence in Hartsville, EdVenture will enact its Future Leaders afterschool program at Hartsville Middle School as a strategy for improving youth services and youth gang prevention measures in Hartsville. Beginning in October 2018 weekly for 12 weeks, 25 students at Hartsville Middle School will take part in an afterschool program designed to enhance their knowledge of important community development topics such as the political process; business and the economy; community planning; arts and culture; innovation, science and technology; education; and social issues. As evidenced by previous evaluations, Future Leaders successfully creates a peer group of students who are motivated academically and socially, and who are willing to seek leadership opportunities in their schools and communities, increasing the likelihood they will complete high school and proceed to postsecondary education. Hartsville Middle School students will apply to participate in the program or will be nominated to participate by teachers and school counselors. Participating students will also partake in a field-study experience to Coker College, the local higher education institution. This trip will provide students with important exposure to postsecondary education and career opportunities that they may not have considered. Over the course of the grant, EdVenture will present four Future Leaders sessions, once each school semester, serving a total of 100 students.

Having implemented the Future Leaders Program since 2006, EdVenture has found several positive results, including its impact on: promoting creative thinking to develop problem solving and critical thinking skills, increasing self-confidence while encouraging respect for others, building on collaborative learning and leadership skills already taught in school, encouraging youth to stay in school, providing opportunities to embrace learning as a lifelong practice, increasing understanding and awareness of learning opportunities and careers, linking students to professionals in interested careers, and providing students with hands-on learning opportunities to spark an interest and excitement in learning.

These are necessary to transform our students to be strategic thinkers, problem solvers, and innovators. The Future Leaders program will address the skills identified in the Profile of the South Carolina Graduate, including creativity and innovation, critical thinking and problem solving, collaboration and teamwork, communication, information, media and technology; and knowing how to learn. These are identified as foundational components to incorporate a sense of self and empathy for others. As this program is implemented, parents and caregivers will have the opportunity to seek support through community programs and share their stories on the conditions of the community. They will act as the "community leaders" to bring other community members to the table to have a conversation. A key indicator in gang affiliation is that youth often feel that they do not have a sense of place or a family dynamic. Gangs serve as the substitute for this need. When identifying best strategies to combat this problem, EdVenture will seek out students that are in need of a community to support them. The hope is to ensure that each youth involved in the programs will feel compelled to live a life free of violence and identify their self-worth.

Parents of the students enrolled in Future Leaders will also have the opportunity to engage with EdVenture and the collective impact initiative: each semester of the Future Leaders program, parents of participants will be invited to two family engagement nights per semester led by EdVenture team members on the topics of *a*) understanding and supporting youth's search for self-identity, and *b*) seizing pre-college or career opportunities. Parents who attend will have the opportunity to discuss the challenges experienced by Hartsville youth,

¹⁰ As leaders of the South Carolina Rural Promise Zone's education workgroup, EdVenture staff traveled to Indianola in 2016 to experience a summit supported by the federal Department of Education's Office of Innovation and Improvement and their Place-Based Initiatives Pilot. The trip was highly informative and solidified a lasting working relationship with the Delta Health Alliance.

including the raging gang war, and how they can better support their teens, ultimately contributing to Hartsville's collective impact initiative. Occurring twice each school semester, all eight parent programs will take place at Hartsville Middle School and serve a total of 100 parents.

C. Town Halls

To report on the initiative's work and to involve as many community voices as possible in its planning process, EdVenture and the Project Team will coordinate and facilitate a total of three town hall events over the two years of this grant project: April 2019 (six-month project report), October 2019 (one-year project report), and August 2020 (final report and plan). The town halls will take place in the gymnasium at Hartsville Middle School and be marketed by both the school district and the City of Hartsville via their websites and social media channels, and by fliers for students and families. Members of the Hartville ministerial alliance (who is involved in the committees of the workgroup) will also distribute informational material to members' congregants. The hour-long meeting will be devoted to a presentation from the Project Team and other workgroup members in which they discuss data collected, anticipated outcomes, and progress toward the initiative's goals. Moreover, the town halls are important in order to include local residents in the initiative: at the event, Hartsville residents will have the opportunity to ask questions, voice their opinions and share their ideas, all to ultimately ensure their inclusion in the collective strategy that is developed.

Through these activities, EdVenture will use its experience as a community convener to bring government, education, religious and community organizations together to address the issue and awareness on how to incorporate the suggested outcomes and preventative measures throughout other parts of the "Corridor of Shame". As these goals and objectives develop into sustainable outcomes through community conversations, town hall meetings, parent engagement opportunities and youth driven programs, this community wide initiative must identify the strategies for a long term and sustainable model. There are no right or wrong ways to identify best practices or reach a common goal. To build upon the trust of the community, as a community convener, stakeholders, must have the conversations and deliver on the outcomes. Far too often, communities are left with insurmountable data that can only be delivered in fantasy when in reality, these communities struggle with the impact of violence and crime on a daily basis. EdVenture, the project team and advisory team, can only begin the process, but together as a community wide effort, real change can be the reality, one conversation at a time.

This collaborative is envisioned as a long-term change effort that is believed to make substantial gain over multiple years. Together, the groups will identify other resources in the community to expand the necessary efforts.

Evaluation and Mitigating Risk

Key to successful implementation will be the use of evaluation findings at the end of each program year. EdVenture has secured the professional evaluation services of Dr. Charlotte Galloway. Dr. Galloway will bear in mind the suggestions of the OJJDP and conduct an assessment that gathers data from official city sources such as school and police records, and utilizes surveys, interviews, and focus groups that include both workgroup and community members, including youth and their caregivers.¹¹ Dr. Galloway has worked extensively with EdVenture on similar community-centered projects, with a specific focus on program development and implementation.

As desired by IMLS and this grant opportunity, Dr. Galloway's evaluation will examine both the effectiveness of a community impact model led by a non-traditional institution (a museum), and the proposed community improvement plan. Dr. Galloway will also evaluate EdVenture's Future Leaders after school program at Hartsville High School, and the community's two recently created youth support programs (the *Police Academy* and *Cypress Adventures*), to determine how these programs can be best aligned to support youth and prevent gang affiliation.

¹¹ *ibid.*

Evaluation data will also guide the sustainability of the initiative, and perhaps most importantly, its potential in other rural communities struggling to support their youth. Furthermore, Dr. Galloway's findings will help mitigate risks: the Project Team, led by EdVenture, will regularly review Dr. Galloway's evaluations to correct their course, involve new partners, improve their use of a collective impact model, and/or incorporate new strategies to achieve desired results.

Sharing Results

The outcomes and recommendations of this project will be reviewed by all workgroup committees and summarized in a document and presentation to be shared at the final town hall meeting, as well as with partner agencies, additional business leaders, legislators, school administrators, and entities across the state and country desiring to develop a collective impact strategy for youth development and youth gang suppression. EdVenture will also apply to present at the American Alliance of Museums 2020 annual conference to inform other museums about the role they can play as the backbone organization to a collective impact model helping resolve problems in their community. Furthermore, to make its results, process, and lessons learned as accessible as possible, all information will be publicly available on the City of Hartsville and EdVenture's websites and included in their annual reports. EdVenture will also plan to provide its findings to Hartsville's sister city, North Augusta, and to other cities or organizations who have a particular interest in making a collective impact on rural education and public health, ultimately improving their children's future.