



Center for
**Health Program
Management**
SIERRA HEALTH FOUNDATION

AFRICAN AMERICAN CHILDREN MATTER: **What We Must Do Now**

Steering Committee on Reduction of
African American Child Deaths in
Sacramento County, California

STRATEGIC PLAN // MARCH 2015



March 2015

Sacramento County Board of Supervisors:

The Steering Committee on Reduction of African American Child Deaths in Sacramento County submits this Strategic Plan in response to the recommendations from the Blue Ribbon Commission. This commission was convened in 2011 by Supervisor Phil Serna to focus on the disproportionate African American child deaths in Sacramento County. This plan is reflective of strategies inherently rooted in the belief that all of our children matter, especially those who are most vulnerable and marginalized and have very little or no opportunity to voice their needs.

Development of the strategic plan marks the culmination of a year of analysis, planning and invaluable input by Steering Committee members. These members represent a diverse cross section of the community's civic groups, faith-based organizations, parent groups, youth representatives, social justice advocates, health providers, county agencies, education and philanthropic organizations. Collaboratively, we have worked to develop and refine an approach that advances the Blue Ribbon Commission's goal to reduce African American child deaths in Sacramento County by 10 percent to 20 percent over the next five years. This approach embraces two key ideas. First, a targeted approach to reducing the disproportionate causes of death among African American children will have a universal impact on all children in Sacramento County. Second, addressing child mortality in our African American community requires addressing the complex, integrated and overlapping social and economic systems responsible for good or bad health.

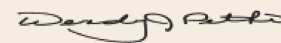
We acknowledge that the Blue Ribbon Commission's goals are not a destination, but a process of both healing and empowering Sacramento to address the needs of its children who have experienced the most negative health outcomes by no fault of their own. Admittedly, some of the strategies in our plan are very ambitious, but the challenge we have before us requires bold and transformative thinking and action. Moreover, committed partnerships are essential to its success, as its implementation will demand shared accountability and responsibility. To truly have long-term impact on the health and well-being of all children in Sacramento County, it is paramount that we work at the nexus of community, city and county systems and policy to create a county where our children are healthy, happy and thriving.

This Steering Committee is wholly committed to providing the oversight and coordination necessary to manage all the efforts associated with implementing the strategic plan, evaluating its impact and reporting on its progress.

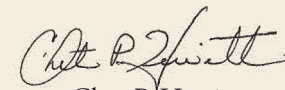
On behalf of the Steering Committee, we thank the Board of Supervisors and the many community partners who have contributed to the plan's development. Additionally, because belief informs behavior, it is the hope of the Steering Committee that the Board of Supervisors will continue to stand with us in the belief that all of our children's lives matter.

We look forward to continuing to work with the Supervisors as we implement our strategic plan.

Respectfully,



Wendy Petko
Co-Chairperson



Chet P. Hewitt
Co-Chairperson

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Executive Summary

The Steering Committee on Reduction of African American Child Deaths in Sacramento County submits this Strategic Plan in response to the recommendations from the Blue Ribbon Commission convened in 2011 by Supervisor Phil Serna. The Committee's charge was to focus on the development of a plan to reduce disproportionate African American child deaths in Sacramento County. This plan is reflective of strategies inherently rooted in the belief that all of our children matter, and that society has a responsibility to ensure the well-being of those who are most vulnerable and marginalized.

We Value Universal Impact

Our central focus is to work together to positively impact the health and well-being of all children in Sacramento County, while paying particular attention to the conditions that are creating poor outcomes for African American children. Californians live with geological fault lines that lie beneath the earth's surface; much like these physical faults, we experience social fault lines that result in health and other disparities that are not natural and thus can be remedied. These lines have made conversations around how to achieve equity in health and well-being historically difficult in our nation, and Sacramento County is not excluded from this challenge. This strategic plan has been created to transform Sacramento County's approach to African American child health to promote more equitable health outcomes for all children.

Targeted Neighborhoods

The Steering Committee proposes a targeted prevention and intervention approach to support activities that will universally enhance the overall positive health outcomes of all children in Sacramento County, but will intentionally point toward six neighborhoods indicated by the Blue Ribbon Commission Report.



These communities are at the epicenter of the disproportionate number of African American child deaths in the county:

- Valley Hi/Meadowview
- Arden-Arcade
- North Sacramento/Del Paso Heights
- Oak Park
- North Highlands/Foothill
- Fruitridge/Stockton Boulevard

Our Strategic Direction

Children and youth today—particularly children and youth of color—struggle with societal problems such as poverty, racism, violence, and other social, economic and political ills that directly and indirectly impact their health. The Blue Ribbon Commission's Report on Disproportionate African American Child Deaths identified four equally important causes of death that have the most disproportionate impact on African American children in Sacramento County. Those causes are:

- **Infant sleep-related deaths**
- **Perinatal conditions**
- **Child abuse and neglect homicides**
- **Third-party homicide**

Framework for Collective Strategies

The Steering Committee identified five strategic priorities in an effort to reduce deaths by between 10 percent and 20 percent among African American children in Sacramento County by 2020. The strategies for long-term impact over the next five years include:

- **Advocacy and Policy**
- **Equitable Investment and Systematic Impact**
- **Coordinated Systems of Support**
- **Data-driven Accountability and Collective Impact**
- **Communications and Information Systems**

These strategies are further outlined in the following pages.



1. Advocacy and Policy

Priority Outcome 1

Engage up to 20 organizations as partners of the Steering Committee. These organizations will promote, advocate and empower communities within the target neighborhoods to take on the four causes of death identified by the Steering Committee to ensure that children from 0 to 17 years of age are safe emotionally, physically and educationally.

Strategy 1.1 Create and convene a community-based Leadership Roundtable to support the development of communication messages and protocols, and carry out mobilization activities that will assist the Steering Committee in the strategic implementation of its activities.

2. Equitable Investment and Systematic Impact

Priority Outcome 2

Convene executive-level county decision makers and elected policymakers representing agencies and departments in Sacramento City and County to focus public system resources on the reduction of African American child deaths.

Strategy 2.1 Establish a Sacramento County Interagency Children's Policy Council (ICPC) made up of county agency executives and department directors who have responsibility for children's health and well-being in Sacramento County. The Council would be directly accountable to the Board of Supervisors and would work closely with the Steering Committee on the development of a comprehensive and collaborative integrated services delivery system strategy consistent

with the Blue Ribbon Commission's Report recommendations to improve the lives of low-income and vulnerable children, youth and their families. The ICPC would work closely with the Steering Committee on reduction of African American child deaths.

Strategy 2.2 Employ the ICPC to develop and advance cross-county-agency initiatives focused on interagency communication, the development of policies and practices, and initiating budgetary changes that result in the prevention and reduction of African American child deaths in Sacramento County, and improve the lives of low-income and vulnerable children, youth and their families.

3. Coordinated Systems of Support

Priority Outcome 3

Establish the Sacramento County Training and Technical Assistance Network to connect, strengthen and expand the capacity of organizations currently focused on preventing and reducing African American child deaths in Sacramento County.

Strategy 3.1 Allocate resources to implement a Reduction of African American Child Deaths Technical Assistance Resource Center (TARC) that is overseen by the Steering Committee and is connected to the Interagency Children's Policy Council (ICPC). Use the TARC to create an information exchange network that connects partners working in the six targeted communities to the best ideas, practices, policies and research from around the county, state and nation whose efforts are directly related to reducing African American child deaths.

4. Data-driven Accountability and Collective Impact

Priority Outcome 4

Develop the RAACD Collective Impact Assessment Framework.

Strategy 4.1 Monitor, document and report on progress toward established benchmarks for reducing African American child deaths.

Strategy 4.2 Monitor, document and report on the quality of programs focused on the well-being of African American children and the reduction of their disproportionate death rate.

5. Communications and Information Systems

Priority Outcome 5

Create a social marketing campaign aimed at increasing awareness of the disproportionate number of African American child deaths in Sacramento County, particularly in the six targeted neighborhoods.

Strategy 5.1 Develop and disseminate media materials focused on the prevention and reduction of African American child deaths for local targeted audiences, using both traditional media and a variety of social media outlets.

Implementation and Next Steps

The Steering Committee will use a collective impact framework to guide the development and design of its implementation plan. Collective impact represents the application of resources from a committed group of partners to a common agenda. The result is to increase capacity to solve complex social problems, such as the disproportionate number of African American child deaths in Sacramento County. The underlying premise of the collective impact framework is that no single organization can create large-scale, lasting social change alone. Specific to the Steering Committee's work, the collective impact framework emphasizes the importance of a comprehensive county-wide "all-in strategy" that is needed to address disproportionate African American child deaths.

Conclusion

Transformative change is the goal of the Steering Committee's strategic plan. To achieve its bold and ambitious goals, there is a need to redesign delivery systems and invest in communities where the need is the highest. The unfortunate truth is that the disparity of African American child deaths in Sacramento County has occurred for too long, and there is no single organization or institution that can address this issue alone. The Steering Committee hopes that the strategies outlined in this document encourage partnership and a fierce urgency to act now to eliminate unnecessary African American child deaths.

Background

For the past 20 years, the Sacramento County Child Death Review Team (CDRT) has investigated, analyzed and documented the circumstances surrounding all child deaths in Sacramento County. During its 20-year review, the CDRT has consistently found that African American children in Sacramento County died at a rate two times higher than all other children. Reacting to this finding, in its 2009 annual report, the CDRT made a specific recommendation to the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors:

“Appoint a multi-disciplinary, Sacramento County Blue Ribbon Commission to analyze data, explore causes of disproportionality in African American child death rates, and develop a coordinated strategic plan to address it.”

In response to this recommendation, in October 2011, Sacramento County Supervisor Phil Serna convened the Blue Ribbon Commission on Disproportionate African American Child Deaths in Sacramento County. During its review, the Blue Ribbon Commission extended the CDRT’s analysis to find that the African American child death rate was twice the average of the overall child death rate during the period from 1990 to 2009.¹ Since 1990, of the 3,633 child deaths, African

American children accounted for 22% (816) of child deaths, while being only 12% of the child population in Sacramento County. According to the 1990–2009 data reported by the Blue Ribbon Commission,

African American children represent 25% (260 of 1,041) of all perinatal condition deaths,

32% (134 of 420) of all infant sleep-related deaths,

30% (48 of 158) of all child abuse and neglect homicides,

and 32% (44 of 138) of all third-party child homicides.²

When explaining that he convened the Blue Ribbon Commission to develop a coordinated strategic plan to reduce the numbers of African American child deaths, Supervisor Serna also issued its ultimate charge:

“ . . . formulate recommendations for consideration by the County Board of Supervisors, so that we on the Board, with welcomed public input, can deliberate what must change to decrease all deaths in our County.”

In order to develop and execute those recommendations, the Steering Committee on Reduction of African American Child Deaths was established by a resolution of the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors in June 2013. Funded by Sacramento County and First 5 Sacramento, and managed by Sierra Health Foundation Center for Health Program Management, the 25-member Committee is comprised of representatives from county agencies, education, health systems, civic groups, faith-based organizations, parent and youth groups, and policy advocates.

¹The overall child death rate during the 20-year time period was 53.2 per 100,000 Sacramento County resident children. During the same period, a total of 816 Sacramento County African American resident children died. However, African American children consistently died at a disproportionate rate of 102.0 per 100,000 children, compared to Caucasian children who died at a rate of 48.5 per 100,000 children, and Hispanic children who died at a rate of 38.3 per 100,000 children..

² Sacramento County Blue Ribbon Commission (2013). Report on Disproportionate African American Child Deaths. <http://www.philserna.net/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/Blue-Ribbon-Commission-Report-2013.pdf>

The Steering Committee is charged with the development, and subsequent implementation, of a strategic plan that will carry forward the recommendations developed by the Blue Ribbon Commission, as unanimously supported by the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors on May 7, 2013. In addition, the Committee's ultimate charge is to monitor implementation, as well as to evaluate and report on progress toward reducing the disproportionate number of African American child deaths. It will accomplish that objective by providing coordination and oversight of all the efforts focusing on multiple manners of child deaths, including deaths related to perinatal conditions, infant sleep-related deaths, homicides related to child abuse and neglect and third-party homicides.

Our Vision

All African American children in Sacramento County are happy, healthy and thriving.

Our Mission

Eliminate preventable African American child deaths in Sacramento County.

Goal

By 2020, reduce the disproportionate African American child death rate in Sacramento County by at least 10 percent to 20 percent.

Our Core Values

Service
Collaboration
Compassion
Sustainability
Innovation
Accountability
Commitment
Community Engagement

Our Strategies

Advocacy and Policy
Equitable Investment and Systematic Impact
Coordinated Systems of Support
Data-driven Accountability and Collective Impact
Communications and Information Systems



Strategic Planning

The Strategic Planning Process

In January 2014, the Steering Committee initiated a strategic planning process that included participatory planning and decision making that led to the development of four workgroups aligned to the four causes of death that are the most disproportionate relative to the ratio of the child population. Those four causes of death are:

1. Perinatal conditions
2. Infant sleep-related deaths
3. Child abuse and neglect homicides
4. Third-party homicides

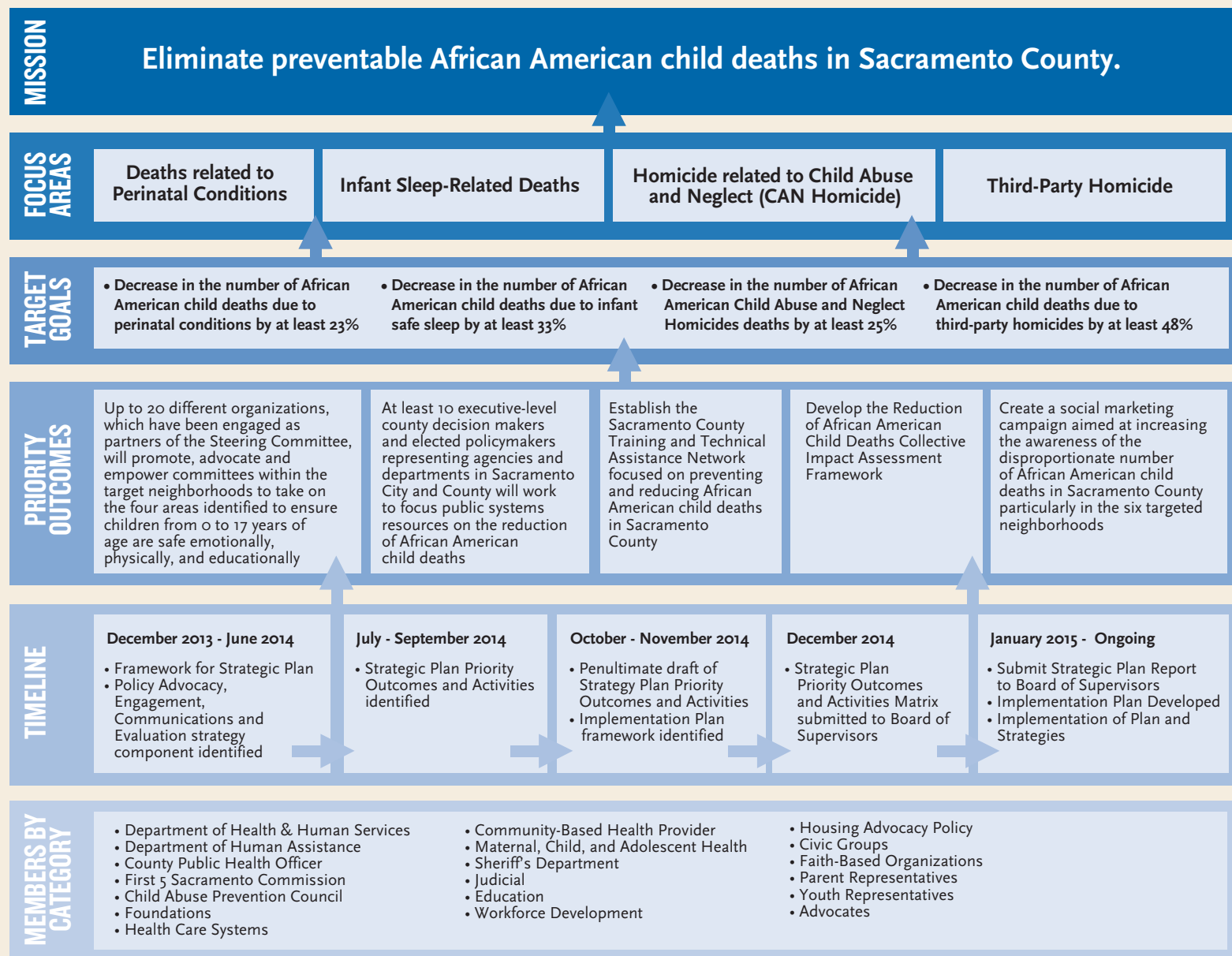
An added workgroup — Evaluation and Assessment — comprised of both Sierra Health Foundation evaluation staff and Steering Committee members, focused on defining and measuring outcomes. This initial planning phase led to the development of strong collaborative relationships among members of the committee, which was necessary for the subsequent direction of the strategic planning.

In addition to the workgroups, the Steering Committee developed a timeline to guide the initial strategic planning phase. Utilization of the findings and recommendations from the 2013 Report on Disproportionate African American Child Deaths and Committee member input provided the basis for outlining strategies aimed at the reduction of African American child deaths.

Building on the initial phase of the strategic planning, further refinement of the strategies and a shift from the workgroup approach to an “all in” full-group approach led to scaffolding of the priority outcomes and core activities identified by the Steering Committee. The process required several mechanisms to meaningfully capture the Steering Committee’s multitude of diverse perspectives, all of which shared in the urgency of the Committee’s mission to eliminate disparities in African American child deaths, but not always on how to best achieve a mission that requires a restructuring of the system that currently exists if our efforts are to be successful. Ultimately, through understanding the manner in which the strategies interact and by integrating the outcomes, timeline and four causes of disproportionate African American child deaths, the design emerged for a coherent systems change model that provides overarching guidance for the Steering Committee’s work.



Steering Committee on Reduction of African American Child Deaths: Systems Change Model



Strategic Direction

Overview of the Strategic Plan

The strategic planning process included an unprecedented level of input and collaboration by a diverse Steering Committee, whose members are fundamentally committed to eliminating the disparities of African American child deaths in Sacramento County. The resulting Strategic Plan has been significantly influenced and enriched by an untiring Committee whose expertise, experience and participation — coupled with data findings and recommendations from the Blue Ribbon Commission's 2013 Report on Disproportionate African American Child Deaths — helped define priority geographies, outcomes, strategies and activities over the course of several planning meetings. That work was also strongly informed by the daily realities of those Committee members who work for and in the communities where the most disproportionate deaths of African American children are occurring. The core activities for each identified strategy outlined in the strategic plan convey where the Steering Committee's work will occur over the next several years.

Additionally, the Steering Committee identified five strategic priorities in an effort to reduce deaths by between 10 percent and 20 percent among African American children in Sacramento County by 2020. Our strategies for long-term impact over the next five years include:

1. Advocacy and Policy
2. Investment and Systematic Impact
3. Coordinated Systems of Support
4. Data-driven Accountability and Collective Impact
5. Communications and Information Systems

Each of these five strategies is aligned with the following three components.

- **Priority Outcomes:** What will be achieved as a result of Steering Committee efforts to reduce African American child deaths in Sacramento County?
- **Strategies:** What are the approaches to achieve the desired priority outcome?
- **Core Activities:** What key activities will be implemented in order to realize the strategies?

The following sections detail the Strategic Plan on the Reduction of African American Child Deaths.



Reduction of African American Child Deaths Strategic Plan

1. Advocacy and Policy

Goal Statement: Promote, advocate and empower target neighborhoods so they play a key role in ensuring that children are safe socially, emotionally, physically and educationally from infancy to adulthood.

Priority Outcome 1

Engage up to 20 organizations as partners of the Steering Committee on Reduction of African American Child Deaths. These organizations will promote, advocate and empower communities within the target neighborhoods to take on the four areas identified by the Steering Committee to ensure that children from 0 to 17 years of age are safe emotionally, physically and educationally.

Strategy 1.1 Create and convene a community-based Leadership Roundtable that provides key communication messages and protocols, and carries out mobilization activities that will assist the Steering Committee in the strategic implementation of its activities.

Core Activities

- a. Develop an “echo chamber” environment³ to reduce African American child deaths by enabling community leaders to speak in a coordinated voice to the Steering Committee to both keep it connected to the targeted neighborhoods and affected communities, and to create a harmonized effort that will help champion and implement strategies.
- b. Create a series of key messages for the Steering Committee that are informed by direct input from

Roundtable members that will be disseminated through the “echo chamber” process.

- c. Leverage existing partnerships with health and wellness, and child advocacy groups in Sacramento County to develop conferences, publications and other projects that support the “echo chamber” impact on the reduction of African American child deaths.
- d. Recruit business and philanthropic community champions to provide financial and non-financial support that will assist in connecting the effort to reduce African American child deaths to other community child health efforts, as well as related workforce and economic development initiatives.

2. Equitable Investment and Systematic Impact

Goal Statement: Engage key public and private institutional stakeholders so they invest resources to support long-term system change initiatives that increase efforts around, and awareness for, reducing African American child deaths as a key component of achieving overall health for children and families in Sacramento County.

Priority Outcome 2

Convene at least 10 executive-level county decision makers and elected policymakers representing agencies and departments in Sacramento City and County to focus public systems resources on the reduction of African American child deaths.

³ The Steering Committee is using the term “echo chamber” to refer to the creation of a dynamic in Sacramento County in which information, ideas and beliefs around the importance of disproportionate African American child deaths are amplified and reinforced by transmission between multiple organizations within Sacramento County.

Strategy 2.1 Establish a Sacramento County Interagency Children’s Policy Council (ICPC) made up of county agency executives and department directors who have some impact on prevention and reduction of African American child deaths in Sacramento County. The Council is directly accountable to the Board of Supervisors and would work closely with the Steering Committee on the development of a comprehensive and collaborative integrated services delivery system strategy consistent with the Blue Ribbon Commission’s Report recommendations to improve the lives of low-income and vulnerable children, youth and their families. The reduction of African American child deaths is a key initiative of the ICPC.

Core Activities

- a. Secure additional support for investments in the prevention and reduction of African American child deaths in Sacramento County from county and city agency executives and department directors to support the co-location of comprehensive health, education and other appropriate services.
- b. Align county and city resources that have the potential to prevent and reduce African American child deaths in Sacramento County in order to leverage current and future county, philanthropic, private and city investments in Valley Hi/Meadowview, North Sacramento/Del Paso Heights, North Highlands/Foothill, Oak Park, Fruitridge/Stockton and Arden Arcade.

Strategy 2.2 Employ the ICPC to develop and advance cross-county-agency initiatives focused on interagency communication, the development of policies and practices, and initiating budgetary changes

that result in the prevention and reduction of African American child deaths in Sacramento County, and improve the lives of low-income and vulnerable children, youth and their families.

Core Activities

- a. Link the Child Abuse Prevention Council of Sacramento, Inc. (CAPC) and the Child Review Death Team analysis of child mortality rates directly to an assessment of the progress of the ICPC efforts.
- b. Establish partnerships among the Board of Supervisors, the ICPC and a private nonprofit agency in Sacramento County to create a quasi-public function that serves as a backbone function for the Steering Committee that supports:
 - 1) the creation and institutionalization of interagency and intra-agency support systems and strategies,
 - 2) data-driven, collaborative decision-making,
 - 3) protection of individual privacy and confidentiality,
 - 4) resource development, expansion, leveraging and pooling,
 - 5) mutual responsibility for outcomes,
 - 6) joint credit for success, and
 - 7) promotion of best practices.
- c. Identify and involve youth-serving organizations as partners to support the ICPC efforts to:
 - 1) support community-based, youth-led leadership in ICPC efforts to prevent and reduce African American child deaths in Sacramento County, and
 - 2) inform policies and develop practices to improve service delivery outcomes for children, youth

and families related to efforts to prevent and reduce African American child deaths in Sacramento County.

- d. Engage in developing a children's annual budget that would:
 - 1) identify a dedicated funding stream for children's services that will serve as an incentive for supporting the ICPC model as a hub for the planning and coordination of children's services within Sacramento County,
 - 2) allow for the identification of county discretionary dollars for children's services that allow Sacramento County to meet the priority of preventing and reducing African American child death in Sacramento County,
 - 3) support the strategic expenditure of county dollars to attract other funding and significant leveraging of private, state and federal dollars, and increases in the overall funding for children's services,
 - 4) create a discretionary local funding stream for children's services to be used to facilitate inter-departmental programs regarding preventing and reducing African American child deaths in Sacramento County, hence promoting greater efficiency of existing resources,
 - 5) create flexibility with county resources to facilitate innovation and experimentation, allowing for new ideas for preventing and reducing African American child deaths in Sacramento County to flourish,
 - 6) position Sacramento County as one of several lead funders of community services for preventing and reducing African American

child deaths, placing the ICPC to serve in a strong position to improve accountability of the service delivery system, including developing a data collection and evaluation system, as well as building the capacity of service providers, and

- 7) position the ICPC as a partner to the Steering Committee to serve as a venue, and provide incentives, to develop comprehensive and integrated policies related to preventing and reducing African American child deaths in Sacramento County.

3. Coordinated Systems of Support

Goal Statement: Develop high-quality coordinated systems of integrated support services that are easily accessible, culturally responsive and meaningful with a supportive policy and management infrastructure.

Priority Outcome 3

Establish the Sacramento County Training and Technical Assistance Network to connect, strengthen and expand the capacity of organizations currently focused on preventing and reducing African American child deaths in Sacramento County.

Strategy 3.1 Allocate resources to implement a Reduction of African American Child Deaths Technical Assistance Resource Center (TARC) that is overseen by the Steering Committee and is connected to the Interagency Children's Policy Council (ICPC). Use the TARC to create an information exchange network that connects partners working in the six targeted communities to the best ideas, practices, policies and research from around the county, state and nation whose efforts are directly related to reducing African American child deaths in Sacramento County.

Core Activities

- a. Develop an approach that builds a local “support system” to assist communities in their efforts to prevent and reduce African American child deaths by combining the talents of public agency staff with the expertise of local consultants, the knowledge from resident participants, experiences of community-based programs, the data from existing evaluations, and learnings from existing investments into technical assistance networks.
- b. Facilitate best practices sharing with diverse community stakeholders, including local residents, through meetings, presentations, site visits, media and online.
- c. Support communities to stay attuned to local priorities by increasing the number of people recruited from the targeted neighborhoods to be trained to provide technical assistance.
- d. Identify, develop, refine and disseminate research tools and resources to improve existing and/or to-be-developed services, thereby ensuring an ongoing relevant measurement of service quality of support providers.
- e. Create formal technical assistance partnerships with health and community partner agencies who embrace the emphasized need for equity, inclusiveness and accountability for priority goals outlined in the Blue Ribbon Commission Report.
- f. Foster an approach to technical assistance that encourages strong community engagement and leadership development, strategic partnerships across various sectors, the ability to convene

partners and conduct long-term planning and reliable community data and information systems.

4. Data-driven Accountability and Collective Impact

Goal Statement: Use data-driven strategies to inform ongoing improvement efforts to reduce the disproportionate number of African American child deaths.

Priority Outcome 4

Develop the RAACD Collective Impact Assessment Framework.

Strategy 4.1 Monitor, document and report on progress toward established benchmarks for reducing African American child deaths.

Core Activities

- a. Develop a shared vision for city and county integrated quality service coordination that seeks to prevent and reduce African American child deaths.
- b. Develop integrated systems indicators for all private and publicly funded organizations focusing on the prevention and reduction of African American child deaths.
- c. Create standardized data collection tools and evaluation plans for tracking the indicators directly related to the prevention and reduction of African American child deaths.
- d. Develop data-sharing agreements to assess collective impact on the prevention and reduction of African American child deaths.

- e. Utilize collective data to inform and prioritize allocation and accessibility of services directly related to the prevention and reduction of African American child deaths.

Strategy 4.2 Monitor, document and report on the quality of programs focused on the well-being of African American children and the reduction of their disproportionate death rate.

Core Activities

- a. Research best practices on quality assessment tools.
- b. Draw on research and input from community partners to develop a quality assessment tool.
- c. Utilize the quality assessment tool to monitor the quality of programs that support RAACD.
- d. Facilitate sharing of the quality assessment tool and results through meetings, presentations, site visits, media and online.

5. Communications and Information Systems

Goal Statement: Develop a social marketing plan that will favorably impact the prevention and reduction of African American child deaths in the six targeted Sacramento neighborhoods.

Priority Outcome 5

Create a social marketing campaign aimed at increasing awareness of the disproportionate number of African American child deaths in Sacramento County, particularly in the six targeted neighborhoods.

Strategy 5.1 Develop and disseminate media materials focused on the prevention and reduction of African American child deaths for local targeted audiences using both traditional media and a variety of social media outlets.

Core Activities

- a. Review existing research to examine similar social marketing health campaigns, networks and collective impact models.
- b. Conduct community-based dialogues and focus group discussions to identify opinions, attitudes and levels of awareness key audiences have about African American child deaths in Sacramento County.
- c. Utilize research findings to develop a strategically focused rolling social marketing plan that utilizes social media, online and traditional advertising, public relations and community outreach initiatives that target key audiences throughout Sacramento County.
- d. Involve and partner with youth to educate and engage targeted populations to increase awareness about how to reduce African American child deaths, particularly in the six targeted neighborhoods.
- e. Launch the strategically focused grassroots social marketing campaign using social media and traditional media.
- f. Celebrate wins and accomplishments publicly.

Our Strategic Direction

Children and youth today — particularly children and youth of color — struggle with societal problems such as poverty, racism, violence and other social, economic and political ills that may directly or indirectly impact their health. As stated earlier, the Blue Ribbon Commission's Report on Disproportionate African American Child Deaths identified four equally dire causes of death that have the most disproportionate impact on African American children relative to their proportion of the total child population in Sacramento County. Those causes include:

1. Perinatal conditions
2. Infant sleep-related deaths
3. Child abuse and neglect homicides
4. Third-party homicide

The Blue Ribbon Commission Report also indicated that the most disproportionate number of African American child deaths occurs in six Sacramento County neighborhoods. Based on data gathered from 1990 through 2009, 81 percent of the 486 African American child deaths in the four categories of death listed above lived in one of the following neighborhoods:

1. Valley Hi/Meadowview
2. Arden-Arcade
3. North Sacramento/Del Paso Heights
4. Oak Park
5. North Highlands/Foothill
6. Fruitridge/Stockton Boulevard

According to findings from the Blue Ribbon Commission Report, the Healthy Sacramento Coalition's Community Health Needs Assessment and Sacramento County's 2012 County Health Profile, these six neighborhoods share many of the same risk factors. They each had large percentages of residents living below the federal poverty level, with low levels of educational attainment, had higher proportions of households headed by single females in poverty, and a high percentage of residents without a high school diploma. In addition, all of the neighborhoods had higher proportions of residents who are African American or Latino/Hispanic.



Sacramento County Blue Ribbon Commission Report on Disproportionate African American Child Deaths

GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION

Of the 486 African American child deaths from 1990 through 2009 in the four categories of third-party homicides, infant sleep-related, child abuse and neglect homicides and perinatal conditions, 81% (392 of 486) are from six primary Sacramento County neighborhoods. These neighborhoods are the most disproportionate relative to the ratio of the child population. The following table reflects the top six neighborhoods with the largest number and percent of African American child deaths in the four categories.

**Top Six Neighborhoods and Top Four Causes of Child Death with the Greatest Disproportion
Sacramento County Resident Child Deaths 1990 - 2009**

| | # AA Third-Party Child Homicide | # AA Infant Sleep-Related Deaths | # AA CAN Homicides | # AA Perinatal Deaths | # Total AA Deaths Among Four Categories | # Total Deaths in All Races Among Four Categories | AA Child Deaths as % of All Child Deaths Among Four Categories | AA Children as % Total Child Population In Each Neighborhood |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|---|---|--|--|
| Meadowview/Valley Hi | 19 | 32 | 15 | 116 | 182 | 446 | 41% | 16% |
| Arden-Arcade | 1 | 6 | 7 | 19 | 33 | 95 | 35% | 8% |
| North Sacramento/Del Paso Heights | 9 | 17 | 3 | 34 | 63 | 212 | 30% | 16% |
| Oak Park | 1 | 7 | 4 | 11 | 23 | 84 | 27% | 9% |
| North Highlands/Foothill | 5 | 11 | 7 | 22 | 45 | 188 | 24% | 9% |
| Fruitridge/Stockton Blvd. | 4 | 11 | 6 | 25 | 46 | 194 | 24% | 8% |



While one of these risk factors alone may not create a barrier to the healthy development of children, exposure to multiple risk factors dramatically increases the likelihood of negative health outcomes. It was important, therefore, that the strategic direction of the Steering Committee acknowledge that children and youth do not develop in a vacuum, but are part of a much larger societal ecosystem made up of families, neighborhoods, institutions and systems that contribute to good or bad health. Understanding the dynamics of how these *social determinants*⁴ intersect with social, emotional and physical health is crucial to the task of addressing disproportionate African American child deaths.

“We consider and make explicit the following fundamental key assumptions that have evolved during the strategic planning process: Place, Policy, Partners, Community Engagement and Youth.”

The Steering Committee has identified a bold strategic vision with an approach that seeks to focus on a set of targets. The direction of the Strategic Plan, while universal in scope, starts with a focus on addressing four causes and six neighborhoods. The Steering Committee will use a *targeted prevention and intervention approach* to employ strategies and activities that will universally enhance the overall positive health outcomes of everyone in Sacramento County, but will intentionally

point toward the six neighborhoods indicated by the Blue Ribbon Commission Report to have the most disproportionate number of African American child deaths in Sacramento County. In practice, the Steering Committee defines this approach as one that stresses policies and investments targeted at reducing the health inequities, and addressing the needs of those families and communities most acutely impacted by the disproportionate number of African American child deaths. A targeted universal approach unambiguously aims to reduce health disparities for children, youth and families who are most deeply affected by African American child deaths, while addressing overall well-being for all residents living in Sacramento County. The innovative nature of this endeavor demonstrates a timely, innovative and creative approach.

In pursuing this targeted approach that incorporates a view on the multiple factors that determine good health for children, we consider and make explicit the following fundamental key assumptions that have evolved during the strategic planning process: Place, Policy, Partners, Community Engagement and Youth.



⁴ CSDH (2008). *Closing the gap in a generation: health equity through action on the social determinants of health. Final Report of the Commission on Social Determinants of Health.* Geneva, World Health Organization.

Key Assumptions:

PLACE MATTERS TO A CHILD'S HEALTH

A place-based approach, which is central to any effort to improve the lives of African American children, has three distinct strategic values:

1. Mapping demonstrates places where health disparities faced by African American children are concentrated, and are the foci of the interventions;
2. Places provide a venue to test the Blue Ribbon Commission's comprehensive theory of change for building healthy communities for African American children; and
3. Places are platforms for engaging community leaders and constituencies necessary for advancing the policy and practices necessary for improving the lives of African American children in Sacramento County.

POLICY CHANGE = SYSTEMIC TRANSFORMATION

1. *Connecting Communities to Large Public and Private Organizations*—To dramatically reduce African American child deaths, a more systemic approach is needed. Sustainable, effective policy change requires the meaningful engagement of community leaders, youth, parents/families, advocates, and city/county elected and appointed officials to facilitate and bridge the appropriate relationships between community members and external stakeholders.

2. *Explicit Change Model Connecting Neighborhood and Regional Work*—The Steering Committee recognizes that the development of a framework that identifies the steps required to bring about a policy and systems change to diminish disparities must, at a minimum, take the form of a menu of potential activities that can function as a working document that is easily understood and can be developed in partnership with the Steering Committee.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS MATTER

1. *Partners Contribute to the Steering Committee's Goals Around Reducing African American Child Death Rates*—The care of children starts with, and is deeply rooted in, the fabric of communities and neighborhoods. As such, the Steering Committee realizes its strategy is dependent upon strong community partnerships; however, this approach requires connecting closely to existing efforts already moving in communities and neighborhoods. This requires partners who are:
 - a. Connected to goals, in targeted neighborhoods and have key constituencies directly related to the Steering Committee's agenda.
 - b. Taking on tough community issues, such as housing, jobs, food, safety, etc., that are not directly related to the Steering Committee's agenda, but ultimately will enhance the overall goals.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IS ESSENTIAL

1. *Improving the Health of African-American Children Translates into Addressing Race, Class and Power to Improve the Health of Neighborhoods Where Children Live.*

The Steering Committee recognizes that both systems/policy changes and community mobilization efforts to address this vital segment of Sacramento County's population will allow communities to create a clear agenda, fundamentally built on existing community-based assets.

2. *Comprehensive "influence analysis" is incorporated into every level of the planning process.*

Systematic approaches to building community leadership with a clear agenda are the cornerstone for the Steering Committee's success. A review of the literature coupled with interviews with various community leaders all point to a lack of a clear analysis of influence in their communities as a major weakness of previous efforts to improve the health of African American children. The Steering Committee's use of an influence analysis⁵ will build a clear agenda, identify potential challenges to, and support for, any effort to improve the lives of African American children, and allow for the creation of change models that build support for the agenda.

⁵ A typical power analysis creates shared understanding of key players, along with their position on key issues, conceptual approach and indicators, data, and analysis and communication in order to map the informal political landscape (including its rules and structures). In addition, it's critical that the foundation teams in each place understand how system cooperation and the allocation of resources are influenced by this landscape and how the landscape of power shapes their activities.

⁶ Social Justice Youth Development combines best practices of youth development with integrated strategies of community social organizing and advocacy. Shawn Ginwright and Julio Cammarota examine the nexus of youth development and youth organizing, documenting how youth organizing results in positive youth development outcomes and social change.

3. *Steering Committee strategy sets priorities to improve neighborhoods and drive systems/policy change.*

The Steering Committee seeks to structure a process where key partners use its "influence analysis" to:

- a. Identify a policy agenda with clear priorities, goals, constituencies and interests.
- b. Build political will to make systems change, policy change and implementation/funding a priority for policymakers and opinion leaders.

YOUTH AT THE CENTER OF CHANGE

Social Justice Youth Development⁶ is a cornerstone of the Steering Committee's efforts.

1. *A social justice youth development perspective is critical to the success of the Steering Committee's strategy.*

Far too many African American children live in communities plagued by chronically high drop-out rates, pervasive violence and substance abuse, inadequate preparation for the job market, limited access to appropriate health services and limited opportunities for physical activities, but easy access to unhealthy foods. All of these are key contributors to the disproportionate rates of African American child deaths in Sacramento County. If we seek long-term sustainable change, we must involve youth as partners with a grassroots approach and equip them as agents of change, so that efforts targeting young people meaningfully become by and for youth.

2. *A key element of the Steering Committee's youth development approach is violence prevention.*

The Steering Committee's goal is to move violence prevention work in Sacramento County "upstream." Supporting the six targeted communities to adopt strength-based approaches to building youth resilience and development will allow Sacramento County to address the root causes of violence and prevent youth from being exposed to the conditions that lead to the disproportionate number of deaths among African American children.

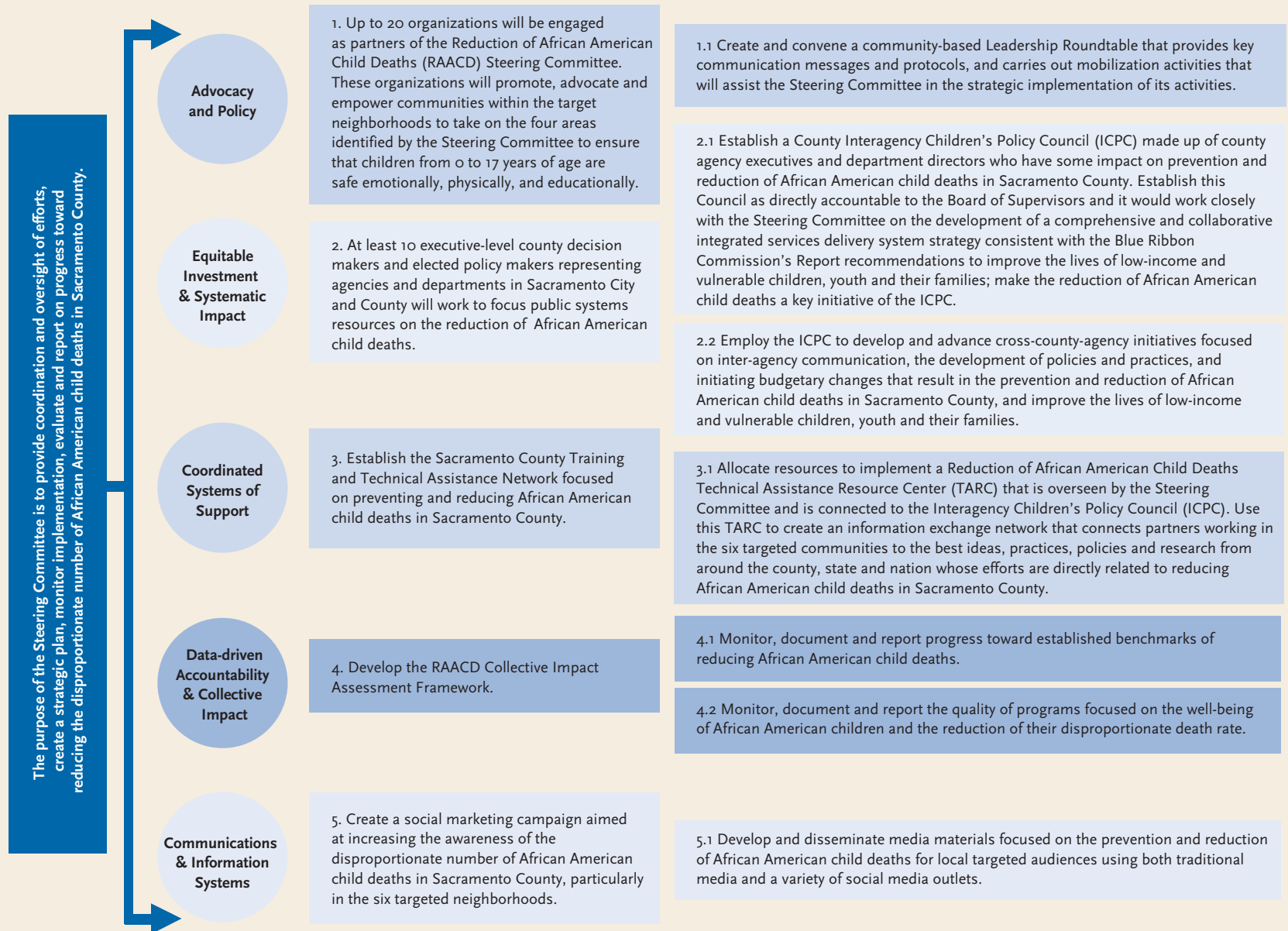
3. *Youth Empowerment*

The Steering Committee recognizes that opportunities must be created to ensure that our youth develop as leaders — each one can teach one — so that the empowerment is reciprocal and culturally relevant.

"The Steering Committee recognizes that opportunities must be created to ensure that our youth develop as leaders — each one can teach one — so that the empowerment is reciprocal and culturally relevant."



Steering Committee on Reduction of African American Child Deaths Strategic Plan Priority Outcomes Matrix



Implementation Plan

Plan Design

As part of its commitment to the overall execution of the strategic plan, the Steering Committee will develop an implementation plan that highlights the core activities to be implemented by 2020, the people and partnerships responsible for the implementation, as well as a project timeline and implementation indicators of success that will list and track key implementation milestones.

The Steering Committee will use a collective impact strategy framework to guide development and design of its implementation plan. Collective impact represents the application of resources from a committed group of partners to a common agenda. The result is to increase capacity to solve complex social problems, such as the disproportionate number of African American child deaths in Sacramento County. The underlying premise of the collective impact strategy framework is that no single organization can create large-scale, lasting social change alone.

Not only does the framework communicate the overall direction of the Steering Committee's efforts, it also demonstrates the integration and impact of multiple partnerships, as well as community-based tactics that will lead to positive behavior change, especially in the six target neighborhoods identified in the Blue Ribbon Commission Report. Moreover, the collective impact strategy framework emphasizes the importance of a comprehensive county-wide "all-in strategy" that is needed to address disproportionate African American child deaths.

In summary, the implementation plan will:

1. Serve as a living document that details the specific and measurable coordinated tasks or actions needed to maximize impact in the six target neighborhoods and throughout Sacramento County.
2. Embrace a practice of shared accountability and a collective approach needed to address the complex social risk factors.
3. Coordinate and manage with Steering Committee partners the alignment among the strategic plan's priority outcomes, strategies and activities.

Acknowledgments

This report is a result of the collaborative effort of the Steering Committee on Reduction of African American Child Deaths in Sacramento County. The members are an accomplished assembly of community advocates, educators, health care practitioners, faith-based leaders, philanthropists and public leaders. This report is a collective vision and we are privileged to have their profound knowledge and dedication in improving the lives of African American children. We thank them for their insight, commitment and experience.

Steering Committee on Reduction of African American Child Deaths

Pastor Alice Baber-Banks
Christian Fellowship Ministry

Debra Cummings
Del Paso Heights Community Association

Dr. Ethan Cutts
Kaiser Permanente

Gladys Deloney
Department of Human Assistance

Paris Dye
Liberty Towers

Addie Ellis
Youth Development Network

Toni Moore
Linda Fong-Somera
First 5 Sacramento Commission

Diane Galati
Dignity Health

Keith Herron
Target Excellence

Chet P. Hewitt
Sierra Health Foundation

Pastor Robert Jones
Powerhouse Christian Ministries

Dr. Olivia Kasirye
Sacramento County Public Health Officer

Darcel Lee
California Black Health Network

Judge Barry Loncke
Sacramento Superior Court

Leslie Moore
UC Davis Health System

Dr. Robert Moynihan
Sutter Health

Tyrone Netters
Sacramento NAACP

Kim Pearson
Sacramento County Child Protective Services

Wendy Petko
Center for Community Health & Well-Being, Inc.

Gina Roberson
Child Abuse Prevention Council

Tina Roberts
Roberts Family Development Center

James Shelby
Greater Sacramento Urban League

Essence Webb
Sacramento Association of Black Social Workers

Natalie Woods Andrews
Sacramento County Office of Education

Sierra Health Foundation Center for Health Program Management Staff

Diane Littlefield, *Vice President of Programs and Partnerships*

Robert Phillips, *Director of Health Programs*

Kindra F. Montgomery-Block, *Program Officer*

Madeline Sabatoni, *Program Associate*

Kari Lacosta, *Public Affairs and Communications Director*

Katy Pasini, *Communications Officer*

Leslie Cooksy, *Evaluation Director*

CONSULTANTS

bel Reyes, *Innovation Bridge*

Jim Hill, *Hill & Associates*

Lyn Corbett, *The Pivotal Group*

CREDITS

Gregory Berger, *Pomegranate Design*

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Center for
Health Program
Management

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