

Metro-Portland Regional Action Initiative *Parenting Education Network Project*

Findings & Recommendations

September 2011



Project Purpose

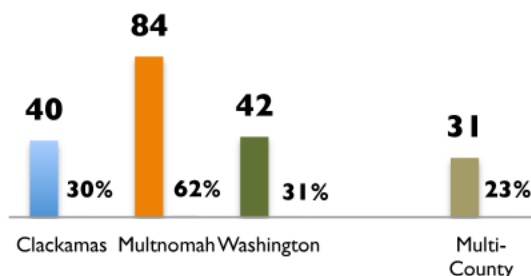
1. Explore the “parenting education hub” approach whose goals are:
 - To further **expand access** to best practice programs
 - To **increase parents’ ability** to play a positive, primary role in children’s care, nurturing and development
 - To build community for parents, thereby **reducing social isolation**
 - To strengthen families, **reducing potential for abuse and neglect**
 - To **increase efficiency and coordination** of parenting education
 - To **raise awareness** of the importance of effective parenting and parenting education as a community norm
 - To **leverage previous investments**
 - To continue to **build a statewide parenting education “system”**
2. Consider the impact of Portland’s larger, more diverse populations
3. Provide a set of recommendations to inform coordinating approaches and their leadership and governance

Methodology

Five research streams:

- Parent Survey - 722 responses
- Provider/Stakeholder Survey - 135 responses
- Natural Meetings - 15 involving 112 registrants
- Key Informant Interviews - 41 (31 Parenting Education providers, 7 System partners, 3 current hubs)
- Literature Review - 69 articles, reports and other sources of documentation

Provider Survey - In which metro-Portland County is your organization active?



Individual Findings

Overall Findings and Recommendations

Research Questions

- Strategic Value of Coordination
- Hub Location(s)
- Functions to Coordinate
- Hub Oversight Structure
- Lead Organization Characteristics
- Lead Organization Candidates
- Governance
- Membership Criteria
- Leverage and Incentives



Overall Findings - BENEFITS

There are multiple strategic benefits

- Better serve needs of diverse families
→ better community-level outcomes
- Better communication of benefits and a common voice
→ Increased use of services and increased funding
- Reduced “siloing”
→ improved access
- System-wide relationships
→ fewer regulatory barriers and easier referral

Overall Findings – RISKS

There Are Some Risks to Navigate

- The economic climate and short attention span could result in inadequate funding and focus
- Emerging structures could dismantle what is working
- A “one-size fits all” approach could further marginalize some families
- Fear of loss of resources to those with influence could limit cooperation
- The structure chosen and expectations set could spur competition

Overall Findings

It Is Challenging to Effectively Match Family Needs and Available Services

- Services are fragmented and a desired regional “system” has not been defined
- More options are needed to serve diverse families and ages of children
- Making effective referrals across agencies and counties is difficult
- Connection and engagement happens best through trusted individuals and organizations
- Locations of current services are not meeting the needs of many families



Overall Findings

There is a lot to build upon, but a single regional lead organization has not emerged

- Issues are broad, complex and the environment is fluid
- There are strong organizations, though important regional functions and expertise are missing
- No single lead organization has emerged



Metropolitan Portland Regional Action Initiative

Parenting Education

If we invest \$ and effort here...

Strategic Initiatives

Imagine an Engagement & Education Continuum

Expand Access to High-Quality Programs

Enhance Information & Referral

Localize & Customize Services

Built upon a robust foundation that ensures leadership, focus and accountability...

Metro Parenting Education Alliance

...and accomplish near-term goals like...

- Understand family “doors in” and “steps up” that underpins planning

- Establish a pathway to the “evidence-based” program models list
- Make more high-quality programs available

- Make detailed service information available (e.g. 211 Info, FESN, resource guides, etc.)
- Reach out to “connection points” (libraries, schools, etc.) linking families and programs
- Strengthen cross-county/sector relationships

- Parenting educators in local communities

- An Alliance of funders, technical experts, and community representatives
- A Lead Executive to maintain focus and accountability
- Funding to carry out 2-3 high-value strategic initiatives

...we will ultimately achieve measurable, long-term goals.

- ✓ Reduced barriers for providers to offer and parents to access services
- ✓ More effective reach to all parents
- ✓ More parents participating in high-quality programs
- ✓ More effective referrals
- ✓ Participation of more parents in parenting education
- ✓ Consistent availability of parenting education programs that meet diverse needs

So that

Every parent in Metro Portland has the knowledge and support they need to be a skilled and successful parent

Recommendations

Select and Implement 2-3 Strategic Initiatives That Can Quickly Improve Access to High-Quality Parenting Education

- **INITIATIVE AREA 1.** Imagine an Engagement and Education Continuum with and for Parents and Families
- **INITIATIVE AREA 2.** Expand Access to High-Quality Programs
- **INITIATIVE AREA 3.** Enhance Parenting Program Information and Referral
- **INITIATIVE AREA 4.** Create Localized and Customized Services for Families

Recommendations

Create a Community Problem-Solving Alliance

Rationale:

- Address complex and broad challenges
- No organization with enough of the necessary characteristics or influence
- Consistent with the Oregon Parenting Education Collaborative (OPEC) goals

Purposes

We envision that the Alliance would:

- Set and hold a regional vision
- Learn from partners, communities and data
- Set and invest in two or three high impact strategies
- Secure needed technical expertise
- Engage high-level champions
- Invest in community planning that supports investment strategies
- Reduce policy and regulatory barriers

Role of Counties

- Day-to-day coordination
- Community planning
- Informal advice to Alliance
- Engaging underserved communities
- Through Initiative Advisory Groups, bring a complement of expertise, influence and ability to execute to the strategic initiatives.
- Individual organizations, partners and parents may interact at different levels as they currently do.
- Individual organizations may act as lead organizations for specific initiatives or smaller elements

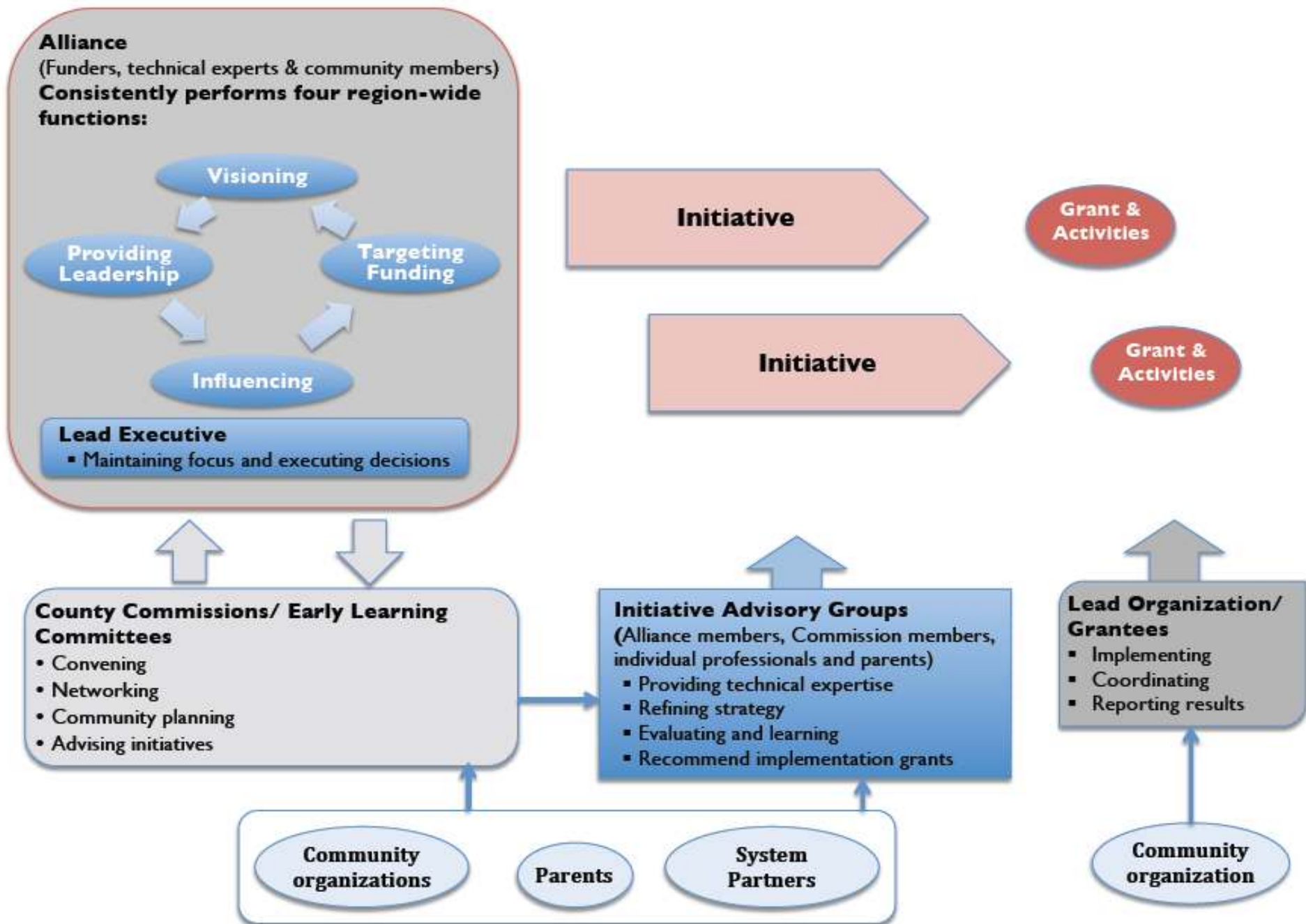


Members and Leadership

- Manageable size (8-16 members)
- A mix of public and private funders who invest in the three-county region
- Other members with knowledge, technical skill, leadership and influence
- A high-level, visible lead executive to:
 - staff the alliance;
 - guide strategy development and execution;
 - build and maintain working relationships with the field and with communities
 - inspire system-wide action.



Potential Alliance Structure



Lead Executive Characteristics

- Excellent communication skills
- Negotiation and conflict resolution skill
- Track record building cross-disciplinary systems
- Awareness of the relationships necessary and expertise cultivating them
- Leadership and capacity to spur regional conversations
- Credibility, integrity and a willingness to adapt
- Ability to manage the initial and on-going internal and external functions of the Alliance
- Experience leading data-based decision-making
- Experience working with, or for, non-profits, government, private funders and communities

Comparison to a Parenting Education Hub

Hub	Alliance
Lead Organization Governance	Participatory Governance
Funder Agenda-setting	Participant agenda setting with alliance visioning
Lead-organization prompts action	Shared action on joint initiatives and aligned action on related tasks
Lead organization is accountable	Accountability is shared
Action focuses on only those items that are "agreed"	Supportive action by less than full membership is encouraged
"Establishment" organizations are in the best position to secure funding due to established experience as grantees and community leads	Organizations are positioned for leadership based upon their ability to execute specific leadership functions or deliver on specific elements of initiatives
Areas of strategic focus	Areas of strategic focus
Funding is at the "lead" table	Funding is at the "joint" table

Next Steps

1. Identify the core group of funders and other stakeholders who can form the core of the Alliance
2. Convene a meeting to refine/confirm general purposes, objectives and strategies and solidify a theory of action
3. Create an interim alliance structure underpinned by a simple Charter, Decision-Making Process and Executive Committee with county-level early learning committees
4. Hire/contract/secure a permanent or interim “Lead Executive”
5. Vet selected initiatives with players across the region
6. Select 2-3 strategic initiatives and create a grant funding mechanism (pooled, co-funded, aligned, mixed)
7. Recruit Initiative Advisory Group members, provide a charge, timeline and grant budget parameters
8. Review recommendations and make grants
9. Identify and implement a simple online method for reporting