



The Woodland Acres I.M.P.A.C.T. Dream Center (Integrated Model for Prevention, Access, and Community Transformation)

About Revitalize Arlington

Revitalize Arlington, Inc., is a 501(c)(3) faith-based community development corporation chartered in 2006 by Impact Church (formerly Faith Christian Center). The church was founded on August 18, 1996 and has sought to make a difference, specifically in the Arlington community of Jacksonville, ever since. In fact, the changing of the church's name to "Impact" in 2014, reflects its mission and grew out of the leadership's desire to positively impact the surrounding community in measurable ways. Revitalize Arlington and its signature initiative, Arlington 20/20, connect the residents of the Arlington community with faith, business, higher education, nonprofit, and government partners to address five focus areas: Community Empowerment, Family Strengthening, Economic Development, Housing Development, and Workforce Development.

Community Commitment

Impact Church has been located within Arlington for over 20 years and congregants have regularly led community cleanups, hosted free, high-quality family-friendly events for the community, and distributed water, clothing, food to Arlington residents in need. In addition to its capital investments of over \$6 million in Arlington, Impact Church expresses its commitment to the community through financial support and shared services provided to Revitalize Arlington.

This approach has proven effective as our commitment to community was recently recognized when Arlington 20/20 received the 2017 HandsOn Community Award from HandsOn Jacksonville. An excerpt from the award announcement follows:

This year we are honored to give the HandsOn Community Award to an amazing organization that has gone above and beyond to improve the quality of life in Jacksonville's Arlington community by 2020. In 2016 alone, Arlington 20/20 mobilized 650 volunteers to serve within the Arlington community, accounting for a total of approximately 2,600 hours of volunteer service.

Further recognition of Revitalize Arlington's commitment to community is evidenced by Jacksonville University, the largest employer in Arlington. The university has adopted Arlington 20/20 as a primary vehicle for increasing community engagement among students and faculty. During the past two years, Arlington 20/20 has helped JU to mobilize 1,785 students, faculty, and parents in service activities around the Arlington community.

Arlington 20/20 was established because of Revitalize Arlington's commitment to community. This multi-agency partnership envisions growth in homeownership, improved educational outcomes, reduction in crime, increased viable business activity, and positive shifts in the public perception of Arlington - all to improve the health, well-being, and quality of life for residents.

The Needs

Families that have been in Arlington for decades have seen drastic changes in their communities. A once vibrant, thriving community is now recognized by the City of Jacksonville as a high-need, high-priority area in need of focused attention. The *Finding of Necessity* report adopted by the City Council in 2015 as the basis for the Renew Arlington Community Redevelopment Area (CRA) found that the proposed redevelopment area contained six conditions indicative of blight:

- Predominance of defective or inadequate street layout, parking facilities, roadways, bridges, or public transportation facilities.
- Faulty lot layout in relationship to size, adequacy, accessibility, or usefulness.
- Unsanitary or unsafe conditions.
- Deterioration of site or other improvements.
- Inadequate or outdated building patterns.
- Incidents of crime.¹

Beyond the CRA boundary, the Arlington community demonstrates several indicators of need. According to 2010-2015 JSO crime statistics, the areas of Arlington surrounding University Blvd, Merrill Rd., and Arlington Expressway adjacent to Arlington Road have a higher occurrence of crime than the city as a whole. In general, commercial and residential buildings in these areas discourage new investment due to poor maintenance and structural deterioration.

The target area for this project, located in the Woodland Acres neighborhood, is one of the most densely populated areas within the 32211 zip code, containing at least 7,900 people per square mile. This area represents a concentration of poverty: median household income within the block containing the target site is only \$16.7K, compared

¹ http://www.coj.net/departments/office-of-economic-development/docs/redevelopment-initiatives/renew-arlington_report_final.aspx

with a median household income in Duval County of \$46.3K.² In all, within the Woodland Acres neighborhood, there are 2,605 households representing 7,458 people. Of these, 30.1%, or 2,245, are children ages 0-17. Black and White residents represent 46% each, while 3% are Hispanic, 2% are Asian, and 2% are multiracial or other. Nearly 6% speak Spanish, while nearly 35% of those do not speak English very well. Median income is \$34.3K. While 9% of the population is unemployed, that number is over 26% for young adults ages 20-21. 6.5% of the Woodland Acres population is unemployed, compared with less than 4% of the Jacksonville population as a whole. In terms of educational attainment, 21.9% of Woodland Acres adults have no high school diploma, compared with 12.5% of adults in Jacksonville. Conversely, 17.4% of adults in Woodland Acres have a higher degree as compared to 34.8% in Jacksonville. 69.5% of the households in Woodland Acres with children under the age of 18 are headed by single mothers.³

Economic Development

The Arlington area of Jacksonville was once a hub of economic activity. Situated between the downtown area and the Jacksonville beaches, the area was burgeoning during the 1970s through early 1990s and at the center of activity was the Regency Square Mall. The Mall, with 1.3 million square feet of retail space, was considered one of the most profitable malls in the US. However, with the development of new communities and new retail outlets, Regency Mall and the Arlington community began to decline. Due to the small size of commercial parcels and haphazard, development-detering land use and zoning patterns, most commercially zoned areas within Arlington are not suitable for sustainable commercial development. As a result, many businesses have relocated and there is an overabundance of vacant commercial properties for sale or lease.⁴

Youth Engagement

According to a community survey administered by Arlington 20/20, Woodland Acres residents ranked afterschool programming for children and youth as the most critical community need. Existing summer and afterschool programs in the area have long waiting lists, indicating more need than capacity. The absence of recreational outlets within the community presents a tremendous opportunity for positive impact through the development of a community center that can address this need and revitalize a key service delivery site within the community. This project involves youth engagement after school via use of expansive and currently underutilized multipurpose fields, softball diamond, basketball and tennis courts, and indoor meeting space.

² <https://statisticalatlas.com/block-group/Florida/Duval-County/015502-2/Household-Income>

³ <https://statisticalatlas.com/neighborhood/Florida/Jacksonville/Woodland-Acres/Overview>

⁴ http://www.coj.net/departments/office-of-economic-development/docs/redevelopment-initiatives/arlington-fon-report_final.aspx

Economic Mobility

In Jacksonville, a child born into the lowest income quartile has only a 6% chance of moving to the highest quartile within a lifetime.⁵ Factors influencing economic mobility include high dropout rates and lack of access to social capital, financial literacy, postsecondary educational opportunities, and employment opportunities paying a self-sufficiency wage. Via case management, this project will support families in their journeys toward economic self-sufficiency.

Blight Reduction and Infrastructure Improvement

A drive around Arlington reveals that many areas of the community are plagued by properties in disrepair. These blighted conditions lower surrounding property values and create havens for illegal activity. In fact, the presence of substandard structures, inadequate infrastructure, insufficient roadways, inadequate parking, and a shortage of affordable housing inspired former Mayor Alvin Brown and the City Council to begin the journey to designating a Community Redevelopment Area (CRA) in Arlington. This vision was realized in 2015 with establishment of the Renew Arlington CRA. The *Finding of Necessity* report (2015) produced by the City of Jacksonville to justify the need for a Community Redevelopment Area in Arlington noted “blighted conditions, such as underutilized land uses, faulty lot layout, deteriorating building and site conditions, vacant commercial buildings, congested and unsafe roadways, lack of investment, inadequate and deteriorating infrastructure, crime and safety conditions and overall aesthetic conditions. The declining nature of the business community along these corridors, as well as conflicting land uses, have contributed to the blight conditions within this area boundary.”

Two factors create urgency for repurposing blighted public buildings into a service hub to meet the needs of families. The first is the negative effects of blight. Statistics show that blight threatens public safety, lowers property values, and degrades quality of life. As stated on the City of Jacksonville’s website, “Blight is a drag on community energy, a siphon on city vitality, and a strong deterrent to economic investment. It can be a source of despair for people who have witnessed the decline of a particular neighborhood over time. Eliminating Jacksonville’s blight will dramatically improve the next chapter of the city’s future.” The second factor creating urgency for this project is more positive: Arlington is a community that is ready for a turnaround. It’s a neighborhood with a great past, and thanks to the launch of the city’s Renew Arlington CRA and efforts like Arlington 20/20, it can look forward to a great future. This project repurposes two buildings that are currently a source of neighborhood blight.

Health and Wellness

National data indicate that a lack of physical activity among youth and adults poses significant risk of disease and escalating healthcare costs associated with treatment.

⁵ New York Times *Equality of Opportunity Project* data

Only one in three children are physically active every day, and less than 5% of adults engage in 30 minutes of physical activity daily. Only one in three adults receive the recommended amount of physical activity each week. More than 80% of adults do not meet the guidelines for both aerobic and muscle-strengthening activities, and more than 80% of adolescents do not do enough aerobic physical activity to meet the guidelines for youth. Children now spend more than seven and a half hours a day in front of a screen (e.g., TV, video games, computer).⁶ Environmental barriers to health contribute to poor health outcomes. For instance, only about one in five homes have a fitness or recreation center within a half-mile. In addition, according to UF Extension Service data, a portion of the Woodland Acres neighborhood falls within a food desert area.⁷ This project addresses this need for recreational facilities by incorporating sports programming of the adjacent 6.67-acre park, as well as a food pantry to provide families with nutritious foods.

Spiritual and Social Engagement

Poverty is not just an economic phenomenon – it can also encompass broken relationships with God, others, one’s environment, and one’s self.⁸ As a result, poverty alleviation efforts must provide holistic solutions that improve spiritual and social wellbeing through opportunities to connect with God and others in healthy ways, as well as opportunities to gain relational skills that support positive relationships, especially in family and work contexts. Arlington 20/20’s partners include trained and experienced behavioral and spiritual health care providers who will be available regularly to serve community residents.

The Solution

The **Woodland Acres I.M.P.A.C.T. (Integrated Model for Prevention, Access, and Community Transformation) Dream Center** will provide co-located programs and services designed to help individuals and families achieve economic mobility and increased self-sufficiency. This center will use a strength-based case management approach to holistically address family’s needs through an individualized plan that incorporates a tailored combination of the following programs:

- a. Financial literacy education, including Financial Peace University and workshops by local financial institutions
- b. First time homebuyer education
- c. Relief services including benefits access, food pantry, and clothing closet
- d. Small business development, including workshops and individualized technical assistance

⁶ <https://www.fitness.gov/resource-center/facts-and-statistics/>

⁷ http://www.rcinef.org/NE_FL_Food_Deserts_EDIS_Final.pdf

⁸ <https://www.chalmers.org/our-work/redefining-poverty/what-is-poverty>

- e. Workforce development, including job search and resume assistance as well as Certified Nursing Assistant education offered by LifePoint Career Institute
- f. Impact Sports youth athletics programs, including tennis, swimming, flag football, martial arts, cheerleading, softball, and 3-on-3 basketball
- g. Afterschool and summer programming for children and youth incorporating literacy, visual arts, music, STEM, and college-going culture
- h. Community health education offered in partnership with Florida Blue
- i. Access to preventive health screenings and mobile primary care services
- j. Behavioral health solutions, including referrals to River Region Human Services, Impact Counseling Center, and other providers, as well as weekly Celebrate Recovery 12-step program meetings
- k. Small group affinity-based mentoring on a variety of topics including financial literacy, parenting, and entrepreneurship

These programs are offered in partnership with agencies and organizations that have a proven track record. Rather than reinvent the wheel, Revitalize Arlington embraces data-driven, proven approaches by partners such as: Jacksonville University Davis College of Business, River Region Human Services, Florida Blue, LifePoint Career Institute, Feeding Northeast Florida, Impact Church, Financial Peace University, and others.

The Opportunity

Revitalize Arlington has submitted a bid to rehabilitate, manage, and operate two currently vacant city-owned buildings in the Woodland Acres community as a service hub, in alignment with the Arlington 20/20 Twenty-Point Plan.

The current development goal includes the cost of capital improvements and other startup costs, 15 months of operating expenses, and resource development support for sustainability.

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| Capital Improvements | \$347,575 |
| Startup Costs | \$74,400 |
| Operating Costs (15 Months) | \$204,400 |
| Resource Development | \$30,000 |
| TOTAL | \$656,375 |

There are also opportunities for in-kind partnership in the form of construction labor and materials, furnishings and equipment, partnerships including curricula and services, and volunteerism.

For More Information

For more information, contact Dr. Joy Hervey at jhervey@arlington2020jax.org or (904) 725-3636 ext. 343.