

White Center: A Promise Neighborhood

What is the “Cradle to Career” Opportunity?

White Center is preparing for a June 2010, 1-year \$500,000 planning grant from the Department of Education and inspired by the Harlem Children’s Zone titled “Promise Neighborhoods”. Teaming Southwest Youth and Family Services as the lead applicant with the Highline School District and the White Center Community Development Association as the initial core partners, the White Center effort is a comprehensive neighborhood revitalization strategy to combat poverty and help children and our families succeed in education and life. The central idea behind Promise Neighborhoods is that by providing both effective schools and strong systems of support to children and youth in poverty and thereby meeting their health, social service, neighborhood and educational needs, children, families and communities will have the best hope for a better life. Grantees that develop promising plans and partnerships would be eligible to receive implementation grants the following years.

Why White Center?

Building on an impressive collaborative history focused on a set of community change results, White Center is a neighborhood at an important crossroads. While recent government and private resources have elevated community voice, created a “new normal” way of doing business and achieved results, we believe even more solutions are required to raise the bar and reach more children and families. Complex efforts such as the Making Connections Initiative, White Center Early Learning Initiative, and HOPE VI Greenbridge have highlighted the strength of the partnerships between institutions, community organizations and residents- and have created a need for more coordination and shared efforts to get to scale. To make a successful case, White Center will:

- Capitalize on the results framework and culture of results built into our communities.
- Work with key stakeholders and the partnerships we have built to develop a strong and inclusive planning process and implement complex two-generation strategies, with Highline Public Schools as an anchor partner.
- Mobilize the resident leadership and networking capacity we built in our neighborhood to develop a planning process addressing the needs of neighborhood residents and design solutions that deepen this capacity.
- Use the data capacity built through existing partnerships to make the case for the White Center Zone, drive the planning process and develop ongoing learning and accountability structures for the Promise Neighborhoods communities.

What Results Are We Committing To?

A combination of solutions is proposed for the planning grant to include program strategies, as well as policy/systems changes and comprehensive planning to address scale and sustainability. The solutions will be integrated seamlessly, based on available evidence and include both academic and family/community supports. As defined by the federal government, White Center’s application will address how the following results will be achieved:

1. Children enter kindergarten ready to learn.
2. Students are proficient in core academic subjects.
3. Students successfully transition from middle grades to high school.
4. Youth graduate from high school.
5. High school graduates obtain a postsecondary degree, certification, or credential.

6. Students are healthy.

7. Students feel safe at school and in their community.

8. Students live in stable communities.

9. Families and community members support learning in PN schools.

10. Students have access to 21st century learning tools.

What is the White Center Zone?

Proposed as 10x20 block area of unincorporated King County/White Center, the Zone encompasses the 3 partner schools of Mount View Elementary, White Center Heights Elementary and Cascade Middle School and targets approximately 2200 children and their families.

For more information or to get involved in the White Center Promise Neighborhoods application, please contact Steve Daschle, Executive Director at SWYFS at 206.937.7680 or sdaschle@swyfs.org.