

# SIGNATURE PARTNERSHIP INITIATIVE

## 10 YEARS OF COLLABORATION WITH WEST LOUISVILLE

Like many major metropolitan areas in the United States, the city of Louisville has an urban core that has experienced decades of economic and social disinvestment that began during the middle of the 20th century. The heart of Louisville's urban core, west Louisville, is home to more than 60,000 residents, the majority of whom are African Americans. West Louisville residents experience educational, health, economic and social disparities as can be found in many other urban communities. Although west Louisville suffers from a high rate of poverty and is economically challenged, it is a community of nine historic neighborhoods whose residents take pride in their schools, churches, parks and other community assets.

In recognition of the serious challenges facing this part of our community, the University of Louisville in collaboration with west Louisville community residents and organizations launched the Signature Partnership Initiative in 2007. West Louisville was designated as the geographical focus of the Signature Partnership after numerous discussions with community leaders and residents over a two year period about the need for a more strategic effort to reduce or eliminate the educational, health, economic and social disparities that exist among the residents.

Although the original impetus behind the creation of the Signature Partnership was to serve and benefit the community of west Louisville, it quickly became apparent to university administrators and faculty that the initiative provided a rich opportunity to facilitate engaged scholarship across academic disciplines. This initiative also provided a framework for the university to offer meaningful and community-identified experiential learning opportunities to students and significant teaching and research opportunities for faculty. The mutual benefit of the initiative to the community and the university becomes more evident with each passing year. The Signature Partnership is a model of how institutions of higher learning can engage with their local communities to address pressing issues and consequently play a role in community and urban revitalization.



In ten years the Signature Partnership has earned trust from community residents and gained national attention for UofL's sustained commitment to west Louisville. Since data collection began in 2009, there have been over 21,000 instances of UofL student engagement, and over 4,200 faculty and staff instances of engagement in hundreds of research projects, community-based learning projects, and outreach activities in west Louisville, in collaboration with over 200 community partner organizations. UofL has garnered over \$30 million in grants and contracts for service and research projects that directly benefit west Louisville residents. UofL also has assisted numerous governmental agencies and community organizations in efforts to secure grants that benefit west Louisville. The Signature Partnership schools are seeing increases in academic achievement, community residents now have increased access to healthcare and health education, west Louisville businesses are growing, entrepreneurship is being encouraged, and neighborhoods are laying the groundwork for future transformation.

# ENGAGEMENT & OUTREACH: A CORE FOCUS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF LOUISVILLE'S MISSION

The University of Louisville takes pride in its role as a metropolitan research university that understands and values the importance of being an “anchor” institution in the community. It established as one of its primary goals the desire to be an engaged institution committed to direct interaction with external constituencies and communities through partnerships and collaborations. The Signature Partnership Initiative was created to collaborate with community organizations on social, educational, and economic issues affecting residents of west Louisville. It aims at enhancing the quality of life for residents in metro Louisville’s urban core. Community residents and partners, along with professional experts in the fields of education, health, economic development, and social services have developed programmatic objectives that focus the work of the university and community partners. A University Community Partnership Advisory Board, a Resident Advisory Council, and faculty liaisons from every school and college within the university guide the work of the initiative with work involving engaged teaching, research, and service as well as outreach opportunities in the neighborhoods of west Louisville involving faculty, students, and UofL staff.

## PARTNERSHIPS

Ongoing collaboration with community partners for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity.



UofL partnered with Simmons College, a historically black college with a focus on west Louisville, at a key period in the development of its academic and administrative capacity, with an emphasis on helping Simmons students successfully achieve their educational goals. The partnership centered on a curriculum alignment process to allow Simmons students to enroll in general education coursework that results in dual credit from both Simmons College and UofL.

## OUTREACH

Providing direct services, time, or resources to benefit a community or its institutions. This also includes activities such as public talks, lectures, presentations, performances, etc.



UofL students have a long tradition of community outreach. Many students become involved in community projects in west Louisville through the Division of Student Affairs and Registered Student Organizations, such as the UofL student chapter of Habitat for Humanity. The UofL student chapter of Habitat for Humanity raised \$44,000 to build a house in the Portland Neighborhood of west Louisville.

## CURRICULAR ENGAGEMENT

Involves student coursework where teaching, learning, and scholarship brings together faculty, students, and community in mutually beneficial and respectful collaboration.



As a part of course work for their respective degree programs, many UofL dental and dental hygiene students visit west Louisville elementary schools to screen children for signs of dental decay and cavities. Dental hygiene students explain how to properly brush and floss, and talk to children about the importance of visiting a dentist and how to make healthy snack and drink choices.

## ENGAGED SCHOLARSHIP

Involves the faculty member in a reciprocal partnership with the community, is interdisciplinary, and seeks to integrate faculty roles of teaching, research, and/or service.



Faculty and students with the College of Arts & Sciences department of History embarked on a three-year public history research project in the Parkland neighborhood in west Louisville, engaging with community members and examining the 1968 urban uprising as a focal point to understand civil rights activism, neighborhood change, and the history of residential segregation in Louisville.

# SELECTED COMMUNITY PARTNERS IN & NEAR WEST LOUISVILLE

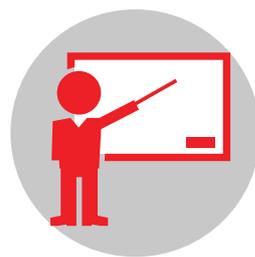


In the past decade, UofL has garnered over **\$30 million** in grants & contracts for service and research projects that directly benefit west Louisville residents.



**21,000+**

Instances of student engagement in service and outreach in curricular and co-curricular activities



**4,200+**

Instances of faculty & staff engagement with community projects in west Louisville



**250,000+**

UofL students have engaged in over 250,000 hours of service related to the Signature Partnership Initiative



**200+**

Community partner organizations working with UofL and the residents of west Louisville

*These numbers represent instances of service and may reflect a duplicated head count for faculty, staff and students; but does not represent a duplication of service.  
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# SIGNATURE PARTNERSHIP INITIATIVE OBJECTIVES

## Education Elevate Educational Attainment

UofL faculty, staff and students are teaming up with community partners to work with teachers, parents and students in schools in west Louisville. These partnerships have helped launch events and programs covering the gamut from professional development for teachers, support services, science and engineering workshops, mentoring programs, college scholarships, career readiness, and initiatives that encourage more parent-teacher interaction. Many UofL academic and administrative units support this focus area with major work from the College of Education and Human Development, the Brandeis School of Law, and University Libraries.

## Economic Development Financial Empowerment

Both academic and administrative units at the university continue efforts to increase economic opportunities in west Louisville through activities focusing on job creation, business development, entrepreneurship, and financial stability. This work with local businesses, government, and nonprofits has involved business planning and consulting, job training programs, financial literacy classes, and UofL faculty & administrator service on decision-making boards for small business loans and economic development planning for west Louisville.

## Social & Human Services Build Capacity

In its first decade, the Signature Partnership Initiative worked with over one hundred community partners in activities to build capacity for social and human services and in creating more sustainable neighborhoods in west Louisville. These activities span the spectrum from engaged scholarship involving participatory research, engaged teaching through community-based learning and internships, to partnership projects with major nonprofits, governmental agencies, and philanthropic foundations.

## Health & Quality of Life

Improving health and quality of life in west Louisville is a key focus of the initiative. In terms of providing health services, major work in this area is led by the UofL Health Sciences Center including the School of Medicine, School of Nursing, School of Dentistry, and the School of Public Health and Information Sciences. A big part of the efforts for improving quality of life have involved working with partners on arts and cultural activities that connect community and celebrate the potential of west Louisville. Major work on arts and cultural programs in west Louisville has been led by the College of Arts & Sciences and the School of Music.

# PARTNERSHIP EXPERIENCE

## Education

### Early Childhood Development

The College of Education & Human Development's (CEHD) Early Learning Campus is part of the Louisville Scholar House Campus and is an exemplary early child development center, serving children from west Louisville and the nearby campus community.



### Academic Performance of the Students in K-12

Located in the heart of west Louisville's Portland neighborhood, J.B. Atkinson Academy for Excellence has worked closely with UofL students, faculty and staff to help boost academic achievement among its student body. Since the spring of 2009 32 student teachers and 99 teacher candidates from the UofL College of Education and Human Development have been placed at Atkinson.



### High School Graduation Rates

Since 2001 about 90 Central High School Law and Government Magnet students are served annually through the partnership program with the UofL Brandeis School of Law, with the goal of developing a more diverse legal profession and building skills for success after high school.



### Residents Obtain Bachelor's Degree

The Office of Community Engagement Upward Bound program annually serves around 100 low income and/or first generation college students with college access programs.



## Economic Development

### Employment Opportunities for Residents

Kathleen Hoye, the Director of the Family Business Center at the UofL College of Business serves as a board member with the city's Metropolitan Business Development Corporation. In 2015 this committee closed 20 loans for a total of \$1,591,130 investment, creating 83 jobs and 231 temporary construction jobs.



### Business Development and Retention

UofL College of Business' Small Business Institute provides counseling and consultation to small business owners, nonprofits, and entrepreneurs. It has served over 20 west Louisville businesses since 2007.



### Entrepreneurship and Wealth Creation

OneWest is a non-profit corporation that is establishing new pathways to generate sustainable economic development and neighborhood revitalization in west Louisville, in partnership with community residents. OneWest was conceived by a group of local leaders, with guidance from top UofL leadership including Dean Craig Blakely (School of Public Health & Information Sciences).



## Social & Human Services

### Enhancement of Social Service Providers

The Cardinal Success Program (CSP), directed by faculty from the College of Education and Human Development helps individuals and families through improved access to mental health services. In the latest program evaluation 57% of Academy @ Shawnee students were directly impacted, and the remaining 43% were positively influenced by the work of CSP.



### Parental Involvement

Stepping Up 4 Your Child aims to enhance non-custodial fathers' involvement with their children through a program of fatherhood and healthy relationship education. The program is a multi-site collaborative effort between the Kent School of Social Work and the KY Cabinet for Health and Family Services' Department of Income Support.



### Sustainable Neighborhoods

The CDC awarded the UofL School of Public Health and Information Sciences \$5.7 million to establish a Youth Violence Prevention Research Center, aimed at reducing violence among youth living in west Louisville through a youth-participatory media campaign and connecting young people to resources and services available locally.



## Health & Quality of Life

### Promotion of Healthy Lifestyles

Under the leadership of Anita Barbee, the UofL Kent School of Social Work is implementing pregnancy prevention programs and moving the needle in reducing teen pregnancy in west Louisville. One such project engaged 1,450 youth and 500 parents in 23 community based organizations, mostly in west Louisville.



### Accessibility to Quality Healthcare

The UofL School of Medicine's Northwest Area Health Education Center works to improve the recruitment, distribution and retention of health care professionals (particularly in primary care) in medically underserved areas including west Louisville.



### Arts and Cultural Activities

The Yearlings Club, a philanthropic organization in west Louisville, and the UofL College of Arts and Sciences have partnered for over a decade examining issues of importance to the Louisville community, often with a special focus on west Louisville.



# ENVISIONING THE NEXT CHAPTER OF THE SIGNATURE PARTNERSHIP INITIATIVE

The University of Louisville began this journey of engaging deeply with the west Louisville community back in 2005 with our first community wide outreach effort. The conversations we had then and since have helped shape our direction in setting strategic priorities to advance us toward the goal of improving the quality of life for youth and families residing in west Louisville neighborhoods/communities. We were fortunate to have the voices of residents, civic leaders, governmental leaders, educators, parents and businesses represented in the 2017 community listening tours. We learned a lot, most importantly that the issues are complex and somewhat diverse. We likewise discovered that there are a number of studies, reports and rankings that can inform us about the state of our city, our target community of west Louisville, our schools, our university and the Commonwealth, however, these alone are merely like a drawing, an outline. The participants in the Listening Tours provided the color, bringing issues and the stories to intensify the picture and give it depth.

Our goal for the Listening Tours was to figure out the whole picture by asking what we hoped were the right questions and listening, so we could plan for how to act.

## What Did We Hear?

We heard loud and clear the message that our community wants to be more engaged! They want to be connected. Clearly people recognize the intrinsic value of collaboration and want to work with each other to identify gaps and maximize resources. Moreover, we discovered via listening and observation that the most important issues impacting residents of west Louisville are:

- **Safe neighborhoods**
- **Educational attainment**
- **Economic Empowerment-Jobs to support families**
- **Appropriate commercial development**
- **Wraparound services especially access to mental health services**
- **Health needs and access**
- **Lack of engagement and community among those who look like us**

It is our hope that the lessons and information learned from the 2017 Listening Tours will not only inform our work but contribute to an ongoing dialogue in communities and among the organizations that support them.

## Planning the next phase of the Signature Partnership Initiative

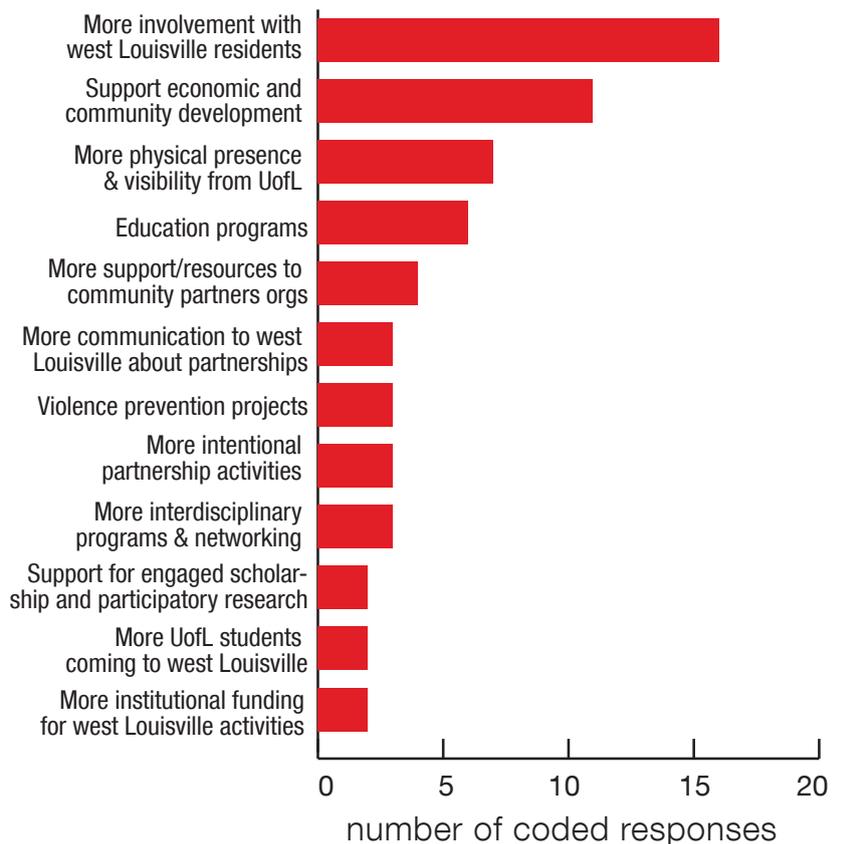
### Action steps

**Step 1** Engage community stakeholders and partners in community listening tours/conversations for purpose of ascertaining their views on past accomplishments and challenges that remain

**Step 2** Engage in survey analysis for the purpose of securing feedback from our many community stakeholders and partners

**Step 3** Based on aforementioned steps, frame a set of recommendations on the next iteration of the Signature Partnership Initiative to be presented to community residents, the university community, and community stakeholders.

## How can UofL strengthen its community partnerships to better serve west Louisville, and to be a more collaborative partner?



# A TIME FOR BOLDNESS

While we pause to celebrate the decade long Signature Partnership Initiative with our west Louisville community, it is equally important to note that much work remains if we are to be successful in eliminating the root cause(s) of poverty and in helping all our families and children have a real shot at an improved quality of life. To that end, the University of Louisville is uniquely positioned as a major “community anchor” to lend its expertise and voice in addressing many of metro Louisville’s community-based educational, economic and civic/social challenges. At the heart of the Office of Community Engagement’s recommendations governing the next phase of the Signature Partnership plan are five major areas of focus.

## ✓ EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

- Continue to develop partnerships aimed at developing/sustaining a college going culture;
- Continue to provide support to Signature Partnership target area schools;
- Be an active partner in 55K Degrees, 15K Degrees and the Mayor’s ‘Cradle to Career’ cabinet movements and other community-based initiatives that address/support educational attainment.
- Partner with UofL development officials in forming a long-term funding strategy;
- Continue to frame/author federal, state and local funding proposals;
- Secure funds sufficient to establish/create an endowment supporting college access programs;
- Assist students enrolled in Signature Partnership target schools to cope with school transition challenges;
- Work closely with the university community in exploring the feasibility of the UofL establishing a “charter school” to serve students residing west Louisville;

## ✓ WEST LOUISVILLE NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT

- Promote engagement opportunities within the Signature Partnership target community to faculty, staff and student bodies;
- Work with faculty liaisons, University-Community Partnership Advisory Board and Signature Partnership Resident Council to enhance existing partnerships and develop new ones;
- Promote curricular and co-curricular engagement opportunities within the Signature Partnership to faculty and students;
- Partner with the Mayor’s Office, Metro Council Representatives, Louisville Urban League, OneWest, Louisville Central Community Centers, YMCA and others to advance community building/revitalization initiatives in west Louisville;
- Work with Signature Partnership resident council to build and establish a comprehensive, realistic and evidence-based pipeline of services and supports around the core child-family unit;
- Explore and establish infrastructure that supports servicing children and families;
- Work with community and faith-based organizations to ensure that youth have safe environments;
- Work with faith-based organizations and civic groups in the development of an effective communication plan to disseminate information to residents;
- Work with established community service organizations such as Metro United Way to create a coordinating council necessary to ensure that out-of-school programs work together;
- Partner with Passport Health Plans on the development of their new west Louisville campus;
- Partner with GLI, businesses and corporate leaders in seeking employment opportunities for residents of west Louisville;

## ✓ DATA & RESEARCH SERVICES

- Explore ways to improve efficiency in data collection processes;
- Develop a system and a schedule to measure the impact of engagement on the community, faculty, students and the university;
- Publish reports on the data and impact assessment conducted to disseminate to the university and external communities;
- Develop a dedicated website/tool for collecting data and sharing outcomes with various stakeholders;
- Build the capacity to offer broad-based social science research services to non-profit and community-based groups that includes survey research, evaluation research, strategic planning, data analysis/database management and geographic information system services;

## ✓ INTERDISCIPLINARY EDUCATION & RESEARCH

- Join the Provost in articulating a campus-wide vision for interdisciplinary education and research;
- Advocate forcibly to remove barriers to faculty participation in interdisciplinary education and research, and assist the Office of the Provost and Chief Academic Officer in the creation of a porous, flexible environment that facilitates the flow of ideas and people across boundaries;
- Work closely with the Office of Student Affairs to increase student awareness and engagement in multi-and interdisciplinary curricula;
- Partner with the Office of the Provost and Office of Institutional Research to develop tools to assess the effectiveness of interdisciplinary education;
- Work closely with the Executive Vice President for Research in identifying federal funding for research and training that supports crosscutting programs that aim to solve problems at the boundaries between traditional disciplines;
- Join the Provost and Chief Academic Officers in further exploring how the tenure and promotion process can be improved to ensure a fair review of interdisciplinary scholarship and engagement;

## ✓ UofL CENTER FOR URBAN INITIATIVES

The Office of the Vice President for Community Engagement is proposing that the University of Louisville establish a Center for Urban Initiatives and Research whose primary charge will be to provide research services and technical assistance to both public and non-profit organizations assisting them to make informed decisions. The Center would be expected to advance pragmatic, evidence-based solutions that impact public policy and have the potential to combat inequality and build stronger, more equitable neighborhoods and communities.

# COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENTS

## NEW PROJECTS COMING TO WEST LOUISVILLE



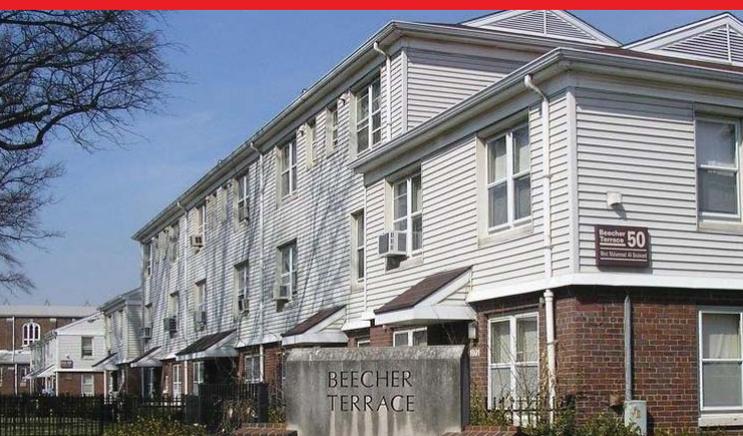
### Portland MFA Space

Scheduled to open in Summer 2018, the space will be home to the Master of Fine Arts program and the Anthropology department's Archeology lab, providing graduate students and faculty with state-of-the-art studio space. The new space will provide UofL's College of Arts & Sciences a campus presence in a community where revitalization efforts are underway, and will further the University's commitment to the third pillar of its mission in providing engaged service and outreach that improve the quality of life for local and global communities.



### Maker Spaces: West End School & Central High

The Speed School of Engineering is partnering with West End School and Central High School in the development of maker spaces for hands on learning about science, engineering, and technology. The goal of these facilities is to increase interest in the STEM fields and to help students at the two schools grow their self-confidence in addressing technological problems. The spaces are equipped with computers, 3-D printers, laser cutters and drill presses for student projects. The Maker Spaces provide UofL Engineering students a chance to mentor young people and gain experience with outreach and community engagement.



### Russell Choice Neighborhoods Initiative

Following on the Russell Transformation Planning Grant submission, the Louisville Metro Housing Authority (LMHA) and Louisville Metro Government (Metro) were awarded a \$29.5 million implementation grant for the neighborhood revitalization project through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. As the project is implemented, UofL will work with LMHA, Metro Government, and community stakeholders in developing educational programs as laid out in the Russell Transformation Plan, including work supporting cradle to career initiatives and programs addressing health equity and the social determinants of health.



### Passport Health & Well-being Campus

Passport Health Plan is engaging west Louisville residents and organizations in a plan for a new health and well-being campus at 18th Street and Broadway. The new Passport Health Plan headquarters will be designed to bring a variety of resources that meet basic human needs and help people thrive—all close to where thousands of its Louisville members live. The University of Louisville will play a key role as a community partner in the effort, and will occupy space in the campus with programming related to the Signature Partnership Initiative.