



Beginning summer 2012, LISC Jacksonville provided funding and guidance to help good neighborhoods become great in a new initiative called Building EPIC (Empower People & Inspire Change) Communities. This initiative has grown out of extensive community meetings and an intense series of focus groups involving over 1,500 neighborhood residents, public officials, business, philanthropic, nonprofit and community development leaders.

Feedback from participants revealed a significant interest in LISC Jacksonville's approach to creating healthy, sustainable communities. It's the result of countless hours of study, conversation, taking stock of what's already working in our neighborhoods, and hard work to determine what exactly makes a neighborhood great.

LISC Jacksonville's Building EPIC (Empower People & Inspire Change) Communities has selected the Lower Eastside/Springfield and the Northwest Jacksonville communities as the first "pilots" for this program.

Each EPIC Community will set out on a journey of community engagement, planning and implementing "early action projects." We are very excited about this initiative because it is a new approach in Jacksonville. Each program will begin with residents discovering what is right about their neighborhood, and putting them in charge of their future by developing their own neighborhood's "Quality of Life Plans".

A quality-of-life plan captures the vision of residents and turns goals into achievable projects and programs. It's not planning for planning's sake, but practical planning driven by real community needs—that leads to real, visible results.

The first step is reaching out to engage everyone to be involved in developing the agreement. Planning is one of the most important steps that a neighborhood can take to become healthier, safer, and economically stronger. The quality-of-life agreement will serve as a ROADMAP: it's how you get to your goal of becoming a great neighborhood.

LISC Jacksonville has identified two "Convening Agency" partners to serve as the local coordinators for each EPIC Community. The Northwest Jacksonville convening agency is Northwest Jacksonville Community Development Corporation (Paul Tutwiler/CEO) and the Lower Eastside/Springfield convening agency is Operation New Hope Community Development Corporation (Kevin Gay/CEO). **They will coordinate all neighborhood meetings in preparation for the visioning workshops and other tasks in preparing their community's quality-of-life plan. The broadest range of resident and community participation and input is critical to the success of this initiative.**

Once the plan is completed and approved by the community and civic leaders, then begins the hard work of getting the agreement strategies implemented. Participation and input in this new initiative is very valuable to making changes in your community.