

# HOPE

COMMISSION

Inspiration ❖ Collaboration ❖ Transformation



## *Executive Summary*

HOPE Commission Report



# Executive Summary Report 2009

HOPE Commission

*Inspiration ❖ Collaboration ❖ Transformation*

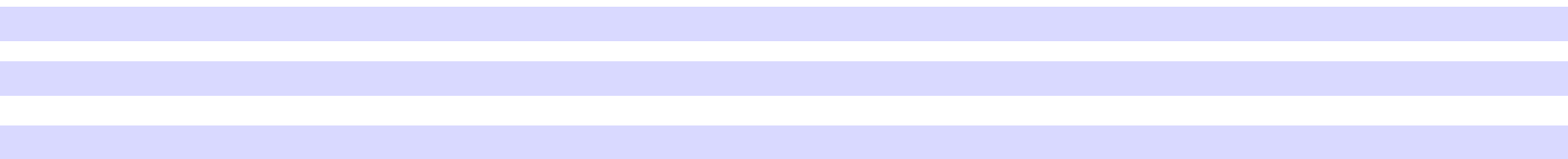
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# Table of Contents

THE HOPE COMMISSION STEERING COMMITTEE AND REPORT .....2

STRUCTURING THE HOPE COMMISSION .....3

VISION & MISSION .....4

NINE RECOMMENDATIONS GUIDE THE STRATEGY FOR ACTION .....5

ACCOMPLISHMENTS .....6

FOCUSING ON FUTURE ACHIEVEMENTS .....10

SUSTAINING THE WORK OF THE HOPE COMMISSION .....11

FINANCIAL SUMMARY REPORT .....12





## **THE HOPE COMMISSION STEERING COMMITTEE AND REPORT**

In May 2005, by Executive Order, Mayor James Baker established the HOPE Commission to identify, review, and act on social and community issues related to violent crime in some areas of Wilmington. He appointed 27 civic leaders to a Steering Committee that was charged with developing a Wilmington Report based on its review and assessment of the many social service, educational, recreational, and cultural programs available to city residents. The report would focus on serious societal issues facing the city and present a list of recommendations to help revitalize underserved communities by improving the delivery of services and programs in a more effective, comprehensive, and targeted fashion. The Mayor's goal, then and now, is to improve coordination and cooperation among the service providers, reduce duplication of effort, and provide a foundation of service delivery that can help reduce incidences of crime and violence.



## STRUCTURING THE HOPE COMMISSION

The HOPE Commission's steering committee, comprising independent opinion-makers who are knowledgeable, committed, and concerned, along with more than 100 volunteers serving on seven sub-committees, spent ten months gathering data and exchanging information and insights among all stakeholders, including community residents, youth, business and political leaders, social service agencies, educators, law enforcement, and other local and national professionals. The resulting report, which was submitted to Mayor Baker in March of 2006, highlighted nine key recommendations. One of these was to establish a permanent HOPE Commission to coordinate and implement the rest of the recommendations, using the creation of HOPE Zones to identify potential solutions to the myriad of social ills that too often serve as a precursor to crime and violence in our city.





*Photo by Paul Kennard*

## VISION

The HOPE Commission is a catalyst for change that strives to inspire and empower a collaboration of citizens, businesses, government agencies, social organizations, and faith based institutions throughout the City of Wilmington to work together in creating safe, vital neighborhoods that strengthen family bonds, promote civic pride, and encourage residents to engage in community transformation.

## MISSION

The HOPE Commission, along with its partners will (1) develop, promote, evaluate, and advocate for meaningful strategies and programs that focus on the revitalization of Wilmington's underserved communities, and, (2) motivate residents and community-based organizations to be actively engaged in the creation of safer, more vibrant, sustainable neighborhoods.



## NINE RECOMMENDATIONS GUIDE THE STRATEGY FOR ACTION

To achieve our vision and put our mission into action, we will implement the report's nine key recommendations, which are:

1. Expand the community policing philosophy as the department-wide approach to fighting and preventing crime.
2. Create a strong advocacy organization to improve the education of city children.
3. Establish HOPE Zones.
4. Improve economic development opportunities for businesses to thrive and for Wilmington residents.
5. Establish a network of community workers known as HOPE Outreach Workers (youth and adults).
6. Coordinate the efforts of the faith-based community in education, youth outreach, violence prevention, and ex-offender reentry.
7. Strengthen ex-offender reentry programs that promote positive reintegration into the community.
8. Embark on a Campaign of HOPE for the City of Wilmington.
9. Create a permanent HOPE Commission to ensure that the action plans in the 2006 Report are implemented and sustained.





# ACCOMPLISHMENTS

## *HOPE Zones*

- In partnership with the city and the community, the HOPE Commission identified five HOPE Zone communities— Eastside, Hilltop, Northeast, Southbridge, and West Center City—as distressed neighborhoods trying to address the problem of violent crime.
- The HOPE Commission's process of launching a HOPE Zone starts with developing a working relationship with the community leaders to identify and assess the needs of the community, then pull together the resources that meet those needs. This collaboration of community service agencies and volunteers provides a more structured way of delivering efficient and targeted services to residents, making it easier for community members to seek help and get involved in the effort to help reduce the incidence of crime.

## *HOPE Outreach Workers*

- We have attracted a large number of volunteers—residents—to serve as HOPE Outreach Workers. These individuals are committed to and passionate about making Wilmington a better place to live.
- We provided training to more than 300 residents to prepare them to help lead community outreach initiatives, and more than 50 completed a demanding 100+ hour certification training process. HOPE Outreach Workers provide assistance in a variety of ways. They have provided resource information to underserved populations and made referrals to a number of agencies and programs, from GED programs and employment services to family, housing, medical and dental services. They also have established relationships with businesses and the faith community.
- Because each HOPE Outreach Worker is intimately connected to his/her community he/she understands its unique challenges and opportunities. They are able to assess needs and provide information that will enable all partners in the process to identify what works to increase public safety and transform communities.



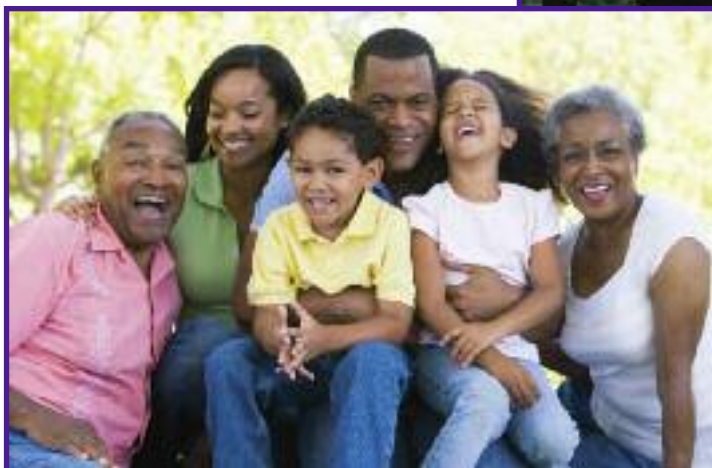
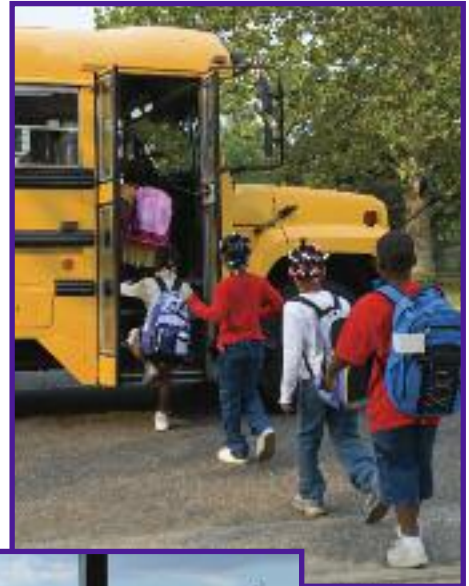
## *The Southbridge HOPE Zone Initiative*

- We started with one HOPE Zone, as it is imperative that we have a laser-like focus on community issues and we gather and assess the findings to determine best practices and the best approach for going forward. We chose Southbridge as our model because of its long history, defined geographic boundaries, active civic association, and opportunity for growth.
- In Southbridge, to help expedite the start of this program in a way that met the specific needs of this community, we assigned a HOPE Zone Project Manager and Community Outreach Worker, who have established vital relationships with community leaders, educational institutions, community based organizations and local businesses to improve the quality of life. Within a year, more than 50 job referrals were made to various employers for Southbridge residents. We also created a partnership with Delaware Health and Social Services to provide a state-sponsored family-crisis therapist, who provides one-on-one parent conferences, individual, small group, and family counseling sessions, and mediation and intervention sessions. To work in tandem with the family crisis therapist, we added a juvenile probation officer, with a reduced caseload to focus only on juveniles in the Southbridge community. Our intent is to keep these personnel in place as collaborations form, access to services increases, and the community develops capacity.
- We have already begun to analyze information from the data that our HOPE Outreach Workers are sharing with the HOPE Commission, and we can see that there are several good things going on that tell us we're on the right track. A report to be issued in 2009 will give us a data-based HOPE Zone model that will guide us in developing, supporting, and advocating on behalf of the next HOPE Zones.



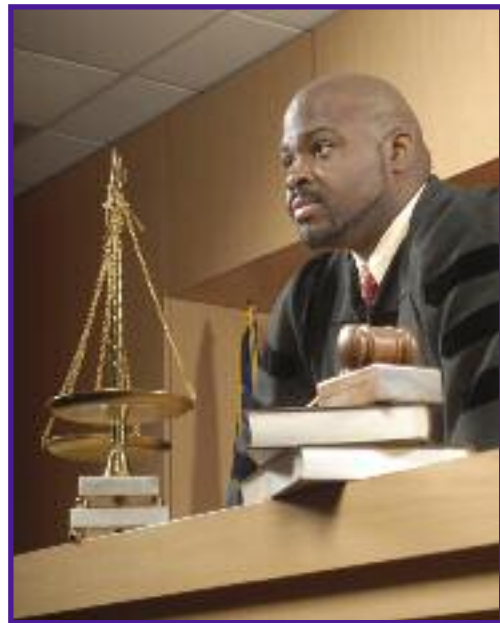
## *Youth Outreach*

- In the summer of 2007, the HOPE Commission helped deliver private and public funds to open up 200 summer jobs for Wilmington youth. Supporting partners were AstraZeneca, Bank of America, Christiana Care Health System, Delaware State Chamber of Commerce, Delmarva Power, DuPont, ING, Laffey-McHugh Foundation, Riverfront Development Corporation, State of Delaware, and WSFS.
- Also in 2007, we established HOPE Safe Havens at community centers city wide. Designed for youth from 10 to 18 years of age, these sites offered a wide spectrum of activities, including workshops in media and technology, life and social skills, financial literacy, and youth leadership, plus academic tutoring, career mentoring and job development.



## *Reentry Strategy*

- The HOPE Commission is in the formative stages of framing a reentry strategy to reduce recidivism and help strengthen the fabric of our communities. In 2005 alone, more than 1,200 ex-offenders were released from prison and returned to their neighborhoods situated in just three zip codes —19801, 19802, and 19805 — which include communities we have identified as HOPE Zones.
- We are focused on reducing recidivism by taking steps to create a One Stop Reentry Center that houses services and resources in one location. Our intention is to assist ex-offenders to successfully reenter the community by ensuring that there are support systems in place to facilitate employment, housing, health care, and life skills development. Because reentry services in Delaware are fragmented, there is a compelling need for a well-coordinated statewide effort. Without access to comprehensive reentry support services, ex-offenders are likely to recidivate—and a cycle of crime continues, tearing at the fabric of our community.
- We will start by convening a coalition of state, federal, municipal, private agencies and community leaders to work toward the creation of a reentry center. We will gather data from around the country on criminal justice policies and best practices related to ex-offenders that will guide our strategic planning and help direct our path forward.
- Central to our work will be the development of a comprehensive plan to successfully prepare ex-offenders for reentry. As part of this plan, we will bring together a network of partnering agencies that provide services in the areas of housing, education, employment, job training, medical treatment, and substance abuse and mental health.



# FOCUSING ON FUTURE ACHIEVEMENTS

## *Partnering with the Faith-Based Community*

Coordinating the efforts of the faith-based community in education, youth outreach, violence prevention, and ex-offender reentry is vital to helping transform communities. The HOPE Commission's collaborations all include the faith community, so that every recommendation-driven initiative we undertake gains strength from their involvement.

## *Economic Development*

In addition to the economic development that will result from the collaborative work we undertake in our HOPE Zones, we will expand our focus to develop strategies to improve economic development opportunities for residents, neighborhoods, and businesses city wide.

## *Campaign of HOPE*

By establishing HOPE Zones, and training and placing HOPE Outreach Workers in HOPE Zone neighborhoods, we have taken a significant step in initiating a Campaign of HOPE for the city of Wilmington. As support for the HOPE Commission's work grows, we will continue to build on the Campaign of HOPE through outreach and by using a variety of communication channels to inspire individuals and organizations to harness the power of hope and create meaningful changes in their neighborhoods.

## *Additional Advocacy*

Going forward, we will strengthen and focus our advocacy efforts to expand the community's involvement in civic activities and build an advocacy network of informed and engaged city residents as the community mobilization approach to fighting and preventing crime. Equally important, we will advocate and promote solutions to help improve the education of our city's children.



## SUSTAINING THE WORK OF THE HOPE COMMISSION

Success will drive our long-term viability—success in our ability to coordinate, develop, evaluate, and evolve our initiatives in a way that helps us achieve our vision of community transformation—as well as success in garnering the resources—human and financial—to sustain the Commission’s work over time.



## Financial Summary Report

Mayor Baker's 2005 Executive Order to establish the HOPE Commission was supported by an allocation of \$1.3 million from the City of Wilmington to be spread over three years. About eight percent (8%) of the allocated funding was used to launch the HOPE Commission in its first year and begin the work of implementing the nine recommendations in the report.

Over the past two years, we are grateful to have received supplemental funding from corporations, grantors, and the state government which, along with the city's funding, helped support the HOPE Commission's surging activities. We developed and launched a comprehensive HOPE Zone initiative in Southbridge.

To ensure that we are being good stewards of the funds extended to us, we are currently evaluating our activities to help us modify and improve our efforts moving forward.

### Investors of HOPE

AstraZeneca

Bank of America

Christiana Care

City of Wilmington

ING

JP Morgan Chase

Laffey-McHugh Foundation

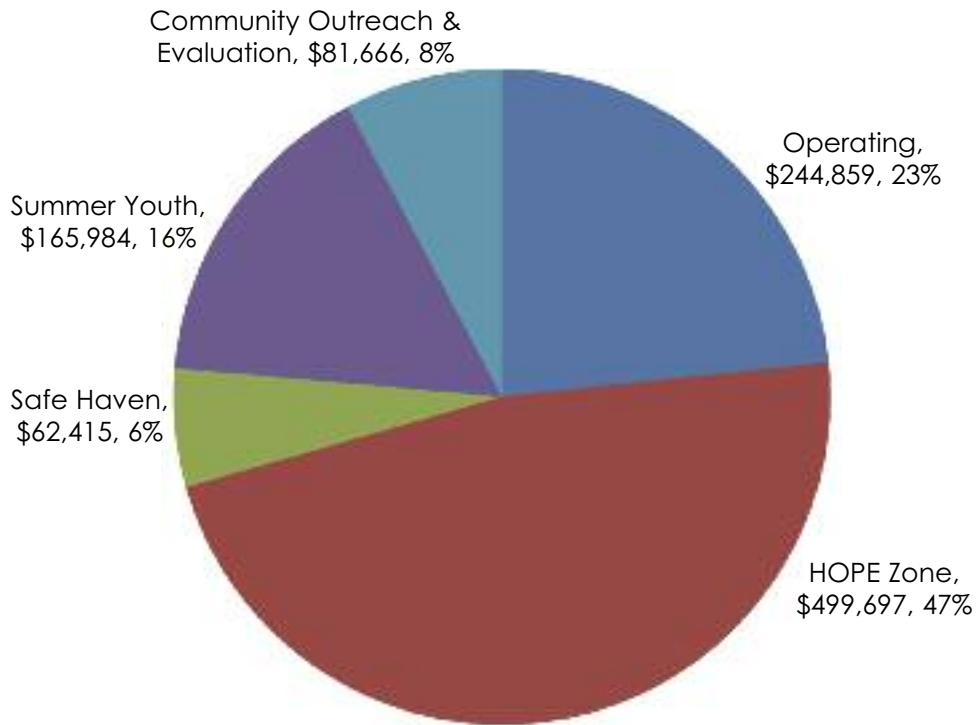
State of Delaware

Verizon

WSFS



## HOPE Commission Expenditures July 1, 2006 to December 31, 2008



### Resource Allocations:

**Safe Haven** . . . Extended recreational hours at community centers in the City of Wilmington

**Summer Youth Employment** . . . Employment for City of Wilmington youth

**Community Outreach & Evaluation** . . . HOPE Outreach Network training and support; assessment and evaluation of HOPE Commission projects

**Operating** . . . personnel, rent, utilities, office equipment and supplies

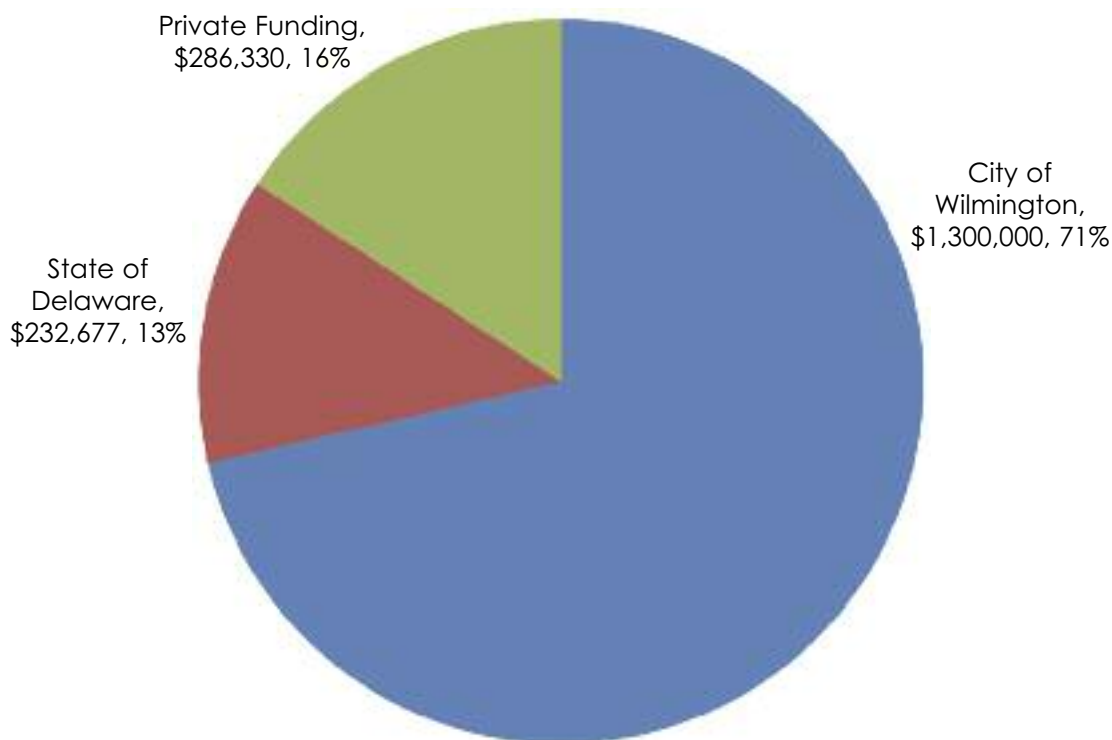
**HOPE Zone** . . . Investments for job training, youth employment, beautification projects, senior activities, community programs and activities

- **Southbridge Partners:** Neighborhood House, Henrietta Johnson Medical Center, Southbridge Civic Association, City of Wilmington Parks & Recreation, Wilmington Housing Authority, PAID, CAPP, Southbridge Faith Network, Nehemiah Gateway, NOR Enterprises, Elbert Palmer Elementary School
- **Supporting Agencies:** Christiana Care, Nemours, Delaware Park, Child Inc., Urban Promise, Goodwill Industries, Delaware Reentry Consortium, LACC, Helping Hand Ministries, DHSS Division of Youth & Families, Robinson & Them, Lowes, ShopRite, Burger King, Home Depot, Thomas Edison Charter School





# HOPE Commission Funding July 1, 2006 to December 31, 2008



The generosity and support from funders has enabled the HOPE Commission to provide technical and financial assistance for community-based project initiatives, launch pilot programs, promote capacity building, and address the needs of families in underserved neighborhoods.

- The City of Willimington pledged a \$1.3 million donation over three years to start the HOPE Commission.
- The State of Delaware contributed \$232,677 in support of a partnership with the Delaware Division of Health & Social Services.
- The private funding sources include businesses, foundations and individuals.



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