

# Resiliency in Communities After Stress and Trauma (ReCAST)

## Flint ReCAST Program



### Purpose

The Flint Resiliency in Communities after Stress and Trauma Program (ReCAST) is designed to promote resilience in the Flint community by assisting high risk youth and families, mitigating the impact of trauma, reducing behavioral health inequities, and increasing the opportunities and training for Flint youth through strong community engagement strategies.

### ReCAST Communities of Focus

The focus of this project is on families and youth at increased risk of traumatic stress, including those impacted by the Flint Water Emergency (FWE).

### Opportunities for Resilience

Using a community-engaged model that builds on past partnerships and experience, the city will establish a community board (CC). The CC will collectively establish a strategic plan to (1) support violence prevention in Flint, (2) offer opportunities for Flint youth and their families to create long-term goals that support wellbeing and behavioral health promotion, and (3) empower community organizations, formal and informal, to contribute to the future growth and development of the Flint community through youth and their families.

### Community Vision.

A narrative of youth and family success and well-being will unfold through community empowerment, and will build on the voice and resilience of community residents and existing organizations to support the growth of Flint.

### Context for ReCAST

In late 2015, after over a year of community voiced concern regarding the contamination of drinking water, the governor of MI sought a federal declaration of emergency for the water emergency in Flint. On January 16, 2016, U.S. President Barack Obama declared a state of emergency in MI as a result of Flint's unsafe drinking water. For Flint residents, the dismissal of community voices of concern, combined with (1) prolonged denial of governmental officials of any problem with the water supply safety, (2) potential cognitive impacts of lead poisoning for Flint children, and (3) sharp and unexpected modifications in daily living required for Flint residents have been traumatic experiences. The FWE was not a single time-limited experience, but rather a chronic situation lasting at least 18 months. Further, Flint has lived with decades of disadvantage, with residents bearing years of affiliated health and societal burdens. These conditions exacerbated multiple behavioral and physical health concerns for both children and adults, and will have lasting effects on health and well-being for the Flint community.

### Community Partners

Flint ReCAST aims to engage community residents, local community organizations (e.g. YMCA, Community Based Organization Partners, etc.), the health care community (e.g. Genesee Health System, Hurley Hospital), local public and private universities (U of Michigan Flint & Ann Arbor, MSU, Wayne State University, Kettering University), and local institutions (e.g. Flint Community Schools, Genesee County Health Department, MI State Police, faith-based organizations).

### Approaches to Resilience

The aims of Flint ReCAST are to:

- Build on an extensive range of local programs and partnerships to empower the Flint community to support at-risk youth and



families in developing resilience, reducing violence, and developing a vibrant community in Year 1.

- Use trauma-informed, evidence based programming to mitigate potential behavioral health impacts of the FWE on Flint youth and families.
- Integrate several evidence-based violence prevention programs to enhance ongoing community-organization led activities to divert high-risk youth from the school to prison pipeline.
- Create a trauma informed 1st responder community by providing trauma training to local police, first responders, correction officers, etc.
- Increase capacity for youth and families in the Flint community to support skill building and career opportunities through evidenced-based programs such as YES, Public Mental Health Leadership Academy, Fathers & Sons, and others as developed or identified by the local CC.

#### Programs and Practices

Flint ReCAST CC will review and select programs and practices through community driven processes. Strategies will include trauma-informed approaches applied in community engagement programs, evidence-based violence prevention, and trauma-informed behavioral health services, each being culturally and developmentally appropriate. Peer support models will be a priority consideration.

Because of the FWE, the identification and capacity building of **trauma-informed practices**, including behavioral health resources has already begun. The Flint Community Resilience Group – Planning and Training Workgroups have been building capacity to provide trauma-informed behavioral health services based on the needs of individuals being served. Flint ReCAST will build on these practices, and expand the use of trauma-informed approaches beyond health services. Possible evidence-based approaches include: *Cognitive Behavioral Intervention for Trauma in the Schools (CBITS)*; Child and Family Traumatic Stress Intervention (CFTSI); or SafERteens program.

Flint ReCAST intends to **support family strengthening and youth engagement** and resilience based on recommendation of the ReCAST steering and community committees, which will identify new and existing (in Flint) programs that are a good fit for Flint, and are evidence supported. Resilience-focused strategies under consideration include Striving To Reduce Youth Violence Everywhere (STRYVE), and Preventing Long-Term Anger in Youth of Color.



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