



# **Strategic Plan 2020-2025**

## **Brookland Center for Community Economic Change**

### **(dba Brookland-Lakeview Empowerment Center [BLEC])**

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A document to guide the activities of the Brookland-Lakeview Empowerment Center (BLEC).  
**Prepared by the Brookland-Lakeview Empowerment Center Steering Committee on  
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#### **Acknowledgements**

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- The staff, members, volunteers, affiliates, and partners of the Brookland-Lakeview Empowerment Center.
- The Board of Directors of the Brookland-Lakeview Empowerment Center.
- Residents and businesses of Lexington and Richland counties who contributed through various consultation efforts.
- Brookland Baptist Church, the City of West Columbia, and the Lexington County Youth Sports Association.
- Our current sponsors, donors, grantors and financial supporters.

#### **Steering Committee Members**

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### **Vision**

To be a supportive community in which all people have pathways to health, education and economic opportunities.

### **Mission**

To engage and serve people of all ages and backgrounds while promoting advancements in health, education, economic empowerment and improving the lives of residents in Lexington and Richland counties and neighboring communities throughout the Midlands of South Carolina.

### **Goals**

- Human Service | Goal 1: To improve the quality of life for people of all ages and backgrounds.
- Foster Community | Goal 2: To offer socio-economic opportunities that would enrich the lives of senior citizens.
- Cultural Service | Goal 3: To provide a safe, inviting environment for seniors, adults, and youth to participate in physical and cultural activities that promote health and wellness.
- Sustainability | Goal 4: To recapture the historic significance of the Center and its important role in the community serving as a focal point of civic pride.
- Partnership | Goal 5: To cultivate collaborative relationships with community partners.

### **Background**

The Brookland Center for Community and Economic Change (BCCEC; dba Brookland-Lakeview Empowerment Center) is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization that provides programs and services for persons of all ages as well as collaborates with local schools and entities throughout the community. Founded in 2008, the BLEC serves over 15,000 individuals per year through unique programs and services designed to bring people together to improve their quality of life. Earlier the year before (2007), Brookland Baptist Church bought the building from the Lexington County School District Two. There are approximately 75 seniors and 240 youth and teens who regularly participate in programs and services at the BLEC. The BLEC is located at 1218 Batchelor Street in West Columbia, South Carolina 29169, what was formerly

Lakeview High School and it operates in a facility that measures more than 94,000 square feet. Included are administrative offices, classrooms, a kitchen, dining hall, a gymnasium and other indoor recreational spaces. There is also a large athletic field. From its inception, the Board of Directors and primary stakeholders identified major goals and initiatives that will ensure the BLEC's future viability and elevate its profile as a resource for residents of the local community and beyond. This included increasing corporate and community partnerships, expanding activities, programs and events that meet the interest and needs of seniors, youth and the community, recruiting enthusiastic, passionate volunteers who are stakeholders that support the purpose and mission of the BLEC, and securing grants and sponsorships from local, state and federal agencies. Their commitment to engage and empower seniors and youth through activities, programs and events that help enhance life skills. The community is largely an underserved area which has experienced dramatic change in recent years. BLEC's purpose is to work collaboratively to put these plans in action with the support of community residents, service providers, elected officials, and other stakeholders to strengthen families and reduce poverty through economic development.

### **Background of the Community**

The Brookland-Lakeview Empowerment Center (BLEC) is located at 1218 Batchelor Street in West Columbia, South Carolina. The BLEC is located in the City of West Columbia (Lexington County, South Carolina), socioeconomically diverse community with a population of about 15,000 persons (2016 U.S. Census Bureau). Overall, more than one in five (21.6%) of West Columbia residents live in poverty. Among families with children, the poverty rate is 25% and among African Americans, the poverty rate is 33.5%. Recent data provided by (2017) a county-wide Community Health Needs Assessment indicates that health outcomes and access to healthcare among the targeted priority population is poorer than in other parts of South Carolina. For instance, data obtained from Community Commons shows that there are just 182 Primary Care Physicians (PCP) in Lexington County, resulting in a PCP rate of just 65.49, which is considerably lower than the national average of 87.8 and the South Carolina average of 76.3. For low-income persons, the health needs assessment shows that access to Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC) in the targeted geographic area is significantly more difficult than in other parts of South Carolina. The Rate of Federally Qualified Health Centers per 100,000

Population in Lexington County is just 1.91, compared to 3.89 for the rest of South Carolina. The report also shows that Lack of a Consistent Source of Primary Care is also a challenge for low-income residents living in the targeted geographic area. The assessment showed that nearly one quarter of low-income residents living in West Columbia do not have access to a regular doctor.

### **Forecast**

According to the 2019 MissionInsite Report within a 2.5-mile radius of the BLEC, the next ten years will bring a moderate growth in population, a significant increase in school-age children, and a high level of adult education attainment. In contrast, there will be fewer families with children and the median family income will dip. By 2029, it is projected that poverty levels, community diversity and the ratio of blue-collar occupations to white-collar occupations will remain about the same. Our goal is to bring an added value to our community with a sustainable impact for generations to come. Therefore, the BLEC will continue to monitor the community forecast in order to remain relevant and influential.

### **Goals**

**Goal 1: To improve the quality of life for people of all ages and backgrounds.**

**Strategy 1.1 To provide greater access to nutritious meals and healthy food options.**

Action 1.2a Continue to partner with the U.S. Department of Agriculture Summer Food Service Program to ensure children receive nutritious meals in low-income areas when school is not in session.

Action 1.2b Collaboration with the Department on Aging to acquire funds in support of providing nutritious meals to seniors.

**Strategy 1.2 To identify and deliver targeted education and professional retraining and to serve as a resource center.**

Action 1.2a Conduct workforce needs assessment to identify desired training programs designed to fit the needs of employers in the community. Work closely with employers and technical colleges to implement targeted training, education, and career placement.

Action 1.2b Develop and implement a comprehensive and integrated marketing and communications plan to engage the community regarding services. Plan will include an enhanced bold new brand identity, e-newsletters, interactive website, social media engagement, multi-language communications, signage, and ongoing success reporting.

Action 1.2c Develop a plan for ongoing evaluation and input from community members and employers regarding quality of services and program outcomes.

Action 1.2d Develop a job reentry program for individuals released from jail, prison or community supervision programs to assist them in acquiring job training and job placement.

Action 1.2e Develop a partnership with partners to offer personal, family, and individual programs such as parenting classes, character building and professional etiquette.

Action 1.2f To collaborate with individuals and organizations to create new partnerships and sustain existing relationships.

**Strategy 1.3 To provide access to quality healthcare.**

Action 1.3a Engage the Department of Social Services (DSS) to determine healthcare coverage and needs (Supplies: diabetic supplies, catheters, wheelchairs etc...) and home services i.e. ADLS (assistance with daily living activities such as bathing, dressing, feeding etc.)

Action 1.3b Identify current healthcare facilities (hospitals) and determine if they are willing to establish healthcare clinics in various communities to provide the needed healthcare especially to the underserved. Lack of transportation can be an impediment to getting to one's healthcare provider

**Strategy 1.4 To affect policy changes and laws in the local community.**

Action 1.4a Partner with local and state government officials to advocate for improve quality of life for the Brookland-Lakeview community to include roads, landscape, sidewalks, facilities, programs, and services.

Action 1.4b Assign at least one board member to serve as a liaison to the West Columbia City Council and district/state representative.

**Strategy 1.5 To increase economic opportunities through career placement and promotion.**

Action 1.5a Partner with Midlands Technical Community College to establish a formal partnership with apprentice, recruitment, and job placement opportunities for youth, young adults, and returning citizens.

Action 1.5b Create a career placement programming matrix with an emphasis on “soft skills” and mock interviews.

**Strategy 1.6 To develop an adult daycare center for senior citizens and disabled individuals.**

**Goal 2: To offer socio-economic opportunities that would enrich the lives of senior citizens.**

**Strategy 1: To educate and provide resources/referral services for affordable housing for senior citizens to prolong independent living.**

Action 2.1a Identify and invite affordable housing resources for special programming, especially in West Columbia, starting with DSS.

**Strategy 2.2 To educate and assist senior citizens in securing, maintaining, and developing essential life skills (e.g., financial literacy, technology training).**

Action 2.2a Conduct a thorough evaluation of current senior citizens educational programs, activities and services and modify existing services as needed, both through participant surveys and internal reviews.

Action 2.2b Explore joint programming possibilities with other non-profit, certified facilitators, and government agencies (e.g., S.C. Lieutenant Governor's Office on Aging, Aiken-Barnwell Community Action Agency, Wateree Community Action Agency, Lourie Center) in order to improve quality of services to senior citizens and to impart the most current and relevant information.

**Strategy 2.3 To provide them with resources and access to quality healthcare.**

Action 2.3a Collaborate with DSS to coordinate efforts to determine healthcare coverage eligibility for Medicaid, Medicare Disability, Veterans benefits, coverage under the Affordable Care Act etc.

Action 2.3b Identify healthcare facilities and healthcare providers who are willing to provide community healthcare services and especially preventive services and care such as childhood and adult immunizations, screening mammograms, screening colonoscopies, prostate, and cervical cancer screening.

**Strategy 2.4 To provide resources and information on planning and final expenses**

Action 2.4a Engage Subject matter experts to teach and inform seniors and others concerning the importance of final expense planning. Additionally, present the concepts of estate planning, wills, trust funds and strategic transfers of properties and other assets.

Action 2.4b Develop a plan to allow interaction and open discussions on the needs, shortcomings and misinformation that permeates our society; especially in the African American community and all others who have not been exposed to wealth transfer programs.

**Strategy 2.5 To provide them with access to targeted resources (e.g., utility assistance, health fair, transportation, public assistance) to assist them with their day-to-day living.**

Action 2.5a Curate an ongoing resources list of targeted resources to be updated at least every six months.

Action 2.5b Assess the resources currently being used and identify which resources are missing, duplicates, and/or irrelevant.

**Strategy 2.6 To explore and develop a senior adult day care center and disabled citizens.**

Action 2.6a Develop a business plan to for senior adult day care center for seniors and disabled citizens that meets the needs of the community and includes licensing credentials and funding sources.

Action 2.6b Research prime location and real estate costs.

**Goal 3: To provide a safe, inviting environment for seniors, adults, and youth to participate in physical and cultural activities that promote health and wellness.**

**Strategy 3.1 To provide greater access to physical activities and wellness**

Action 3.1a Grow and expand the Farmer's Market and vertical farming through the use of farm boxes to grow fresh vegetables.

Action 3.1b Continue and expand nutritious meals for youth and teens, and senior citizens.

Action 3.1c Conduct new community engagement activities, including physical and wellness activities with the City of West Columbia, the Lexington County Youth Sports Association, government agencies, and non-profit and faith-based organizations. Create an effective activities calendar to coordinate efforts between groups.

Action 3.1d Develop a fitness program to include aerobics and exercise classes, and update and adapt exercise equipment as needed in the fitness room.

**Strategy 3.2 To provide greater access to cultural activities and events.**

Action 3.2a Identify opportunities for the Lakeview community to share its story with others (e.g., public school programs, non-profits, faith-based organizations) in the community utilizing the Lakeview documentary and/or creative personal narratives.

Action 3.2b Seek grant funding and sponsorships that will support and underwrite the participation of at least 50 BLEC constituents in community-wide cultural arts performances (e.g., theater, visual arts, music) annually.

**Strategy 3.3 To afford greater access to athletic competitions**



Action 3.3a Identify local athletic competitions (e.g., BLEC sports, local college/university sports, Fireflies baseball) and invite community seniors to attend as a group outing on a quarterly basis.

Action 3.3b Create innovative service projects for the senior citizens to support 1-2 local athletic competitions on a quarterly basis.

**Goal 4: To recapture the historic significance of the Center and its important role in the community serving as a focal point of civic pride.**

**Strategy 4.1 Building restoration and improvements**

Action 4.1a Create a master plan for building use and function to be used by the development team to cultivate relationships and fundraising efforts.

Action 4.1b The BLEC will establish a timeline for a major capital campaign effort for fundraising priorities and the creation of a development team.

**Strategy 4.2 Cultural events (e.g., class reunions, church activities, community events)**

Action 4.2a The BLEC will host at least three events annually which highlight and celebrate the history of the community and its significance in West Columbia and beyond. These events will be both age specific and intergenerational. These events will focus on the culture of music and the arts, language, spiritual formation, and ancestral honor.

Action 4.2b Cultural initiatives to be determined.

**Strategy 4.3 Historic preservation (e.g. historic landmark, museum, state recognition)**

Action 4.3a Strategies to preserve history to be determined.

Action 4.3b Activities to promote state and federal recognition for cultural contributions to be determined.

**Strategy 4.4 Heritage education (e.g. publications, documentations, lectures, archives)**

Action 4.4a The BLEC will publish a quarterly e-newsletter for distribution to the Center's database, partners, and community leaders.

Action 4.4b The BLEC will continue to submit articles to the "Brookland Star" monthly and other media outlets with updates and historical information about its work.

Action 4.4c The BLEC will collaborate with local university historians to present an annual lecture series for two years related to ancestry, black history and/or cultural diversity. The lecture series does not need to be held at the Center but must include themes and topics that relate and align with the mission and goal of the Center.

### **Strategy 4.5 Administrative and Operational Services**

Action 4.5a Review and update all current policies, procedures, and processes on an annual basis. Assess for missing and outdated documents annually.

Action 4.5b Develop necessary policies, procedures, and processes for all new endeavors, as needed (e.g., enter into all partnership with new vendors and partners with legal, binding contracts in writing).

Action 4.5c Develop and implement effective Human Resources procedures for hiring, onboarding, evaluation, points of transition and conflict resolution, departures, and termination.

## **Goal 5: To cultivate collaborative relationships with community partner.**

### **Strategy 5.1 Implement a development plan to acquire resources to achieve mission.**

Action 5.1a Create a Development Plan for Fundraising to possibly include activity sponsorships, gift catalog, facility naming opportunities, endowment funds, crowd funding possibilities, and other fundraising strategies.

### **Strategy 5.2 Partner with corporations to educate, and for community and economic development**

Action 5.2a Identify existing corporate sponsors, current engagement and their commitments to BLEC. Describe shared mission, core value alignment and social impact strengths. Design a communication strategy to keep them informed, inspired, and engaged.

Action 5.2b Identify 4-6 prospective corporate sponsors (local, state, nationwide) annually. Develop a tactic to cultivate each prospect's interest with a long-term goal with evaluation tools set.

### **Strategy 5.3 Expand relationships with faith-based communities**

Action 5.3a Identify existing faith-based community partners, their current level of

engagement and their commitment to BLEC. Describe shared mission, core value alignment and social impact strengths. Design a communication strategy to keep them informed, inspired, and engaged.

Action 5.3b Identify 1-2 prospective faith-based partners (local, state, nationwide)

annually. Develop a tactic to cultivate each faith-based community's interest with a longterm goal and evaluation process established.

Action 5.3c Establish a global list to create a world market for expansion.

**Strategy 5.4 Build ongoing relationships with government entities to better serve the community (i.e., local, state, federal).**

Action 5.4a Identify existing local, state, and federal government partners, their current level of engagement and their commitment to BLEC. Describe shared mission, core value alignment and social impact strengths. Design a communication strategy to keep these entities informed and engaged.

Action 5.4b Identify 1-2 prospective local, state, and federal government partners annually. Develop a tactic to cultivate each local, state, and federal government's interest with a long-term goal established.

**Strategy 5.5 Collaborate with small businesses to build resources and to have greater impact in the community**

Action 5.5a Identify existing small business partners, their current level of engagement and their commitment to BLEC. Describe shared mission, core value alignment and social impact strengths. Design a communication strategy to keep these businesses informed, inspired and engaged.

Action 5.5b Identify 2-3 prospective small business partners annually. Develop a tactic to cultivate each partner's interest with a 12-month goal.

**Strategy 5.6 Partner and collaborate with other non-profit organizations to build resources and to have greater impact in the community**

Action 5.6a Identify existing collaborations with other non-profit organizations. Describe shared mission, core value alignment and social impact strengths. Design a communication strategy to keep these businesses informed, inspired, and engaged.

Action 5.6b Identify 2-3 prospective non-profit organizations annually. Develop a tactic

to cultivate each partner's interest with a 12-month goal and crafted evaluation process.

**Strategy 5.7 Partner and collaborate with schools to have greater impact in the community (e.g., public, charter, private, colleges and universities, trade schools) resources and to have greater impact in the community.**

Action 5.7a Identify existing collaborations with schools. Describe shared mission, core value alignment and social impact strengths. Design a communication strategy to keep these schools informed, inspired, and engaged.

Action 5.7b Identify 3-4 prospective school partners annually. Develop a tactic to cultivate each partner's interest with a 12-month goal and crafted evaluation process.

Action 5.7c Partner with schools and the community to promote youth academic success, college and career readiness through after-school programming, personal and professional development seminars, and workshops to target specific outcomes.

**Strategy 5.8 To advocate against gentrification.**

Action 5.8a In conjunction with community development partners, design educational marketing and branding material explaining the importance of homeownership, community development, and economic empowerment.

Action 5.8b Offer creative and effective ways of share BLEC's intent and positive impact for the community whenever considering the acquisition of land and/or property via town hall, community forum, and/or fireside chats.

Action 5.8c Develop a public relations strategy with current homeowners, the family of homeowners, and community landlords. Cultivate strategic relations with potential investors in the community to share the BLEC's mission and its vision for sustainable community impact.



