

Prosper Springfield – Do You Know Why This Initiative Exists?

Prosperity. What is it? If you don't have it, how can you get it? If you have it, how can you help others prosper? Questions about prosperity and how to achieve it aren't new. For a number of years, finding the answers have been a focus for the City of Springfield, the Community Partnership of the Ozarks, the United Way of the Ozarks, and literally hundreds of other local businesses, organizations, nonprofits, charities, and faith-based organizations.

How does one start to address a community-wide concern? First, the Impacting Poverty Commission was formed to understand the causes and effects of poverty. After two years of learning more about the needs of our community, the IPC produced a *Call to Action Report* in October 2015 that also aligns with the *Community Focus Report*. In the *Call to Action Report*, the IPC recommended an initiative entitled, *Together Springfield* to provide oversight of the recommendations in the *Call to Action Report* to make sure the IPC followed through on the recommendations. It was determined that a better name for the initiative was *Prosper Springfield*. The entire Springfield community should be able to prosper based on what prosperity means to each individual who calls Springfield home.

Second, in March 2017, the community hired Francine Pratt as the Prosper Springfield Director. Initially, she worked on a part-time basis reading and learning about the activities that had taken place from the beginning of the IPC (She was also a member of the IPC). In April, she started working full-time and used a collective-impact model to create the Prosper Springfield Advisory Council with representatives from the IPC, and private, public and social sectors. The process takes longer using a collective-impact model but better sustainable results are achieved with holistic community input.

This month Prosper Springfield celebrates one-year. In this first-year an infrastructure was developed, a strategic plan has been completed, objectives with specific tasks are in place and the review process has begun. Have the action items in the IPC started? If so, who is doing what by when? Are we identifying duplications or are dual services needed to support different community needs? What gaps exist that impact a person's prosperity? How do we know we are making an impact in helping our community become more prosperous based on the action items in the *Call to Action Report*? Do the actions have measurable outcomes? Can we scale? Do they have long-term sustainability? These questions lay the framework for year-two of Prosper Springfield.

On May 22, 2018, Prosper Springfield will hold a breakfast meeting at 7:30 A.M. to share information about the work of the initiative and what the community can expect to see in year two. For more information about the Prosper Springfield Breakfast, please feel free to contact Francine Pratt at Fpratt@cpozarks.org.

Prosper Springfield is a collective impact initiative focused on a shared community vision to improve economic mobility in the Springfield community. The Prosper Springfield mission is to build community relationships and align community resources to create pathways that help move people to prosperity. The column runs every other Thursday. Today's column was written by Prosper Springfield Director, Francine Pratt. For more information about Prosper Springfield,

contact Francine Pratt at 417-888-2020. Prosper Springfield - Uniting Resources. Improving Lives.