

Restore, Reinvest, and Renew (R3)  
Centralia Community Key Informant Meeting  
Centralia, IL.  
Conducted July 29, 2021  
(n=27)

Participants/Respondents

27 key informants

Average of 43 years living in Centralia

Three respondents report living between there between 53-73 years

Percent next to statement represents the number/percent identifying/endorsing the theme/issue for specific question

- I. What do know about the R3 neighborhood?
  - a. Most respondents indicated they do not know much about the R3 neighborhood (44%)
  - b. Recognize the neighborhood is comprised of low income and high poverty (24%)
  - c. Recognize the neighborhood as having high crime, gangs, drug abuse and violence, crack destroyed the economy
  - d. Other key informants report/recognize high levels of youth exposed to trauma, public housing, racial inequity impacted by COVID
  
- II. What might people who live in this neighborhood like about it? Or dislike
  - A. Like about the neighborhood
    - a. Neighborly and familiarity (60%)
    - b. Own their home and have families (5%)
    - c. Activities in parks, many community events and youth center (10%)
    - d. Want to make it safe and provide support for youth and families (10%)
  
  - B. Dislike about the neighborhood
    - a. Mostly dislike crime, gun violence, drug sales, shootings (31%)
    - b. Rundown, abandoned and dilapidated building and property (25%)
    - c. Lack of opportunities and community activities (13%)
  
- III. What could make this neighborhood better?
  - a. Grocery store(s) and other retail shopping (17%)
  - b. Provide residents with resources to invest in the neighborhood, invest capital and resources, building the capacity of residents (12%)
  - c. Housing improvements, fewer rental homes, update current housing stock (10%)
  - d. Activities for youth, need mentoring programs (10%)

- e. Increase police patrol, road enforcement (7%), more parks, extra playground (7%), more opportunities/jobs (7%), increase sense of safety (7%), parent participation (5%).
- f. Citizen pride (2%), transportation (2%), ask people what they need (2%) Improved roads, traffic management (2%).

IV. What can you tell us about the youth that live in the neighborhood?

- a. Need more to do, too much hanging round, unsupervised, little to do (41%)
- b. Problems in school, struggle academically, truancy, exposed to trauma (23%)
- c. Generational poverty, most youth eligible for free and reduced lunch (18%)
- d. More guidance, need role models (14%)
- e. Parents need to be involved in youth lives, lack of home training (effective parenting), families with addiction problems (14%)
- f. Youth learn what they see, violence, witness crime, exposed to trauma, picking up the toxic environment (9%).

V. How is the relationship with law enforcement in this neighborhood?

- a. Need community policing back, more open conversations, law enforcement can be improved in terms of community relationships, stretched too thin (31%)
- b. I have heard members of the neighborhood say they appreciate law enforcement presence, seems relatively good to me, but I am not very qualified to say (23%).
- c. Unsure, not sure (15%)
- d. Relationship is nonexistent, relationships are very poor, not well, prejudices on both sides (15%)
- e. Relationships are good and bad, ups and downs, 50/50 (12%)
- f. Need for mental health services – knowledge gap, perhaps a service gap (4%)

VI. What is the relationship with the court system in this neighborhood?

- a. Don't know, unsure, non-applicable (93%)
- b. Courts don't hold feet to the fire (3%)
- c. Court system is not favorable, discrimination of people of color (POC) (3%)

VII. What are the barriers to getting good jobs in Centralia?

- a. Lack of education, technical skills, job searching skills (27%)
- b. Transportation, transportation on weekends, lack of license to drive (16%)
- c. lack of job awareness, youth need exposure to different job types and opportunities (8%)
- d. Need childcare, babysitters, especially evenings and weekends, (11%)
- e. Unwilling to take pre-employment screenings, drug testing, background checks because of prior convictions (8%), lack of desire to work (8%), Need to be given chance (8%) Type of work (5%)

- g. Need good connections for job, who you know, (3%), who you know, housing (3%), and flexible employers (3%)
- VIII. What resources are available and helpful and useful? (Percent mentioned by respondents)
- a. Centralia community youth center (CCYC) 24%
  - b. BCMW 20%
  - c. CRC 10%
  - d. Housing Authority, Housing, 8%
  - e. Schools, education system 6%
  - f. Drug counseling, SCT, OFA, drug counseling, Kaskaskia College, Spero, Mission Centralia, CMWCC, WIOA, DFS-CIL, Centralia job fair, Church programs, social media, career expo., Events at the park, KC, mental health services, (each mentioned one time)
- IX. What resources are missing in the community?
- a. Job training, job searching services, job preparation services, life skills and soft skills training for youth (30%)
  - b. Recreation areas, CCYS building and ground need improvements, play areas, need pool (11%), youth mentorship, youth leadership, family activities (11%)
  - c. Not accessing existing resources, lack of knowledge and awareness (7%), build community relationships, central resources/connection organization or coalition to work with city, policy to work together (7%), Wraparound services, mental health services – inpatient beds, resources for developmental delayed youth (11%)
  - d. Affordable housing (4%), police involvement (4%)
- X. If you own a business in the neighborhood, how do you feel about it? (Only 4 responses)
- a. Ensuring safety, particularly at night, need more police (50%)
  - b. More city involvement in community (25%)
  - c. Hard to get employees (25%)
- XI. What other information do you want to share?
- a. Many of my employees lack reliable transportation, need transportation in area, Lack of easy, reliable transportation for those without licenses (15%)
  - b. If we don't make a change, the cycle will never be broken, and we will never get the violence out of our children. Need to understand childhood trauma and consequences, something to prevent them going down terrible paths (10%) Need to support youth, youth are our future, programs, activities, supervision, I feel this community works well together if they have a direction and leadership. Knowing the expectation or needs they work hard to meet them in a unified effort. (10%), Basic job skills, workforce training, Job prep needs to be established for the training of our youth, programs for basic job skills. Workforce training (10%), Park and rec place and activities- need a baseball diamond (10%), Sense of future for Centralia. Excited to see where the grant goes and what happens in the next phases, I am happy to help with anything I can.
  - c. Love to see the parents get involved (5%), Employer Needs: As a business owner,

we need the workforce (5%). Many do not follow through after applying for a job, do not show for interview or first day after hired (5%)