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Street Sweep Employment Program

A MODEL FOR CHURCH AND COMMUNITY COLLABORATION
WITH FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATIONS



by Byron R. Johnson and William Wubbenhorst

Purpose & Mission

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STREET SWEEP EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM:

A Model for Church and Community Collaboration with Faith-Based Organizations

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The value generated through Street Sweep is demonstrated both through the sustainable transition of program participants and the savings for local city government from the efforts of the program participants in removing trash and litter.

INTRODUCTION

The Street Sweep Program is an innovative program developed through a partnership between the First Baptist Church (FBC) Waco and Mission Waco, Mission World, located in Waco, Texas, both to provide valuable work experience for individuals experiencing homelessness, as part of a holistic wrap-around of spiritual and practical supports, and as a civic contribution to keeping Waco clean.

The value generated through Street Sweep is demonstrated both through the sustainable transition of program participants and the savings for local city government from the efforts of the program participants in removing trash and litter.

The three-fold purpose of this case study is to provide:

- i. A brief background and history of Mission Waco, Mission World, including its relationships with First Baptist Church of Waco, leading up to the development of the Street Sweep Employment Program.
- ii. A description of how the Street Sweep Employment Program operates within the broader Mission Waco, Mission World array of ministries, including key partners and stakeholders that support the program.
- iii. A preliminary evaluation of the program, including interviews of current and recent Street Sweep Program participants, as well as data outcomes analysis, from data collected on Street Sweep Employment Program participants, and a projected Return On Investment of the program.

I. BACKGROUND - Mission Waco, Mission World

In 1991, Jimmy and Janet Dorrell, after years of informal neighborhood ministry, created Cross Culture Experiences, Inc., a nonprofit Christian organization designed to help students leave the comfort of their own cultural experiences and come to understand and love the poor and marginalized. A “poverty simulation,” out-of-country “exposure trips,” and a few neighborhood Bible clubs filled their time since the couple was bi-vocational. Within a year, they received \$75,000 in start-up funds from a foundation named Christian Mission Concerns (established by Paul and Katie Piper) to establish Mission Waco, Mission World.

Mission Waco, Mission World programs are built around three goals:

- 1. Empower:**

Through relationship-based, holistic programs among the poor and marginalized.

- 2. Equip:**

Through the mobilization of middle-class Christians toward “hands-on” involvement.

- 3. Engage:**

Through addressing systemic issues that dis-empower the poor.

Due to growing numbers of homeless people who had no safe place to sleep, Dorrell gathered four other pastors together in 1994 to create Compassion Ministries as another separate nonprofit for homeless women, children and families. In 1995, another ministry called “Manna House,” a ten-bed residential alcohol/drug recovery home, was established by Jason Pittman of Mission Waco, Mission World. The goal was to target low-income persons, including the homeless who could not access other treatment programs. A transition house named “The Lighthouse” for those completing the program was established on North 15th Street. However, it was not until 2004 that Mission Waco, Mission World chose to establish a chronic homeless shelter, called My Brother’s Keeper.

In 2016 plans were firmed up for remodeling an old grocery building into Jubilee Food Market as a tangible way to address the reality that Mission Waco, Mission World’s neighborhood was essentially a “food desert” with a lack of fresh foods and affordable groceries for purchase. The lack of fresh food and groceries that are affordable is a problem commonly experienced in most urban centers in the United States. By the time Jubilee Food Market’s grand opening rolled around on December 1, 2016, 362 donors had given a sum of \$653,133 in cash as well as \$255,329 of in-kind donations totaling \$908,462.

Since then, Mission Waco, Mission World (renamed to Missions Waco, Mission World to reflect its commitment to both domestic and international mission work), has grown into a diverse array of missions and programs, with 33 full-time and 43 part-time staff (See Exhibit 1 for a current organizational chart of Mission Waco, Mission World). John Calaway became the new executive director in January 2018 as a part of an extensive succession plan. Jimmy Dorrell remains connected to the organization as President Emeritus and continues helping with the Jubilee Food Market as well as other development projects.

Origins of the Street Sweep Employment Program

First Baptist Church Waco (FBC) and Mission Waco, Mission World (MW), are two of the most prominent and widely recognized organizations in Waco, but only had an informal relationship prior to the formation of the Street Sweep Employment Program (SSEP). Their shared mission to serve the poor and marginalized in the community was the main factor directly responsible for making their two paths intersect. The origins of their formal partnership through SSEP were precipitated by a visit, in 2019, from, of all places, the Office of Environmental Crimes (OEC), which was part of the city's Solid Waste Department. FBC was located next to Magnolia, a major tourist attraction in Waco made famous by the popular television show *Fixer Upper* starring Wacoans Chip and Joanna Gaines. FBC provided paid parking to tourists visiting Magnolia, which led to high volumes of visitors and, with them, trash.

In response to this trash problem, brought to their attention by the Office of Environmental Crimes, FBC could have contracted with a trash removal company to address the matter but chose instead to create a mission opportunity out of the situation. Joshua Hays, who has served as the Associate Pastor of Discipleship for FBC since 2017, met with Calaway from Mission Waco, Mission World to discuss the development of a work-readiness program utilizing shelter residents to provide trash pick-up services for FBC. With FBC providing \$45,000 in start-up funds for the first 6 months, the Street Sweep Employment Program was first incubated in late 2019 and begun in earnest by March of 2020. Currently, FBC still provides 50% of the funding for SSEP.

II. THE STREET SWEEP EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

As the Street Sweep Employment Program (SSEP) was to target homeless shelter clients, it was placed within the My Brother's Keeper shelter program for homeless adults, alongside several other social service programs provided by Mission Waco: Emergency Shelter, Extended Stay Shelter, Transitional Housing, MPowerment, and Youth Mpowerment. The idea of SSEP was to serve as an employment opportunity for those in the shelter seeking to 'earn their keep' but not yet ready for the rigors of full-time employment. The SSEP participants are employees of MW and are expected to work at least 20 hours per week. Generally, participants work for SSEP for around 3 months,



“The Street Sweep program gives us the opportunity to ease them back into employment in a more supportive environment, which many of our residents need on the path to living independently in the community.”

Sam Doyle, Director of My Brother's Keeper (MBK) shelter and Mpowerment instructor

receiving on-site professional training in preparation for full-time employment beyond Mission Waco, Mission World. This allows SSEP to serve about 12 participants per year.

In addition to providing trash pick-up for FBC, the program soon grew to take on other trash pick-up responsibilities, growing from one SSEP worker to three. In May of 2022, Ryan Harrington was hired as Program Director under the umbrella of Mission Waco, Mission World Social Services. His responsibilities consisted of case management for the SSEP participants, program development and fund-raising. As previously mentioned, SSEP participants were recruited from among the 30-40 shelter residents, based on their ability to meet the physical requirements and have a degree of mental stability and motivation to work.

The two key resources within MW that supported SSEP participants are the Mpowerment program and support from MW Social Services. All SSEP participants are required to take the Mpowerment class, a life skills program aimed at addressing a range of issues in participant's past, some going back to traumatic experiences in childhood, to prepare them for the demands of obtaining and keeping a job. This includes lessons on everything from communication strategies and managing workplace conflicts to financial literacy workshops, job searches, mock interviews, etc.

Sam Doyle, Director of My Brother's Keeper (MBK) shelter and Mpowerment instructor, explained how SSEP provides a valuable intermediate step for transitioning their residents to employment and independent living:

Before the Street Sweep Program, we would be trying to transition the shelter residents directly into employment and housing. The Street Sweep program gives us the opportunity to ease them back into employment in a more supportive environment, which many of our residents need on the path to living independently in the community.

Beyond the Mpowerment program and resources, SSEP participants also have access to a wide range of social services, including mental health counseling and access to medication, a legal clinic to address any outstanding criminal background issues, and sometimes family reunification. MW also provides a \$500 match to SSEP and MPowerment participants' own savings to assist with obtaining housing.

SSEP's Partners

The partnerships that supported SSEP go beyond that of just FBC and Mission Waco, Mission World. Below is a summary of other community-based partners that contribute to the program's success now and in the future.

Keep Waco Beautiful, which was established in 1981 as a certified local affiliate of Keep Texas Beautiful and Keep America Beautiful, has been a valuable partner to SSEP. Keep Waco Beautiful has provided material assistance, in the form of gloves, grabber pickers¹ and trash bags. In return, SSEP has assisted Keep Waco Beautiful in providing trash pick-up at some of its fund-raising events as well as other City Center events, funded by the city of Waco to administer various economic development projects and events (see below). Keep Waco Beautiful includes the work of SSEP in the performance reports it submits to its state and national affiliates (see Exhibit 2 for a sample report).

Turner Brothers Real Estate, which is actively involved in economic development projects in downtown Waco, has had a working relationship with Mission Waco, Mission World for the past 5 years. Shane Turner, broker/partner for Turner Brothers, is committed to working with partners like Mission Waco, Mission World that help provide the people with whom they work a purpose. In addition to hiring some SSEP 'graduates', Shane Turner has also provided scholarships for technical school through Mission Waco, Mission World's Wellspring Scholarship program.

City Center Waco is funded by the city of Waco to administer its Public Improvement District² and other economic development projects funded through the city's general fund. City Center Waco's interim director, Chris McGowan, has a long history of working with Mission Waco, Mission World on a variety of development projects. He sees a number of opportunities to partner with SSEP in the future, including:

- engaging with Lawns Limited, a commercial landscaping company that recently won a bid from the city, to utilize SSEP graduates that would like to continue working in the field; and
- engaging more with Waco city council members and departments, including Parks and Recreation, Streets, and Solid Waste, as well as the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, to develop business opportunities for projects in various neighborhood commercial corridors.

III. PRELIMINARY EVALUATION OF THE STREET SWEEP EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

This section consists of two components: i) Summary of interviews with recent and current SSEP participants; and ii) Analysis of pre-post outcomes data, provided by Mission Waco, Mission World, to produce an estimated Return On Investment (ROI) on SSEP, based on the financial impact of the outcomes of SSEP participants, as compared to the cost of the program.

SSEP Participants³

1 A device with two parts that open and close on the end, used for taking hold of or picking up things.

2 A Public Improvement District (PID) is a designated area where property owners pay a special assessment for improvements and services within that area. The services must benefit the PID area and are supplemental to services already provided by the city. What are Public Improvement Districts? - Triangle Realty (triangler Realtyllc.com)

3 The names of the participants have been changed to preserve anonymity.

George – After 12 years working for a construction company, George found himself unemployed and without housing. In addition to living in the MBK, George signed up for SSEP and began job training in April of 2021. After 4 months, George had saved enough money to obtain housing and employment with Mazanec Construction, where he has worked for the past year. George described how Ryan Harrington, SSEP's program director, helped him plan for the future:

Ryan worked with me on setting short-term and long-term goals. Now that I have achieved my short-term goals of getting a car and a house, I am working on getting skills to find work outside of Waco.

Miguel – Miguel was homeless, living under a bridge, for 8 months before coming to the MBK shelter. After completing the 4-week MPowerment class, Miguel worked in SSEP for 2.5 months doing landscape work for Turner Brothers Real Estate. His time in SSEP and the shelter also helped to keep him in good standing with his parole officer. Miguel especially appreciated the relationships and camaraderie he developed with other residents through the MPowerment program:

I liked being part of a group of people. It gave me a chance to build positive relationships in my life. I have stayed connected with Sam [Doyle, MBK Director] and the other staff and the people at the shelter. Also, the mental health services helped me to find happiness and peace in my life.

Joseph – Joseph was a current SSEP participant as of November of 2022. He came to the MBK shelter. He spent 2 months in the shelter before he obtained housing through HUD's⁴ Rapid Rehousing Program. Joseph enrolled in SSEP while still a MBK resident and continues to work in the program. He also works with a case manager to help manage his medications. As Joseph explains, the SSEP was a good way for him to transition back to a working life:

I enjoy the work and it's easy to do. They are also teaching me how to build relationships and showing me the resources that are out there to help me get a job. I like having a coach to help me figure all of this out. I am interested in doing voice acting, and I am attending an acting class currently.

Bruce – Bruce is a current SSEP participant, having been in the program for a month after completing his MPowerment training. While working for SSEP, Bruce is actively looking for work, attending job fairs and applying for seasonal employment at Amazon. MPowerment was helpful for Bruce, teaching him how to look for a job and obtain housing.

He has developed strong relationships through the MBK shelter and its programs and hopes to stay connected.

⁴ The US Department Housing and Urban Development provides funds across the country to support the transition of individuals experiencing homelessness to housing in the community.

Key Outcomes

- 100% of SSEP participants obtained a referral to the Mission Waco, Mission World Health Clinic, and 6 of 18 applied for medical insurance.
- 12 of the 20 participants (60%) received help to obtain a form of identification, including obtaining a birth certificate (7) and getting assistance with social security (7).
- 12 of the 18 SSEP participants (67%) were able to find employment upon leaving SSEP ; and
- 15 of 18 participants (83%) left the MBK shelter for permanent housing.



Bruce described his work with SSEP:

I enjoy the work, helping to clean up the community. It makes me feel like I am part of the community. I would like to continue doing this kind of work in the future.

Preliminary Evaluation

Mission Waco, Mission World was able to provide data on the 20 SSEP participants who served since the start of the program. Below are some of the findings related to their condition upon enrollment.

Demographics

- 15 of 20 SSEP participants (75%) were diagnosed with some form of mental illness, of whom 13 were receiving medication assistance.
- 14 of the 20 participants (70%) had been convicted of a felony and/or incarcerated, including 5 registered sex offenders; and
- 11 of the 20 participants (55%) suffered from some form of Substance Abuse and/or Alcoholism.

Below are some of the outcomes achieved through MBK and the SSEP.

Outcomes

- 100% of SSEP participants obtained a referral to the Mission Waco, Mission World Health Clinic, and 6 of 18⁵ applied for medical insurance.
- 12 of the 20 participants (60%) received help to obtain a form of identification, including obtaining a birth certificate (7) and getting assistance with social security (7).
- 12 of the 18 SSEP participants (67%) were able to find employment upon leaving SSEP ; and
- 15 of 18 participants (83%) left the MBK shelter for permanent housing.

A Preliminary ROI Analysis - Translating Outcomes to Financial Impact

The ROI calculation shown in Table 1 below is based solely on an analysis of the employment and housing outcomes for the 20 SSEP participants served to date.

⁵ Data on two of the SSEP participants were not available.

The changes associated with estimated public program cost savings for these eighteen friends are as follows:

- i. 15 participants prevented from experiencing homelessness and in stable housing;
- ii. 12 participants obtaining employment at an estimated average earnings rate of \$18.00/hour;
- iii. 13 participants receiving medication, either with assistance from or fully purchased by MW, for their diagnosed mental illness.

Table 1: Estimated ROI for Street Sweep Employment Program

TYPE OF OUTCOME	ESTIMATED ANNUAL SAVINGS/ADDITIONAL TAX REVENUE PER HOUSED INDIVIDUAL	ESTIMATED 2-YEAR TAXPAYER SAVINGS	METHODOLOGY/SOURCE
Cost saved from homelessness prevented. 20 participants at estimated 83% finding permanent housing = ~17 participants.	\$39,000 in taxpayer costs per year for chronically homeless individual	<u>1st year savings</u> $17 \times \$39,000 = \$663,000/\text{yr}$	Homelessness City of Waco (waco-texas.com) ⁶
Additional tax revenues from increased employment rate: 60% employment for SSEP participants versus overall ⁷ 30% employment for homeless individuals overall means an additional 7 individuals employed per year due to SSEP.	\$4,773 per person in additional tax revenues per year	<u>1st year estimated additional tax revenues</u> $7 \times \$4,773 = \$33,411$	Based on a 13% tax burden in Texas ⁸ times \$36,720 annual wages at \$18.00/hour.
Total Year 1 Estimated Savings		$\$585,000 + \$28,641 = \$696,411$	
Total Year 2 Estimated Savings⁹		\$522,308	
Total 2-year savings		\$1,218,719	
Estimated annual costs for SSEP participants	\$14,300	$\$14,300 \times 20 = \$286,000$	
Estimated 2-year ROI		$\$1,218,719 / \$286,000 = \$4.26$	Every \$1.00 invested in SSEP produced \$4.26 in taxpayer savings over 2 years.

⁶ These include costs to hospitals, Waco PD/Sheriff's dept, and County Jail as well.

⁷ FactCheck Q&A: do 'about 30% of homeless people have a job'? (theconversation.com)

⁸ Low Tax for Whom? Texas is a "Low Tax State" Overall, But Not for Families Living in Poverty – ITEP

⁹ Based on the assumption that 75% of SSEP participants maintain their housing, employment and medication adherence for their diagnosed mental illness.

Based on research demonstrating the public costs associated with these outcomes, there was an estimated \$1.2 million in future public program costs avoided and additional tax revenues generated through increased employment levels of SSEP participants. Compared to an estimated cost of \$286,000 (20 participants times \$14,300), results in an estimated ROI of \$4.26 for every \$1.00 invested in SSEP after only two years following program completion.

These calculations are deliberately conservative with respect to outcomes and impact in several ways:

- It only captures the additional tax revenues associated with the high employment rate and does not include the direct benefits of the earnings for the SSEP participants.
- It factors in a 75% reduction in the 2nd year of outcomes to account for participants who may lose their job or housing.
- There are many other benefits associated with the SSEP that simply cannot be translated into financial and/or economic savings.

Long-Term Savings Are Even Greater

This calculation is only focused on short-term savings and outcomes occurring within a 2-year span. What is not included here are the significant savings associated with changing the trajectory of these SSEP participants' lives through the support they received through Mission Waco, Mission World, with the support of its partners' newly found housing, social networks, and other resources.

IV. THE STREET SWEEP EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM - LOOKING AHEAD

With almost three years of experience operating SSEP, Mission Waco, Mission World is now looking to formalize the program model for other cities to replicate. Exhibit 3 shows a logic model developed by Mission Waco, Mission World (MW) to capture all the activities, outputs and outcomes planned for SSEP, which will also help them to identify where they need to conduct additional data collection to monitor the success of the program. The preliminary ROI calculation shown above provides a starting point for demonstrating the value and impact of the program. MW also plans to explore ways of placing a value on the trash clean-up efforts itself, in addition to the benefits for the SSEP participants.



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Street Sweep is an example of what happens when people, inspired by faith and simple goodwill roll up their sleeves in order to care for their neighbors.

Sustaining and Growing SSEP

Currently, the SSEP budget is being funded, in its entirety, by First Baptist Church Waco and a couple of businessmen in Waco. However, MW hopes to diversify funding for SSEP in the future. As MW CEO John Calaway explains:

We would like to increase the revenues coming in to support SSEP to expand the program and add another shift supervisor and add another two teams of three participants each, with one of those teams focused on developing contracts to provide lawn care as well. In addition, we want to be able to share this unique ministry to other cities and give them the benefit of our experience to allow them to move up the learning curve rapidly.

Likewise, SSEP director Ryan Harrington is looking to strengthen the relationship and social support components of the program, and improve their data collection capacity:

I would like to see SSEP as a community of participants, keeping the program's alumni connected as part of a network of relational supports, which is essential for successfully transitioning from homelessness to housing and economic independence. Developing this alumni network will also be valuable to learn from former program participants about what did and didn't help in the program, so we can improve outcomes.

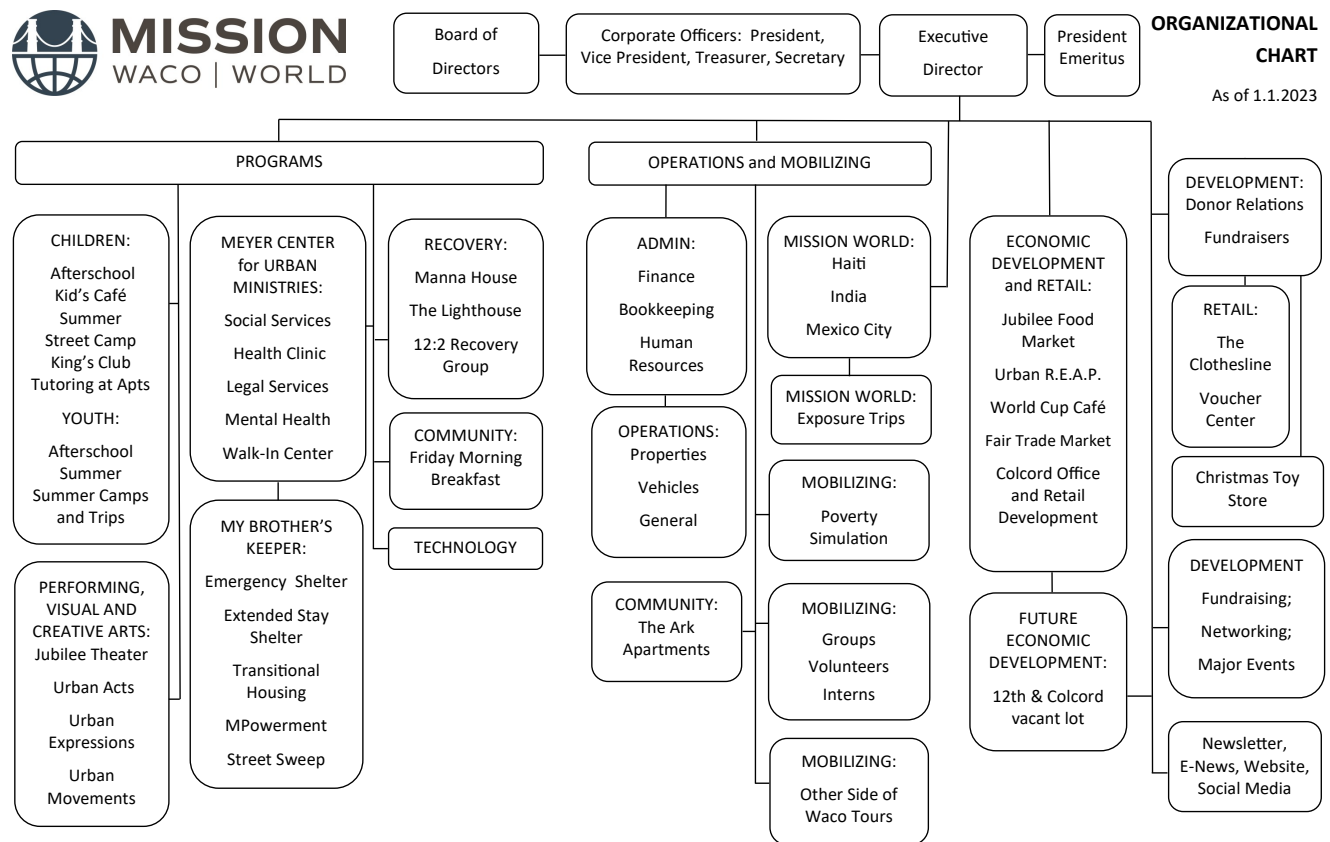
Lastly, with plans to expand the program, we are looking at recruiting participants outside of the My Brother's Keeper shelter to also include those exiting from drug rehab through Mission Waco, Mission World's Manna House.

Conclusion

American citizens have always been the backbone of ambitious solutions to the world's most pressing problems. In the most innovative ways, communities of faith continue to rally to serve their nation by launching initiatives and volunteering in their local communities. This case study is yet another tangible reminder of the clever and selfless way that houses of worship and faith-motivated individuals are catalysts for new ministries that serve those in need and address real-world problems.

Exemplary programs like Street Sweep happen in countless communities across the nation, even though they rarely receive recognition for their invaluable contributions to civil society. Indeed, there is not a social problem in America that is not being addressed by a faith-based or community group every day. Street Sweep is an example of what happens when people, inspired by faith and simple goodwill roll up their sleeves in order to care for their neighbors.

EXHIBIT 1: Organizational Chart



EMPOWER. Provide Christian-based, holistic, relationship-based programs that empower the poor and marginalized.

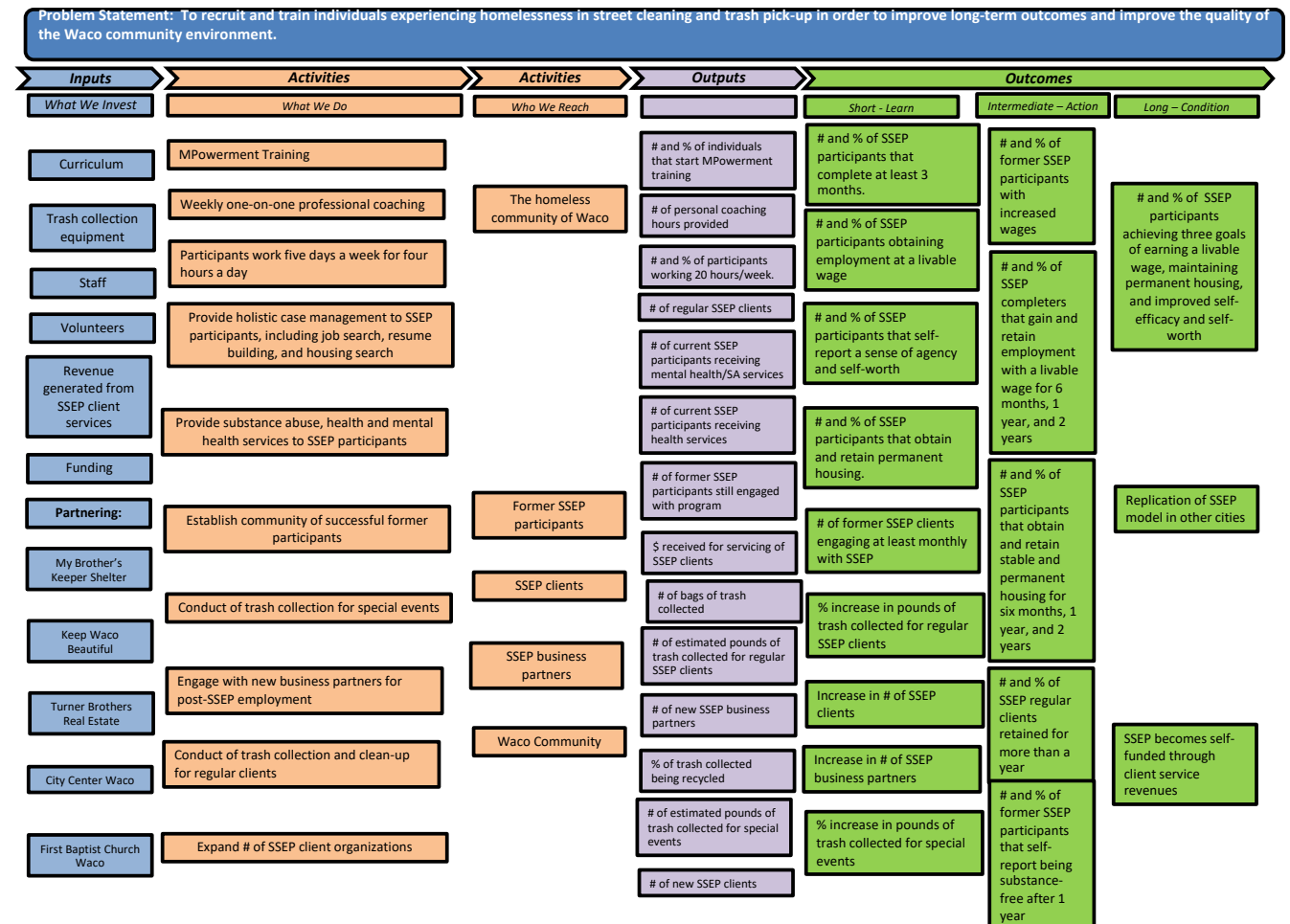
EQUIP. Mobilize middle-class Americans to become more compassionately involved among the poor.

ENGAGE. Seek ways to overcome the systemic issues of social injustice which oppress the poor and marginalized.

EXHIBIT 2: Street Sweep Program Contributions to Keep Waco Beautiful Performance Metrics (2022)

	Total Trash Pick-up				
	Date	Location	# of bags picked up	lbs. of trash	
	1/31	Monthly Totals	59	1,459	
	2/28	Monthly Totals	47	737	
	3/31	Monthly Totals	103	866	
	4/30	Monthly Totals	30	387	
	5/31	Monthly Totals	59	549	
	6/30	Monthly Totals	376	898	
	7/1	Waco Paddle	78	898	
	8/1	Monthly Totals	35	745	
	9/30	Monthly Totals	52	673	
	10/31	Monthly Totals	58	745	
	11/30	Monthly Totals	35	325	
	12/3	Wilbert Austin Sr. Park	32	363	
			964	8,642	
	Total lbs. of trash collected by Keep Waco Beautiful			69,093	
	% of trash collected by Street Sweep			13%	

EXHIBIT 3: Street Sweep Employment Program Logic Model



ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Byron R. Johnson is Distinguished Professor of the Social Sciences at Baylor University. He is the founding director of the Baylor Institute for Studies of Religion (ISR) as well as director of the Program on Prosocial Behavior. Johnson is a senior fellow at the Sagamore Institute (Indianapolis). He is a leading authority on the scientific study of religion, the efficacy of faith-based organizations, and criminal justice. Recent publications have examined the impact of faith-based programs on recidivism reduction and prisoner reentry. Before joining the faculty at Baylor University, Johnson directed research centers at Vanderbilt University and the University of Pennsylvania. He has been the principal investigator on grants from private foundations as well as the Department of Justice, Department of Labor, Department of Defense, National Institutes of Health, and the United States Institute for Peace. He is the author of more than 200 articles and a number of books including *More God, Less Crime: Why Faith Matters and How it Could Matter More* (2011), *The Angola Prison Seminary: Effects of Faith-Based Ministry on Identity Transformation, Desistance, and Rehabilitation* (2016), and *The Quest for Purpose: The Collegiate Search for a Meaningful Life* (2017).

William Wubbenhorst is a non-resident fellow for the Institute for Studies of Religion at Baylor University (ISR). He recently completed a 21-month term as Associate Commissioner for the Family and Youth Services Bureau within the Administration for Children and Families. Previously, Mr. Wubbenhorst worked as a consultant to government and non-profits for over 30 years, most recently as a Return On Investment (ROI) Specialist, developing economic measures for community-based social and health programs. Mr. Wubbenhorst has collaborated with professors from several prestigious academic institutions, including Baylor University, Boston University and Harvard University. He has published a variety of peer-reviewed journal publications and case studies. Recently, Mr. Wubbenhorst co-authored a case studies entitled *Harvest of Hope: A Faith-Based Child Welfare Intermediary and The Crosswinds – Open Table Collaboration: An Aftercare Model for Runaway and Homeless Youth*. Mr. Wubbenhorst received an MBA with a concentration in Public and Non-Profit Management (Beta Gamma Sigma honors society) from Boston University.



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BAYLOR UNIVERSITY

ONE BEAR PLACE #97236

WACO, TX 76798

254/710-7555

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