

Cooperation Jackson (CJ) – Jackson, Mississippi

SNAPSHOT

Overview

Our vision is to develop a cooperative network based in Jackson, Mississippi that will consist of four interconnected and interdependent institutions: an emerging federation of local worker cooperatives, a developing cooperative incubator, a cooperative education and training center (the Lumumba Center for Economic Democracy and Development), and a cooperative bank or financial institution.

Mission

“The broad mission of Cooperation Jackson is to advance the development of economic democracy in Jackson, Mississippi by building a solidarity economy anchored by a network of cooperatives and other types of worker-owned and democratically self-managed enterprises.” – Cooperation Jackson Website

Constituency

- Youth and adult (0-9 and 17-65+)
- African American
- Caucasian
- LGBTQ
- Homeless
- Immigrant
- Undocumented
- Formerly incarcerated



Local Conditions & Critical Issues Impacting 0-5 Childhood Health in Jackson, MS

Failing Public Education System

Including a lack of opportunities for youth. Jackson Public School District is one of 19 school districts in the state that received a failing grade from the Mississippi Department of Education.¹

“[The lack of] extracurricular activities for young people is a major concern because people talk about that being related to crime and folks getting in trouble... There’s a lot of the older people (parents and especially grandparents) that just really want to see something that’s even fun for them to do... something that would keep them busy or keep them out of the streets... everybody understands that all those different things are related to learning and skills and socialization.” – Sacajawea Hall-Williams, Coordinator

Neighborhood Safety Concerns

Including violence and crime. Jackson’s crime rate is higher than 95.2% of U.S. cities²; specifically, Jackson scores an 81 on a scale of 1 (low) to 100 (high), which exceeds the U.S. average at 38.1 for property crime (burglary, larceny-theft, motor vehicle theft, and arson).³

Key Indicators of Childhood Health in Jackson, MS

18.9%

of Mississippi high school students are **obese** and 17.1% **overweight**. Of those, 53.2% said that they were not trying to lose weight.⁴

69%

of third-grade children had tooth decay, 39% had **untreated tooth decay**, and 10% needed urgent dental care.⁵

34,000

children live with serious mental **health conditions** in Mississippi.⁶

CJ’s Accomplishments in Wellness & Safety

- **Community Model of Cooperation**—working collectively to share existing resources and support each other.

“The fact that we actually do have resources here compared to being told what we don’t have is just as much a part of healthy living. For that to be something that is seen at an early age and is engrained as you’re growing up is a really important part of the work.”

Current Wellness & Safety Efforts

Freedom Farms Urban Farming Cooperative—Food Justice initiative that is building a network of farming plots throughout Jackson; the objective of the Urban Farming Cooperative is to supply Jackson with high quality foods (vegetables, fruits, fish and poultry) at affordable prices and to create sustainable, living wage jobs for Jacksonians.



Community Defined “Best Practices” to Improve Childhood Health

1. Bottom-up Approach

“I would say that the best practice that I think needs to be proliferated is a more bottom-up approach to identifying the issues and then developing what we can collectively do together to get there.”

2. Intentional Inclusion

“Reaching beyond the language of inclusion to the practice of: Who’s in the room? Who’s at the table? Who gets to be the ‘leader?’”

Allies/Partnerships Working on Children’s Health

- Mississippi Immigrant Rights Alliance- Jackson, MS <https://yourmira.wordpress.com/>
- Malcolm X Grassroots Movement- Jackson, MS <https://mxgm.org/>
- Mississippi Association of Cooperatives- Jackson, MS <http://www.mississippiassociation.coop/>
- Federation of Southern Cooperatives- <http://www.federationsoutherncoop.com/>



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2. (N.D), Crime rate in Jackson, Mississippi (MS): Murders, rapes, robberies, assaults, burglaries, thefts, auto thefts, arson, law enforcement employees, police officers, crime map. Retrieved from <http://www.city-data.com/crime/crime-jackson-mississippi.html>
3. (N.D.), Jackson, Mississippi: Crime Overview, Retrieved from <http://www.bestplaces.net/crime/city/mississippi/jackson>
4. 2017, Mississippi State Department of Health: Childhood Obesity, Retrieved from https://msdh.ms.gov/msdhsite/_static/43,14258,289.html
5. Mississippi State Department of Health: Oral Health Plan , (2016), Retrieved from https://msdh.ms.gov/msdhsite/_static/resources/7315.pdf
6. Harvard Law School Mississippi Delta Project. (2014, March). Mental Health In Mississippi: Analysis and Recommendations. Retrieved from <http://www.deltadirections.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/Mental-Health-in-Mississippi-.pdf>