

## LUTHERAN FOUNDATION OF ST. LOUIS

### **FACTORS FOR SUCCESSFUL SOCIAL SERVICE MINISTRY INITIATIVES**

In 2004, Lutheran Foundation of St. Louis contracted with the University of Missouri – St. Louis to conduct several studies regarding grants it had made to area congregations. One study examined what characteristics of congregations and their community project result in successful social service outreach ministries. The research reviewed ten projects conducted at nine different area congregations. In-depth interviews were conducted with key individuals involved in the project as well as the pastor.

The following were identified as key factors for a successful congregational community engagement project:

- Strong, effective leadership (both lay and clergy) which motivates and inspires others to share actively in the project
- A vision to serve the community, not just the congregation
- A good fit among the skills, interests, and leadership with those involved and the target audience
- Strong initial planning for the project and congregation buy-in
- Ongoing congregational participation in implementation
- Ability to understand the target population/community and how to communicate with it
- Formal cooperation/collaboration with community stakeholders/other institutions
- Ability to be flexible as the project evolves
- Congregational capacity for community engagement
- Targeted community/population capacity and trends
- Project funding comes from multiple sources