

Ekklesia Development Corporation
Cincinnati, OH

Project GILEAD, an online service linking faith-based providers

PROJECT NARRATIVE

I. Project Purpose

To network currently fragmented and disjointed faith-based services, and provide access to these services for Hamilton County, Ohio's disadvantaged and underserved residents through customer-driven digital information and customer-friendly business processes.

I.1 Problem. The Governor's Advisory Task Force on Faith-Based Community Service Groups convened by then President George W. Bush noted that despite 30+ years and \$5.4 trillion spent on human service programs since the 1960s, the nation has experienced a 30-year rise in illegitimacy of 500 percent, a 600 percent increase in violent crime, and over 6 million children on welfare rolls. The centerpiece of the American welfare system — AFDC, the federal cash entitlement benefiting unmarried poor mothers — is gone. This human services context, the funding of September 11th related charities, a global crisis to finance the war on terrorism, and downturns in the economy have led to budgetary cuts at the nation's social service agencies. Locally, organizations such as The Urban League of Greater Cincinnati, Hamilton County Department of Jobs and Family Services, and the Cincinnati Empowerment Zone [CEZ] are undergoing financial downsizing. These cuts, however, are occurring in the backdrop of high crime rates, unemployment, persistent poverty, homelessness, and precipitating tensions in Cincinnati that have reached.

Notwithstanding, Greater Cincinnati's civic infrastructure includes 2,047 socially active faith congregations, 100+ formal and informal religious organizations, and myriad faith-based agencies that promote values and economic independence. See Appendix I.1.1. In a 1998 survey of 400 area residents conducted by Corinthian Baptist Church, the faith community was considered the most important community service asset. In fact, 44.9% of respondents gave faith organizations the top ranking over six other organization types, including community councils, civil rights organizations, and chambers of commerce. A recent Ekklesia Development Corporation [EDC] survey found that faith-based providers offer an average of six community services (e.g., substance abuse treatment, offender/ex-offender services, literacy training, affordable housing, etc.), serving 500 to 999 people annually. Locally, these organizations are centers of volunteerism. And they are committed to asset development in underserved markets. (e.g., JIREH Development Corporation's Equipping Center, St. Aloysius Orphanage expansion, City Cure purchase of new offices, Allen Temple Foundation's Swifton Commons redevelopment. Over 55% of EDC survey respondents indicated that their organizations developed assets (e.g., service centers, recreation facilities) in the past 5 years, and 63% indicated plans to do so in the next 5 years.

However, some of the worst socioeconomic conditions in Greater Cincinnati are found in the very neighborhoods where the faith community is most present and making significant capital investments. For instance, the 3,889-resident Village of Lincoln Heights has some 28 churches within its area of 0.737 square miles. But the village is plagued with a per capita income that falls below \$9,000. Avondale, with 19,000 residents and the region's largest community of African Americans, is the home of nearly 60 churches and the Coalition of Churches' Avondale Towne Center redevelopment. Yet this community suffers from the 4th highest crime rate of area neighborhoods, unemployment that exceeds 60%, and a poverty rate of over 40%. Ironically,

many of Hamilton County's most impoverished, at-risk, and depressed neighborhoods – such as Over-The-Rhine, West End, and Price Hill – have significant faith-based community service capacity. In the EDC survey, aside from obtaining financial resources, respondents ranked the following as the most important improvement areas for faith-based services: 1) utilization by the underserved community; 2) awareness by the underserved community of faith-based services; and 3) impact on the underserved/at-risk community. Thus, *while the Governor's Advisory Task Force position with regards to the role of faith-based services might be accurate, in Hamilton County, there is a "disconnect" between these services and those who are in most need.* This disconnect is rooted in four practical problems:

- **Missing/Out-Of-Date Service Information.** Traditionally used directories (or listings) cannot provide citizens' current capacity (e.g., number of vacant beds at The Interfaith Hospitality Network of Greater Cincinnati) or availability of temporary/emergency services (e.g., utility bill payment assistance).
- **Search Inefficiencies.** Individuals currently rely on "hit and miss" approaches such as phone calls, word of mouth, on-site visits, and other time-consuming search techniques. An unemployed worker desires a training program that holds classes on the weekend, provides on-site childcare facilities, and integrates computer literacy. Currently, no digital resources exist to provide the names of faith-based services that can meet this need.
- **No Integrated Tracking Capabilities.** Providers are unable to share client information across organizations. This leads to client abuse, budget shortages for legitimate needs, and missed opportunities to address root problems. As an example, Mr. Jones presents a \$1,000 heating bill to Corinthian Baptist Church [CBC] in order to substantiate a \$250 request for food assistance. Mr. Jones receives the assistance because the faith community, as noted by Pastor Kazava Smith, *"Is not in the business of saying no."* However, CBC had no way of knowing that Mr. Jones had received benevolent funds from four other churches that day! The abuse diminishes benevolent funds for future legitimate assistance cases. Likewise, as George Findley of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati suggests, *"The problem might be a drug problem. So rather than dealing with a problem, the faith community in some cases actually enables the dysfunction."*
- **Disjointed Services.** Local faith-based providers have no effective means to share service and project information, offer referrals, locate volunteers, identify experts, and solicit resources. For instance, at the time of this application, New Prospect Development Corporation's Wineskins (emergency shelter/food) service lacks resources and is in need of volunteers. Further, Wineskins is not linked to other faith-based services that work with homeless and ex-offender citizens on GED preparation/testing, computer training, and other workforce development areas. This is not to suggest that resources, volunteers, and complimentary services are not available; identifying them however, is a difficult task.

I.2 Solution. Thus despite the growing need, barriers make it difficult for the underserved community to access Hamilton County's faith-based services. That is, until now. The proposed digital network and related business processes will provide citizens and faith-based service providers solutions to aforementioned problems. Discussed further in Appendix I.2.1, solutions include:

- **Web Database to Resolve Missing/Out-Of-Date Information.** Area faith centers and intercongregation/interfaith coalitions maintain up-to-date service information through Project GILEAD's interactive Web-based data repository.
- **Distributed End-User Access to Solve Search Inefficiencies.** Underserved citizens will utilize a network of Internet terminals strategically placed throughout the Greater Cincinnati area. These include: (1) an installed base of 425+ public Internet workstations at partner facilities (e.g., libraries); 2) GILEAD PC HelpStations installed on-site in targeted areas such as places of worship; and (3) GILEAD Internet-capable Kiosks placed in high-traffic locations (e.g., recreation centers).
- **GILEAD Accounts to Address No Tracking Capabilities.** Underserved residents will be able to enter account information such as needs self-assessments, education and work history, and goals (e.g., employment interests). This gives faith-based providers throughout the region a single repository to identify those in need and the nature of the needs, coordinate services, enter service data, better steward resources, and increase accountability. Note that secure socket transactions and user authentication will address privacy issues.
- **Real-Time Digital Messages for Disjointed Services.** The project will solve response time problems of currently disjointed services through message routers that enable real-time notification. This is useful for (1) linking volunteers to providers; (2) enabling faith-based developers to reach technical experts (e.g., grant writers, counselors); (3) responding to emergencies (e.g., suicide prevention, crisis intervention, conflict resolution); and (4) sending/receiving inter-organizational referrals.

The solution includes mission critical business processes to: train and employ economically disadvantaged residents to manage the Project GILEAD infrastructure; enroll a network of 200 faith-based providers; and provide outreach/educational campaigns for hard-to-reach citizens.

I.3 Measurable Outcomes. Principally, Project GILEAD will empower Hamilton County residents to overcome the grips of dependency and dysfunction. The project will provide residents the necessary tools to proactively access solutions to unemployment, substance abuse, affordable housing, affordable childcare, etc. The project has adopted an activity-based model to measure outcomes and provide accountability: 1) 50,000 underserved residents access GILEAD providers; 2) 2,000 persons volunteer 15,000 volunteer service units to GILEAD services; and 3) 50 new congregation/ intercongregation/interfaith service initiatives. The Evaluation Plan in Section I.9 discusses the approaches to measuring outcomes. In addition, a highly publicized "G-meter" will provide up-to-the minute statistics on how the community is coming together to lend a hand to those in need. See Appendix I.3.1.

I.4 Targeted Population. *The Geographic Market.* Geographically, Hamilton County covers 412.8 square miles within the 13-county, Greater Cincinnati Consolidated Metropolitan Statistical Area (3,810 square miles). See Appendix I.4.1. The county is comprised of 48 statistical distinct neighborhoods. Each is known by certain factors, has developed identities, and contributes to the unique cultural diversity of the area. The West End has produced a number of local leaders such as Ohio Secretary of State Mr. J. Kenneth Blackwell. Lincoln Heights has a rich cultural tradition as the home of Nikki Giovanni and The Isley Brothers. And Amberley Village is historically an enclave for the preservation of Jewish traditions.

Targeted Customers and Consumers. As discussed in sections I.1.and I.2, Project GILEAD targets both *customers* and *consumers*. Emblematic of the 1999 NTIA “Collected Case Study Evaluations: Summary of Findings”, there is a degree of blurring between project partners and end-users. **Customers** are the area’s 2000+ faith organizations and their membership, the latter representing a pool of potential GILEAD volunteers. **Consumers** are distressed, disadvantaged, dependent, and dysfunctional residents of Hamilton County, Ohio. The county’s economic indicators reflect gross socioeconomic disparities. For instance, while the median income of \$38,763 exceeds the Ohio figure by more than \$2,734, homeownership falls 9.2 percentage points below the state’s at 67.5%, and the poverty rate of 11.4% surpasses the state’s by .4%. According to the Hamilton County Department of Jobs and Family services, 8,378 households and 20,710 individuals received Temporary Aid to Needy Families [TANF] cash assistance in 2001. In that same year, 21,769 families and 49,355 individuals received Food Stamps. The Greater Cincinnati Coalition For The Homeless reports that 25,000+ local citizens, including children 9,000+, experience homelessness in the course of a year. Of families with children in the county, 47.5% are single mothers. A particular focus is on residents of the Cincinnati Empowerment Zone and 11 other economically disadvantaged neighborhoods. These areas, referred to “GILEAD Restore Zones”, include neighborhoods with poverty rates over 60% and where up to 69% of adults do not have high school diplomas. See Appendix I.4.3.

I.5 Innovations

I.5.1 Partnerships. Against Hamilton County’s economic backdrop, is the existence of a diverse group of faith congregations, associations, and agencies. These organizations are providing an assortment of programs available to the underserved community. A sample list is provided in Appendix *Notwithstanding, Hamilton County (and for that matter the country), does not have an interactive digital web portal of faith-based services.* Such a partnership model is readily scalable to the faith-based community across the country. Project GILEAD expands the traditional partnership models achieved through TOP awards. In the case of the 2000 award to the Crisis Services of North Alabama (Helpnet), the target is the 125 area not-for-profit organizations and local government agencies. The Providence, RI COZIN project (TIAP FY 1999) targeted schools, libraries, and traditional service providers as well. IMPACT (TIAP FY 1999) was targeted for Lake County, IL human services organizations, with a possible expansion to the City of Chicago. And Caracole, Inc’s SOPHIA system (1997) serves social agencies such as the United Way. Further, the involvement of partners such as The Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County Department of Jobs and Family Services and City of Cincinnati Career Resource Center leverages the installed base of public Internet workstations. Integrating existing investment in community technology will enable Project GILEAD to concentrate resources on server infrastructure, robust application functionality, innovative end-user access, and deploying an organizational structure that provides needed supportive services. Given role definition problems encountered by Project InterLinc (1995-1996), support letters and Memoranda of Understanding [MOUs] are used to clarify roles. See Appendix I.5.1.2.

I.5.2 Technology-Enabled Social Service Process Re-Engineering. The aforementioned NTIA awards involve Internet-based solutions. Project GILEAD will integrate the Internet and touch screen kiosks (as did Helpnet and IMPACT). But the major long-term vision for Project GILEAD is to use *wireless communications* and volunteers equipped with personal digital

assistants [PDAs] to provide “access without walls” and “rapid service response” for persons in prison, nursing homes, hospice centers, on the street, etc. During the demonstration period, we will conduct a field study to assess the feasibility of and receptivity to using wireless communications for intake functions and service coordination.

I.5.3 Promoting Relationships. Racial/ethnic healing in the faith community is absolutely critical in order to penetrate systemic socioeconomic problems especially in a post-911 environment. In Greater Cincinnati, a key to the region’s current tensions is the active involvement of the multicultural/multiracial faith community in serving the needs of disadvantaged residents. There is significant social capital at stake with bridging the race/ethnic divide in the faith community. Project GILEAD will reach out to ecumenical groups to facilitate multicultural collaboration for the benefit of the general community. Further, Project GILEAD represents a faith-based/secular agency joint venture: The recent debate in Washington, DC regarding faith-based initiatives is creating a charged climate of concern in the social service sector. For instance, the National Association of Community Action Agencies [NACAA] recently convened in Chicago, IL to discuss the issue of faith-based initiatives and the impact of CAAs. The Project GILEAD partnership structure, which includes the Cincinnati-Hamilton County Community Action Agency and City of Cincinnati Employment & Training Division Career Resource Center, offers a national model of faith-based/secular agency collaboration.

I.5.4 New Approach to Faith-Based/Government Collaboration. On September 14, 2000, Congressman Bobby Scott (D-VA) sponsored an issues forum on “Charitable Choice” as a part of the Congressional Black Caucus Annual Legislative Conference. Several panelists cited alternative ways to foster cooperation between church and government in the delivery of social programming. Project GILEAD implements of six key innovations. See Appendix I.5.4.1.

I.5.5 End-Users As Information Producers and System Managers. Project GILEAD extends the functionality of SOPHIA, NetWellness, and Helpnet by empowering underserved citizens to produce information and manage the overall process. Clients will be able to enter their service needs self-assessments, goals, and service plans, schedule appointments with service providers, and reserve service (e.g., emergency shelter, substance abuse treatment, literacy training), maintain a personal service calendar, place a resume online, and provide ideas to the network of faith-based providers as to how they can better serve the underserved community. The project will train and employ persons from the ranks of the disadvantaged population to assist the design, implementation, and management of the overall process and system infrastructure. Fundamentally, we believe that identifying responsible workers from the underserved community will sensitize Project GILEAD to factors that will best position this project to serve the public while in a sense enabling the underserved to take control of their futures. This is consistent with NTIA direction and Welfare Reform’s Workforce Investment Act [WIA] that emphasizes customer choice/control.

I.6 Diffusion Potential

Beyond the 3-year demonstration, Project GILEAD rollouts will be planned for the State of Ohio, the Ohio/Kentucky/Indiana tri-state area, and ultimately the nation.

I.6.1 Market Factors. The convergence of 4 factors creates the statewide and national market for Project GILEAD. First, the gap between the needs of the underserved and the fulfillment of those needs is a national concern. For instance, the U.S. Conference of Mayors [USCM] study “A Report on Hunger and Homelessness in America’s Cities 2000” concluded that 13% of food requests and 23% of emergency shelter requests went unmet in 1999. Second, the impact of Welfare Reform, financial commitments to the war on terrorism, and the state of the economy pose challenges to social service agencies across the country. This problem was highlighted by the United Way that expressed concerns that charitable giving for September 11th relief has negative consequences on other organizations. Third, the problems associated with underserved populations accessing increasingly important faith-based services are not indigenous to Hamilton County, OH. The absence of a digital network for faith-based providers is common to US cities, both urban and rural. And fourth, the existence of 164,574 religious organizations operating across the nation according to US Bureau of Census 1999 County Business Patterns data represents tremendous capacity to serve the underserved.

I.6.3 Portability. Project GILEAD utilizes Internet access with a scalable back-end data engine that enable seamless expansion and access to new geographic markets. Market entry costs are reasonable given the initial investment in a robust server and network environment. Several project partners – e.g., Archdiocese of Cincinnati, Cincinnati-Hamilton County Community Action Agency - have national affiliations. The organizational model includes a Partnership Development function that will be responsible for intra- and inter-market acceptance. Business processes such as users maintaining their information and data standards are geared toward low-cost, customer-friendly practices, and distributed processing. Consequently, expanding Project GILEAD to markets is less of a technical problem per se.

I.6.3 Diffusion Strategies. Strategies to actively share information about Project GILEAD are threefold. **GILEAD Journal**, a national publication, will be distributed to faith-based organizations active in social services across the US. An inaugural prototype edition has been circulated in Hamilton County. The Journal provides income for Project GILEAD, but more than that promotes the program, as well as provides a national forum to discuss best practices in community services. **Statewide Meetings** will be held with faith-based providers in the five largest cities in Ohio – Akron, Cleveland, Dayton, Columbus, and Toledo. Here we will provide program education, community service success stories, implementation strategies, and other details. **GILEAD Conferences**, designed as a forum for faith-based institutions to discuss community development strategies, will provide critical mass outreach exposure for Project GILEAD. Wherever possible, we will connect to Project GILEAD through the Internet to provide live demonstrations during presentations. Care will be taken to “brand” all collateral publications and events under the GILEAD name in order to build awareness and loyalty.

I.7 Project Feasibility

I.7.1 Technical Solution. In developing Project GILEAD’s technical solution, a set of Architecture Principals, models, and preliminary platform decisions were established through meetings with and input gathered from numerous groups, including The Salvation Army, Digital Millennium LLC, Triad Development LLC, City Gospel Mission, The Interfaith Alliance, The Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County, Cincinnati Recreation Commission, and

Cincinnati-Hamilton County Community Action Agency. Learnings from previous NTIA awards – Lane County, Charlotte’s Web, Helpnet, IMPACT, COZIN, Caracole (SOPHIA), Pennsylvania Kiosk Project Case Study, Western Brokering Project Case Study - provided valuable insights. The project has adopted 10 Architecture Principles to address major concerns raised on issues such as privacy, interoperability, and compliance (e.g., providers maintaining up-to-date information). See Appendix I.7.1.1. The basic design utilizes broadband access to the GILEAD Internet server (from GILEAD machines), a scalable data repository, and messaging infrastructure for rapid-response transactions. Open directory technology will manage user information, authentication, and other processes. A flow log server will support transaction audits. A firewall and backup cluster will control access and provide seamless redundancy, respectively. A network of PC workstations and kiosks will have dial-up access to the Internet server; the long-term plan includes handheld devices that GILEAD volunteers will use to access the Internet site through wireless connectivity. Reliability will be maintained through a fully redundant server environment maintained at a remote facility. Preliminary platform decisions, consistent with Architecture Principals, are reflected in the Budget Narrative section under Equipment (II.4). Note that the Project GILEAD Advisory Council [PGAC] will own technology direction-setting recommendations, providing such to Ekklesia Development Corporation on a periodic basis. PGAC’s Technology Team will include technical resources from agencies such as City Gospel Mission to promote interoperability. **Technical alternatives** existed around: (1) computing environment; (2) data entry data centralization/decentralization; and (3) buy versus build software. Each was considered, with decisions made that are most consistent with Architecture Principals. Project GILEAD will be Internet-based, employ end-user/decentralized data entry, and build proprietary software. See Appendix I.7.1.2. The GILEAD Maintenance Plan was developed to provide direction on the handling requests for system upgrades, notification of system failure/problems, and major enhancements will be managed. See Appendix I.7.1.3.

I.7.2 Applicant Qualifications. Ekklesia Development Corporation is committed to real quality of life changes for at-risk population segments. The Project GILEAD Advisory Council [PGAC] is comprised of partners with extensive experience in computing, business development, community services, faith-based programs, and other core competencies necessary to accomplish the project’s goals. This includes The Village of Lincoln Heights, the oldest U.S. municipality of predominantly African American citizens, has made a significant commitment as it seeks to revitalize a community hit hard by economic divestment, crime, and poverty. The Cincinnati-Hamilton County Community Action Agency, a \$32 million organization, operates a model Head Start program, is investing \$15 million in a new community service facility, constructed a technology center, amassed a fleet of vehicle to transport clients, and implemented weatherization services. Digital Millennium, LLC, the technology manager, has experience in LAN/WAN, enterprise messaging, directory services, client-server computing, database systems, systems integration, and a number of other core competencies. See Appendix I.7.2.1.

I.7.3 Budget and Implementation Schedule. Total project cost of \$1,020,000 includes an NTIA award of \$510,000 and match of \$510,000. This assumes funds are made available in October 2002, with work beginning immediately thereafter. See Appendix I.7.3.1.

I.7.4 Privacy. There is a recognition that holistic and rapid-response services across multiple

GILEAD providers require the maintenance of highly personal information. Business processes and technical solutions will ensure privacy. See Appendix I.7.4.1 Principal #3. A detailed plan will be provided upon acceptance of this application.

I.7.5 Sustainability. Project GILEAD will remain *economically viable* beyond the grant period through four income strategies: (1) Primarily, contracts with GILEAD Providers – that is faith-based services - to maintain their service information content in Project GILEAD; (2) Partners’ sponsoring kiosks, PCs, and ultimately PDAs; (3) State/national rollout of Project GILEAD provide incremental operating margin given the major investment in fixed costs; (4) Operating as a Workforce Development Eligible Training Provider to receive WIA funds to train unemployed workers to run the program. Key factors for *operational viability* include commitments from faith-based providers to maintain timely information and the assistance of Digital Millennium LLC to oversee the technology plan.

I.8 Community Involvement

I.8.1 Partnerships. From the project’s conception, the applicant developed a set of core competency/key resource requirements, giving attention to the need for diverse participation and providers that have a demonstrated commitment to meeting the needs of people in the Cincinnati Empowerment Zone and other GILEAD Restore Zone neighborhoods. Partners were sought through roundtable discussions and on-site meetings. Appendix I.8.1.1 describes one of the meetings. Partners have been confirmed, each with specific roles and contributions as defined in the GILEAD Partnership Model. See Appendix I.8.1.2. As some NTIA award recipient partnerships collapsed at the end of the funding period, Project GILEAD is built on mutual benefits to promote long-term relationships.

I.8.2 Obtaining and Sustaining Community Support. A Stakeholder Support Model was created to clarify external linkages and strategies. See Appendix I.8.2.1. In 1998, a survey of 400 Hamilton County residents was conducted to understand the needs and interests of underserved communities, and the perceived role of the faith community in fulfilling such needs. Several meetings with stakeholders were conducted to discuss the challenges facing underserved population segments, the efficacy of enabling the faith-based community to participate in a more collaborative manner, and barriers facing the underserved. Additional learnings were derived through participation on the Cincinnati Empowerment Zone Task Force and from prior lengthy dialogues with NTIA grantees (e.g., Helpnet). Appendix I.8.2.2 describes users, their needs, involvement in project design, recruitment, training, and supportive services. A Lead User team will work with the development team throughout the process.

I.8.3 Support for End-Users. During the early community meetings, we assessed needs of various anticipated users. Extensive profiles were created and provided in Appendix I.8.2.2.

I.9 Evaluation. Built into Project GILEAD’s execution plan are the “-Meter”, online feedback, periodic analyses, annual reports, and an end-of-grant period case study. As Project GILEAD will conduct human subjects research, we have budgeted for a third-party institution to develop and review our evaluation plan as well as to assist the execution. See Appendix I.9.1.