

West End Revitalization

mlkcenter.org/westend

Making the West End of Rock Island a preferred place to live and thrive

We envision a West End of Rock Island that is a preferred place to live and thrive. This requires building the West End community's wealth, power, and livability. No single person, organization, or sector can do this on its own. We all must work together to achieve it.

The Martin Luther King Center is bringing together the West End community and its supporters to make overdue, positive, lasting, transformational change.

Following a community-informed assessment completed in 2021, teams of community activists moved to action on **five impact areas**.



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Revitalization**
ROCK ISLAND, IL

Community Engagement



The relationships, networks and skills that communities use to make decisions and solve problems are essential to a community's long-term success. We want to strengthen participation, collaboration, equity, and communication – for and by both citizens and organizations.

Personal Assets & Income



West End residents earn significantly lower incomes, experience higher unemployment and poverty rates, and have high rates of disconnected youth compared to the rest of Rock Island and the entire Quad Cities. It is vital to increase the assets and income of West End households.

Housing & Land



Housing in the West End presents serious challenges, currently. We envision stable housing that builds assets and wealth, and neighborhoods that are safe and supportive of upward mobility. We also envision increasing West End community control over land and housing.

Community Economic Vitality



There must be more (and more targeted) investment to support, grow, and attract businesses and entrepreneurs, and to provide much-needed services and amenities to all community members.

Infrastructure & Visual Appeal



Infrastructure – sidewalks, streets, broadband access, etc – impacts everything from transportation and business attraction to recreation and educational achievement. We envision a community that is both functional and beautiful.

Progress so far

To move from assessment to action to measurable change, the West End Revitalization is working together using a strategy called “collective impact.” We are building a network of West End community members and supporters – nonprofits, funders, government, businesses, financial institutions, schools, individuals, clubs, societies, and more – to envision the future we want for our families and community, to align activities, to implement innovative solutions, to evaluate our progress, and to learn and improve together.

- In the summer of 2022, a Task Force of community representatives appointed a Steering Committee for the West End Revitalization.
- The Steering Committee created Working Groups in the five impact areas described on the front, plus one cross-cutting areas: Communications.
- A full-time West End Coordinator was hired in June 2023. A second full-time Coordinator was hired in April 2024.
- Working Groups met regularly throughout 2023 to prioritize strategies, and to create specific, measurable goals for each impact area.
- The Quad Cities Community Foundation awarded a \$300,000 Transformation Grant to the MLK Center in January 2024, for West End Revitalization.
- A three-year implementation plan was unveiled in March 2024.

The Martin Luther King Jr Community Center is providing backbone support to the West End Revitalization. That includes mobilizing, coordinating and facilitating the Steering Committee, Working Groups, and Collective Impact process.

**For more information:
Visit mlkcenter.org/westend
Or call (309) 732-2999**