

## Leadership Group of Indianapolis AdvAntage Initiative

**Issue Area:** Local Leadership

**Contact:** Joseph DiLaura  
The AdvAntage Initiative Manager  
4755 Kingsway  
Indianapolis, IN 46205  
(317) 803 – 6022  
jdilaura@cicoa.org

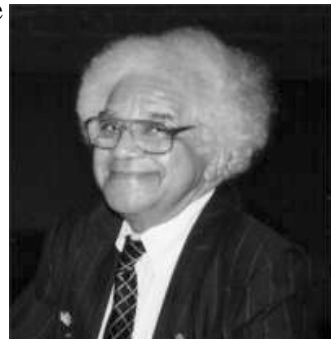


**Date Published:** June 2004

### **Summary:**

In 2000 there were 95,000 people over the age of sixty-five living in Marion County, the county including and surrounding Indianapolis, but predictions forecast that by 2040 this number will almost double to 187,000 people over the age of sixty-five. Nearly a one hundred percent increase, Indianapolis saw the need to make their city elder-friendly and in turn capitalize on the doubling demographic. In 2001 they and several other communities were selected to participate in a national initiative to meet their two needs, to create and benefit from, an elder friendly city. The initiative started with the help of CICOA Aging & In-Home Solutions and the help of a determined leadership group. Several other national foundations also participated in funding the initiative. The national initiative was run from a policy center on aging issues operated by the Visiting Nurse Service of New York City.

While the larger organizations ensured appropriation of some funds, Indianapolis needed an initial group of dedicated believers spark the initiative. This group, officially titled the “Leadership Group” by Indianapolis, began to lay the foundations for the initiative in Indianapolis. The leadership group was co-headed by Father Boniface Harden, president of Martin University, who seeks to create an affordable college experience for all people, and Helene Cross, the President and CEO of Fairbanks, a freedom from chemical dependency center. In addition to the two chairs, there were thirty-one other members, including twelve presidents, CEOs, executive directors of regional organizations and the deputy mayor. The leadership group was diverse and able to meet and convene effectively to create an aging in place agenda in their city. They set up the framework under which the program would proceed. Before the program began to take form, the leadership group set up six main goals for the initiative to accomplish.



*Father Boniface Harden, Co-chair of the leadership group.*

- Plan for and convene a major “summit on aging” for Indianapolis.

- Organize and manage a “community strategic planning” process through which the results of the comprehensive survey of Indianapolis senior citizens could be analyzed and recommendations and strategies developed to make the city more elder friendly.
- Develop communications programs and activities to help make the community more aware of the aging of the city and its implications.
- Develop partnerships and collaborations with other groups and organizations to implement the recommendations in the report.
- Develop and implement a plan to replicate the project in seven other Indiana counties.

In the past year, the first major goals have been accomplished. The “summit on aging” and “community strategic planning” were completed successfully. Through these forums the steering committee has agreed on four components of an elder friendly community: (1) addresses basic needs, (2) optimizes physical health and well-being, (3) maximizes independence for frail and disabled, and (4) promotes social and civic engagement. These four components were then further evolved into main branches of the initiative. Each branch now has its own board or committee to determine how best to complete their component’s goal.

The initial drive of the leadership group has sent this initiative in the right direction and its accomplishments are just beginning. This model program is an excellent example of local leadership because a group of individuals organized themselves and created a successful agenda to address aging in place. They have established goals to accomplish and laid out routes to follow. Their leadership has paved the way for others to follow and is demonstrated in the program through a collection of a steering committee and four “component boards.” Their initiative has been selected as a program champion by the federal Administration on Aging.

**Related Resources:**

The AdvAntage Initiative: Improving Indianapolis for an Aging Society.  
<<http://www.cicoa.org/advantage/index.html>>.

CICOA Aging and In-Home Solutions. <<http://www.cicoa.org/>>.

“Program Champions: CICOA Indianapolis AdvAntage Initiative.” Administration on Aging. <[http://www.aoa.gov/press/oam/May\\_2004/ch\\_052804.asp](http://www.aoa.gov/press/oam/May_2004/ch_052804.asp)>.

Martin University. <<http://www.martin.edu>>.

Fairbanks. <<http://www.fairbankscd.org>>.

“Leadership Group.” The AdvAntage Initiative.  
<<http://www.cicoa.org/advantage/LeadershipGroup.html>>.

**Additional Contacts:** Father Boniface Hardin  
President, Martin University  
(317) 917-3376  
bjones@martin.edu

Helene Cross  
President, CEO Fairbanks  
8102 Clearvista Parkway  
Indianapolis, IN 46256-4698  
(317) 849-8222