

**New Strategy in Bryan, Texas:** When the National League of Cities spotlighted the concepts of Economic and Social Exclusion and Social Inclusion on a conference call with Inclusion experts in January 2010, Project Unity clearly understood the need for an economic and social inclusion strategy to divert severely distressed low income neighborhoods within the City of Bryan from continuing to have a poverty increase at four times the national average. *“Social exclusion is when individuals or areas suffer from the negative effects of unemployment, low skills, low income, poor quality housing, crime, poor health, family difficulties, limited access to services, living in a remote area, isolation and high costs. Social inclusion is achieved by helping those on the margins of society to secure their place in the mainstream.”* (Branosky, 2011)

In May 2010 economic and social inclusion consultants Natalie Branosky and Lynn Todman came to Bryan, Texas to begin the inclusion process specifically targeting the city of Bryan. Natalie Branosky, Centre for Economic and Social Inclusion, U.K. and Washington D.C. ([www.cesi.org.uk](http://www.cesi.org.uk)) and Lynn Todman, Ph.D from the Adler Institute for Social Exclusion in Chicago, Illinois helped the city of Bryan create its Economic and Social Inclusion Strategy. The Economic and Social Inclusion model is based upon best practices (Branosky, 2011) Within the model, community leaders and partners: Define what economic and social inclusion is for their local community; Develop an evidenced based shared understanding of where the community is; Draft a vision statement of where the community wants to be; Choose priority groups and neighborhoods; Join across services to set shared targets; Develop and implement an action plan for achieving them; Partner with services providers who have a proven track record for quality; Meet regularly and continuously monitor the strategy via one agreed data expert/source; and Amend the strategy to keep it “live”. After six months of collective meetings, Ms. Branosky stated that **Bryan, Texas is the first city in the United States to develop a comprehensive economic and social inclusion strategy.** For Bryan, Texas, Economic and Social inclusion means: *Living in a culture of expectations for ourselves and our children, where the community values the life and welfare of all individuals.*

The ten year vision for Bryan is that every citizen will have the tools to access the “Good Life Texas Style”

Bryan will: Be a great place to live; Provide a great start to life; Provide excellent educational opportunities; Be safe and feel safe; Support a prosperous economy; Support and promote good health and the value of family; and Provide the best possible services to all residents. Bryan will bring about a change in local perceptions and perspectives such that all community members are valued and all residents have access to the resources that are necessary not only to survive but to thrive, grow and improve. By 2021, Bryan will be an export community built upon bottom up economic and social measures. The economic and social inclusion strategy was developed through Bryan’s Economic and Social Inclusion Action Network (E.S.I.A.N.), facilitated by Project Unity. The Network is comprised of individuals representing city government, business, housing, health, workforce and economic development, criminal justice, transportation, basic needs, education, child abuse and prevention, financial institutions, Americorps, faith based organizations, and non profits. The Centre for Economic and Social Inclusion team in London prepared an Exclusion Toolkit for Bryan which gave 2000-2009 census data based upon the American Community Survey.

The Economic and Social Inclusion Action Network set 10 year targets with 5 year milestones. By 2021, there will be: 2,089 fewer households below 60% of median; 500 fewer substandard homes; 755 less people needing help with a cognitive difficulty; 13,191 more people with health insurance; 6,761 more people working full-time; 230 more people using public transportation; 2,628 more high school grads; 342 more associate degree completions and 2,500 bank accounts.