

---

# AGORA'S SUPPLEMENT TO THE PFCEF

---

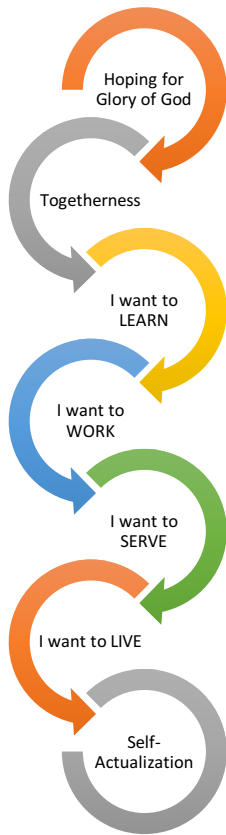
AN ALIGNMENT OF THE HEADSTART PARENT, FAMILY, COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK TO  
AGORA'S WHEELS WITHIN WHEELS CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM MODEL

Richard Bartholomew, Joshua Bartholomew  
2018 AGORA CHRISTIAN SERVICES, INC. | 400 W BROAD, COLS OH 43215

---

## WHEELS WITHIN WHEELS

---



Agora Christian Services was formed in 1997 using a new organizational structure known as Wheels Within Wheels. The inspiration for this model came from Ezekiel chapter one. This new structure was a piece of divine inspiration that differentiates our organization in several ways: leadership is circumspect instead of top-down, responsibilities are worn as hats instead of authority executed with crowns, individuals can wear multiple hats of responsibilities and three-dimensional circular structure instead of hierarchical.

Agora is not a vertical organization. It is an organization whose wheels move and accomplishments are achieved because people work together, serving according to their gifts and skills. Everyone, including leadership, serves in humble capacities to assist those in lead positions, while those in lead positions are governing the initiative at work. Instead of ruling over, or exercising authority over those with whom they are working, their purpose is to bring the best out of those with whom they are working. Theirs is to coach and encourage the gift their team member has to offer, as the team works together. Belief in God is foundational for this model, as it depends on the recognition of God's good created in each, God's gifts and skills which need polished, encouraged, affirmed, and acknowledged by everyone. The greatest outcomes emerge when this foundational principle and purpose is understood cognitively and followed ardently.

---

## PARENT, FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

---

---

### A CALL FOR A CHRISTIAN MODEL

---

Family engagement models without a spiritual influence simply fall short, because they fail to respond to underlying spiritual issues causing social and educational problems. They fail to be effective when the cause of the problem is deeper than the scope of the framework. These models are extensive with great strategies and impressive collaborative partnerships, but they never fully solve the underlying social problems in our communities of greatest need, because of the missing spiritual component.

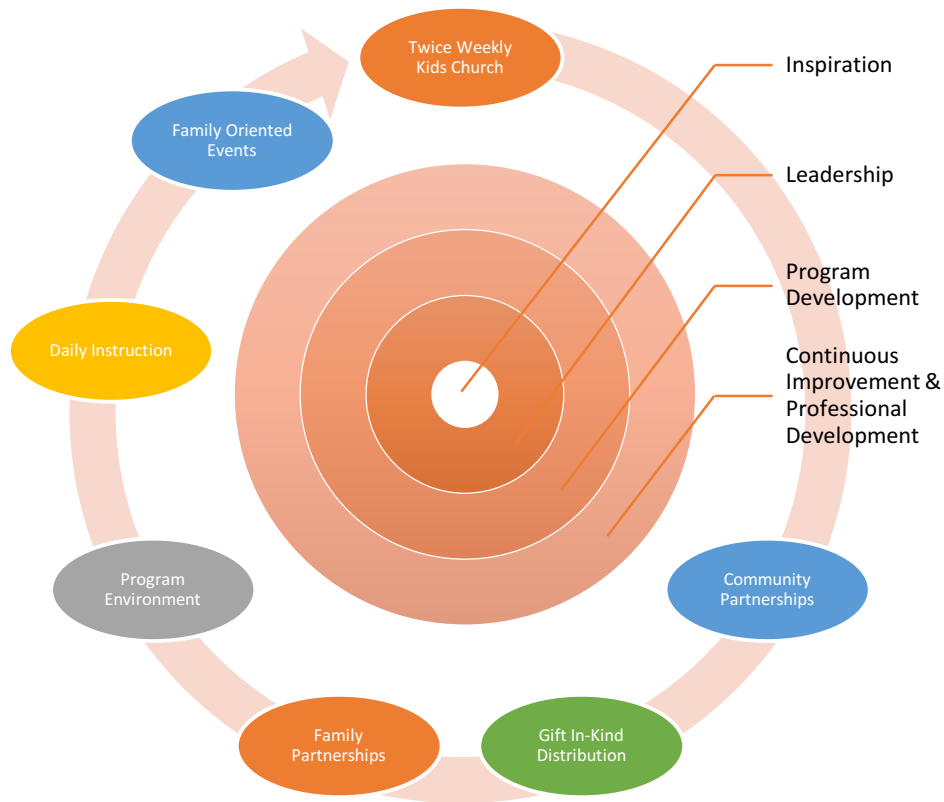
Models that focus on professional development, education and involvement have client families that may misidentify the differentiating social factors between staff and families, and it can lead to an us versus them social barrier and a judgmental meritocracy. These models are vertical in their development, vertical in their delivery, and vertical in their engagement. The client family is beneath the model in every stage, and made mindful of this on an ongoing basis, despite the efforts to include them in goal-setting and planning. They are de-valued by virtue of having everything to receive and nothing to offer except program initialized participation. **The one who desperately needs lifted and empowered is disenfranchised from the inside out. Such models build walls, sustaining the "us versus them" if not reinforcing and promoting and certainly not "leveling the playing field."**

Family Engagement Models of a faith-based character can fall short due to self-imposed isolation from research-based models because of the fear of the non-spiritual influence. These models are void of standards and excellence. Faith-based programs that are void of standards and excellence may impact client families with a spiritual component, but lack impact in the areas of school-readiness and ultimate transitioning of education into career end-points.

There is a need for a new Community Development Corporation Model integrated with the Headstart Family Engagement Model. A model that is successful and dynamic.

## AGORA INTEGRATED FAMILY ENGAGEMENT MODEL

---




---

### PROGRAM FOUNDATIONS

---

We begin the supplement with a brief reference to the program foundations found in Headstart’s framework. Please refer to their framework for information on Leadership, Professional Development and Continuous Improvement. Integrating Headstart’s model into the Wheels Within Wheels Model at Agora necessitated the additional program foundations: Divine Inspiration and Program Development.

#### DIVINE INSPIRATION

Each person is fashioned by God with skills and abilities, woven together that they might experience a joyful life that is overflowing with purpose and fulfillment. Inspiration is God communicating through His Spirit to our spirit within. It is not controlled but received and freed to work God’s good for each of us individually as well as community around us. Leadership can only lead in this model as each individual with responsibility surrenders control and submits what inspiration they receive for examination and

consideration with his team, trusting the inspiration of God with each team member. This same pattern is encouraged by everyone who participates in the program. Therefore instruments are sought out and valued which communicate inspiration from any who share together in the achievement of the organization's vision. Instruments which offer the ability to submit for consideration what good should be considered by every initiative and at every level of responsibility. Divine inspiration is multidirectional and reciprocal in understanding with clarity. Therefore, all program participants are essential for the discernment of God's inspiration.

### PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

Program Development is the work of facilitating the implementation of a solution to a need recognized through the Continuous Improvement Planning Process. When there is a vision to begin a new Initiative, as expressed by the community, it is the role of *program development* to facilitate the research, organization, training, and implementation the initiative. The Program Developer is also involved in a follow-up evaluation process, where internal audit reporting is translated into more informed board-level decision making. Program Development should never hold a static role in a program except with the ongoing internal audit controls. Program Development helps to fast-track improvements through energizing new responsibilities, teams and the carrying out of new policies, but not the decision making process. This program foundation should be differentiated from Continuous Improvement in this way.

---

### IMPACT AREAS

---

Impact areas include those present in Headstart's framework. Please refer to their framework for information on Community Partnerships, Family Partnerships, Teaching and Learning (Daily Instruction), and Program Environment. Our model supplements these with our twice weekly kids church gatherings (Kids Church and Kids Bible Club), Family Oriented Events and Gift In-kind Distribution.

### KIDS CHURCH

Kids Church activities should offer children the opportunity to learn spiritual values for everyday life and provoke praise and worship to God. Children who attend should see the relationships of friends and family members improve dramatically. Every child should value people around her and yet her behavior might suggest otherwise. Goals should be set together with children when there are opportunities to work at conflict resolution to assist them in their intrinsic goal of valuing the people with whom trouble happens frequently. The conflict resolution process should be a team effort, which includes peers and staff. Conflict resolution is paramount to relationship building and opens the door into every home and relationships with each parent. Conflict resolution should be at the core of any Kids Church program.

### FAMILY ORIENTED EVENTS

While Agora focuses on children of all ages, the family and everyone in each family is the subject of bridge-building ventures. Events like a Child Care Christmas Program are pivotal to communicating value to each person in the family. Opening up a facility for a special outdoor event like a barbeque communicates a sense of belonging to the Agora Family, and discourages the organizational identity of bureaucracy. It is at these events that family members should begin to see how they fit in and what contribution they may have. This can lead to an epiphany, or inspiration of sorts which hopefully results in a suggested event for the future. These events should be organized and run by the families, subject to the approval of proper leadership channels. It is always great when leadership then takes a hat of responsibility to fill a role under a volunteer event team.

## GIFT IN-KIND DISTRIBUTION

Responding the needs of our client families should include helping families with the simple needs inside the home. Some of these needs could include small things like groceries and bigger things like furniture, or helping a family move furniture. In fact, research has shown that homeless families placed in housing with an aggressive after-care program reduces recidivism rates dramatically. Any community development corporation working with families in need should be actively working to distribute gift in-kind donations, to keep families afloat however possible. It should also be the goal to include the family who receives in the giving, or helping, as we have seen this encourage positive self worth.

---

## OUTCOMES

---

- Reaching required state benchmarks with ease
- Everyone experiencing an overall sense of family
- Every kindness feeding into organic gatherings
- Outward facing professional development
- Individuals that critically think through life choices
- Inward facing attention toward the community
- Educational success transitioned into career end-points

---

## EVERYTHING DONE FOR OTHERS IS LOVE IN ACTION

---

There is such a force at work with authentic love that although one can reject this and walk away from such a power, it is difficult. This spiritual force is difficult to reject because God made us to give and receive love. Being engaged in it can be life changing. When we experience it, not simply see it or watch it, we are drawn like a magnetic field. Sincere acts of kindness soften that which had been hard and insensitive and transforms our world. It breaks the encrustations of hopelessness because it is true and personally impactful from one person to another.