

5-2006

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GVSU NewsCenter, "Grand Valley's Community Research Institute awarded national membership" (2006). *Research, Reports, and Publications*. 29.
<https://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/jcppubs/29>

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Grand Valley's Community Research Institute awarded national membership

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. -- The Community Research Institute, in Grand Valley State University's Dorothy A. Johnson Center for Philanthropy and Nonprofit Leadership, has been awarded membership in the National Neighborhood Indicators Partnership (NNIP).

In achieving membership, CRI joins a select group of 30 institutions representing cities from across the country. Grand Rapids will be the only Michigan member and will represent the Midwest along side Indianapolis, Milwaukee, Cleveland and Des Moines. Other members include Los Angeles, Boston, Washington, Seattle and Denver.

The National Neighborhood Indicators Partnership is a collaborative effort by the Urban Institute and local partners to further the development and use of neighborhood information systems in local policymaking and community building.

Kathy Agard, executive director of the Johnson Center, said NNIP membership acknowledges the work of CRI and provides an opportunity to have national impact. "This membership will give our work access to other committed and seasoned community change agents," said Agard. "It also will give them the opportunity to know us as we develop the capacity of our neighborhoods and institutions."

To become an NNIP partner, an institution must demonstrate that the following are central to its mission: (1) building and operating an advanced information system with integrated and recurrently updated information on neighborhood conditions in its city; (2) facilitating the direct practical use of data by community and city leaders in community building and local policymaking; and (3) giving emphasis to using information to build the capacities of institutions and residents in distressed neighborhoods.

Examples of CRI's work in these areas include: Grand Rapids neighborhood profiles; census and education data by region with trend analysis; and crime and housing data used by neighborhood, city and regional stakeholders.

For more information on the Community Research Institute or NNIP membership, call Mary McDonald, director of the Community Research Institute at (616) 331-7258 or Grand Valley News and Information Services at (616) 331-2221.