



LAWRENCE COMMUNITY CENTER TASK FORCE REPORT

RESOLUTION NO. 346-24

Lawrence Council

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MAYOR'S TASK FORCE

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Mayor's Task Force Report to Council

**Mayor’s Task Force Report to
Lawrence Township Council
September 16, 2025**

The Mayor’s Task Force was created to:

- Advise the Township Council on the concerns and priorities of Lawrence residents
- Address the mission statement and future vision of the Lawrence Community Center
- Engage the community to ensure decisions reflect collective needs and aspirations
- Preserve the Center’s legacy as a vital, inclusive space for all Lawrence Township residents

Based on the findings of the Mayor’s Task Force community data, the Mayor’s Task Force recommends that the Lawrence Town Council adopt the following recommendations to address the Council’s original charges and responsibly guide the future of the Lawrence Community Center (LCC):

The Council’s charge to “engage the community to ensure decisions reflect collective needs and aspirations” is represented in the appendix data evaluated by Dr. Mary McKillip and represents email outreach, group interviews, a community survey, and a community meeting.

Charge: Advise the Council on concerns and priorities of Lawrence Township residents

- We recommend the adoption of a clear, inclusive mission that recognizes the Center as a unifying township-wide resource, while remaining responsive to historically underserved communities.

- We recommend an articulate township-wide vision that explicitly names the Center as a space for all residents—across race, age, income, and neighborhood—while ensuring special attention to communities with limited access to other resources.
- We recommend reinstating Lance Corporal Douglas R. Dickerson Jr.’s name to the center, as well as including “Recreation Center” in the title—such as “The Lance Corporal Douglas R. Dickerson Jr. Community & Recreation Center.”
- We recommend developing strategic partnerships, including organizations and stakeholders such as nonprofits, schools, universities, businesses, and philanthropic foundations that collaborate with the Community Center to share resources, expertise, funding, and governance responsibilities to enhance its offerings and sustainability.
- Based on clear community input, we recommend the creation of a representative body, leveraging strategic partnerships of key stakeholders, accountable to the Council, to create a plan for the governance, staffing, and implementation of the program of the Center.

Charge: Address the mission statement and future vision of the Lawrence Community Center

Mission and Vision Recommendation

We recommend that whatever governing body Council determines to govern the Center create Mission and Vision statements that encompass the feedback included in this report.

Mission Statement Recommendation

The Lawrence Township Community Center is a vibrant, inclusive hub where all residents are empowered to connect, thrive, and grow. Rooted in a legacy of serving

socioeconomically disadvantaged communities, the Center fosters equity, learning, recreation, and well-being through accessible programs and services. By encouraging mutual support, collaboration, and shared purpose, we aim to enrich lives and build a stronger, more connected Lawrence Township.

Vision Statement Recommendation

The Lawrence Township Community Center will be a welcoming, community-governed Center that unites residents of all ages, backgrounds, and neighborhoods across Lawrence Township. Through dynamic programs, shared stories, and collaborative leadership, the Center will be a cornerstone of civic engagement, cultural celebration, lifelong learning, and collective care where diversity is celebrated and everyone has the opportunity to belong, contribute, and flourish.

Statement of Values

- **Equity & Inclusion** Commit to fair access for all Lawrence residents—regardless of race, religion, gender, or income—consistent with our mission, vision, and values.
- **Community Voice** The people of Lawrence Township should shape the programs, policies, and priorities of their community center.
- **Collaboration** Partner with local organizations, religious institutions, schools, and residents to deliver responsive, high-quality services.
- **Respect for Legacy** Honor the history and impact of the Lawrence Community Center through words and action, and uplift the stories of long-time community members.
- **Transparency & Accountability** Operate with openness, share outcomes, and continuously seek feedback to improve and grow.

- **Lifelong Growth & Belonging** Support personal, social, and civic development for residents of all ages, creating a space where everyone feels they belong.

Charge: Preserve the Center’s legacy as a vital inclusive space for all Lawrence Township residents

We recommend the installation of a permanent exhibit honoring the Center’s history. Reincorporate historic signage and establish a Legacy Council of long-time residents to guide commemorative programming and storytelling.

We recommend naming the building in honor of Lance Corporal Douglas R. Dickerson Jr.

We recommend the creation of a plaque naming and honoring the Community Center Founders.

We recommend maintaining community input and equity through strategic partnerships.

We recommend biannual township-wide meetings to ensure input from underrepresented groups.

Conclusion

The Lawrence Community Center has the potential to be a vibrant, inclusive, and historically grounded community space for all residents. We recommend the Council adopt these recommendations as guiding principles for a formal Strategic Plan with timelines, responsibilities, and budget scenarios.

Analysis: Strategic Partnerships

Analysis: Strategic Partnerships that Reflect Shared Investment in the Lawrence Community Center

Here are **all comments** from the McKillip Report data related to strategic partnerships and shared investment:

Strategic Partnership-Related Comments (Bulleted List)

- *“The Lawrence community residents (as well as other community stakeholders) should have key roles in the planning and governance of the center.”*
- *“Respondents suggested that governance of the center follow a ‘decentralized governance model’ where one organization is not managing the whole facility, allowing many small groups the opportunity to have a place to gather and build community.”*
- *“Engage other stakeholders in the community to collaborate in the planning and implementation of programming at the Center, including nonprofits, the Lawrence Township school district, higher education (e.g. Rider University), and other service providers (TASK, Y, Homefront).”*
- *“The community center could become a shared investment rather than a financial burden through partnerships with nonprofits, businesses, educational institutions, and philanthropic foundations.”*
- *“The Community Center would best serve the residents if community groups had a role in programming and governance.”*
- *“Local nonprofits could help bring in additional funds if they have a stake in the use of the facility.”*
- *“The Lawrence Township Public Schools could offer professional staff, faculty and student interns.”*
- *“The center would serve the community better if it was governed by a Board of Directors from each of the entities supporting the Center.”*
- *The Township could utilize the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation to include residents from start to finish,*

- *A speaker at the Community meeting encouraged “partnerships with nonprofit organizations, higher education institutions, and service providers to enhance and sustain programming.”*
- *A speaker “cited examples of site-specific investments and partnerships that enabled centers to thrive in other towns.”*
- *There is “potential for graduate student involvement, grant applications, and shared staffing models.”*
- *“A speaker emphasized that the need is vast and heavy, and called for collaboration with nonprofits, daycare providers, arts groups, and culturally sensitive multigenerational spaces.”*
- *“Multiple table groups at the Community meeting (3, 4, 5, and 8) suggested partnership with Rider, TCNJ, MCC, HomeFront, and other nonprofits.”*
- *“Use community service students from the high school and pull from colleges for help.”*
- *“Invite nonprofits to run programs alongside or instead of the Recreation Department.”*
- *“Form a Community Advisory Board.”*
- *“Encourage a Board with seats for the Recreation Department and community members.”*

What was the overwhelming sentiment and level of importance among our population?

Here is an analysis of all comments from the McKillip Report data related to Strategic Partnerships:

- **Tone:** Overwhelmingly **positive**
- **Themes:**
 - Shared responsibility.
 - Inclusion of trusted **nonprofit, educational, and faith-based** partners.

- Financial **sustainability** and **resource-sharing**.
- Strategic partnerships seen as a **necessity**, not just a benefit.
- **Language examples:** “shared investment,” “strengthen,” “enhance,” “inclusive,” “collaborate,” “empower,” “collective engagement.”

Here is an analysis of all comments from the McKillip Report data around the relative importance of the four major themes:

Compared to the **four major themes** in the McKillup report:

1. **Who the Center is For**
2. **What to Offer**
3. **The Legacy**
4. **Planning and Governance**

...the goal of forming **Strategic Partnerships** is embedded most deeply in **Theme 4: Planning and Governance**.

Relative Importance:

- **High.** It's the **most pragmatic and action-oriented** theme—mentioned across open-ended survey responses, town hall comments, and community leader testimonials.
- **Second only to "Who the Center is For"** in emotional emphasis.
- Seen as **essential to financial viability**, equity, and inclusion.

Conclusion

Forming strategic partnerships is a core, high-priority concern among community members. It is strongly associated with ensuring sustainability, equity, and community-wide ownership of the Center. Given that partnerships are seen as essential to achieving all other goals—including programming, representation, and outreach—this objective should be considered **one of the top two most important strategic imperatives** moving forward.

Important statistical data points from the report that provide **evidential substantiation** for the **importance of forming strategic partnerships** for the Lawrence Community Center. These are drawn from **survey results, demographics, and open-ended feedback analysis**.

Key Data Points Supporting Strategic Partnerships

1. Usage of the Community Center (Need for Outreach + Shared Investment)

- **42%** of survey respondents **never visited** the Center when it was operational.
- Only **16%** were **frequent visitors**.
- **Biggest barrier:**
 - **71%** (113/159) cited **“lack of awareness”** about events/programs.

Implication: Better outreach and visibility could be accomplished through **community partnerships** with nonprofits, schools, and civic groups.

2. Demand for Programming That Relies on Partnerships

Residents rated the importance/desirability of various programming types that would require **external expertise** or organizational collaboration:

Most Desired Programs (Top 6 out of 11 surveyed options):

Program Type	% of Respondents Who Desired It
Community meetings & cultural events	87% (139/159)
Life-skills workshops (e.g., resume, cooking)	87% (138/159)
Open gym for teens & adults	84% (134/159)
Arts & crafts, teen nights	84% (134/159)
Afterschool tutoring & mentoring	83% (132/159)
Food pantry	83% (132/159)

Implication: These services **cannot be fully delivered** by municipal staff alone and **require partnerships** with schools, nonprofits, food banks, and volunteers.

3. Priority Program Themes Align with Shared Community Goals

Top Program Themes by Combined “Important” or “Most Important” Ratings:

Theme	Important/Most Important (%)
Youth & Family Support	91% (145/159)
Community Engagement	89% (142/159)
Education & Personal Dev.	87% (139/159)
Community Social Services	86% (136/159)

Implication: These themes reflect services typically offered by **nonprofits, schools, and faith-based groups**, validating the need for **shared investment**.

4. Support for Governance Structures that Require Partnerships

- **Multiple respondents** explicitly recommended a **Board of Directors** with representatives from:
 - The Recreation Department
 - Lawrence Township Public Schools
 - Nonprofits and civic groups
- Calls for a “**decentralized governance model**” and **Community Advisory Board** featured in multiple tables and speaker comments.

Implication: Residents favor a **governance structure rooted in partnership**, reflecting a shared investment ethos.

5. Community Demographics Suggest Broad Need for Diverse Partnerships

Demographic	Lawrence Township (%)	Survey Respondents (%)
Foreign-born	26%	Not surveyed
Speak non-English at home	35%	Not surveyed
Hispanic/Latino	16%	4%
Asian	14%	3%

Income below \$50K

8%

4%

Implication: Partnerships are essential to **reach underrepresented groups** and **address equity gaps** in service delivery.

Summary of What This Evidence Supports

Claim	Backed by Data?
The Center cannot succeed without outside partnerships	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes
Most-desired programs require nonprofit or school involvement	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes
Residents support shared governance models	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes
Equity and outreach gaps can be filled via partnerships	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes

Dr. Mary McKillip's Resume and Report

Mary E. M. McKillip

EDUCATION

PhD, Sociology, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign

Master of Education, Harvard University

Bachelor of Arts, Hispanic Studies and English, Boston College

EXPERIENCE

Education Law Center, Newark, NJ

2018-Feb 2025

Senior Researcher

- Led *Resource Equity in the States* research examining the fairness of preK-12 public school funding through data analyses of state-level finance and demographic data records in 8 focus states.
- Collaborated with state advocates to align projects with legislative and policy goals.
- Produced reports and data visualization tools, attended and presented at public meetings and research conferences.
- Led *School Desegregation Remedy Project* to review national research on school desegregation remedies, review of school segregation metrics used to measure inequities and improvements, and recommendations for policy applicable to New Jersey.
- Responded quickly to internal and external ad hoc research and data requests regarding public school funding and resource equity questions.

New Jersey Department of Education, Trenton, NJ

2014-2018

Data Collection and Evaluation Coordinator, Office of Student Support Services

- Managed statewide data collection for disciplinary incidents from New Jersey preK-12 school districts.
- Evaluated submission quality and consistency through data audits and school monitoring. Designed data dictionaries and training tools for users, developed and delivered data training sessions for district and school staff.
- Prepared and analyzed data for federal and state annual reporting.
- Oversaw the development and rollout of new data collection system, released 2017-18.
- Supervised two staff members.

College Board, Newtown, PA & New York, NY

2009-2013

Assistant Research Scientist, Research, Evaluation and Measurement Team

- Analyzed high school to college transitions, focusing on equity in student access and outcomes.
- Led, co-led, and supported fulfillment of requests for research, evaluation, statistical analyses, literature reviews, and oversight of evaluators for College Board programs and services.
- Gave 15 presentations at education, sociology, and public policy conferences, published 6 articles in external journals and books, published 6 College Board research reports.

SKILLS

Languages: Proficient in Spanish

Teaching: Undergraduate Sociology college courses, Middle and High School English, Preschool

Technical knowledge: Expertise in SAS, Tableau, Excel, Survey Monkey; proficient with Python, R, SPSS, SQL, STATA, Arc-GIS, Qualtrics, NVivo

Lawrence Community Center Feedback

About the Author & Report

This report was compiled by Mary McKillip in June 2025. Dr McKillip has a PhD in Sociology from the University of Illinois and a MEd from Harvard University. She was a Senior Researcher at Education Law Center from 2018-2025 and led ELC’s research examining the fairness of state funding systems through analyses of resource equity within states. Prior to joining ELC, Dr. McKillip managed school discipline and health survey data collection and analyses at the New Jersey Department of Education and conducted research on the high school to college transition at the College Board. She has been a Lawrence Township resident since 2010.

Lawrence Township, New Jersey has around 32,000 residents in 12,000 households, based on 2023 U.S. census data. 19% of residents are under 18, 16% are 65 or older. 60% of residents are White, 13% Black, 14% Asian, 10% multiracial. In addition, 16% of residents identify as Latino (asked separately from racial identification). 26% of residents are foreign-born and 35% speak a language other than English in the home. A majority of residents aged 25 or older – 61% - have a Bachelor’s degree or higher with just under 6% in poverty. Median household income is \$120,000.

This report synthesizes Lawrence Township residents’ feedback on the future of the Lawrence Community Center as gathered by the taskforce via emails from 34 Lawrence residents, a community survey open from April 15 until May 15, 2025 with 159 respondents, and a community meeting held at the Lawrence High School on May 13 2025 with over 100 attendees.

Demographics

Demographic details on the 159 survey respondents can be found in the table below, with a comparison to the wider community census demographic information in the far right column. Demographics were not collected from community meeting participants or email respondents. Survey respondents were moderately representative of the larger Lawrence community population, but more likely to be female, be 65 or older, be White or Black, and be of higher income/education than the wider community.

	Survey Respondents = 159		Lawrence Township= 32,000
Gender			
Female	61%		51%
Male	36%		
Age			
0-17	1%		19%
18-24	3%		
25-34	4%		
35-44	14%		
45-54	25%		
55-64	19%		
65+	33%		16%

	Survey Respondents = 159¹	Lawrence Township= 32,000
Race/Ethnicity		
Asian	3%	14%
Black/African American	17%	13%
Hispanic/Latino	4%	16%
White	69%	60%
Multiracial	2%	10%
Home Location²		
North of I-295	38%	
South of I-295	56%	
Not in Lawrence	4%	
Education		
Less than HS³	1%	
High School	6%	
Some college⁴	16%	
Bachelor's or more	75%	61%
Household Income		
Median	\$ 160,000	\$ 120,000
\$150,000+	37%	
\$100,000 - \$149,999	25%	
\$75,000 - \$99,999	16%	
\$50,000 - \$74,999	8%	
\$25,000 - \$49,999	2%	
Less than \$25,000	2%	
Marital Status		
Divorced	6%	
Married	72%	
Single	14%	
Widowed	8%	
Children 18 or younger in home		
None	58%	
1	14%	
2	20%	
3	4%	
More than 3	2%	

¹ Respondents could skip items. Demographic information does not sum to 100% due to missing responses.

² One respondent noted that dividing the township by north and south is an outdated and no longer useful way to separate the community.

³ The respondent with less than high school degree was under 18.

⁴ "Some college" includes associate's degree holders.

Center Involvement

Among the survey respondents, 42% had never visited the Lawrence Community Center while it was operational, with just 16% reporting being frequent visitors. The biggest challenge reported by respondents to using the center was lack of awareness of the programs and events available.⁵ In the open-ended responses at the end of the survey, respondents often expressed concern about lack of knowledge and information about the Center. They asked that events offered by a reopened center be visible throughout the community, with strong marketing and advertising. The vast majority of respondents hoped to use a reopened center at least occasionally. The most popular times considered for activities and events at the center were weekday evenings and weekend afternoons, with weekday morning and afternoons being the least popular options.

When the Lawrence Community Center was operational, how often did you visit it?	
Frequently (Once a month or more)	16%
Occasionally (3-6 times per year)	16%
Rarely (1-2 times per year)	27%
Never	42%

Biggest challenges would prevent you from using the Community Center? (Check all that apply)	
Lack of awareness about programs/events	113
Scheduling conflicts with available programs	59
Facilities do not meet my needs	33
Cost of programs or activities	17
Limited transportation options	8

Assuming a newly renovated Community Center offered programs that appeal to you, how often would you anticipate visiting?	
Frequently (Once a month or more)	48%
Occasionally (3-6 times per year)	45%
Rarely (1-2 times per year)	6%
Never	1%

What days and times would you prefer for activities and events at the Community Center?	
Weekday Evenings (4 PM – 8 PM)	110
Weekend Afternoons (12 PM – 4 PM)	90
Weekend Mornings (7 AM – 12 PM)	64
Weekend Evenings (4 PM – 8 PM)	56
Weekday Afternoons (12 PM – 4 PM)	41
Weekday Mornings (7 AM – 12 PM)	34

⁵ The survey respondents tended to be higher income than the general Lawrence population, so cost and transportation concerns may be more of an issue for a segment of the community not fully captured by the survey.

Lawrence Community Center Vision

Beyond the survey multiple choice style questions, there were three open-ended questions asked at the end of the survey, with similar questions offered on a feedback form at the May 13 community meeting. The remainder of this report is based on the feedback from these questions along with responses received via email from community members.

- 1) What other programs or services not listed above that you would like to see? (*at the community meeting the question was: What programs and services would you like to see in a renewed community center?*)
- 2) What should be the primary mission of the Lawrence Community Center? (*at the meeting, the question posed was: What words or phrases might you want to see in a new mission statement for the center?*)
- 3) Do you have any additional suggestions or ideas for how the Community Center can best serve the residents of Lawrence Township? (*at the meeting: What else should the task force know from you as it makes its recommendations to the Council?*)

Due to overlap in the responses to these three questions, the information was combined and analyzed together. Four key ideas emerged:

- 1) **Who the Center is for:** The center should be a welcoming, unifying space for all Lawrence township residents.
- 2) **What to offer:** The center should offer a wide variety of programming led by the interests and needs of the Lawrence community.
- 3) **The Legacy:** The legacy of the center and its history must be honored and recognized within the renovated center.
- 4) **Planning and Governance:** the Lawrence community residents (as well as other community stakeholders) should have key roles in the planning and governance of the center.

Who the Center is for

In the survey open-ended responses and community conversation feedback, many people considered who the center should serve. That the Center should be for all Lawrence Township residents was the most common, clear feedback received by respondents. Respondents felt that the community center should be a space that unifies the town, fostering a strong sense of community, bringing different neighborhoods and people together. A couple respondents also added the importance of catering to the Lawrence of today – that as the township changes in composition, the center must evolve in response to those changes to meet the needs of today’s residents. A few respondents brought up the importance of a name for the center to signify who the center is for, with suggestions to have “Community” in the name.

I would love to see the center be used for the greater community. Teen nights, family card games, middle school dances and classes for small children and adults. Lawrence is an incredible community and I would love for it to be a place all feel valued and welcome.

Some respondents specified the need for programming explicitly serving youth, families, parents, seniors, new residents to the township, and preschoolers. Others specifically mentioned targeted support for those most in need in the township, who may lack access to other facilities and opportunities. In addition, some respondents specified the need for programming to explicitly serve the Eggerts Crossing community surrounding the Center. On the other hand, a number of respondents expressed a concern that the Center should take care to be inclusive and not be aimed only at the surrounding neighborhood which could lead to a feeling of exclusion of other members of the Lawrence community.

What to Offer

As an overarching theme from Lawrence Township residents in their vision for a renovated Lawrence Community Center, residents spoke of a welcoming community hub offering a wide range of events,

activities, and services that would appeal to residents throughout the township and connect community members to each other. Rather than one focus, residents envisioned a center that offered a wide variety of services and resources to the community, including arts, sports, mentorship, tutoring, educational workshops, intergenerational dialogue, and cultural exchange; from township meetings and daycare offerings to informal book swaps, crafting clubs, and game nights. The overarching mission suggested was the center should be a resource for all residents while fostering connections between them. Respondents hoped the center would fold into the town alongside existing institutions like the library, senior center, public schools, and churches. For example:

The mission of our community center should be to serve as our town’s ‘third place’—a welcoming, inclusive space beyond home (the first place) and work (the second place) where people of all ages and backgrounds can gather, connect, and build community. It should be a hub for conversation, creativity, support, and shared experiences, fostering a stronger, more vibrant civic life.

This theme of a multifaceted community center can also be seen in the survey results where respondents were asked to rank the important and desirability of different types of programming (note that each respondent could rate multiple themes or programs as “most” or “least” important or desired). Rather than one theme or programming emerging as a clear favorite, the vast majority of respondents ranked all themes as most important or important and ranked all programming options as most desired or desired. Though themes of youth & family support and community engagement were highest ranked, and recreation and fitness lowest, all were valued highly. Similarly, the highest ranked programming was community meetings & cultural events and life-skills workshops, and the lowest ranked being Film screenings, concerts, or speaker series, but all were desired by respondents.

Most important themes for new programming	Most Imp or Imp	Most Important	Important	Least Important
Youth & Family Support	145	107	38	9
Community Engagement	142	88	54	10
Education & Personal Development	139	65	74	14
Community Social Services	136	77	59	16
Recreation & Fitness	133	69	64	18

Most desired programs	Most Des or Des	Most Desired	Desired	Least Desired
Community meetings & cultural events	139	92	47	14
Life-skills workshops (resume, cooking & financial literacy)	138	77	61	12
Open gym for teens & adults	134	73	61	18
Arts & Crafts Programming/Teen Nights	134	72	62	15
Afterschool tutoring & mentoring	132	94	38	19
Food pantry	132	72	60	20
Veterans & Seniors Assistance	126	68	58	26
Community Resource Fair	123	45	78	19
Youth & adult sport leagues	121	49	72	29
Film screenings/concerts/speaker series	114	56	58	36

To give more of the detailed recommendations on what to offer that were suggested by Lawrence residents, I have loosely collected the suggestions into the five programming themes above: Youth and family support, community engagement, education and personal development, community social services, and recreation and fitness.

In regard to youth and family support, one of the most common suggestions of residents was to offer daycare to children under 5 at the Lawrence Community Center. In addition, afterschool care and summer camp for school aged children was recommended as well. This included recommendations to offer classroom space to Every Child Valued, the Eggerts Crossing Village program for youth that was housed at the center in the past. One respondent suggested the Every Child Valued program could be expanded to serve more children in the community, offering recreation and education mentoring and programming to a wider group. More informal programming was suggested as well, to give teens a safe place to just be, including gaming opportunities, wi-fi access, and social activities.

The community engagement theme suggestions focused heavily on the center being a place to invite civic engagement and inclusive community-building, bringing people of different ages and backgrounds together from across the township to engage and learn from each other and foster trust among diverse groups. Respondents suggested a variety of community gathering events, such as town halls on topics or local government meetings, community group meetings, historical society events, language exchange clubs, or cultural events and film screenings. For example, one suggestion was to offer a Human Library experience:

Originally started in Denmark in 2000 to challenge prejudice and promote understanding, the Human Library invites people to serve as “books” who share personal stories—often around identity, lived experience, or expertise—while “readers” engage in one-on-one or small group conversations.

Many respondents suggested that people would feel welcomed into the center and community if meeting areas were available for rent or reservation by local community groups (e.g. Girl scouts or adult non-profits) or residents, and if there were offerings of low cost or free access to social spaces for residents to meet each other and foster connections. For example, respondents suggested table game clubs, bingo nights, trivia nights, craft groups (knitting, crocheting, painting), and local art exhibits.

Falling into the theme of education and personal development, a very common suggestion from respondents was to offer educational workshops that could benefit Lawrence residents in job training and other personal development and lifelong learning. This included suggestions for resume/cover letter help, ESL programs and resources for immigrants, financial literacy, and computer skill workshops. Other education workshops were suggested for adults such as crafting, sewing, home economics, cooking, basic car maintenance, health and wellness, dance and music classes, and gardening skills. Specific workshops for parent support were suggested, especially for new parents or immigrant parents adjusting to U.S. schools; in addition special education targeted to adults was suggested. A common suggestion was for afterschool tutoring, homework help, and mentoring support for students in the township. One respondent noted, “*if you make a call out to the community asking people to host workshops about topics that they know about that would help the community, it could lead to a lot of cool and low cost events.*”

The availability of community food assistance and a food pantry at the Lawrence Community Center was the most common community social services suggestion. Many respondents hoped for a center that could offer resources as needed to residents (suggestions included counseling/drug reduction programs, support groups, health clinics, rental assistance, clothing, multilingual translation services) or could help residents locate and access such resources from other services throughout the community. In addition, respondents envisioned the center as a more general resource hub, offering information to residents on local natural resources, township community and recreation services, volunteer opportunities, local job openings, voter registration, or simply through access to wi-fi and computer workstations at the center. A few spoke of the

ways the center could encourage members of community to support each other – offering some of these resources through food drives or clothing drives, for example.

The fifth theme, recreation and fitness, came up most commonly in respondents requesting a return of open gym space to offer an indoor space that could be used for basketball and other exercise. The idea of a year-round dedicated exercise space was seen as a positive for all age groups, with suggestions of additional perks such as an indoor track or a community pool being added. Respondents suggested some other specific types of recreation offerings such as archery & fishing, yoga, pilates, Zumba, other fitness and exercise group classes, ping pong, and laser tag.

The Legacy

Another common theme that emerged from the open-ended survey responses and community feedback at the May 13 meeting was the importance of recognizing the past history of the Lawrence Community Center. This is important not only to honor the legacy of the center, but also to pull from what was successful in the past and bring that into today's version of the Community Center.

Although 69% of survey respondents reported that they rarely or never used the Center when it was operational, a number of respondents and community meeting participants had strong connections to the Center and spoke of its importance to them and their community. Some respondents familiar with the history of the Center emphasized the need to find ways to honor and teach the past. For example, Billy Chester, a longtime Lawrence resident, deeply familiar with the history of the center, stressed that preservation of the center's legacy must begin with honoring its history "from the outside in." This would include reinstalling the building's original signage and recognizing its contributions to generations of Lawrence Township residents.

Some of the respondents familiar with the center's history also suggested that one way to honor the legacy would be to keep the center's history of providing community-building and transformational opportunities in the offerings of the new center. For example:

The Lawrence Community Center must continue delivering the essential services long provided by the Lawrence Neighborhood Center, expanding programs and activities where possible to meet the evolving needs of Lawrence Township's diverse population. The Center's history exemplifies the power of community-driven efforts to improve social services and educational opportunities for Lawrence Township residents. While change may be inevitable, the Center's mission must stay true to its founding charter, preserving its role as a hub where community-minded volunteers can make a meaningful impact on those who need services most. The LCC must not lose the 1960s inspired spirit, but can adapt that same spirit to present needs of the community it serves.

Planning & Governance

Although not explicitly asked through the survey or community meeting questions, many respondents discussed ideas for how plans for the Center should be developed and implemented. The most common suggestion was that community members be included as an integral part of the planning process as well as of the ongoing implementation/governance process. This would involve a diverse group of community members (ages and backgrounds) in the Center's development from start to finish. Many respondents explained that the ownership and representation of the center by the community, including those who need support services from the center, would strengthen its role in the community. Others suggested that governance of the center follow a "decentralized governance model" where one organization is not managing the whole facility, allowing many small groups the opportunity to have a place to gather and build community.

Along with this idea of community members being involved in planning and governance of the center, another common suggestion was to work to engage other stakeholders in the community to collaborate in

the planning and implementation of programming at the Center, including non-profits, the Lawrence Township school district, higher education (e.g. Rider University), and other service providers (TASK, Y, Homefront). One respondent noted the community center could become a shared investment rather than a financial burden through partnerships with nonprofits, businesses, educational institutions, and philanthropic foundations. For example:

The Community Center would best serve the residents if community groups had a role in programming and governance. Local nonprofits could help bring in additional funds if they have a stake in the use of the facility, the Lawrence Township Public Schools could offer professional staff, faculty and student interns and the recreation department could supply recreational programs, expertise and equipment. The center would serve the community better if it was governed by a Board of Directors from each of the entities supporting the Center. The Board of Directors should report to the Town Manager and or the Town Council.

The Recreation Department has offered a proposal to manage the center as the Lawrence Township Community Recreation Center, and some respondents familiar with this proposal supported this governance approach, while other respondents mentioned concerns about one entity being in charge. Similarly, while one respondent suggested township offices at the center would be helpful for people to access staff and information, a couple other respondents said offices should not be at the community center.

Conclusion

The taskforce asked the community to envision a new Lawrence Community Center, and residents responded to the call with dreams of a wonderful resource center for all residents, welcoming and enriching, allowing residents to come together in a shared space to listen and be in community with each other. Although not fully representative of the diversity of the township in race, age, and income, the responses collected from members do offer a wealth of thoughtful ideas that can be used as a solid framework to begin to develop a plan for the Center. It is important for the taskforce and township to carefully consider the suggestions of the residents, in particular the four key ideas that emerged from the survey, meeting, and other feedback from the residents:

- 1) Who the center is for: the center should be a welcoming, unifying space for all Lawrence township residents.
- 2) What to offer: the center should offer a wide variety of programming led by the interests and needs of the Lawrence community.
- 3) The legacy: the legacy of the center and its history must be honored and recognized within the renovated center.
- 4) Planning and Governance: the Lawrence community residents (as well as other community stakeholders) should have key roles in the planning and governance of the center.

However, space and financial constraints make it impossible for the center to offer all the resources that the residents have proposed. The township will have to make decisions that offer a realistic vision for the center while working to address the desires of residents (and ideally continue to consult with additional residents throughout the township to refine and re-envision the plans as they are further developed). One survey respondent addressed this push and pull:

As folks are considering the future value for the Community Center, what stands out for me is the importance of specifying well-defined community objectives it's intended to serve, including an understanding of the types of groups that will be enjoying it. A facility can't be all things to all people – the Twp. can't equip it with the right furniture, equipment, flow, and design if the service objectives and related target audiences and uses aren't specific enough.

I know from experience that ambiguity regarding a community building can result in that asset being underutilized and unavailable to some and over-accessed by others. It can be hard to schedule usage of space without stated priorities ...

The objectives and target user groups need to be clear. The committee discussing the Center should not gloss over the specific determination of purpose - including what kind of community work and subgroups it serves (to inform the "must haves") for the Center and what it doesn't intentionally support and serve (even if they'd be "nice to have.").

Email Comments from Residents

Hello,

RSVPing for the 5/13 special discussion regarding Lawrence Community Center.

I have many ideas including, but not limited to:

- (senior) fitness classes
- a BLACK Saturday school
- resurrecting the daycare
- historical society events
- workshops - resume/cover letters, college prep, etc.

I also wrote an opinion piece about the importance of the Center and its impact on me and my community. I will share it with you when it has been published.

Happy to support across policy and programmatic efforts - looking forward to contributing!

Thank You,

[REDACTED]

Please see attached. This is a glance at the last 2 years at the LCC. The organizations are listed with a brief description. I can also tell you that outside of the organizations' usage of the space, the LCC had an average of 1484 monthly "sign ins" to the building. This would range from youth coming in after school to use the gym, individuals seeking social services assistance, smaller groups using space with a less formal relationship with us, etc. Of course, there were also a handful of HomeFront programs, usually for our children, that would use the space consistently. We also had a case manager placed there to work with individuals struggling to make ends meet to help them sort through their challenges and provide them with food and other basic needs as well.

- [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

My opinion would be to make the center the offices and hub for Lawrence Township Recreation Department. This would be the only way all of Lawrence Township residents can benefit from the center. The minute certain neighborhoods take precedence over the whole township benefits, you will have more negative feedback by catering to a portion of who it represents.

Hello,

My name is [REDACTED] and I am interested in RSVP-ing for the Lawrence Community Center town meeting on Monday May 13 along with my husband [REDACTED].

I would also like to suggest an event for the Community Center to host called the [Human Library](#). Originally started in Denmark in 2000 to challenge prejudice and promote understanding, the Human Library invites people to serve as “books” who share personal stories—often around identity, lived experience, or expertise—while “readers” engage in one-on-one or small group conversations.

The format has now been implemented in over 70 countries around the world, hosted in libraries, community centers, and colleges as a powerful way to foster empathy and build meaningful connections. It’s a flexible and inclusive model that can be adapted to the specific community goals—whether that’s uplifting local voices, supporting youth, or encouraging intergenerational dialogue. Feel free to reach out if you have any other questions on the event I am currently researching this for my PhD.

Looking forward to the session in a few weeks!

Sincerely,

██████████

My name is ██████████, ██████████, residing in Lawrenceville for two years. I am writing to express my desire to attend the discussion about the future of the Lawrence community center this coming Tuesday, the 13th. Is it still possible?

I enthusiastically read the announcement in the Lawrence Gazette last week.

I have experience with collaborative and inclusive design projects with similar communities in Colombia and Venezuela in the past. I believe in the power of architecture to symbolize collective efforts and paradigm shifts. It would be a pleasure for me to offer my collaboration in whatever you deem appropriate.

I remain attentive, thank you very much!

P.S. My colleague ██████████ is also interested in attending.

**Community Meeting Individual Comments,
May 13, 2025**

██████████, a lifelong member of the Lawrence Township community, brought a deeply personal and historical perspective to the discussion. Describing the community as a family, not just a neighborhood, he reflected on his upbringing in the town of Lawrenceville, Eggerts Crossing and his own family and friends connections to Lewisville Road, which was recently recognized for its historical significance.

He has volunteered in Lawrence Township and throughout Mercer County, as well as other portions of NJ, for well over 40 years. He is currently employed as a Security Monitor at Lawrence High School, Lawrence Middle School, and any other school in the district, where he has provided a safe environment for these learning institutions.

██████████ highlighted the current strain on community-based programs such as the Recreation Department and Every Child Valued, noting that both are critically important yet under-resourced. He urged the task force and township to recognize and respond to the community's needs across all neighborhoods—emphasizing equity and inclusion rather than a focus on any one part of town.

He advocated for the creation of a space that unifies the township and better supports overburdened programs that serve youth, families, and seniors alike.

Consideration should be taken into account regarding fiscal responsibilities, financial, and budgetary constraints.

██████████ recalled his first summer job at age 13, which began with painting the Lawrence Neighborhood Service Center—a building that still holds personal and historical significance for him. He urged that any vision for the center's future include the restoration of its identity, beginning with its exterior and original signage, particularly the dedication honoring his cousin, Douglas R. Dickinson, Jr., the first Vietnam War casualty from Lawrence Township.

He envisioned a revitalized center that respects its past while embracing its future mission as a space for inclusive recreation development and community service.

██████████ has collaborated on several projects with the Lawrence Recreation Department, and has had success with them all, and hopes to have continued success with Lawrence Recreation because he personally has futuristic ideas that he thinks would benefit this entire community.

██████████ called on residents to take part in shaping the center's future by completing surveys, attending meetings, and having open conversations with one another. He emphasized the importance of listening to all voices and expressed confidence in the task force's role as a "conduit" between the community and Township Council.

He encouraged relationship-building and collective engagement, urging residents to get involved and work together toward a shared vision.

██████████ stressed that preservation of the center's legacy must begin with honoring its history "from the outside in." This includes reinstalling the building's original signage and recognizing its contributions to generations of Lawrence Township residents.

He also spoke passionately about the importance of recreational programs in shaping lives—sharing how playing in local leagues and the mentorship he received in his youth has had a lasting impact. He cited his role in launching a successful girls fundamental skills basketball program ("Girls Got Game"), and an adult cornhole league as examples of what can be accomplished with the support of the Recreation Department.

He closed with gratitude for the opportunity to speak and a clear call to action: "Roll up your sleeves" and be part of the process.

In addition, he reiterated the importance of reinstating the historical signage honoring Douglas R. Dickerson, Jr. as a way to further preserve the center's deep history.

Note: I personally would like to see a recreation, education-based mentor program which involves the expansion of the Every Child Valued Program. The Recreation Department would be the foundation and central hub as the basis for this expansion. Viable and sustainable programs will be developed through the information and data gathered in this process.

The development of this program would be contingent upon the cooperation level of the Lawrence Township school district and volunteerism within the district and community stakeholders. There would be various forms of curriculum, including preparatory/tutoring, vocational interest, life lessons, coping skills, nutrition/health and wellness, local Church, collegiate, and prep school connections, socio-emotional well-being, and personal growth with qualified mentors that choose to invest in this community.

I would like to also see a clear and concise vision for seniors in the community, a population that has laid a dedicated and loyal foundation for this town (social gatherings, group trips, and activities). These thoughts can be expounded on at a future time, but there should be a very heavy consideration for our senior citizens.

██████████, a 15-year resident of Lawrence Township and a recent member of the Recreation Advisory Committee, was appointed to the Mayor's Task Force alongside fellow committee member ██████████. Their appointments ensure the Recreation Advisory Committee has a voice in the task force's deliberations and that recreation-related community concerns are represented.

██████████ highlighted ongoing concerns voiced by residents over the years regarding the lack of a dedicated indoor facility for recreation. The current absence of such a space limits the Township's ability to offer consistent, year-round programming for both children and adults. The Recreation Department has had to rely on outdoor facilities and various school buildings to host events, often limiting access and flexibility.

██████████ provided a brief history of the Lawrence Community Center, which was operated by the nonprofit HomeFront from 2011 to 2024. While some community services were offered during that time, the Recreation Department could not use the building consistently. After HomeFront relocated its services in 2024, the building was closed due to code and maintenance issues. She referenced a July 2024 proposal by the Township's Supervisor of Recreation outlining a vision for a Lawrence Township Community Recreation Center—a space that would accommodate both current and future recreational programs and meet evolving community needs.

██████████ emphasized the important role of community volunteers in executing successful recreation programs and events. She noted that the Advisory Committee helps gather and reflect resident feedback and that task force members are committed to actively listening and incorporating the community's voice in decision-making.

She encouraged residents to stay engaged by participating in discussions and surveys, and by helping shape a recreation center that reflects the diverse interests of the entire community.

██████████ stressed that any redevelopment of the community center should honor its original mission of service while expanding its capacity to serve all of Lawrence Township. She envisioned a future center that includes historical displays and storytelling elements, preserving the building's legacy while enhancing its relevance for today and tomorrow.

She reiterated that a dedicated, inclusive recreational facility could serve as a vital hub for wellness, connection, tradition, and community for all Lawrence residents.

██████████ – sent for approval

██████████ highlighted the issue of food insecurity in Lawrence Township, noting that while Lasagna Love volunteers deliver meals to surrounding "threatened areas," requests for help from Lawrence itself are limited, despite there being a clear need. She suggested that this may be due to lack of awareness or access to the program and encouraged broader outreach.

██████████ remarks supported the idea that the future of the Lawrence Community Center should include supportive services that meet basic human needs, such as food assistance. She pointed out that the Center previously played a role in helping run Lasagna Love meal distributions

during food bank events, reinforcing that the Center can and should be a hub for compassionate, community-based service.

She extended an invitation to residents to get involved—either by volunteering to cook meals or by requesting meals if experiencing hardship. Her offer underscores the importance of mutual aid and grassroots engagement in creating a supportive, connected community.

█ comments reflect the Center’s legacy as a place where care and service were extended to those in need, particularly during difficult times. She urged the task force to consider re-establishing partnerships like Lasagna Love within the future use of the building, reinforcing its history of uplifting the community through service.

█ - approved

█ emphasized the importance of continuous civic engagement and inclusive community-building, expressing concern that Lawrence Township has not done enough to elevate its increasing diversity in a positive and sustained way. He warned that recognition of diversity often happens reactively or only in school settings, rather than being proactively fostered by adults in the wider community. He spoke on behalf of long-time residents—many of whom have passed away—who once labored to improve community conditions and urged the Township to build upon their legacy by consistently engaging all residents, not just during isolated, once-a-year events.

█ envisioned the Lawrence Community Center as a hub for ongoing civic and cultural engagement, rooted in the legacy of past successes. He recalled the center hosting ecumenical services and serving as a unifying “campus” where churches, organizations, and individuals collaborated to address social issues. He made a case for the center’s revival as a consistent, active, and inclusive space, warning that limited or symbolic activities are insufficient to sustain a meaningful sense of community.

He called on all community members to “roll up their sleeves” and participate in the democratic process—not just by attending meetings, but through active civic contribution. He emphasized that global civic engagement begins locally, and cited events such as town halls, cultural festivals, and National Night Out as key platforms for relationship-building. He credited the center with previously breaking down social barriers and fostering trust among diverse groups, and believes renewed engagement through the center can restore that communal spirit.

█ stressed the transformational impact the Center and its partners once had, especially in neighborhoods like Eggerts Crossing, which transitioned from substandard housing to thriving residential areas. He recounted the success of the Center in mobilizing national resources to support local housing initiatives. He urged the task force to preserve and elevate the Center’s historical role as a unifying space for collaborative problem-solving and to ensure that future decisions reflect the needs of a growing and increasingly diverse population. He closed by citing a 2004 New York Times article, underscoring how much more diverse the Lawrence community has become since then—and the critical importance of fostering that diversity in positive, deliberate, and community-wide ways.

█ - approved

█ expressed concern about a growing divide in the community regarding the future of the Lawrence Community Center. He noted that this tension is rooted in how the Center’s purpose and identity are perceived—especially when it comes to inclusivity. He referenced unease stemming from past changes in Township property naming, such as the renaming of Eggerts Crossing Park to Central Park, which some viewed as a symbolic erasure of community history. Similarly, he acknowledged that some residents may incorrectly assume the Center is only for those in Eggerts Crossing, urging a reaffirmation that it serves all Lawrence Township residents. █ strongly emphasized that taxpayers fund the Center, and therefore all residents must have a say in its direction.

█████ called for a balanced vision that honors the Center's past while looking ahead to how it can better serve the entire Township. He emphasized the importance of programs that uplift all people, and proposed that the Center become a hub not only for recreation and social events, but also for career development and practical training. He specifically mentioned areas like ESL, STEM, and youth career readiness as essential services the Center should provide in the future. He stressed the value of creating intentional partnerships that strengthen the Center's role in the community. To that end, he proposed a tri-party agreement between the Township, surrounding neighborhoods, and the Lawrence Board of Education to collaboratively develop programming and ensure broad community access. █████ also highlighted the importance of nonprofit organizations, naming groups like the Eggerts Crossing Civic League and Lawrence Neighbors Together, among others, as essential contributors to civic life whose voices must be included in decision-making processes.

█████ urged the task force and township leaders to respect the historical significance of the Center, particularly its ties to community leaders. He believes that by celebrating and preserving this legacy, while also adapting to meet contemporary needs, the Center can become a truly unifying institution. His call to action was clear: ensure that decisions made about the Center are rooted in the voices of taxpayers, reflect the real needs of residents, and support long-term community growth and inclusion.

█████ - approved

█████ emphasized the urgency of making fundamental decisions about the future of the Lawrence Community Center. He noted that the center is a critical asset for residents, especially families who lack access to other facilities and opportunities. He urged Township Council members to take ownership of the decision-making process, stating that it is not solely the administration's responsibility but rather the elected officials' duty to invest strategically in the town's future. █████ called for a renewed public commitment to the center as a long-term community asset, similar to prior investments made by residents in the school system.

█████ advocated for a modernized, multifunctional center that aligns with the strategic needs of the community. He recommended that the Township view the center not as a standalone resource but as an integral part of the town's infrastructure, alongside institutions like libraries, senior centers, and recreational spaces. He envisions a center that serves all segments of the community and is designed with long-term sustainability in mind. The center, he argued, is ideally located in the geographic heart of Lawrence, making it a natural and accessible hub for residents.

A strong proponent of collaboration, █████ encouraged Lawrence Township to partner with nonprofit organizations, higher education institutions, and other service providers to enhance and sustain programming at the center. He cited examples from his past work in larger towns, where site-specific investments and partnerships enabled centers to thrive. He also mentioned the potential for graduate student involvement, grant applications, and shared staffing models, which could bolster community engagement and expand program offerings.

█████ urged the Township to remember that the center primarily serves families who may not otherwise have access to quality programs and services, and that equity should remain central to any redevelopment plan. He also emphasized the importance of maintaining Township ownership of the facility to ensure accountability, accessibility, and sustained public investment. In closing, he called for the council to remain committed to a future that is community-centered, inclusive, and financially supported by the public in dynamic and responsible ways.

█████ - Sent for approval

█████ shared that although recent discussions by the Trails and Open Space Committee on the topic of the Lawrence Community Center were limited, the meeting prompted him to

reflect on how the center could support environmental education and community access to local natural resources. He noted the center's proximity to trails and open space—including the Johnson Trolley Line and Boston Way—highlighting the opportunity to better connect residents with these natural assets through the center.

█████ proposed a vision for the center that includes increased educational and environmental outreach. Specifically, he suggested creating a community resource and information hub inside the building—possibly in the room immediately to the right of the front entrance. This space could be used to share information about local natural areas, trails, and open spaces through rotating public displays or informational exhibits, potentially curated by local organizations or committees.

He emphasized the potential for community-driven content, suggesting that local groups and residents could contribute to interactive exhibits or educational booths within the proposed resource room. By doing so, the center could serve as a platform for civic participation and shared learning. He also highlighted the Trails and Open Space Committee's interest in contributing content to such an initiative.

█████ underlined the importance of ensuring broad accessibility, particularly digital access. He recommended outfitting the proposed resource room with Wi-Fi and computer workstations to ensure internet connectivity for all residents, including those without reliable access at home. By serving as both a physical and digital access point, the center could help bridge the digital divide and support environmental awareness and equitable engagement.

█████
Thank you for hosting last night's Town Hall - a much-needed community engagement to remember the legacy of the space and explore its potential for the future.

As requested by a Task Force member, I am sending over my talking points and attaching a [video](#).

"Hello! I am █████ born and raised in Lawrence, NJ and I am the daughter of █████ who ran the summer camp at the Center for 4 summers, who is the daughter of █████ who is the Office Manager for Homefront, who is the daughter of █████ █████ who was one of the Center's original staff members, leading community outreach.

I say that to say that the Center raised me just like those powerful Black women that I just named.

I have 3 concerns that I want to highlight and solutions and to go along with those concerns.

The first being that the history must not be lost and I see an example of that already because █████

█████ should have been on the agenda, he needed much more than three minutes to speak.

How we address that is by remembering the Center was for us, by us. Yes, the Center's mission was about community and about service. It was about Lawrence residents, but it was especially about residents of Eggerts Crossing, it was especially about Black residents, with a capital B and that cannot be forgotten.

To that, I propose that people enter the space knowing who it was for and who made it happen.

My second concern is that a multifunctional space of this magnitude - and I am not just talking size, I am talking impact - needs involvement that is multiracial and multigenerational.

I implore young people to get involved, this is our space just like it is the older generation's. They need our talent, our tech, our skills.

Last but not least, I have a concern about gentrification of the space and one way to avoid that is by amplifying the community it is meant to represent.

Another way that the Center can serve the community is that the Center can be used to host events like this, Town Halls about a range of topics. I would love to see a robust array of youth programming but please as a stay-at-home mom to 3 under 3 bring back the daycare, I beg.

*I'll close with this. Before I became a stay-at-home mom, I was a local government Director and Strategist so I know how local government works. I request that the Township consider the structure and oversight that's been proposed. I am not here to cast doubt about the Department of Recreation being able to do this, but I think it requires much more.**

I also request that they utilize something called the [IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation](#) which means that residents are involved from start to finish of the process. We are asked to inform, consult, involve, collaborate, and empower residents to get involved. Thank you!

*mentioning here that can look like a Community Advisory Board as an example

I look forward to remaining involved with this meaningful work!

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Thank You,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] - sent for approval

(New Resident of Lawrence Township; Attending First Community Event)

[REDACTED] shared that she moved to Lawrence Township two years ago and that this meeting was the first community event she attended—only after learning about it by chance through a Civic Lawrence announcement. She expressed concern that newcomers to the township are not adequately informed about community events or the rich history of the area, which limits their ability to engage and connect with their new home. She characterized this as a missed opportunity for both the township and its residents.

[REDACTED] envisioned the Community Center as a hub for shared learning, storytelling, and cultural connection, especially for new residents. She highlighted a global program called the Human Library, which invites individuals to “check out” people instead of books—for example, a person can be “borrowed” to share their lived experience as a veteran, a first-generation immigrant, or other identity. The idea is to foster empathy and human connection through 15-minute one-on-one conversations that help break down prejudice and build understanding. She encouraged the township to consider incorporating similar programming into the Center’s mission to promote deeper community engagement.

[REDACTED] stressed the need for the Community Center to function as an accessible, central information hub—particularly for newcomers to Lawrence Township. She recommended better communication and outreach strategies to ensure that new residents are aware of local events, programs, and opportunities for involvement. In addition to the Human Library model, she supported more community-building events that encourage personal storytelling and connection, which she believes would foster a stronger sense of belonging.

By advocating for inclusive programs that help bridge the gap between long-standing residents and newer community members, [REDACTED] emphasized the importance of designing the Center’s future to reflect the diversity and evolving makeup of the township. She noted that her graduate studies focus on using technology to build community, and she sees the Community Center as an ideal place to apply such thinking. Her remarks implicitly called for a Center that is both

rooted in its past and responsive to the needs and perspectives of new generations and populations moving into Lawrence Township.

██████████ – pending approval

(Single parent, long-time Lawrence Township resident, educator, and advocate)

██████████ shared her personal and family investment in Lawrence Township, noting her ten years as a homeowner and her mother’s thirty years as a taxpayer in the township. As a parent of a student in the Every Child Valued afterschool program, she praised the staff for supporting her daughter’s growth and development. ██████████ voiced a broader concern that as the township grows more diverse—culturally, generationally, and economically—the Community Center must evolve to reflect and respond to these changes. She urged council members to treat the center not as a static facility, but as a living institution whose role is to uplift and unify an evolving population.

██████████ advocated for a reimagined Community Center that builds on its legacy while expanding its purpose. She called for a vision in which the center becomes a multifaceted hub of activity, combining arts, sports, mentorship, social services, intergenerational dialogue, and cultural exchange. She described an inclusive future where a young person could come in for basketball, discover a passion for art, and find a mentor—all under one roof. Her vision included seniors contributing to youth development, multicultural programming, and an overall sense that every visitor feels seen, valued, and welcome. She emphasized that the center must reflect who Lawrence is becoming, while still honoring where it has been.

██████████ called for inclusive community participation in planning the center’s future—particularly across racial, cultural, gender, and generational lines. She asked whether the township could collectively create a space that honors its legacy while also embracing and celebrating its growing Latino, Asian, Black, immigrant, and refugee populations. She sees this as a community-building project rather than a mere building renovation and highlighted the importance of emotional and physical accessibility for all residents.

██████████ affirmed the importance of being financially responsible, acknowledging economic pressures at the county level. However, she argued that a renewed community center need not be a financial burden. Instead, it could become a shared investment, leveraging partnerships with nonprofits, businesses, educational institutions, and philanthropic foundations. She asked decision-makers to dare to dream about a vibrant, equitable, and inclusive center that would attract residents of all backgrounds, turning it into a cornerstone of township identity and belonging. She closed with a call to action: “Let’s honor our legacy, let’s shape a new vision, and let’s do it together.”

██████████ - approved

██████████ highlighted a critical operational concern: Every Child Valued urgently needs access to classroom space within the Lawrence Community Center. She emphasized that reclaiming these classrooms is essential to continue delivering services to local youth and families effectively.

██████████ remarks underscored the alignment between the mission of the Lawrence Community Center and the work of Every Child Valued in serving children and youth. She advocated for a vision of the center that prioritizes consistent, structured, and educational programming, including early-morning, after-school, and summer learning opportunities. Access to both classroom and recreational spaces is vital to fully realize a future where the center serves as an inclusive educational and recreational hub.

Though brief, her statement carried an implicit call for continued collaboration between township leadership and community-based organizations. Every Child Valued serves over 70 students in its breakfast program alone, indicating strong community demand and engagement. ██████████

appeal was heartfelt and community-centered, reflecting the real-time, on-the-ground needs of children, families, and educators.

█ request to prioritize educational and recreational space for children directly reflects the historical purpose of the Lawrence Community Center. Her remarks align with the center's longstanding role in nurturing local families and underscore the importance of preserving and enhancing that legacy through thoughtful space allocation and planning.

█ -SENT FOR APPROVAL

(Resident and Community Participant since 2009)

█ raised a series of concerns regarding the past occupancy of the Lawrence Community Center by HomeFront. She questioned how the organization was allowed to operate in the facility despite apparent code violations, emphasizing the need for accountability and transparency. Specific concerns included:

- Whether HomeFront paid rent during their time in the building
- If so, where that rent money went (i.e., whether it benefitted Lawrence Township or supported the program directly)
- Whether building inspectors regularly evaluated the facility's compliance with safety and accessibility codes
- If the community was consulted or informed when HomeFront began operations at the center

█ requested that answers to these questions be made publicly available.

█ remarks implicitly pointed to a broader vision of the center as a well-maintained, code-compliant, and community-first facility. She called for urgent attention to the building's physical condition and infrastructure, citing firsthand experiences of poor accessibility (e.g., families having to carry strollers to the third floor) and inadequate climate control.

She emphasized the importance of engaging the local community in decision-making, particularly when outside organizations are permitted to operate within township facilities. Her comments underscored a perceived breakdown in communication and accountability in the past, and she advocated for greater community oversight moving forward.

█ expressed concern that the community had not benefited equitably from the use of the center in recent years. By calling for the building to be brought up to code and asking for greater fiscal transparency, she stressed that future uses of the center must prioritize the needs, safety, and dignity of all residents. Her remarks reflect a desire to restore community trust and ensure that any future partnerships or programs serve the broader public interest.

█ - APPROVED

(Resident and Community Advocate)

█ emphasized the importance of maintaining and protecting the Lawrence Township Community Center as a vital local resource. He highlighted a growing concern that "third places" — spaces that are neither work nor home — are disappearing across Lawrence. In this context, █ identified the community center as a critical third place that supports the needs of residents and helps build a more bonded, resilient community.

He also noted concern that capital improvements to the building have been repeatedly deferred over the past decade. He urged the township to dedicate consistent budget resources for ongoing maintenance and structural upkeep.

█ framed the mission of the community center as rooted in equity, service, and belonging. He advocated for the center to remain a hub for youth programming, after-school support, community group meetings, and food assistance. He asserted that the center's work should

continue to be driven by a “bottom-up” approach, one that uplifts those most in need and fosters a stronger sense of community.

He described the community center as both a landmark and a monument — one that honors past generations and must serve the needs of future ones.

██████████ proposed engaging trusted local organizations such as the Trenton Area Soup Kitchen, the YMCA, and potentially HomeFront (despite prior concerns about their departure), noting that these groups have a proven history of providing essential services. He emphasized the value of collective action and collaboration among residents, township leaders, and nonprofit partners to fulfill the center’s mission.

██████████ - approved

(Longtime Resident and Former Youth Program Participant, and ██████████)

██████████ spoke with deep personal and historical perspective about the Lawrence Community Center, emphasizing its legacy as a space that provided education, recreation, mentorship, and transformation for residents—especially children and youth. He highlighted the need for continued investment in the center as a critical resource for youth development, academic growth, and community engagement, from all income backgrounds.

He emphasized the importance of preserving the original vision of the center—a space built on connection, diversity, and opportunity—and expressed concern that as the community has changed, some of those guiding principles must be actively protected and reaffirmed.

██████████ described the community center as a visionary space that emerged from partnerships between schools, churches, nonprofits, and community leaders. He credited Mr. Vereen with initiating a foundation that enabled community-building and innovative approaches to education and policy development. He stressed that the center should continue to provide transformation opportunities for both youth and elders, just as it did when he was growing up.

The vision, he said, should remain rooted in diversity, access, and empowerment, providing a place where all members of the community—regardless of income or background—can thrive. Drawing from his personal experiences, ██████████ reflected on how the center once served as a hub of vibrant, diverse participation, in draftsl by a network of community organizations and civic-minded individuals. He urged that such engagement and partnership-building be rekindled and maintained. He noted that the center has always thrived when it remained inclusive, collaborative, and open, and he called on current leaders to honor that tradition.

██████████ emphasized the historical significance of the building and its symbolic and functional role in the lives of countless community members over the decades. He advocated for the building to be preserved and enhanced, not only as a physical space but as a beacon of equity and transformation for future generations. His remarks concluded with a call to maintain what is special, safeguard the community’s legacy, and ensure that the center continues to be a place of growth, joy, and connection for all.

██████████ - sent for approval

While ██████████ did not raise a specific concern during her remarks, her comments reflect a broader commitment to transparency, civic engagement, and inclusive participation in local governance. By announcing a vacancy on the Board of Education and encouraging community members to apply, she demonstrated an openness to resident involvement and an acknowledgment of the importance of community voice in public education leadership.

██████████ remarks did not directly address the mission or vision of the community center.

However, her outreach regarding leadership opportunities in the school system underscores a shared value between the school board and the community center: engaging residents in shaping the future of Lawrence Township, particularly for the benefit of children and families.

Her remarks were a direct call to action for community engagement. By inviting residents to apply for the vacant board seat, she encouraged local involvement in school governance, promoting democratic participation and strengthening the link between public education and the broader Lawrence community.

Although her remarks did not address the community center directly, [REDACTED] outreach reflects an understanding of the importance of inclusive decision-making and ensuring that leadership bodies represent the diversity and perspectives of the entire community. Her actions support the broader goals of the Mayor's Task Force by promoting community empowerment and shared responsibility.

[REDACTED] - approved

While [REDACTED] did not cite specific concerns, her remarks acknowledged a shared community need for unity, inclusiveness, and collective responsibility. Her call to "lean into this idea of We Are One" reflects an understanding of the community's desire for stronger cohesion and more equitable access to shared public spaces like the Lawrence Community

[REDACTED] directly reinforced the vision of the center as a truly inclusive space—a place where *everyone* matters and everyone comes together." She positioned the evening's event as a pivotal moment, calling on all stakeholders to recognize the opportunity to transform the center into a dynamic, welcoming hub that reflects the district's and the township's values of diversity, equity, and community.

Her remarks emphasized collective action and partnership, stating "it starts with us, and it starts tonight." As the leader of Lawrence Township Public Schools, she expressed a strong commitment to working collaboratively with community members and other institutions. She pledged to bring teams and ideas to the table, reinforcing the role of the school district as an engaged partner in this community-building process.

By affirming the district's motto—"LTPS: This is us"—[REDACTED] echoed the importance of representation, belonging, and legacy. Her framing of the community center as a place "meant for all" underscores her dedication to ensuring that future decisions support inclusivity and continue the center's role as a cornerstone of support, growth, and connection for every resident of Lawrence Township.

Table Reports Community Meeting, May 13, 2025

Table 1

Program and misc ideas

- Concern that there's time for Every Child Valued programs and other legacy programs to honor the overall legacy, and bridge the gap between that and recreational activities.
- More than just exercise for senior citizens (and so... programs for senior citizens)
- Naming of the center is key. Should be "community" in the name. Will the legacy name be used?

Words and phrases for mission statement – and misc. feedback:

- Cultural. Diverse. Community
- Bridge the divide in Lawrence (over divisions that exist – geographically, culturally, racially, economically, etc)
- Essential and central
- Need to pay lots of attention to marketing and advertising – people didn't know what was going on at the center. More visible. Strongly promoted.
- Essential community gathering space.
- We need to thread the needle of using community resources well AND preserve the legacy of the center.
- Governance: essential to include diverse voices
- Include AA

- Handicap access
- KEY: Ownership and representation of everyone in the community

Table 2 [REDACTED]

The future center must be “true” community center that is open and available and welcoming to all of Lawrence not just the Black community. This point was made repeatedly and there were hurt feelings shared and lots of strong emotions about the “exclusion” felt in the past from programming there.

-Should be run by the recreation department

-should be run by the township or government body

Are nonprofits allowed to run programs or alongside the Rec department? (This is a question that members of the rec committee have been asking for months and are very frustrated and angry it has yet to be clarified.)

A Center for all of the community will have advertising throughout the community.

It should include adult programming, a working kitchen, maybe it can have space that can be rented or reserved but the Rec department/municipality should run it, it should have space for kids and teens.

The legacy should also be preserved.

There has been a sense and often an overt message that the Lawrence Community Center was not for everyone which was not fair. The participants at this event are skewed to show support for a community center instead of a rec department.

The report written by Director Nancy Bergen that included feedback and input by the Recreation Committee should be given high priority when looking at the information collected by the task force

Table 3

Programs

- Active and passive activities
- Daycare
- Counseling
- Food pantry
- More futuristic view of how we use it – job training

Where will the money come from?

Who should run it?

- 501c3 with ability to raise money independently
- Board with 2 seats for rec department
- Governance is critical, should be community led

People who need services (day care, food pantry, ESL, etc.) need to be at these tables determining the future of the center

Table 4 [REDACTED], 7 Lawrence residents, white, most with deep decades of connection to community

[REDACTED] rec classes, improved gym with indoor track, dedicated exercise space, air conditioning, wifi, e-sports, maybe not build a new municipal fire center but prioritize funding for this community center. It should just be a community center and get community partners, high school community service students volunteering, pull for help from colleges too

[REDACTED] place for kids to hang out, K-3 connections to help students meet each other before coming together in 4th (will shift to 3rd)

[REDACTED] accessibility to be inclusive and equitable, don't want to lose neighborhood connections, third place spaces, not just recreation, but also food insecurity, school help, call it the neighborhood service center, make it clear it is there to help the community

dedicated afterschool tutoring program, math, reading, basic skills
mentoring and career guidance, leverage on existing homefront programs
"Community" in the name would be more welcoming than "neighborhood"
need to get money to implement, must be put in budget and earmarked for community programming, sewing and cooking classes for ex.

Table 5

- Connect the town, for all people, central location connecting the parts
- Open to older kids or help provide options for more flexible
- Community pool open to public, LHS pool not open enough
- Linkage to public school to help bridge gaps for extra learning, e.g. tutoring programs
- Who will run, manage the center?
- Decentralized model for how/who decides how to figure out what happens there – use community to manage/decide secondary impact – jobs for kids in community
- Place for individuals to rent/use space for kids birthday parties, celebrations

Table 6 [redacted], [redacted], [redacted], [redacted]

Concerns: Question of where programs have moved to i.e. basketball program, expressed disappointment during change

- Clarification sought for what programs are running currently and missing
- Recommendation to sharing more broadly what programs are being offered where

Concern: Why was building allowed to operate out of code? Request: All tenants need to have building up to code.

Recommendation to ensure programs and information is accessible to Lawrence and beyond.

Table 7 [redacted]

Planners, leaders, residents, community building project

The expectation to be the social services of the Fred Vereen Center is substantial. The Recreation Department has become the defacto place to solve large scale social issues in Lawrence.

The need is vast and heavy. Nonprofits, daycare, arts, sports, mentorship, culturally sensitive multigenerational multiracial space that is fiscally responsible is requested.

The township should be the main driver as the rec department is not a planning or governing body.

In order to legally, financially, and equitably move forward, a more professional approach should be taken to properly move the community recommendations forward.

A great follow up would be to hear from the mayor and council on plan to formalize comments submitted today. Lawrence is more than those in one neighborhood.

Table 8

Central place – no upkeep

Gentrification of the space, multi racial and multi generational

Amplifying

Where will kids go if there's no center

History of giving a greater glimpse into the world

Programming: Open gym, computer room

Invest in library recreation community center, better partnership

Need community groups council's responsibility

Daycare/Preschool. 0-3 shortage of affordable day care

Food pantry

Referring to the original mission statement
Internships from Rider, TCNJ, MCC
Lasagna Love
Career training, STEM, ESL

Table 9

Why was Dougie Dickerson's name removed?
Why was neighborhood center name changed?
Why did homefront take over?
Why did homefront leave?
Programs for children – neighborhood center, safe spot for kids
Services for parents, single mothers
“taken away from us”

Table 10

- A place people can get out and dance, hangout, board games
- Question about alcohol
- Low cost (attend and produce) way to meet people
- The arts (partnerships?)
- Stuff isn't out there in Lawrence
- How to publicize rec activities but not being like Princeton Art Council

Table 11 [REDACTED] 5 participants

What programs or services would you like to see in a renewed community center?

- Gym
- Teen programs/center
- Story/book groups
- Afterschool programs
- Computers?
- Meeting areas?

What words or phrases might you want to see in a new mission statement for the Center?

Inclusive, connection, mentorships – different generations working/being together

Table 12 [REDACTED]

What programs or services would you like to see in a renewed community center?

- Lifeskills- collaboration with LTPS – job, adult education (language support, English classes, computer skills, basic skills)
- Parent workshops/family learning opportunities
- Food pantry and deliveries
- multipurpose

What words or phrases might you want to see in a new mission statement for the Center?

It starts with us, united, families first, good for all, “support”, “Our”, “Fostering inclusivity”
Neighbors

What else should the task force know from you as it makes its recommendations to the council?

This is us! Common goals!

Individual feedback

1

What programs or services would you like to see in a renewed community center?

Daycare program and afterschool program, computer rooms and mentoring programs

What words or phrases might you want to see in a new mission statement for the Center?

Reestablish a community center that collaborates with the entire Lawrence public and non profit groups that serve our community

What else should the task force know from you as it makes its recommendations to the council?

Lawrence Township Community Center and Recreation

2

What programs or services would you like to see in a renewed community center?

I would like to see an expansion of services to the community without somehow losing programs that have serviced children in ECV (with consideration of cost as well).

What words or phrases might you want to see in a new mission statement for the Center?

History, community, mentorship, safe space, recreation, services, resources, accesibility, collaboration, melting pot?, diversity

What else should the task force know from you as it makes its recommendations to the council?

It's a big job but you have a great team and can do it!

Also maybe a wall of honor/fame for the town

If there was a way to expand near the senior center, that would open up to more activities since the community center doesn't have a lot of physical space to expand.

3

What programs or services would you like to see in a renewed community center?

- Mentoring program
- Life advice regarding jobs, applications, vocational guidance

What words or phrases might you want to see in a new mission statement for the Center?

- Involve children/young adults/adults be active in the community – ie. Visit veteran homes, senior citizen senters
- Read to them, play music

What else should the task force know from you as it makes its recommendations to the council?

- Meals-to-go
- Accessibility/welcoming place

4

What programs or services would you like to see in a renewed community center?

Recreational, educational, cultural activities

Art & Music

What words or phrases might you want to see in a new mission statement for the Center?

Community Together

What else should the task force know from you as it makes its recommendations to the council?

The mission and building should live on as intended by its founders

5

What programs or services would you like to see in a renewed community center?

- Hang out center for young people, especially teen, drop in to play basketball eg, or have a snack, etc. someplace to go
- Enrichment activities – dancing, cooking classes, Saturday night dances, foreign film festivals
- Music studios for young people to make beats

What words or phrases might you want to see in a new mission statement for the Center?

Multi-purpose, inclusive (of all groups in our communities), a sense of community, welcoming of debate/discussions/communication between different groups

What else should the task force know from you as it makes its recommendations to the council?

I moved my family here in 1993 and children went thru Lawrence schools. I was disturbed and continue to be disturbed by segregation in housing, disparities in educational achievement, social isolation of certain groups

6

What programs or services would you like to see in a renewed community center?

After school programs, mentor programs

What words or phrases might you want to see in a new mission statement for the Center?

Inclusive, community connections, events

7

What programs or services would you like to see in a renewed community center?

- Home economics, cooking, sewing, life skills
- Youth mentoring, career guidance
- Before and afterschool educational programming

What words or phrases might you want to see in a new mission statement for the Center?

It takes a "village", "neighborhood", "welcoming

What else should the task force know from you as it makes its recommendations to the council?

Allocate the money to implement the recommendations

Apply for the available grants or issue bonds

Get Rider and TCNJ students (greek orgs) to volunteer

Invite Homefront into assist in programming

8

What programs or services would you like to see in a renewed community center?

Tutoring, cooking, sewing, simple car maintenance classes, etc. Home ec style stuff, no municipal staff based there, don't put the rec dept there

What else should the task force know from you as it makes its recommendations to the council?

We need a true community space to connect. Something with support and things to do from toddlers to young adults

9

What programs or services would you like to see in a renewed community center?

Afterschool program, summer camp, classes – young adults, day care center, youth program, food program, ESL programs, facilitator for programs, transportation, all ages

What words or phrases might you want to see in a new mission statement for the Center?

Community Center for all, for all, All inclusive

What else should the task force know from you as it makes its recommendations to the council?

Plaque honoring original members

10

What programs or services would you like to see in a renewed community center?

After school program, services for residents in community, summer camp program, educational programs, teen programs – counseling/ drug use reduction programs

What words or phrases might you want to see in a new mission statement for the Center?
Service to community to enhance and develop residents to be productive members of society
What else should the task force know from you as it makes its recommendations to the council?
Programs for children with vouchers/for low income residents/ access for local non-profit organizations

11

What programs or services would you like to see in a renewed community center?
Is there a dedicated space to services the community? After school programs
What words or phrases might you want to see in a new mission statement for the Center?
Remember the legacy/ remember the community

12

What programs or services would you like to see in a renewed community center?
Archery & fishing, town meetings like this, career development

13

What programs or services would you like to see in a renewed community center?
Programs for all: daycare, afterschools, seniors
What words or phrases might you want to see in a new mission statement for the Center?
Togetherness, community
What else should the task force know from you as it makes its recommendations to the council?
To open the center back up to the community

14

What programs or services would you like to see in a renewed community center?
Daycare, community outreach, women's services, teen programs, tutorer and mentoring
What words or phrases might you want to see in a new mission statement for the Center?
Our history
What else should the task force know from you as it makes its recommendations to the council?
Don't forget the community

15

What programs or services would you like to see in a renewed community center?
Return to the original mission of community services
What words or phrases might you want to see in a new mission statement for the Center?
Volunteers, community, recreation, families, programs, service
What else should the task force know from you as it makes its recommendations to the council?
Identify source of funding to renovate the building

16

What programs or services would you like to see in a renewed community center?
Day care, afterschool help programs, bring back the summer camp
What words or phrases might you want to see in a new mission statement for the Center?
Keep the Lawrence Neighborhood Center name, Keep our history, for the committee!
What else should the task force know from you as it makes its recommendations to the council?
I worked in the daycare when I was 14 years old, I went to the afterschool program

17

What programs or services would you like to see in a renewed community center?
Afterschool recreational and studies programs, programs that help children grow into adults
(girls- poise, refined), camp program parterships with Princeton YMCA

What else should the task force know from you as it makes its recommendations to the council?
Leave the name intact "Lawrence Community Center"

18

What programs or services would you like to see in a renewed community center?

Open gym, access to computer lab, affordable childcare, affordable after care, mentorship for young men, life skills classes

What words or phrases might you want to see in a new mission statement for the Center?

Community, Diversity

19

Love the idea of a "Human library" being hosted in this center

20

I'd like to see a "hub and spoke" decentralized governance model, so that many organizations can schedule activities and events without adding to the burden of the rec department

21

Getting Money ideas

Law Twn and Rec staff research and apply grants

Ask fireworks committee and PAL and firemen and churches to chip in

Ask Rider, ETS, BMS, Costco, Mall, Lawrence schools, supermarkets

Hold fun fundraisers like bingo at Rider

Hold a yard sale

Charge \$1 for all community events like the music in the park

Put this funds on our yearly township ballot

22

Funding needs to come from the township and augmented by organizations that periodically use the center

23

I donated a lot of items for 25 years. Whenever I came in, staff was friendly and did everything right (hangers, receipts, etc.) Here is what I saw when I cam in over time: children's sports programs, church, a garden, preschool, charity stores, diaper donation, education and info programs, etc. If it ain't broke don't fix it. Support with finances and safe building

24

Human library or other similar programming to allow community members to get to know each other better. People act as books; they have a story to share (e.g. "I am an immigrant; I am a veteran") and "readers" can check the books out to share their stories.

Community Survey, Open-Ended Comments

Survey Comments

1 Female, aged 65 - 74, White, Resident of Lawrence Township south of I-295, Bachelor's degree, household income \$150,000+, Married, 0 kids in home

What other programs or services not listed above that you would like to see?

Activites & programs for elementary age children

What should be the primary mission of the Lawrence Community Center?

To serve the entire lawrence township population and to utilize many different platforms & mediums so available programs and offerings are easy to find for all those interested

2 NA

What other programs or services not listed above that you would like to see?

Adult school/continuing education for hobbies and crafts, lifelong learning, ESL also Spanish lessons. Allow LTPS to use as needed especially for special needs students

What should be the primary mission of the Lawrence Community Center?

A community center is the heart of a neighborhood, a gathering place where people of all ages and backgrounds come together to connect, learn, and support one another. Its mission is often centered on fostering a sense of belonging, providing resources, and promoting social, educational, cultural, and recreational activities.

- ****Building relationships****—creating a welcoming space for individuals, especially new residents to Lawrence, to interact and form meaningful connections.

- ****Offering support services****—providing resources like food programs, career assistance, mental health support, and educational workshops.

- ****Encouraging lifelong learning****—hosting classes, events, and programs that educate and empower members of Lawrence community

Do you have any additional suggestions or ideas for how the Community Center can best serve the residents of Lawrence Township?

The building needs a huge re-refresh. Also, the building has a history of serving only the people living in Eggerts Crossing, so image needs a boost. Also, people don't always feel safe there. If the community center is going to serve everyone and be part of Recreation, it will need an outgoing and personable supervisor at the helm [REDACTED].

3 Male, aged 35 - 44, White, Resident of Lawrence Township south of I-295, High school, household income \$150,000+, Married, 3 kids in home

What other programs or services not listed above that you would like to see?

After school programs for kids. Definitely sporting activities.

What should be the primary mission of the Lawrence Community Center?

It should be a center for the ENTIRE community usage not just the Johnson Avenue neighborhood. I believe it's an under utilized resource, however with the proper leadership could be an asset to The entire community.

Do you have any additional suggestions or ideas for how the Community Center can best serve the residents of Lawrence Township?

Just make it available to anyone and everyone. Better communications about activities and programs being offered/ran. It can be a great resource to the entire community. It shouldn't be looked at as primarily for just residents in the Johnson Avenue area community. If the town is going to be dumping millions of dollars into the building, which I think is great, it needs to be open doors to anyone and everyone especially all the tax paying citizen's of the township.

4 Female, aged 75+, White, Resident of Lawrence Township south of I-295, Doctoral degree, household income \$75,000 - \$99,999, Widowed, 0 kids in home

What other programs or services not listed above that you would like to see?

As I am 75+ years of age, the only programs that would interest me specifically would be adult-oriented although I recognize the need for youth-oriented programming and service. I know there is a senior center in the township; however the scope of programming is somewhat lacking and I make greater use of the programs offered in Princeton.

What should be the primary mission of the Lawrence Community Center?

Serving the needs of the Lawrence community in a way that attracts participation for the entire community as opposed to specific areas of Lawrence

Do you have any additional suggestions or ideas for how the Community Center can best serve the residents of Lawrence Township?

Again being of retirement age, greater coordination with the senior center.

5 Male, aged 45 - 54, Black or African American, Resident of Lawrence Township south of I-295, Bachelor's degree, household income \$50,000 - \$74,999, Married, 2 kids in home

What should be the primary mission of the Lawrence Community Center?

SERVE THE COMMUNITY

6 Male, aged 45 - 54, Black or African American, Resident of Lawrence Township north of I-295, Graduate degree, household income \$100,000 - \$149,999, Married, 3+ kids in home

What other programs or services not listed above that you would like to see?

Basketball

What should be the primary mission of the Lawrence Community Center?

Bring the community together.

7 Female, aged 55 - 64, Black or African American, Resident of Lawrence Township south of I-295, Doctoral degree, household income \$150,000+, Married, 0 kids in home

What other programs or services not listed above that you would like to see?

Clothing drive. Battery and shredder drive.

What should be the primary mission of the Lawrence Community Center?

To serve all people of Lawrence Township.

8 Female, aged 45 - 54, White, Resident of Lawrence Township north of I-295, Graduate degree, household income \$100,000 - \$149,999, Married, 1 kids in home

What other programs or services not listed above that you would like to see?

Community conversations and workshops

What should be the primary mission of the Lawrence Community Center?

A place where people from various neighborhoods in Lawrence can gather for a variety of events.

9 Male, aged 45 - 54, Multiracial (Black and White), Resident of Lawrence Township south of I-295, Graduate degree, household income \$150,000+, Married, 1 kids in home

What other programs or services not listed above that you would like to see?

Connect with the athletic programs that happen at Central Park and the Armory. Open the rooms up to community groups like the library does. Look to partner with the school district and Mercer County to bring resources to the center, eg events highlighting County services, college fairs, vo-tech events

What should be the primary mission of the Lawrence Community Center?

Bringing the community together through a multitude of programming that includes the Recreation Department (including additional services focused on seniors), health and wellness programs, evening lecture series, allowing community groups to meet in the rooms (similar to the library)

Do you have any additional suggestions or ideas for how the Community Center can best serve the residents of Lawrence Township?

By embracing the who the residents of Lawrence Township are today and looking to the future. We should respect the center's history but it shouldn't be stuck in the past. It should serve all of Lawrence.

It's also disappointing to see the "North vs South" bias in this survey as it ignores the differences that also exist between those living east of US-1 and those living west of US-206. I have concerns that the lens that this survey will be viewed with is outdated and ignores who we are right now as a community, eg residents of the Trails at Princeton Pike, though north of I-295 have different concerns than someone living on Cold Soil.

10 Female, aged 45 - 54, White, Resident of Lawrence Township south of I-295, Graduate degree, household income \$50,000 - \$74,999, Married, 2 kids in home

What other programs or services not listed above that you would like to see?

CPR and First Aid classes

Summer Job fairs for teens

Events for children under 5 during day

ESL classes

Special interest club meetings

What should be the primary mission of the Lawrence Community Center?

To lift members of the community through activities that foster connection, education, aid, and enrichment

Do you have any additional suggestions or ideas for how the Community Center can best serve the residents of Lawrence Township?

Stay apolitical

11 Female, aged 55 - 64, Black or African American, Resident of Lawrence Township north of I-295, Graduate degree, household income \$75,000 - \$99,999, Single, 1 kids in home

What other programs or services not listed above that you would like to see?

Cultural programs that represent or promote community norms.

ESL programs and resources for immigrants

What should be the primary mission of the Lawrence Community Center?

To provide activities and events that enhance and educate the Lawrenceville community.

Do you have any additional suggestions or ideas for how the Community Center can best serve the residents of Lawrence Township?

Partner with Local Schools & Libraries: To understand what youth and families are looking for.
Programs & Services by Age Group

For Youth:

After-School Programs & Homework Help

STEM and Arts Workshops

Youth Leadership Councils to give teens a voice and responsibility

Safe Hangout Spaces with games, music, and Wi-Fi

For Adults:

Career Support: Resume writing, job fairs, ESL classes

Wellness Classes: Yoga, Zumba, meditation, cooking demos
 Parenting Workshops: Especially for new parents or international families adjusting to U.S. schools
 Cultural & Community Building
 Cultural Heritage Celebrations: Lunar New Year, Diwali, Juneteenth, Hispanic Heritage Month
 International Potlucks or Music Nights
 Language Exchange Clubs for those learning English or another language
 Education & Skills Development
 Digital Literacy Programs
 Homeownership & Financial Literacy Workshops
 Basic Car Maintenance, Cooking, or Sewing Classes
 Health & Wellness
 Pop-Up Health Clinics: Vaccines, screenings, dental check-ups
 Nutrition & Cooking Classes
 Community Garden or urban farming plots
 Outdoors & Recreation
 Community Clean-Up Days
 Outdoor Movie Nights
 Seasonal Events: Fall festivals, spring planting days, summer BBQs
 Accessibility & Inclusion
 Transportation Services for seniors or those without vehicles
 Multilingual Materials and signage
 Sensory-Friendly Programs for neurodivergent individuals

12 Female, aged 75+, White, Resident of Lawrence Township north of I-295, Doctoral degree, household income \$100,000 - \$149,999, Widowed, 0 kids in home

What other programs or services not listed above that you would like to see?

Dances in evening for teenagers
 Dances in evening for adults
 Dance lessons for adults
 Culturally enriching classes for everyone
 Foreign Film Festivals
 Black Lives Matter Film Festivals

What should be the primary mission of the Lawrence Community Center?

To bring all parts of our community, especially teenagers, together for fun, educational, and culturally enriching activities.

Do you have any additional suggestions or ideas for how the Community Center can best serve the residents of Lawrence Township? Develop a steering committee representing all segments of the community to plan activities, get feedback from participants, problem solve operational issues/complaints

13 Female, aged 35 - 44, Hispanic Latino or Spanish origin, Resident of Lawrence Township north of I-295, Graduate degree, household income \$75,000 - \$99,999, Married, 2 kids in home

What other programs or services not listed above that you would like to see?

Emotional health programs

What should be the primary mission of the Lawrence Community Center?

Train the pillars of the association to provide efficient support to the community, thus allowing the development of impact programs

14 Female, aged 75+, White, Resident of Lawrence Township south of I-295, Graduate degree, household income \$150,000+, Married, 0 kids in home

What other programs or services not listed above that you would like to see?

English classes

What should be the primary mission of the Lawrence Community Center?

Enhance and support the lives of Lawrence residents

15 Male, aged 45 - 54, White, Resident of Lawrence Township north of I-295, Graduate degree, household income \$150,000+, Married, 2 kids in home

What other programs or services not listed above that you would like to see?

Events that would draw in a broadly different demographic attendance

Hold town council and schools board meetings there

What should be the primary mission of the Lawrence Community Center?

Have something for everyone to do and be able to use the center for.

16 Female, aged 45 - 54, Black or African American, Resident of Lawrence Township south of I-295, Graduate degree, household income \$100,000 - \$149,999, Single, 2 kids in home

What other programs or services not listed above that you would like to see?

Every town has a community pool except for Lawrence. Even though it's been said the pool at the high school can be used, it's really not doable because it's only open from 9am-11am.

Having an outdoor pool during the hot summer days is a great way people gather in a community.

Do you have any additional suggestions or ideas for how the Community Center can best serve the residents of Lawrence Township?

A pool like all other communities around us. Lawrence is the only township without a pool for the kids in the community to use.

17 Female, aged 65 - 74, White, Resident of Lawrence Township north of I-295, Graduate degree, household income \$150,000+, Married, 0 kids in home

What other programs or services not listed above that you would like to see?

Fitness and exercise programs for seniors. There is not enough room at the Senior Center

What should be the primary mission of the Lawrence Community Center?

Community engagement

Do you have any additional suggestions or ideas for how the Community Center can best serve the residents of Lawrence Township?

More parking

18 Female, aged 65 - 74, White, Resident of Lawrence Township north of I-295, Graduate degree, household income \$150,000+, Married, 0 kids in home

What other programs or services not listed above that you would like to see?

Fun activities that draw the whole community. Bingo, dances, plays, crocheting, cooking classes, watching sports on TV together, yard sales, etc.

Do you have any additional suggestions or ideas for how the Community Center can best serve the residents of Lawrence Township?

If it ain't broke don't fix it. I can't pick one most important theme, NSC did it all and should still do it. Give them money and a safe building.

19 Male, aged 45 - 54, White, Resident of Lawrence Township north of I-295, High school, household income \$0 - \$24,999, Single, 2 kids

What other programs or services not listed above that you would like to see?

Gloria champion

What should be the primary mission of the Lawrence Community Center?

Gloria champion family

Do you have any additional suggestions or ideas for how the Community Center can best serve the residents of Lawrence Township?

Gloria champion family

20 Female, aged 65 - 74, White, Resident of Lawrence Township north of I-295, Bachelor's degree, household income \$100,000 - \$149,999, Widowed, 0 kids

What other programs or services not listed above that you would like to see?

Health Screenings, health education, vaccine site, voter registration, community meeting rooms.

What should be the primary mission of the Lawrence Community Center?

The primary mission of the Lawrence Community Center should be to engage the entire Lawrence Township community in various programs for all ages. Also, an awareness of the history of the beginnings of the Center should be incorporated into the reimagining of the Lawrence Community Center.

Do you have any additional suggestions or ideas for how the Community Center can best serve the residents of Lawrence Township?

The legacy and integrity of the original Center needs to be recognized. When the actual renovation begins, perhaps include photos or plaques of the original Center and the Eggerts Crossing residents who had the vision of a community meeting place and who put in the hard work to establish the Center in the 1960's.

21 Male, aged 35 - 44, Black or African American, I don't live in Lawrence Township but plan to use the Community Center, Some college, household income \$150,000+, Married, 2 kids

What other programs or services not listed above that you would like to see?

I believe implementing some form of a youth/adult book club would be great. Also a yoga class and possibly etiquette class.

What should be the primary mission of the Lawrence Community Center?

I would love to see the Lawrence neighborhood center stay as it always was but, with a revamp and implementation of the things listed in this survey. I want the Center to keep the same foundation and culture that it was built for. Inclusion of all races and walks of life is very important but, also not losing its core values that were always there.

Do you have any additional suggestions or ideas for how the Community Center can best serve the residents of Lawrence Township?

Get parents involved in the programs. Having support of your parents is a vital component. Focus on the youth because they are truly our future. Getting children out of their usual bubble is important also, experience things that take them out of their element. Maybe once a year take them to NY to a play, or a similar event to open their minds.

22 Male, aged 55 - 64, White, Resident of Lawrence Township north of I-295, Bachelor's degree, household income \$150,000+, Married, 1 kids

What other programs or services not listed above that you would like to see?

I think regular film screenings would attract many that have never been to the center and it would be a good chance to expose people to all of the great potentiality of the center.

What should be the primary mission of the Lawrence Community Center?

To gather people from all over the community together. It should be the residents' meeting hall of our town!

23 Female, aged 55 - 64, White, Resident of Lawrence Township south of I-295, Bachelor's degree, household income \$100,000 - \$149,999, Married, 0 kids

What other programs or services not listed above that you would like to see?

I would love to see senior center activities taking place there, as well as programs for young people and families. I've been part of great fitness programs in the space over the years, as well as parties and other community celebrations.

What should be the primary mission of the Lawrence Community Center?

To ensure that everyone in Lawrence has access to programs that enhance our quality of life.

Do you have any additional suggestions or ideas for how the Community Center can best serve the residents of Lawrence Township?

Bridge the distance between the north and south parts of town by offering township recreation programs, senior center programs (weekly bingo?) or other offerings that don't usually take place in Eggerts Crossing and will attract folks from all over. It's ridiculous that many of us don't move from one part of town to another to have fun or learn together.

24 Female, aged 75+, Black or African American, Resident of Lawrence Township south of I-295, Doctoral degree, household income \$75,000 - \$99,999, Widowed, 0 kids

What other programs or services not listed above that you would like to see?

Inclusive gatherings to have voices of all residents share their views on culture and values that we all have in our Lawrence community.

What should be the primary mission of the Lawrence Community Center?

To serve the Lawrence Community.

By meeting their needs.

By making residents aware of current and innovative trends that will benefit all

By keeping Lawrence Community a desirable place to live and raise families.

Do you have any additional suggestions or ideas for how the Community Center can best serve the residents of Lawrence Township?

To develop programs for seniors and youth and pre schoolers.

Keep our community safe and protected by having Partners with PoliceDept

25 Female, aged 65 - 74, White, Resident of Lawrence Township north of I-295, Bachelor's degree, household income \$75,000 - \$99,999, Single, 0 kids

What other programs or services not listed above that you would like to see?

Infant care - mini daycare programs (anything that has seniors connecting with children in a helpful way)

What should be the primary mission of the Lawrence Community Center?

To keep seniors healthy, involved and active.

Do you have any additional suggestions or ideas for how the Community Center can best serve the residents of Lawrence Township?

Healthy cooking and eating (easy recipes for one or two people).

26 Female, aged 65 - 74, Black or African American, Resident of Lawrence Township south of I-295, Bachelor's degree, household income \$100,000 - \$149,999, Married, 0 kids

What other programs or services not listed above that you would like to see?

Neighborhood band or chorus for novices.

Gardening classes.

African or ethnic dancing/drumming classes.

What should be the primary mission of the Lawrence Community Center?

TO foster a sense of community, and connect with othose who are not exactly like wht we're used to seeing/being in our everyday lives.

Do you have any additional suggestions or ideas for how the Community Center can best serve the residents of Lawrence Township?

Lots of corporate sponsors who will give support in a nonpartisan way.

27 Male, aged 75+, White, Resident of Lawrence Township south of I-295, Doctoral degree, household income \$100,000 - \$149,999, Married, 0 kids

What should be the primary mission of the Lawrence Community Center?

To be a welcoming haven for all Township residents and guests; to promote Township unity.

Do you have any additional suggestions or ideas for how the Community Center can best serve the residents of Lawrence Township?

To adequately represent the interests and needs of all Township residents given their diversity.

28 Female, aged 75+, Hispanic Latino or Spanish origin, Resident of Lawrence Township north of I-295, Graduate degree, household income \$50,000 - \$74,999, Single, 0 kids

What other programs or services not listed above that you would like to see?

Offer orientation services for newly arrived immigrants. For example,

What are their rights.

Where to study ESL

Explain the school system

Non for profit organizations services

Clinics

SNAP and Section 8 if legal residents.

What should be the primary mission of the Lawrence Community Center?

To bring community together by promoting integration. One of such ways could be accomplished by having workshops where participants from different cultures sit at a table where all are from different backgrounds, cultures, and faiths.

I believe that when we get to know a person from a different race, culture, and faith and see him/her for who she is/he is, we find our common humanity.

Do you have any additional suggestions or ideas for how the Community Center can best serve the residents of Lawrence Township?

Be multicultural, multiethnic, multi faith, and multi political views. Promote unity not separation

29 Female, aged 25 - 34, Asian, Resident of Lawrence Township south of I-295, Graduate degree, household income \$150,000+, Married, 0 kids

What other programs or services not listed above that you would like to see?

One event the community center could host is the Human Library. Originally started in Denmark in 2000 to challenge prejudice and promote understanding, the Human Library invites people to serve as “books” who share personal stories—often around identity, lived experience, or expertise—while “readers” engage in one-on-one or small group conversations.

The format has now been implemented in over 70 countries around the world, hosted in libraries, community centers, and colleges as a powerful way to foster empathy and build meaningful connections. It’s a flexible and inclusive model that can be adapted to the specific community goals—whether that’s uplifting local voices, supporting youth, or encouraging intergenerational dialogue.

What should be the primary mission of the Lawrence Community Center?

The mission of our community center should be to serve as our town’s ‘third place’—a welcoming, inclusive space beyond home (the first place) and work (the second place) where people of all ages and backgrounds can gather, connect, and build community. It should be a hub for conversation, creativity, support, and shared experiences, fostering a stronger, more vibrant civic life.

30 Female, aged 45 - 54, White, Resident of Lawrence Township south of I-295, Graduate degree, household income \$75,000 - \$99,999, Divorced, 2 kids

What other programs or services not listed above that you would like to see?

Parenting support/coaching for parents of different age children centered around home life, the importance of education, connecting with your child's school/teacher, mental health of children and social skills experiences.

What should be the primary mission of the Lawrence Community Center?

To provide a pathway for people in the community to feel purposeful and connected. To provide a place for people who need support and those in a position to offer support, and a means for people to see their integral role in our community.

Do you have any additional suggestions or ideas for how the Community Center can best serve the residents of Lawrence Township?

As a parent in Lawrence, a teacher for LTPS and a staff at ECV, I see the need for a strong community center program from many angles. It all starts with a welcoming building that reaches out to community members, inviting their presence as participants, leaders and facilitators for programming. The mission/programs should include a strong desire to instill a sense of purpose in every member of our community to be part of the support for all others. All people in our community should know what former Saint Ann pastor Fr. R. Vincent Gartland liked to say, "If you're not here, you're missed!" The community center has the potential to be the welcoming hub for our community. I can't wait to see where this goes!!! Thank you for asking! :) Donna Macc.

31 Male, aged 75+, White, Resident of Lawrence Township south of I-295, Graduate degree, household income \$150,000+, Married, 0 kids

What other programs or services not listed above that you would like to see?

Preschool programs, tutoring, after school programs for teens

What should be the primary mission of the Lawrence Community Center?

Community involvement

32 aged 75+, White, Resident of Lawrence Township south of I-295, Doctoral degree, household income , Married, 0 kids

What other programs or services not listed above that you would like to see?

preschool/daycare

What should be the primary mission of the Lawrence Community Center?

The mission of the Lawrence Community Center should be to foster unity in Lawrence Township by eliminating racial, socioeconomic and geographical isolation through education, community service and recreation.

Do you have any additional suggestions or ideas for how the Community Center can best serve the residents of Lawrence Township?

educational support programming including tutoring, mentoring, preschool and child care and recreation

The Community Center would best serve the residents if community groups had a role in programming and governance. Local nonprofits could help bring in additional funds if they have a stake in the use of the facility, the Lawrence Township Public Schools could offer professional staff, faculty and student interns and the recreation department could supply recreational programs, expertise and equipment. The center would serve the community better if it was governed by a Board of Directors from each of the entities supporting the Center. the BoD should report to the Town Manager and or the Town Council.

33 Male, aged 65 - 74, White, Resident of Lawrence Township south of I-295, High school, household income , Married, 0 kids

What other programs or services not listed above that you would like to see?

Programs and classes for seniors, and allowances for overflow from senior center. Allowances for sports activities instead of utilizing the schools.

What should be the primary mission of the Lawrence Community Center?

To allow access to all the residents of the township, and to not focus on the needs and desires of residents of certain parts of the township, but for all portions. It should be a place where residents can go and relax, learn, play within the rules and limits that will be put into place.

Do you have any additional suggestions or ideas for how the Community Center can best serve the residents of Lawrence Township?

Be open minded to ALL residents, not just certain groups. I realize there will be obstacles presented for everything, monetary , enough volunteers, scheduling etc. one of my biggest concerns would be security and control of how you are going to keep it from being overcrowded and allowing large groups in because I know from experience that once the word gets out about open recreation, and as to quote a movie, if you build it they will come. But i am hopeful this will become a true community center for all two residents.

34 Female, aged 55 - 64, White, Resident of Lawrence Township south of I-295, Bachelors degree, household income \$150,000+, Married, 0 kids

What other programs or services not listed above that you would like to see?

Programs for ALL of LT citizens.

What should be the primary mission of the Lawrence Community Center?

Social and resource center

35 Female, aged 45 - 54, White, Resident of Lawrence Township north of I-295, Some college, household income , Married, 0 kids

What other programs or services not listed above that you would like to see?

Rec Department

What should be the primary mission of the Lawrence Community Center?

Rec Department

Do you have any additional suggestions or ideas for how the Community Center can best serve the residents of Lawrence Township?

Rec Dept has a shed they took from public works. Give shed BACK to public works, they used to have lunch break there at central Park, and give rec Department building. Public works now break in trucks or shop if near it.

36 Male, aged 75+, Black or African American, Resident of Lawrence Township south of I-295, High school, household income \$75,000 - \$99,999, Widowed, 1 kids

What other programs or services not listed above that you would like to see?

Representatives from County, State and Federal agencies such as: Medicare and Medicaid offices, Employment Agencies, Health Agencies, Special education programs for adults, Community Meetings, Sewing and Cooking classes.

What should be the primary mission of the Lawrence Community Center?

The Lawrence community Center must continue delivering the essential service long provided by the Lawrence Neighborhood Center, expanding programs and activities where possible to meet the evolving needs of Lawrence Township's diverse population. The Center's history exemplifies the power of community-driven efforts to improve social services and educational opportunities for Lawrence Township residents. While change may be inevitable, the Center's mission must stay true to its founding charter, preserving its role as a hub where

community-minded volunteers can make a meaningful impact on those who need services most. The LCC must not lose the 1960s inspired spirit, but can adapt that same spirit to present needs of the community it serves.

Do you have any additional suggestions or ideas for how the Community Center can best serve the residents of Lawrence Township?

With our growing diverse population and the variety of religious and cultural families, the Community Center can play an important role in getting people to know one another and learn about each others cultural, thereby establishing a better understanding and making our Community, our State and our Country a place where we all can live in harmony.

37 Female, aged 55 - 64, White, Resident of Lawrence Township south of I-295, Graduate degree, household income \$100,000 - \$149,999, Single, 0 kids

What other programs or services not listed above that you would like to see?

Room rentals, meeting space, local art exhibits, volunteer opportunities.

What should be the primary mission of the Lawrence Community Center?

To connect with all Lawrence residents, not just the Eldridge Park neighborhood.

Do you have any additional suggestions or ideas for how the Community Center can best serve the residents of Lawrence Township?

I have lived in Lawrence for almost 40 years and have literally never received one piece of information about programs or services at the Community Center. Does it have a website? Does it have a presence anywhere? Thanks for this new effort.

38 Female, aged 55 - 64, Hispanic Latino or Spanish origin, Resident of Lawrence Township north of I-295, Graduate degree, household income \$100,000 - \$149,999, Married, 0 kids

What other programs or services not listed above that you would like to see?

Showcase green building and sustainable architecture

What should be the primary mission of the Lawrence Community Center?

Serving Lawrence families with multigenerational activities and fitness offerings

Do you have any additional suggestions or ideas for how the Community Center can best serve the residents of Lawrence Township?

Encourage fitness and togetherness

39 Male, aged 45 - 54, Black or African American, I don't live in Lawrence Township but plan to use the Community Center, Graduate degree, household income \$100,000 - \$149,999, Single, 0 kids

What other programs or services not listed above that you would like to see?

Social Service, (PSEG electrical assistance), social service services, gardening programs, healthy eating classes

What should be the primary mission of the Lawrence Community Center?

A community agency that houses social services, after school activities and youth services programs for youth and families who reside in the Lawrence community at large.

40 Female, aged 35 - 44, White, Resident of Lawrence Township south of I-295, Graduate degree, household income \$150,000+, Married, 2 kids

What other programs or services not listed above that you would like to see?

Summer camp or events for kids during the summer

41 Female, aged 45 - 54, Black or African American, Resident of Lawrence Township north of I-295, High school, household income \$100,000 - \$149,999, Married, 2 kids

What other programs or services not listed above that you would like to see?

Summer Camp, space to rent to host a paint party, crafts, watch a movie, bingo night, karaoke

What should be the primary mission of the Lawrence Community Center?

Diverse programs for all ages

42 Female, aged 55 - 64, White, Resident of Lawrence Township south of I-295, Some college, household income \$50,000 - \$74,999, Divorced, 0 kids

What other programs or services not listed above that you would like to see?

Support groups (children/teens), computer lab for seniors (anyone), disabled programs (physical sport stuff and educational life skills)

What should be the primary mission of the Lawrence Community Center?

To serve the community in all aspects of life

43 Male, aged 45 - 54, White, Resident of Lawrence Township south of I-295, Bachelor's degree, household income \$75,000 - \$99,999, Married, 2 kids

What other programs or services not listed above that you would like to see?

Table gaming clubs

Job fairs

Support/networking for new/existing businesses

What should be the primary mission of the Lawrence Community Center?

Uniting our community through tutoring, arts, and life skills — fueling growth, creativity, and confidence by turning after-school hours, community gatherings, and workshops into stepping stones for success.

Do you have any additional suggestions or ideas for how the Community Center can best serve the residents of Lawrence Township?

Try not to overlap existing services with other facilities or offerings in Lawrence. But, if you do, try and calibrate for the needs of the neighborhood where it resides.

44 Male, aged 55 - 64, White, Resident of Lawrence Township south of I-295, Bachelors degree, household income \$100,000 - \$149,999, Married, 2 kids

What other programs or services not listed above that you would like to see?

The center should be a place that residents can use for all types of activities both public and private. We need a place for teens to go to learn and grow that educates about the history of the township and teaches some life skills.

What should be the primary mission of the Lawrence Community Center?

Promote, support, and expand the health and wellbeing of Lawrence Township residents with a focus on the youth in the continuity.

45 Female, aged 65 - 74, White, Resident of Lawrence Township north of I-295, Graduate degree, household income \$150,000+, Married, 0 kids

What should be the primary mission of the Lawrence Community Center?

Community social services, especially for underprivileged residents.

46 Female, aged 55 - 64, White, Resident of Lawrence Township north of I-295, Bachelor's degree, household income , Married, 0 kids

What other programs or services not listed above that you would like to see?

The times that services are provided should be determined by the desired audience.

What should be the primary mission of the Lawrence Community Center?

To serve the residents of Lawrence Township of all ages.

Do you have any additional suggestions or ideas for how the Community Center can best serve the residents of Lawrence Township?

I don't know the size of the building, so I don't know how many or how varied the programs/activities can be. I don't want to see the facility duplicate existing services (for example, Lawrence has a successful and well-attended senior center), but the facility should provide options for a variety of audiences at different times of day/days of the week. I know that Ewing and Hopewell have undergone significant processes in the development of the replacement ESCC (Ewing) and the proposed new community center in Hopewell. Please reach out to them to see what sorts of programs/activities/facilities will be provided to those residents as a comparison for discussion.

47 Male, aged 65 - 74, White, Resident of Lawrence Township north of I-295, Doctoral degree, household income \$150,000+, Married, 0 kids

What other programs or services not listed above that you would like to see?

To answer the previous question, the days and times should be set based on the activities that are offered, as well as the available funding. Other programs could include daytime childcare services & pre-school education programs.

What should be the primary mission of the Lawrence Community Center?

To fill gaps in similar existing programs such as those provided at churches (in particular the coming Presbyterian church Community Well), the Senior Center, public school activities, Recreation Dept., fire dept (voting, Halloween contests, etc), previously established youth athletic teams, library programs, etc. Essentially avoid duplicating what we already have.

Do you have any additional suggestions or ideas for how the Community Center can best serve the residents of Lawrence Township?

Overall, if it doesn't require taxpayer support, such as by creating and operating it as a standalone non-profit organization, it can be run any way those funding it and serving on its board want to. However, if supported by taxpayer dollars and under management of the Recreation Dept, avoid duplicating town budget costs and resources just to offer the same activities that are already available elsewhere in the township or nearby.

48 Female, aged 55 - 64, White, Resident of Lawrence Township south of I-295, Graduate degree, household income \$100,000 - \$149,999, Married, 0 kids

What other programs or services not listed above that you would like to see?

Trying to revive the outdoor garden that was there. Book groups and/or book exchange programs. Jigsaw puzzles. Craft groups- ie knitting, crocheting, painting, etc.

What should be the primary mission of the Lawrence Community Center?

To serve the Community.

49 Female, aged 35 - 44, White, Resident of Lawrence Township south of I-295, Bachelor's degree, household income \$150,000+, Married, 2 kids

What other programs or services not listed above that you would like to see?

Tween/teen social nights, basketball tournaments and 3v3 or 5v5 pick up games and open gym for the kids that have nowhere to play in the winter if they don't make the school teams! Thanks!

What should be the primary mission of the Lawrence Community Center?

Community involvement lower cost for anyone to enjoy with a focus on some youth activities and basketball programming/open gym and teen/tween social nights.

Do you have any additional suggestions or ideas for how the Community Center can best serve the residents of Lawrence Township?

Please bring back the open gym for basketball. There are kids that don't make the high school or middle school teams and they have nowhere to play inside during the winter months and this was a way for them to play and socialize with their peers. It would be great if they could have

some low cost teen and tween activities and social nights. Possibly basketball tournaments or teams, dance classes and other 10-17 year old activities.

50 Female, aged 45 - 54, Black or African American, Resident of Lawrence Township south of I-295, Graduate degree, household income \$150,000+, Married, 1 kids

What other programs or services not listed above that you would like to see?

Unsure. Is there an assessment or environmental scan of what services are all ready offered?

By whom? How will you know if you're replicating existing initiatives?

What should be the primary mission of the Lawrence Community Center?

Provide services and opportunities for community connections.

Do you have any additional suggestions or ideas for how the Community Center can best serve the residents of Lawrence Township?

I'm not sure how helpful it is to identify residents by north/south of 295. That division may have made sense historically -- but especially with developments east of Princeton pike / north of 295 it would have been more useful to divide the town into 4 quadrants, at a minimum -- using one of the major north/south roads as the other axis.

51 Female, aged 25 - 34, Black or African American, Resident of Lawrence Township south of I-295, Graduate degree, household income \$100,000 - \$149,999, Married, 3 kids

What other programs or services not listed above that you would like to see?

use of the daycare

historical society events

add entrepreneurial workshops, in addition to life skills workshops

collaborations with local nonprofits, businesses, and community leaders/orgs

summer camps

What should be the primary mission of the Lawrence Community Center?

The LCC is a community space that centers people and works alongside them to educate, connect, and uplift through programmatic offerings and other meaningful collaborations.

Do you have any additional suggestions or ideas for how the Community Center can best serve the residents of Lawrence Township?

when hiring, hire local talent as full-time staff and for temp/seasonal programming initiatives

52 Female, aged 45 - 54, White, Resident of Lawrence Township south of I-295, Bachelor's degree, household income \$150,000+, Married, 2 kids

What other programs or services not listed above that you would like to see?

We need to have a wide array of programs that all residents can utilize from throughout the township.

Resident led program should be prioritized, as recreation has done for years.

Township offices should be available at the community center so people can access staff and information

Space should be rented out for use of community members

What should be the primary mission of the Lawrence Community Center?

To provide a place for all residents to access township services, particularly recreation programs and to have a space available to all residents

Do you have any additional suggestions or ideas for how the Community Center can best serve the residents of Lawrence Township?

Provide township offices in the building and make sure that residents can all access the space, there should be a clear way that anyone can access the space for use for events or programming

53 Female, aged 65 - 74, White, Resident of Lawrence Township north of I-295, Graduate degree, household income \$100,000 - \$149,999, Married, 0 kids

What other programs or services not listed above that you would like to see?

Wellness programs: yoga, pilates etc.

What should be the primary mission of the Lawrence Community Center?

To bring residents together and have a sense of community.

54 Female, aged 35 - 44, White, Resident of Lawrence Township north of I-295, Bachelor's degree, household income \$150,000+, Married, 2 kids

What other programs or services not listed above that you would like to see?

Would love a space for older tweens/teens- basketball open gym during winter/fall, ping pong, meeting rooms, drop in craft activities, bingo, dances, agility training, card games, laser tag. For adults Gardening, painting classes, trivia nights too

What should be the primary mission of the Lawrence Community Center?

To provide a safe place to gather for all the residents of Lawrence Township through the recreation department.

Do you have any additional suggestions or ideas for how the Community Center can best serve the residents of Lawrence Township?

The rec dept could use the basketball court for additional practice for the basketball program, since the courts sometimes interfere with school programming. It could also be used for the summer camp as an indoor option on rainy days to mix things up.

55 Female, aged 45 - 54, Hispanic Latino or Spanish origin, Resident of Lawrence Township north of I-295, Bachelor's degree, household income \$75,000 - \$99,999, Married, 2 kids

What other programs or services not listed above that you would like to see?

Would love to see teen club groups that center on things such as Pokémon, gaming, and other interests for teens to share.

What should be the primary mission of the Lawrence Community Center?

The community center should be a place of outreach bc there are many in need of help, but don't know where to turn to. And I fear that we are heading into even more difficult times. People are going to need more help with emergency food, rental assistance, clothing, and other necessities for their families. It should be a place that someone can walk into or call and find someone who can either direct them towards other programs or can help them directly.

Do you have any additional suggestions or ideas for how the Community Center can best serve the residents of Lawrence Township?

I think if we can have the community come together several times a year to give back, that would be great. Food drives, toy drives, clothing drives would help a lot of people.

56 Male, aged 55 - 64, White, I don't live in Lawrence Township but plan to use the Community Center, Graduate degree, household income \$150,000+, Married, 2 kids

What other programs or services not listed above that you would like to see?

Adult Education

57 Female, aged 65 - 74, White, Resident of Lawrence Township north of I-295, Graduate degree, household income \$100,000 - \$149,999, Widowed, 0 kids

What other programs or services not listed above that you would like to see?

All community engagement. Safety and affordable.

58 Male, aged 65 - 74, White, Resident of Lawrence Township south of I-295, High school, household income , Married, 0 kids

What should be the primary mission of the Lawrence Community Center?

Be open to all residents of the town regardless where they live or their age. There will be a fine line on how to keep outside agencies and residents from not using it. Possibly having residents obtain a key card like gyms have to enter and participate because if not word gets out and you will have no control over who uses it

Do you have any additional suggestions or ideas for how the Community Center can best serve the residents of Lawrence Township?

Just listen to all resident's ideas and put them to good use, both old and young

59 Male, aged 35 - 44, White, Resident of Lawrence Township south of I-295, Some college, household income \$150,000+, Married, 0 kids

What should be the primary mission of the Lawrence Community Center?

Enrich the community.

Do you have any additional suggestions or ideas for how the Community Center can best serve the residents of Lawrence Township?

Community engagement with Rider U. To have adult credited programs to transfer to school.

60 Female, aged 55 - 64, White, Resident of Lawrence Township south of I-295, Some college, household income \$100,000 - \$149,999, Widowed, 0 kids

What should be the primary mission of the Lawrence Community Center?

Entire community activities for all ages, not just the small radius around the center.

61 Male, aged 55 - 64, White, Resident of Lawrence Township south of I-295, Graduate degree, household income \$150,000+, Married, 0 kids

What should be the primary mission of the Lawrence Community Center?

I think it should be a resource that appeals to all Lawrence residents. Providing recreational, educational, art and other programming.

62 Male, aged 65 - 74, White, Resident of Lawrence Township north of I-295, Bachelor's degree, household income \$75,000 - \$99,999, Divorced, 0 kids

What should be the primary mission of the Lawrence Community Center?

Primary: To serve the educational and recreational needs of the community bordered by 295, 206, Ewing border and Trenton border.

63 Female, aged 65 - 74, White, Resident of Lawrence Township south of I-295, Bachelor's degree, household income \$150,000+, Married, 0 kids

What should be the primary mission of the Lawrence Community Center?

Programs that service ALL Lawrence residents regardless of income or residence in the township.

64 Female, aged 65 - 74, White, Resident of Lawrence Township north of I-295, Bachelor's degree, household income , Married, 0 kids

What should be the primary mission of the Lawrence Community Center?

Provide needed services for Lawrence residents: particularly daycare and afterschool programs [free or reasonably priced]

65 Female, aged 75+, White, Resident of Lawrence Township south of I-295, Doctoral degree, household income \$50,000 - \$74,999, Married, 0 kids

What should be the primary mission of the Lawrence Community Center?

Serve the needs of residents in the Center's geographic area. This includes providing the food pantry, summer camp.

66 Female, aged 55 - 64, White, Resident of Lawrence Township south of I-295, Graduate degree, household income \$150,000+, Single, 0 kids

What should be the primary mission of the Lawrence Community Center?

Service all residents of the township, not select groups.

Do you have any additional suggestions or ideas for how the Community Center can best serve the residents of Lawrence Township?

Offer services throughout the day and early evening when people have time. Offering events from 10am - 3 only services those available at that time. What about the rest of us?

67 Male, aged 35 - 44, White, Resident of Lawrence Township south of I-295, Bachelor's degree, household income \$75,000 - \$99,999, Married, 0 kids

What should be the primary mission of the Lawrence Community Center?

The Lawrence Community Center has a long tradition steeped in equity. I would like to see that legacy continue and grow by ensuring that the primary mission of the community center is that of serving Lawrence Township residents from the bottom up. That means prioritizing things like food assistance and school/educational and social support programs over general recreational programming like athletic leagues or gym space.

In a day and age where community third spaces of this kind are rapidly dwindling (we've seen the loss of three over the past decade in Lawrence), it's important now (more than ever) to look to the Community Center's legacy for inspiration for its direction into the future.

Do you have any additional suggestions or ideas for how the Community Center can best serve the residents of Lawrence Township?

I would highly recommend working with Homefront to bring them back to the community center or looking to partner with other similar organizations like TASK or the Y.

68 Female, aged 75+, White, Resident of Lawrence Township south of I-295, Some college, household income \$75,000 - \$99,999, Married, 0 kids

What should be the primary mission of the Lawrence Community Center?

The Lawrence Community Center should evolve into a vital hub for the entire Township, offering programs that serve residents of all ages and backgrounds. While it was once used as a recreational facility, changing times and growing needs have highlighted the importance of a more inclusive and community-focused approach. The Center should support a wide range of services, including academic tutoring for students attending Lawrence Township Public School, and actively engage programs tailored not only for youth but for resident of all ages. As the needs of our community continue to grow, it is essential that the Community Center reflects its role as a resource for all residents, fostering connection, learning and support across Lawrence.

69 Male, aged 65 - 74, Black or African American, Resident of Lawrence Township south of I-295, Graduate degree, household income , Divorced, 0 kids

What should be the primary mission of the Lawrence Community Center?

The mission of the center should be to:

- 1.) Offer social, personal growth and educationally based programs to the youth, senior citizens and community based organizations.
- 2.) Provide meeting space for governmental entities, and or community based organizations to

link with various sectors of Lawrence Township residents.

3.). Feature Lawrence Township sponsored programs at the Center- such as serving as an auxiliary location for senior citizen activities, youth recreation, counseling services, income tax preparation, and intake for governmental service programs.

Do you have any additional suggestions or ideas for how the Community Center can best serve the residents of Lawrence Township?

In order for the Center to best serve the people, the Township of Lawrence leaders must listen to the people and ensure that the center be what the people need it to be.

The center should not and must not be relegated to serving as convenient auxiliary office space for Town Hall; nor should the center be a spillover location or a means by which to reduce staff overcrowding at Lawrence Township Hall or other Township properties!

The Center must first, last and always be accountable to all of the people of Lawrence Township.

70 Male, aged 25 - 34, Black or African American, Resident of Lawrence Township south of I-295, Bachelor's degree, household income \$100,000 - \$149,999, Single, 1 kids

What should be the primary mission of the Lawrence Community Center?

The primary mission of the Lawrence Community Center should be to provide additional services and programs to the community. This should be intentionally purposed for the local Eggerts Crossing community, as the Center has been an essential part of the community even after Homefront operated the building.

71 Female, aged 65 - 74, White, Resident of Lawrence Township south of I-295, Some college, household income \$75,000 - \$99,999, Married, 0 kids

What should be the primary mission of the Lawrence Community Center?

The services provided when it was the Eggerts Crossing Center should and need to continue. Lawrence seniors have their own facility on Darrah Lane. The schools in Lawrence provide indoor sport facilities and we have plenty of outdoor sporting fields. The township's under-served population need this facility to resume the services previously provided there.

72 Female, aged 55 - 64, White, Resident of Lawrence Township south of I-295, Bachelors degree, household income \$150,000+, Married, 0 kids

What should be the primary mission of the Lawrence Community Center?

To be a hub for the community in times of need, celebration, heartbreak and emergency- it can be the heart of Lawrence.

Do you have any additional suggestions or ideas for how the Community Center can best serve the residents of Lawrence Township?

There is such an opportunity in front of us as a town to create a resource for all of Lawrence. It can serve so many needs (from housing the Rec Dept staff as well as possibly a manager of the non-recreation programming.) It can be so much to so many people!

73 Female, aged 45 - 54, White, Resident of Lawrence Township south of I-295, Bachelor's degree, household income \$75,000 - \$99,999, Married, 0 kids

What should be the primary mission of the Lawrence Community Center?

To bring the community together as often as possible. A variety of events will encourage that.

Do you have any additional suggestions or ideas for how the Community Center can best serve the residents of Lawrence Township?

Allowing community groups to reserve space. Scouting and school/student organizations, as well as adult non-profit organizations that want to hold events

74 Female, aged 25 - 34, White, Resident of Lawrence Township north of I-295, Some college, household income \$150,000+, Married, 1 kids

What should be the primary mission of the Lawrence Community Center?

To bring the residents together to make better and more informed decisions

75 Female, aged 65 - 74, , Resident of Lawrence Township north of I-295, Some college, household income \$75,000 - \$99,999, Divorced, 0 kids

What should be the primary mission of the Lawrence Community Center?

To bring togetherness with all community and divisions of Lawrence Township

Do you have any additional suggestions or ideas for how the Community Center can best serve the residents of Lawrence Township?

Technology for children and seniors who need to be educated, refresher courses, etc.

76 Male, aged 55 - 64, Black or African American, Resident of Lawrence Township north of I-295, Some college, household income \$100,000 - \$149,999, Married, 0 kids

What should be the primary mission of the Lawrence Community Center?

To encourage togetherness, enjoyment, and enlightenment.

77 Male, aged 75+, White, Resident of Lawrence Township south of I-295, Doctoral degree, household income \$75,000 - \$99,999, Married, 0 kids

What should be the primary mission of the Lawrence Community Center?

To host activities and programs that cannot be found elsewhere in Lawrenceville (or a nearby town). To create opportunities for people living in different parts of the town to interact and get to know each other.

78 Male, aged 65 - 74, White, Resident of Lawrence Township south of I-295, Some college, household income \$0 - \$24,999, Married, 0 kids

What should be the primary mission of the Lawrence Community Center?

To provide for and undeserved community.

Do you have any additional suggestions or ideas for how the Community Center can best serve the residents of Lawrence Township?

Keep it a community center to serve Lawrence Township's most needy and not a hang out for the Lawrence Township recreation committee.

79 Female, aged 55 - 64, White, Resident of Lawrence Township north of I-295, Bachelor's degree, household income \$150,000+, Married, 0 kids

What should be the primary mission of the Lawrence Community Center?

To provide for the social/recreational/cultural/educational needs of all Lawrence residents.

80 Female, aged 65 - 74, Black or African American, Resident of Lawrence Township south of I-295, Bachelor's degree, household income \$75,000 - \$99,999, Married, 0 kids

What should be the primary mission of the Lawrence Community Center?

To serve the entire community

81 , aged 35 - 44, , Resident of Lawrence Township south of I-295, Some college, household income \$75,000 - \$99,999, Married, 3 kids

What should be the primary mission of the Lawrence Community Center?

To serve the entire community and be a place where all can gather and benefit

82 Female, aged 35 - 44, , Resident of Lawrence Township south of I-295, Some college, household income \$75,000 - \$99,999, Married, 3 kids

What should be the primary mission of the Lawrence Community Center?

To serve the entire community and be a welcoming place for all.

83 Female, aged 45 - 54, Black or African American, , Bachelor's degree, household income \$150,000+, Married, 2 kids

What should be the primary mission of the Lawrence Community Center?

To serve the surrounding community

84 Male, aged 45 - 54, White, Resident of Lawrence Township south of I-295, Graduate degree, household income \$150,000+, Married, 3 kids

What should be the primary mission of the Lawrence Community Center?

To serve the whole township, not just local the neighborhood.

Do you have any additional suggestions or ideas for how the Community Center can best serve the residents of Lawrence Township?

The center needs to be for Lawrence residents only. Otherwise it will be a free for all from other towns

85 Male, aged 55 - 64, White, Resident of Lawrence Township north of I-295, Graduate degree, household income \$150,000+, Married, 1 kids

What should be the primary mission of the Lawrence Community Center?

Truthfully, given the uncertainty of the economy it makes more sense for the town to reduce its fiscal liabilities. It may become necessary to reduce the town budget in the face of a recession or heaven forbid a depression.

We should start by divesting non-critical assets now.

86 Female, aged 45 - 54, White, Resident of Lawrence Township north of I-295, Graduate degree, household income \$150,000+, Married, 2 kids

What should be the primary mission of the Lawrence Community Center?

Uniting Lawrenceville residents together through pertinent programs, services and recreational activities that will enhance the Lawrence Community.

Do you have any additional suggestions or ideas for how the Community Center can best serve the residents of Lawrence Township?

Game nights

Providing mental health services for families

Providing space for teens to hangout.

87 Female, aged 45 - 54, White, Resident of Lawrence Township north of I-295, Bachelor's degree, household income \$150,000+, Single, 1 kids

Do you have any additional suggestions or ideas for how the Community Center can best serve the residents of Lawrence Township?

Don't waste time and resources focusing on seniors there is already a separate senior center that does that.

88 Female, aged 35 - 44, White, Resident of Lawrence Township south of I-295, Graduate degree, household income \$150,000+, Married, 2 kids

Do you have any additional suggestions or ideas for how the Community Center can best serve the residents of Lawrence Township?

I forgot to add into my initial response I sent in. It would be amazing to have multilingual (Polish, Spanish, Czech ect) department where elders who don't speak much English can go to , in order to find out specifics about things that apply to seniors (SSI, Medicare info, senior tax freeze etc). There's a big burden on many now grown up English speaking children of these people to now have to research and do all of these applications for their aging non-English speaking parents. I myself and so many other people that I know spend so many hours of our time having to research all of these programs for our parents and complete the entire process for them because they do not speak enough English to understand and usually don't know how to use computers. This is all while having our own small kids and managing our own family, household, and jobs. Of course this task mostly falls on the daughters as well. Lawrence is very diverse in Ethnicities so it would be great to have a resource like that. Also if possible, some kind of central multilingual department where people can hire someone who speaks their language that can take them to doctor appointments and translate for them. Again many times the now grown up kids have to take off of work to take their parents to appointments in order to translate. Can't tell you how many times I've been asked by an aunt/ uncle/ parent/ distant relative to translate random mail for them, complete entire processes for them, go to doc apps with them. It's exhausting. It would be great for Lawrence to have some kind of affordable resources like that.

89 Female, aged 65 - 74, White, Resident of Lawrence Township north of I-295, Bachelor's degree, household income , Married, 0 kids

Do you have any additional suggestions or ideas for how the Community Center can best serve the residents of Lawrence Township?

I think that the community center should be renovated and used to house the public preschool program Lawrence Township plans to offer. When I drive past I already see a playground at the facility. I think that it could be used for the preschool and evenings could be used for other activities.

90 Male, aged 65 - 74, , Resident of Lawrence Township north of I-295, Graduate degree, household income , Married, kids

Do you have any additional suggestions or ideas for how the Community Center can best serve the residents of Lawrence Township?

I'm putting in writing what I spoke to last night (thank you for the event). I suggested a community library/resource room be included, perhaps in the room to the right as you enter from the front. The space could be set up like a "living room" (to foster interpersonal communication) with books and other materials related to the township, and provide an opportunity for the township, township committees and non-profits to have informational displays, either permanent or rotating, relating to Lawrence. The room should have public WiFi, and perhaps a computer for those not connected via portable devices.

91 Male, aged 0 - 17, White, Resident of Lawrence Township north of I-295, Less than HS diploma, household income \$0 - \$24,999, Single, 2 kids

Do you have any additional suggestions or ideas for how the Community Center can best serve the residents of Lawrence Township?

Please bring back the open gym for basketball, it gave me a place to play and would be nice to have some teen social events

Pre-Survey comments

Please share your thoughts about priorities for the Lawrence Community Center in terms of its mission and use.

1

Two main things I'd like to see at the center:

1) A place for events. The senior center is a vital part of our township and hosts a number of incredible events. However, it only services a small proportion of the community, people 60+. I'd love to see the same caliber and frequency of events hosted at the community center too, also keeping in mind that a lot of people work from 8am-6pm, so having events that work with a variety of schedules, not just events during the day when most people are working. Might also be good to organize and host interest-based events such as board game nights, new parents groups, crocheting/knitting groups, etc. And host workshops on things such as how to insulate your house for winter, what plants grow best in our area and when to plant them, etc. if you make a call out to the community asking people to host workshops about topics that they know about that would help the community, it could lead to a lot of cool and low cost events.

2) A makers space with woodworking, sewing, 3D printing, pottery wheel, kiln, etc. equipment available to the community (with materials sold to users at cost). Maybe also a garden/seed bank that people can give/take and share seeds from. Would also be awesome to see events that were also organized to use this space such as classes or events to fix/mend your current broken items, woodworking, etc.

2

I would love to see more usage of the community center to host educational talks, game nights, movies and discussions, international and cultural food events.

3

I feel grateful that the Comm Ctr is there for folks in our community. I dont feel versed enough in the specifics to focus priorities for anyone. I wish we had a few of them all over town. I will try to answer better next time!

4

I think the Community Center should stay a committed community focused center. I would not like to see a single focused organization take over the facility, no matter how great that organizations mission may be, nor for a single focused department of the Township to lay claim to the Center. I would like to see it used by the many small groups that look for a place to gather, a club house of sorts, but definitely not groups that charge or want to make money from the Center. I want to see it used by the community for the community.

5

I believe the community center should be a place where Neighbors, and family can come together to discuss issues concerning the community, socialize, and find inspiration.

6

Activities should be available to everyone in Lawrence, with proگرامing designed especially to meet needs of residents of Eggerts Crossing area. Needs of residents of all ages should be addressed.

7

I'd say look around at what the town's churches and other recreational facilities are already doing and see what a remodeled Community Center could add to that, or improve upon. Art

classes? Opportunities for community service? Improved bike lanes to get to the Center from different parts of town (the amount of parking spaces available is a problem)? If the bonds for the expansion and renovation of the town's middle school get approved, then one has to factor in the prospect that the middle school's gym and auditorium will be available for community use. So how will that affect the use of the Center's facilities? How can the Center complement those facilities?

8

I'm embarrassed to admit that I really don't know much about the community center. We moved to Lawrence the summer of 1996 with little kids aged 9,5 & 9 months. I had a FT home childcare business so there wasn't a lot of extra time to do much else. I never felt like I belonged in our neighborhood, I felt alone with no like minded neighbors.

In a perfect world (for me) I think a community center should be a place where all are welcome regardless of race, gender, religion, income or the neighborhood they're from.

It should be a safe and inclusive place for all. I'd love to see programs for children, teens and adults where community members could volunteer and teach hobbies and skills they possess. It should be a place for social engagement and unity within the township. A place with a wealth of information for those that are struggling and in need of helpful resources.

I think especially in light of the cruelty we are witnessing by the new administration, the community center needs to be a place for coming together to share empathy and compassion with our neighbors, a place to share ideas and form strategies and plans for resistance.

9

Programming for youth in the community and seniors. Affordable, educational and cultural.

10

Local civic engagement stands as a cornerstone of vibrant and thriving communities. This engagement encompasses a wide range of activities, from participating in local government meetings to volunteering in community service projects, and it is fundamental to the health of democratic societies. The value of local civic engagement cannot be overstated, as it fosters a sense of community, enhances social cohesion and drives local development. (Check the community of Eggerts Crossing, just drive through it, as compared to what it was before the Lawrence Neighborhood Center.) At the heart of local civic engagement is the creation of a sense of community. When individuals participate in local activities, they build relationships with neighbors, fostering trust and mutual respect. This interaction helps break down social barriers, allowing diverse groups to come together and collaborate towards common goals. (This happened through the NC in the development of Eggerts Crossing Village) Which has made a positive difference in the lives of many families and their children throughout Lawrence Township.

In todays time, civic engagement and social needs are needed more than ever and you cannot do these through a Recreation Department program.



11

There ought to be open play spaces and open gym times for play for the children in and around the community. This time and space should extend for children thorough high school and be consistent for them to have access to a safe space to socialize with supervision.

12

Supports and services for students and families in need.

13

A space is needed in Lawrence for commercial groups and non-profit organizations to hold events and gather. This is the perfect use for the current building. In addition, having it be a space for cultural events to uplift the diversity of our residents would be great.

14

It seems like the mission is on point.

A potential use/event might be a Community "Free Market." Bring your kid's gently use clothes, toys, sporting equipment. Bring your old furniture and small appliances. Maybe something you have can help someone nearby? Maybe a small group could commit to donating what doesn't get claimed?

Or, how about a kids' market? We have SO many junior entrepreneurs in this town! Let them have a day to strut their stuff and sell their goods to neighbors! A kids' art/craft fair.

15

The Center must provide recreational activities for Lawrence Township youth, space for Lawrence Township community groups to meet, and offer an incubator-type environment which will encourage public -private entities to establish linkages with the people of Lawrence Township.

16

As folks are considering the future value for the Community Center, what stands out for me is the importance of specifying well-defined community objectives it's intended to serve, including an understanding of the types of groups that will be enjoying it. A facility can't be all things to all people – the Twp. can't equip it with the right furniture, equipment, flow, and design if the service objectives and related target audiences and uses aren't specific enough.

I know from experience that ambiguity regarding a community building can result in a that asset being underutilized and unavailable to some and over-accessed by others. It can be hard to schedule usage of space without stated priorities. Design and maintaining a space to be optimally safe and enjoyable needs the right "use cases" based on specific "user groups." For example, should it accommodate large groups for meetings? Be a small-group workshop space? Allow for performances or lectures? Have a kitchen or kitchenette? Should it be suited for young children (special furniture)? Particularly suited for individuals with physical disabilities (accessible floor design)?

I think that a well-designed Center can be used by groups or orgs that already provide great services but perhaps in locales not accessible to the community close to the center. The Twp. could allow the space to be an extension of already-successful programs and experiences by other parties in a plug-and-play manner.

But again, the objectives and target user groups need to be clear. The committee discussing the Center should not gloss over the specific determination of purpose - including what kind of community work and subgroups it serves (to inform the "must haves") for the Center and what it doesn't intentionally support and serve (even if they be "nice to have.")

17

I am a former Executive Director at the LNSC. It was always an important part of the programming to include the community, its Youth and Families. The Center was conducive to having educational, recreational, cultural and social services. It was a big part of the low crime rate, community development and information in Lawrence. It is my humble opinion that the Center should be returned to serving the community of Lawrence's youth and families.....

18

I think it would be a good place for activities for older kids who are not into sports. There's so much to do for younger kids, but once they get older it's harder to find free or low cost activities that would cater to tweens and teens.

19

I would like to see a true "third space" for members of the community, especially children. The library is a great "third space," but third spaces are so limited in this day and age.

20

I agree with Mayor Farmer that a community center should be a community hub and a resource where everyone feels welcome. I am also impressed with the progress made thus far by our township in planning for the aging building's rehabilitation. I would like to see the upgraded and spacious premises shared among interested community partners, such as the Recreation Department, Eggerts Crossing community programs, and other organizations' programs. The more community groups that have a reason and a purpose in visiting the center, the more members of our community will feel welcome there.

21

Services and resources for the families

22

No to it being changed to a Recreation Center.

23

I think it's very important that the community center continue to be a gathering space and a space where services are provided to the community that are wanted and needed by the community. There should be a citizen led task force to make decisions about the programs and use of the center.

24

The Neighborhood Center was a vital part of Lawrence Township years ago. I moved away and somewhat recently returned, so I am unsure of the current state of affairs. During the time I served my two terms on the "Neighborhood Center" board, the Center was a "happening place." The daycare center rarely had an opening. Basketball leagues were a constant. Workshops on topics the people wanted were well attended. After school free tutoring was available. I remember a mentoring program for pre-teen girls. Scouts met there. Income was generated by renting out space in the facility for anniversary parties, weddings, meetings etc. There were so many events taking place, that a monthly calendar was produced to make community members aware. The vibe was that "The Center" had answers to questions folk may have had. Perhaps folk that weren't comfortable with walking into town hall, had no qualms about getting the assistance they may have needed at "The Center." It was the GoTo in the community. If it is no longer, it needs to be revitalized so it can return to the pride of the community it once was.

25

Publicize it more! I didn't even know we had one nor what is currently used for!

26

I honestly don't know that I have ever been here for an event.

I know people are always asking about spaces for family gatherings, meetings, etc. Could the space be available as a rental?

Girl Scout meetings

Lectures and presentations

Monthly activities for the community such as game nights, ice cream socials, holiday events?

Tutoring

Afterschool care/holiday care for children

Summer camp space or weekly children's events

27

I grew up in Lawrence Township, right down the road from the Neighborhood Center. I've lived in Lawrence all my life with the exception of 4 years in college. I'm 65 years old so it's been a long time and I'm very passionate about our community specifically, this Lawrence Community Center! A community center means a community gathering spot. Somewhere to meet and gather. A happy place that offers connection and resources and a place where we can share knowledge in a very comfortable environment.

I actually worked in the Eggert's Crossing garden for Homefront . Growing and gardening means growth. Maybe create a space for flowers and growing. Nature is Therapeutic and healing. We can look at cooking that way as well. Maybe a cooking space to create Unique food. Maybe a music space which always brings happiness. Music is a connector.

I feel like in today's society, and the challenges we presently are faced with, We need a place to feel Connection with the community. So important right now in life. Those are just some of my ideas. I know Fred Vereen And went to school with his daughter, Susan. I do have a soft spot for this center!!

28

I would love to see the center be used for the greater community. Teen Nights, Family Card Games, Middle school dances and classes for Small children and adults. Lawrence is an incredible community and I would love for it to be a place all feel valued and welcome.

29

A place for residents to access recreation services, to have meetings ,hold events. A regular place for people to find info about community and recreation services provided by the town.

**Community Survey, Raw Quantitative
Data Available Upon Request**

