

Pathways Past Poverty

Executive Summary of Information from Public Meetings

Overview:

A total of 165 people signed in at the 4/30 meeting at Atzlan, though I believe another 25 or so likely participated but did not sign in. We received 96 at least partially completed green surveys back.

A total of 36 signed in for the 5/7 meeting in Loveland. We received 30 at least partially completed green surveys back.

Three focus groups with low-income participants were held, one each in Fort Collins, Loveland, and Estes Park. A total of 18 participants completed demographic forms.

A discussion was also held during the Local Legislative Affairs Committee meeting on April 25th at the Fort Collins Chamber of Commerce with local business leaders. 18 participants provided completed demographic forms.

This executive summary includes a brief review of overall themes and the overall ranking from the surveys. If you would like the full summary or the full report, contact Martín Carcasson at cpd@colostate.edu.

Key general overall themes from small group discussions and written comments:

- Need to know what other agencies are doing, existing services need to know and work together better/coordinate of existing services
- Don't duplicate/reinvent the wheel, look at what is already being done
- Increasing overall awareness and understanding is critical
- Need to start earlier with youth
- Need to get more information from the people in poverty, involve them in planning
- Need better info on current numbers and needs
- Goals aren't inclusive enough – do not address people with disabilities or seniors
- Many also expressed excitement and appreciation for the initiative overall

Key Themes from Individual Goal Discussions and Survey Data

A1 – Child care

Top overall goal from survey (received 15% of goals)
Goal seen as critical, particularly for working poor to be able to work toward self-sufficiency
Goal does not clearly address quality, and child care must be available for both work and education
Goal fits P3 well due to need for community/policy mix

A2 – Health care

Seen as critical issue; health often a major source of poverty
Significant concern that local “bandaid” effort would harm long term reform effort
Mixed views concerning the integrated “connections” model
Many specifically mentioned need for single payer plan
Tied for highest number of people expressing interest in helping

A3 – Housing

Had the most individuals interested in discussing the issue at the Fort Collins Open House (tables were full for this topic, and an additional “overflow” table was required).
Received the most #1 votes (18), and second most votes overall
Seen as a critical fundamental/preliminary issue that impacts all other goals.
Goal impacts very broad audience (working poor, children, elderly, disabled, etc.)
Many expressed concern with 3 unrelated law

A4 – Transportation

Seen as critical for many other goals (mentioned as a key issue during discussions of other goals)
Important for overall community, but particularly low income workers
Current situation seen as particularly problematic (lack of routes, time f
Significant support for public transportation, including light rail
Identified a tension between need for more demand before costly improvements, but need for improvements before more demand

B1-3 – Job training

Participants discussed many appreciations
Goal seen as a good fit for P3 (individual/community/policy combination)
Importance of soft skills emphasized
Significant support for the need for a skills assessment prior to the development of new programs
Support for idea of entrepreneurial mentoring, helping low-income start businesses
Some disagreement concerning value of specific job training, and who should be responsible for it (concern that businesses move, and “cookie-cutter” training may not be useful long term)
Third in number of people interested in helping

C1 – Increased awareness of diversity and poverty

Clear support for the need for awareness, but also concern that “awareness” is too limited
Concern expressed over meaning of diversity and scope of goal
Concern expressed concerning the particular lack of understanding of diversity or poverty in Northern Colorado
CSU seen as an untapped potential resource
Several potential partners identified

D1 – Individual resource development/mentoring

Significant appreciation for the empowerment aspect of this goal, and the balance between individual and community responsibility
Unsure how those in poverty would react
Received third most #1 votes, and sixth most points overall
Tied for highest number of people expressing interest in helping

D2 – Community awareness concerning economic benefits

Some appreciated the economic framing (“spoke the language of business”), but others felt that focus was inappropriate
Many saw the importance of engaging businesses in the issue
Fits the overall concern with the need for greater awareness

D3 – Engage broad range of stakeholders

Some back and forth concerning importance and limits of “engaging” others
Support for need to start with early childhood and do more preventative work

E1 – Better jobs

A number of recommendations and discussion of potential partners
Need for employer education expressed
Received the second most #1 votes, and third most points overall
Understanding of the difficulty of expecting wage increases

F1 – School readiness and participation

Significant discussion of tensions between public and private schools and need for both to work together better
A number of recommendations for potential partners

F2 – Government prioritizes children

Some appreciated governmental/policy focus, others felt that it disempowered community
Concerns over lack of clarity
A number of broad suggestions were made, ranging from Tabor to cliff effect to CSAP tests.

F3 – Increased academic success

Drew limited attention at forums, and only received 1% of vote points.
Discussion of goal was very broad and somewhat disconnected

G1 – Increased savings

Table at Fort Collins Open House for this goal did not draw participants for either session, only goal to not have any conversations tied to it.
2nd lowest rated goal in survey.

G2 – Increased financial literacy

Importance was recognized, but difficulty of drawing people to these conversations also expressed.
Numerous interesting suggestions, would seem to fit P3 well (individual/community effort)

G3 – Level the playing field

Least rated goal.
Some confusion concerning goal description.
Appreciation for the need to undo institutional barriers that keep people in poverty
Concern over limits of the goal, and the middle-class assumptions

Total Prioritization of Goals from 4/30 and 5/7, Sorted by Rank

	Priority Votes					Pts.	%
	1	2	3	4	5		
Goal A1: Ensure families in Larimer County have access to child care that they can afford, that supports their children’s development, and supports their ability to be present and productive at work (including when children are sick).	9	16	18	14	8	199	15%
Goal A3: Develop and implement a multi-dimensional approach to low-income housing to help ensure that no persons or families lack access to adequate housing.	18	10	7	10	15	186	14%
Goal E1: Provide Better Jobs in Larimer County (better jobs are jobs that have a sustainable wage; value employees as people; and are long-term, career oriented)	17	12	8	6	3	172	13%
Goal A2: Develop and implement a multifaceted integrated health care/wellness/preventative system to help ensure that every resident of Larimer County has access to quality mental, dental, physical, and vision services throughout their lifespan.	9	12	14	7	8	157	12%
Goal B1: Identify critical skill sets required for living wage employment in Larimer County; Goal B2: Identify and increase living wage job training opportunities which teach critical skill sets and increase the participation in this job training; Goal B3: Identify and create synergistic support systems which enable members of our community to successfully participate in essential skill set job training	7	8	10	11	11	130	10%
Goal D1: Ensure that families facing poverty with the opportunity to take part in a community supported process that enhances their own individual and family resources. In this process, individuals take responsibility for building their future as they identify their goals and assess their resources (financial, emotional, mental, spiritual, physical, support systems, relationships and role models, and knowledge of the hidden rules of class). They continue with the process by making choices and creating plans to enhance their resources. (Definition of families includes, but is not limited to two parent families, single parent families, grandparents raising grandchildren, foster families)	12	5	11	7	2	129	9%
Goal F1: Provide supportive programming for children and their families to improve school readiness and participation, as well as to insure that schools have necessary supports to educate children and families in poverty.	1	8	10	6	5	84	6%
Goal C1: Increase awareness of diversity and poverty to create an inclusive and involved community that honors the value of all people in Larimer County	6	2	9	3	10	81	6%
Goal A4: Develop and implement a seamless, affordable, integrated multi-modal transportation system, providing uninterrupted coverage for the area from Wellington to Berthoud and including Timnath, Windsor and Johnstown.	0	4	3	12	9	58	4%
Goal F2: To have every governmental body in Larimer County place the health and well-being of children and youth as a top priority, demonstrated through budgetary processes, policy decisions and awareness efforts.	3	0	2	5	4	35	3%
Goal G2: Increase the level of financial literacy in the community.	1	3	4	1	2	33	2%
Goal D3: Engage a broad range of community stakeholders in examining policies and implementing best practices that support children, youth and families.	2	2	3	1	3	32	2%
Goal D2: Raise community awareness of the economic benefits of investing in and supporting children, youth and families.	0	1	3	2	4	21	2%
Goal F3: Increase the academic success of all youth in Larimer County.	1	1	1	3	1	19	1%
Goal G1: Encourage people to have savings of 3 – 6 months of expenditures to create a cushion for emergencies such as job loss or health issues.	0	0	3	1	3	14	1%
Goal G3: Level out the playing field for those in poverty.	0	2	0	1	4	14	1%