

Pathways Past Poverty Initiative

Preliminary Goals, Spring 2008

The Pathways Past Poverty Initiative (P3) began in Fall 2007 as a community-wide, grassroots mobilization focused on addressing growing poverty in Larimer County. Since then, more than 150 community members spearheaded by the United Way and the CSU Center for Public Deliberation have developed eight Approach Committees focused on "Pathways Past Poverty," to examine the problems and develop a list of goals for a community effort. The eight approach committees were formed around the following issues:

- Enhance childhood education and achievement
- Create more and better jobs that lead to self sufficiency
- Provide job training and increase skill sets
- Increase individual responsibility for financial stability
- Provide solid foundations for families
- Address diversity and inequality
- Strengthening youth and families
- Enhance safety net through policy change

Each committee was charged to research their area, examine best practices locally and nationally, and propose a short set of goals for the community effort. The preliminary goals for each area are detailed in the following pages, with one page summaries for each goal. At our April 30th open house, these goals will be presented and community input concerning their prioritization will be collected. In particular, input from the community concerning the prioritization of the goals will be sought as the project transitions into researching and developing specific programs and ideas to strive toward fulfilling the goals.

Open house participants will be given a survey to allow them to rank the importance of the goals, forms to provide written comment, and also will be able to provide oral comments during small group discussions throughout the evening. New small group discussions will begin every 30 minutes throughout the evening. In addition, participants will also be given a chance to identify if and how they would like to be involved as the project moves forward.

In May, the steering committee for the Pathways Past Poverty initiative will decide the next steps for the project. Over the summer and into the fall, committees will examine and propose specific programs to help the community reach the goals.

The open house, hosted by the Colorado State University's Center for Public Deliberation, will be held from 4:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. on Wednesday, April 30, at the Northside Aztlan Community Center.

A follow-up forum will be held from 5 - 7 p.m. on Wednesday, May 7 in Loveland at city council chambers. Focus groups are also being held on low-income audiences that may not be able to attend the public forums.

For more information, see www.pathwayspastpoverty.org or www.cpd.colostate.edu.

Overview of the preliminary goals

A. Providing Solid Foundations for Families Approach Committee Goals
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).
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.
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.
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.
B. Provide Job Training and Increase Skill Sets Approach Committee Goals
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
C. Address Diversity & Inequality Approach Committee Goal
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
D. Strengthening Youth and Families Approach Committee Goals
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)
Goal D2: Raise community awareness of the economic benefits of investing in and supporting children, youth and families.
Goal D3: Engage a broad range of community stakeholders in examining policies and implementing best practices that support children, youth and families.
E. Create More & Better Jobs Approach Committee Goals
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)
F. Enhancing Childhood Education and Achievement Approach Committee Goals
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.
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.
Goal F3: Increase the academic success of all youth in Larimer County.
G. Increased Individual Responsibility for Financial Stability Approach Committee Goals
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.
Goal G2: Increase the level of financial literacy in the community.
Goal G3: Level out the playing field for those in poverty.

Note: The “Enhance Safety Net through Policy Change” approach committee is on a different time frame from the others, as they work to educate themselves on relevant policies and wait to see what specific goals the project focuses on first.

Goal A1 (from the Providing Solid Foundations For Families Approach Committee): Ensure families in Larimer County have access to child 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).

Importance:

- When the cost of child care is too great a portion of a family's income, they can be put in the untenable position of choosing between paying for care for their children and other critical needs such as food, housing and clothing.
- Research has shown that, especially for low income and at risk children, high quality early care and education programs increase success in school, improve graduation rates, reduce involvement in crime, increase graduation rates and increase lifelong earning potential – thus helping to break the cycle of poverty.
- The ability of families to achieve and maintain self sufficiency can be derailed by break down in child care arrangements that impact their ability to get to work and to keep their employment. Parents have their jobs jeopardized by frequent absences, due to sick children or to unavailability of child care.

Needed resources:

- Additional funding for child care assistance programs, sliding scale programs and/or tuition scholarships.
- Expertise and assistance in identifying strategies to use economies of scale to reduce cost of care, including purchasing materials and supplies, food; possibly to provide benefits such as health insurance and retirement benefits for child care staff.
- Incentives for businesses, churches or other organizations to make space available for child care to reduce facility costs in order to make care more affordable.
- Funding to expand existing quality improvement work to a greater percentage of child care programs.
- Child care facility location map.
- Funding for some type of care for sick children.
- Low cost or no cost facility options for child care programs.

Partnerships:

- Public officials who can put policies and/or incentives in place to defray some of the cost of running child care programs in order to reduce the cost of providing care, thereby helping to make care more affordable for families.
- Larimer County government to ensure compatibility and integration of strategies with Child Care Assistance and TANF programs.
- Nonprofits and foundations to assist in identifying resources and providing funding, where appropriate.
- Business representation to ensure that strategies support economic well being of the community.
- PSD and TSD early childhood representatives to provide seamless support for families enrolled in Early Head Start, Head Start, and Colorado Preschool and Kindergarten program, in collaboration with Early Childhood Councils and child care licensing.
- Higher education – early childhood programs.
- Parents' representatives to clarify needs and barriers.
- Entities involved in setting standards, such as Qualistar and the NAEYC.

Strategies:

- Determine a benchmark for what percentage of family income should be needed to pay for child care.
- Examine development fees assessed when new child care facilities are constructed and work with city officials to explore options for waivers of fees.
- Consider tax initiative (best practice for some communities) to help with cost of care for families.
- Educate the business community on the economic impact of the child care industry including cost of child care for employees, employees' ability to be present and productive at work, the "cliff effect," and the ability of the community to attract and retain primary employers.
- Support options for care for sick children.
- Provide incentives for odd hour care.
- Create incentives for developers to include child care in new developments.
- Modify location of bus routes in relation to child care so that lack of transportation is not a barrier to getting children to care and parents to work.
- Address and seek solutions to minimize the closing of child care facilities and therefore instability in care arrangements for families.

Principles met by this proposal: Leads to systemic change, removes barriers, assumes long-term viability, encourages synergistic approaches, promotes respect and diversity, educates the community, promotes economic health, shows measurable change, empowers individuals, increases community ownership of the solution.

Relationship of Goal to Vision: The physical structure of a child's brain is shaped by the presence (or lack) of appropriate stimulating experiences in the first three to five years of life. Ensuring that children have the experiences that support brain development enhances their ability to take advantages of the educational opportunities available to them and to be successful in school and in life. Appropriate child care helps assure an employee can maintain his/her job and to achieve self-sufficiency.

Goal A2 (from the Providing Solid Foundations For Families Approach Committee): *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.*

Importance: Access to a full spectrum of health and wellness services ensures that the citizens of Larimer County can be more self-sufficient and productive community members; currently these are not available to those who live in poverty and don't qualify for government subsidized health insurance programs. The following statistics bear out the need to address this issue on the local level:

- 10.3% of Colorado's population lives in poverty.
- 11.5% of Larimer County's children ages 0-18 are uninsured.
- Larimer County residents living at or below the poverty line tend to have lower overall health scores than the general population (see "Index of Community Well-Being in Larimer County").
- According to the Larimer County Compass, 50% of the adult population is over-weight or obese in Larimer County.
- National studies indicate that mental illnesses affect nearly 50% of the general population in their lifetime and close to 30% in the previous year; the lifetime prevalence rate of substance use disorders is almost 27%. Nearly 40% of people with an alcohol use disorder also meet criteria for a mental health disorder (from, "Co-Occurring Disorders: A Training Series"). Locally, statistics gathered for a six month period during 2007, indicated that 86% of people admitted to Mnt. Crest had a co-occurring disorder. During this same six month period, 27% of clients served at Larimer Center for Mental Health had a co-occurring disorder, and 36.3% of clients served at Island Grove.

Proposed Solution: Recognizing that research indicates that the best treatment for all healthcare needs is an integrated approach, and that this is the most effective approach to promote wellness, the following programs are proposed:

- Develop a "Connections" model program to provide access to low cost medical, dental, and vision services for the uninsured of Larimer County that would, 1) Be staffed by medical personnel who could provide a holistic health assessment, 2) Could explore coverage options, 3) Make referrals to Pro Bono primary health care and dental providers, 4) Provide outreach and educational presentations to residents of Larimer County regarding their eligibility for services, 5) Would promote wellness by providing education on fitness, nutrition, smoking cessation, and other wellness programs and local resources that would help meet these needs, and 6) Would provide assistance (via a volunteer possibly) with completion of paperwork.
- Recognizing that many people in need of assistance can't read or write at even the 6th grade level, which is well below what is needed to complete most agency's forms/paperwork; and also that completion of vast amounts of paperwork discourages people from obtaining the help that they need thus creating a barrier to service, a standardization of the area's agency's forms covering all necessary demographic information is recommended. By standardizing this section of the forms, people could then complete one set (with assist by volunteer if needed) and then each agency could make a copy for its own use. People would then just need to complete paperwork specific to each individual agency.
- Financially support a multi-agency approach to provide integration of mental health and substance abuse services using the best practices approach of Integrated Dual Disorder Treatment (IDDT).

Needed Resources:

- Primary health, vision, and dental care providers willing to accept minimal fees for their services to the low income/uninsured population of Larimer County. There is currently an effort underway to create a network of dentists who would be willing to collaborate in such a way.
- Location from which a "Connections" program for health care could be run from.
- Funding to support staff and overhead for this type of program.
- Volunteer network to assist with paperwork needs.
- Funding to support local efforts already underway to provide IDDT services.

Necessary Partnerships: All local systems will need to cooperate in bringing this integration of services to fruition; this includes, but is not necessarily limited to, Salud, Health District, PVH, LCMH, Island Grove, McKee Medical Center, Family Medicine Center, private practitioners in both the medical and dental fields, and local government entities.

Strategies: These ideas are based on using the model that the Connections program has successfully implemented in this community, where people walk-in and receive an assessment of their mental health needs and a referral to a practitioner who can help to meet those needs. This strategy ensures timely access to services for people who otherwise could not afford to get these needs met. It relies on a collaborative, community based effort to bring necessary services to this population.

Fundamental Principles: 1) Leads to systemic change, 2) Removes barriers, 3) Assumes long-term viability, 4) Encourages synergistic approaches, 5) Educates the community, 6) Shows measurable change, 7) Empowers individuals, & 8) Increases community ownership of the solution.

Relationship of Goal to Vision: Ensuring that all residents of Larimer County have access to basic health care services, and empowering them to access needed resources, meets all aspects of the vision statement that stresses the importance of cooperation, choice, and opportunities in the provision of services.

Goal A3 (from the Providing Solid Foundations For Families Approach Committee): *Develop and implement a multi-dimensional approach to low-income housing to help ensure that no persons or families lack access to adequate housing.*

Need for Housing and Services: Research indicates that housing is a key element in supporting economic mobility and reducing poverty. Research also indicates that the provision of housing and services can be a mitigating factor for preventing the onset of poverty. Furthermore, research supports that a combination of housing, provided hand-in-hand with other services (i.e., case management), is more likely to increase access to appropriate housing, decrease poverty and assist toward economic mobility.

Partners: Housing service providers, economic developers, builders and home developers, landlords, tenants, governmental entities.

Recommendation(s):

It is recommended that United Way contract with an experienced entity to develop and implement a community-based forum regarding access to low-income, subsidized, affordable housing in Larimer County. It is recommended that United Way accept responsibility for the oversight and ongoing management of the forum results.

1. The forum will build clarity about the housing and services available to low-income individuals and strengthen informal and formal connections among providers.
2. The forum will develop a transparent continuum of housing and services and identify areas where the amount of housing and services does not meet the need and where gaps in housing and services are evident.
3. The forum will develop the infrastructure to support a “single point of access” service (available throughout Larimer County) for low-income individuals to meet with trained and knowledgeable staff (a.k.a. Housing Services Brokers). These brokers will conduct an assessment of the housing needs and make appropriate referrals to the housing entity(ies) that are best positioned to meet the housing needs of the individual/family. The Housing Services Broker will work on behalf of the customer, and housing entities, to increase knowledge of the continuum of housing and services and to guide the individuals/families to the service(s) that best meets their current and/or future need.
4. The forum participants will support the Housing Specialists with the goal that the customer is the most important person in the process. Forum participants will intentfully and positively collaborate to strengthen a streamlined continuum of services for low-income individuals/families.
5. The forum would develop and initiate a community-based awareness campaign regarding the current community needs for housing and services.
6. Next steps determined after the successful completion of the forum.

Incorporates the Following Fundamental Principles:

- Encourages synergistic approaches
- Educates the community
- Promotes economic health
- Empowers individuals
- Increases community ownership of the solution

Relationship to Vision: Seems self-explanatory.

Goal A4 (from the Providing Solid Foundations For Families Approach Committee): *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.*

Need: Insufficient transportation services impact the community, particularly the poor, in multiple ways, including:

- Single parents cannot get children to day care/school and arrive at work in timely manner, cannot hold jobs as a result;
- Transportation systems do not run late enough to allow evening shift or extended shift workers to utilize them;
- There are large service gaps for those with disabilities;
- Persons on work release have no public transportation to/from jobs (typically do not have driver's licenses), making rehabilitation more difficult;
- Persons in need of critical medical services, such as dialysis, typically have difficulty arranging transportation;
- Transportation is fragmented, with no service from Fort Collins to Medical Center of the Rockies and similar locations and many gaps within and between communities;
- As the "Baby Boomer" generation ages and its members become less capable of driving, dependency on transit will increase;
- Transportation is reported as major impediment for access to services by most non-profit and government service agencies (such as Workforce Center, Health District, Salud, Larimer Center for Mental Health, etc.). [Note: In a 2005 survey by Larimer County Health and Human Services, 19 out of 29 agencies reported that inadequate transportation either prevented clients from receiving their services or caused a serious inconvenience in accessing their services.]

Proposed Solution: Multi-modal seamless service as stated in goal. This would require:

- Coordinated and cooperative service among transit providers (i.e., Transfort, COLT, BATS, Larimer Lift, Foxtrot);
- Coordinated and cooperative service among other transportation resources (i.e., SAINT, Shamrock Taxi, car pooling, transportation vouchers, private agencies [such as Poudre Valley Health Systems, Foothills Gateway, nursing homes, school districts, etc.]);
- Integrated alternative transportation (i.e., bicycle pathways, other alternative transportation modalities);
- A coordinating entity (such as North Front Range Metropolitan Planning Organization's Human Service Transportation Coordinating Council and Mobility Manager);
- Supportive funding sources at Federal, State, and Local levels;

Strategies:

- Obtain buy in from stakeholders;
- Develop coordinating entity with sufficient authority and resources to develop and implement solutions;
- Establish sustained funding sources to develop and operate services;
- Lobby policy makers as required to create funding and policies necessary to implement and maintain these services;
- Develop regional structure to finance, oversee and maintain services.

Principles Met by this Proposal:

- Leads to systemic change
- Removes barriers
- Assumes long-term viability
- Encourages synergistic approaches
- Shows measurable change
- Empowers individuals
- Increases community ownership of the solution

Relationship of Goal to Vision:

As noted in the "Need" section above, inadequate transportation creates a barrier to employment, access to health and human services, child care and most quality of life elements for persons and families who have limited independent transportation capability. In some cases, such as access to dialysis services, this can actually be life-threatening. Lack of transportation is a barrier to meeting virtually all basic needs, let alone desirable enhancements such as cultural and recreational activities. Creating an adequate transportation system will do a great deal to reduce the barriers to employment and basic services and will make possible fuller access to life enhancement possibilities.

Goal B1 (from the Provide Job Training and Increase Skill Sets Approach Committee):
Identify critical skill sets required for living wage employment in Larimer County

Why Is This Goal Important?

This goal consists of two interrelated components:

- to identify living wage employment opportunities within the diverse economy of Larimer County
- to identify the critical skill sets required for these employment opportunities

This goal is significant because it provides a reality-based focus on workforce training. The living wage jobs which people train for should actually exist in the Larimer County economy. This ensures long term viability of the training program by establishing a necessary link between the training sites and employers. This strategy also empowers individuals by giving them an opportunity to grow, seek realistic goals and thrive.

Once the employment opportunities have been clearly identified, it is significant that the critical skill sets for these jobs be also identified. Members of the community seeking employment need to have the specific skills that jobs in our economy require. When the community is educated in the area of the critical skill sets, systemic change results. Links are created between the training/education sector and the employment sector. This is a synergistic approach that involves and changes many sectors of the community.

Who Should Be Involved and What Resources Are Required?

It is essential that a wide section of the economic and education community be involved in identifying job opportunities in Larimer County and the critical skill sets they require.

These may include:

- members of the Larimer County business community, including those in the commercial, industrial, recreational and public service spheres, such as health care
- Northern Colorado Economic Development Council
- Chambers of Commerce
- Workforce Center and other community-based services related to employment
- Educational institutions such as Front Range Community College, Colorado State University, technical post-secondary schools, K-12 public and private education

Resources required will be time for collaboration, efficient communication, access to essential data and expertise.

Ideas on How Goal is Accomplished

- Use existing studies/data
- Use locally available expertise, such as Dr. Martin Shields at CSU
- Utilize focus groups and collaborative groups

Goal B2 (from the Provide Job Training and Increase Skill Sets Approach Committee): ***Identify and increase living wage job training opportunities which teach critical skill sets and increase participation in this job training***

Why is This Goal Important?

The key element of this goal is to create change that is measurable and, thus, assumes long term viability. Gathering meaningful information provides a sound basis for program development and assessment.

Who Should Be Involved and What Resources Are Required?

As in Goal 1, many segments of the community would be involved in this task:

- Members of the Larimer County business community
- Northern Colorado Economic Development Council
- Chambers of Commerce
- Community-based services related to employment
- Educational institutions

Resources required include:

- Data on current job training opportunities within the diverse economy of Larimer County,
- Financial investment and expertise to develop essential job training opportunities
- Support and understanding of the business community
- Expertise in data gathering and management

Ideas on How Goal is Accomplished?

This committee found job training programs and concepts that used best practices:

- On the job and work-release training
- Training health care workers so they move up the career ladder in health occupations
- Sensitize Larimer County employers to the need of on the job, career ladder, and work-release training
- Increase the availability of soft skill training for unemployed workers or those at risk of losing their job
- Critical skill set training and support within faith-based organizations and government programs such as Job Corps

Goal B3 (from the Provide Job Training and Increase Skill Sets Approach Committee):
Identify and create synergistic support systems which enable members of our community to successfully participate in essential skill set job training

Why is This Goal Important?

A creative, jobs-based workforce training program requires student participants who have the necessary supports to fully engage and be successful. A comprehensive system in which every part of the community works together will enable those students to be successful. This increases community ownership and empowers the individuals to make critical changes in their lives. The resulting partnerships create nothing less than cultural change. Student needs may include transportation, child care, medical care and social services, housing, money management skills, and soft skills training.

Who Should be Involved and What Resources Are Required?

- Faith-based communities
- Non-profit agencies such as Project Self Sufficiency
- K-12 education, post secondary education
- Public transportation
- Housing assistance agencies
- Child care services
- Medical care community, social services
- Financial community
- Business community

Resources needed include:

- Close communication between training programs, students, and support providers
- Financial and expertise support to expand current community resources
- Assessment tools to determine student needs

Ideas on How Goal is Accomplished?

The committee investigated these strategies:

- Expand support systems for at-risk youth who are at risk of dropping out of school
- Prioritize interventions for those who are motivated and willing to work but have experienced barriers
- Expand comprehensive services, such as those offered by Project Self-Sufficiency, that include housing, access to education, preparation for living wage employment, and resources that remove barriers to financial independence.

GOAL C1 (from the Address Diversity & Inequality Pathways Past Poverty Approach Committee):
Increase awareness of diversity and poverty to create an inclusive and involved community that honors the value of all people in Larimer County.

Why is our goal important?

Our community is only as strong as our most vulnerable members. Sometimes, due to generational discrimination, stereotypes and ignorance a community can create its own vulnerable populations; by increasing knowledge, we decrease the amount of marginalized people. Creating awareness will help to replace intolerance, discrimination and marginalization with tolerance, inclusion, value and dignity. To truly be successful, all committee goals that address poverty must include the reality of and needs of our diverse populations. Partnerships between resources will help break down the “silos” of support; current resources for diverse populations can work together towards a common purpose. Acceptance, love and a sense of belonging are among a person’s basic needs; we must address emotional health, as well as physical. This goal will support our reputation as being one of the best places to live by reinforcing an inclusive culture.

Who should be involved?

- All other Approach Committees
- Marginalized/diverse populations
- Media
- Leaders willing to represent diverse populations within their sphere of influence:
 - Government
 - School districts/Universities
 - Businesses
 - Non-profits and organizations that address diversity

What resources would be needed?

- Advocates and volunteers who are passionate about diversity
- Funding
- Educational materials
- A large bullhorn
- Marketing and advertising
- Support from key community partners

Possible Strategies to Achieve Our Goal:

- Needs Assessments to discover the needs of populations in all the communities in Larimer County
- Working with all other Approach Committees to support diversity inclusion in strategies
- Media Campaign – TV/radio/print
- Diversity Fair
- Create partnerships between diverse communities (ex. partner GLBT community w/ folks with disabilities)
- Ongoing training for advocates
- Support and expand current diversity initiatives
- Road Show/Educational Campaign
 - “A Day in the Life” videos; exploring “the shoes” of others
 - Videos, PowerPoint’s, printed materials

How the Goal relates to the Vision: Dignity is one of the core concepts central to our goal because our aim is to create an involved community that honors the value of all people in Larimer County. When people feel valued, they can live with dignity in our community. By increasing awareness we are helping to promote opportunities for growth and engaging our community to be invested in each and every member.

Application to Fundamental Principles (goal must incorporate at least 5):

- Promotes Respect and Diversity
- Increases Community Ownership of the Problem- the majority of our strategies rely on a strong volunteer base
- Educates the Community
- Removes Barriers – will help eliminate social and emotional barriers found in the larger community that lead to discrimination and stereotyping
- Empowers Individuals – education and tools provide choices and support empowerment
- Encourages Synergistic Approaches – our goal could be integrated into all systems (specifically other committee goals)

Leads to Systemic Change – our goal is ultimately built to change the way that all systems work by ensuring that equality and respect are extended to the marginalized populations they serve

Goal D1: (from the Strengthening Youth and Families Approach Committee)

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)

Why is this important?

People who build supportive relationships and take ownership in developing solutions are more invested in creating positive outcomes. When an individual in poverty is constantly solving daily, concrete problems, they are not able to move to the abstract, future story that could be theirs. With a more stabilized environment and the support of positive working relationships with members in the community, this same individual is able to assess their resources, exercise choice and make plans to build their resources towards self-reliance.

Who should be involved and what resources would be needed?

- Families facing poverty
- Administrators and staff of agencies working with families facing poverty
- School district administrators and staff
- Spiritual and religious community
- Service organizations
- Community government officials

How will the goal be accomplished?

- Community-wide trainings will take place on Bridges Out of Poverty and Getting Ahead in a Just-Getting'-By-World: Building Resources for Better Life materials by Ruby Payne and Philip DeVol so that the citizens of Larimer County share an understanding of the rules of class and resources necessary to move out of poverty.
- Commitment from (*above mentioned agency/programs*) administrators and staff to integrate the principals and practices into the work they do and services they provide.
- Using “authoritative communities” best practice based at Dartmouth Medical School to ensure participation by individuals and families living in poverty. The principles of authoritative communities are:
 - It is a social institution that includes children and youth
 - It treats children as ends in themselves
 - It is warm and nurturing
 - It establishes clear limits and expectations
 - The core of its work is performed largely by non-specialists
 - It is multi-generational
 - It has long-term focus
 - It reflects and transmits a shared understanding of what it means to be a good person
 - It encourages spiritual and religious development
 - It is philosophically oriented to the equal dignity of all persons and to the principle of love of neighbor
- Participants who receive benefits from this process will also be asked to commit to contribute in some way to the ongoing success for future participants.

What fundamental principles does this goal incorporate?

- Leads to systemic change
- Removes barriers
- Assumes long-term viability
- Encourages synergistic approaches
- Promotes respect and diversity
- Educates the community
- Promotes economic health
- Shows measurable change
- Empowers individuals
- Increases community ownership of the solution

How does this goal fit with the vision?

The goal addresses each piece of the vision in its focus on creating choices and opportunities and a focus on the future for all people and families in poverty.

Goal D2: (from the Strengthening Youth and Families Approach Committee) *Raise community awareness of the economic benefits of investing in and supporting children, youth and families.*

Why is this important?

- Shows the clear relationship between strengthening families and promoting the sustainability of our community.
- Helps remove the barriers families face when juggling home and work spheres.
- Based on innovative family friendly workplace solutions that also support the health of business.
- Promotes community buy-in and leads towards making effective changes.
- Boosts the economic health in Larimer County which reciprocally provides employment opportunities for youth and families.

Who should be involved and what resources would be needed?

Who: Residents of Larimer County, business community, community planners, economic development experts, school districts.

Resources: Sloan Foundation research and practices, media, service clubs, forums for education.

How will the goal be accomplished?

- Using Sloan Foundation’s best practices and research. Purpose is to move towards making educated changes. (Note: The Sloan Foundation conducts research, training, and outreach in the area of Workplace, Workforce and Working Families. Provides data, examples of innovative practices, and models for systemic change. Based on the premise that strong families are interrelated with strong business communities)
- Again using Sloan Foundation’s research, encourage local employers to provide services to employees directly at work sites (ie. Parent education/support, drug and alcohol prevention/services, childcare services, child/spousal abuse prevention/services)
- Using economic development theory to highlight the impacts of poverty in a community and business. (Note: Economic development theory is based on three core premises: 1) producing more “life sustaining” necessities such as food, shelter, and healthcare, 2) raising standards of living and individual self esteem, and 3) expanding economic and social choice and reducing fear.)

What fundamental principles does this goal incorporate?

- Leads to systemic change
- Removes barriers
- Assumes long-term viability
- Encourages synergistic approaches
- Promotes respect and diversity
- Educates the community
- Promotes economic health
- Shows measurable change
- Empowers individuals
- Increases community ownership of the solution

How does this goal fit with the vision?

The goal focuses on engaging the entire community around Larimer County.

Goal D3: (from the Strengthening Youth and Families Approach Committee)
Engage a broad range of community stakeholders in examining policies and implementing best practices that support children, youth and families.

Why is this important?

This goal will address ways for agencies and organizations to address systemic change in all areas that affect children, youth and families. It will allow for a strategic focus on the gaps around services and policies for children, youth and families.

Who should be involved and what resources would be needed?

Specific stakeholders' agencies/organizations/businesses/policy makers

How will the goal be accomplished?

- By encouraging existing systems to evaluate their current policies against best practices
- By using participatory evaluation (which involves incorporating the population served in the review of the program objectives, goals and outcomes), including families and youth in poverty to explore and outline existing systems, define barriers and gaps in service, and implement new strategies for change. When those being served are at the table in the planning stages and also the evaluation process positive outcomes are more likely to be obtained.
- Philip deVol's work on "Creating a Sustainable Community"
- Using economic incentives to encourage entities to get involved

What fundamental principles does this goal incorporate?

- Leads to systemic change
- Removes barriers
- Assumes long-term viability
- Encourages synergistic approaches
- Promotes respect and diversity
- Educates the community
- Promotes economic health
- Shows measurable change
- Empowers individuals
- Increases community ownership of the solution

How does this goal fit with the vision?

The goal focuses on engaging the entire community around preventive efforts that focus on children youth and families.

Goal E1 (from the Create More & Better Jobs Approach Committee):

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)

Definition of “Better Jobs”:

1. Sustainable Wage – per self sufficiency guidelines, basic needs met PLUS, basic benefits would be factored in as part of the wage (example: \$18/hr might be the same as \$14/hr with medical), defined differently based on family type, basic sustainable lifestyle on one 40 hour work week job per adult in the family
2. Value Employees as People – support of home life and flexibility – individual situation analysis when policies or rules are broken - examples include consideration of when a employee or child is sick, car breaks down, bus schedule, adult student or children’s school schedule, holidays, vacation
3. Long-term, Career Oriented – provide training or support continued education, internal career paths

Why it is important: A better job ensures that employed individuals have their basic needs met, choices now and opportunities to thrive, grow and live with dignity in the future.

Who should be involved and resources that would be needed:

Who:

- Employers
- Larimer County Community/Consumers at Large
- NCEDC
- Media
- Government Entities
- Chambers
- Rocky Mountain Innovations
- All Education Institutes
- Larimer County Workforce Center
- Small Business Development

Resources Needed:

- Affordable childcare options
- Reliable transportation system (see Boulder RTD for example)
- Affordable and flexible (timing and location) job training
- Research on what is a sustainable wage in Larimer County at different family levels
- Micro Business Development (see Denver for example) – provides start-up loans as well as consultation
- Cliff Effect needs to be non-existent to encourage workers to become sustainable

Ideas on how to accomplish this goal:

- Partner with NCEDC
- Education of employers and low-income employees of the Hidden Rules
- Community recognition of companies that provide “Better jobs” – logo program such as BBB logo in advertising, media recognition, encourage “socially responsible” consumers to purchase from these companies
- Help local entrepreneurs with start-ups
- Help employers come up with ideas around relatively low cost or no cost benefits/incentives that are significant to low-income employees
- Have a capable and reliable workforce (defer to Job Training & Increase Skills Sets Committee’s goals)
- Collaboration/partnerships between businesses and education institutes as seen with Vestas and Woodward and FRCC to train and employ for specific positions
- Internal skills training as seen through PVH’s progressive program
- Regional government cooperation to create a positive business climate & to help pass important regional initiatives
- Recruit companies that provide “Better Jobs” as defined above
- Reduce high business tax
- Reduce timeline for company expansion (larger building) in Larimer County

Fundamental principles this goal addresses:

Primary:

- Leads to systemic change
- Assumes long term viability
- Encourages synergistic approaches
- Educates the community
- Promotes economic health
- Increases community ownership of the solution

Secondary:

- Removes barriers – for both employers and employees
- Promotes respect and diversity – through Hidden Rules education
- Shows measurable change – reduce the number of employed people in poverty
- Empowers individuals – individual employees, employers and consumers

GOAL F1 (Enhancing Childhood Education and Achievement Approach Committee)
Provide supportive programming for children and their families to improve school readiness and participation, as well as to insure that schools have the supports to educate children and families in poverty.

Why is this important?

Research has shown that for every \$1 spent on early childhood programming there is a return of \$8 to \$14 with benefits demonstrated in less school retention and special education referrals, less crime and greater economic productivity, and a future reduction in poverty rates.

- Prevention of living in poverty for future generations
- Interventions for current children and their families living in poverty
- Children who participate in a high quality preschool program have better school achievement, social skills and behavior
- Participation in an established early childhood intervention for low-income children is associated with better educational and social outcomes up to age 20 years.

Who should be involved and what resources would be needed?

Who:

- State and Federal government for funding programs
- School Districts
- Early Childhood Councils at the county level
- Resource and referral agencies

Resources:

- CCCAP/TANF
- Medicaid
- Head Start
- Colorado Kindergarten/Preschool Program
- Boys and Girls Club

Ideas to accomplish this goal:

- Universal preschool
- Seamless early childhood services: childcare, preschool, etc.
- All day kindergarten options for those that are interested
- Accessible before/after school enrichment programs for all ages
- Parent education
- Accessible mental health supports
- Access to early childhood quality environments

How does this goal relate to the Pathways Vision?

Vision: *We are an engaged community, cooperating to ensure that every individual has their basic needs met, has choices now and has opportunities to thrive, grow, and live in dignity in the future.*

Our goal is aimed at insuring all children and families have the choice to access quality early childhood education, all day kindergarten, and before/after school enrichment programs so that they can “thrive, grow, and live with dignity in the future.” We want children to have the supports to be ready for school and schools to have the supports to teach children coming from poverty.

Fundamental Principals incorporated: This is a goal that would lead to a systemic change in the educational system, remove barriers, promote respect and diversity, promote economic health, and empower individuals, all fundamental principals of the Pathways Past Poverty Initiative.

Goal F2 (from the Enhancing Childhood Education and Achievement Committee Policy Goal Subcommittee):
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.

Why is this important?

Because it embodies each fundamental principal of the Pathways Past Poverty Initiative, (see also, How Does Goal Relate to Vision?):

- ✧ Leads to systematic change
- ✧ Removes barriers
- ✧ Assumes long-term viability
- ✧ Encourages synergistic approaches
- ✧ Promotes respect and diversity
- ✧ Promotes economic health
- ✧ Educates community and raises awareness
- ✧ Shows measurable change
- ✧ Empowers individuals
- ✧ Increases community ownership

Who should be involved and what resources would be needed?

- ✧ Players
 - Municipalities – staff and officials
 - Counties– staff and officials
 - School Districts– staff and officials
 - Citizen advisory boards to the above entities
- ✧ Resources
 - General Fund Allocations
 - Grant Proceeds (i.e. a % of grant programs go toward youth/children)
 - Adequate Staffing

Ideas to accomplish this goal:

- ✧ Intergovernmental agreements, private-public partnerships and collaborations
- ✧ Fixed/Predictable line items in budget
- ✧ Resource and policy development/expansion
- ✧ Proactively consider/assess impact(s) on children/youth regarding policy decisions being made
- ✧ Work with economic developers, planners, business sector, etc. to encourage portion of profits/revenues be dedicated to youth in their communities. Ask new companies to demonstrate how their organization’s function can tie into the well-being of kids prior to coming in, etc.

How does this goal relate to the Pathways Vision?

Vision: *We are an engaged community, cooperating to ensure that every individual has their basic needs met, has choices now and has opportunities to thrive, grow, and live in dignity in the future.”*

It not only epitomizes the vision, through the integration of every fundamental principle (see above) but **provides the resources with which to implement and sustain new and existing activities necessary to achieve the vision** for the generation which is our community’s future.

GOAL F3: (from the Enhancing Childhood Education and Achievement Committee Policy Goal Subcommittee) *Increase the academic success of all youth in Larimer County*

NEED: Academic success is directly related to individual earning potential and employment stability.

Unemployment rate facts:

-Dropout	8.2%	-2 Year Degree	4.2%
-High School Graduate	5.0%	-College Graduate	2.8%

Monthly earnings of full-time workers:

-Dropout	\$1716	-2 Year Degree	\$2769
-High School Graduate	\$2401	-College Graduate	\$3900

Who should be involved and what resources would be needed?

All Day Kindergarten	Youth Enrichment Programs
Larimer County School Districts	Local and State Government
Non-Profit Agencies	Community Support and Awareness
Federally Funded Training Programs	Faith Community
Early Childhood Council	

POSSIBLE STRATEGIES:

The measures by which the academic success will be assessed are as follows:

- Reduction in high school drop out rates
- Reduction in teen pregnancies
- Increased enrollment in mentoring programs for both the mentors and youth
- Reduction in juvenile delinquency
- Increased access to public transportation
- Increased alternative high school programs
- Increase availability to mental health services
- Expansions to affordable and quality daycare
- Creation of tracking system that measures what youth are doing in free time
- Ensuring that all youth read at a third grade level before moving into the fourth grade
- Support Governor Ritter's P-20 Education Council's recommendations

Fundamental Principles Incorporated:

- Removes Barriers
- Encourages Synergistic Approach
- Promotes Respect and Diversity
- Educates the Community
- Promotes Economic Health
- Shows Measurable Change
- Empowers Individuals

HOW THE GOAL RELATES TO THE VISION:

By mobilizing the community and resources to ensure academic success for all youth in Larimer County we will be providing the fundamental framework for those youth to be self sufficient in the future. That allows for the youth to have opportunities to thrive, grow, and live in dignity the future. This strategy is focused on preventing poverty in future generations.

GOAL G1 (from the Increased Individual Responsibility for Financial Stability Committee): *Encourage people to have savings of 3 – 6 months of expenditures to create a cushion for emergencies such as job loss or health issues.*

Why This Is Important:

- To have a financial savings cushion is insurance against falling into poverty.
- Savings allow people to continue to meet basic needs while facing emergencies, preventing a crisis that would cause financial instability.
- Savings can help a household build wealth, not debt.
- Having a savings account gives a sense of stability and hope, reducing family stress, and providing a more stable environment for children.
- When parents have a pattern of saving, they are role modeling for their children
- Savings are a critical element of managing money. When savings do not exist, families experience increased stress from “robbing Peter to pay Paul”, never getting ahead.

Who Should Be Involved / Resources Needed

- Employers, encouraging automatic deductions for savings plans
- Financial institutions
- Financial educators (CSU-Larimer County Extension, Certified Financial Planners, Consumer Credit Counseling Services, others)
- Foundations
- Media outlets
- Quality, tested curricula
- Messages that are uplifting and make creating a savings plan achievable

Ideas For Accomplishing This Goal:

- Create Individual Development Accounts program
- Conduct financial education at work sites
- Enlist financial institutions that lower the minimum amount required for initial deposit
- Encourage mandated savings programs through employers, direct deposits, flexible spending accounts
- Create “savings clubs” whereby savers support and encourage each other

Fundamental Principles Incorporated:

Empowers individuals	Removes barriers	Assumes long term viability
Encourages synergistic approaches	Educates the community	Promotes economic health
Promotes respect & diversity	Shows measurable change	Leads to systemic change
Increases community ownership of the solution		

Goal Relationship To The Vision:

Having a savings cushion allows people to live with dignity by becoming more self sustaining, meeting their own basic needs. Individuals with savings have more choice and have the opportunity to grow and thrive with a sense of confidence and power over their destiny. The activities to achieve the goal would require cooperation as many elements of the community become engaged.

GOAL G2 (from the Increased Individual Responsibility for Financial Stability Committee:
Increase the level of financial literacy in the community.

Why This Is Important:

- Knowledge is power. Knowing more about financial management produces better informed decision making, more safety in handling finances, and prevents fewer negative consequences.
- Financial literacy increases personal responsibility and lessens the likelihood of becoming a victim.
- Finances are a critical element of every resident's every day life. Financial education for all youth and adults is currently sporadic and incomplete, if at all.
- Financial literacy passes generation to generation. Literacy can help turn the trend of generational poverty. It reduces the likelihood of situational poverty because creating a savings for emergencies becomes more possible.
- Financial literacy increases the probability of financial success. Financially literate individuals are more likely to build wealth and decrease unproductive debt.

Who Should Be Involved / Resources Needed

- Schools and institutions of higher education
- Employers, encouraging automatic deductions for savings & retirement plans
- Financial institutions, human service agencies, AARP
- Financial educators (CSU-Larimer County Extension, Certified Financial Planners, Consumer Credit Counseling Services, others)
- Foundations & National Endowment For Financial Education (NEFE)
- Media outlets
- Quality, tested curricula
- Residents with life experience

Ideas For Accomplishing This Goal:

- Encourage & establish financial literacy classes in high schools
- Conduct financial education at work sites
- Develop a financial mentors program
- Provide financial education classes in the communities and through human service agencies at low or no cost

Fundamental Principles Incorporated:

Empowers individuals	Removes barriers	Assumes long term viability
Encourages synergistic approaches	Educates the community	Promotes economic health
Promotes respect & diversity	Shows measurable change	Leads to systemic change
Increases community ownership of the solution		

Goal Relationship To The Vision:

Possessing financial management skills allows people to live with dignity by becoming more self sustaining, meeting their own basic needs. Financially literate individuals have more choice and have the opportunity to grow and thrive with a sense of confidence and power over their destiny. The activities to achieve the goal would require cooperation as many elements of the community become engaged.

GOAL G3 (from the Increased Individual Responsibility for Financial Stability Committee):
Level out the playing field for those in poverty.

Why This Is Important:

- Lower income residents are often penalized with higher interest rates and higher per unit pricing because the lack resources and credit-worthiness to make purchases in the same fashion as higher income individuals. They may pay more over-draft and money order purchase fees, and more for commuting throughout the community to pay by cash when they do not have checking accounts. Financial institutions can and do charge higher fees for low balance accounts.
- Lower income families need a psychological boost when experiencing financial stressors, rather than to be demoralized even further by having to function in an uneven playing field as consumers and money managers.
- Lower income families need temporary “hands-up”, opportunities for success, and the same chance the general public gets for financial success.

Who Should Be Involved / Resources Needed

- Financial institutions
- Legislators
- Financial educators
- Business owners
- Media outlets

Ideas For Accomplishing This Goal:

- Enlist financial institutions to lower the minimum amount required for checking account balances, fees on overdrafts, and costs of doing banking (at least temporarily until a person’s financial situation stabilizes)
- Advocate for legislation that encourages businesses to work with lower income people
- Partner with local businesses through a pilot project, attempting to level the playing field
- Mentor low income consumers to learn how to make wise financial decisions
- Human services agencies (to reach the target low income population)
- Educate the community about the barriers that low income individuals face as consumers

Fundamental Principles Incorporated:

Empowers individuals	Removes barriers	Assumes long term viability
Encourages synergistic approaches	Educates the community	Promotes economic health
Promotes respect & diversity	Shows measurable change	Leads to systemic change
Increases community ownership of the solution		

Goal Relationship To The Vision:

Having a more even playing field allows people to live with dignity by becoming more self sustaining, meeting their own basic needs, and feeling like the community wants them to succeed. Individuals will have more choice and have the opportunity to grow and thrive with a sense of confidence and power over their destiny. The activities to achieve the goal would require cooperation as many elements of the community become engaged.

Enhancing the Safety Net through Policy Change

The policy approach committee is on a different time frame, as it educates itself on the various related policy issue and waits to see what areas the P3 initiative will focus on moving forward.

Our Process

Since accomplishing our public policy goals will most likely depend upon actions by the State Legislature in addition to local policymakers such as county commissioners and/or city council(s), and also because there is so much to learn and so many possible issues and solutions, we have created a timeline for our work that is different from the other committees.

- December 2007 – August 2008: Learn what issues are being dealt with currently by the state and local policymakers and how they are impacting people living in poverty. We are also having guest speakers educate the committee on the issues that create barriers to or could assist people living in poverty achieve self-sufficiency. So far we have had three topics:
 - Affordable Housing
 - TANF and other basic government support programs
 - Public Health

In this process we would also like to hear public policy suggestions/needs from other PPP Committees.

- September 2008 – January 2009: Develop a plan of which public policy issues to pursue, either by supporting policy/legislation that is already in process or by working with our policymakers to develop a legislative initiative. Develop a plan about how we can best influence legislation which may include local, state or federal efforts. Perhaps create an ongoing public policy agenda.
- January 2009 – May 2009: Work with the policymakers at all levels for positive results.