

Economic Self-Sufficiency



OUTCOME TEAM ROSTER

Commissioner Deborah A. Lieberman
Montgomery County Commission
Co-Champion

Willie Walker
The Dayton Urban League (Retired 12/08)
Co-Champion

Erthale Barnes
Montgomery County Dept. of
Job and Family Services

Catherine M. Brown
C. M. Brown, Inc.

John T. Donnellan
Community Action Partnership

Kathleen J. Emery
City of Dayton

The Honorable Dennis J. Langer
Montgomery County
Common Pleas Court

Jan Lepore-Jentleson
East End Community Services Corp.

Commissioner Dean Lovelace
City of Dayton

Heath MacAlpine
Montgomery County Dept. of
Job and Family Services

Lucious Plant
Montgomery County Dept. of
Job and Family Services

Clarence A. Ray, III
The Dayton Urban League

The Honorable Walter H. Rice
United States District Court

Joseph Tuss
Montgomery County Community
and Economic Development

Donald A. Vermillion
University of Dayton

Commissioner Nan Whaley
City of Dayton

Gary Williamson
The Job Center

STAFF:

Joyce Gerren
Human Services Consultant

Beverly Pemberton
Montgomery County Dept. of
Job and Family Services

Craig Powell
PowerNet of Dayton

John Theobald
Montgomery County
Commission Assistant

VISION

Residents have access to employment that provides a living wage and benefits. Barriers to employment, including transportation and day care issues, are minimized. Adequate opportunities for lifelong learning help prepare the workforce for the realities of 21st-century jobs. Educational, vocational training, and worker retraining services are readily available to support the needs of residents and employers.

ECONOMIC SELF-SUFFICIENCY OUTCOME TEAM REPORT

The Economic Self-Sufficiency (ESS) Outcome Team recognizes that employment is a key component when addressing poverty but it is not a stand alone strategy that will address generational poverty or its by-products such as crime, poor housing, inadequate healthcare, low expectations, or under achieving schools. Low income families and single adults live in communities throughout Montgomery County, but adults and children living in areas of concentrated and persistent poverty within the County are much more likely to face multiple barriers to good jobs and economic self-sufficiency. During 2008, the ESS Team focused its efforts on identifying and addressing the challenges and barriers facing low income adults and children in Montgomery County.

CURRENT ECONOMIC CHALLENGES FACING MONTGOMERY COUNTY

Economic conditions locally and nationally have taken a toll on our community. Poverty rates rose, and layoffs in the manufacturing, financial services and retail sectors helped push the official unemployment rate to 8% in Montgomery County, and to 9.1% in the City of Dayton during the third quarter of 2008. Unemployment could be even higher in 2009 with the closing of the GM Plant in Moraine and the shutdown of the DHL facility in Wilmington. Together these two businesses and their local suppliers, who also have closed or downsized, account for the loss of 10,000 additional jobs.

Since 2005, home foreclosures, fueled by predatory lending, have impacted thousands of homeowners and many communities throughout Montgomery County. With unemployment on the rise, Food Stamp and cash assistance rolls are growing, residential foreclosures continue unabated, food pantries are running low, and a growing number of households throughout Montgomery County are finding it harder to afford rent, groceries, gas, utilities, and healthcare.

ESS OUTCOME TEAM'S WORK IN 2008

Against the backdrop of worsening economic conditions locally and nationally, the Economic Self-Sufficiency Outcome Team continued to work on a framework for reducing poverty among families with children and increasing employment among

disadvantaged single men. It also joined forces with the Stable Families and Supportive & Engaged Neighborhoods Outcome Teams to work jointly on these issues. The information presented below highlights the Teams' findings on the scope of poverty locally, factors contributing to poverty, and best practices for reducing family poverty.

FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO POVERTY

Three factors are major contributors to the extent of poverty in our community. They include the restructuring of the Dayton area job market, socio-economic and racial isolation of low income adults and children in neighborhoods of persistent poverty, and generational poverty.

*Go to page 69
for more
discussion.*



Good Jobs & Stable Employment Matters.

The restructuring of the job market has resulted in the increasing prevalence of low wage jobs without benefits, replacing living wage jobs for adults with a high school education or less. Too many adult men and women in our community lack the credentials, skills and networks to compete successfully for good paying jobs. At the same time, it is difficult for low income adults, who must support themselves and their family, to commit the time and attention required to first remediate academic skills, and then complete the coursework for a certificate or degree program.

Place Matters.

The socio-economic and racial isolation of low income adults and children in neighborhoods of persistent poverty contributes to generational poverty. Neighborhoods matter. Racial, gender, class and zip code discrimination reduce employment opportunities and housing choice for low income families and single adults. Generational poverty has a cascading impact on school readiness and academic achievement.

NATIONAL & LOCAL BEST PRACTICES FOR REDUCING POVERTY

1. Provide educational opportunities and financial incentives to families in a place based, neighborhood setting.
2. Provide high quality early care and education starting with infants, and continuing through pre-school and kindergarten. Provide high quality public K-8 neighborhood schools and effective, high performing high schools.
3. Utilize sector employment strategies that start with community-based organizations who help low income adults develop the basic skills needed to survive in the workplace, then enable them to develop the hard skills required for jobs in growth sectors such as healthcare, or in specific regional industry clusters (e.g., advanced manufacturing, construction, etc.).

4. Reduce the higher cost of goods and services in low income neighborhoods by increasing regulation of high cost alternative financial services, by providing incentives to businesses to enter lower income markets, and by increasing the transparency of the marketplace for low income consumers.
5. Assist low wage workers in receiving the public work supports to which they are entitled, e.g., Earned Income and Child Tax Credits, Food Stamps, Child Care subsidy, Children's Health Insurance Program (S-CHIP), etc.

ESS TEAM'S STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT DURING 2008

Within the context of reducing poverty among families with children and single adults, the ESS and Stable Families Outcome Teams focused a great deal of attention on two major topics during 2008. The first was the importance of putting the necessary public, non-profit and private resources together to develop and sustain pathways to living wage jobs for low skilled, low income adults, especially males. The second was the development of a framework for a comprehensive, sustainable, multi-year investment involving multiple partners to break the cycle of generational poverty in one or more low income neighborhoods. The Comprehensive Community-Based Initiative for Reducing Poverty is diagrammed in Fig. 1. That work is being led by East End Community Services Corporation.

CREATING PATHWAYS TO LIVING WAGE JOBS

Montgomery County has good program examples to build upon. All involve specific employment sectors including healthcare, tooling, advanced manufacturing, or construction. Employer partners who need skilled workers and a workforce intermediary organization, such as the Dayton Urban League or ISUS, provide outreach, assessment, screening, intensive case management, job coaching and follow-up. Hard skill training is provided by an educational institution such as Sinclair Community College. The results have been impressive, but the number of persons participating is dwarfed by the number of residents in Montgomery County in need of such assistance.

A critical area of need for low income adults with multiple barriers to employment in Montgomery County is transitional jobs. Transitional jobs provide structure, literacy, life skills training and work experience, while enabling participants to build good work habits and a sense of responsibility and accomplishment. They also enable the participants to earn much needed income during the 3-6 month transition to a permanent job. For-profit or non-profit community-based businesses can provide semi-skilled jobs paying livable wages that can also improve neighborhoods by removing unsound obsolete housing; retrofitting sound structures with energy efficient materials; landscaping, community gardens and/or cleaning up environmental hazards, etc.

ESS TEAM'S PROPOSED FRAMEWORK FOR REDUCING GENERATIONAL FAMILY POVERTY

1. Focus on families with children, using a multi-generational approach, and work to increase the number of two parent families.
2. Set a goal of reducing poverty in Dayton and Montgomery County by 25% by 2014, and design local antipoverty investments to include a combination of incentives, structure, high expectations and support.
3. Provide high quality early care and education starting with infants, and continuing through pre-school and kindergarten. Provide high quality public K-8 neighborhood schools and effective, high performing high schools.
4. Invest in neighborhoods where low income families live to increase safety, build community, and increase opportunities for upward mobility. Recognize and address racial disparities in income and wealth, and the segregation of black residents that have resulted from discriminatory housing and employment practices. Increase access to healthcare and quality early care and education among low income families. Strictly regulate the predatory credit industry.
5. Significantly increase math, literacy, life skills and occupational skills among parents who are unemployed or working in low wage jobs using best practices underway locally and nationally. Utilize technology and outreach to increase low income families' access to publicly funded work supports.



Comprehensive Community-Based Initiative for Reducing Poverty

Based on East End Community Services Corp. Community Initiative Logic Model for Children & Youth, Adults & Families, Community Development

Figure 1. An expanded version of the re-building initiative that has been underway in the Twin Towers neighborhood in Dayton for the past ten years.

SCOPE OF POVERTY LOCALLY BY THE NUMBERS

- ✦ The federal poverty level for a family of four in 2008 was \$21,200.
- ✦ During 2005-2007, 12,896 Montgomery County Families lived below poverty.
- ✦ The City of Dayton, with about 25% of the County's families, is home to 56% of the County's families living below poverty.
- ✦ During 2005-2007, black families comprised 19% of the County's families, but 47% of all families living below poverty in Montgomery County.
- ✦ During 2005-2007, 28,187 children aged 0-17 lived below poverty in Montgomery County, an increase of 31% since 2000.
- ✦ Between 2000 and 2007, poverty rates rose for both the City of Dayton (from 23% to 28.8%) and Montgomery County (from 11.3% to 14.9%).
- ✦ 39% of 5-year old children entering Dayton Public Schools in 2006-07 needed intervention because of low reading readiness scores, the highest level of need in the region's 60 school districts.