

# **From Poverty to Prosperity: Exploring Community Strategies that Move People from Poverty to Self-Sufficiency**

## **Introduction**

More than four decades after the United States government declared “war” on poverty, the official 2008 poverty rate is 12.3%, not even two percent less than the 1967 figure of 14.2%. According to the Center for American Progress Task Force on Poverty, the number of poor Americans has grown by five million over the past six years. One in eight Americans now lives in poverty, and poverty in the United States is far higher than in many other developed nations.

Despite our best collective and individual efforts to address poverty at the local level, the gap between what Longmont residents are earning and what they need to survive is ever-widening. Nearly 11% of Longmont residents in 2008 had an annual income below the federal poverty line. 10% of our households (3,519) live in poverty and 48% of these are in families. 56% of families in poverty are single-parent families. A three-person household makes about \$18,310 at the 2009 federal poverty line. By contrast, the self-sufficiency standard for a family of three in Boulder County is \$59,489, which is defined as the amount of income required to adequately meet their housing, child-care, food, transportation, healthcare and other miscellaneous essential needs without public or private assistance.

The recent national financial crisis has further impacted the stability of Longmont residents—not only those who already have been struggling with poverty but also those who may need assistance for perhaps the first time in their lives. Those in chronic poverty now must compete with those who have been recently laid off and who most likely have more experience and education for job opportunities.

Although reform and action at the federal and state levels would have the most significant impact on reducing poverty at the local level, the City of Longmont, like other municipalities across the nation, can take action to address poverty. For example, the City of Longmont currently allocates 1.6% of its General Fund operating revenues to more than 30 local nonprofit agencies to assist those agencies in addressing a variety of human service needs among Longmont residents, including poverty. In 2009, Longmont residents sought assistance from a multitude of human service programs on over 57,000 occasions. The City also receives around \$545,000 in CDBG funding each year that supports a variety of housing and other programs that benefit low- and moderate-income persons, many of whom live in poverty.

However, traditional government and community service delivery systems that are in place to address poverty are having an insufficient impact in truly helping people get out of poverty. By funding and operating a collection of programs and services, we have created a fragmented approach that offers only short-term relief for people living in poverty. Some communities across the country have begun to explore what they feel are more effective ways to help move people completely out of poverty rather than doing only part of the job. Some key strategy shifts in those communities include:

- Working more intensively and holistically with smaller target populations or neighborhoods over a longer period of time;
- Focusing on specific target areas for communitywide action, such as income generation or building wealth, as a way to reduce poverty in their communities;
- Creating new frameworks where all community partners/sectors are invested in eradicating poverty and in preparing people to live self sufficiently; and
- Pushing beyond traditional boundaries to redefine the issue of poverty.<sup>1</sup>

Promising approaches research reveals that municipal leaders can play important roles in combating poverty. The intent of this white paper is to assist City Council in 1) further understanding of the face of poverty in our Longmont community, the generational cycle of poverty, and how we currently address poverty issues; 2) exploring several poverty reduction initiatives that have been implemented throughout the country that have transformed the ways in which communities move people from poverty to prosperity; and 3) determining what role, if any, the Longmont City Council wishes to take in transforming our local efforts to reduce poverty in the Longmont community.

### **Status of Poverty in Longmont**

Table 1 below shows selected poverty statistics from 1990 and 2000 Census data and from the 2005 and 2008 American Community Survey for Longmont residents compared to the United States and Colorado. The United States poverty level remained fairly constant over this time period with the 1990 rate at 13.2% and the 2008 rate at the same level. Colorado's poverty rate also remained fairly constant over this period moving from 11.7% to 11.5%. However, the number of Longmont residents living in poverty has risen from 7.7% in 1990 to 10.7% in 2008 despite a 114% increase in per capita income and a 78.9% increase in median household income during the same time frame.

A check of children living in poverty shows all three (U.S., Colorado and Longmont) had a decrease in this population group from 1990 to 2008, although absolute numbers have increased. The U.S. and Colorado have been showing increasing percentages of the number of adults in poverty, while Longmont's percentages are decreasing in this area. However, the opposite is true for the elderly with the U.S. and Colorado holding fairly steady while Longmont's elderly in poverty has increased quite substantially (a 126% increase in persons from 2000 to 2008).

The maps in Attachment 1 graphically illustrate where certain poverty indicators are more prevalent in the Longmont community.

---

<sup>1</sup> Sara Bainton Kahn and others, "Combating Poverty: Emerging Strategies from the Nation's Cities," National League of Cities, 2007, pages 1-2

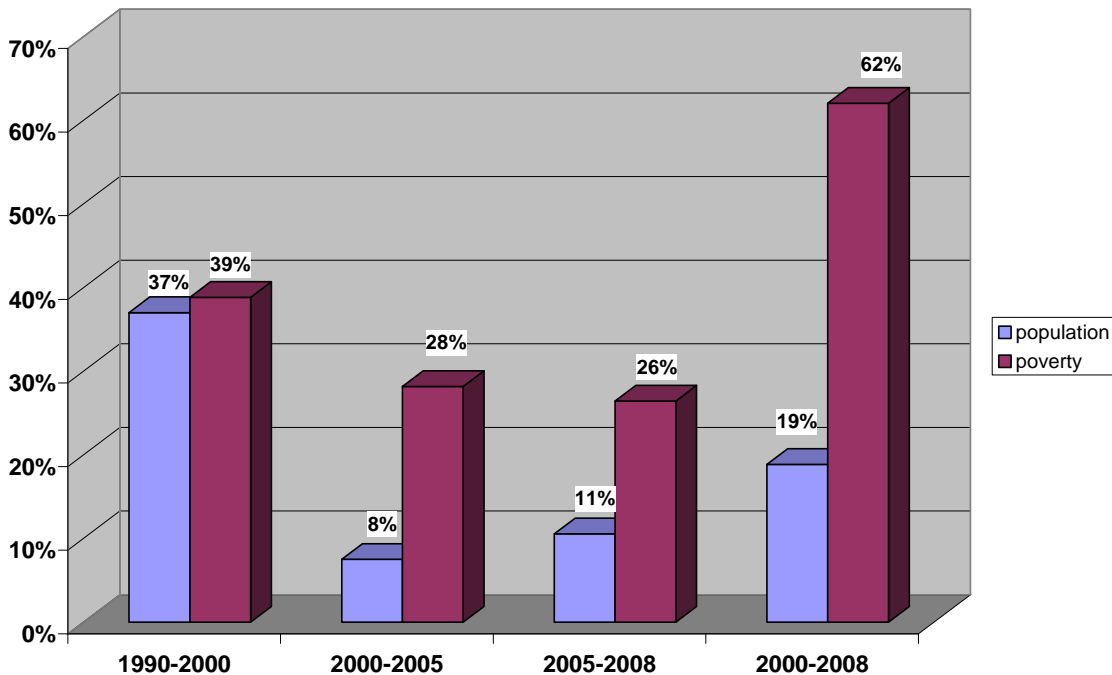
**Table 1**

Longmont	1990			2000			2005			2008		
	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total
Children (0-17)	693	759	1,452	1,066	1,133	2,199	912	1,352	2,264	1,514	1,392	2,906
Adults (18-54)	771	1,329	2,100	1,118	1,537	2,655	1,569	2,482	4,051	1,935	2,593	4,528
Elderly (55+)	39	393	432	212	465	677	348	426	774	585	944	1,529
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>1,503</b>	<b>2,401</b>	<b>3,984</b>	<b>2,396</b>	<b>3,135</b>	<b>5,531</b>	<b>2,829</b>	<b>4,260</b>	<b>7,089</b>	<b>4,034</b>	<b>4,929</b>	<b>8,963</b>
Percentages	38%	62%	<b>7.7%</b>	44%	56%	<b>7.8%</b>	40%	60%	<b>9.3%</b>	45%	55%	<b>10.6%</b>
U. S.	13.2%			12.4%			13.3%			13.2%		
Colorado	11.7%			9.3%			11.1%			11.5%		
	US	CO	L	US	CO	L	US	CO	L	US	CO	L
Children (0-17)	36%	35%	37%	35%	31%	40%	35%	33%	32%	34%	32%	33%
Adults (18-54)	46%	51%	52%	49%	56%	47%	49%	53%	58%	49%	53%	50%
Elderly (55+)	18%	14%	11%	16%	13%	13%	16%	14%	10%	17%	15%	17%

*1990 & 2000 Census Info, 2005 & 2008 American Community Survey*

The following chart tracks the increase in poverty compared to the increase in population to determine if the poverty levels are increasing because of the increased population in our community since 1990. As you can see, the rate of poverty is increasing much more dramatically than the population.

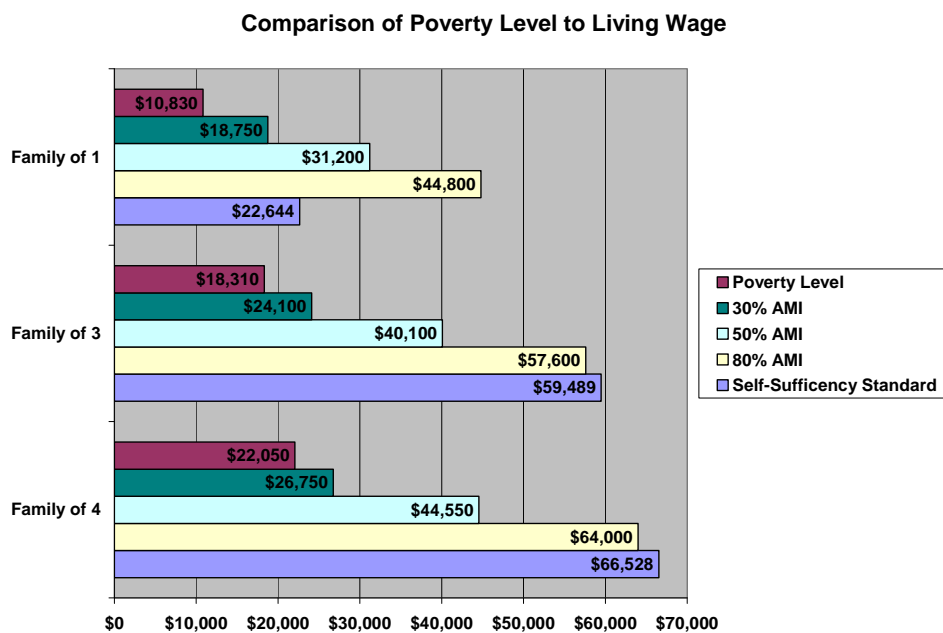
**Comparison of Increase in Population to Increase in Poverty Rate**



When comparing the 1990 to 2000 decade with the 2000 to 2008 (almost) decade, the substantial increase in the level of poverty is significant. This would seem to show that, at least in Longmont, poverty increases greatly during times of economic downturn and that perhaps all of our residents are buoyed during times of economic growth.

Living Wages and Education Level

The self-sufficiency standard<sup>2</sup> in Boulder County for a family of four (two adults and two children) varies from \$60,850 to \$66,528. A single adult needs to earn \$22,644 to be self-sufficient. Comparing these to the poverty levels shows how very far families living in poverty have to go to be self-sufficient. Information also has been added to show the 30%, 50% and 80% area median income (AMI) figures that the City uses routinely to qualify households for assistance using CDBG and HOME funding (*Boulder County TRENDS, page 36.*)



The level of wages a person or household earns is directly proportional to the education of its workers. In Boulder County, someone with less than a high school diploma is likely to earn only \$17,060. A high school graduate or GED recipient increases their earnings to \$27,198. Someone who completes an associates degree or finishes even some college earns up to \$32,042 (*Boulder County TRENDS, page 61, from 2007 American Community Survey*).

Data from the 2000 Census shows that people in poverty are twice as likely not to have finished high school as those living above poverty.

<sup>2</sup> The Self-Sufficiency Standard includes the following costs: housing, child care, food, transportation, healthcare, miscellaneous expenses, taxes, and both the Earned Income and Child Care tax credits. The standard is based on a “bare bones” budget that excludes any restaurant or take-out food costs, credit card or loan payments, or emergency funds. The standard is calculated, by county, for households using many combinations of single adult or two adults, with infant, with preschooler, with school-age child, and with teenager. More detail is provided in Attachment 4.

## Jobs

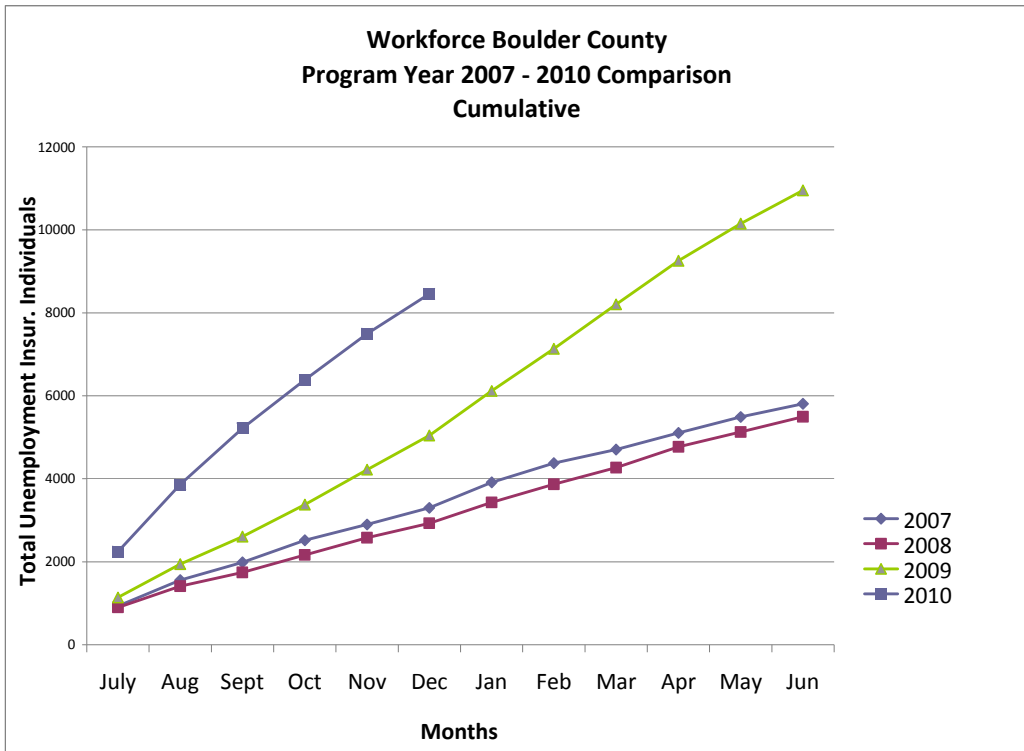
While there was an overall gain of jobs in the Boulder-Longmont area from 2000 to 2008, most of those were in higher paying, high tech jobs. There was a loss of 1,300 retail jobs from 2000 to 2008 but an increase in food service (1,600), leisure and hospitality (2,400) and “other services” (300), all of which pay lower wages. Fairly high demand jobs in the following industries that pay a higher wage and would be a logical “next step” for folks living in poverty would include health and educational services (28.3% increase predicted from 2005 to 2015), leisure and hospitality (26.4% increase), wholesale and retail trade (14.3% increase) and transportation, warehouse and utilities (21.1% increase).

Only 3.1% of single persons living in poverty worked full time. 39.8% worked part-time or some of the time, and 57% did not work at all. A lack of employment could perhaps be due to a disabling condition; 2000 Census data shows that 31% of persons age 18 to 64 had a disability.

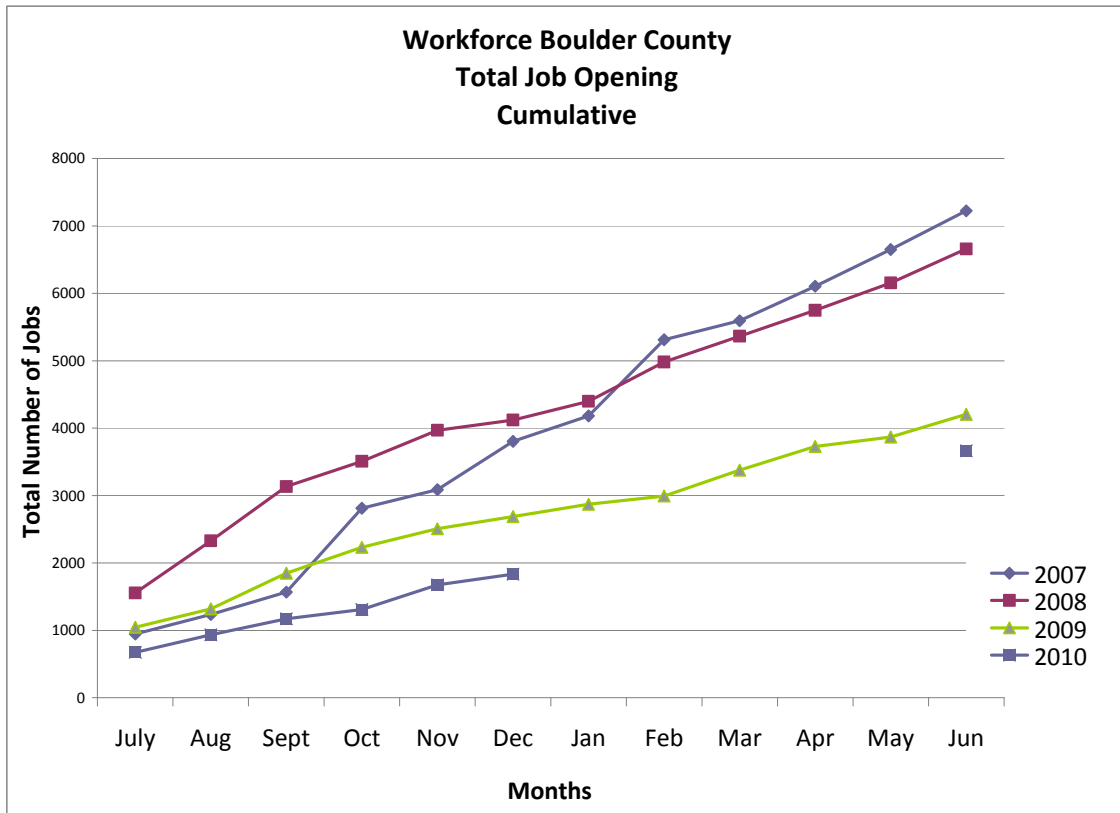
Workforce Boulder County (WfBC) reports a 68% increase in total persons served from July through December 2008 compared to July through December 2009. In addition, unemployment insurance claims in 2009 (see Chart 1) also have risen by 68% over the same period. At a time when the demand for job-seeking services is so great, the number of job openings listed with WfBC in 2009, as illustrated in Chart 2, has dropped by 37% compared to 2008, and if current listings remain constant, will drop another 12% this program year (2010). In addition, the number of day labor jobs has decreased taking away a financial avenue for many without skills or education.

While people living in poverty need job skill enhancements, as well as completion of a secondary education (34.5% of people in poverty in Longmont are not high school graduates), our local workforce system is not set up to assist these residents. Because their funding sources require them to serve specific populations, WfBC often is unable to assist people in poverty with the level of needs they have.

**Chart 1**



**Chart 2**



### Benefits – Financial and Health

People living in poverty actually are less likely to receive at least some of the financial benefits to which they are entitled. Often they are unable to traverse the application systems to access the benefits and are denied. For instance, only 24% of Longmont households living in poverty receive food stamps when all should be eligible according to state guidelines (American Community Survey, 2008). In other instances, the benefits have rules and regulations that conflict with each other resulting in fewer benefits or cancellation of critical benefits when another source is accessed or approved. In many cases, income from a job acts as a disincentive to work when a critical benefit, such as child care, housing or disability assistance, may be lost if the person's or family's income exceeds a certain low amount.

2008 American Community Survey data shows that 20.3% (17,101) of Longmont residents do not have health insurance. 18.7% of these (3,194) are children below the age of 18. Many households do not have healthcare or dental care because their jobs do not provide them even when they are working; many others are not working. These folks are forced to use the emergency room system, which is much more costly; or they postpone or do not participate in preventative care, which, again, leads to health crises that are more costly to deal with and treat. Local healthcare agencies that serve this population have complicated rules and regulations for use of their system, and it often takes a case manager or some type of advocate to navigate the system and access what should be readily accessible.

During the 2010 Human Service Agency funding process the following were reported:

- Dental Aid reported an increase in client demand for services as a result of an increased number of people living below 200% of poverty, and/or loss of dental coverage due to job loss.
- Salud Clinic reports that the fastest growing classification of patients is uninsured (51%). There also is an increase in patients who have never been seen at Salud before. Many are recently unemployed or have faced a reduction in work hours. Salud also reports an increased prevalence in behavioral health issues identified in patient visits: anxiety and depression over loss of employment, how to pay for rent and food, and care for families.

While Longmont has a myriad of human service agencies and a good record of collaboration among them, they still are operating in silos and each has their own rules, regulations and norms for operating and delivering services. Services, particularly funded from state and federal resources, are dispensed through a jumble of disconnected programs that reach some and reject others, often for reasons of geography or chance rather than differences in need. Healthcare, housing, food stamps and cash assistance all form separate bureaucratic worlds, and their dictates, set at the state or federal level, often collide. The result is a hit-or-miss system of relief, which is very difficult to navigate, and for people living in poverty, it is overwhelming.

## Understanding Poverty

Before exploring emerging strategies for combating poverty, it is important to develop a deeper understanding of the experience of those in our community who are living in poverty. There are two kinds of poverty: generational and situational. “Generational poverty is defined as having been in poverty for at least two generations, while situational poverty is a lack of resources due to a particular event (e.g., death, chronic illness, divorce, etc.). Generational poverty has its own culture, hidden rules, familial patterns and belief systems. Those in generational poverty find it more difficult to become self-sufficient - not from a lack of intelligence or ability, but because they do not know there is a choice they can make to live differently, or they do not have the necessary resources.”<sup>3</sup> We are focusing on generational poverty in this paper.

In 2008, Boulder County government introduced community organizations and local governments to the “Bridges out of Poverty” framework. Bridges out of Poverty is a community change model with the goal of eliminating poverty.

The model examines the sources and impact of generational poverty on families and communities; reveals the hidden rules and norms of social class; and supports addressing and solving generational poverty at the community level. Typically, poverty is thought of in terms of financial resources, only. According to the Bridges model, financial resources, while extremely important, do not explain the differences in the success with which some individuals leave poverty nor the reasons that many stay in poverty. The ability to leave poverty is more dependent upon other resources than it is upon financial resources. Therefore, the Bridges out of Poverty model defines poverty as the extent to which an individual does without the following resources:

<b>Financial</b>	Having the money to purchase goods and services.
<b>Emotional</b>	Being able to choose and control emotional responses, particularly to negative situations, without engaging in self-destructive behavior.
<b>Mental</b>	Having the mental abilities and acquired skills (reading, writing, computing) to deal with daily life.
<b>Spiritual</b>	Believing in divine purpose and guidance.
<b>Physical</b>	Having physical health and mobility.
<b>Support Systems</b>	Having friends, family and backup resources available to access in times of need.
<b>Relationships/Role Models</b>	Having frequent access to adults who are appropriate, who are nurturing to the child, and who do not engage in self-destructive behavior.
<b>Knowledge of Hidden Rules</b>	Knowing the unspoken cues and habits of a group
<b>Coping Strategies</b>	Being able to engage in procedural self-talk and the mindsets that allow issues to be moved from the concrete to the abstract (the ability to translate from the personal to the issue). <sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Ruby Payne, Philip DeVol, Terie Dreussi Smith, *Bridges out of Poverty-Strategies for Professionals and Communities*, aha!Process, Inc., page 49

<sup>4</sup> Ibid

Debra Whitehead, who is a certified “Bridges out of Poverty” trainer, will facilitate a session with Council during the retreat about the generational cycle of poverty and the dynamics that keep people from moving from poverty to self-sufficiency.

### **Emerging Strategies for Moving People from Poverty to Prosperity**

Policy reform and action at the federal level have the most impact for reducing poverty among residents in communities throughout our nation, such as Longmont. The Center for American Progress, which convened a task force in 2007 to recommend a national strategy to significantly reduce poverty in the United States, asserts that the federal government has a crucial role to play in “providing leadership, financing, addressing inter-state inequities, and in spurring and supporting state, local and private actions. The Center goes on to advocate that poverty-reduction strategies require a true public-private partnership and should be guided by the following four principles: 1) promote decent work; 2) provide opportunity for all; 3) ensure economic security; and 4) help people build wealth.”<sup>5</sup>

Unfortunately, comprehensive reform to reduce poverty has not taken center stage on the national agenda. Regardless, many states, including Colorado, are moving forward to examine what they can do to address poverty among their children and families. Pursuant to House Bill 09-1064, Colorado established an Economic Opportunity Poverty Task Force to 1) assess current state policies and practices that promote economic opportunity and poverty reduction, 2) evaluate federal and state-supported programs that serve persons living in poverty, 3) examine factors that contribute to poverty and its economic impact, and 4) develop a comprehensive plan for reducing poverty by at least 50% in Colorado by 2019.

Many city leaders also are seeking more immediate ways to take action to respond to persistent poverty and the growing income disparity among their residents. They see the impact that economic instability has on their residents and the community as a whole every day...and they see that need continuing to grow. The National League of Cities has long supported efforts of local officials to address poverty and equity in their communities through research, technical assistance, best practice information, and other tools. As more cities are taking on new initiatives that address poverty and equity, we are learning key lessons and promising approaches. Although there are many common themes and ideas that have emerged, the following sections focus primarily on approaches that reflect some of the principles identified above and that truly are positioned to make a difference in reducing, rather than moderating, poverty at the local level by:

- Creating new frameworks where all community partners/sectors are invested in the eradication of poverty and in preparing people to live self-sufficiently;
- Focusing on income generation as a way to reduce poverty in their communities; and
- Working more intensively and holistically with people over a longer period of time.

---

<sup>5</sup> Mark Greenberg, Indivar Dutta-Gupta and Elisa Minoff, “From Poverty to Prosperity—A National Strategy to Cut Poverty in Half,” Center for American Progress Task Force on Poverty, April 2007, pages 2 and 14

**Community Investment**

Move the Mountain and aha! Process, Inc. – two organizations that have been consulting with communities throughout the nation on poverty reduction – suggest that “poverty is the result of the community’s shortcomings in providing equal education and opportunity to all from birth to grave.” These entities have jointly developed the following comprehensive continuum of strategies for communities to consider in their efforts to engage all sectors of the community in the shared responsibility of eradicating poverty.

## COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGIES FOR BRIDGES STEERING COMMITTEES THE BRIDGES CONTINUUM

	BIRTH TO 6	K-12	POST-SECONDARY	WORKFORCE PREP/PLACE MENT	JOB RETENTION	SELF-SUFFICIENT INCOME	SENIORS	WELLNESS	COMMUNITY PROSPERITY
<b>Metrics: Ending Poverty Scorecard</b>	Ready for school  Language experience, brain development, cognitive learning structures	Graduation rates  GEDs	Retention rates  Graduation rates  Certifications	Employment rate  Apprenticeships  Certifications  Availability of jobs  Mix of jobs	1 year minimum	Self-sufficient wage (WOW)  200% poverty guidelines goals met for households  Assets established	Poverty rate.  Access to housing and healthcare.	High resources – all eleven  Balanced life  Giving back to the community	Environmental sustainability  Economic viability where everyone can live well  Low rates of poverty and disparity  Social health indices are positive
<b>Fallout Costs</b>	Failure to act here means giving up the highest returns on dollars spent on interventions; for birth-to-five the returns can be as high as 15-17%.	Dropouts from the class of 2007 will cost the U.S. nearly \$329 billion in lost wages, taxes, and productivity in their lifetimes. ii	Loss of income: lifetime earnings of a male with a bachelor's degree in 2004 were 96% higher than a male with a high school diploma. iii	Young men with low earnings and employment rates are much more likely than others to engage in crime, less likely to marry, and more likely to father children outside of marriage. Crime imposes costs of as much as \$1-2 trillion per year. The savings that can be realized by preventing crime and delinquency among youth are extremely high. iv	\$5,505.08 average turnover cost for an \$8.00 an hour employee v	Children who live in families with an annual income less than \$15,000 are 22 times more likely to be abused or neglected than children living in families with an annual income of \$30,000 or more. vi	Individuals 55 and older accounted for 22 percent of all personal bankruptcies in 2007, compared to 8 percent in 1991. Healthcare costs proved to be the top reason for many of these bankruptcies. vii	Poor rankings in the OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development) viii	Persistent childhood poverty is estimated to cost our nation \$500 billion a year, or about 4% of GDP. ix Communities that have lost manufacturing jobs, businesses, and their tax base are not viable economically and socially.

<b>Family of Strategies Using aha! Process Constructs</b>	<p><i>Tucker Signing Strategies</i></p> <p><i>Reading by Age 5</i></p> <p><i>Getting Ahead</i></p> <p>Develop an early childhood champion</p> <p><i>Until It's Gone/Circles</i></p>	<p>Ruby Payne schools—Framework training</p> <p><i>The R Rules</i></p> <p><i>Collaboration for Kids</i></p> <p>Dropout prevention</p> <p>Financial Literacy</p> <p><i>Until It's Gone/Circles</i></p>	<p><i>Helping Under-Resourced College Students</i> (for administrators)</p> <p><i>Getting Ahead, College Edition</i></p> <p><i>Understanding and Engaging Under-Resourced College Students</i> (for faculty and instructors)</p> <p><i>Until It's Gone/Circles</i> targeting barriers and academic performance</p>	<p>Cascade Engineering/Quest</p> <p>Cincinnati Works</p> <p>The Source</p> <p><i>Getting Ahead</i></p> <p><i>Until It's Gone/Circles</i> to support placement and barrier removal</p>	<p>Cascade Engineering/Quest</p> <p>Cincinnati Works</p> <p>The Source</p> <p>Getting Ahead for new employees</p> <p><i>Until It's Gone/Circles</i></p> <p>Working Bridges Employer Workgroup, VT</p>	<p>Employer in-house advancement strategies</p> <p>Bridges training</p> <p><i>Getting Ahead</i></p> <p>Cascade Engineering/Quest</p> <p>Cincinnati Works</p> <p>The Source</p> <p><i>Until It's Gone/Circles</i> for advancement</p>	<p>Wider Opportunities for Women</p> <p><i>Until It's Gone/Circles</i></p> <p>Service providers, faith community, government, neighborhood associations, civic groups.</p>	<p>Sophisticated Service Delivery Systems – consulting</p> <p>CCI, Community Collaboration, Inc., Northern Illinois University</p> <p>Until It's Gone Community engagement models, Circles Campaign</p> <p>Champions by discipline</p> <p><i>Tactical Communications</i></p> <p>Faith community, civic organizations, medical community, law enforcement, neighborhood associations, political parties</p>	<p>Bridges Steering Committees</p> <p>Community Sustainability Grid</p> <p>Systemic change and policy issues addressed by all sectors</p> <p><i>Until It's Gone/Circles</i></p> <p>Bridges Steering Committees, people and organizations from all other points on the continuum. People from all classes, races, and political persuasions.</p>
<b>Who Takes Responsibility for Change</b>	Families, early childhood development field	Parents, students, educators, school boards, PTAs, taxpayers	Students, faculty, administrators, boards, communities, benefactors	Employers, employees, government, colleges, chambers of commerce, economic and community developers, workforce development, high schools	Employers, employees, chambers of commerce, economic and community developers, workforce development, human services, government	Policymakers, employers, employees, workforce development, government, human services	Service providers, faith community, government, neighborhood associations, civic groups.	Faith community, civic organizations, medical community, law enforcement, neighborhood associations, political parties	Bridges Steering Committees, people and organizations from all other points on the continuum. People from all classes, races, and political persuasions.

[www.ahaprocess.com](http://www.ahaprocess.com)  
[www.movethemountain.org](http://www.movethemountain.org)

©2009 Move the Mountain

<sup>i</sup> Heckman, James J. "Investing in Disadvantaged Young Children is an Economically Efficient Policy." Paper presented at Committee for Economic Development, the Pew Charitable Trusts, PNC Financial Services Group Forum on "Building the Economic Case for Investments in Preschool." New York, January 10, 2006.

<sup>ii</sup> High School Dropouts in America, Alliance for Excellent Education, [http://www.all4ed.org/files/GraduationRates\\_FactSheet.pdf](http://www.all4ed.org/files/GraduationRates_FactSheet.pdf)

<sup>iii</sup> Kirsch, Irwin, Braun, Henry, Yamamoto, Kentaro. (January, 2007). "America's Perfect Storm: Three Forces Changing Our Nation's Future." Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service.

<sup>iv</sup> Holzer, Harry J. "Workforce Development and the Disadvantaged." The Urban Institute, Brief 7, September 2008. [www.urban.org/UploadPDF/411761\\_workforce\\_development.PDF](http://www.urban.org/UploadPDF/411761_workforce_development.PDF)

<sup>v</sup> Compilation of Turnover Studies, SASHA Corporation, <http://www.sashacorp.com/turnframe.html>

<sup>vi</sup> American Humane, <http://www.americanhumane.org/about-us/newsroom/fact-sheets/americas-children.html>

<sup>vii</sup> Health Care Costs, Economy Pushing Senior Citizens to Bankruptcy and Poverty in the U.S., Senior Journal.com. <http://seniorjournal.com/NEWS/SeniorStats/2008/20080826-USSeniorCitizensInPoverty.htm>

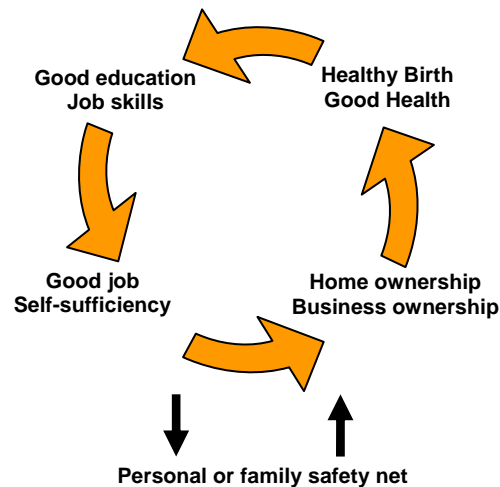
<sup>viii</sup> Burd-Sharps, Sarah, et. al. (2008) The Measure of America: American Human Development Report 2008-2009. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.

<sup>ix</sup> Center for American Progress, From Poverty to Prosperity: A National Strategy to Cut Poverty in Half, April 2007. [www.americanprogress.org/issues/2007/04/pdf/poverty\\_report.pdf](http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2007/04/pdf/poverty_report.pdf).

According to Scott Miller of Move the Mountain, Inc., “The continuum’s first row shows what we need to focus on as babies are born and move through our community systems. Special efforts need to be made to anyone born into a family experiencing poverty to interrupt generational poverty. Anything less than 100% success produces fallout which is shown in examples in the second row. The third row provides a sample of strategies that share the constructs and language being used by Move the Mountain and aha!Process, Inc. Communities can insert other strategies that are successful in reducing fallout costs. The fourth row suggests who needs to take responsibility for changes. A major theme of the Continuum is that a wider swath of community engagement is necessary to implement effective strategies that have the promise of helping families out of poverty and others to avoid it altogether.”<sup>6</sup>

Another community framework that illustrates what makes it possible for families and individuals to realize their full economic, social and personal potential has been developed by the Bell Policy Center in Denver.

This “Cycle of Opportunity” framework suggests that opportunity is not generated by a single action but through the following series of experiences and events (“gateways”) that build on one another and help people accumulate over the course their lifetimes.



- Gateway 1: A Healthy Birth
- Gateway 2: A Safe and Stimulating Childhood
- Gateway 3: Building a Solid Base for Literacy
- Gateway 4: Establish a Healthy Lifestyle in Childhood and Adolescence
- Gateway 5: Leaving High School with a Diploma and the Skills to Succeed
- Gateway 6: Access to Education and Training for Adults
- Gateway 7: A Healthy Adult Life
- Gateway 8: Earning a Decent Living and Building Wealth
- Gateway 9: A Financially Secure and Healthy Retirement

<sup>6</sup> Scott Miller, “Ending Poverty in our Communities—What Communities Can do Right Now to Transform and Thrive in the New Economy,” Move the Mountain, Inc. Leadership Center, February 2009, pages 4 - 5

These gateways are like steps on a long staircase; missing one doesn't mean you cannot succeed, but it does make the next step much steeper. Miss too many and the climb may become impossible. Individual effort fuels the Cycle of Opportunity; however, all sectors of the community play a role in sustaining it—families, businesses, government, schools, and neighborhoods.<sup>7</sup>

These two frameworks cited above suggest that the way to help people move from poverty toward prosperity is to focus on how the entire community generates opportunity for all people throughout their entire lives and how it helps support people to achieve and sustain self-sufficiency.

### **Promote Economic Opportunity**

Ultimately, reducing poverty requires increasing the incomes of the poor. If Longmont is to work toward achieving its *Focus on Longmont* vision of a sustainable community that balances economic, social and environmental needs while enhancing our legacy, then it is important to link low-income populations to economic opportunity. Communities cannot achieve economic well-being without generating and maintaining stable employment for individuals who are trying to move out of poverty.

Portland, Oregon, Burlington, Vermont, and South Bend, Indiana, are examples of three communities that have developed economic opportunity initiatives to help people generate sustainable incomes so they are able to meet their basic needs without having to rely on ongoing public or private assistance. Each of these community initiatives is highlighted below.

Portland, Oregon, launched its Economic Opportunity Initiative in 2004, when its long-held assumptions about helping people out of poverty proved to be inaccurate. According to Howard Cutler, Portland Development Commission, “One assumption has been that a strong local economy and new job creation would allow low-income residents to grab onto the ladder of prosperity; in reality, few of the poor benefited from the economic boom of the ‘90’s.”<sup>8</sup> Mr. Cutler went on to say that “affordable housing developments that were built [in Portland] to help provide a lasting buffer against poverty for residents proved to be too expensive for the very low-income populations most in need.”<sup>9</sup>

The Portland Bureau of Housing and Community Development now contracts with 34 community-based organizations in order to undertake work force and microenterprise projects for specific economic sectors and target populations. The initiative's goal is to increase the income and assets of low-income participants by at least 25 percent within three years of their enrollment, which

---

<sup>7</sup> The Bell Policy Center, “Gateways to Opportunity.” <http://www.thebell.org/node/35>, 51, 52

<sup>8</sup> Howard Cutler, “Charting a New Course in Portland,” National Housing Institute, Fall 2007, pages 1 - 2

<sup>9</sup> Ibid

the first group of participants has more than achieved. Each group of participants receives holistic support and customized training for a three-year period.

Snapshot of Portland's Model	Desired Project Outcomes	Target Group	Additional Benefits Provided	Public and/or Private Investment	Results	Lessons learned
<p>Work with small groups of participants who have a common bond and develop projects designed around their strengths and maximize peer support</p> <p>Offer support services to each participant to help remove barriers to sustainable employment and self-sufficiency</p> <p>Emphasize development of long term, mentor/coaching relationships</p> <p>Involve employers early in design of work force programs and curriculum</p> <p>Conduct ongoing quantitative and qualitative evaluations in a long term, comprehensive approach</p>	<p>Increase income by at least 25% over 3 years: Participants' income, or Businesses increase in gross revenue</p>	<p>People with incomes of &lt;50% area median income (AMI): Section 8 residents, homeless, high-risk youth</p> <p>Common needs among participants:</p> <p>Education: early childhood, skills training, affordable college</p> <p>Employment: transitional jobs, unionization, living wages, connecting poor with growth sectors of economy</p> <p>Income enhancements: Earned Income Tax Credit, federal and state benefits</p> <p>Affordable health care</p> <p>Affordable Housing: increase amount and level of affordability (i.e. more deeply subsidized)</p>	<p>Pro bono health care if not provided by job</p> <p>Pro bono legal assistance</p> <p>Below market loans and free banking services for micro-entrepreneurs</p> <p>Individual Development Accounts (IDAs) for all participants</p> <p>Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) assistance extensions for participants</p> <p>Credit repair assistance</p> <p>Clean up of traffic and petty crime records</p>	<p>\$6.9 million (CDBG) and 1.56 million (General Fund) for three-year period, including 4 FTE staff</p> <p>\$9,500 cost per successful graduate</p>	<p>202 successful graduates in 2008; 324 successful graduates in 2009</p> <p>Wages for adults grew by 33% from first placement</p> <p>21 start-up microenterprises tripled gross revenues; 32 existing microenterprises more than tripled their gross revenues</p>	<p>Need improved participant screenings</p> <p>Projects not used to three-year advancement</p> <p>Staff turnover results in losing bonds with participants</p> <p>Participant mobility</p> <p>Causes of one's poverty is multifaceted; so response should be also</p> <p>Genuine change takes time; some that were successful got stuck after the three year period</p> <p>Build on strengths of discrete populations</p> <p>Wealth creation paths differ; need spectrum of strategies</p> <p>Focus on long-term outcomes</p>

Burlington, Vermont, has implemented a “Working Bridges” initiative that is “designed to help businesses of all sizes hire, retain and advance low- to moderate-income employees and maximize the effectiveness of an economically diverse workforce. Burlington’s initial focus of its poverty reduction strategies was working with nonprofit and government agencies that serve low-income persons to improve their service delivery and outcomes. In the course of their work, it became increasingly clear that financial stability required job stability, and that if they did not expand their efforts to include businesses and employers, they would never be able to bring about real and lasting change. Workplaces that successfully employ economically diverse populations are the foundation for communities which are truly financially stable.”<sup>10</sup>

Snapshot of Burlington’s Working Bridges Model	Desired Project Outcomes	Target Group	Public and/or Private Investment	Results	Lessons learned
<p>Convened employers from manufacturing, construction, health care and hospitality sectors (sectors that hire lower-wage workers)</p> <p>Provided “Bridges out of Poverty” training sessions to set the foundation for organizational and systems change</p> <p>Participating employers developed a series of management and benefits changes to improve workforce attendance, retention, and advancement</p> <p>Successfully piloted an emergency loan program and shared an on-site resource coordinator to help employees meet basic needs</p>	<p>Employees with unmet human service needs are connected with resources while remaining at work</p> <p>Employees and management report improved attendance, retention, and financial stability</p> <p>Supervisors report less time spent addressing employee needs and see improved performance</p> <p>Information sharing and technical assistance are offered to other employers and community partners</p>	<p>Youth and adults- Assist youth and adults to attain the job skills, life skills, well-being and support they need to work</p> <p>Businesses that employ low/moderate income workers- Assist businesses to hire, retain and advance low to moderate income employees</p>	<p>Annual budget is \$125,000 which supports 1.75 FTE project director and Resource Coordinator</p> <p>Funding comes from private foundations, vocational rehabilitation, National Council of the Society for Human Resources Management, and from participating employers</p>	<p>Employer participation tripled within a two-year period. 71% of all employers are changing their policies and practices that affect lower wage workers</p> <p>75% of core group employers report improvement in one or more areas affecting their workforce</p> <p>Resource Coordinator has assisted 220 lower wage workers. 83% reported that they got the help they needed</p> <p>Ten employers are offering loan/savings programs in partnership with five financial institutions. Over 186 loans have been made, with a 95% repayment rate</p>	<p>Continue to offer Bridges out of Poverty training to area employers</p> <p>Be sure to involve the employers who most likely employ the target participants</p> <p>Employer forum for connecting, sharing, learning, trying new ideas and finding solutions</p> <p>Project would not be successful without a Project Director</p>

<sup>10</sup> “Community Impact in Action—Working Bridges Employer Workgroup Project,” United Way of Crittenden County, February 2009

South Bend (St. Joseph County), Indiana's path is similar to Burlington, Vermont. South Bend, too, became a "Bridges out of Poverty" community after the model first came to the South Bend area in 2004. Since then, more than 500 community members have been trained in the Bridges curriculum and about 75 people have been trained as Getting Ahead facilitators. The following describes how South Bend is expanding its Bridges model to create more job opportunities for Getting Ahead participants. This initiative is in its early stages of development, so there are no results to report at this time.

Getting Ahead provides people from generational poverty a process to explore the impact of poverty in their own lives and access the necessary resources to build a better life. However, almost every organization that offers "Getting Ahead" is confronted with the problem that Getting Ahead graduates face – where to get a job. South Bend's Bridges out of Poverty Initiative is now developing the "Future Story Project" – a comprehensive, integrated strategy that benefits both employees and employers.

The Future Story Project combines employment for people in poverty with both the Bridges out of Poverty educational platform and critical resources from community agencies that assist participants in becoming stable and productive employees. Employers receive support from an Employment Specialist and training in the Bridges concepts and Getting Ahead graduates will receive layers of support to stabilize their environment and build resources.<sup>11</sup>

Snapshot of The Future Story Project	Desired Project Outcomes	Target Group
<p>Based on the proven approaches of Cascade Engineering and Cincinnati Works (two employment centers that understand and use Bridges constructs in their hiring and employment practices; refer to Attachments 2 and 3 for more information about their programs)</p> <p>Hire an Employment Specialist to guide the project</p> <p>Recruit business partners who will hire "Getting Ahead" graduates and work on learning what it takes to move people to self-sufficiency. The businesses will: 1) pay \$8.50 an hour, 2) provide opportunities for advancement, 3) provide some benefits, 4) commit to mentoring/coaching, 5) hire 2 to 3 Getting Ahead graduates, 6) work with Employment Specialist, and 7) participate in evaluation, training and other learning opportunities.</p>	<p>Self-sufficiency for the participants and their families</p> <p>Business sector engaged in solving poverty</p>	<p>15 to 25 Getting Ahead graduates who are employment ready</p>

<sup>11</sup> "Future Story Project," St. Joseph County Bridges Initiative, August 2009

These are just a few examples of innovative approaches being implemented throughout the country that are demonstrating success in moving people from poverty to self-sufficiency. These approaches can be, and have been, replicated in different communities.

### **What Longmont has been Doing to Assist People in Poverty**

Longmont has long had a philosophy that the community should be assisting residents who are less fortunate and/or less able to care for themselves. Starting with the allocation of the City's federal revenue sharing funds to local human service agencies nearly 30 years ago and the qualification of Longmont as an entitlement community under the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program in 1985, the City has used its resources to serve low- and moderate-income persons. While the programs funded over the years were not necessarily designed under a formal poverty reduction initiative, they have served to meet a myriad of needs and have assisted a multitude of residents who live in poverty.

In preparing this paper and learning about what other communities are doing, staff was struck by how very much Longmont is doing in the area of increasing economic opportunities for people living in poverty – albeit without these programs operating under one philosophical umbrella. The following section reviews Longmont programs that are in place at this time that serve similar purposes to those presented in the previous discussion.

### Economic Development

**Free market research – LEGI Program** – Every business in Longmont is eligible to participate and to receive a combination of peer counseling, access to research data, data analysis, market analysis, plus competitive and industry intelligence. The initial interview, counseling, research data, and data analysis are free.

To date, more than 80 Longmont businesses have used this program.

**Small Business Loan Program - Direct Loan Assistance** – This program provides new and existing entrepreneurs with direct financial assistance to expand a business or start a new business venture, making them as successful as possible. The goal is to provide businesses with financial assistance to support the retention and creation of jobs for low- to moderate-income city residents. The program is designed to fill the financing gap between private debt financing and private equity. Funds are provided to create economic benefit through increased revenues and the creation and retention of jobs in the city.

To date, one loan for a new start-up business has been made, two others are under consideration, and one additional business has been referred for substantial technical assistance.

**Technical Assistance – Small Business Development Center of Boulder County** – Through a contract with the SBDC, technical assistance is available at minimal or no charge to Longmont entrepreneurs. Assistance can include preparation of a business plan, start-up essentials, business research, payroll and sales tax essentials, marketing plans, financial projections, confidential one-on-one consulting, etc.

In 2009, more than 60 Longmont business owners/entrepreneurs received assistance.

**Providers Advancing School Outcomes (PASO) Program** – This program provides assistance, education and training to low-income Latino child care providers who often are babysitting for friends, family and neighbors to better prepare the children under their care for school. The program's goal is to diminish and eventually eliminate the achievement gap between Latino and white students.

To date, 85 child care providers in Boulder County have passed through or currently are enrolled in PASO.

**Longmont Entrepreneurial Network (LEN)** – LEN is a nonprofit organization fostering economic growth and vitality through the support of entrepreneurship, innovation and technology. Launched in 2002, LEN is a business incubator that currently provides programs and services for entrepreneurs through its center in Longmont. LEN maintains a large network of advisors who volunteer their time to help entrepreneurs by providing business expertise ranging from concept development and business planning to operations and management.

13 former clients and 4 current clients have been assisted to date.

**Co-op kitchen (incubator) at Village Place** – The Longmont Housing Authority has opened its commercial kitchen in the Village Place apartments (located at 615 Main Street) to micro-entrepreneurs who are in the food service business and are ready and/or need to work in a commercial kitchen environment, but who cannot yet afford to rent or own their own space.

In 2009, 2 entrepreneurs have used/rented space. They include a burrito maker and a hot dog vendor.

### Education

**Digital Divide Program** – This program provides free Internet access through a partnership with the city's wireless Internet provider. Up to 260 free accounts will be made available to low-income families with school-age children so they can access the Internet at home and complete their homework assignments without having to go to a public access computer lab. About half of the assisted families

also received donated computers through a partnership between the City, the school district and the Jared Polis Foundation. The program was first offered to residents of assisted housing, Section 8 voucher holders and families at the Inn Between. We will be working with the school district in 2010 to further market the program.

Since December 2008, 98 families have received Internet accounts.

### Personal Finance

***Individual Development Account – matched savings program*** – This program allows low-income persons to save to buy a home, start or expand a business, or attend post-secondary education. For every dollar they save, the funds are matched with \$3 for business or education or \$4 for homeownership. Everyone is required to take free Financial Fitness classes, and separate free classes to support their savings goal are offered during their savings period.

To date, 1 Longmont household has met its business asset goal and 3 others are saving in this area;  
3 Longmont households have furthered their education and 2 others are saving in this area; and  
13 Longmont households have purchased a home and 6 others are saving in this area.

***Credit repair through Boulder County Housing Counseling Program*** – This program helps households get their credit reports and understand what the report says and helps them define what they need to do to repair their credit. Periodic check-ins can occur, and while it takes time, most do repair their credit enough to eventually own a home.

No data at this time; this is a subset of the homeownership training classes.

***Financial Fitness Classes*** – The Boulder County Housing Counseling Program (BCHCP) provides a series of classes including “Budgeting is not a Bad Word,” “Understanding Credit,” “Being a Savvy Consumer” (understanding consumer loans), and “Banking Services” (a type of Bank-On program).

More than 163 Longmont residents attended these classes in 2009.

***Counseling Services*** – One-on-one counseling is provided by BCHCP on both budgeting and credit issues to anyone who requests it.

20 Longmont residents received counseling in 2009.

**Earned Income Tax Credit** – This is a federal tax refund intended to offset the loss of income from payroll taxes owed by low-income working families. The EITC is a “refundable” tax credit, meaning working adults may receive the tax credit whether or not they owe any federal taxes. Colorado’s state EITC is not available for tax years 2002-2010. The City of Longmont participates in programs aimed at helping our residents receive this credit if they are eligible. This includes providing space and marketing for private firms to provide information and direct assistance to residents.

**Longmont’s C.O.P.E. (Citizen’s Option to Provide Energy) Program** – This program was established to provide direct emergency assistance to people in times of crisis. It is a cooperative agreement between the City and the OUR Center, Inc. Specifically, COPE helps area residents to pay past-due utility bills when all other resources are exhausted. Residents donate to the program with either a one-time payment or a monthly contribution added to their utility bill. No administrative funds are taken out of donated funds; 100% of contributions are used for utility bill payments. Customers requesting assistance from the OUR Center are screened to ensure that their need is critical.

\$28,958 was collected and distributed to 216 households in 2009.

## Housing

**Foreclosure Prevention Workshops and Individual Interventions** – The BCHCP provides both communitywide seminars on the foreclosure process and what a family can do to avoid it, as well as individual interventions to help those who are current but worried to those who are behind in their payments. Counselors work to try to salvage their situation, work with the financial institution, modify a loan and otherwise help the homeowners understand all the options available.

146 Longmont residents attended a workshop or received counseling in 2009.

## **Housing Rehabilitation Programs –**

**General Rehab** - Loan program to bring single-family owner-occupied homes up to code and make other needed modifications. Household must be at or below 80% of the area median income by family size. Maximum of \$25,000 per house. Priority is given to work to correct health and safety issues, code violations, make energy efficient improvements and then for general improvements.

Six families were assisted in 2009.

**Accessibility Program** - Completes needed removal of architectural barriers to owner or renter housing so that a disabled occupant can have free access to the property. Improvements can include ramps, widening of doorways, lowering of cabinets, roll-in shower stalls, etc. Assistance up to \$10,000 per home. Households must be below 80% of the area median income by family size with a priority given to households at or below 50% of the area median.

Six families had their homes made accessible in 2009; 30% had incomes below 30% of AMI (poverty level).

**Emergency Grant Program** - Makes emergency repairs to major systems (furnace, roof, electrical) that have recently failed and threaten the health or safety of the owner-occupied household. Maximum of \$2,500 per house, as a grant, is available to households at or below 50% of the AMI by family size.

In 2009, 19 emergency grants were made to replace heating systems, water heaters and failed electrical systems. 63% had incomes at or below 30% of the AMI (poverty level).

**Paint-A-Thon Program** – Paints the exteriors of homes owner-occupied by very low-income elderly persons (persons living in poverty). The home is assessed, lead-based paint testing and remediation are done (if needed), and the paint is purchased and supplied. Community volunteers paint the homes. Program is run in partnership with the Senior Center.

Two homes were painted in 2009 – all with incomes below poverty.

**Rent Deposit for Persons with Disabilities** - Funds are used to pay security deposits and/or first/last months' rent for persons with disabilities so that they can live as independently as possible. Often they are lacking only this one piece of assistance to be able to live independently. Funds are loaned and when the person moves, the deposit is returned to the program to help another person.

8 disabled persons received assistance in 2009.

**Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program** - Federal grant directly to public housing authorities. Provides rental assistance vouchers so that income-qualifying persons or households with very low incomes pay no more than 30% of their income for rent. The household pays its share to the landlord, and the housing authority pays the rest of the rent (up to a predetermined "fair market" rent set by HUD) directly to the participating landlord.

The Longmont Housing Authority will receive \$4 million in 2010 and will provide approximately 490 vouchers. Virtually all of these vouchers will be

issued in and used in Longmont. Another 300 to 400 voucher holders are living in Longmont with vouchers issued by the Boulder County and City of Boulder housing authorities.

**Rental Rehabilitation Program** - The goal of the Rental Rehabilitation Program is to assist owners of existing rental property in preserving the supply of decent, safe, sanitary, rental housing for occupancy by lower income persons or families. This program provides the rental property owners with a financial tool to maintain the safety and integrity of their property. At a minimum, the rental property must be brought into compliance with applicable state and local codes, rehabilitation standards, local ordinances, Section 8 Housing Quality Standards, and zoning ordinances, and must be occupied by income-eligible renter households at the beginning and completion of the rehabilitation and through the applicable effective period of affordability. Very low interest loans will be made and funds must be matched with private funds.

9 total loans made to date with 31 units rehabilitated and made affordable for households at or below 50% AMI.

### Children

**Longmont Head Start (Wild Plum Center)** - Provides comprehensive school readiness program, including language development skills, cognitive skill building, social/emotional skills, physical development, and educational skills such as letter, number, and color recognition, to low-income preschool children. Their families receive nutrition education, mental health services, and health services referrals.

64 children and their families received assistance directly from the City of Longmont and other local funders. (An additional 166 children and their families are served through federal funding.)

**Child Care Certificate Program** – The City reimburses child-care providers the gap between the Colorado Child Care Assistance Program rates and the average market rate for providing child care to eligible low-income children and their families.

336 low-income children accessed quality early care and education services through this program.

**Bright EYES** – This community-based initiative operates the Mayor’s Book Club program to help low-income children (3 – 4 years of age who do not have access to quality early care and education opportunities) develop a love for reading and learning at an early age. Each child who enrolls in this program receives a backpack, t-shirt, a special Mayor’s Book Club library card, and one book every month for one year.

Currently, 466 total participants are enrolled in this program.

## Job Training

### ***Workforce Boulder County (WfBC) programs -***

- **Business Service Solutions** - Provides training to incumbent workers at Boulder County businesses that represent the technology, manufacturing, healthcare, and energy industries.
- **Northern Health Care Consortium** - To fill healthcare openings that are facing critical shortages, to provide opportunities for employees in low-skilled positions to advance to higher-skilled positions within their organizations, to provide non-native speakers of English with opportunities for advancement within the healthcare field, and to increase access to education and training for low- to moderate-wage employees through employer-sponsored training.
- **Summer Employment and Enterprise Development (S.E.E.D.)** - This project seeks to grow the workforce of the future by increasing employment opportunities for young adults (ages 16 to 21) in Boulder County. Opportunities are created by businesses investing a \$1,000 work scholarship to either host an internship at their work site or to provide a gift scholarship for an internship to be hosted at a nonprofit or business that cannot afford the scholarship. WfBC in turn recruits, screens, and delivers specialized work preparedness training to the young adults who apply for a S.E.E.D. internship. Also, WfBC handles the payroll, covers the workers' compensation insurance, and provides follow-along support for the employer and the intern.
- **Boulder Bridge** - Provides literacy and skill development, employability skills, and job placement services to the ex-offender population.
- **Bridges to the Future** - Provides intensive academic, career awareness, personal development, leadership activities, and college preparatory classes to non-native speakers of English, first generation college students, and low socioeconomic status young adults. In addition, this project provides education and referral services to parents of participating youth. These services include assisting with access to social services and linkages with other human service agencies in the region.
- **HIRE Colorado** – Short-term work project for people who have been unemployed for a period of time.

## Homeless

***Housing First Programs*** - Housing First programs put homeless persons and families into housing before they deal with the issues that led to their homelessness. Housing First programs include 24/7 case management to help the homeless prepare and work on an improvement plan that will deal with whatever issues led them into homelessness. The Housing First Programs include the Rent Deposit program, the Tenant-Based Rental Assistance (TBRA) program, the Briarwood Apartments and other financing mechanisms that allow us to marry case management with housing for the homeless.

**Tenant Based Rental Assistance Program** - Provides rent assistance similar to the Housing Choice Voucher Program but to families who are chronically homeless and living on the street, in transitional housing, or in shelters. Chronically homeless means that they have had three or more incidents of homelessness in the past year, and/or have been dually diagnosed with mental illness or alcohol/drug addictions. The City provides funding for this “Housing First” program to the Longmont Housing Authority to administer it.

25 persons in 8 households were placed in housing in November 2009, and 2 more households are pending lease up. These folks will be assisted in 2010-2011. 30 families were assisted in previous years, all of whom moved into a permanent housing situation.

**Rent Deposit Assistance for the Homeless** - Funds are used to pay security deposits and/or first/last months’ rent for persons who are working, but homeless. They often are unable to save a deposit because of routine living expenses. Funds are loaned but when the person moves, they may be allowed to use it for the deposit at their next home.

4 homeless persons received assistance in 2009, 31 since 2007 when the program began.

**Briarwood Apartments** – The Briarwood Apartments’ 10 housing units are master leased by the Longmont Housing Authority to five local agencies that serve the homeless and that put their homeless clients into the units and provide case management for those individuals.

58 persons were housed in 2009. 66 persons were assisted from October 2007 through 2008.

**Sheltering Services** – Nighttime sheltering services are provided in Longmont in a couple of different ways:

**Boulder Shelter** – Operates every night from October to April. About 1,000 people (Boulder County) were sheltered in 2009 resulting in 37,000 bed nights and 80,000 hot meals served.

**Warming Centers** - Two centers provide emergency weather-related shelter when the weather is wet and at or below 30° or dry and at or below 20°.

- Christian Outreach and Emergency Sheltering (CORES) – Operated by the faith community, several churches shelter the homeless in their sanctuaries or other facilities. Volunteers provide supervision.
- The OUR Center’s Warming Center – 74 unduplicated individuals sheltered, open 46 nights through December 22 in 2009.

**Street Outreach** – Homeless Outreach Providing Encouragement (HOPE) provided year-round outreach in 2009 and missed no nights, as well as provided 474 transports to the Addictions Recovery Center, emergency shelters, hospitals and medical and dental appointments. HOPE offers after-hours basic needs emergency supplies such as food, clothing, boots, sleeping bags, prescriptions, showers and laundry vouchers, as well as emergency motel vouchers, bus tickets and limited transitional housing.

488 unduplicated persons were seen.

**Day Shelter** – Opened by the OUR Center in 2005 to give homeless persons a place to go during the day to look for work, stay out of trouble, and access services. Provides emergency food, showers, laundry, personal care items, clothing, prescriptions, glasses, tents, sleeping bags, backpacks, towels, identification and birth certificates, health screenings, job training and placement, housing and a place to get mail and voice messages.

More than 347 unduplicated persons were assisted in 2009.

**Benefits Coordinator** – The City will be contracting with the OUR Center to provide a part-time benefits coordinator to help those who come to the Warming Centers to access the resources and benefits to which they may be entitled.

This program began in January 2010.

**Mental Health Services** - Contract for mental health service provider to assist homeless individuals who come to the warming centers or day shelter and have chronic mental illness.

This program will start in 2010.

**Salud Clinic screenings** – Salud partners with the Day Shelter to provide health services to Day Shelter clients who would not otherwise be able to receive health screenings. They check blood pressure; perform blood, diabetes and TB screenings; and provide inoculations and immunizations. Follow-up at Salud is provided where needed. They have found persons who had potential heart problems, diabetes issues, etc., and have been able to get them into treatment. Salud goes to the Day Shelter every six weeks and sees an average of 58 persons each time.

Approximately 464 persons received health screenings in 2009.

#### Miscellaneous Programs/Services

**Mental Health Services** – Contracted for mental health services that cannot be provided by the Mental Health Center of Boulder and Broomfield Counties. The

services are provided to the recipients of the Housing First and the Substandard Housing Programs.

13 Substandard Housing clients assisted to date and 16 Housing First clients assisted to date.

### **Opportunities for Creating a Longmont Poverty Reduction Initiative**

The issues that impact people living in poverty are complex, as is the task of determining how to develop a more effective service delivery system that can reduce poverty among Longmont residents. As presented in this paper, other communities across the country have approached this task by breaking the issue into discrete challenges or building on existing programs in order to make measurable progress in reducing poverty. Issues most frequently tackled in this manner by other communities include asset or wealth building, health, workforce development, literacy, and early childhood education.

Another option for approaching anti-poverty efforts is selecting a specific population group or neighborhood with pressing needs. Some communities have identified vulnerable populations in need of particular attention, including children, immigrants, the elderly and people with disabilities. Other communities have focused their attention on a specific geographic area such as a Neighborhood Revitalization Area. This approach could allow Longmont to coordinate several programs and multiple resources and take a more comprehensive and intensive approach within the Midtown Neighborhood Revitalization Area. As shown in the maps in Attachment 1, midtown has a high proportion of households in poverty and female heads of household with children.

Since the City is not in a financial position to increase funding for local poverty reduction efforts at this time, it appears that if Council wants to start an anti-poverty initiative, it will need to allocate existing funding (primarily CDBG and human service agency funds) in a different way or at least with a different purpose in mind. Please keep in mind that many communities have millions of dollars in CDBG funding, have other federal funding to access such as Community Service Block Grants and homeless (McKinney Act) funding, and are direct recipients of state funding that goes to the counties in Colorado. The City of Longmont receives about \$545,000 in CDBG funding each year and has between \$900,000 and \$950,000 for human service agency funding.

### ***Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Funding -***

Over the past two years (2009 and 2010) the City's CDBG funding has been allocated with one-third going to Neighborhood Revitalization in Midtown (about \$141,000), one-third to economic development programs (about \$146,000) primarily to fund the Small Business Revolving Loan Fund, and one-third for housing activities (about \$180,000). This last one-third includes ongoing support for the Boulder County Housing Counseling Program, some of whose programs would be a critical part of an anti-poverty initiative (financial literacy classes, one-

on-one budgeting and counseling, foreclosure prevention counseling, etc.). It also supports housing rehabilitation programs, including making homes (both owner and rental) accessible for persons with disabilities (most have incomes at or below 30% of AMI), providing emergency grants to extremely low-income homeowners who are living in poverty, and painting the homes of elderly persons who are living in poverty. While HOME funds could be used for some of these, because of the restrictive rules and regulations under that program, most would have to be shifted to the Affordable Housing Fund (AHF). While rehab has been funded from the AHF, the City tries to use those funds for creating and providing new affordable housing options and housing stock instead of just repairing existing affordable housing.

Using CDBG funding for what is called “public service activities” is limited to no more than 15% of our grant (approximately \$81,000). Most anti-poverty initiatives, strategies, and programs would fall under this category. Therefore, we are either further limited in the amount of funding that can be used for this purpose, or we must create what are called “community-based development organizations” (CBDOs). A CDBG regulation allows CBDOs to carry out public service activities without counting against the public service cap of 15%. CBDOs are very narrowly focused organizations, however, and we currently have none in Longmont.

#### ***Community-based Development Organizations –***

CBDOs are associations or corporations organized under state or local law to do community development activities. For entitlement communities, they must operate within an identified geographic area within a jurisdiction and have as their primary purpose to improve the physical, economic or social environment, with particular emphasis on the needs of low- and moderate-income persons.

CBDOs can be nonprofit or for-profit organizations, and 51% of the membership of the governing body must be any combination of the following:

- Low- or moderate-income residents of its area of operation;
- Owners or senior officers of private establishments and other institutions located in and serving its geographic area of operation; or
- Representatives of low- and moderate-income neighborhood organizations located in its geographic area of operation.

A CBDO cannot be an agency of the city/jurisdiction; it can be a CHDO (community housing development organization) with a geographical area of no more than one neighborhood.

#### ***Human Service Agency Funding -***

Human service agency funding has been used in the past to support the ongoing administration and operations of approximately 30 to 35 local nonprofit human

service agencies. These funds now are allocated in the following categories of need:

- Aiding People in Crisis – providing immediate services for people in emergency or acute situations.
- Enhancing Community Climate and Support – enhancing the community’s capacity to assist those in need and ensure that all residents have full access to services and resources.
- Providing Healthcare – providing education, prevention and treatment services and programs that sustain physical and mental well-being.
- Strengthening Children, Youth and Families – providing services and programs that promote and meet the developmental needs of children and youth.
- Supporting Work and Independence – providing services and programs that promote and maintain self-sufficiency for adults.

Local agencies rely on this funding as part of their ongoing operations, and a change to be more directive with what we choose to fund could greatly impact the ability of some of these agencies to sustain their operations.

### **Questions for Discussion**

*Focus on Longmont* outlines a vision for Longmont’s sustainable future as a great place to live and work, and a strategic road map for our City organization to provide municipal services that support a healthy, balanced community whose economic, environmental and social needs are met. Longmont’s vision as a sustainable community includes not only a healthy environment, vibrant downtown, strong retail and economy, vibrant cultural and entertainment, but also prosperity and opportunities for all people to reach their potential.

While the task of creating and sustaining opportunities to help Longmont residents move from poverty to prosperity is not something that the City can do entirely on its own, the National League of Cities suggests that municipalities do have certain capacities that allow them to address poverty-related issues in creative ways. “At a minimum, cities are uniquely able to promote collaboration among key stakeholders, leverage public and private resources, and ensure that poverty receives sustained attention within municipal government and throughout the community. We have also seen many cities go much further in their efforts to reduce poverty among their residents, by realigning funding, resources and/or systems that help people achieve self-sufficiency.”<sup>12</sup>

As outlined in this paper, the Longmont community does, indeed, offer many programs and services to assist people who are living in poverty. The overarching question for City Council to discuss is “Should we stay the course in our efforts to address poverty, or should we consider different strategies to

---

<sup>12</sup> Sara Bainton Kahn and others, “Combating Poverty: Emerging Strategies from the Nation’s Cities,” National League of Cities, 2007, page 1

reduce poverty among Longmont residents?” Staff hopes that information presented in this paper will help launch Council’s discussion of this question and to, ultimately, provide direction to staff about whether Council wishes to:

1. Continue our programs and emphasis as-is, knowing that most are geared to alleviating poverty rather than truly helping people move out of poverty. The City will continue supporting a broad base of nonprofit human service agencies that address a wide range of human service needs.
2. Realign existing resources in a more concentrated focus on anti-poverty programming—still communitywide but based on a local analysis of need. This means that the City will be more directive in its nonprofit agency funding and likely will fund specific projects based on local needs analysis rather than fund general agency operations. This likely will mean that several agencies that currently receive City of Longmont funding will no longer receive it.
3. Focus new or targeted anti-poverty efforts on a specific population or in a specific geographic area (neighborhood) using a “pilot program” approach. This also will mean that the City will realign its resources and be more directive in allocating its nonprofit agency and CDBG funding; several agencies that currently receive City of Longmont funding will no longer receive it, and current CDBG funding priorities probably will shift.
4. Completely overhaul the existing system and programs and create a systemic change in service funding and delivery as part of a specific, to-be-determined anti-poverty strategy.

If Council determines that it wishes for staff to pursue systematic changes in our efforts to address poverty, there would certainly need to be more staff research conducted and communitywide involvement to develop a community-supported poverty reduction strategy that would be effective for Longmont.

### **Attachments**

1. Longmont maps showing poverty comparisons by Block Groups
2. Bridging the Cultures of Business and Poverty—Welfare to Career at Cascade Engineering, Inc.
3. Cincinnati Works model
4. Information on the Self-Sufficiency Standard (pages 5, 42, 43, and 46)