

## **Vermont Child Poverty Council**

Public Forum Roundtable Discussion  
Questions and Answers  
Windham County, Bellows Falls  
October 30, 2007

### **What circumstances put Vermonters in poverty and what barriers keep them there?**

- Minimum wages
- Cost of living heat, cost of housing, lack of access to affordable health care
- Transportation
- Job insecurity
- Child care not available and not affordable
- Not enough good paying jobs
- Mental health services help not readily available
- Dental health
- Domestic violence, alcoholism/drug abuse, gambling
- Negative stereotype-hide your need for help
- Self-esteem
- Difficult access to health care
- Low wages
- Disability and unaffordable health care
- Lack of affordable housing
- Transportation, lack of
- Predatory lending \lack of child care, affordable and reliable
- High cost of fuel oil and gas
- Access to training and education opportunities
- Addiction
- Mental illness
- Self-esteem, empowerment
- Divorce – child support
- Cost of housing
- Cost of heating
- Transportation – gas
- Children’s needs – school clothing and supplies – lack of affordable child care and available off hours
- Livable wages – obtainable
- Lack of education and training
- Disabilities
- Domestic violence
- Lack of hope
- Lack of living wage

- Single parenthood
- Disabled dependents
- Insufficient affordable housing
- Lack of education and training
- Transportation barriers (lack of adequate public trans. and operational/dependable vehicle)
- Culture of hopelessness, high cost of living
- Housing, lack of
- Lack of transportation
- Lack of information re services
- Catastrophic events
- Low wages/no livable wage
- Lack of affordable/quality child care
- Education
- Mental illness
- Health care
- Substance abuse
- Teen pregnancy
- Social stigma
- Lack of support systems
- Generational poverty
- Lack of opportunity
- Low wages
- Medical crisis
- Lack of housing, domestic violence
- Substance abuse
- Single parenthood
- No health insurance
- No housing
- Lack of child care
- Lack of transportation
- System – punitive invisibility
- Limited opportunity
- Low expectations
- Hopelessness
- Lack of education
- Generational poverty

## What do you think would help Vermonters move out of poverty?

- Livable wages
- Health plans with benefits
- Asset building strategies
- More child care and subsidies
- Affordable, safe, quality housing
- Alternative education programs
- Removing “cliff”, easing people off benefits
- Job skills, job readiness
- Transportation – new innovative plans
- No % loans – revolving loans
- Build resiliency
- Professional follow-up to interventions
- Graduated transition off benefits
- Benefit-income level cutoffs that are higher than current levels
- Adult vision and dental are benefits
- Earned income credit
- Building community connections and mentoring programs
- Encouraging children and adults to build assets (family self-sufficiency programs)
- Financial literacy
- Educational opportunity
- Strengthening communities
- Life skills knowledge/skills
- Support – case mgmt./mentoring
- Focus on empowering young women
- Economic development
- Livable wage jobs
- Support for cooperative living
- Livable wage jobs with benefits
- Affordable housing
- Universal health care
- Education and training to meet needs of labor market
- Developing an employer-friendly environment
- Adequate supports for people who are working – job retention – longer
- Transitional period for benefits
- Adequate transportation
- Adequate child care – affordable
- Access to education
- Transportation
- Affordable child care
- Hopelessness, everyday crisis
- Good paying jobs

- Livable wage
- A greater cultural understanding
- Affordable housing support for children in education system
- Increasing rate of HS> grads
- Better advertising of services to help families, children and their needs
- Mentoring programs for children
- Higher wages
- Affordable child care
- Health care
- Affordable sustainable housing
- Education accessibility
- Job creation
- VT tradition of self-reliance
- Financial literacy skills
- Transitional subsidy for people coming off Reach Up etc...
- More section 8 vouchers
- Life skills training for ages 6 up
- Family planning services
- Child support

**What is your vision for Vermont, without children living in poverty?**

- Children come to school nourished and ready to learn
- Cost of living affordable
- Good jobs with livable wages
- Children would have a sense of hope for their future
- Equal access to health care for all
- Tax incentives to help people, environment, etc.
- No hunger
- Families/children with positive self-esteem
- Friendly, safe environment
- No violence
- Parents with good parenting skills
- Support diversity
- No illiteracy
- This would be the last year we would have to talk about this
- Children would be; happy, healthy, self-confident, able to accomplish more, reach full potential, resilient
- More young people would stay in VT
- Would attract people to live here
- Children who don't live in poverty will have children who don't live in poverty

- More cultural awareness and diversity through out the state, healthy kids with teeth
- Parents with teeth
- All kids graduate from high school
- All kids have vision/hope for future
- Money for college instead of Blackwater
- Turning the curve on child abuse
- Young single moms indicators related to child poverty
- Homeless is rare occurrence
- Families live in safe homes
- Safe schools focused on education, instead of hunger, violence, no housing, parenting classes
- All kids have caring relationship with adult
- Children feel valued and supported by community
- No hungry children
- Community support that meets people's needs and eliminated isolation
- Communities together with schools teach all children civic responsibility
- Healthy food that is affordable and available for everyone
- Adequate, safe housing
- Access to healthy nutrition
- Adequate clothing
- Education beginning preschool, access to extracurricular activities
- Freedom from fear
- A healthy balance of parents', job demands and family life
- Quality, affordable health care which includes continuity of primary care and access to dentists, mental health providers
- Equal access to support of their individual development needs
- No unwanted children
- Children ready and able to learn
- Healthy brain development
- Support for all who needs it
- Happy healthy children
- Parent education
- No US dropouts
- Stronger voc. tech, education
- Better lifestyles/choices
- Solid career dev.
- Better sense of civic responsibility
- No abusive homes
- Vibrant artistic community
- All resources are known and accessed
- Strong supportive communities

**What other thoughts, ideas, questions, or suggestions would you like to share with the Council?**

- Support for early education programs – Headstart
- Assistance for telephones
- Resources for children’s school clothes supplies
- Tiered motivational supports
- Come up with tangible action steps
- Encourage more dialogue with low income people
- Consumer protection for low income people
- Remember that whole community is responsible for children
- Stronger collaboration and less duplication of effort
- Educate Vermonters about poverty
- Use arts to communicate i.e. Music, anti-poverty message
- Legislators engage in poverty simulation
- Building interagency connections
- Culture change regarding money
- Poverty is everyone’s problem
- How can VT influence federal policy
- Engage voters
- Raise minimum wage
- What can we do to help everyone get out of poverty
- Education around poverty similar to other education programs to help change attitudes about/toward poverty
- ADHD – mental health issues in general
- Reach out to dept. of corrections helping return to the community
- Higher education is very expensive, young people are in debt before they begin
- Federal budget priorities – cuts to housing/children
- Single payer health care
- Incentives and requirements for creating and retaining mixed income neighborhoods
- State section 8 programs
- Encourage landlords to create accessible apts.
- Flexibility – don’t be so prescriptive
- We are in the wrong war
- What works in Chittenden might not work in Brattleboro
- Study what works, what programs are cooking
- Build greater life-long learning opportunities
- This will not be cost-neutral