

Vermont Child Poverty Council

Public Forum Roundtable Discussion
Questions and Answers
Essex County, Island Pond
November 1, 2007

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

- Lack of a sense of hope; relevance of education
- Segregation/shame
- Why bother getting education when only job is minimum wage
- Location/rural areas
- Lack of jobs/opportunities
- Lack of livable wage
- Health issues
- Need connection to jobs
- Mandates – state disincentives to work
- Domestic violence (leads to depression, employment, child care issues)
- When you get a leg up, food stamps taken away
- Lack of transportation for sports/other activities
- Appreciation for education-rationales
- Generational poverty – vision only as big as backyard
- Kids don't see connection between education and employment
- School quality standards – towns can't afford new teachers/courses
- Can't afford language teachers, tech ed.
- By 8th grade kids aren't exposed enough to diversity of experience
- High school bigger but too late
- Students who succeed leave the State of Vermont town would benefit from those graduates who have incentive to stay
- Mentoring needed – fill the gap (positive role model)
- Job market nationwide changed – no such thing as good factory job – persistent myth
- Colleges not geared toward working adult population – not flexible schedule – distance
- CCV courses not offered at all campus
- Decline in parents going to get their GED
- See dead-end (parents)
- Teen pregnancy and parenting
- What does it mean to be a parent
- State regs; penalize student/parent for getting job
- Equal access/support for all families/remove segregation
- "Turf" issues in some places
- Travel time takes time away from services

- Drug and alcohol (also leads to domestic violence)
- Lack of drug and alcohol interventions
- Student drug/alcohol abuse
- Get into communities
- Support in communities for the services
- Communities who are going the extra mile and taking it all on and succeeding are left to their own devices and don't get support from State of Vermont
- State deal for Verizon, etc. broadband doesn't reach this community and won't
- Agencies do hardest work 1st and get the gravy last
- No sense of outside world
- AHS bureaucracy
- "If you're not at the table, you're on the menu"

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

- Empowerment
- Ombuds office
- Holistic--the Canaan way--different organizations support each other and share resources
- Lose egos/no turf wars – focus on kids
- Teen center – give kids hope and a break from bad home life
- Collaboration – share skills
- Churches/mental health, etc.
- School play large role
- Support group for women? AA
- Flexibility
- Mental illness and drug, alcohol interventions
- Contract state money directly to NEKCA
- Review DOE/AHS arrangement
- Tailor approach to location (Essex Co.)
- State contracts should include deliverables
- Next generation legislation for all students
- Economic development
- Empower parents to help themselves
- Don't punish people when they get job – gradual weaning
- Job training and connection to community
- Connect to resources
- Affordable daycare
- Allow kids to work and don't punish entire family
- Don't force kids to leave
- Sense of inclusiveness

- Sense of community
- Sense of hope and aspiration
- Jobs/incomes
- Let them know what's out there, big cities, examples, museums
- Role models
- Education schools/Headstart = choices
- Self-esteem
- Food
- Employment = livable wage