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

- Interrupted education
- Domestic Violence
- Low self esteem
- Loss of jobs and lack of variety of jobs
- Cost escalations – increase of housing costs, energy, food
- Generational poverty
- New catastrophic, divorce, medical
- Substance abuse
- Transportation
- Child care
- Mental health and substance abuse treatment
- “safety net”
- Lifetime section 8
- Flexible education system
- Lack of life skills
- Generational poverty
- No “alternatives”
- Low wage jobs with limited advancement
- “Cliffs”
- Mental health
- Fear
- Stigmas
- Hard choices “what to give up”
- Fuel, home, auto
- Time
- Education
- Costs of transportation (auto)
- Limited public transportation not family friendly
- High service costs
- Lack of education
- Kids pushed out of homes with no extended family care
- Lack of money and resources
- Economic downturn
• Cost of everything; heat, utilities, rent, fuel, mortgage, transportation, child care
• Domestic Violence – fleeing, divorce, disability – pick a “D” word (depression, doubt, dismay, despair)
• Education system “writes off” low income kids
• Low parental involvement, parents don’t know how or have time to advocate
• No other resources for care/living situations
• Low wage jobs, no jobs (that fit), lack of entry to jobs (closed doors)
• Co-pays for all services that require them
• Inflexibility within programs or systems need exceptions
• Programs are problem focused rather than strength based
• Low wages
• Job security
• Housing costs
• Lack of education
• Generational poverty
• Hopelessness
• Child care costs
• Transportation barriers
• Inconstant political leadership
• Stigma of poverty
• Illness, lack of health care
• Mental illness
• Domestic violence
• Situational event (loss of job, Domestic Violence)
• Lack of communication
• Inequality between actual wages and cost of living
• Lack of education
• Citizenship, requirement
• Income guidelines for various programs (similar to situation one panel member spoke of)
• Distribution of wealth in our society
• Lack of education
• Medical emergency or another emergency
• Lack of jobs that pay a livable wage
• Mental health issues (unaddressed)
• Providing child care for their children
• Lack of vision of what success looks like
• Substance abuse
• Transportation – the rural area
• Expensive life costs, gas, house
• Domestic abuse
• Health insurance issues, including being underinsured
• Choosing between working and benefits
• Lack of communication –lack of supportive relationships that help move toward success
• Fear of the unknown
• Not wanting to get “help”
• Lack of relationships from the helping agencies
• Not enough transition time from assistance to work with benefits
• Substance abuse of any kind
• Lack of relationships for - children and adults
• Geographic isolation
• Lack of treatment options
• Lack of opportunity
• People isolate

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

• Education –career plan
• Systems--flexibility/push the rules…need to listen to story
• Graduated support to eliminate cliffs
• Save – affordable housing
• Job skill building – readiness
• High school tech training
• Alternative education
• Drug treatment
• Transition housing  DOC, youth, families, MH
• Non-categorical case management
• Transportation – public
• Minimum wage, livable wage
• MH – SVCS
• Budgeting classes
• Education
• Parenting skills, support
• Good government
• Pathways to employment which are skill-specific--specific steps to health care, job
• Transitional services
• Reduce “cliffs”
• Job skills training
• One-on-one budget counseling
• Career/education counseling
• “No wrong door” navigator
• Interagency communication
- Make 360 grant work
- Universal education
- Training
- Job skills
- Guaranteed annual income
- College tuition for every Vt. youth
- Support systems (teen-parent program)
- Mentoring
- Wrap-around support system
- Service coordination
- Navigation
- Transportation (upkeep)
- Affordable housing
- Substance/mental health counseling
- Livable wage jobs
- Health insurance
- Adequate affordable quality child care
- Money
- Jobs that pay better/livable wage
- Creative flexibility within programs/systems
- Decent, affordable housing (built by prisoners and moved off site)
- More work camps (Charlotte says so), fewer jails
- More and more creative transitional services for: youth coming out of custody, people coming out of incarceration, people coming off public assistance, people coming out of residential TX
- Greater availability of nontraditional educational services when and where people can access them
- Greater access to college for low income and working class
- More affordable insurance to address health – improve access issues
- Assist people to fill out forms and make them simpler and less numerous
- Universal health care
- Livable wage
- Subsidized child care
- Get rid of benefit “cliffs”
- Longer transition periods
- Having mentors to goals
- Having success at school
- Avoiding interruptions in schools
- Higher education
- Affordable housing
- Mental health--accessible
- Supports during transitions – including incentives
- Helping families celebrate their success
- Changing how we look at poverty--a community issue
- Redistribute the wealth

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

- Health and mental health, dental, vision, parental support
- Enough housing –choice
- Poverty council does not have a job
- Mentors
- Connections before crisis/fall
- Multiple type of jobs and way to get there
- Economic development
- Education
- Social capital happens
- Every person has a mentor/connection
- Full belly
- Social services aren’t so black and white (e.g. flexibility in rules)
- Enough child care
- Health care – providers
- Being able to meet “your” needs
- Children are provided with more than just essentials
- Social and educational equality
- Affordable extracurricular/recreation opportunities
- Livable wages for everyone
- SSDI – adequate support for those on disability
- Affordable, adequate child care when needed, as needed
- That kids can be carefree kids
- That children are safe and hopeful
- That kids aren’t hungry
- Safe homes for kids
- Stable adults as role models
- That children have a sense of their future, hope to realize their dreams
- Generational upward mobility
- Every child receiving the same and best opportunities that our system/community can offer
- High expectations for all children alike
- Love (healthy) attention
- Happy kids that can pay attention because they aren’t hungry and other kids aren’t making fun of them and they have a vision, or a number of visions for who they are and what they will be doing when they grow up
- People feel like they have choices
- People can set and attain goals
- People have fun and enjoy life
- Don’t have to worry about the day-to-day struggles
• Keep the good public assets, SCHIP, public schools
• Public policies well coordinated and integrated in order to solve problems rather than create them
• Children allowed to be children (as panel member states)
• Basic needs are a right, food, housing, heat
• Children believe there is a future
• Access to services year-round, not just during the school year
• Children are a witness to positive familial relationships
• Children are able to spend time, recreation, vacations with their parents
• Families and community thrive
• People believe in themselves
• Prevention happens
• Sufficient funds to live
• Children are active, engaged, cared for and loved
• Services are adequate – no waiting lists
• Everyone has friends/supports
• Equal access to home, food, job, health education, relationships
• Less stress

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

• Please fix teen – parent education
• Increase funding for collaboration
• Higher education more affordable
• Focus on prevention
• Build more flexibility into social prog.
• VSAC career developer in every school
• Need action
• Listen to the people
• Be creative – allow experiment
• State review contracts, outsource
• Better customer service in government
• Program stability
• Give programs time to work
• Client-oriented services
• Rethink how we measure success
• That poverty is visible
• More emphasis on prevention
• Creativity in solving issues
• Realizing the goals of the AHS reorganization
• Community awareness and changing attitudes toward poverty
- Assistance for “start-up” costs of living
- Council needs concrete suggestion
- Participation of folks receiving benefit/services on the council
- Grow mentoring programs for all age groups – fund longer
- Incorporate more service learning into schools, help all kids feel more connected to community
- Kids need more transitional supported housing that teach life skills
- People in positions of leadership cultivating an attitude/atmosphere of giving/volunteerism
- People stop blaming poor people for being poor
- Tap resources of aging population to mentor, teach, care
- What will happen with this information?
- What is the next step?
- Mission/charge of council
- The issues of poverty are larger than those who are in poverty – it is bigger – it affects more and it is also widening
- Income gap is widening – even in the kingdom (second homes for example) and large homes
- Invite at least 2 parent representatives to join the council to provide the “rubber hits the road’ perspective to any initiatives for potential solutions by them before implementing them
- Find other ways to gather information from those in poverty to assist in planning – find ways to gather their perspective