

A CHALLENGE TO BRING ECONOMIC PROSPERITY
and hope to every citizen.

DULUTH'S
blueprint
to end poverty

REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY



POVERTY IS A DAILY REALITY FOR OUR NEIGHBORS



Jessica* is a single mother living here in Duluth. She earns \$11.65 per hour at her job. She works 40 hours a week, but the money doesn't seem to pay all the bills. Jessica can't afford to pay into her employer's healthcare plan, so she and her 11 year-old son, go without health insurance coverage.

The minimum wage in this region is \$6.15 per hour. A couple with two children would have to work 133 hours (combined) to meet basic needs.

She doesn't have reliable transportation, so the mechanic's bills for the car she owns constantly nickel-and-dime her. Jessica currently pays \$550 a month for rent, which doesn't include utilities. Her winter fuel bill alone can raise the rent an additional \$400 a month. Jessica and her son are caught in a catch-22. The family income is too high to qualify for government assistance, yet Jessica often needs to pick up a second job when money gets tight. She is caught in the crevice between poverty and stability. *Struggling* is the word she uses to describe her family.

The numbers tell it all

- Nearly one in three people (31%) who live in Duluth struggle to get by on a daily basis.
- Of those, 12,600 meet the federal definition of poverty—which is \$20,650 for a family of 4.
- Another 14,500 are eligible for government assistance such as free or reduced lunch, energy assistance and more.

What it takes to get by

The median hourly wage in Northeastern Minnesota is not keeping up with the area's livable wage—the amount of income it takes for working families to meet their needs in the regular marketplace without public or private assistance of any kind.

Family of Two (one adult, one Child)	Hourly Income	Monthly Income
Livable Wage [±]	\$14.15	\$2,416
Median Wage [§]	\$8.50	\$1,360
Wage Gap	-\$5.65	-\$904

*Jessica lives and works in Duluth and has requested that her name NOT be changed for the purposes of this report.

[±]JOBS NOW Coalition, Key Region 3 Findings and Analysis from September 2007

[§]Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development's first quarter 2007 Minnesota Job Vacancy Survey



TAKING STEPS TO END POVERTY IN DULUTH

Duluth's Blueprint to End Poverty is a community-based initiative to bring Duluthians together to determine what it will take to end poverty in our city. Our goal is to bring economic prosperity and hope to every citizen in Duluth by taking the following steps to end poverty:

- educate the community about the reality of poverty in our city
- bring community members together to determine what it will take to end poverty in Duluth
- obtain consensus on the key issue areas requiring action to significantly reduce or eliminate poverty
- move Duluth forward to take action steps to end poverty

LAUNCHING INTO ACTION

Early in 2007, Duluth's Blueprint to End Poverty formed a Blueprint Guiding Coalition made up of community leaders from the business, faith, government, education and health care sectors.

At the same time, a group of Blueprint Fellows came together. The Fellows consisted of active community members who had first-hand experience with poverty. They gave voice to the more than 20,000 citizens in Duluth who struggle to make ends meet on a daily basis.

In May and June of 2007, three community engagement sessions were held. Over 100 citizens attended each session. The Guiding Coalition and Fellows were instrumental in planning, hosting and marketing these sessions to the Duluth community.

During these community engagement sessions Duluth citizens from all walks of life worked side-by-side:

- sharing the reality of poverty in our community.
- creating a vision of Duluth without poverty.
- developing strategies to make that vision a reality.

55% of rental households in St. Louis County spend over 30% of their income on rent (the highest in the state).



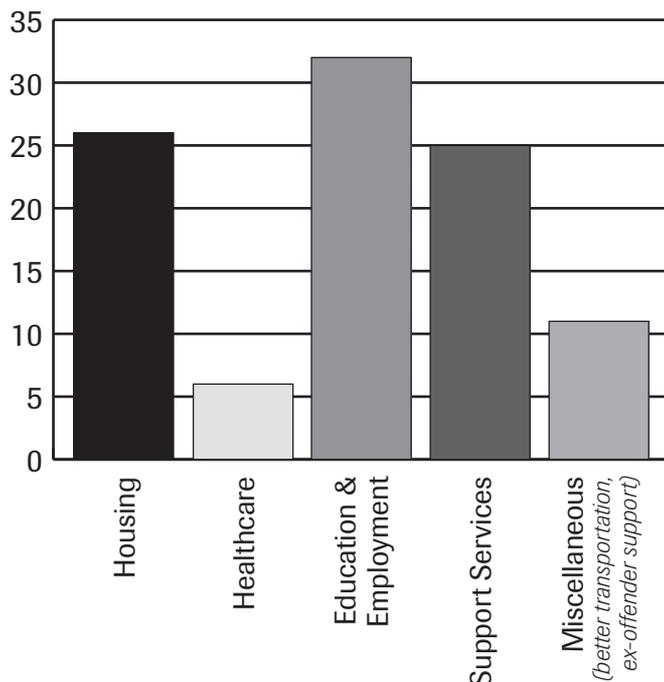
ASKING QUESTIONS

As community engagement sessions were taking place, Blueprint Fellows conducted extensive oral interviews of their peers living in poverty. Some of those questions and answers included:

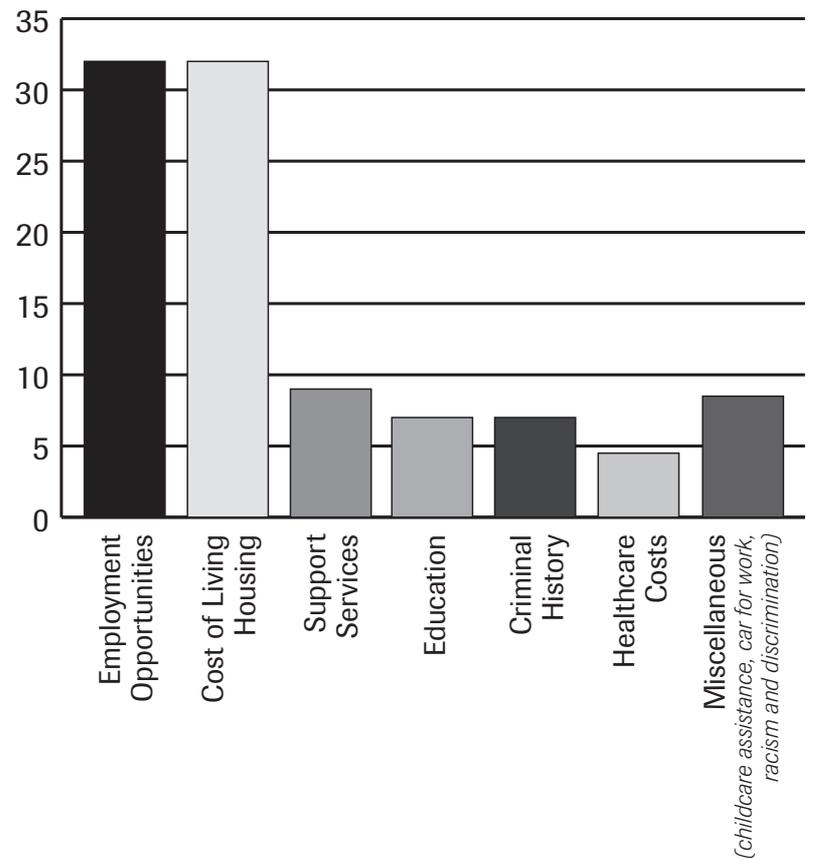
What is the number one financial problem in your life at this moment?

1. Overall lack of income
2. Affordable health care
3. Affordable housing/rent
4. Inability to pay bills
5. Inability to meet basic needs

What would have to be in place (programs, resources, information) for you or other people you know to move out of poverty?



What is preventing you from getting out of poverty and meeting your basic needs?



In 2007, there were 8,200 unemployed workers in northeast Minnesota competing for 2,900 unfilled jobs that paid on average \$8.15 to \$8.20 per hour.

GETTING TO THE CORE OF THE PROBLEM

Ending poverty will require the talent, range of citizens, organizations, the faith in order to succeed. An impressive groups participated in the Blueprint to following “starting point” for reducing

energy and commitment of a broad community, and government agencies sample of representatives from these End Poverty process and produced the and eliminating poverty in Duluth.

TARGETED STRATEGIES

Invest in education and skill development while improving access to quality employment opportunities.

- Promote and provide a living wage to Duluth workers through a wide variety of employment opportunities in areas that offer benefits and childcare.
- Put systems in place so that all community members can obtain the necessary skills to get and keep the jobs they want.
- Offer access to, and support for, programs that help families build up savings or put money on reserve for future investments.
- Develop a wide variety of affordable educational opportunities available to meet the community’s diverse needs.

Increase access to affordable housing and create healthy neighborhoods.

- Create more options for homeownership; expand affordable rental options and housing assistance.
- Increase the housing stock through tax and policy incentives so that everyone has access to safe, decent, affordable housing.
- Promote community-building programs and landlord/tenant agreements that create and maintain safe, clean neighborhoods that value all citizens.

Develop affordable, efficient transportation options.

- Develop a well-coordinated public transportation system that offers a wide variety of bus route options and extended service hours on selected routes to meet employment options.
- Promote the value of public transportation for all community members regardless of physical ability or limitations.
- Create and enhance programs that support access to personal vehicles (car purchase and repair initiative) and non-motorized transportation options.

Provide opportunities for all.

- Increase the availability and quality of childcare and dependent care.
- Invest in and improve healthcare systems.
- Streamline systems so that accessing supportive resources is convenient and easy.
- Ensure that the organized criminal justice system embraces diversity in its employment and support opportunities for ex-offenders to succeed.
- Ensure that everyone in Duluth has the opportunity to be healthy, care for family members, invest in his or her future and gain access to needed support services.

DECLARATION TO END POVERTY*

WE BELIEVE now is the time for the citizens of Duluth to join together in a historic pact of compassion and justice to end poverty.

Poverty is a barrier to food, education, housing, transportation, healthcare and employment. Poverty is contrary to our core belief that all people are entitled to basic human dignity.

In a community without poverty, adults will have meaningful and gainful work. All Individuals and families, regardless of race, ethnicity, age, or sexual orientation will have access to housing, employment opportunities, quality healthcare and support services. Parents will be assured their children are learning the skills and values that will lead to a bright future. Homelessness will be eliminated and homes will provide warmth and shelter. Communities will be stable and safe. Everyone will feel connected by our responsibility for the common good.

I support the Duluth Blueprint to End Poverty’s call to end poverty in the City of Duluth.

**To view the entire Duluth Blueprint Declaration to End Poverty; please visit our web site at www.communityactionduluth.org.*

38% of Duluth children qualify for free or reduced lunch rates.

THANK YOU

The Duluth Blueprint to End Poverty would like to thank the following individuals and organizations for their contributions and their participation in this important initiative.

Fellows

Jessica Anderson
William Brasted
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Justin Lenz
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Ernesto Rivas
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Funders

Community Action Duluth
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Northland Foundation
Benedictine Sisters
Willey Mitchell Family Foundation
Asbury United Methodist Church

Guiding Coalition

Keith Dixon *ISD #709*
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Alan Netland *Duluth Central Labor body*
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Kris Ridgewell *SVCNDA*
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Therese Scherrer *United Way of Greater Duluth*
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Michael Garcia *Duluth Children's Museum*
Marilyn Larson *Duluth Head Start*
Joe Ferguson *CA Duluth Board*
Bob Grytdahl *Duluth's Human Rights Office*

PLACE
STAMP
HERE



Community Action Duluth
19 North 21st Avenue West
Duluth, MN 55806



DARE TO GET INVOLVED

There's an incredible energy in our community right now. Citizen groups are working throughout the city to create a Duluth where everyone can succeed and prosper. We invite you to join the movement to end poverty by supporting the work of some of these groups including: the Duluth Affordable Housing Coalition; St. Louis County 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness; and Creating Communities that Work—At Home in Duluth Initiative.

There is plenty of work to be done in the many targeted strategy areas raised during our Blueprint community engagement sessions and outlined in this report. Please fill out the back side of the card above. Keep this positive and powerful energy going—**dare to get involved.**



Engaging our community to end poverty
19 North 21st Avenue West, Duluth, MN 55806
phone (218) 726-1665 | toll-free (866) 761-5257
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For information on upcoming Blueprint events, or to stay updated on the initiative progress go to www.communityactionduluth.org. or call us at (218) 726-1665.



19 North 21st Avenue West
Duluth, MN 55806



DARE TO GET INVOLVED

Help create something incredible in Duluth. End poverty.

We invite you to choose a targeted strategy area you would like to become involved in, or to simply sign our declaration to end poverty. We have the power to end poverty. Together, we can make it happen in Duluth.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

I would like to be involved in the following targeted strategy area:

- affordable housing
- transportation
- education/job training
- opportunities for all

Providing the information requested here is strictly voluntary. It will only be used by Duluth's Blueprint to End Poverty and will not be sold or used from any commercial purposes.