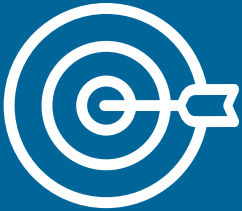


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6. GOALS AND ACTION STEPS

The goals and action steps reflect discussions about the important areas to make progress as a community. Informed by stakeholder input, the steering committee agreed on the four main goal areas of Jobs, Housing, Health, and Youth. The workgroups fleshed out specific opportunities and needs in each focus area, again drawing on the input from the stakeholder engagement. The steering committee then provided input over a series of meetings to expand upon the action steps, dive deeper, and prioritize short-term and long-term actions.

Some of this is work that the Franklin County Board of Commissioners and its agencies can do. To that end, the Board of Commissioners identified several immediate actions that they can take right away to start to move the needle even as the short and long-term action steps evolve. These immediate county actions, which are expanded upon in Section 7, are listed under particular goals but many cut across multiple goal areas. However, others in the community will need to take ownership and responsibility for advancing

many short and long-term action steps along with the Board of Commissioners. The collaborative effort to define these goals reflects this shared understanding. The goals should be read as *“Goals for the Franklin County Community.”*

This should not be read as a complete and comprehensive list of all that is being and/or could be done to address the challenges of poverty. It is a list of identified goals and action steps that are endowed with shared commitment to seeing movement.

Indicators and Targets

The goals represent shared ideas for how to make progress on important dimensions of poverty in Franklin County. Each needs to have clear indicator(s) tied to it with targets established. In many cases existing efforts have established related indicators and targets. In other cases, more work needs to be done to clarify and set these. Phase Two of this initiative will include a focused effort to identify indicators and set targets for each goal.

Transportation and Mobility

Transportation and the challenge of mobility are referenced with action steps in all four goal areas. While not a separate goal area, the recurring identification of transportation as a problem throughout the blueprint process, and the frequent suggestions for addressing it, reinforce efforts already underway in Franklin County to improve, extend, and innovate in public transportation and mobility. As comprehensive planning for transportation systems continues, the challenges and goals identified here are expected to be connected and integrated into those efforts.

To improve conditions and reduce poverty in Franklin County we seek to:

JOBS - Increase access to high-paying jobs by:

- Increasing employers' engagement in neighborhoods of concentrated poverty – through creation of living wage and high-paying jobs for residents.
- Eliminating systemic class and racial wage gaps in employment.
- Increasing access to relevant training for credentials that meet local demand with employer commitments to hire and promote.
- Improving and increasing the delivery of supportive services for individuals to access employment.

HOUSING - Stabilize housing for families near or below poverty by:

- Increasing the supply of and equitable opportunity to access quality housing.
- Enabling more families at or near poverty to afford quality housing, reducing the percentage of housing-cost burdened families.
- Increasing the financial resources available to implement housing supports.

HEALTH - Improve physical, mental, and behavioral health, and overall well-being through increased access to care, utilization of services, and social connectedness by:

- Improving maternal and child health among high-disparity groups struggling financially.
- Reducing the overall incidence and racial disparities in occurrences of preventable diseases and improving the health of those living with chronic, mental, physical, and behavioral health conditions among those struggling financially.
- Improve overall environmental conditions in neighborhoods of concentrated poverty so that they are safe, walkable, and have easy access to basic resources including access to nutritious food.

YOUTH - Ensure all young people are on track for long-term success by:

- Increasing the number of students at or near the poverty level experiencing academic success.
- Increasing the number of children in safe and stable homes and environments.
- Strengthening partnerships with parents to increase support for young people.



JOBS - Increase access to high-paying jobs by:

Goal #1 Increasing employers' engagement in neighborhoods of concentrated poverty – through creation of living wage and high-paying jobs for residents.

Short-Term Action Steps

- Encourage partnerships and collaboration between employers and local employment services providers to increase (1) understanding of the value of investing in targeted neighborhoods through expanded interactions in those neighborhoods; (2) learning about other companies that are in targeted neighborhoods; and (3) gaining exposure to hiring practices that succeed in neighborhoods of concentrated poverty.
- Inventory existing businesses and skills among residents in targeted neighborhoods and develop growth strategies in partnership with local employers to meet employment needs.
- Initiate a task force to review and recommend zoning changes in targeted neighborhoods to improve ease of use of land, including for civic agriculture or food systems use, and reduce barriers to business investment, such as permit delays and long approval processes, for employers.
- Create innovative transportation options connecting neighborhoods of concentrated poverty to jobs by including stronger partnerships with employers and economic development planners.

Long-Term Action Steps

- Expand availability and use of incentives for employers to locate and hire from the neighborhood with accountability for performance tied to incentives.
- Expand the spread and reach of Franklin County People Works or similar initiatives to connect employers and potential employees.

Immediate County Action

- **Forward Cities:** The commissioners and private sector partners have launched a new two-year pilot program that will help connect entrepreneurs in targeted neighborhoods with investors, lending, expertise, and mentoring to grow their small businesses and strengthen the local economy.

Goal #2 Eliminating systemic class, racial, gender, and disability wage gaps in employment.

Short-Term Action Steps

- Ensure all county departments and contracts are exemplary models of diverse hiring and promotion.
- Strengthen enforcement of fair hiring and wage practices.
- Promote state legislation to approve a "living wage" based upon a county's cost of living measures.
- Increase the number of employers that hire restored residents and expand awareness and use of federal bonding programs for employers.
- Expand explicit awareness-building and education programs on racial bias as contractual obligation for employers to do business in/with the county.
- Partner with employers to develop specific programs to increase skills (upskill) among low-income and minority employees.
- Publicly report on employer diversity and inclusion through a report card.

Long-Term Action Steps

- Directly incentivize the expansion of employer measurement and reporting of minority presence at all levels of management and leadership.
- Match existing programs with neighborhood agencies to create community job centers within specific neighborhoods connected to a regional hiring effort.
- Require employers to report disaggregated wage base.

Immediate County Action

- **Living Wage for County Employees:** The commissioners will be raising the minimum Board of Commissioners pay rate to \$15 per hour, and adjusting the pay scale accordingly. They will work with and challenge other large employers and local governments to follow suit.
- **Smart Justice Reform:** The commissioners are committed to advocating for reforming the cash bail system that unfairly targets the poor and minorities, and which can have effects that reverberate in a family for years.

Goal #3 Increasing access to relevant training for credentials that meet local demand with employer commitments to hire and promote.

Short-Term Action Steps

- Align and expand financial aid for training (and related costs to conduct training) to include industry-recognized credentials that lead to employment.
- Expand publicly funded apprenticeship/earn-to-learn programs.
- Expand outreach and awareness-building of evidence-based best practices in employment training.
- Expand programs that support job readiness and interview skills to reduce barriers to entry among those at or near poverty.

Long-Term Action Steps

- Expand and support programs partnering directly with employers to engage participants in skills training that will directly lead to a job.
- Reward employers who successfully demonstrate commitments to hire and invest in workers struggling financially.
- Lead the development of a seamless, integrated, and coherent workforce education, training, and development systems aligned to support the regional economy.
- Review and revise licensing and credentialing requirements and remove unnecessary barriers for New Americans seeking to transfer foreign credentials and others with bankruptcies and criminal histories that unfairly exclude them from opportunities.

Immediate County Action

- **Building Futures:** The commissioners' premiere workforce training program connects low-income residents from traditionally underrepresented populations with pre-apprenticeship training in the skilled building trades. The commissioners are also exploring other fields for expansion and are committing to funding this pilot program for at least another year.

Goal #4 Improving and increasing the delivery of supportive services for individuals to access employment.

Short-Term Action Steps

- Develop and invest in programs that provide long-term personalized employment services to help individuals transition to and succeed at employment opportunities.
- Support the use of comprehensive case management to transition employees to sustainable, full-time employment.

- Expand and support public transit priority corridors to increase speed and reliability of public transit connecting neighborhoods of concentrated poverty to employment centers.
- Expand free access to transit - based on job centers and neighborhoods of concentrated poverty.
- Expand solutions for first and last mile connections in neighborhood transportation deserts that effectively connect residents to transportation priority corridors.

Long-Term Action Steps

- Expand neighborhood-based and workplace-based financial services to support individual financial decision making and overall wealth building.
- Expand and subsidize on-site, integrated, and flexible childcare arrangements.
- Innovate availability of dependent care arrangements to support employment.
- Advocate for increasing the eligibility level for Publicly Funded Child Care, for increasing the subsidy value, and for greater flexibility in the hours and services for which subsidies can be used.



HOUSING - Stabilize housing for families near or below poverty by:

Goal #5 Increasing the supply of and equitable opportunity to access quality housing.

Short-Term Action Steps

- Increase financing for the reputable repair and improvement of existing affordable housing stock.
- Create a task force to improve alignment county-wide in housing codes and definitions of quality for subsidies.
- Enforce codes with a supportive approach to seek first to improve conditions and keep housing as part of the affordable supply.
- Expand and improve programs that assist, accelerate, and prioritize maintaining housing for vulnerable populations (veterans, seniors, re-entry, etc.) including providing multilingual and culturally competent resource officers for housing assistance.
- Increase enforcement of county fair housing rules and regulations on behalf of tenants and address long-term challenges faced by length of eviction records.
- Increase support for the county land trust to drive expansion and to preserve and grow supply.

Long-Term Action Steps

- Increase the value of rent-subsidies to keep landlords interested in taking subsidies instead of converting to market rate rents.
- Expand tax abatement in exchange for affordable housing development with longer term commitments on affordability and increased supply in new developments.
- Convene a multi-jurisdiction discussion to address challenges related to locating subsidized housing throughout Franklin County.
- Implement long-term affordability guarantees in neighborhoods experiencing growth to protect affordable housing stock.
- Accelerate and expand on the direct investment in a comprehensive affordable housing plan for increasing the supply of housing.
- Build within an affordable housing plan, transportation options to ensure long-term connectivity and access to services.

Immediate County Action

- **Senior Housing Initiative:** In the next three months, the Franklin County Office on Aging will be rolling out a comprehensive program to address senior housing concerns with the goal of ensuring that more seniors are able to age in place at home this year.

Goal #6 Enabling more families at or near poverty to afford quality housing, and reducing the percentage of housing-cost burdened families.

Short-Term Action Steps

- Expand programs to support landlord asset management– educating landlords on the value of quality housing and low turnover (expand opportunities for landlord orientation and growth).
- Invest in community groups to implement education and support programs for residents on tenant issues and financial management issues.
- Improve use of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Women Infant and Children (WIC) programs, and other public resources by families eligible to create housing stability.
- Invest in neighborhoods where housing instability occurs to ensure fast and appropriate responses connected to comprehensive systems addressing homelessness.
- Support creative bonding and other efforts to eliminate barriers to housing for those with disparities, criminal records, bankruptcies, or other disqualifying events.
- Educate and expand access to credit and financial services to support households as they exit housing subsidy eligibility.
- Increase awareness of business leaders and the general public of the importance of family housing stability and the role employers can play in increasing the availability of affordable housing near employment.

Long-Term Action Steps

- Expand the use of Individual Development Accounts and other income supports to increase household wealth among families at or near poverty.
- Recognize changed living arrangements and consider adjustments to zoning rules to accommodate affordability in multigenerational living.

Goal #7 Increasing the financial resources available to implement housing supports.

Short-Term Action Steps

- Work in partnership with the City of Columbus and other municipalities to successfully raise bond financing in support of affordable housing plans.
- Directly advocate for increases in federal housing dollars and support a state housing tax credit.
- Investigate the expanded use of abatement buy-outs, filing fees, and other targeted resources to support affordable housing strategies.
- Partner with the state to access unclaimed lending and state credit dollars for direct housing strategies.

Long-Term Action Steps

- Support a review of the history of state housing support and appropriately increase the state housing trust fund and other state supports to meet current needs.
- Create a task force to identify and recommend changes to Franklin County zoning and other housing policies that directly or indirectly impact minority residents' ability to access wealth and housing; in particular to ease restrictions on accessory dwelling units.
- Increase access to credit for direct investment in homes, businesses and programs in neighborhoods of concentrated poverty by various means, including exploring creation of public/municipal banks.

Immediate County Action

- **Affordable Housing Support:** The commissioners' Department of Economic Development and Planning will complete its new strategic plan this spring. The plan will include comprehensive recommendations in line with the blueprint's housing goals and action steps and will likely include components such as creating a new community land trust; reviewing zoning codes; considering residential tax incentives; continuing to support for home ownership and financial counseling programs; and leveraging funding, tax credits and other resources to increase the supply of affordable housing.



HEALTH - Improve physical, mental, and behavioral health, and well-being – increasing access to care, utilization of services, and social connectedness by:

Goal #8 Improving maternal and child health among high disparity groups, struggling financially.

Short-Term Action Steps

- Develop and expand existing high school mentoring programs, including targeted services for pregnant and parenting teens living in poverty.
- Expand education, treatment and addiction services in targeted neighborhoods to reduce alcohol, tobacco, opioid and other drug abuse.
- Expand access to affordable long-acting, reversible contraceptives.
- Improve usage rates for SNAP, WIC, Medicaid, and other public programs among eligible families.

Long-Term Action Steps

- Add school-based health clinics and conduct food insecurity screenings in all schools.
- Add affordable, high-quality childcare for teen parents at school.
- Expand health clinics to match the spread of poverty in the county.
- Support and integrate with efforts of Ohio Better Birth Outcomes, CelebrateOne, and other health planning partners to succeed at key prevention indicators.
- Implement childcare options at point of service for Medicaid recipients to receive medical services.
- Advocate for the adoption of health education standards and implement a model curriculum and other school-based health and nutrition programs to develop healthy behaviors in young people.

Immediate County Action

- **Comprehensive School Health Curriculum:** The Board of Commissioners, in partnership with CelebrateOne and Nationwide Children's Hospital, recently invested \$100,000 to help Columbus City Schools to adopt an evidenced-based, comprehensive health curriculum for both middle and high school students.

Goal #9 Reducing the overall incidence and racial disparities in occurrences of preventable diseases and trauma, and improving the health of those living with chronic, mental, physical, and behavioral health conditions among those struggling financially.

Short-Term Action Steps

- Deliver culturally sensitive, trauma-informed care with neighborhood navigators including blood pressure screening, awareness-building activities, nutrition education, gardening and cooking programs, and simple health checks.
- Expand employer coverage of health insurance and wellness programs in the workplace.
- Expand availability for a free physical, mental health screening, and food insecurity screening once a year to all residents in targeted neighborhoods.
- Expand the use of key leaders and neighborhood champions as credible spokespeople for disease prevention in targeted communities, including New American communities.
- Increase the number of providers accepting Medicaid, including new Medicaid patients, in targeted neighborhoods.
- Expand on-demand transportation services scheduled at the time of appointment in coordination with the health care provider.

Long-Term Action Steps

- Encourage, support and invest in quality partnerships for awareness and care coordination throughout the county.
- Support programs that enable more students of color to pursue careers in health care.
- Incentivize minority health care providers to deliver services in targeted neighborhoods.
- Develop better programs to reach individuals near or below poverty through influencers at home, in faith-based settings, at work, and in school to ensure health literacy and encourage compliance.
- Integrate with Franklin County's efforts on the County Health Implementation Plan and the Local Food Action Plan.
- Expand programs to help families manage limited resources and maintain healthy food choices.

Goal #10 Improve overall environmental conditions in neighborhoods of concentrated poverty so that they are safe, walkable, and have easy access to basic resources, including access to nutritious food.

Short-Term Action Steps

- Review and consistently enforce housing and related safety codes with connections to programs that support landlords/homeowners making improvements.
- Position the county as a neutral ongoing convener to connect services and economic development to improve health and nutrition outcomes.
- Inventory and build neighborhood-based response to environmental safety and food security concerns.
- Improve community and law enforcement relationships with focus on safety.
- Provide funding and reliable contractors -- leveraging existing bond money -- for minor home repairs, including energy efficiency improvements.
- Target neighborhoods of concentrated poverty with direct financial support to encourage development of safe public spaces for recreation, accessibility, and civic agriculture.
- Expand neighborhood access to healthy food options by incentivizing the location of small grocers, repurposing vacant sites for local food systems uses, connecting to distribution networks, and/or expanding appropriate public transportation.

Long-Term Action Steps

- Prioritize county and municipal investments for safe streets and walkable neighborhoods in communities of concentrated poverty.
- Create innovative programs to improve access to local healthy food in the context of a rapidly changing marketplace for grocery stores.
- Provide universal breakfast and lunch at all school districts.

Immediate County Action

- **Combined Charitable Campaign:** Each year, the commissioners' combined charitable campaign in which county employees donate to charity raises more than \$300,000. This year, the commissioners are changing the terms of the program to keep these important donations with charities right here in our community.



YOUTH - Ensure all young people are on track for long-term success by:

Goal #11 Increasing the number of students at or near the poverty level experiencing academic success.

Short-Term Action Steps

- Provide coaching and technical assistance to childcare programs on Step Up To Quality early learning standards.
- Expand access to star-rated, quality childcare and education programs (including after school and summer programs) with increased subsidy.
- Increase awareness of college and other post-secondary opportunities, including affordability by dramatically increasing completion of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).
- Support school district policies that strengthen teacher quality in schools serving low-income neighborhoods, including trauma-informed training for all educators.
- Improve the use of high-quality screening to identify and respond to unique needs of all students.
- Expand school-based supports for students including case management, social and health services, food assistance, and other direct services.
- Pursue reinstating and expanding free COTA transportation for public school students in Franklin County.
- Expand early college and other dual credential programs targeting students living in poverty.
- Increase participation in youth summer employment programs to provide youth with opportunities to enter the workforce.
- Initiate and sustain conversation about the ongoing segregation of students and persistent racial achievement gaps throughout the county.

Long-Term Action Steps

- Expand the use of home visiting programs for families at or near poverty.
- Advocate for modification of the state report card to appropriately capture student growth and recognize schools that successfully assist students from poverty to succeed.
- Support school-based programs that expand individualized student plans and programming for success.
- Expand the use of schools as family and neighborhood resource centers, providing access to healthy food and other integrated supports for students and families throughout the day and evening.
- Expand the availability of quality and aligned, community-based tutoring supports for students in neighborhoods of concentrated poverty and ensure tutoring programs are connected to schools for integrated supports.
- Develop and deploy comprehensive career readiness support for students with exposure to work and integrated skill-based learning opportunities.

Immediate County Action

- **Step Up To Quality Childcare Provider Training:** Franklin County is committed to expanding access to high-quality, star-rated early learning programs for low-income families and offering free training to help state licensed childcare providers meet the state's 2020 Step Up To Quality early learning standards.

Goal #12 Increasing the number of children in safe and stable homes and environments.

Short-Term Action Steps

- Increase the accessibility of integrated family support services, including parent education, childcare, and food assistance, by adding locations that are walkable or easily accessed by public transit.
- Build neighborhood-based strategies that activate capacity and trust in the neighborhood to support families before formal interventions are required, such as Restorative Circles Models.
- Expand training in community-based settings in de-escalation techniques to reduce crime.
- Connect formal systems of policing and enforcement with community champions to recognize and build trust, for example commissioning community citizen review panels.
- Expand and include in-school mental and behavioral health services, food insecurity screenings, and trauma-informed training at all schools, particularly schools with high concentrations of poverty.

Long-Term Action Steps

- Align direct investment in the development of skilled community partners using Asset-Based Community Development strategies in neighborhoods of concentrated poverty and have them coordinate on localized best practices/shared metrics.
- Increase school stability through development of policies that prohibit displacing students during the academic year.
- Increase independent housing for homeless youth.

Immediate County Action

- **Catalyst Grants:** This spring, the Board of Commissioners is allocating \$1.5 million to a new initiative called the Catalyst Grant Program, which is intended to spark meaningful change in the priority areas of Economic Security, Personal and Family Empowerment, Emerging and Basic Needs, and Community Enrichment.

Goal #13 Strengthening partnerships with parents to increase support for young people.

Short-Term Action Steps

- Create a resource directory/guide for parents regarding available programs and services in the county that is inclusive of multilingual and New American communities.
- Expand the engagement of birthing hospitals/prenatal offices to ensure that parents have the resources they need.
- Invest in culturally relevant neighborhood events – block parties, festivals, etc. - to strengthen multi-generational bonds and family connectedness.
- Develop an ongoing countywide task force to monitor and improve connectedness along the entire continuum of child and family support services.
- Pilot programs to directly train, support, engage, and activate parents as resources to each other.
- Explore whether parents and caretakers can be permitted to volunteer at their child's school as an allowable work activity for benefits programs with work or community engagement requirements.

Long-Term Action Steps

- Partner with local school districts to implement parents as leaders programs.
- Establish policies within schools and districts that widen the opportunities for parents to engage with the teachers and staff (expanded hours, options to phone conferences, multiple forms of communication).
- Implement restorative justice principles in all family legal proceedings.
- Develop layered and expanded home visiting programs to support all families.