



PRIMER ON UNITE ESCAMBIA'S *POVERTY SOLUTIONS TEAM*

Changing mindsets. Building bridges out of poverty.

This 'primer' is designed to inform the community about Unite Escambia's *Poverty Solutions Team (PST)*. You will find our Mission, a Call to Action for both individuals and businesses, a Definition of Terms, Team Descriptions / Contacts , Training Programs and Sources of PST Information.

We encourage you to share this information, and to help those opting out of poverty in their journey to self-sufficiency by joining our team.

Poverty Solutions Team MISSION

The shared vision of the PST is: "*Escambia County is a community without poverty.*" PST is made up of a growing number of businesses, government, educators, faith-based and non-profit organizations, and the community at large.

The team has adopted the concepts and language of the Bridges Out of Poverty and CIRCLES™ models to change mindsets about poverty and to build a sustainable increase in community partners motivated to improve the conditions of neighbors and colleagues living in generational poverty.

The long-range goal of PST is to reduce by 50% the percentage of the county's population living below the federal poverty level, i.e., from 15.9% to less than 8% from 2008 to 2020. A total of 42,935 people, including 16,918 children, were counted among those living in poverty in Escambia County in 2008.

A Primer on Unite Escambia's Poverty Solutions Team was prepared by PST's Poverty Information Group – April 2009.

Call to Action



INDIVIDUALS

- Think about poverty, and how it impacts our community. Consider how it taxes our economic health, community resources, education, health care and neighborhoods.
- Change your mindset about people who live in poverty by thoughtfully considering their financial, mental, emotional and/or physical limitations and the barriers that prevent them from getting ahead in the absence of healthy relationships and adequate resources.
- Review the ‘Sources of PST Information’ referenced in this document then choose to become part of the solution by spreading the word about our efforts.
- Pick one of the Teams listed in this document in which to get involved and make a difference, leveraging your skills, knowledge and/or passion; contact the chair to discuss the needs and the contributions you can make to the team.
- Attend one or more of the training programs listed in this document to learn about PST’s approach to combating poverty.
- Choose to facilitate training or become a personal ally.
- Volunteer your time, connect people with resources and/or provide funding in support of the numerous ongoing programs, special events and grassroots initiatives sponsored by PST.
- Stay engaged as long as your contribution is meaningful.
- To become part of the solution, contact Peggy Groves at plgroves@cox.net or the *Bridges to Circles* Office at 429-7296.

Recommended Reading

Bridges Out of Poverty, by Ruby K. Payne, Ph.D., [Philip DeVol and Terie Dreussi Smith](#)

Hear Our Cry - Boys in Crisis, by Paul D. Slocumb.

Pathways, by Stanford Center for the Study of Poverty and Inequality. Sign up for free hard copy delivery of quarterly magazine or PDF notification at www.inequality.com

Same Kind Of Different As Me, by Ron Hall, Denver Moore and Lynn Vincent

Until It’s Gone: Ending Poverty In Our Nation, In Our Lifetime, by Scott C. Miller.
Highlands, Texas

What Every Church Member Should Know About Poverty, by Ruby K. Payne, Ph.D. and Bill Ehlig

Call to Action

BUSINESSES

- Considering your investment in charitable endeavors benefiting the community at large, experiment with an in-reach approach that looks first at your struggling employees – one that builds hope, trust and charity from within.
- Acknowledge the working poor among your ranks, i.e., those earning wages that are not enough to lift them above poverty because they lack the education, resources and/or ability to change their circumstances on their own.
- Provide your working poor with convenient access to community resources; consider hosting a Getting Ahead Fair (perhaps co-hosted with neighboring businesses) with onsite representation by agencies such as Families Count, Catholic Charities, Habitat for Humanity, Financial Stability Coalition, Escambia County Health Department, Escambia Department of Community Services, Department of Children and Families, Northwest Florida Legal Services, Head Start, Council on Aging, ECAT, Boys and Girls Club of Escambia County, and Early Learning Coalition.
- Develop a culture of caring with the delivery of targeted employee advocacy programs such as free or low-interest loans with principal paydowns automatically withdrawn from paychecks, job advancement training for low-wage earners, car pool coordination, team-supported home repairs and tutoring, and preventative health care.



- As a means of building mutual trust, advancing learning and promoting teamwork, encourage *all* team members to participate in lunch-and-learn money-smart sessions; in one or more sessions, make employees aware of the pitfalls of payday loans, rent-to-own plans and tax refund anticipation loans, and provide them with alternative choices.
- Encourage your employees living in generational poverty to participate in **Getting Ahead** training as a segue to **Circles-to-Bridges**; recruit one or more employees to participate as Getting Ahead facilitators and/or Circles-to-Bridges allies.
- Make the commitment to reach inward as long as you think you have the potential to build healthy relationships with and for your working poor.
- To become part of the solution, contact Christy Emmanuel at christyemmanuel@aol.com or the *Bridges to Circles* Office at 429-7296.

Definition of Terms

- **Unite Escambia** -- Community-wide movement in pursuit of a shared Community Vision: "A healthy community where all have the inspiration and opportunity to succeed." Initiated in a collaboration including Escambia County Health Department, Partnership for a Healthy Community and United Way of Escambia County. Aims for broad-based community participation in support of education, environment, health, housing, and poverty solutions. Champion Buzz Ritchie, President/CEO, Gulf Coast Community Bank, is leading the way.
- **Bridges Out of Poverty** – Construct embraced by PST that uncovers and orients thinking around the culture, hidden rules, familial patterns and belief systems characteristic of generational poverty. Book authored by Dr. Ruby Payne, Philip DeVol and Terie Dreussi Smith offers practical strategies to better lives via role models, support systems, emotional resources and mentoring.
- **Bridges to CIRCLES™** -- Initiative sponsored by lead agency Catholic Charities targeting those living in generational poverty with a desire to achieve self-sufficiency. Offers **Bridges to CIRCLES** as a natural progression for Gettin' Ahead graduates. Staffed by Community Organizer Janet Westlake and CIRCLES Coach Estella Lee.
- **Circles** – A Circle is led by an individual or family working to get out of poverty and includes two to four allies who support them in their efforts to develop the emotional, intellectual, financial and spiritual resources necessary for self-sufficiency and stability.
- **Ally** – An Ally is a volunteer engaged in an intentional, befriending relationship with an individual or family working on his or her plan to become self-sufficient, within the guidelines set by **Bridges to CIRCLES**. An Ally attends a **Bridges Out of Poverty** seminar and hands-on ally training before the match with a Circles individual or family.

*PST embraces both the **Bridges Out of Poverty** and **CIRCLES** models, and has adopted an integrated approach for implementation in Escambia County.*

Poverty Solutions Action Teams

The Poverty Solutions Team believes there are many factors that contribute to poverty, including barriers to human and social capital within reach of the poor, exploitation and political/economic structures. There are many causes and many solutions. Action Teams have been formed to address the continuum of causes. You are invited to become part of the solution.

Each team is tasked with (a) identifying priorities and a short-term and long-term goal for maximum impact, (b) developing and implementing plans to achieve goals, and (c) considering actions for individuals, agency, policy, community and business. Participation in committees is open to anyone with an interest in poverty solutions. Contact the chair(s) of the committee(s) in which you'd like to become involved. We welcome your passion, innovation and action.

Circles Community Team; Interim Chair Jackie Bell (Lott & Associates); jbelle@lottlaw.com; 206-2351

Circles Getting Ahead Team; Chair Peggy Groves (Community Volunteer); plgroves@cox.net; 479-9692

Exploitation; John Clark (Council on Aging of West Florida); jclark@coawfla.org; 432-1475, ext 105

Circles Planning; Chair Brunie Emmanuel (Homeless Coalition); UniVisGrp@aol.com; 439-3009

Education; Co-chairs Dr. Angela McCorvey (UWF); Marcia Nowlin (Director, Title One); amccorv0@uwf.edu; 473-7448, mnowlin@escambia.k12.fl.us; 595-6915, ext 225

Faith-Based; Co-chairs Oliver Jones (Dept of Juvenile Justice) and David Alexander (Pensacola Police Department); oliver.jones@dji.state.fl.us; 453-7490; dalexander@ci.pensacola.fl.us; 698-0905

Human/Social Capital; Chair Brenda Trimble (Community Action Program); trimbleb@capc-pensacola.org; 438-4021

Political and Economic Structure; Chair Susan Nelms (Workforce EscaRosa); snelms@escarosa.org; 473-0939

Poverty Information Group; Chair Carolyn Appleyard (Appleyard Agency); cappleyard@gmail.com; 494-2194

Poverty Solutions Team / Board of Directors; Chair Jean Norman (United Way of Escambia County); jean@unitedwayescambia.org; 444-7110

Resources; Chair Randy Fleming (Dept of Children & Families); randy_fleming@dcf.state.fl.us; 595-8075

Training; Chair Tim Evans (Manna); evans@mannafoodpantries.org; 432-2053

Circles Community Team

Jackie Bell
(Lott & Associates)

Ensures Circles meetings are building community; helps Circle leaders reach their goals; as needed, provides location, meals, childcare, programming for children, and a support programs that enable participants to attend weekly support and educational meetings.

Circles Getting Ahead

Peggy Groves
(Community Volunteer)

Oversees and facilitates Getting Ahead workshops; recruits and trains Getting Ahead facilitators; recruits, assesses and selects Getting Ahead workshop/Circles participants; recruits, selects, trains and matches allies with Circle leaders.

Circles Planning

Brunie Emmanuel
(Homeless Coalition)

Coordinates with the leadership of the other Circles teams (Circles Team & Circles Community Team) to identify needs and gaps, and implement plans to resolve them.

Education

Dr. Angela McCorvey (UWF); Marcia Nowlin (Dir, Title One)

School District, PJC, UWF and George Stone; implements Bridges concepts at all levels of education; provides educational and job training access and resources for people working toward self-sufficiency.

Exploitation

John Clark (Council on Aging of West Florida)

Identifies and attempts to break down profit-making practices that prey on people living in poverty, including payday lenders, sub-prime lenders, reverse mortgages targeting elderly, telemarketers, lease/purchases, temp work and scams.

Faith-based

Oliver Jones (Dept of Juvenile Justice) and David Alexander (Pensacola Police Dept)

Educates faith-based community about poverty; encourages active participation in *Getting Ahead* and *Circles* for congregants in generational poverty and those willing to facilitate training and become allies; promotes *What Every Church Members Needs to Know About Poverty* book study.

Human/Social Capital

Chair Brenda Trimble
(Community Action Program)

Identifies and addresses barriers to accessing individual, community and business resources such as jobs / education, skill sets, childcare, class distinction, racism, decline in neighborhoods, city/regional planning and transportation.

Political & Econ Structure

Chair Susan Nelms
(Workforce EscaRosa)

Identifies and addresses barriers of economic, political and social policy at all levels such as job loss, de-industrialization, taxation patterns, economic disparity, racism, immigration patterns and limitations due to criminal record.

Poverty Information

Carolyn Appleyard
(Appleyard Agency)

Uses print and electronic communications, broadcast media and group presentations to educate the community about the language and culture of class, and the impact and issues of poverty.

PST Board of Directors

Jean Norman (United Way of Escambia County)

Comprised of chairs of all teams plus community, business and government representation; Leader provides overall coordination and communication among the teams.

Resources

Randy Fleming
(Dept of Children & Families)

Team focuses on sustainability of Circles and other initiatives of PST; secures funding, donations and other resources such as child care, transportation and revolving loans to help people reach their goals.

Training

Tim Evans
(Manna)

Provides training to agencies, churches, businesses and the community on Bridges; builds the base of certified Bridges trainers; develops strategy and content tailored to different audiences.

Training Programs

- **Community Orientation – An Overview of Poverty** -- Designed to introduce the community to the needs of those living in poverty and the work of PST; 1-1/2 hours; free.

Bridges Out of Poverty Training – Based on book authored by Dr. Ruby Payne, Philip DeVol and Terie Dreussi Smith; examines the sources and impact of generational poverty on families and communities and supports addressing and solving generational poverty at the community level; training is designed for businesses, agencies and organizations working with people from poverty to understand the employees' challenges and partner with them to create opportunities for success; Bridges Out of Poverty training is a prerequisite for those desiring to become *Getting Ahead* facilitators and *Bridges to CIRCLES* allies; full-day; costs \$25.

- **Getting Ahead in a Just Gettin' By World** – Based on book authored by Philip DeVol; 15-session program offered to 12-15 adults at the lowest economic rung who are hard-working and play-by-the-rules motivated to leave poverty behind. Coursework shows them how to use the hidden rules of class to build financial, emotional and social capital. Based on research of Phil DeVol, the volunteer facilitator-led program builds knowledge through a co-investigative process, fostering participant-driven motivation, insight and plans intended to open doors to resources and new opportunities on the path to financial stability. In the 15-20 sessions, participants explore the impact that poverty has had on them, investigate economic realities, complete a self-assessment of their own resources, make plans to build their own resources, and develop a mental model of community prosperity; 15 weekly sessions; no cost.
- **Train-the-Trainer Getting Ahead for Facilitators** -- Training and accompanying workbook equip volunteers to facilitate *Getting Ahead in a Just Gettin' By World*. Topics include philosophy, theory, motivation and incentives, long-term support, mental models, content and process, and practice sessions; full-day; free.

- **Bridges to CIRCLES Training** -- Ideally suited for *Getting Ahead* graduates who desire to continue working their plan to self-sufficiency. Surrounds individuals seeking to move out of poverty with engaged citizens who are working to change community systems on their behalf. Based on 'Bridges Out of Poverty' by Ruby Payne, Phil DeVol and Terie Dreussi Smith, Bridges to CIRCLES creates teams of 2-4 community volunteers who become allies of a family transitioning out of poverty, helping them to achieve their goals for financial stability. The team collaborates with local social service agencies and other community programs that provide information, support and resources; 18-24 months; no cost.

Training schedules are published in the Bridges newsletter.

Sources of PST Information

- **Unite Escambia Website** - www.UniteEscambia.com; source of information about PST and Unite Escambia's four other solutions teams, including education, environment, health and housing.
- **Bridges Newsletter** - PST publication featuring progress reports, a calendar of upcoming events, book reviews, appeals for help, a 'Stepping Out' column by and about people who have chosen to move out of poverty, a 'Stepping Up' column by a local citizen who has chosen to help them succeed, and a general interest story addressing PST's efforts to help move people up and out of poverty in our community. Delivered via email and posted on the Unite Escambia website.
- **WUWF-TV - Bridges Out of Poverty series** -- TV series designed to sensitive, educate and mobilize the community into action. Addresses what our community is doing to help break the cycle of poverty in Escambia County. Features the personal stories of local people who successfully crossed the bridge out of poverty. Airs each week with program changes each month.

