

AGENDA

- ✕ Introduction and Context
- ✕ Lessons from Key Collaborative Activities
- ✕ Summary and Closing Comments
- ✕ Questions and Comments

SITUATION OVERVIEW

In spite of economic recovery, Michigan's poverty rate is rising:

- ✗ Michigan residents living in poverty increased from 13.5 percent of the population in 2006 to 16.8 percent in 2010
 - + No Great Lakes state has a higher proportion of its residents living in poverty
 - + 41 percent of those living in poverty worked during 2010
- ✗ State assistance has been reduced
 - + 2011 legislation enforced a strict, 48-month limit on cash assistance benefits
 - + 16,000 families have already reached the 48-month cap and kicked off welfare
 - + An additional 7,130 families will be dropped from cash assistance on September 30, 2012¹

¹ The Bridge, May 17, 2012 http://bridgemi.com/2012/05/poverty-rises-even-as-economy-turns/#.T_Sm947B5hc

SITUATION OVERVIEW

- ✖ Nearly a quarter of all children in Michigan were living in poverty in 2010
 - + More than 31,000 children are homeless, more than 700,000 receive food assistance
 - + Highest poverty rates – children under the age of 5
 - ✖ Six in ten young Black children
 - ✖ 50 percent of American Indian children
 - ✖ 40 percent of Hispanic children
 - ✖ One-fifth non-Hispanic white children
 - + Oakland County saw its child poverty rate jump by more than 50 percent between 2006 and 2010



SITUATION OVERVIEW

- ✗ Reducing poverty is an essential component of economic recovery
- ✗ Poverty reduction efforts must be linked at local, state and federal levels
- ✗ Health Disparities are linked to poverty
- ✗ People in poverty must be included in designing and implementing poverty reduction efforts
- ✗ Collaboration among the university, the state, as well as regional and local community organizations and members is an effective way of reducing poverty and reducing related health disparities

ABOUT UNIVERSITY-COMMUNITY COLLABORATIVE

- ✘ Brought together academics, community professionals, residents to engage in critical inquiry/research around poverty reduction
- ✘ Operated from the WMU College of Health and Human Services. Led by Dean Earlie Washington, Ph.D., the School of Social Work (Dr. Linwood Cousins), Lewis Walker Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnic Relations (Dr. Tim Ready) and Consultant (Teresa Bingman, Esq.)
- ✘ Conducted a 2011 evaluation of V4A statewide poverty reduction initiative



COLLABORATIVE GOALS

University-Community Collaborative – focused on bringing people together to develop projects, jointly or individually, that include the best thinking, best practices around evidence-based research, service delivery.

- ✦ Pilot models that will provide an array of service delivery programs and interventions to advance from “think tank” ideas to actual implementation of activities in the community
- ✦ Community partners such as Mothers of Hope and Hispanic American Council
- ✦ Engage Community & University Fellows



ACTIVITIES

Projects implemented through the Edison United and University Community Fellows to:

- ✖ Improve Access to Benefits, Services and Opportunities
 - + Sports programs
 - + Web-based indicator system
- ✖ Address Barriers to Access by Providing Youth and Family Support
 - + *Keepin' It Real* substance abuse prevention program
 - + *Razas United* anger coping program
- ✖ Engage and Advocate
 - + Community Advisory Council
 - + “*Sistahs Can We Talk*” Forum
 - + “How you livin’” Information Forums
 - + Targeted Program Evaluation



LESSONS LEARNED

- ✖ Collaboration is powerful
 - + Collaborative network can successfully partner with low-income residents in self-advocacy work in collaboration with policy makers, opinion leaders, and the community at large.
 - + Directly exposes university partners to the interests, motivations, strengths, resources, and challenges of community members and organizations.
- ✖ Evaluation process needs to be sensitive to the needs of the organization being evaluated and the funders of the evaluation and services.

