

Mayor David N. Cicilline's  
Poverty, Work and Opportunity Task Force

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Task Force Meeting  
September 17, 2007

# Taskforce Goals

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## *Develop and define an agenda to...*

- Increase the ability of low-income families to improve their economic status.
- Decrease barriers to economic advancement facing families living in poverty in the city.
- Grow, retain and reclaim the middle class in Providence.

## *Through strategies that...*

- Improve economic conditions of poor people in the labor force (working and looking for work)
  - Address the high cost of being poor
  - Prevent poverty in the next generation
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# Criteria for Objectives and Strategies

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➤ ***Meaningful***

Implementing this strategy will have a significant and positive impact on people in Providence and there are data showing need.

➤ ***Measurable***

It is possible to make a measurable change within 3 years.

➤ ***Effective***

There is a research-base showing effectiveness or promising models in other cities.

➤ ***Feasible***

There is a realistic resource development strategy to accomplish this objective.

➤ ***Ability to Implement***

There is leadership capacity, community interest and existing efforts.

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# Opportunities for Low-Wage Workers and Job Seekers to Obtain Quality Jobs

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# Increase the Capacity of Adult Education and Training Programs in Providence

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- Create a formal partnership between the City of Providence and the Office of Adult Education to leverage additional funding and resources for adult education in Providence.
  
  - Specific goals of the partnership include:
    - Improve supply, quality and responsiveness.
    - Expand access for underserved populations.
    - Increase availability of family literacy programs.
    - Expand training that supports career advancement.
    - Provide case management services.
    - Improve access to financial aid.
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# Expand Sector-Based Career Pathways

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- ❑ Leverage additional funding and partnerships for existing initiatives in high-growth industries:
    - ❑ Health care
    - ❑ Construction
  
  - ❑ Explore options for creating new initiatives in additional sectors:
    - ❑ Hospitality
    - ❑ Financial services
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# Improve Employment Opportunities for City Residents

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- The Department of Planning should convene a Providence Connects/First Source Implementation Committee.
    - Action steps to improve the effectiveness of Providence Connects:
      - Update, clarify language of ordinance.
      - Substantive assessment of candidates.
      - Improve internal capacity.
      - Ensure database is useful and effective.
      - Feedback from businesses, adult education providers, community members to improve effectiveness.
      - Strategically align with existing job training.
      - Expand job training programs offered.
      - Implement annual reporting requirement.
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# Make Work Pay



# Increase the Number of Individuals with Adequate Wages and Health Insurance

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- Commission a study of the costs and benefits to Providence residents of a living wage ordinance for private sector contractors providing public services.
    - Number of residents who would receive higher wages.
    - Projected costs.
    - Pros and cons of implementation.
    - Lessons from other communities.
  
  - Support federal reauthorization of the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) and educate Rhode Island state elected officials on the critical importance of Rite Care to low-income children and families.
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# Streamline Access to Income Support Programs that Help Meet Basic Needs

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- Partner with funders, business leaders and other key stakeholders to explore the potential for replicating the Centers for Working Families model in Providence.
    - Helps families become more financially secure through a focus on 3 areas: Increased wages, improved access to employment services and financial services, streamlined access to public benefits.
    - Built upon the existing network of trusted community providers.
  - Explore the potential for on-line benefit access system to increase enrollment of eligible families.
  - Create and disseminate outreach materials for the four targeted income support programs (health insurance, child care subsidies, Food Stamps, EITC)
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# Reduce the High Cost of Being Poor

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# Create Affordable Financial Services for Low-Income Residents

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- Develop a partnership between the City and the financial services sector that bring together banks and credit unions in order to...
    - Create and implement a strategy for providing more services to low-income customers in Providence.
    - Explore the model used by Bank on San Francisco.
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# Reduce Predatory Lending and Other High-Cost Practices

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- Explore state or municipal legislative or regulatory options for...
    - Regulating licensing of predatory lending businesses.
    - Limiting licenses for payday lender or check cashers.
    - Regulating interest charged by financial service providers.
    - Banning other predatory lending practices.
  
  - Encourage employers to offer payroll options to low-income employees that reduce transaction and administrative costs.
  
  - Increase access to home ownership counseling and financial education.
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# Increase Financial Literacy

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- ❑ Embed effective and culturally/linguistically appropriate financial education and literacy training for adults in Providence in adult basic education and ESL classes.
  
  - ❑ Provide a variety of opportunities to teach young people financial literacy skills.
    - ❑ In the regular school curriculum.
    - ❑ Part of college financial planning.
    - ❑ Within after-school programs.
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# Connect Youth to Jobs and Post-Secondary Education

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# Expand Access to Workplace Learning

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- ❑ Further develop and expand Career and Technical Education (CTE) and career-related coursework in the Providence Public Schools to meaningfully involve every student.
  - ❑ Explore strategies to better connect youth with available resources to get advice and assistance with career exploration and jobs, such as the netWORKri Youth Career Center and programs funded through Workforce Solutions.
  - ❑ Expand access for Providence youth to career exploration and development opportunities in after-school programs, particularly those geared toward middle school and high school youth.
  - ❑ Build partnerships to expand access to work-based learning programs that offer educational remediation and job training for out-of-school youth, and include opportunities for out-of-school youth to connect to career pathways and post-secondary education.
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# Assist Youth with the College Application and Enrollment Process

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- Explore creating an office of post-secondary education within the Providence Public School Department.
    - A successful model in Chicago provides college transition support services to students, information on financial aid, and monitors enrollment and higher education success as part of a system to help teachers improve how they are preparing students.
  
  - Sustain and expand the work of youth leadership programs with a track record of helping student complete high school and enter college.
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# Prevent Poverty in Future Generations

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# Universal Access to Quality Early Childhood Programs

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- Actively champion the creation of access to universal pre-kindergarten for 3- and 4-year-olds in Providence.
    - Participate in the *Pre-Kindergarten Exploratory Group* recently convened by the Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and Rhode Island Kids Count.
  
  - Restore access to child care subsidies for low-income families by working with legislators to restore the eligibility thresholds for the program.
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# Prevent Teen Pregnancy and Provide Intensive Services for Parenting Teens

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- Explore possible models for a teen pregnancy prevention program designed to meet the needs of teens and their families in the low-income, ethnically diverse neighborhoods of Providence.
    - Review the literature and program model for Plain Talk, developed by the Annie E. Casey Foundation and now implemented in 13 communities with strong positive evaluation results.
  - Increase access for teens and their children to high quality early care and education programs, such as Early Head Start, Head Start, quality child care and pre-K programs to improve outcomes.
  - Improve access to evidence-based intensive support services for teen parents and their children, such as the Nurse Family Partnership.
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# State and Federal Policies to Support Opportunity

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# Appendices

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The Critical Importance of a High-Quality  
Public Education System

Affordable Housing in Providence

Prisoner Reentry Initiative

# Timeline

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- Task Force members will provide feedback on the draft report by Friday, September 28<sup>th</sup>.
  - The final report will be released on Thursday, November 1<sup>st</sup> from 9:00 – 10:30 a.m.
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