

Executive Order Number 2007-01
January 3, 2007

Establishing The Poverty, Work and Opportunity Task Force

WHEREAS, the City of Providence receives wide recognition for the revitalization of its downtown, its vibrant and culturally diverse neighborhoods, its rich traditions in art, architecture, design, theater and superior restaurants; however the story of Providence, like the story of cities across the country, is increasingly a tale of two cities; and

WHEREAS, Providence has the third highest child poverty rate in the United States of America for a city with over 100,000 residents according the 2000 US Census; and,

WHEREAS, since 1969, according to US Census data, there has been a steady and marked decline in the number of Providence families in the National Middle and High Income Brackets, so-called, and a steady increase in the number of families in the National Low Income Bracket, as follows:

- From 1969 to 1999 the percentage of Providence residents in the National Middle Income Bracket declined from 60.5% to 48.6%,
- Over the same period, those in Providence in the National High Income Bracket declined from 14.8% to 12.1%,
- Those in the National Low Income Bracket rose from 24.8% to 39.3%, a 14.5-point increase; and,

WHEREAS, for Providence's revitalization to continue, the City must retain and reclaim middle class residents, and increase the ability of low income working families to improve their economic status and successfully enter the middle class; and,

WHEREAS, being mindful that the City of Providence cannot do this alone in face of limited resources, decades of Federal neglect, years of under-investment by the State and anti-urban policies and practices at the State and Federal level which constrain city-level action; and,

WHEREAS, the City of Providence, utilizing financial support granted by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, seeks to develop and define an agenda to address the decline of the middle class and the barriers to economic advancement faced by families living in poverty in the City through the Poverty Study Task Force established by this Executive Order Number 2007-01.

NOW THEREFORE, do I, David N. Cicilline, Mayor of the City of Providence, order the following, effective immediately:

1. That there is hereby established the Poverty, Work and Opportunity Task Force. Said Task Force shall be composed of community leaders, policy experts, and community members experienced with the issue of poverty in the City of Providence who have the ability and resources to influence policy and implement strategies, as shall be appointed, from time to time, by the Mayor as may be deemed prudent and necessary to carry out the mission of said task force.

2. The Poverty, Work and Opportunity Task Force shall establish a set of clearly defined and feasible objectives and strategies to optimize collective impact and achieve substantial and quantifiable outcomes in the City's neighborhoods.

3. The Poverty, Work and Opportunity Task Force shall draw upon best practices nationwide at the municipal level as well as define new initiatives and models tailored to the needs of Providence and shall, among other things, build upon the research and policy work done to date on the topic of the "high cost of being poor."

4. That the work of the Poverty, Work and Opportunity Task Force shall be supported by Rhode Island KIDS COUNT, a Rhode Island not-for-profit organization, which will serve as the facilitator of task force meetings, as well as provide policy research to the task force.

5. Upon completion of its work, the Poverty, Work and Opportunity Task Force shall issue a final report with findings and recommendations to the City of Providence. The report should detail specific municipal policy and programmatic recommendations, specific state-level policy and programmatic recommendations, and identify the measurables that will be used to define policy objectives and to evaluate the effectiveness of the overall agenda.

David N. Cicilline
Mayor, City of Providence

Date: _____