

Dubuque Community Equitable Poverty Prevention Plan

Presentation to the City Council Work Session

January 11, 2021



AGENDA

- Watch “Taking on Poverty”
- Review the Scope of Work of the Project
- How We Went About Our Work
- Understanding Poverty in Dubuque
- Determinants of Poverty
 - Overview
 - What We Heard You Say
 - Promising Practices to Consider
- Infrastructure
- What’s Next

Scope of Work

- Describe the State of Poverty in Dubuque.
- Identify Services and Initiatives to Address Poverty.
- Gather Community Insights on Experiencing and Engaging Poverty.
- Identify Promising Practices to Reverse Poverty.
- Develop “Caucus for Community” Sessions on Promising Practices.
- Produce the Equitable Poverty Prevention Plan Report

How We Went About Our Work



UNDERSTANDING POVERTY

DEFINING Poverty in Dubuque

Most simply, an economic state when one's income can't cover the basic needs of everyday life.

- **Situational:** Due to a life event (e.g. death, job loss, poor health, pandemic).
- **Generational:** two generations experiencing poverty. No wealth to fall back on or hand down.
- **Extreme Poverty:** living at 50% below Federal Poverty Level.
- **Concentrated:** high numbers of poor living in neighborhoods. Census tracts 1 and 5 are such areas in Dubuque.

MEASURING Poverty in Dubuque

Official Poverty Measure (OPM) Significantly Underestimates Poverty Levels

16%

The Federal Poverty Level 2018

\$25,100

The Annual Amount that a family of four is expected to live on -- \$2,092 a month.

24%

Of Families of Four Survive on
\$3,138 month (150% Poverty)

City of Dubuque, ACS 2018

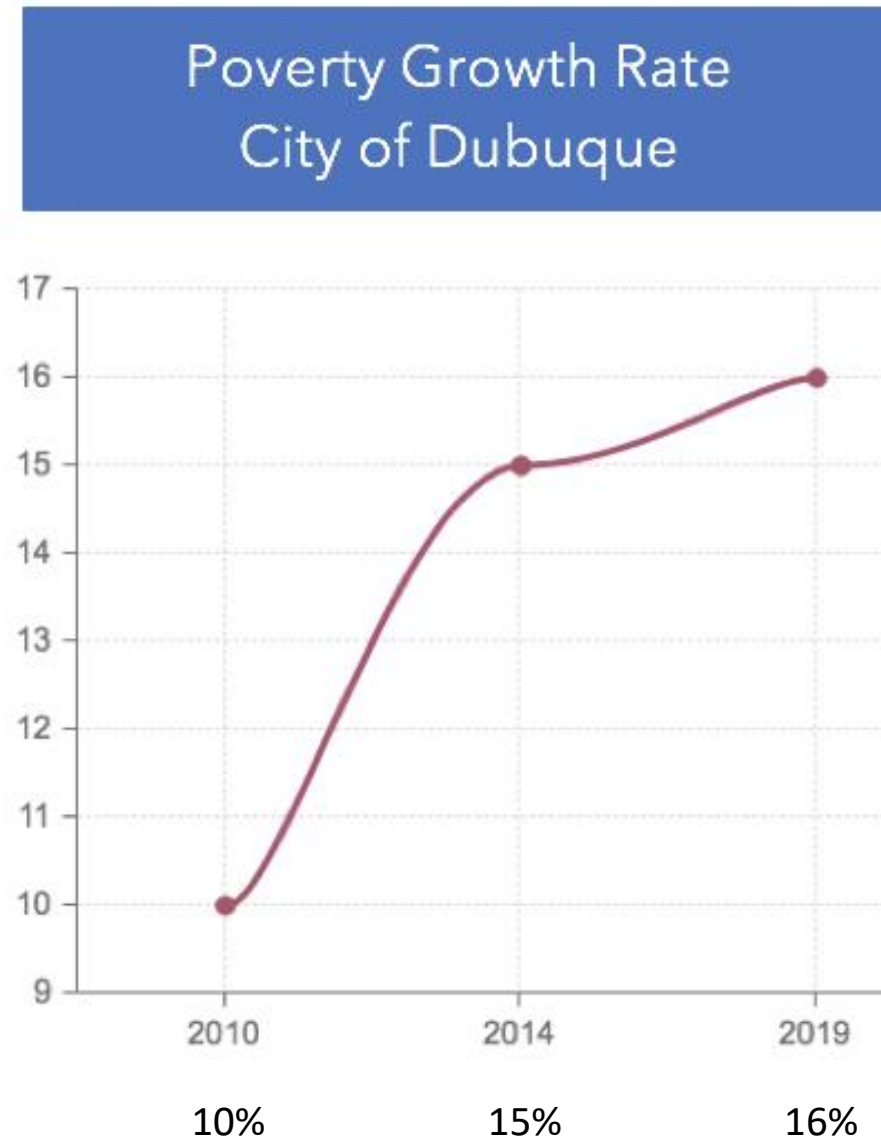
32%

Of Families of Four Survive on
\$4,183 month (200% Poverty)

City of Dubuque, ACS 2018

RISING Poverty in Dubuque

This shows a 60% increase over the last ten years and the rate continues to rise.



RACIAL DISPARITIES

Poverty in Dubuque

The Black community in Dubuque is four times as likely to be poor as their White neighbors, almost twice as likely as Blacks statewide, and two and a half times as likely to live in poverty as Blacks nationwide.

**Table 7: City of Dubuque Percent of Poverty Within Racial Groups
100 Percent Federal Poverty Level 2018**

Race	Number in Poverty	Percent	Iowa	United States
White Alone	6,416	13%	9.9%	10.9%
Black or African American Alone	1,467	56%	30.7%	22.5%
Pacific Islander	146	38%	Not Available	16.7%
Asian	128	17%	14.5%	10.8%
Some Other Race	210	67%	25.3%	20.1%
Two or More Races	224	26%	25.4%	15.9%
Latinx	274	22%	20.1%	18.8%
Total in Poverty	8,856	16%	11.2%	13.1%

Source: [American Community Survey, 2018 Table ID: S1701](#)

Source: [Iowa Census Data 2018](#)

Source: [U.S. Census Data 2018](#)

TAKING ON POVERTY: THE DETERMINANTS



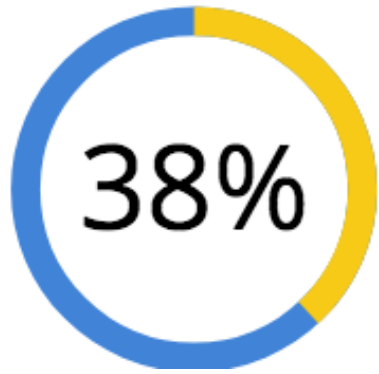
DETERMINANTS

Poverty in Dubuque

Nearly 60% of Service Providers see poverty as a Very Large or Large **Challenge** in Dubuque.
(Pre-COVID-19)



ECONOMIC INSECURITY



Of unemployed women live in poverty.

Barriers to Building Wealth:

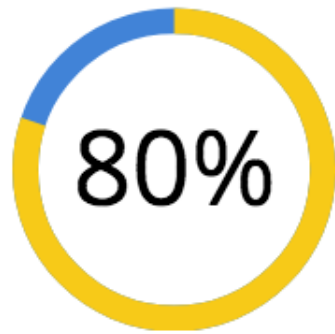
- Wages are low; not considered a “Living Wage.”
- Many poor work part-time jobs. Higher the hourly wage, less hours offered.
- Lack of banking leads to costly payday lenders.
- Fees & Fines contribute to a spiral of debt.
- Cliff Effect traps workers into low wage jobs.
- “Check the Box” traps released adults from prison from jobs, housing, loans, education.

PROMISING PRACTICES

ECONOMIC
INSECURITY

1. City promotes a Living Wage Certificate among employers.
2. Create a Financial Empowerment Collaborative to explore "Social Enterprise Opportunities" among Anchor Institutions.
3. Promote Financial Equity practices among banks & Home Ownership.
4. Pass City Ordinance on "Ban the Box" and promote Fair Chance Pledge.
5. Provide "Fees & Fines" relief among persons in poverty.
6. Support mentoring programs to assist poor in getting jobs and Financial Literacy.

TRANSPORTATION



Of public transportation patrons report annual income of less than \$35,000.

- A disconnect between those who design the public transit system and those who use it.
- Bus system considered confusing, routes are too long, and limited. Not conducive to getting or keeping a job.
- It's expensive to get a car and maintain a used car.
- Need to address synchronizing transit with school schedules and state 2-mile radius code impacting low-income children.

PROMISING PRACTICES

1. Employers consider on-demand ride-share collaboratives for employees during off-schedule hours.
2. Conduct Study on 2-mile radius impact on attendance among Title 1 elementary schools.
3. Consider consumer-directed ride model for the Jule.
4. Consider family discounts, off-peak fare cuts & Transit Checks.
5. Conduct comprehensive assessment with consumer input in addressing issues raised by focus groups and interviews.

EDUCATION & SKILLS TRAINING



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Proficiency scores of children in Title 1 Elementary Schools lower than district average by 20 percent.

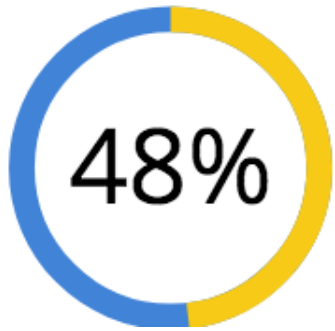
- Up to one-third of students in Title 1 elementary schools move during the school year.
- Impact of poverty on children is high; creates need for trauma-informed care & teaching.
- Need for family engagement – Home Connector model very helpful and needed.
- Need for greater access for youth in poverty to gain access to higher ed and skill training.

PROMISING PRACTICES

EDUCATION &
SKILLS TRAINING

1. Create City-Wide “Prosperity Coordinating Council” bringing together education and the determinants of poverty to holistically integrate services & delivery.
2. Co-sponsor career-oriented programs for youth.
3. Continue to support & enhance mentoring of persons returning from incarceration.
4. Continue & enhance funding for youth programs.
5. Support Dubuque Community School District on initiatives that increase collaboration with teachers, students & families with community services and City-sponsored programs.

HEALTH & FOOD INSECURITY



Of County Health Needs Assessment survey respondents say providers don't accept Medicaid (2018).

1. Difficulty finding Medicaid providers for health care is seen as a major issue.
2. The opioid crisis & other drug addictions are very serious and accessing services is difficult.
3. Mental and Brain Health services are in great need; accessing them is difficult.
4. Those in focus groups experiencing poverty report that mental & brain health highly affected by trauma & stress.
5. In Dubuque County 13% of children are food insecure. A high proportion of children in Title 1 schools rely on their free lunch and breakfast as their main meals of the day.

PROMISING PRACTICES

HEALTH & FOOD
INSECURITY

1. Establish “Community Health Network” to encourage more peer-to-peer health education at neighborhood level.
2. Through the Data Collaborative develop deep data with health care groups, social services, schools, County Health Department to track health outcomes.
3. Continue support of Community Brain Health initiatives.
4. Facilitate creation of Food Pantry App for easy access & scheduling, gather info from consumers.
5. Create jobs along food distribution chain.

RACIAL EQUITY

In the city, nearly sixty percent of Blacks (56%) live in poverty; as do 22% of Latinx and 38 % percent of Marshallese compared to 13 percent of Whites.

American Community Survey, U.S. Census, 2018

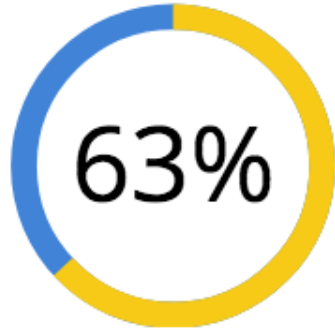
- Blacks & People of Color on all measures of prosperity fare significantly worse than whites.
- Blacks incur very high arrest rates for marijuana possession & disproportionate suspension rates from high-school.
- Blacks & PoC can't build wealth: low-paying jobs, unbanked, pay high interest rates.
- Health disparities high among Blacks & PoC.

PROMISING PRACTICES

RACIAL EQUITY

1. Create a Racial Equity Index to identify, track & measure outcomes to reverse disparities among poverty determinants.
2. The School Resource Officer Committee consider suggestions cited in this report for further analysis.
3. Create a “Diversion Work Group” with advocacy groups among the Black community and justice system to analyze arrests & divert youth/adults from jail.
4. Add a Social Worker to work with and accompany police on calls that are domestic and/or brain and mental health related.
5. Keep Talking (e.g. Real Talk, Switching Places). Use “All Community Reads” via library to read, “So You Want to Talk About Race.”

HOUSING



The percent of Housing Units that do **not** accept housing vouchers in city of Dubuque.

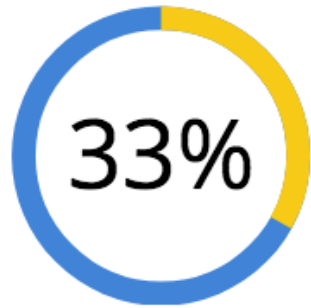
Source: Housing Authority, Email on Housing Voucher Statistics, November 5, 2020.

- Affordable safe housing is out of reach for most low-income persons forcing them into subpar housing.
- The rent burden is high among people in poverty and only 17% of those eligible for a federally funded housing voucher in Dubuque receive one.
- Dubuque has two of the highest concentrated neighborhoods of people living in poverty in the state (Tracts 1 and 5). (<https://247wallst.com/>)

PROMISING PRACTICES

1. Adopt a Source of Income Ordinance for acceptance of Housing Vouchers among low-income persons.
2. Consider a pilot for training “Resident/Citizen Inspectors” that can support Housing Inspectors & expand pilot on Testing for Fair Housing.
3. Implement & prioritize the recommendations in the 2019 Proposed Fair Housing Plan. Pursue Rapid Re-Housing Strategies & Inclusionary Zoning.
4. Enact a Just Cause Eviction Ordinance, create an Eviction Study Group and increase funding for legal representation of renters facing eviction.
5. Create a “Housing & School Life” Study Group to address relationship of housing to a child’s well-being & school performance.

CHILDREN & YOUTH



One-third of children under the age of 5 years lives below the Official Poverty Measure in the city of Dubuque.

- Living in poverty is considered an Adverse Childhood Event with lifetime consequences.
- One in four third graders are **not** reading at grade level in Dubuque – a strong predictor of not graduating from high-school.
- The lack of affordable quality child care in Dubuque is high & prevents employment of parents.
- Pandemic-related learning loss among low income families faced with digital divide will require innovative intervention.

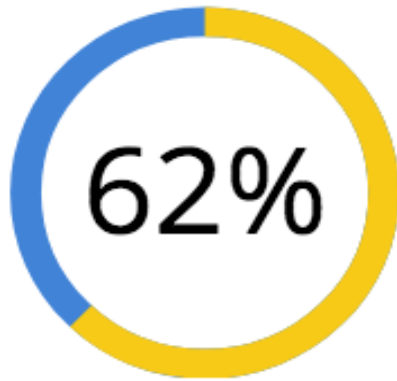
PROMISING PRACTICES

CHILDREN & YOUTH

1. Business sector is key in offering child care assistance onsite or via vouchers. Adopt ideas presented in “Child Care Access in Greater Dubuque” report (Community Foundation of Greater Dubuque).
2. Create a Task Force on Child Care Deserts and Child Care Worker Shortage.
3. Advocate for state-funded full-day Pre-K for four-year-old children.
4. Support “Every Child Reads” efforts to unify community action around early care and education.
5. Facilitate launching a “Safe Learning Environment” initiative within schools to provide trauma-informed counseling for students & their families.
6. Hold an annual “Youth Summit” to address young people’s prosperity (teens and college age group). Collect and analyze data to assess needs & track outcomes.

TAKING ON POVERTY: INFRASTRUCTURE

OBSTACLES TO ACCESS



Of Providers say there are “too many forms to fill out.”

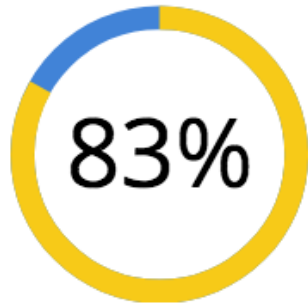
- Over 200 organizations provide services to low-income persons among 26 categories.
- Each group has its own application & eligibility requirements.
- Each group has its own data for analysis.
- Focus Groups with those experiencing poverty report navigating the maze of service providers as extremely difficult.

PROMISING PRACTICES

ACCESS TO
SERVICES

1. Develop a Benefits Screening Universal Core Application
2. Reimagine the Library as a Point of Friendly Access
3. Subsidize Internet Access in Low-Income Neighborhoods
4. Develop Digital Equity Plan

COLLECTIVE IMPACT v. SILOS



Of providers agree that, “People are falling through the cracks.”

- Despite a myriad of programs, reports, and studies on poverty, it remains on the rise.
- Moving to a Collective Impact Model requires a convener with backbone organizations addressing specific areas of poverty that are in sync.
- Objective is to provide strategic coherence, stakeholder engagement, communications, data collection and coordination to systemically address poverty.
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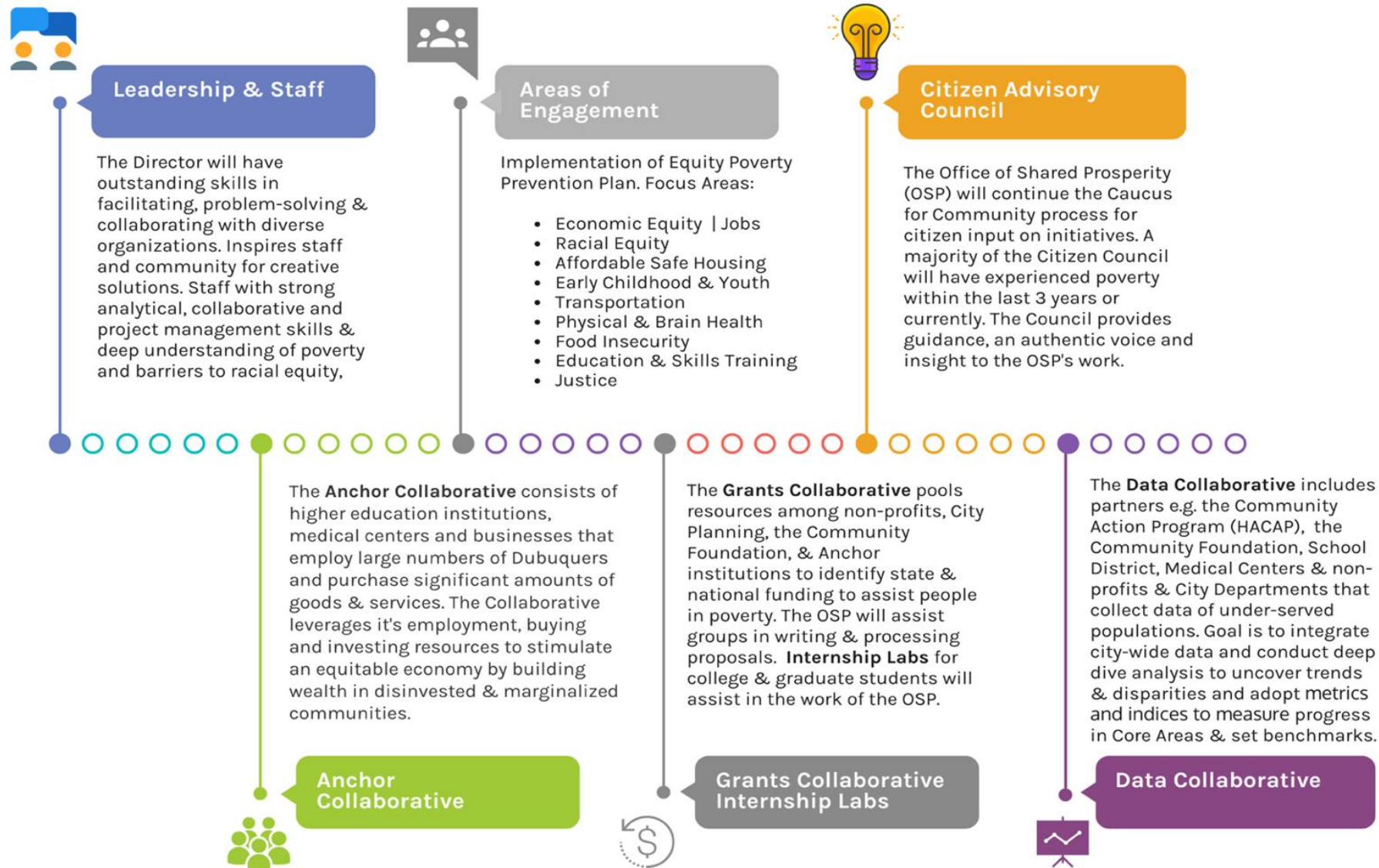
PROMISING PRACTICE: OFFICE OF SHARED PROSPERITY

FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLE

Taking on poverty and bringing about shared prosperity in the City of Dubuque is a **community** “all hands-on deck” endeavor. It requires every sector – business, financial, education, philanthropic, faith-based, non-profit, government and advocates – to address the widespread impact of poverty among us and reverse its course.

City of Dubuque Office of Shared Prosperity

Pursuing an equitable and prosperous community for all



QUESTIONS & COMMENTS

