

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES  
MAY 16, 2016

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Shay, LaPointe, Campbell, Pitts, Fedler, Moore

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT: Suprenant

SUPERVISORS: Gang, Idleman, O'Brien, Armstrong

Debra Prehoda, Clerk

Chris DeBolt, County Administrator

Al Nolette, Treasurer

Gina Cantanucci-Mitchell, OFA Director

Kathy McIntyre, Deputy Director Public Health

Tina McDougall, Public Hlth Fiscal Manager

Claire Murphy, EOC Executive Director

Tammy DeLorme, Commissioner DSS

Mike Gray, Youth Bureau

Rob York, Director, Mental Health

Public

AGENDA AS PRESENTED IN COMMITTEE NOTICE:

1) Call to Order

2) Accept Minutes – April 27, 2016

3) Department Reports/Requests:

A. ADRC/OFA

1) Washington County Senior of the Year Presentation

B. Department of Social Services

1) Program Update

C. Mental Health/Community Services

1) Request for Budget Amendment – Recognize Funding \$4,486 Council for Prevention

2) Prevention Services Overview – Council for Prevention

4) Other Business

5) Adjournment

Chairman Shay called the meeting to order at 10:00 A.M.

A motion to approve the minutes of the April 27, 2016 meeting was moved by Mr. LaPointe, seconded by Mr. Moore and adopted.

ADRC/OFA – Gina Cantanucci-Mitchell, Director, addressed the following item with the committee:

- Washington County Senior of the Year Presentations – May is Older American's month and Gina Cantanucci-Mitchell, Director, recognized the two Senior of the Year recipients, Ruth Scribner and Don Brooks. The recipients were presented with a proclamation and Washington County pin.

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES – Tammy DeLorme, Commissioner, addressed the following items with the committee:

- Program Updates:
  - Post Star Article on Foster Care – copy attached.
  - 2016 Safe Harbour Initiative Funding relating to the Sexually Exploited Children and Youth Program in the amount of \$75,000 – The Commissioner plans to utilize the majority of this funding, \$64,000 for training. She also plans to do a lot of outreach and information sharing using \$10,000 for a copier for the Youth Bureau to print brochures and pamphlets. The Youth Bureau and DSS will be working together on this initiative. The remaining \$1,000 applied toward software expenses. A motion to amend budget to recognize Safe Harbour Initiative funding in the amount of \$75,000 increasing office equipment by \$10,000, training and education by \$64,000 and software by \$1,000 was moved by Mr. Campbell, seconded Mrs. Fedler and Messrs.

LaPointe, Pitts and Moore and adopted. Mike Gray, Youth Bureau/Alternative Sentencing Director, highlighted the collaboration between the two departments and stated by purchasing the copier with the Safe Harbour Initiative funding he will not have to use the \$6,000 local dollars he budgeted this year for a new copier.

- Supervision and Treatment Services for Juveniles Program (STSJP) – DSS and the Youth Bureau/Alternative Sentencing work closely together to provide programs such as Community Restoration, working with teens that come through the system and electronic monitoring. Typically, this is the time of year that the funding comes in for the next program year but the State has elected to change the program year for the STSJP funding from April 2016 through March 2017 to October 2016 through September 2017. The State believes that will be beneficial but they are not providing any additional funds for the gap between April 2016 and October 2016. They have spent their allocation for the previous program year. The Commissioner stated they receive the STSJP allotment and also a detention allotment and they are able to move monies from detention into STSJP each year and they do that. She has asked the State and they have said that through a waiver, they can request to have unspent detention funds moved into STSJP to utilize those funds through the next six months. She wanted to advise the committee of this change and thinks they will be okay with the budget. Advised that a letter is coming to the County Executives in a day or two explaining what the waiver process is. She will work with Mike Gray, Youth Bureau/Alternative Sentencing Director, to submit a waiver for use of these funds.
- Rural Impact County Challenge: A National Effort to Combat Rural Child Poverty – Chris DeBolt, County Administrator, forwarded information from the National Association of Counties (NaCo) on the Rural Impact County Challenge: A National Effort to Combat Rural Child Poverty to Claire Murphy and Tammy DeLorme. Claire Murphy, EOC Executive Director, distributed the attached information packet including information on the Rural Impact County Challenge, a proposed resolution, and EOC information on poverty in Washington County. She stated they are looking for counties to participate in a rural poverty initiative that focuses on alleviating poverty for children and families and they are convening a group in Long Beach, California as part of the NaCo Annual Convention in July. She stated the initiative goes nicely with what EOC and county departments have started in terms of anti-poverty conversations, how do we talk about poverty in Washington County and how do we look at addressing poverty in Washington County. This provides an opportunity to leverage some additional resources and possible funds to support that initiative. What would be required for their participation is to sign on through a Board resolution designating the County's participation in the process and participation in the discussion in Long Beach, California in July 2016. The packet of information includes a proposed resolution. EOC is not an agency of Washington County government but she would be more than proud to represent the County at the conference and also asking that Tammy DeLorme, DSS Commissioner, be allowed to accompany her as a representative of the County to the conference. This two-day training is on a Saturday and Sunday in July in Long Beach, California. EOC is responsible for her travel/training related costs. A motion to approve resolution to support Washington County participation in the National Association of Counties Rural Impact County Challenge to address issues of Chronic Rural Poverty and direct county agencies, organizations and individuals to participate in a coordinated effort to address issues within Washington County was moved by Mr. Campbell and seconded by Mr. LaPointe. Discussion. Mr. Shaw asked if there was any cost associated with this resolution. Chairman Shay and Mr. Campbell stated no cost for the resolution and they will talk about the trip after the resolution. The Treasurer stated this is just a resolution in support of EOC.

Claire stated this resolution will actually allow, she has identified three funding sources that could possibly support these initiatives and this resolution validates and lends credibility to our efforts to put this with our funding applications and leverage that money which comes from the Health Foundation of New York, Adirondack Health Institute and other foundations and State funding sources. The motion to approve resolution to support Washington County participation in the National Association of Counties Rural Impact County Challenge to address issues of Chronic Rural Poverty and direct county agencies, organizations and individuals to participate in a coordinated effort to address issues within Washington County was moved by Mr. Campbell, seconded by Mr. LaPointe and adopted. (Note: Mr. Pitts was not in the room for the vote.) EOC is paying for Claire's trip expenses and the Commissioner stated she does have funding in the department's training budget but this is an unanticipated expense and she is uncomfortable using such a large percentage of it for herself and needs to evaluate the budget. She is looking at signing on as a partner with Adirondack Health Institute and trying to determine how much more work that actually puts on staff if they do that. This might allow her to utilize the same funding that Claire is using to fund her trip but needs to research this further and suggested bringing this back to the Finance Committee. A motion to recommend moving trip approval/costs to the Finance Committee for consideration was moved by Mr. Campbell and seconded by Messrs. Moore and LaPointe. Discussion. Claire estimated the cost to be about \$1700. Mr. Campbell praised NaCo and the Adirondack Health Institute. Chris DeBolt, County Administrator, stated this precipitated with him sending this information to Claire and Tammy because in looking at the program as it was briefly described in the notice from NaCo it looked exactly like the Bridges Out of Poverty initiative that Claire has started to put together with our departments. His goal is that this would open new funding streams. He also understands he is putting Tammy in an uncomfortable position in requesting that she be sent to California and her reluctance to something that came through him not from her to take a large portion of her training budget and use it on herself. He stated it would be well worth the County's money to put contingency funds toward this trip expense. The motion to recommend moving trip approval/costs to the Finance Committee for consideration was moved by Mr. Campbell, seconded by Messrs. Moore and LaPointe and adopted.

MENTAL HEALTH – Rob York, Director, addressed the following item with the committee:

- Budget Amendment – Recognize \$4,486 Council for Prevention – A motion to amend budget and contract for the Council for Prevention, Inc., to allow pass through of 100% State/Federal funding from the NYS Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services in the amount of \$4486 to cover increased health and worker's compensation insurance costs was moved by Mrs. Fedler, seconded by Mr. Campbell and adopted.
- Prevention Services Overview – Council for Prevention – David Saffer, Executive Director of the Council for Prevention, Inc., provided an overview of their services and what they are doing in the community. The majority of what they do is data driven and provided information on the school survey they conduct every two years. In 2014, three thousand two hundred sixty (3260) students in Washington County in grades 7 – 12 representing all the school districts in the County participated in the survey. The survey data indicated the following: 35% talk about using alcohol in their lifetime, 20% using marijuana in their lifetime, 8% prescription drugs except in the twelfth grade where the rates were twice the national average, 28.5% talked about being depressed in the last twelve months and 238 students have attempted suicide and more than have of those 238 have tried it more than once, a very alarming statistic. Based on that, they build their services by community based on what they see in that survey and what the needs are. What type of services do they provide:

providing educational services in the school districts on substance abuse and mental health issues, sponsor the SADD Program – Students Against Destructive Decisions, Natural Helpers programs, some summer programs and an anti-bullying program. Also, the Challenge Program developed with the Center for Recovery for substance abusing adolescents. Recently starting doing trauma informed care trainings and trainings in adult and adolescent mental health. Working on the heroin issues in the two counties through the Hometown vs. Heroin & Addiction Group and in the last sixteen months they have held 19 community forums to try to raise awareness, seventeen articles in the Post Star newspaper, discussing treatment services and how do we address the problem. They have increased awareness but the overdoses have not stopped. The Council is really trying to meet community needs.

#### OTHER BUSINESS:

YOUTH BUREAU – Mike Gray, Director, addressed the following item with the committee:

- Staffing Pattern Change – Requesting permission to change his staffing pattern to upgrade a position from Program Aide, Grade 7, to Program Assistant, Grade 9. The reason being he has exhausted Civil Service with three people turning down the job, put someone in the position for five months but it did not work out, so working with Personnel, he has reviewed the duties and responsibilities of their program needs. He has funds in the current budget to cover this added expense. This grade will give him a person that will allow him to backfill positions when someone is out with a vacation and not leave a void. A motion to forward Staffing Pattern change to the Personnel Committee for consideration was moved by Mr. Pitts, seconded by Mr. Campbell and adopted.

PUBLIC HEALTH – Kathy McIntyre, Deputy Director, addressed the following items with the committee:

- Program Updates:
  - Car Seat grant covers the technicians to be recertified, Elizabeth St. John and Officer Teft of the Greenwich/Cambridge PD. A motion to approve training and recertification of technicians was moved by Mr. Campbell, seconded by Mr. LaPointe and adopted.
  - Healthy Foods Initiative – Starting to work with Glens Falls Hospital on a healthy foods initiative called the Feel Good Movement that brings healthy food to the workplace. Washington County employees can order the healthy food items and vegetables for pick up during the week. This grant allows Glens Falls Hospital to supplement some of that cost; for example a bag for a family member is \$30 and with GF Hospital supplementing, the cost would be \$23. Public Health is just starting these discussions.
  - Tai Chi for Arthritis - Working with the Quality and Technical Assistance Center to gather data for our tai chi program for arthritis for the elderly which they partnered with ADRC/Office for the Aging. They have a program in Whitehall with ten seniors and will get some reimbursement for it if they meet the qualifications and the data has to be submitted. They are hoping to expand this program.

The meeting adjourned 10:54 A.M.

*Respectfully submitted,*  
*Debra Prehoda, Clerk*  
*Washington County Board of Supervisors*

[http://poststar.com/news/local/hudson-falls-couple-makes-foster-children-part-of-the-family/article\\_3db09381-7a4a-5139-963a-8cc02c6330e8.html](http://poststar.com/news/local/hudson-falls-couple-makes-foster-children-part-of-the-family/article_3db09381-7a4a-5139-963a-8cc02c6330e8.html)

## Hudson Falls couple makes foster children part of the family

KATHLEEN MOORE [kmoore@poststar.com](mailto:kmoore@poststar.com) May 8, 2016



Ashleigh Abreu photos—Special to The Post-Star

Zander Wheeler, 10, Andrea Wheeler, 18, Nick Anderson, Andrea's boyfriend, to her left, Cindy Wheeler, mother, Jeff Mia Wheeler, 17, Desiree Wheeler, 16, on her back, Crystal Vanness, 20, Anelique (soon to be) Wheeler, 15, and Jeffr walk back to camp Friday afternoon at their camp at Adirondack Gateway Resort in Gansevoort. The Hudson Falls couple makes foster children in Washington County and make them all feel part of the family.

Tammy DeLorme has a dream.

<http://poststar.com/news/local/hudson-falls-couple-makes-foster-children-part-of-the-famil...> 5/16/2016

The Washington County commissioner of Social Services would love an abundance of foster homes, so many that she could carefully select each foster child's new home, rather than calling every home to find someone who would say yes.

"If we have more homes, I think kids would have less time in foster care," she said. "They wouldn't have to go to accelerated levels of care if a family could give them individual attention. Sometimes there's so many kids, it's just overwhelming."

For Mother's Day, county officials described the importance of foster parents at a time when a child's biological parents can't take care of them.

Foster parents do far more than simply house and feed a child. They help the child recover from the trauma of being ripped from home, while also working with the child's parents to get them to a point where they can care for the child again.

That might mean encouraging a single mother to make it through rehab, or to stay on mental health medications.

At the same time, the foster parents must learn how to raise a child who may be acting out. Is it because of trauma? Is the child just infuriated being in foster care?

If the foster parents are at a loss, that child might move to another home, and then another. The more children bounce from place to place, the harder it is for them to connect to their caregivers and begin to thrive, DeLorme said.

Some of those children end up in a psychiatric hospital, or a group home, or a residential camp like the one proposed in Hebron.

It doesn't have to be that way, DeLorme thinks.

She envisions a system in which every foster home takes just one foster family at a time. That means siblings stay together, and don't move into a home that has any other foster children.

<http://poststar.com/news/local/hudson-falls-couple-makes-foster-children-part-of-the-famil...> 5/16/2016

That would allow the foster parents to focus on working with just one set of birth parents, she said. And they would be able to focus on the issues of just one family, she added.

There's not enough foster parents for that dream right now.

"My biggest need in the foster care realm is family homes. We really, really need more family homes," she said.

While it might seem counter-intuitive, in that ideal world children might change foster homes a little more often, added Washington County Director of Children's Services Karen Baker.

If there were more families to choose from, they might move children to a better match after learning about the children's needs, she said.

"We learn things after kids are placed," she explained. "I feel like at times, we may work really hard to salvage (the foster relationship) because what we have is all we've got."

They also bend over backwards to keep the children in their school district, which sometimes involves complex transportation agreements when the only available foster home isn't in the school district. In one case, a bus stop was three miles away from the home.

Then there's the other relationship to consider.

"We would want the foster parents and birth parent to make an immediate connection," she said, envisioning a relationship in which the two sets of parents could operate as smoothly as an amicably divorced couple.

"It's rare," she admitted.

If the birth parent's children are spread among two or more foster families, it's also

harder for the multitude of foster parents to connect with the birth parent.

But right now, most foster and birth parents are in that situation. The county has 10 sibling groups spread among 17 foster homes.

Less than half of them move from home to home, Baker estimated. But for those who move several times, it's still devastating, said foster parent Cindy Wheeler of Hudson Falls.

Wheeler's husband Jeff knows about that first hand. He spent his teen years in foster care.

"I wasn't in the best of homes, and I thought we could do much better," he said. "It's not really too hard. You just treat everyone the same. There's no favoritism. Everyone comes into our house with a clean slate."

Cindy Wheeler of Hudson Falls, who cares for seven children, including three biological children, said the trauma of being forced to leave parents is compounded by repeated moves in foster care.

"They're already dealing with loss from being taken from their homes," she said. "Moving is just more loss."

So when they get to her house, they stay.

She treats them all as her own children, and they respond to that.

It starts with little things. Her oldest child is 18 and still gets a hug at bedtime. So Wheeler offers a hug to every child. There are two children in each bedroom at her house. One child does not stay with the family.

"Nine times out of 10, they want a hug," she said. "After a couple nights, I don't ask anymore."

They just get a hug — like everyone else.

During the day, she drives them to their appointments, activities and jobs, while Jeff works as a mechanic. The state pays for the children's food, health care and other expenses. There's a subsidy for clothing and foster parents can also ask for special payments for sports, summer camp or even prom dresses.

Every weekend they all go to the family camp at Adirondack Gateway Resort, and the Wheelers go through the sometimes arduous task of getting permission for each child to attend the family's longer vacations as well.

"When we go on vacation, I don't send them to a respite home," she said. "I just make sure they're involved in everything."

That goes for big things, too. Her brother's girlfriend once told her that she couldn't bring foster children to her niece's birthday party.

"I said, then I'm not coming."

Her brother stepped in.

"He told her, basically, if you can't accept her whole family, you can't accept any of them," Wheeler said.

Treating them as members of her family comes with a price, though. It can be devastating to say goodbye.

Her first placement was two children, ages 2 and 3. She cared for them for seven months, until their mother was able to care for them again.

"I'll never forget the day they left," she said. "I was to drive their stuff to their mom's place. The two-year-old was crying and holding me. The mother promised me visits, which I never got."

They're 7 and 8 years old now. She got to see them recently.

"They don't remember us. It was heartbreaking," she said.

There's been other losses as well. That's what she calls them: losses. She's lost members of her family. It's that hard.

But opening her heart to them is not just the right thing to do, she said. It's the only way.

"I just try to make them feel like they're part of the family," she said.

*You can reach Kathleen Moore at 742-3247 or [kmoore@poststar.com](mailto:kmoore@poststar.com). Follow her on Twitter @ByKathleenMoore or at her blog on [www.poststar.com](http://www.poststar.com).*

### Foster care by the numbers

Here is a breakdown of the care of foster children in Washington County.

41
number of Washington County foster youths
2
youths staying with their birth parents on a trial basis
10
youths in residential care facilities
29
youths in 17 foster homes
\$24.36
per day rate paid to foster parents for teenagers
\$72 to \$88
monthly clothing subsidy for teenagers

### How to become a foster parent

- In Washington County, Berkshire Farm Center & Services for Youth trains and certifies all foster parents.
- Apply by calling Berkshire at 925-8926.



# Rural Impact County Challenge: A National Effort to Combat Rural Child Poverty

## RURAL IMPACT COUNTY CHALLENGE

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Small towns and rural communities are home to millions of Americans, are a vibrant part of our nation's economy, and include some of the most beautiful landmarks in the country. Rural America provides the vast majority of food, energy, and environmental benefits for the rest of the country. Additionally, rural communities are the source of nearly 90 percent of renewable water resources, and home to important service sector and manufacturing hubs.

Despite this critical role in our nation's economy, too many Americans in rural areas are not sharing in our nation's economic growth. A full 85 percent of our country's persistent poverty counties are in rural America. Lack of opportunity for rural kids and families is often compounded by other challenges, including distance from health and early learning programs, lack of access to public transportation, and higher rates of drug and substance abuse. But for all kids, the road to successful adulthood relies on a strong foundation of access to basic health, nutrition, high-quality early education, strong schools, and support from parents and caregivers.

## Counties Leading the Way

Recognizing the critical role local officials play in supporting innovation and change, the National Association of Counties (NACo) and the White House Rural Council have come together on a national initiative to help advance counties' efforts to reduce the number of rural children and families living in poverty. The Rural Impact County Challenge (RICC) seeks to recognize and support counties making real difference in the lives of children in rural communities.

The RICC consists of two components:

(1) **A Call to Action** demonstrating strong county leadership, commitment, and vision to achieve concrete results on behalf of rural children and families. The Call to Action asks counties to develop

or refine an actionable plan that can be used to achieve local and state-level impacts. As part of this Call to Action, county elected officials will pass a resolution to work with local, state, and federal entities (e.g., schools, health and social service providers, and state and federal policymakers), children and families, and other key stakeholders on the following actions:

- **Convene or draw on a diverse team of leaders and decision makers** from multiple agencies committed to reducing the number of children and families in rural areas living in poverty
- **Develop a plan** with measurable outcomes that improves access, participation, and/or impact of evidence-based and other promising practices in one or more of the following areas: early childhood education, nutrition, workforce development, and health and human services.
- **Implement research-based approaches** that advance the plan.
- **Create a process to track progress** using data and information systems, and to report on successes.

In addition to national recognition as local leaders creating opportunity in rural communities, County Challenge participants will receive a weekly newsletter with rural-focused research and state and federal funding opportunities, invitations to participate in monthly webinars with Senior Administration Officials and fellow Challenge participants, and a platform for peer learning opportunities to share best practices and barriers

(2) A **National Convening** of County Challenge participants, Administration officials, thought leaders, and practitioners. This summer, the White House Rural Council and NACo will lead a convening to highlight progress and innovation in advancing county-led plans to reduce the number of rural children and families living in poverty. The summit will help counties advance their plans and measure progress while identifying best practices from counties across the country that have developed successful and scalable evidence-based programs or initiatives designed to combat chronic rural poverty on a local and regional basis.

**Title: A resolution to support Washington County participation in the National Association of Counties Rural Impact County Challenge to address issues of Chronic Rural Poverty and direct county agencies, organizations and individuals to participate in a coordinated effort to address issues within Washington County.**

**WHEREAS**, small towns and rural communities are home to millions of Americans and are a vibrant part of our nation's economy; and

**WHEREAS**, in 2014, approximately 1.4 million children in rural areas were poor and over 700,000 children lived in rural families with cash incomes that fell below half of the poverty line; and

**WHEREAS**, high rates of poverty have persisted for generations, including over 300 rural counties with poverty rates of over 20 percent in every Census since 1980; and

**WHEREAS**, investing in poor children and their families not only reduces poverty in the near term, but also improves children's education, health, and earnings outcomes later in life; and

**WHEREAS**, rural and tribal communities face distinct challenges, including limited access to critical services, fewer job prospects, and in some places, relative lack of institutional capacity; and

**WHEREAS**, no matter where they live, all families aspire for the cornerstones of economic security: a well-paying job, child care, a college education, health care, a home, and retirement; and

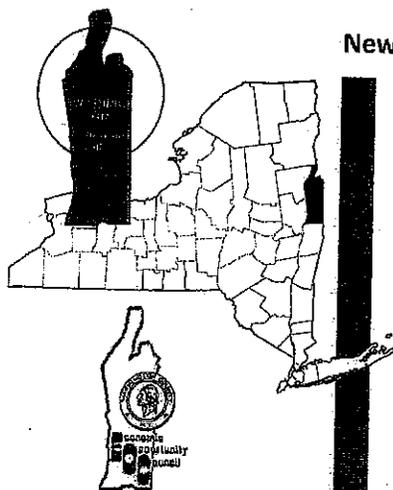
**WHEREAS**, Washington County and all counties recognize that a child's zip code should not determine her destiny, and that every child should have the opportunity to succeed; and

**WHEREAS**, Washington County Economic Opportunity Council, Inc., together with county departments, school districts, faith based groups, health care and other social services providers has been engaged in an active and purposeful discussion to address issues of intergenerational poverty with Washington County and has agreed to work collaboratively toward the development of community capacity to address poverty issues in Washington County; and

**WHEREAS**, through *The Rural Impact County Challenge*, the National Association of Counties and the White House Rural Council are encouraging public, private and nonprofit leaders to reduce the number of children living in poverty in rural areas;

**NOW, THEREFORE, LET IT BE RESOLVED**, that the Washington County Board of Supervisors, does hereby sign on to the Call to Action to reduce the number of children living in poverty, commit to sharing lessons learned with other counties in New York state and across the country to support a national initiative and encourage all county officials, employees and residents to participate in *The Rural Impact County Challenge*. We resolve to utilize the resources available through *The Rural Impact County Challenge* to:

- Support Washington County Economic Opportunity Council, Inc. continued efforts to convene and draw on a diverse team of leaders and decision makers from multiple agencies committed to reducing the number of children and families in rural areas living in poverty.
- Support the development a plan with measurable outcomes that improves access, participation, and/or impact of evidence-based and other promising practices in one or more of the following areas: early childhood education, nutrition, workforce development, and health and human services.
- Implement research-based approaches that advance the plan.
- Create a process to track progress using data and information systems, and to report on successes.



383 Broadway  
Fort Edward, NY 12828  
518.746.2390

County Population:  
62,910

Population for whom  
poverty status is determined:

Overall  
59,503  
Population Under 18  
12,525  
Population 25 & Over  
42,288  
Population over 65  
9,785

**13.0%**  
**COUNTY**  
**POVERTY**  
**RATE**

**Living In Poverty**

Individuals  
13.0% 7,760  
Children (Under 18)  
19.5% 2,443  
Adults 25+  
10.2% 4,328  
Senior Citizens 65+  
7.1% 695

# Washington County

Washington County EOC, Inc.  
www.washingtoncountyeoc.com

## Race & Poverty

White	12.7% (7,313)
African American	61.9% (216)
Hispanic/Latino	27.6% (282)



## Education & Poverty



Adult Population 25+ 42,288

### Educational Attainment

No Degree	High School	Associate	Bachelors or Higher
■ 11.0% (4,653) Total	■ 42.0% (17,765) Total	■ 27.7% (11,700) Total	■ 19.3% (8,170) Total
■ 23.6% (1,099) Living in Poverty	■ 10.3% (1,834) Living in Poverty	■ 8.8% (1,031) Living in Poverty	■ 4.5% (364) Living in Poverty



## Employment & Poverty

Living Wage for  
1 Adult, 1 Child  
Household  
\$24.60

Hourly Wage for  
FMR, 2BR  
Apartment  
\$16.60

Median  
Income  
\$31,767

Median Income  
w/High School Diploma  
\$30,219

## Health & Poverty

**No Health Insurance**  
Employed  
12.4%  
Unemployed  
35.0%

**Free/Reduced Lunch Program**

**47%**

## Gender & Poverty

High School Diploma Only



Median  
Income  
\$35,605



Median  
Income  
\$23,533

US Poverty Rate: 15.6% • NYS Poverty Rate: 15.6%

Of those Families with  
Female Heads of Households  
and Children Present  
**41.4%**  
Live in Poverty

# ***Let's Get Talking...Poverty in Washington County***

**October 2, 2015**

## **Summary and Discussion Point**

### **Future Plans**

Attached is a copy of the sign-in sheet for the October 2, 2015 Forum for your information. I want to thank each one of you for joining in this Forum and look forward to working together to reduce poverty in Washington County.

I am including a summary of the points and items included in the discussion that was held at the meeting. For the sake of organization I have divided the list into Strengths/Resources, Needs, and Suggested Program Opportunities. This is by no means a complete list of the wonderful thoughts shared but it gives us a basis for going forward.

#### **Strengths – use our strengths.**

Schools as community hubs

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Space Availability for locally available services/Program Satellites

21<sup>st</sup> Century Grants

Libraries

Faith Groups

Use County's capacities – such as food production to increase available food resources

NYCONNECTS – Resource to identify locally available resources

#### **Needs**

Family Development Training

Parenting Classes

Financial Literacy

Community Literacy – increase people's knowledge of resources around Health, Language, financial and Access to services

Transportation – Public Access

Affordable/Subsidized Housing

Day Care – 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Shift Availability

Recognition of Poverty as an economic driver

Need to change decision making culture – political and funding

Non-Profit Providers need to be represented at the funding table – consolidated Funding Application

Engagement of For-Profit organizations in the discussion

#### **Program Opportunities**

"Getting Ahead" – the community counterpart of Bridges out of Poverty

NYCONNECTS – increase community awareness and use to provide access to services information

Resource Navigators through the Open Door – same as NYCONNECTS

## Next Steps

In order to keep this valuable discussion moving forward I am planning on breaking the group that came on October 2<sup>nd</sup> into component groups and doing some focused discussion with each group. At this point I am thinking I would do a modified SWOT of each group and then line them all up for our next large group meeting.

The questions to be asked would be something along the lines of:

1. What resources does your group/organization/community have available to support people in poverty?
2. What problems does your group/organization/community have supporting people in poverty?
3. What resources do you have that could be used to support efforts to reduce poverty?
4. What is the biggest threat that Poverty presents to your group?

To date I have the following meetings scheduled:

School Superintendent's Group – October 22<sup>nd</sup>

Washington County Day Care Providers – Nov. 19<sup>th</sup>

Washington County Food Pantries – Dec. 3<sup>rd</sup>

In addition to these groups I am also trying to schedule meetings with the following sectors:

Health Care

Libraries

Churches and other Faith Based organizations

Chamber of Commerce Groups

Housing Providers

Community Focused Groups – looking small groups of engaged community members and elected officials to focus on community needs.

If you can identify any other groups or you are part of a group and would like me to come for a focused conversation don't hesitate to let me know and I will be very happy to make arrangements to bring the show to you.

**Save the Date!**

***Let's Get Talking... Again!***

**February 5, 2016**

**Location and Time will be out in mid-January!**

**Let's Get Talking...Poverty in Washington County**  
**Discussion and Proposed Work Plan**  
**February 19, 2016**

Based on discussion of representatives of each of the groups that contributed to the small group discussion the following activities and goals were identified as a starting point for an ongoing work plan to begin to address issues of ongoing generational poverty in Washington County.

The following themes emerged in the small group discussions:

- Need for a universal understanding of the culture of poverty is necessary to address issues of poverty.
- Access to information and understanding of how the system works is necessary to be able to help people who live in poverty.
- Lack of reliable transportation, both public and private, makes accessing services very difficult.

Thank-you to Kevin Froats, Fort Ann Central School; Ann Miller, Greenwich Public Library; Peter Klaiber, Hartford Food Pantry; and Liz Mahon-Laidlaw, Southern Adirondack Childcare Network for their conversation regarding these plans.

WE would like to initiate the following Activities will be initiated to begin to address the issues of generational poverty in Washington County.

**Bridges Out of Poverty** – There is Significant Interest in building a network of Trainers who can train across the community on *Bridges Out of Poverty* Principles to develop a common framework for understanding poverty in Washington County

Goal 1 – Develop a Pool of Certified Bridges Trainers

1. Attend/Hold Bridges Out of Poverty Train the Trainer Sessions by end of June 2016
2. Maintain Pool and Build Skills in diverse areas of Bridges Specialties so that we can maintain Bridges training over the long term.

Goal 2 – Conduct Bridges Out of Poverty Community Trainings to Diverse Groups – by December 2016

Goal 3 – Begin offering Getting Ahead sessions to consumers and families living in poverty beginning in 2017.

**Create Family Outreach Centers in Communities throughout the county** – located in community identified locations/institutions to ensure that individuals and families have access to information, services and assistance accessing services – it is crucial that the location make sense for the community, but the information and resources needs to be consistent and accurate from center to center.

Goal 1 – identification of Family Outreach Locations within Communities

Goal 2 – Staff/Volunteers in Outreach Center will be trained in resources, services and eligibility in a coordinated and consistent way

1. Identification of skills and resources necessary for outreach volunteers
2. Creation of Training modules for volunteers
3. Training Classes for Volunteers – Who is responsible, where are they held.

Other Items open for Discussion:

1. How do we maintain the connection and communication of the larger group?
  - a. Continue to hold large group meetings every 4 months
  - b. Create a Members only List Serve for questions and answers that people in the group can join and use.
2. Upcoming Events Related to Poverty: Materials will be available on the 19th
  - a. March 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> – SUNY ADK – *No Crystal Stair, Understanding and Responding to Poverty in the North Country*
  - b. March 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> – Symposium on Poverty and Economic Security – NYS Community Action Agency – Albany, NY (NYSCAA membership rates can be used when registration through EOC)
    - i. Keynote by Luke Shaefer based on his book "\$2.00 a Day - Living on Almost Nothing in America"