

Missouri Association for Community Action

Transformational Plan 2010 - 2013



Defining Poverty

What is Poverty?

pov•er•ty noun, often attributive \ˈpɑ-ˈvɪr-tē\ 1: the state of one who lacks a usual or socially acceptable amount of money or material possessions

What is Poverty, Really?

We are a state rich in beauty and prosperity, in education and opportunity, in security and health, in values and vision. Yet, within our richness lies poverty and fear, hunger and homelessness, unmet potential and despair.

The state of Missouri's economy in recent years has brought attention to the crisis of poverty. The issue is one that is complex. Many different elements connect to create the web of problems that holds individuals, families and communities down.

Missouri's Community Action network has identified five main pillars, or root causes, of poverty. These five pillars are:

- Food
- Health
- Education
- Housing & Energy
- Family & Economic Security

It's not just about having enough money to pay the bills, it's about how poverty affects families economically, socially, emotionally, and physically. It's about the erosion of our communities and the lack of hope people have for a better future. No matter how an individual ends up in poverty, chances are it's not where they want to be.

Our vision...United in purpose, the Missouri Community Action network will inspire and engage people to ensure that all families and communities thrive.

But the problems are vast.

in Missouri

Food

Even with public and private safety net programs in place, thousands of Missourians can't always meet their food needs. Surprisingly, the need for access to healthy and affordable food is both an urban and rural issue.

Health

Many Missourians are uninsured, most of whom are working in low wage jobs. Those who lack insurance are likely to forgo needed medical care, and are at greater risk of suffering financial strain, including debt and bankruptcy.

Education

Ensuring quality education from early childhood through college is an essential component to eradicating poverty. Numerous studies find a positive correlation between higher levels of education and increased job earnings later in life. One study has found that for every one year of schooling, earnings for people on public assistance increased by 7%.

Housing & Energy

Low income households pay an average of 46% of their gross pay toward two expenses, housing and energy. Many lower income families are living in housing that is in disrepair, energy inefficient, or in neighborhoods that are unsafe for themselves and their children.

Family & Economic Security

Thousands of Missourians live in poverty...over one third of them are children. One critical issue is getting people back to work in jobs that will sustain local economies and provide a living wage for families to support themselves.

*Poverty is the
unrelenting stress of
keeping a family
sheltered, clothed and
fed...and hoping
desperately to finally get
a full week's paycheck
before the baby gets sick
or the car breaks down...
and choosing which bills
to pay this month.
It's an exhausting day to
day struggle
without relief,
that robs
body and soul.*



Strategic Commitment #1

Organize Communities and Develop Advocates to End Poverty

Ten Year Outcomes

- **MACA's community partnerships and the community action network are expanded and committed to ending poverty.**
- **A statewide plan to end poverty is embedded and integrated within the community.**
- **National and statewide policies support an end to poverty.**



So what does that really mean?

It means that over the next three years, the Community Action Network and MACA will work to engage 2,000 community members in advocating for the vision. It means that we will increase our membership and our community partnerships with all partners committing to ending poverty.

Together, we will work to develop a statewide plan to end poverty and communicate that plan through the Missourians to End Poverty coalition group.

We will link our legislative priorities to the 5 pillars of poverty and partner in at least 10 national activities to end poverty. In addition, we will educate those running for state and local office on the impact of poverty in their community.

These are real and achievable goals and we invite your participation!

Engage

Strategic Commitment #2

Develop Leaders Committed to Ending Poverty throughout Missouri

Ten Year Outcomes

- A cadre of leaders committed to ending poverty exists within the Community Action network.
- A cadre of leaders committed to ending poverty exists within the community.



Inspire

So what does that really mean?

In the next three years, a process for identifying and supporting leaders in member agencies and in the community is developed. It means that 1,000 network members and 100 new community members attend leadership enrichment opportunities through MACA.

In addition, we hope to have 100 members called upon for their expertise and 150 leaders developed.

Finally, it means that all MACA related meeting agendas are focused on ending poverty and include at least one agenda item about leadership!

Strategic Commitment #3

Build a Respected, Strategic, Statewide Organization that is an Effective Leader and Catalyst to End Poverty

Ten Year Outcomes

- MACA has the capacity to implement the strategic commitments to achieve its vision.
- MACA is the recognized source for poverty information and anti-poverty solutions.
- MACA's organizational structure and culture are aligned with its vision and strategic commitments.

And?

In order to achieve the vision, MACA will align all activities, polices, and procedures with the mission, vision, and this plan. In addition, MACA will work to increase cash resources and technological capacity and will model a standard for excellent work.

MACA will be recognized as a clearinghouse for poverty information and potential solutions. To achieve this goal, MACA will implement a marketing and communications plan and increase our communication both internally and externally.

Finally, the state association hopes to have 10 agencies with groups of active members dedicated to MACA's vision. These groups will organize in support of MACA's vision, and provide a means of communication between the MACA office and local members to create an active network throughout the state.

Thrive



What Does Thriving Look Like?

It's simple, really.

Families and communities thrive when:

- Everyone has enough to eat and the food is nutritious.
- Everyone has access to healthcare.
- Families and individuals have safe and affordable homes to live in.
- Homes are energy efficient and healthy for children and adults.
- All children have quality child care and educational opportunities.
- Employers have access to a well trained and educated work force.
- Jobs that sustain families and communities exist for all who want them.

The vision:

The Missouri Community Action network will **INSPIRE** and **ENGAGE** people to ensure that **ALL** families and communities **THRIVE**.

In order for the Transformational Plan to succeed, we need support from leaders at all levels in the Community Action Network to bring about fundamental change. We invite you to join us and be a part of this vision for a brighter future for all.





MACA

*Missouri Association
for Community Action, Inc.*
Helping People. Changing Lives.

MACA
2014 William St.
Jefferson City, Missouri 65109
(573) 634-2969
www.communityaction.org