

ACTION PLAN SUMMARY
APRIL 2009



First Steps to Cutting Poverty



STEP UP
SILICON VALLEY

Campaign to Cut Poverty

Poverty runs deeper in Silicon Valley than you think.

Did you know that in Santa Clara County—one the most affluent areas of the United States—one in four households struggles every day to make ends meet? That includes nearly half of our seniors. And in the current economic downturn, this number will grow as more middle-class people join the ranks of the poor.

When one-quarter of the people living in a community are poor, poverty should be considered a crisis. Step Up Silicon Valley was formed in order to find concrete solutions to this crisis. We're a coalition of 90 member organizations dedicated to cutting poverty in half in Santa Clara County by the year 2020. This document is a summary of our research into the causes of poverty and the actions that will help people step up and out of poverty for good. Our full action plan is available at www.stepupsv.org.



Who are the poor?

Some of the poor are in plain sight, such as homeless people on the street, men waiting in parking lots for work as day laborers, or unemployed youth hanging out on street corners.

Poverty is also behind many common statistics: the unemployment rate, the high school drop-out rate, the home foreclosure rate, and the crime rate.

But often the poor are “invisible”—the homebound senior who depends on volunteers to bring her one hot meal of the day, the man working two low-wage jobs and living in a garage, or the single working mother who can't buy groceries when the money runs out before her next paycheck.

We encourage you to read both documents and share them with your family, friends, neighbors, and co-workers. It's going to take all of us—rich, poor, and in-between—working together to cut poverty. And it's going to benefit all of us to live in a more vibrant, prosperous, safe, and caring community.

We can cut poverty in half, step by step.

Step Up Silicon Valley has identified three major steps that our community must take in order to cut poverty in half by 2020:

Step One: A family of four needs to earn about \$68,000 a year to make ends meet in Santa Clara County. This is what we call the Family Economic Self-Sufficiency Standard, and it's more than three times the Federal Poverty Level, which would be just \$21,200 for the same-sized family. Our first step is to acknowledge that we must use the Family Economic Self-Sufficiency Standard to measure poverty instead of the Federal Poverty Level.

Step Two: Every day, public and private organizations make decisions that affect the lives of poor families in Santa Clara County. We must pay closer attention to the effect of all such decisions. Every policy should be analyzed based on whether or not it helps to reduce poverty.

Step Three: We recognize that no single issue is the cause of poverty and no single strategy is the solution. We must unite local efforts, both public and private, to improve access to food, housing, healthcare, education, and income for the poor.

Step Up Silicon Valley Focus Areas

FOOD Nearly half of the low-income people living in Santa Clara County go hungry sometime each month.

Action by 2010: Expand outreach about publicly-funded food resources and reduce bureaucratic barriers that prevent people from enrolling in Food Stamps and other programs.



Goal for 2020: Ensure that each child, adult, and senior has adequate nutritious food and water every day.

HOUSING The 2007 Homeless Census counted more than 7,000 people without homes in Santa Clara County, with a growing number of families with children.

Action by 2010: Focus more resources on preventing families and individuals from becoming homeless, and on getting more of those who are homeless into homes.



Goal for 2020: Ensure that everyone can find and maintain a safe, decent, and affordable place to live and raise their families.

HEALTHCARE One in eight adults in Santa Clara County has no health insurance; lack of access to affordable healthcare is a major contributor to poor health.

Action by 2010: Work to sustain the Santa Clara County Children's Health Initiative and the Healthy Workers pilot project.

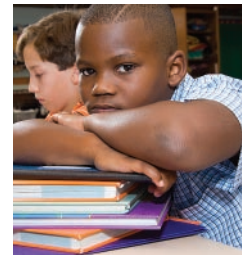
Goal for 2020: Provide access to affordable healthcare for everyone living in Santa Clara County.



EDUCATION Low-income, African-American, and Latino children have lower literacy rates and the adults have lower educational levels; these are major factors in keeping people in poverty.

Action by 2010: Stop further cuts to education. Expand career technical education and job training and placement programs to increase skills and put people back to work.

Goal for 2020: Give all children and adults educational and training opportunities that will stimulate their minds and help them become self-sufficient.



INCOME A parent has to make more than \$24 an hour, full-time, in order to afford the average rent on a two-bedroom apartment in our valley.



Action by 2010: Expand Earned Income Tax Credit programs to increase the incomes of more working poor families.

Goal for 2020: Create opportunities for everyone to earn a self-sufficient wage and save for the future so they can leave poverty behind for good.

When working people go hungry

Dave is a married father of three children. He has always had a steady work history but a sudden illness left him unable to walk, to work, and to provide for his family. His wife works but doesn't make enough money to meet their monthly expenses.

Despite their hardship, this family isn't eligible for Food Stamps and must rely on the Second Harvest Food Bank. The children report that they look forward to the day when they get food from the Food Bank, because then they can eat!

We can remake our community into one that offers economic opportunity to all.

What gives us hope that we can do this? First, it has been done before: nationally, the poverty rate was cut in half between 1959 and 1974. Locally, targeted strategies involving both the public and private sectors have also been

Step Up Silicon Valley: Cutting poverty in Santa Clara County

Our vision is clear: Cut the poverty rate in Santa Clara County in half by the year 2020.

Our mission is direct: Create the will in the community to cut poverty by increasing awareness, building partnerships, shaping public policy, increasing private and public funding, and integrating services to better meet the needs of the poor.

Our goal is just: Ensure that every resident of the County can secure the food, housing, healthcare, education, and income they need to be self-sufficient and to thrive.

successful in attacking the causes of poverty; just a few examples include the Children's Health Initiative, the Affordable Housing Trust Fund, the Blue Ribbon Commission to End Homelessness and Solve the Affordable Housing Crisis, and FIRST 5's early childhood initiatives.

Secondly, we know that we already have enough resources so that every man, woman, and child in the County could make ends meet. So it is not a matter of resources, but a matter of will—the will to not just help our neighbor in need but to empower that neighbor to succeed, and the will to live as one community in which we care for one another.

Step up and become a part of the solution.

Neither the private sector nor the public sector can solve the crisis of poverty alone. It's clear that we all need to work together. Public policies and regulations need to change, and individuals and corporations need to open their hearts and minds to our neighbors who are struggling.

Go to our website, www.stepupsv.org, and learn how to become better informed, advocate for the poor, volunteer in the community, donate to The Campaign to Cut Poverty in Santa Clara County and our member organizations, and encourage your organization, congregation, business, or school to sign on to Step Up Silicon Valley.



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