

What Is Horizons?

Horizons is an 18-month program aimed at building leadership to reduce poverty in small rural and reservation communities. By providing locally delivered training, skill building and coaching, Horizons hopes to help your community understand poverty and commit to action so you can bring about lasting change.

- Horizons explores perceptions about and sources of **POVERTY**; it isn't always just about lack of money.
- Horizons builds stronger community **LEADERSHIP**; leadership is as important as good roads, great schools and clean water.
- Horizons embraces the **ENTIRE COMMUNITY**; everyone is needed and everyone has something to contribute. For communities to thrive, everyone must thrive.



FROM TALK TO ACTION

Working together to move
XXXXXX from poverty to
prosperity for all

Study Circles Action Forum

December 2008
Choteau, Montana



HORIZONS
COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP TO REDUCE POVERTY

Community Discussion on Poverty

People in communities across America want to live in a place where they have the chance to thrive. This is true in all kinds of places: small towns, rural areas, urban neighborhoods, American Indian reservations, and others.

People talk about it in different ways. But when they talk about what holds their community back, one thing that comes up is poverty.

Poverty is everywhere. It may look different in rural places than it does in cities or suburbs. It may look different on a reservation. But there are things about poverty that look the same in all these places.

For the past eight weeks, our community has been meeting in small groups, talking about the kind of community we want to live in. No community is doing well where there is poverty. If we work on getting rid of poverty, we can have a better community. And by working on making our community better we can help reduce poverty. These two important tasks go hand in hand.

This booklet captures your friends and neighbors thoughts and ideas of what [XXXXXX](#) can do to reduce poverty. You will find words that describe a vision for [XXXXXXX](#), a list of community assets and ideas for action. We encourage you to look for ways to support this effort to make [XXXXXX](#) a more thriving community.

Build Assets and Hold onto Them

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Fight Racism

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Invest in Basic Community Resources

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

[List only the approaches the Circles identified action for, drop the rest]

For updates and progress on Horizons activities in [XXXX](#) visit our Community Blog at <http://XXXX.communityblogs.us/>

Priority Action Ideas

Study Circle participants spent several hours identifying ideas for action to reduce poverty in [XXXX](#) and then linking them to community assets. Listed below are priority ideas for action listed by different approaches to reduce poverty the Circle participants felt the community should begin addressing immediately.

Is there an action idea listed here you can support? Please consider joining many others in your community that will be taking action to create a more thriving community for all!

Priority Action Ideas:

Focus On Early Childhood, Youth and Schools

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Create More and Better Jobs

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Help People Meet Their Urgent Needs

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Join With Others to Create Change

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

A Vision for Our Community

Study Circle participants were asked to imagine a place in the community where almost everyone goes. Maybe it's a main road, or a park. It's a place that visitors are likely to see. It's also a place that school buses pass each day.

Imagine the community building an archway that stands for the things we like about our community. We want to carve some words into it — *words of hope*. We need to find words to describe our vision of our community when it is thriving. There is only room for four or five words.

Below is a list of unduplicated words each group came up with that described hope and a vision of [XXXX](#) when it is thriving.

[Display words in bullets and in two columns]

Community Assets

Many communities focus on the needs or deficits of the community. And they should. Every community has needs and deficits; they ought to be corrected.

It is also possible to focus on assets and strengths -- emphasizing what the community does have, not what it doesn't. Why? Because those assets and strengths can be used to meet those same community needs; they can improve community life.

A community asset (or community resource, a very similar term) is anything that can be used to improve the quality of community life. And this means:

- It can be a person -- the master mechanic down the street who can fix any car ever made. The stay-at-home mom or dad who organizes a playgroup. Or a star high school athlete, a coach, a cheerleader, or a fan in the stands. These are all community assets.
- It can be a physical structure or place -- a school, hospital, church, library, recreation center, social club. It might also be an unused building that could house a community hospice, or a second floor room ideal for community meetings. Or it might be a public place that already belongs to the community park, a wetland, or other open space.
- It can be a business that provides jobs and supports the local economy.
- You are a community asset, too, and so are your friends, and the people you know, and the

people you don't know yet. When you walk down the street, there are assets all around you.

This is a very encouraging and promising way of seeing the world.

Below is a list of **XXXX** assets identified by Study Circles participants:

XXXX Community Assets:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.