Ensuring Opportunity: The Campaign to End Poverty in Contra Costa County
What is Ensuring Opportunity?

A collaborative effort to end poverty in Contra Costa County by addressing structural causes at the policy level.
Why do we need to end poverty in Contra Costa?

Contra Costa – Family of Four

$74,353 = Contra Costa Median Family Income (2012)

$71,711 = Contra Costa Self-Sufficiency Standard (i.e., don’t need to rely on public assistance)

$37,440 = Two full-time jobs @ current CA minimum wage

$23,850 = 2014 Federal Poverty Level (FPL)

$131,800 = Number of Contra Costa residents live below FPL
- 12.5% of the population
- Half live in four cities (Antioch, Concord, Pittsburg, Richmond)
- 38,000 are children
- 50,000 residents live in deep poverty (<50% FPL)
Why do we need a Campaign to End Poverty?

Because…

**Direct services** are essential to addressing the impact of poverty, **but** services alone are **not enough** to **end** poverty.
What is the focus of the Ensuring Opportunity Campaign?

Public policies that address poverty at the root causes

- High-quality early childhood education
- Higher education
- Sufficient wages
- Housing that is affordable
- Health care
- Quality food
- Earned Income Tax Credit,
- And more…
Campaign goals

- Improve residents’ economic security and well-being
- Raise awareness of unfair policies that hurt local residents
- Bring diverse stakeholders together to create practical, lasting solutions
Or to put it in human terms…

We believe that everyone living in our county deserves to have a safe and affordable home, enough food, good health care, a decent education, and enough money to build a future for themselves and their family.
We all know what works! **We support** ....

- High-quality early childhood education
- Fair pay
- Affordable higher education
- Earned Income Tax Credit
- Housing that is affordable
- Access to quality health care
- Healthy and plentiful food
- Safe communities
Who created the Campaign?

In the beginning … (2008)
Contra Costa Safety Net Task Force & Family Economic Security Partnership

- Funders Forum
- Public sector providers
- Nonprofit providers
The Campaign now includes...

- Funders
- Nonprofit providers
- Businesses
- Labor organizations
- Public sector providers
- Faith-based community
- Cities
- Residents
- Elected officials

[Diagram showing overlapping circles of various groups: Funders, Nonprofit providers, Businesses, Labor organizations, Public sector providers, Faith-based community, Cities, Residents, Elected officials.]

[Legend: POVERTY, OPPORTUNITY]
Campaign structure

- **Collective impact model** – cross-sector, many partners
- **Lead agency** – Richmond Community Foundation
- **Campaign Leadership Team** – represents all sectors
- **Staffing**: Campaign Director, Policy Coordinator (pending), interns
- **Policy Platform** – focuses our efforts on what works, what’s emerging, and what policy changes are needed to end poverty in our community
- **Policy Framework** – provides process for considering Ensuring Opportunity endorsement of specific policy proposals
Campaign Leadership Team

- Jim Becker, Richmond Community Foundation*
- Fran Biderman, First 5 Contra Costa, FESP*
- Sonia Bustamante, Supervisor Gioia’s Chief of Staff
- Sean Casey, First 5 Contra Costa, FESP
- Kristin Connelly, East Bay Leadership Council*
- Kathy Gallagher, Contra Costa Employment and Human Services Dept.
- John Gioia, Contra Costa County Supervisor
- Margaret Hanlon-Gradie, Central Labor Council
- Lauren Leimbach, Community Financial Resources
- Lavonna Martin, Contra Costa County Homeless Services
- Christina Reich, EHSD Community Services Bureau
- Wanda Session, Contra Costa Health Services
- Jasmine Tarkoff, Multi-Faith A.C.T.I.O.N. Coalition

* Executive Committee member
6 Campaign focus areas

- Economic Security
- Education
- Health
- Housing Security
- Safety
- Food Security

Ensuring Opportunity
How will we make an impact?

1. Link with, **support and amplify existing efforts** of key partners
2. **Initiate and lead bold initiatives** in collaboration with others
3. **Advocate for effective policies** at local, state & federal level
4. **Share data & strategies** with other communities
5. Ensure solutions are **tailored to local needs and resources**
Current Campaign priorities
Incredible work is being done by concerned residents and advocates throughout the county. Examples:

1. **Contra Costa Cares** mobilized a broad coalition of community members to expand access to health care for all county residents, regardless of immigration status.

2. **Healthy Richmond** is engaging residents and stakeholders on health, safety, education and economic development.

3. **CalFresh Partners** are focused on increasing enrollment.

4. **Tri-Valley Poverty Task Force** is engaging local business community, faith leaders & others.
Food Security: Increasing CalFresh Enrollment

- **Joint effort** of county Employment & Human Services Dept., Multi-Faith ACTION Coalition, Food Bank, Family Economic Security Partnership & other Ensuring Opportunity partners
- **Strategies**: CalFresh Awareness Month, outreach to schools & Medi-Cal recipients, customer services & data tracking innovations
Housing security: Ensuring all residents have a home

- Support countywide **Zero:2016** campaign, which aims to house all homeless veterans, chronically homeless individuals, and homeless families by Dec. 2017.

- Explore other strategies (e.g., shared housing, master leasing, secondary units, housing trust fund) to increase the supply of **housing that is truly affordable**.
Victory!
Ensuring every resident has enough resources to support their family

- Working with a broad coalition of allies, we pursued and won a **local (El Cerrito) minimum wage increase** to $15/hour (Nov. 2015).
- We then supported the successful campaign to enact a **statewide wage increase to $15/hour** (April 2016).
Minimum wage increase will help local families thrive

- Sept. 2015 economic analysis* by UC Berkeley Center on Wage and Employment Dynamics found that, when a $15 minimum wage is implemented in Contra Costa:
  - 111,000 workers (33% of local workforce) will get a pay raise
  - Average annual earnings increase is $3,800
  - $418 million increase in aggregate earnings by 2020

The UC Berkeley report concludes that the wage increase will generate **significant benefits for local families**:

“We estimate that the proposed minimum wage increase would provide **significant gains in income** to Contra Costa’s low-wage workers and their families. **Most businesses would be able to absorb the increased costs**, and consumers would see a moderate increase in restaurant prices spread over five years. The proposal’s impact on overall employment is therefore not likely to be significant.”
Next steps for the Campaign

- Continue **current policy initiatives** with our Campaign partners
- Use our **Policy Framework** to guide us in taking positions on initiatives/legislation
- Implement a **communications strategy** to shape attitudes & perceptions
- Leverage **website and social media** to share information, resources & alerts
- Build countywide **momentum and support** to advocate for effective public policies
- Continue **convening** diverse stakeholders to share needs, ideas, resources
How to stay informed:

- Email us to join our contact list!
  Mariana Moore, Ensuring Opportunity Director
  info@cutpovertycc.org
  (510) 234-1200, ext. 311
  www.cutpovertycc.org

- Visit our website: cutpovertycc.org
Poverty is not natural. It is man-made and can be overcome and eradicated by the actions of human beings.

- Nelson Mandela