



5. Methodology—Summary of Methods Used To Create the Strategic Plan

P4P employed a multi-methodological approach to collecting and analyzing data in order to capture the dynamic characteristics of poverty. From September, 2002, through June, 2003, P4P contacted approximately 2,500 people throughout the Eastern Idaho regional community to gather input for the strategic plan. The contact was made in various forms, such as community dialogue meetings, ethnographic interviews, Steering Committee meetings, presentations to civic groups and other organizations, and appointments made by P4P staff members with interested community members.

The primary data used in the initiative was qualitative, and focused on listening to the voices of people in poverty and creating an open forum for the expression of ideas. The methods were designed to explore innovative approaches to poverty reduction and the ability to “think out of the box.” Six major methods were used to collect information from the regional community: ethnographic interviews, Steering Committee meetings, asset mapping, community dialogue meetings, an Idea Forum, a “Do No Harm” Forum, and a Plan Review Panel. The information gathered was analyzed to identify and evaluate emerging themes, patterns, symbols, and trends. The analysis was then linked to the vision statement and strategy formation.

The secondary data used in the initiative involved the collection and analysis of existing quantitative or statistical information. The statistical data was used to understand the qualitative information and to create a well-defined picture of the extent of poverty. P4P utilized a system of poverty indicators and analyzed the connections between indicators. Poverty Indicators were classified and nine categories emerged from the analysis.¹

Demographic information was collected from over 1000 community members who attended community dialogue meetings, participated in interviews, an essay contest, or other events. A decision was made early in the process to collect basic information such as age, sex, primary language, group affiliation, and county of residence versus more detailed personal information such as income level. The demographic form was voluntary and some people chose not to complete one. In addition, many presentations were made around the region to civic groups and other organizations that were more directly related to public awareness activities. During these types of presentations P4P staff did not collect demographic information.²

¹The nine categories used in the quantitative analysis include food security, housing, transportation, employment, education, health care, crime and safety, technology, and community characteristics (census data). Two additional categories of poverty indicators emerged from the qualitative data: community characteristics (diversity/tolerance), and personal characteristics (empowerment/leadership).

² P4P made presentations to approximately 1500 throughout the region in addition to the people who completed demographic information forms.



An analysis of the demographic forms indicates the following trends:

- 58% of respondents are female
- 42% are male
- 82% speak English as a primary language
- 17% speak Spanish as a primary language
- 1% speak Bannock as a primary language
- .8% speak Shoshone as a primary language
- 9% are under the age of 18
- 84% are between 18 and 64 years of age
- 7% are age 65 or older
- 17% of the respondents reside in Madison County (highest participation)
- 4% reside in Jefferson County (median)
- .5% reside in Caribou County (lowest participation)
- 8% reside in Fort Hall

Demographic Forms (n=967)

County/Area	Count	County/Area	Count
Caribou	5	Bingham	46
Franklin	9	Bear Lake	63
Clark	9	Power	71
Custer	12	Teton	72
Butte	15	Fort Hall	73
Fremont	23	Bonneville	143
Lemhi	32	Bannock	154
Oneida	32	Madison	168
Jefferson	37		

Total Demographic Forms: 967

Primary Language of Respondents (n=1114)³

Language	Count
English	907
Spanish	185
Bannock	13
Shoshone	9
Total	1114

Total demographic forms plus Spanish speaking participants in School District 91 meeting: 1114

³ In addition to the 954 demographic forms P4P collected, a meeting was held with 150 Spanish speaking parents of students in School District 91 in Bonneville County. Although participants did not complete a demographic form, they participated in a community dialogue meeting and contributed to the definition of poverty.



Age and Sex of Respondents (n=1048)⁴

	Male	Female	Total
Age 18 and under	44	47	91
Age 18 to 65	362	514	876
Age 65 or older	38	43	81
Total	444	604	1048

Total demographic forms plus essay contest participants: 1048

Affiliation of Respondents⁵

Affiliation	Count
Government	269
Business	170
Faith-Based	222
Nonprofit	265
Education	219
Other	73

Other affiliations listed included: legal services, political parties, unions, and professional associations such as the Idaho Professional Fire Fighters Association.

5.1 Primary Data Methods

5.1.1 Ethnographic Interviews

Ethnography is the art and science of describing a group.⁶ The foundation of an ethnographic interview is to understand another way of life from the native point of view. Atkinson and Hammersley make the argument that ethnography is a form of social research that has several features: (1) a strong focus on exploring the nature of a particular phenomena; (2) a tendency to work with unstructured data; (3) an examination of a small number of people; and (4) the analysis of data that involves interpretation of the meanings and functions of human actions. In an ethnographic interview, the description and explanation of an event or experience take priority.⁷ Traditional ethnography has most often been applied to a cultural group; however, it can also be applied to social phenomena. Ethnography can be a valuable tool by helping to discover human needs and ways to meet those needs. Ethnographic interviews are an in depth

⁴ P4P conducted an essay contest in order to hear the voices of children on poverty issues and solutions. A total of 91 children from around the region participated in the essay contest. In order to adhere to human subjects guidelines for research participants, P4P did not collect demographic information on the children with the exception of sex.

⁵ Many respondents identified more than one affiliation and some did not identify an affiliation. This is a list of the affiliations that were noted on the forms.

⁶ Rice and Ezzy

⁷ Atkinson, P. and Hammersley, M., 1994. "Ethnography and Participant Observation". *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Sage Publishing.



way to begin understanding the life situation of people in poverty. Effective interviewers learn the circumstances surrounding poverty from the individual point of view along with the beliefs and other objective data from which a successful grassroots program can be planned. This process gives people living in poverty the opportunity to tell their stories and how poverty affects them personally within the context of the initiative as a whole. It also enables planners to understand how people within a given situation categorize and prioritize their experiences. An additional benefit of the method is that it helps researchers avoid stereotypes.

P4P conducted and analyzed 78 interviews with people in poverty, who would be representative of the region. In order to reach saturation or a sufficient breadth of information, P4P selected six areas to focus the interviews: Dubois (rural North), Montpelier (rural South), Pocatello (urban), Fort Hall (extreme poverty), Driggs (high percentage of service industry workers), and Bingham County (Spanish speaking interviewees).

Interview staff designed a process using “mind-mapping” or concept mapping techniques. Mind-mapping involved writing down central ideas and related thoughts that branch out from the central ideas. The interviewers used content analysis to examine this information for connections between the ideas. The goal was to discover natural categories of the meaning of poverty and its impact on an individual basis, thereby creating links to strategies and actions. The interviews were analyzed and the information was linked to poverty indicators. A frequency analysis was conducted to determine which indicators were discussed most often and which indicators were most often linked to other indicators.

5.1.2 Steering Committee Meetings

The current membership of the Steering Committee is over 200 people representing the diverse Eastern Idaho region. Meetings have been held regularly since February, 2002. Initial meetings were conducted monthly until May, 2003, at which time meetings were scheduled twice monthly to complete the planning process. During the months of April, May, and June, 2003, the Steering Committee scheduled multiple all-day “work sessions” in order to finish the draft plan. Additional meetings were held during the summer to discuss future governance structure and revisions to the draft plan. A series of public meetings were held in June to discuss the draft plan and additional public meetings were held in October to discuss the final strategic plan.

Ground rules for participation were established early in the process and a professional, neutral facilitator was used to protect the group from overbearing members and inappropriate behavior. Members used “Talking Circles” in order to give everyone an equal voice in the discussions and the ability to learn to listen to each other. Small groups were formed to discuss poverty indicators, prosperity indicators, and the definition of poverty: both individually and in the community. A talking stick, or equivalent, was provided to each group and the person holding the talking stick was allowed to talk while the others listened.

No opinions were dismissed and groups worked toward consensus. Many members were not able to attend meetings on a regular basis, so P4P used email for updates and notification of



upcoming events with all members. Information from the meetings was gathered and analyzed as a means of understanding the regional community perspective.

The Steering Committee established subcommittees for asset mapping, primary and secondary data, and volunteer coordination. Over 30 Steering Committee members actively participated on the subcommittees and worked closely with P4P staff in data collection and analysis. In addition, members worked with Area Coordinators to strengthen the presence of P4P in local communities and bridge the planning process to the regional community. They provided input in a variety of ways, including developing poverty definitions based on the data, developing prosperity indicators as a basis for the vision statement, and creating a defining statement that became the mission statement.

5.1.3 Asset Mapping

Asset Mapping is an opportunity based philosophy that identifies existing resources and capacities in a community in order to build self-reliance. The focus is on opportunities, not weaknesses or threats. An asset map is an inventory and profile of the people and organizations that make up a community. Asset mapping reveals the strengths of the entire community and highlights the interconnections. Once the assets or resources are identified, the community can develop innovative approaches to poverty reduction, utilizing and enhancing existing resources.

P4P hired 14 Area Coordinators to conduct asset mapping in the regional community. Area Coordinators contacted organizations throughout the region in order to create community-specific asset maps as well as a regional asset map.

5.1.4 Community Dialogue Meetings

P4P held community dialogue meetings across the region in most communities, including the Fort Hall Indian Reservation. The meetings were facilitated by the Area Coordinators and were conducted in an open format. Participants were asked to complete a basic demographic form as well as a poverty definition form (see Appendix B).

Each group was asked to discuss poverty definitions both on an individual level and on a community level. The definitions and discussions were linked to ten categories of poverty indicators and ranked for importance. As of October, 2003, over 100 community dialogue meetings have been held, with approximately 800 participants.

5.1.5 Idea Forum

The idea forum was established to receive ideas and suggestions from members of the Eastern Idaho community. The forum panel included both staff and Steering Committee members: Jessica Sotelo and Karleen Lynes from P4P; Cary Jones, Director of Pocatello Neighborhood Housing; Arnold Cantu, Vocational Rehabilitation Services; and John Norstog, Tribal Planning Director from the Fort Hall Indian Reservation. The panel developed forms for participants to complete and a review process. No idea was dismissed and all were taken into consideration for future planning and strategy development.



A total of 22 ideas were submitted from the regional community and 19 of the submissions were presented to the panel.⁸ The Idea Forum will continue to meet on a regular basis to encourage new ideas and community participation in the development of future strategies.

5.1.6 “Do No Harm” Dialectic Panel

The Steering Committee formed a panel to review the strategic plan for unintended consequences to the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of both local communities and the regional community. The panel used a dialectic process, which is a method of argument that weighs contradictory facts or ideas with a view to the resolution of their real or apparent contradictions. The panel gave feedback to P4P staff and changes were made to the plan. Panel members included: Barbara Nash, Director of People 2 Gente; Darrell Shay, Shoshone Bannock Tribal Planner; Laura Maciel, Training Coordinator for the Idaho Migrant Council; and Genie Sue Weppner, former Program Manager for the Self Reliance Program at the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare.

5.1.7 Strategic Plan Review Panel

A Review Panel was formed in June to review the draft plan. Members of the panel included several Steering Committee members: Russ Spain, Bessie Katsilometes, Margaret Ganyo and Larry Gebhardt. Bob Perky joined the panel for the final review in September. The purpose of the panel was to review the plan on behalf of the Steering Committee and larger community. Members of the panel acted as the formal channel for feedback from the Steering Committee and community. The panel met twice, once for the draft plan and once for the final plan. Several suggestions were made by the panel and incorporated into the final plan.

5.1.8 Definition of Poverty and Prosperity

P4P used a broad approach to define poverty from economic, social, cultural and spiritual perspectives. People in poverty are typically underrepresented in the data used to define poverty in economic terms, and therefore additional definitions of poverty are necessary to understand the “big picture.” Although poverty, for the lowest economic quartile, is defined in this report, P4P also defined poverty in qualitative terms. A total of 486 definitions of poverty were collected from around the region, including 67 from Fort Hall and 33 from Spanish speaking respondents. Many groups were represented in the definition, including persons of poverty and those who are impacted by its effects.

⁸ A summary of the ideas submitted is found in Appendix B.



Poverty Definition Forms (n=486)

County/Area	Respondents	County/Area	Respondents
Fort Hall	67	Franklin	5
Bannock	57	Fremont	5
Bear Lake	23	Jefferson	14
Bingham	17	Lemhi	19
Bonneville	80	Madison	22
Butte	2	Oneida	29
Caribou	5	Power	6
Clark	1	Teton	23
Custer	7	Unavailable	104

Total Poverty Definition form: 486, including 33 Spanish forms

The information gathered from these definitions was analyzed and synthesized and presented to the Steering Committee. Several Steering Committee meetings were devoted to the creation of the broad poverty definition. In keeping with the spirit breathed into this initiative, P4P elected to define prosperity, in addition to poverty, in order to work from a positive position toward a well-defined outcome.

5.1.9 Partnership Exploration

In addition to traditional methods of gathering data, P4P staff members made numerous presentations to community groups in various settings such as Chamber of Commerce meetings, Rotary Club meetings, Idaho Housing and Finance regional meetings, Governor's Conference on Families and Children, Southeast Idaho Work Board, Economic Development Forum meetings, various housing coalition forum meetings, Idaho Human Rights Conference, faith based coalition meetings, interagency alliance meetings and others. During these presentations, staff members made connections in their communities and scheduled follow-up meetings with potential stakeholders.

P4P also sponsored an essay contest to listen to the voices of children in grades K-12 throughout Eastern Idaho. Participation was voluntary and the event was heavily advertised in newspapers. Area Coordinators invited school administrators and teachers to participate in the contest, and a total of 72 entries were received.⁹ Although the contest was limited to older children, one first grade teacher submitted essays on behalf of her class.¹⁰

Finally, staff members conducted a thorough literature review of poverty issues with a particular focus on literature related to rural poverty.

⁹ A complete list of essay winners, including copies of the grand prize winning essays can be found in Appendix D.

¹⁰ P4P published a book of all essay entries in August, 2003.



5.2 Secondary Data Methods

Secondary data is data that is collected by someone other than the principal investigator on a research project. It may include a compilation of records or the results of surveys that are conducted by other agencies. For example, birth and death statistics are based on medical records and compiled by the Bureau of Vital Statistics. The Decennial Census is a mail survey of every household in the country collected by the U.S. Census Bureau, a division of the Department of Commerce.

The use of secondary data involves the selection and interpretation of key indicators: in this case poverty indicators. Poverty indicators are categories of data or variables that provide information about people living in poverty. There are two reasons for using a system of poverty indicators to analyze the data. First, there is an abundance of data on the various aspects of poverty. Some is relevant to the initiative and some is not. In order to focus on the critical poverty issues it was necessary to develop major categories. Second, the statistical data were collected by other agencies and may not include all the data P4P needs in order to complete a thorough analysis. By looking at multiple sources and different indicators, P4P was able to analyze the broad picture of poverty in Eastern Idaho.¹¹

5.2.1 Community Characteristics

According to the United States Census Bureau poverty is measured this way:

Following the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) Statistical Policy Directive 14, the Census Bureau uses a set of money income thresholds that vary by family size and composition to determine who is poor. If a family's total income is less than that family's threshold, then that family, and every individual in it, is considered poor. The poverty thresholds do not vary geographically, but they are updated annually for inflation using the Consumer Price Index (CPIU).

The official poverty definition counts money income before taxes and does not include capital gains and non-cash benefits (such as public housing, Medicaid, and food stamps). Poverty is not defined for people in military barracks, institutional group quarters, or for unrelated individuals under age 15 (such as foster children). They are excluded from the poverty universe—that is, they are considered neither as "poor" nor as "non-poor."

While the thresholds in some sense represent families' needs, the official poverty measure should be interpreted as a statistical yardstick rather than as a complete description of what people and families need to live. Moreover, many of the government's aid programs use different dollar amounts as eligibility criteria.¹²

¹¹P4P formed partnerships with several agencies in order to obtain data including: The U.S. Census Bureau, Idaho Kids County, Idaho Dept. of Housing and Urban Development, Idaho Department of Labor, Eastern Idaho Economic Development Council, Idaho State Police and the Idaho Dept. of Education. A complete list of data collection agencies can be found in Appendix A.

¹²United States Census 2000.



For the purpose of this research the poverty threshold for a family of four (\$17,603.00 annually), as determined by the United States Census Bureau, will be used.¹³ Families that fall below the threshold will be considered to be in poverty. These figures provide a baseline for identifying people in poverty

The general demographics of the 16 county region were labeled Community Characteristics and the information was used to gain an overall picture of where poverty is located and to define poverty for the lowest economic quartile. Using the poverty threshold of \$17,603 annually for a family of four, three subcategories were analyzed: single mothers, children under the age of 18, and adults over the age of 65. In analyzing the three subcategories, four variables were used: 1) Poverty Status in 1999 by Age; 2) Ratio of Income in 1999 to Poverty Level (referred to as Severe Poverty); 3) Poverty Status in 1999 of Families (by Family Type and Presence of Related Children Under 18); and 4) Aggregate Income Deficit.

- **Poverty Status in 1999 by Age**

Three areas analyzed:

- a. percentage of the total population below the poverty threshold;
- b. percentage of population under 18 years below the poverty threshold;
- c. percentage of the population over 65 years of age below the poverty threshold.

- **Ratio of Income in 1999 to Poverty Level (Severe Poverty)**

This variable was used to determine the percentage of the population at .50 of the poverty level or below. The group is considered to be in severe poverty when its annual income is less than \$8,801 for a family of four.

- **Poverty Status in 1999 of Families (by Family Type and Presence of Related Children Under 18)**

This variable was used to analyze the economic status of single mothers compared to single fathers. The information was used to determine the percentage of female householders (no husband present, with children under 18) who reside below the poverty threshold and the percentage of male householders (no wife present, with children under 18) who reside below the poverty level.

- **Aggregate Income Deficit**

This variable was used to analyze by how much a section of the community falls below the poverty threshold in actual dollars. Female householders, male householders, and other family types were subcategories of this variable.

5.2.2 Employment

Employment as an indicator of poverty is the number of people who are either unemployed or who face serious barriers to employment. However, only reducing the unemployment rate will not automatically reduce the poverty rate. Poverty can be reduced, rather, with an

¹³Thresholds are weighted incrementally from this figure, depending on the number of persons residing in the household.



increase in real wage earnings. Therefore, employment encompasses the average wage that people make and the structure of the local economy, and not just whether they are employed. Employment as an indicator of poverty should be examined by the average wage employers are willing or able to pay, as well as the number of jobs available to the population.

To understand employment as an indicator of poverty, three categories were analyzed using data gathered from the Labor Market Information study compiled by the Idaho Department of Labor.¹⁴ P4P looked generally at the unemployment rate and, more specifically, at entry level wages vs. experienced level wages, and wages paid by local industries employing the most workers in the individual counties.

Analyzing the unemployment figures in the 16 county region provides a representation of the percentage of the population that is seeking employment. The 2000-02 unemployment figures were reviewed for the purpose of determining trends.

The average annual wages for entry-level workers (workers who are not required to have any form of higher education or previous training in order to perform the tasks of the job) were compared with average annual wages for experienced level workers (workers who are required to possess some form of higher education or training in order to be considered for employment). These figures, when compared with the county educational attainment levels, were useful in creating a picture of how many workers in the sixteen county area are qualified for experienced level opportunities and how many workers are relegated to entry level wages because of a lack of educational attainment.

Average covered wages¹⁵ of local industries and the number of workers these industries employ was another category analyzed. This information was necessary to determine what percentage of the work force could afford adequate housing given the average annual rental costs within each area. By analyzing the top three industries (in number of workers employed) in each area and computing the average annual wage paid by that industry, an analysis of affordable housing was determined.

5.2.3 Housing

Housing can be considered an indicator of poverty by looking at the relationship between covered wages and rent affordability in a community. Fair Market Rent (FMR) figures are calculated by the “amount of money a household must earn in order to afford a rental unit of a range of sizes (0, 1, 2, 3, and 4 bedrooms) at the area’s FMR, based on the generally accepted affordability standard of paying no more than 30% of income for housing costs.”¹⁶

Based on the aforementioned FMR formula, the Low Income Housing Coalition conducted a comprehensive study of average annual rental cost that included the Eastern Idaho region.

¹⁴ LMI Website

¹⁵ Covered Wages refers to wage information for workers covered by Idaho Unemployment Insurance law and for federal workers covered by Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees law. Every quarter, employers report the number of workers paid for work done during the week including the 12th of each month and total wages paid during the quarter.

¹⁶ National Low Income Housing Coalition Website



The data compiled from this study was analyzed in tandem with average annual wages. This analysis identified whether people residing in specific communities could afford adequate housing for their families. Housing issues were also analyzed for links to other indicators of poverty, such as health and education.

While some families participate in government-sponsored housing assistance programs, housing subsidies are not an entitlement program. Eligibility is based on family composition and income. Local housing authorities allocate spaces to qualified applicants on a first-come, first-served basis. Therefore, individuals and families who need housing assistance may be placed on waiting lists for an indeterminate period of time.

Information from the Idaho Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Idaho Finance and Housing Association was also analyzed to gain a better understanding of housing issues within the region.

5.2.4 Education

Education is used as an indicator of poverty by measuring the percentage of the population who attain a post-secondary education and/or job training opportunities. Idaho lags behind other states in the percentage of students going on to post-secondary education. In 1999 only 49% of Idaho's graduating seniors sought a post-secondary education, compared to 64% nationally.¹⁷ Research has shown that children in rural areas are less likely to go on to a higher learning institution; therefore, the rural nature of Eastern Idaho may be part of the reason fewer children are seeking additional education past the secondary level.¹⁸

Education, as an indicator, was analyzed using data from the Idaho Department of Education, the Idaho Kids Count 2003 State Data Book, and the United States Census 2000. From these sources, two categories of poverty were analyzed: 1) percentage of the population who have received a high school diploma or equivalent; and 2) percentage of the population over 25 who have obtained an associate's degree or higher.

By comparing the percentage of the population over the age of 25 who has obtained a post-secondary education and/or job training with entry-level versus experienced level wages, an analysis of the number of people in the community who are qualified for various employment opportunities was made. This was helpful in determining what types of business may be willing to locate in the community and what wages they will be willing to pay.

5.2.5 Health

Health, as a poverty indicator, is measured by the number of people who have limited or no access to health care. For the purpose of analyzing poverty in the Eastern Idaho region it is important to look at the percentage of women who seek late or no pre-natal care, the frequency of employers in the area who pay the partial or the full health care benefits of their employees, and the percentage of the population with health insurance. To quantify health

¹⁷ United Way, Idaho Kids Count

¹⁸ United Way, Idaho Kids Count



issues in the region, data from the 2001 Idaho Vital Statistics Report was used to analyze what percentage of the population of pregnant women in the region seek prenatal care. Whether women began their prenatal care in the first, second, or third trimester, or not at all, can have a significant relationship to the continuing health of both the mother and the child.

Parental income can be a proxy for unmeasured health problems. Poor housing can lead to health risks such as overcrowding, the presence of animal pests, and the presence of lead paint. These conditions are linked to poverty because they can have serious health consequences.¹⁹ Poor health may indicate poverty because there may be restrictions on the number of hours a person can work. Limited resources, a lack of health insurance, the inability to pay for medical care, and unhealthy behavior associated with poverty may also lead to increased health problems.²⁰

Children in poverty are twice as likely to be in fair or poor health, to die during infancy, or to have spent time in the hospital in the last year compared to children who are not in poverty. They are also one and one-half times more likely to have a learning disability or cognitive developmental deficit.

Also analyzed was the frequency of employers to pay partial or full health care benefits for their employees. Information was gathered from the Department of Labor's Labor Market Information Study to determine what percentage of employees in the Eastern Idaho region receive health care benefits. The implications of this information are significant since they imply that workers not receiving benefits may have to pay for benefits out of their own pockets. This, coupled with low wages, perpetuates poverty for the working poor.

5.2.6 Crime and Safety

Crime and safety, as an indicator, is difficult to quantify because it is not clear whether it is a cause or an effect. Crime and safety can relate to poverty by examining the number of crimes committed by both adults and juveniles in a community. People of poverty often feel less safe in a community where crime occurs more frequently. They do not feel that they have the same protection or avenues to seek help. Feeling disenfranchised from the system leads people in poverty to believe that they are less safe than others who have the means to seek protection. Studies indicate that individuals who live in crime ridden neighborhoods often lack opportunities, face more hardships, and perform substantially worse in school than people in wealthier neighborhoods.²¹

For the purpose of this study, crime statistics were used from the 1994 – 2000 Uniform Crime Report²² concerning the arrest rates of both adults and juveniles in the categories of burglary, rape and drug offenses. Analyzing this information gives an overall picture of how safe the communities are in comparison with each other.

¹⁹ Dust, dust mites, mold, and mildew are all more likely to occur in low-quality housing and lead to health problems such as asthma.

²⁰ Danziger p. 280

²¹ Rosenbaum 1995 study

²² <http://fisher.lib.virginia.edu/cgi-local/crimebin/new2.cgi>



5.2.7 Food Security

Food security is a major indicator of poverty, and is determined by measuring the number of people who are unable to afford nutritional and adequate food. Food security can be measured by looking at the participation in programs that address hunger and food access. School lunch participation, for example, gives a general picture of children whose parents cannot afford to pay for school lunches. Information from the Department of Education was used for the purpose of this study to achieve a better understanding of how many children in the region are accessing the free and reduced school lunch programs.

Elderly nutrition programs, food stamps, and WIC participation indicate lack of food resources for those with an income deficit. Food insecurity is defined by the government as not simply outright hunger, but a lack of access to food to meet basic needs. The incidence of food insecurity is more prevalent among households with children, especially those led by single women, minorities, and households with poverty-level incomes.²³

5.2.8 Technology

Technology can be defined as a poverty indicator in two ways. First, technological upgrades often contribute to a loss of jobs in the blue collar or labor sectors where many people in poverty are employed. As a result, there is a shift from a high number of well-paying manufacturing or labor jobs to highly technical jobs that require higher-level skills and training.²⁴ This leads to a higher rate of unemployment among the underskilled.

Technology can also create a larger gap between the “haves” and the “have-nots” because people in poverty have less access to technology in general. There is also a gap between the younger and older generations. Many individuals try to participate in the new technological society, but have little exposure to it due to the fact they were educated at a time when little technology existed. Older generations are therefore a target for education, training, and access to make them more competitive in the workforce.²⁵

Another aspect of technology related to poverty is how technology can contribute to prosperity. Technology has the potential to narrow racial and economic gaps in social capital, education, employment, and housing, and to offer insights in how to capitalize on this potential.²⁶ Advances in Internet access can provide people with access to new groups and associations that will impact civic involvement. Access will provide opportunity for schools and neighborhoods that lack resources to acquire expansive virtual libraries. Adults will also have increased access to training and information from their homes or community institutions.

²³ Danziger, p. 122

²⁴ Danziger, p. 140; This point was also discussed in group discussions at the P4P Steering Committee Meeting, April 11, 2003.

²⁵ This point was generated through discussion at the P4P Steering Committee Meeting, April 11, 2003.

²⁶ Danziger, p. 455



5.2.9 Transportation

Transportation is analyzed as an indicator of poverty by examining established transit routes in the region and the access they provide for people living in rural areas to commute to regional service centers. Studies have suggested that efficient transit routes can open access to labor markets and offer vulnerable populations the mobility they need due to the isolated nature of the region.²⁷

People in poverty living in highly rural areas, such as most of the Eastern Idaho region, rely heavily on the metro centers to provide not only employment opportunities but also critical health and educational opportunities. Lack of access to these services can be devastating to low income populations who rely on them for their survival.

Many rural areas suffer from lack of access to the urban service centers due to the lack of planning and the adequate resources needed to undertake such a project. Because of this, more progress must be made to develop tools necessary for estimating demand, establishing routes, and preparing schedules.²⁸

5.2.10 Summary

P4P used multiple methods that reflect a commitment to the original six criteria established by the NAAF. By looking at both quantitative and qualitative poverty information, thoughtful and realistic strategies were developed that will significantly reduce poverty. Many diverse voices were heard in the process and local leaders were identified and encouraged to participate in the planning process. One of the goals of the research was to gain a better knowledge of our regional community and the numerous communities that make up the region. These communities are not limited to geographic location because they encompass cultures, functions, and much more. Together they paint the picture of poverty in Eastern Idaho and help us understand our connections to each other and the potential strength when many communities unite and adopt a regional approach to poverty reduction.

²⁷ Attaluri, Seneviratne, Javid p. 1

²⁸ id