Ensuring Opportunity Campaign:
Cutting Poverty in Contra Costa County
The Ensuring Opportunity Campaign was created by the Contra Costa Safety Net Task Force, the Family Economic Security Partnership, and numerous constituents, to reduce poverty in Contra Costa County.
What is the Ensuring Opportunity campaign?

Components of the campaign:

- Leadership Committee - Policy
- Convening Committee - Training
- Report Card Committee - Awareness
Report Card Committee Purpose

- **Who:** Ensuring Opportunity Report Card Committee
- **What:** Draft report card including data and stories
- **When:** Before the end of 2014
- **Where:** Contra Costa County
- **How:** Create brochures, presentations, etc.
- **Why:**
  - Reshape public opinion about poverty
  - Impact poverty policy
  - Reduce poverty throughout the county
Develop issue-specific report cards for five Safety Net areas:

- **Housing**/(homelessness)
- Food
- Health
- Economic Security
- Family Safety
Is not to generate new data, but rather curate persuasive existing data to cultivate long-term strategies to reduce poverty in Contra Costa County.
Previously working independently on similar issues

FESP  MFAC  Safety Net

Now Working together to **Ensure Opportunity**
Current Priorities

- Housing Security
- Food Security
Housing Security
The Report Card committee first focused on homelessness, and is compiling compelling data and affirming the policy need for: “housing that is affordable for people who are homeless” (vs. “affordable housing”).

Building on the extensive network of the Contra Costa Continuum of Care, the committee is now collecting provocative stories and exploring the promotion of a Housing First approach.
Partners exploring this and similar opportunities include but are not limited to:

- County Homeless Director
- Shelter Inc.
- Safety Net Task Force
- Human Services Alliance
- Local Integrated Networks of Care
- Multi-Faith A.C.T.I.O.N. Coalition
- Employment & Human Services Dept.
- Family Economic Security Partnership
Housing Insecurity Indicators in Contra Costa County (2012-13):

- On any given night nearly **4,000 people** were homeless
  - 410 Emergency Shelter beds available
  - 648 Transitional Housing beds available

- **8,252 people** accessed homeless services during the year
  - 30% were newly homeless
  - 40% were youth or young adults

- **111,609 people** were living below the poverty line
Did you know?

Homeless Costs

- Emergency Room visits for the homeless = $18,500/yr. (avg. 5/yr.)

- Incarceration costs in California = $47,000/yr. on average

Felons are 7 to 11 times more likely to experience homelessness either before or after prison
Did you know?

Housing Cost in Contra Costa County

- Cost of providing shelter, transitional, and/or permanent housing and services to a household for a year = $10-25,000/yr. on avg. (Data provided by Shelter, Inc.).

- Preventing a family’s homelessness = $1,000/yr. on average (Data provided by Shelter, Inc.)
Food Security
Food Insecurity Indicators in Contra Costa County (2012-13):

- Loaves & Fishes serves 500-600 people every day across 5 locations - for many this is their only meal of the day
- Loaves & Fishes served over 400,000 meals during the year; 170,000 meals served; 250,000 meal equivalent via pantries
- Food Bank of Contra Costa/Solano distributed 13.9 million pounds of food & served 125,000 people during the year
- Food Pantries served 44,000 people; Soup Kitchens served 18,000 people; Community Produce Program served 19,400
Did you know in Contra Costa County?

25% Emergency Food Recipients are Children
Did you know in Contra Costa County?

33% of food bank clients have to choose between paying for food or paying for rent.
Quick Facts
Food Bank

- Almost 50% of food distributed is produce
- The equivalent of more than 625,000 meals was distributed through Food for Children this summer.

**96 CENTS OF EVERY $1 DONATED GOES DIRECTLY TO FOOD PROGRAMS**
“This is my first time here. I have been cleaning house but barely made $500 last month. I am normally a book-keeper...I am excited about the bread. I haven’t had bread in weeks... I am an educated woman. I don’t do drugs. I am finding myself in a weird spot. These are tough times.” – Food Bank client
Quick Facts
Loaves & Fishes

- Distribute 2 tons of groceries weekly
- The majority of patrons are over 50 yrs. old, unemployed and living on a fixed or limited income

The 3rd week of the month the number of meals and people served increases 30-50% compared to the 1st week of the month
Economic Security
Did you know in Contra Costa County?

- The self sufficiency standard for one adult and two young children (preschool and school age) is $63,945 (3 full time minimum wage jobs)
- 131,800 people live below the federal poverty level (38,000 of them are children)
- Nearly 50,000 residents live in deep poverty (less than 50% of Federal Poverty Level)
- 242,744 people live below 185% of Federal Poverty Level ($36,611 for a family of 3)
Q & A