

July 2021



# Chattahoochee Valley Poverty Reduction Coalition

# Why We Decided to Build the Chattahoochee Valley Poverty Reduction Coalition

- In 2017, Enrichment Services Program (ESP) served as a super host for the On The Table community discussions.
- Current ESP customers described persistent system barriers and missing resources for families living in poverty.
- Organizational stakeholders also discussed the lack of coordinated approaches to serving customers across programs and sectors.
- Community partners recognized, and became energized by, the opportunities presented for cross-sector system improvement.

# Why We Decided to Build the Chattahoochee Valley Poverty Reduction Coalition

- Concurrently, Circles USA and CQIU were developing a model that could be used to support regions across the US as they worked to reduce poverty significantly within their communities.
- Key components of the “Poverty Reduction Lab” model were:
  - Creating a shared vision that poverty can be eliminated.
  - Adopting a culture of continual learning and improvement using Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) methods and principles.
  - Working across sectors to test and identify high impact strategies that can be disseminated across the region.

# Brief History of the Chattahoochee Valley Poverty Reduction Coalition

- ESP, Circles USA, and CQIU formed a partnership to establish the first “Poverty Reduction Lab” in Columbus, Georgia in November 2018.
- Year 1 funding was provided by the Georgia Division of Family and Children Services’ *State of Hope* initiative.
- The Columbus Poverty Reduction Lab was the first to be established in the US.
- The name was eventually changed to the Chattahoochee Valley Poverty Reduction Coalition (PRC) to better reflect the purpose and scope of the initiative.
- Year 2 funding was provided through ESP’s Community Services Block Grant.

# Our Vision & Mission

**Vision:** The Chattahoochee Valley Poverty Reduction Coalition envisions a future for the region where more than half of the individuals currently living in poverty are able to achieve financial self-sufficiency within the next 10 years.

*2018 US Census data were used for the baseline. For the Chattahoochee Valley, "...Half of the Individuals Currently Living in Poverty (in 2018)..." equaled 62,274 individuals. We define financial self-sufficiency as a household achieving an annual income exceeding 200% of the Federal Poverty Thresholds. In 2019, 200% of the Federal Poverty Threshold for a family of four with two children under 18 years of age was \$51,853. The full list of Federal Poverty Thresholds, as measured by the US Census, is available at this [link](#). Our vision is to achieve this reduction in poverty by 2030.*

**Mission:** The Chattahoochee Valley Poverty Reduction Coalition (CVPRC) explores high-impact strategies to create one connected regional system of services that 1. Equips families with the resources needed to achieve financial self-sufficiency, 2. Promotes economic equity, and 3. Continually improves opportunities across generations.



## Population Living Below 100% Federal Poverty Levels (FPLs) and 200% FPLs

2019 Estimates from the American Community Survey and US Census

	% population living in poverty < 100% FPLs	% population living in poverty < 200% FPLs	Population living in poverty < 200% FPLs
Chattahoochee Valley County			
Chattahoochee County, GA	19.8%	47.7%	3,417
Harris County, GA	6.2%	21.4%	7,180
Marion County, GA	16.7%	40.5%	3,368
Muscogee County, GA	20.7%	42.2%	79,670
Russell County, AL	20.7%	42.3%	24,080
Stewart County, GA	34.5%	71.4%	2,930
Talbot County, GA	18.9%	45.7%	2,865
<b>Chattahoochee Valley</b>	<b>19.1%</b>	<b>40.5%</b>	<b>123,510</b>

In 2021, for a family of 3, 100% of the FPLs is \$21,960.

## Children < 5 Years Old Living Below 100% Federal Poverty Levels (FPLs)

2019 Estimates from the American Community Survey, US Census

	% children < 5 years old living in poverty (< 100% FPLs)
CV County	
Chattahoochee County, GA	33.6%
Harris County, GA	10.6%
Marion County, GA	37.2%
Muscogee County, GA	30.9%
Russell County, AL	30.2%
Stewart County, GA	78.6%
Talbot County, GA	29.2%
<b>Chattahoochee Valley</b>	<b>29.8%</b>

## Employment & Income



Unemployment Rate = 3.6%



Children Whose Parents Lack Secure Employment = 9.9%

Median Household Income = \$43,239

\$27.13

Living Wage, based on MIT Living Wage Calculator

\$15.12

Median Wage

\$7.25

Minimum Wage



# A Closer Look at Muscogee County, Georgia

Based on Data Available January 2020



- High school graduate or higher = 87.4%



- Annual childcare expense for a family with two children = \$8,306
- 2,249 children have Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS) scholarships which assist low-income families in affording quality-rated childcare

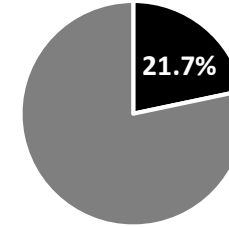


- Annual food expense for a family of four = \$8,822
- 1 in 5 people are food insecure
- 14, 284 households receive food stamps (SNAP)
- 8,429 households with children receive food stamps

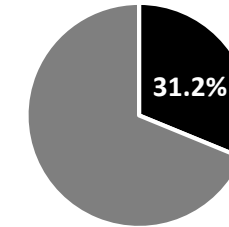


- Annual housing expense for family with two children = \$9,876
- Median gross rent = \$856/month
- 2,300 public housing units
- 2,333 Housing Choice Vouchers (HCV)
- 1,056 households experienced homelessness in 2018

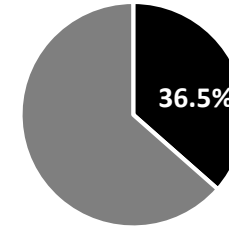
## Poverty & Financial Insecurity



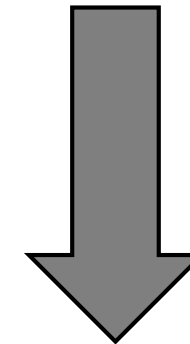
People in poverty, defined as < 100% of the Federal Poverty Threshold (approximately 43,106)



Children in poverty, defined as < 100% of the Federal Poverty Threshold (approximately 15,370)



Families with children with annual income less than 150% of the Federal Poverty Threshold. For a single parent with two children, 150% = \$30,346



A 10% reduction in 10 years would mean approximately 4,310 individuals, including 1,537 children, currently living in poverty would move to financial self-sufficiency.



# Who We Are

Organizations Represented	CVPRC Members Active in 2021
Aflac	Audrey Tillman (strategic advisor)
Ashbury United Methodist Church	Mike Powell
Columbus 2025	Tabetha Getz, Warren Steel
Columbus City Council	John House
Columbus Technical College	April Hopson
District Department of Public Health	Asante' Hilts, Jack Lockwood
Enrichment Services Program	Belva Dorsey, Jamie Thomas, Iris Ortiz
Faith Worship Center	Norman Hardman
Goodwill Industries of the Southern Rivers	Tricia Konan, Jessica Neal
Hiring Well Doing Good	Kristin Barker
Local Families	Individual participants, plus focus groups & surveys
Muscogee County Division of Family and Children Services	Tonika Wadley, Deidra Whittlesey
Muscogee County School District	Kimberly Thomas
Open Door Community House/ Circle Chapter	Barbara Moushon
Parents as Teachers (University of Georgia Extension)	Tammy Keith
PRF Ministries	Nathaniel Dunlap
Troy University – Phenix City Campus	Dionne Rosser-Mims
United Way of the Chattahoochee Valley	Candace Muncy, Pam Romero

# How the PRC Will Achieve Its 10 Year Goals

1

Through coordination of organizations, across sectors, to improve the regional Poverty Reduction System's effectiveness, efficiency, and equity.

2

By helping families overcome barriers and increase their income to a living wage.

3

Through advocacy, specifically to address Cliff Effects, which occur when public subsidies fall off at a faster rate than a family can earn additional income.

# Current Priorities of the PRC

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- Development of a strategic plan to reduce the poverty rate in the Chattahoochee Valley so that that half of the individuals currently living in poverty can achieve financial self-sufficiency within the next 10 years.
- Securing support and funding to establish the role of a “Poverty Czar” to ensure coordination between local and state-level poverty initiatives and to lead facilitation of the PRC.
- Expansion of a coordinated service delivery/joint case management pilot with the Division of Family and Children Services, ESP, and the PRC.
- Integration of personal financial management coaching into the coordinated service delivery pilot in partnership with the PRF Institute.
- Development of a poverty reduction system map for the Chattahoochee Valley using data from United Way’s 2-1-1 system.

# Current Priorities of the PRC

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- Implementation of Phase I and continued development of an online community portal for coordinated and linked access to social services.
- Establishment of a neighborhood-focused jobs incubator (Jobs for Life) for the Oakland Park community in partnership with Asbury United Methodist Church and Better Work Columbus.
- Continuation of the PRC-affiliated GED Program in partnership with Ashbury United Methodist Church and Columbus Technical College.
- Expansion of long-term financial management coaching, specifically with individuals participating in a transitional program before release from prison, in partnership with the PRF Institute.

# Accomplishments of the Chattahoochee Valley Poverty Reduction Coalition

- Gathered input and stories of community members' lived experience through direct participation in PRC activities, focus groups, and surveys. These data directly inform the PRC's work and priorities.
- Expanded promotion of United Way's 2-1-1 system.
  - Leveraged new sources of funding for promotion of the 2-1-1 system.
  - Cross trained staff at partner organizations to serve as 2-1-1 system navigators.
  - Developed 2-1-1 training video.
- Established a new GED program in collaboration between Ashbury United Methodist Church and Columbus Technical College.
- Developed online community portal and common family intake form to promote coordinated access to social services and ongoing tracking of outcomes.
- Created and disseminated a one-page Resource Checklist, in English and Spanish, for individuals newly facing financial hardship as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Increased cross-organizational collaboration among PRC-participating organizations, breaking down walls between previous silos.