

Comprehensive Action Plan

Introduction:

The Pathways for Prosperity initiative emerged as a response to a 2015 Harvard University study ranking Fayetteville last among the country’s 100 largest economic centers in earnings potential for children growing up in poverty. Convened by the City of Fayetteville, Pathways for Prosperity endeavors to improve economic prospects for all residents and to break the cycle of generational poverty by bringing together local government leaders, community based organizations and community members in a coordinated effort. In November of 2017, Pathways for Prosperity held a full day summit event, convening 250 local leaders and community members. Through the course of that event, the community chose five focus areas to drive the work going forward: Early Childhood Education, Quality K-12 Education, Life Skills, Affordable Housing, and Workforce-Industry Alignment. Over the ensuing months, workgroups empaneled around each of these focus areas worked with agency leaders and community members to jointly develop a set of objectives and strategies to support measurable improvements in each area.

Communities of Focus:

In order to direct interventions and resources to areas of greatest need, the Pathways for Prosperity Core Leadership Team reviewed the most recent American Community Survey data. Based on that data, the team chose to focus on 11 communities comprised of 15 census tracts. The communities where poverty is most concentrated in Cumberland County include:

Old Wilmington Road / B Street Area – Census Tract 2
Massey Hill – Census Tract 5
Murchison Road – Census Tract 10
Murchison Road – Census Tract 11
Ramsey Street – Country Club Drive – Census Tract 12
Cedar Creek Road—Census Tract 14
Bonnie Doone – Census Tract 22
Bonnie Doone – Census Tract 23
Shaw Heights / University Estates – Census Tract 24.01
Shaw Heights / University Estates – Census Tract 24.02
SE Cumberland CO (unincorporated) – Census Tract 29
Bunce Road – Census Tract 33.02
Spring Lake – Census Tract 35
Spring Lake – Census Tract 36
Downtown Fayetteville – Census Tract 38

Key Objectives:

The objectives below are designed to build on assets and programs that already exist in the community and to create synergy between systems that sometimes operate in silos. For each objective, a lead agency is established and supportive strategies are listed.

Early Childhood Education:

Objective 1: We will reduce the chronic absenteeism rate within our 11 focus communities across program types by three percentage points (**from 11 percent to 8 percent**) within three years.

Lead Agency: Partnership for Children of Cumberland County

Strategies:

- Engage childcare providers and parents in discussion regarding the importance of consistent attendance through a local campaign; emulate the K-12 “Every minute counts” messaging; promote September as attendance month; leverage American Academy of Pediatrics policy statement.
- Analyze data on reasons for child absences and barriers for attendance to determine strategies to address chronic absenteeism.
- Institute an evidence-based kindergarten readiness and transition program for pre-school aged children in our 11 focus communities.
- Institute an evidence-based program to reward good attendance for children enrolled in pre-kindergarten classes in our 11 focus communities.
- Increase the proportion of children in Cumberland County ages 0-5 who receive early intervention or special education services **from 3.15 percent to 5 percent** within three years.
 - Engage pediatric providers on developmental/behavioral health screening and referral
 - Engage in a dialogue with parents who have received a developmental screening referral or a developmental evaluation referral from a pediatric provider on ways to ensure the referral visit takes place
 - Make mentorship or advocacy support available to parents
 - Direct contact with target audience (texting and other digital media)
 - Advocate for a policy requiring annual physicals for childcare enrollment

Objective 2: We will increase the number of high-quality childcare slots available within our 11 focus communities by converting **four** childcare programs to 4/5 Star ratings within three years.

Lead Agency: Partnership for Children of Cumberland County

Strategies:

- Complete a mapping of childcare facilities labeled with their ratings within our 11 focus communities to identify areas where high quality facilities are not available; create a target list of programs for conversion to 4/5 Star ratings (with particular focus on Census Tracts 2, 11, 29, 33.02, and 36).
- Increase the provider capacity in our private centers by leveraging model demonstration sites that facilitate observation and mentoring.
- Provide targeted support to providers to move from a 3 Star rating to a 4/5 Star rating through support to develop business plans through use of administrative tools, technical assistance for Environment Rating Scale preparation, Star Rating Bonuses and mini-grants.
- Increase provider quality through access to professional development (form relationships with local colleges and universities to assist).
- Advocate for improving the attractiveness of the early childcare and early childhood education professions with competitive compensation with a priority for educators in the 11 focus areas.
- Provide targeted support to increase the number of infant and toddler slots in high quality facilities within the 11 focus communities to address infant/toddler childcare deserts.
- Advocate for paid family leave for parents/primary caregivers following the birth or adoption of a child.

Quality K-12 Education:

Objective 1: We will double enrollment in work-based learning opportunities (from **1,874** (2017/18 school year) to **3,748**) for Cumberland County public school students (ideally, those students eligible for free or reduced price lunch) within three years.

Lead Agency: Community-Agency Council (to be empaneled)

Strategies:

- Build an awareness campaign for parents and students through communication channels (social media, application development, community channels, local community TV channel, organizations that provide access to technology within the 11 focus communities).
- Collaborate with Workforce-Industry Alignment and Life Skills lead agencies.
- Develop a community-agency council (comprised of community members and Cumberland County Schools staff) for this objective.

Objective 2: We will reduce the number of infractions leading to out-of-school suspensions (up to 10 days in length) by **15 percent** in our 11 focus communities over three years as follows:

- Elementary--from an average of **51** suspensions/school to **43** (2017/18: 1,229 suspensions, 24 schools)
- Middle--from an average of **224** suspensions/school to **190** (2017/18: 2,019 suspensions, 9 schools)
- High--from an average of **363** suspensions/school to **309** (2017/18: 2,540 suspensions, 7 schools)

Lead Agency: Community-Agency Council (to be empaneled)

Strategies:

- Implement evidence based practices to reduce suspension; focus on repeat offenders.
- Review alternatives to suspension listed in Duke University publication: https://law.duke.edu/childedlaw/schooldiscipline/downloads/instead_of_suspension.pdf
- Consider: alternative schools (with community service and job-based learning within the alternative schools), substance abuse interventions, community partnerships, community service programs, restorative justice, reviewing school district policies to reduce use of suspension as a discipline.
- Develop a community-agency council (comprised of community members and Cumberland County Schools staff) to support this objective.

Life Skills:

Objective 1: We will connect **500** families (of children enrolled in pre-school and elementary schools in our 11 focus communities) to community resources within three years.

Lead Agency: Communities In Schools

Strategies:

- Leverage the Communities In Schools model to engage parents of children in preschool and elementary school (expand Walker-Spivey Elementary School *Parent University* model across 11 focus communities).
- Coordinate and deliver **quarterly resource fairs** in schools located in our 11 focus communities (include resources/local expertise on: job training, access to health care, social services, housing, financial literacy, parenting resources, and community programs).
- Support Cumberland County Department of Public Health in referring parents/primary caregivers to the Positive Parenting Program (“Triple P”).
- Connect **100** Parent University participants with opportunities available through the Cumberland County NCWorks Career Center.

Objective 2: We will recruit and mentor 10 percent of parent participants to pursue leadership development opportunities in order to serve as mentors themselves.

Lead Agency: Communities In Schools

Strategies:

- Coordinate leadership development workshops for first year parent participants of the Communities In Schools model to train and empower five prospective parents for mentorship in each of the Parent University expansion schools.
 - By mid-year, provide one to one mentorship; reward with certificate
 - By end of year, host community leaders celebration

Affordable Housing:

Objective 1: We will increase the inventory of safe, affordable housing available to low income households in our 11 focus communities within three years.

Lead Agency: PENDING

Strategies:

- Explore approaches adopted by other jurisdictions to expand affordable housing for severely cost burdened residents.
- Cultivate close partnerships among the City of Fayetteville, Town of Spring Lake, and Cumberland County to build a coordinated plan (establish a multi-party letter of agreement) for improving local housing stock.
- Complete a review of expiring rent restraints in Cumberland County.
- Explore dedicated revenue source(s) to support a Housing Trust Fund (HTF) (revenue sources may include a general obligation bond, budget line item, allocation of fees, or special taxing district).

Objective 2: We will partner with community members living in the 11 focus communities in addressing local housing policy and resource allocation decisions over the course of the next three years.

Lead Agency: PENDING

Strategies:

- Complete a study to understand why clients/customers are not being approved for or denied housing opportunities.
- Engage community members from the 11 focus communities to participate in local housing policy decisions, including the use of HTF funds.

- Coordinate with Communities In Schools in building a curriculum for parent education/life skills training that includes a housing resource component.

Workforce-Industry Alignment:

Objective 1: We will improve alignment and coordination between regional industry demand/opportunity and education/training resources available to individuals living in our 11 focus communities.

Lead Agency: Cumberland County Workforce Development Board/K-12 Community-Agency Council

Strategies:

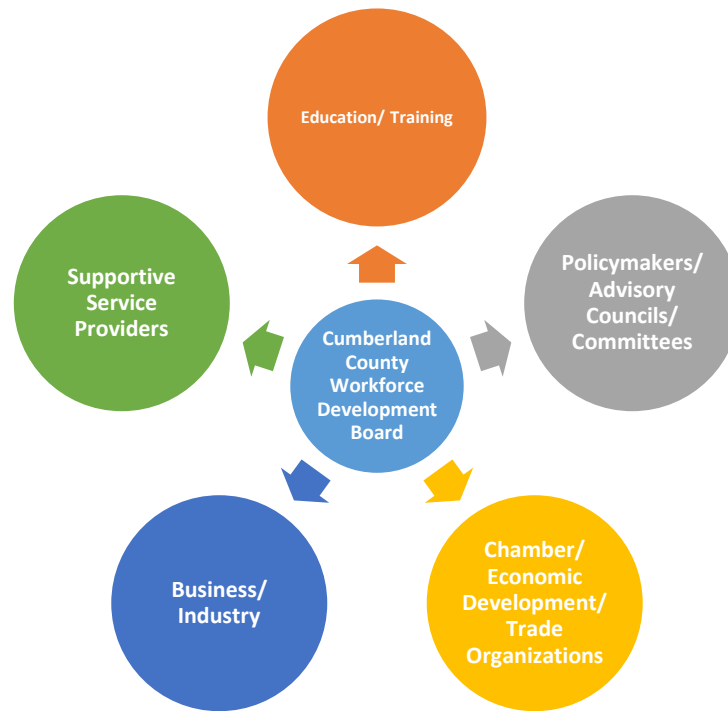
- Build an effective partnership/network among 11 focus community anchor institutions, Cumberland County Workforce Development Board, high schools serving our 11 focus communities, and local employers to drive candidate identification and recruitment for job training and placement.
 - Establish a forum for lead agencies named in this plan to meet **semiannually** with stakeholders in the workforce development space
- Based on a review of promising industry sectors, increase the number of certified NC Works career pathways from **two** to **five** within three years.
- Explore the merits of instituting a first source hiring program in Cumberland County; align with Historically Underutilized Business (HUB) utilization and employment.
- Launch a HUB certification campaign for businesses operating in our 11 focus communities.

Objective 2: We will increase capacity for the local education and training system to serve individuals living in our 11 focus communities.

Lead Agency: Cumberland County Workforce Development Board/K-12 Community-Agency Committee

Strategies:

- Increase completion rates for training programs that lead to employment for individuals across Cumberland County (from **69.6 percent** to **75 percent**).
- Develop a process for entrepreneurship training with a focus on transitioning veterans, family owned businesses, and young adults.
- Explore programs to support remote workers in partnership with the Cumberland County library system.



Next Steps:

The next phase of planning will require identification of revenue sources (e.g., foundation grants, federal grants, local government financing) as well as appropriate fiscal agents. The Pathways for Prosperity Core Leadership Team will continue working with lead agencies to support grant applications and program/operational expansion. In tandem, the initiative will support Community Revitalization Teams in each of the 11 communities of focus. These teams will be responsible for building networks in their communities and implementing the plan at the local level.