

PRI Impact and Measurement

Since 2004, the Traverse Bay Poverty Reduction Initiative (PRI) has been committed to measuring the impact and difference made for those who participate in PRI community outreach events and activities, including regularly scheduled Opportunity Conferences, Saturday Specials, Neighborhood Meetings, and Poverty Workshop Simulations.

PRI has also conducted two comprehensive surveys (2006-07 and 2010) of people in financial poverty. Our most consistent and valued finding is that there is no “typical” respondent in our five county region. Respondents consistently report a wide variety of situations, circumstances, needs and opportunities for moving forward. The most responses, however, come from and include:

Survey respondents who:

- ▶ are majority white (92%) and women (80%)
- ▶ live in Grand Traverse County (60%)
- ▶ have been residents for more than 10 years (68%)

Many people in financial poverty:

- ▶ rely heavily on DHS food assistance and Medicaid
- ▶ report both food assistance and Medicaid as very helpful
- ▶ list very important unmet needs as optical and dental care, along with job searching and career exploration.
- ▶ are nearly evenly divided between those who are married, divorced, or never married
- ▶ reside in smaller households (53% with one or two members, 47% with no children)
- ▶ earn an income of under \$15,000/year (62%), with 42% earning less than \$10,000
- ▶ 60% have training or college coursework beyond a high school diploma/GED
- ▶ report significant physical and/or emotional health problems or other related disabilities

PRI outreach program and event participants routinely expressed a high level of benefit and satisfaction. In a retrospective survey (2010), these PRI outreach programs were reported to be very valuable or of great value as much as three years following the event:

- ▶ Opportunity Conferences: 87%
- ▶ Saturday Specials: 74%
- ▶ Neighborhood Meetings: 82%
- ▶ Navigators: 68%

Moreover, PRI participants report a high level of readiness to take new steps (81%), report renewed self esteem and many have taken specific steps to move forward as a result of attending PRI events. Participants at Poverty Simulations consistently report that the experience had a great impact and changed their attitudes toward individuals and families throughout our five county region that face the many challenges of limited or no income.

We welcome your questions, comments and feedback – in care of:
Diane Emling by email demling@nmc.edu or 231 995-1295. August 2010