

HOW A COMMUNITY BENEFITS

By completing the entire Horizons program, a community can expect:

- A community-wide understanding of poverty and ways it can be solved;
- More people in leadership roles in the community;
- Community leaders who come from all ages, backgrounds and incomes;

- At least six people with better skills to help lead community discussions and move toward community action on poverty;
- Three people who can present ongoing leadership training in the community;
- At least 20 people with enhanced leadership abilities;
- A vision and a plan - created and carried out by at least 60 people;
- Up to \$10,000 to sustain community strategies for poverty reduction and leadership;

- Connections to many organizations and hundreds of other Horizons communities that can help for the long haul; and
- Changes from within the community that allow this work to continue long term.

Community Success

Is Horizons worth the effort? Nearly 200 small rural and reservation communities – towns just like yours – say “yes!” Read some of their entries at <http://communityblogs.us/>

Delivery organizations:

• Iowa State University Extension, <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/horizons/>

• Montana State University Extension Service, www.horizonsmt.org

• North Dakota State University Extension Service, <http://www.ag.ndsu.edu/horizons/vision.htm>

• South Dakota State University Cooperative Extension Service, <http://sdces.sdstate.edu/cil>

• University of Idaho Extension, <http://extension.ag.uidaho.edu/horizons>

• University of Minnesota Extension, <http://www.extension.umn.edu/community/horizons/>

• Washington State University Extension, <http://horizons.wsu.edu/>

Everyday Democracy
(study circles facilitator training and assistance to delivery organizations)
www.everyday-democracy.org

Pew Partnership for Civic Change
(training for LeadershipPlenty®, assistance to communities) www.pew-partnership.org

Northwest Area Foundation
(funding, technical assistance to delivery organizations, evaluation, sharing of learning)
www.nwaf.org, 800-904-9821

“A year and a half ago, if you had asked me or others in town about poverty, we would have said, ‘There isn’t much, it’s not a big issue.’

Some people would have said it’s just those people who are too lazy to get a job. When you start looking at it though, as in Study Circles, you realize that bad things do happen to people, that you can’t always get a job that will support your family.”

“What mattered most with Horizons is that someone believed that things could be better— they had more faith in us than we had in ourselves.”

“We have new leaders in the community because of what we are doing here. People are volunteering for things that they had never even been invited to before.”

HORIZONS IS ABOUT MOVEMENT AND CHANGE: From waiting to leading ... from talk to action ... from poverty to prosperity ... from a few to many ... from despair to hope ... from indifference to pride.

HORIZONS

COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP TO REDUCE POVERTY

SEEM LIKE BIG DREAMS FOR SMALL RURAL COMMUNITIES? NOT AT ALL. THESE COMMUNITIES CAN – AND ARE – THRIVING:

Communities where families and neighbors with wide-ranging perspectives and ideas once struggled in isolation ... now plan collaboratively for their future. They have come to recognize the importance of a single voice, as well as the strength of community decision making.

After holding a “funeral” to bury negative attitudes and behaviors, a community moved on to creating a shared vision, setting goals and taking action.

Many small towns are addressing their communities’ need for access to healthcare, especially by those with very limited means.

Three communities joined forces to push for a statewide communications policy to bring in wireless technology. The much-needed cell tower now makes these towns attractive to new businesses.

People involved in the Horizons program increasingly show up and speak up at important community discussions around needed infrastructure, improving school district budgets and developing municipal sewer systems. Many participants have built the skills, run for – and won – positions for mayor, school board or city councils.

Small rural towns are starting their own community foundations; locally-grown support for actions plans that will help low-income families.

Does Horizons accomplish all of this? No. People do – people who care deeply about their communities and want them to thrive. Horizons provides ideas, resources, support and inspiration – fertile ground where optimism can thrive.

WHAT IS HORIZONS?

Horizons is a community leadership program aimed at reducing poverty in small rural and reservation communities (population less than 5,000) faced with economic decline and demographic change.

Horizons explores perceptions about and sources of **poverty**; it isn’t always just about lack of money. Horizons builds stronger community **leadership**; leadership is as important as good roads, great schools and clean water. Horizons embraces the **entire community**; everyone is needed and everyone has something to give. For communities to thrive, everyone must thrive.

Who funds it?

Horizons is funded by the Northwest Area Foundation, whose mission is to help reduce poverty in Minnesota, Iowa, North Dakota, South Dakota, Montana, Idaho, Washington and Oregon. The Foundation invests in - and relies upon - experienced regional institutions to provide training, consulting and technical support in each Horizons community. It also directs the two grants that come to communities during the program, totaling up to \$10,000 to help them sustain their poverty reduction work.

Who facilitates it?

Seven organizations deliver the Horizons program. They helped design Horizons and have coached nearly 200 rural and reservation communities through the process since 2003. They provide communities with coaching and training but have assembled a vast network of other partners who help Horizons communities.

How long does it take?

Horizons is an 18-month program with four required segments. Communities must meet the thresholds for each segment within defined timeframes before they can move forward. Each threshold is connected to skills and achievement that help strengthen a community.

What does it involve?

All Horizons communities get the same foundation of program resources and tools during the first three program activities. The delivery organizations then select additional program resources customized to address each community’s unique needs. For one community, it might mean economic development training; for another, conflict resolution counseling or technical skill courses.

All Horizons communities take part in:

- Community conversation and action ideas focused on poverty. This segment requires 12 hours during a three-month period and the involvement of at least 30 people. The goal is for the community to learn what poverty looks like and what they can do about it. Momentum grows as the community builds skills, involves more people and becomes increasingly strategic.
- Leadership building using LeadershipPlenty® training. At least 20 people give 30-40 hours of time. This is a popular segment because it’s practical and assumes every community member can provide leadership.
- Community visioning and planning focused on leadership growth and poverty reduction. This involves the whole community. Some communities get competitive, seeing who can involve the most people!
- Idea implementation. The delivery organization and others provide the community with support, coaching and additional resources as they put their plans into action.

The Horizons program is exciting and gratifying, yet challenging. The community must invest time if it is to achieve long-term results.

Community Action to Reduce Poverty

What happens?

- Community implements plan
- Community tracks progress
- Delivery organization helps coach and provide additional resources and support
- Community seeks other resources

Benefit to community:

- Action and progress on its plan
- Community-wide understanding and plan around poverty
- Community-wide understanding and plan around leadership
- Strategies that link action to poverty reduction
- More community members involved
- People providing leadership from all parts of the community
- New connections with organizations and other communities to provide resources

To receive up to \$8,500

- ✓Community plan with outcomes connected to poverty reduction
- ✓Community blog entries showing action and structural change on poverty

To enter Horizons program

- ✓Population < 5,000
- ✓Poverty rate > 10%
- ✓Minimum of 5 community members attend program preview
- ✓Application with at least 30 signatures from many sectors of community
- ✓Minimum number of facilitators recruited and trained (see chart)

Required for Study Circles

Town size	Minimum participants	Facilitators
<1500	30 people	6
2000	2% = 40 people	8
2500	2% = 50 people	8
3000	2% = 60 people	10
3500	2% = 70 people	10
4000	2% = 80 people	12
4500	2% = 90 people	12
5000	2% = 100 people	14

Study Circles

What happens?

- Community steering committee recruits facilitators and participants for Study Circles community dialogue on poverty and prosperity; recruitment targets all parts of the community, especially those struggling to get by
- Facilitators attend a day of training
- Participants give 12 hours (six sessions) to understand poverty, develop ideas to reduce it and take action on at least one idea
- A few community members are trained to start tracking community progress using a community blog

Benefit to community:

- At least 6 people with skills to lead a community dialogue and action process
- At least 30 people in the community who understand poverty, have a vision for a community without poverty, and ideas for action
- More people involved from all parts of the community
- Many practical ideas to help reduce poverty
- At least one idea becomes a plan and action
- Connection of facilitators to other communities

To move to LeadershipPlenty®

- ✓Minimum number of Study Circles facilitators trained
- ✓Minimum number of participants in Study Circles (see chart)
- ✓Pre and post surveys completed
- ✓Action idea list submitted with one item complete
- ✓3 LeadershipPlenty® trainers recruited
- ✓LeadershipPlenty® participant recruitment plan
- ✓Community members track progress on poverty outcomes on blog

Community Visioning

What happens?

- Participants in Study Circles and LeadershipPlenty® work together to lead a community visioning process that involves at least 15% of the community
- Recruitment draws people from all parts of the community

Benefit to community:

- More people from all parts of the community involved
- Exciting community vision that results in solid action on leadership and poverty
- Plan to sustain the work over time
- Qualified organization to receive funds on the community's behalf

To receive the first \$1,500 grant

- ✓15 % of community participates in visioning and planning
- ✓Identify qualified organization to receive funds
- ✓Community making blog entries related to community change

To move to Visioning

- ✓3 people trained to deliver LeadershipPlenty®
- ✓Minimum number complete LeadershipPlenty® training (20 if <1500, 25 if greater)
- ✓Community members track progress on leadership outcomes on blog
- ✓Pre and post surveys complete

LeadershipPlenty®

What happens?

- 3 community members trained to deliver LeadershipPlenty®
- Community members participate in LeadershipPlenty®, 30-40 hours of leadership training
- Community members track progress on leadership outcomes on blog
- Participants help plan community visioning

Benefit to community:

- At least 20 people with expanded understanding of leadership and greater skill
- 3 people who can provide ongoing leadership training
- Core group that can organize community visioning and planning to reduce poverty
- Core group that can use blog as tool to track progress and communicate to community
- More people who can lead on poverty reduction
- More leadership from all parts of the community
- More people who understand how to mobilize others to action
- Commitment to keep the work going over time

