

## Individual and Family Economic Stability Notes – April 8, 2010

Next Meeting: May 6 – noon-1:30 pm at Tri-County CAP Resource Center

Focus: Actions the team can take in each of the focus areas in the next 90 days

### Homework:

What is one action the team can take in each of the focus areas over the next 90 days to see movement? (The actions are the tool for engaging more of the community in these efforts - things the teams will bring to the community – these are the things we need your help to do.)

Like the other four action teams, this team continued to work on putting together their Action Plan (A3) and looked closely at the potential areas of focus they have explored over the past few months. The team really dug deeper into thinking through what action areas/measures would drive change and decided the first areas the team will focus on are:

1. Buy local
2. % livable wage jobs
3. Employee friendly businesses

#### 1. Buy local

- The team reviewed information/research about Buy Local efforts elsewhere around the country including Portland, ME.
- Research in other areas have shown on average that purchasing from local businesses vs. national chains keeps 3 times as much money in the local economy (45¢ vs. 14 ¢ of every dollar), supports the creation/retention of local jobs and would therefore be a solid strategy to improve the local economy. Local businesses also tend to pay higher wages, be more environmentally friendly (use less square footage to equal the same economic impact) and support the local community through higher percentages of support of local community efforts.
- Generally efforts elsewhere have focused on encouraging people to spend 10% more at local businesses.
- One observation shared is that a lot of seasonal employees already buy local.

#### 2. % livable wage jobs

- Reviewed information about Carroll County's job portfolio. Currently, 51.4 % of Carroll County's jobs are in the retail; accommodations/food and arts/recreation sectors compared to 29.2% for NH. The County's job base is less diverse than the state as a whole; the high percent of jobs in those sectors are reflective of the region's visitor-based economy. Jobs in the sectors that support the visitor-based economy tend to pay lower wages, be more seasonal, be more part-time and offer fewer benefits, some are high employers of teens.
- The livable wage figure could look very different depending upon if a person has paid health benefits or not.

- Year-round livable wages can be achieved both through year-round jobs or paired seasonal jobs. The seasonal jobs have a value to the region since they are a big part of the area economy and may be preferable for people who enjoy work in the ski and tourism industries. Are these an asset in terms of thinking about opposite season capacity? Is there open capacity or is the region pretty balanced with winter and summer jobs with most people already working two seasonal jobs? What is the impact on families if they would prefer year round, benefitted positions but cannot find them?
- Intentionally developing/attracting new jobs and the capacity for training aligned to new jobs are both needed to have more livable wage jobs. A tandem effort is needed since training in and of itself won't result in new jobs. There is training capacity through the community college and MWV Economic Council.
- Look at anticipated job growth trends and think about what is needed to proactively draw those jobs.

### 3. Employee-friendly businesses

- Research shows that employee-friendly practices, such as offering paid sick-time and paid annual leave, increase productivity and loyalty and decreases turnover, which strengthens local businesses. Employees don't come to work sick and make other workers sick.
- Likewise, paid sick-time and paid annual leave allow employees to take care of personal or family emergencies and take an annual break from work without fear of losing wages or their job.
- Group sees this as a strategy to strengthen businesses and improve individual and family economic stability.
- Allow brief check-in time during the day to talk to kids or elderly parents. Increases focus and decreases health care costs.

### **Other discussion:**

Retaining Young Adults/Attracting Young Adults – group sees this as an important issue to the region since Carroll County is losing young adults at a higher rate than elsewhere in NH but thinks this is probably a secondary measure rather than a core measure. Successes in diversifying the job stock as well as across all the teams would likely positively impact this group.

***2nd New Hampshire Summit on Work and Family is June 7*** with release of the data from the first NH survey of working parents about work and family life. More information at [www.nhworkandfamily.org](http://www.nhworkandfamily.org).