



Community Declaration

A call for Economic Opportunity and Hope for All in Riverside (BLISS) County.

I. Call to Action

We call for an end to poverty in our communities. Since 9-11, Americans have come together to protect our homes, lend strength and support in times of tragedy, and to build a national political dialogue. We have discussed our collective responsibility for human dignity, equity and well-being. It is time to bring this focus and energy to ending the tragedy of poverty in our communities.

Our communities have incredible potential – for a high quality of life, for creating meaningful work, and for building common bonds. However, this potential cannot be realized while there are still people who live in poverty. With the elimination of poverty, everyone will be better off: we will have healthier, stronger and safer communities.

II. Who is called

This Declaration is addressed to the people of Riverside County; to their politicians and pastors, to their commercial enterprises and community activists; to their prosperous and poor, and to their schools and social service agencies. We all have a stake in the well-being of our communities and share the responsibility for eradicating the threat to human dignity, security and quality of life that poverty represents.

III. The importance of ending poverty

Poverty is contrary to a core belief of our country; that people are entitled to basic human dignity. Poverty denies people this basic right by putting the elements of dignity out of reach. Poverty is a barrier to food, education, housing, transportation, healthcare and employment; it makes the cost, quality and availability of these basic needs unattainable.

A variety of points of view exist that unite us in our commitment to end poverty.

- A. Poverty conflicts with deeply held religious beliefs of charity and justice.
- B. Poverty conflicts with the long term economic well-being of our communities.
- C. Poverty conflicts with the ability of people to seize the opportunities that this country affords.

In a community without poverty, adults will have meaningful and gainful work. Families will have access to quality healthcare. Parents will be assured their children are learning the skills and values that will lead to a bright future. Communities will be stable and safe. Homelessness will be eliminated and homes will provide warmth and shelter rather than financial hardship and environmental hazards. Everyone will feel connected to a responsibility for the common good.

(OVER)

25th Anniversary of Community Action Riverside

IV. This is the time to end poverty

In this time of unprecedented improvements in global standards of living, the official poverty rate in the United States rose, from 12.1 percent in 2002 to 12.5 percent in 2003. During the same period the number of people in poverty also increased by 1.3 million people to 35.9 million. The poverty rates for people 18 to 64 and those 65 and older remained unchanged, but the poverty rate for children rose from 16.7 percent in 2002 to 17.6 percent in 2003. Median household income has been in decline since 2000.¹

V. We have the resources to end poverty

Riverside County, whose population exceeded 2 million in 2006, is fortunate to have a number of resources available in our fight to end poverty. We have a high-quality local system of education. We have healthy and active faith communities and a non-profit sector. We have a business community with a tradition of philanthropy, service and commitment to improving the quality of life in our region. We have public programs designed to serve people in poverty. We have natural resources and community assets available to everyone. And we have a strong local culture that emphasizes hard work and life-long learning.

VI. Declaration

By signing this document, I/we declare a commitment to work in the next year and the years to come to build economic opportunity and hope for all in Riverside County. Please call me to discuss how I can work towards ending poverty in Riverside County. () _____.

Signature

Date

Check your Supervisorial District

District I _____
Buster

District II _____
Tavaglione

District III _____
Stone

District IV _____
Wilson

District V _____
Ashley

¹ Source: U.S. Census Bureau. **Income, Poverty and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2003.** <http://22.census.gov/prod/2004pubs/p60-226.pdf>

PLEASE RETURN TO:
Community Action Partnership of Riverside County
2038 Iowa Avenue, Suite B-102
Riverside, CA 92507

