



Connecting People

Communication
Across Barriers

Poverty Competencies for Educators



FOUNDATIONAL SKILLS

- 1. Education and Self-Awareness About Poverty and Its Causes:** Is the history of poverty taught in your organization? Are staff members trained on poverty competencies necessary for serving those living in the context of poverty? Are poverty issues included as a topic of conversation at all staff meetings?
- 2. Assess Organizational Policies and Procedures:** Have you examined your organization's policies and procedures through the lens of poverty to see if they are serving those living in poverty conditions? Are they responsive to poverty conditions?
- 3. Partnerships and Resources:** Does your organization have enough community partnerships to provide a comprehensive approach to addressing barriers related to poverty (clothes, supplies, utilities, housing, food, jobs, legal help)? Do staff members know the neighborhoods/ community where those from poverty live (i.e. are there sidewalks, what kinds of businesses are in their area, how are they treated in their community, what is available to them in their community)?
- 4. Staff Buy In:** Do you have staff buy-in for increasing the success of individuals living in poverty? Do you have a shared vision and clearly stated goal on how your organization will serve people in poverty?
- 5. Collaborative Relationships:** Have you begun to develop a collaborative program? Does your organization have professional development teams who discuss and share best practices for serving people in poverty? Do you help individuals form peer (helping) relationships (i.e. Student to-student, parent-to-parent)?
- 6. Effective Communication Skills (oral culture training):** Does your organization have a program to address vocabulary/ grammar/oral culture language differences and help individuals gain the middle class vocabulary and the skills of print culture while honoring and learning from the wealth of skills people from oral culture bring?
- 7. All Staff as Mentors:** Are staff in your organization able to act as mentors (as defined by Levine and Nidiffer, and Beegle): i.e. Do they believe in the person, do they believe that there is a way out of poverty, are they aware of the history of poverty and local poverty conditions, and do they introduce those they are mentoring to people within their network? Do individuals identify with staff (e.g. Do they see how they are like them and do staff see how they are like those from poverty) For example, do staff members self-disclose personal stories and/or examples of how they learned/how they created success for themselves?
- 8. Building Resiliency and Positive Self-Concept:** Do staff know how to build positive self-concepts among those in poverty situations? Can they remind an individual what is special about them?
- 9. Exposure Opportunities:** Do those from poverty have opportunities to become exposed to outside adventures that will increase their awareness of possibilities (e.g. trying new foods, visiting new places, and meeting professionals in a relaxed setting)?
- 10. Motivation/Value of Education/Planning for the Future:** Can your staff help people from poverty externalize the blame and raise their awareness about the external barriers that are challenging their progress towards success? Can they make their services meaningful to them? Can they empower and motivate them to challenge those barriers and aim for success?
- 11. Welcoming Families and Reaching out to the Community:** Do staff know how to set up a welcoming climate for people in crisis? Do they reach out to the community to understand the social context that surrounds the people they are trying to serve?



now what?

Dr. Beegle Recommends These Next Steps:

- 1. Next-Level Professional Development Sessions:** Breaking poverty barriers requires ongoing learning. Dr. Beegle will work with you to identify target areas for growth and customize next-level trainings to meet those objectives.
- 2. Video Training and Book Reads:** See *Poverty...Be the Difference* and *An Action Approach to Educating Students in Poverty* assist participants in taking the learning to a deeper level. *Action Approach* comes with a two-hour, five-topic training DVD and companion *Action Approach Guidebook* for applying Dr. Beegle's concepts and seeing measurable results. Both are available at www.combarriers.com.
- 3. Send a Team To Attend the Beegle Poverty Institute:** The intensive two-day Poverty Institute provides a grounded understanding of poverty and concrete tools for breaking poverty barriers to success. The Poverty Institute is designed for professionals from the fields of justice, education, health and social service, as well as faith-based, business and community organization members.
- 4. Send a Team to Become Beegle Certified Poverty Coaches:** The intensive two-day Beegle Poverty Coaching Institute prepares participants for leading systemic change within their organizations. Participants gain skills for providing ongoing poverty competencies, teaching professional development workshops, conducting poverty competency assessments and developing measurable action plans for improving outcomes. Register at www.combarriers.com.
- 5. Partner With Our Team:** Host the Beegle Poverty Institute and Poverty Coaching Institute in your community. Contact Elia Moreno, national program director, at elia@combarriers.com for more information.
- 6. Become an Opportunity Community:** Dr. Beegle has researched best practices, nationally and internationally, that work to improve outcomes for children and families living in the crisis of poverty. Out of this research, Dr. Beegle developed the Opportunity Community (OC) model. The OC model is a community-wide approach that includes programs for students and families who currently live in poverty. The pillars of the model are to: 1) Remove the shame and judgment; 2) Rebuild the hope; 3) Reduce the isolation; and 4) Create a poverty-informed community that works together to improve outcomes. For more information, contact our national program director, Elia Moreno, at elia@combarriers.com.
- 7. Bring a Communication Across Barriers Team Member in for a Poverty Competency Assessment (PCA):** Dr. Beegle developed the Poverty Competency Assessment and action planning tools to create more responsive systems. The PCA examines all aspects of the organization to identify areas that are meeting or exceeding desired outcomes and how to do more of what works. It illuminates areas for growth (where we keep doing what we have always done even though we are not achieving desired outcomes). The process identifies professional development levels of staff for addressing poverty barriers. It also captures the strengths of partnerships necessary for providing a comprehensive approach to removing poverty barriers. Programs, curricula, communication and teaching styles are also captured to ensure we are communicating and providing information in relevant, meaningful ways. The PCA results in a Poverty Competency Plan with measurable, doable actions. The Poverty Competency Plan can be incorporated into organizational strategic plans. For more information, contact our office at 503-590-4599.
- 8. Partner With CAB and Dr. Beegle to develop a custom training DVD and materials for your organization.**

"Dr. Donna Beegle's poverty work and Poverty Coach Certification are the foundation of our new approach to serving students. These trainings have completely changed our understanding of who our students are and what they need from us. The Poverty and Coaching Institutes will be the best professional development investment in your employees and organization you could possibly experience. The interactive experience will change your hearts, challenge your minds and improve your impact, personally and organizationally."-
Dr. Russell Lowery-Hart
President, Amarillo College

Contact Us For More Information: www.combarriers.com: (503)590-4599