

What's the POINT?

A shared desire for all people in Northeast Wisconsin to be self-sufficient and able to participate fully in the life of the community.

How will POINT work?

POINT will use continuous improvement processes to strengthen existing poverty reduction efforts, address service gaps, and measure our progress on reducing the percentage of people living poverty in Northeast Wisconsin. There are three key components to this movement:

1. **Improving services** for people experiencing poverty by assessing the needs and assets of this population, including segmentation, data analysis and community-wide engagement.
2. **Developing a learning system** based on intentional testing and learning, and feedback loops to understand movement on specified poverty aims and measures.
3. **Accelerating results** by integrating and aligning the assets of local leaders and organizations.

Why a focus on poverty?

Poverty is a common thread in many current efforts to strengthen our communities and quality of life. We believe that a reduction in the number of people living in poverty will translate into stronger schools, healthier neighborhoods, lower unemployment and underemployment rates, reduced health disparities, less crime, and improved supports for mental health and addiction, among others. The poverty rate is trending in the wrong direction, despite the unemployment rate moving in a favorable direction. In 2014, the poverty rate in Winnebago County was estimated at 12.6 percent, according to the U.S. Census, an increase from 6.7 percent from 2000. Furthermore, the poverty rate has continued its steady climb despite the unemployment rate's decline to 6.2 percent from a 2009 Great Recession spike at 7.8 percent, according to the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development.

Why now?

The answer is two-fold. First, despite millions of government and philanthropic dollars to address root causes of poverty, we have not yet seen the breakthrough improvements that we want and need to see. Second, our community has been offered a rare opportunity. Our success in collaborating to solve community problems throughout Northeast Wisconsin has attracted the attention of the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI), an internationally-recognized consulting group looking to apply its continuous improvement process to affect social change. The IHI board has offered 18 months of consulting support for POINT at no cost to us. Added to this is an investment from the Basic Needs Giving Partnership – a collaboration bringing together the U.S. Venture Fund for Basic Needs; the J. J. Keller Foundation; the community foundations in Oshkosh, the Fox Valley and Green Bay; and other community donors – to cover training expenses to help us build our own capability and capacity to engage in systems improvement efforts.

How is POINT different from other community initiatives or approaches to solving poverty?

POINT is a cultural shift as much as it is an initiative. It's unique because it will:

- Work towards shared **regional goals** while simultaneously supporting local priorities
- Employ proven, **data-driven** methods under the guidance of an internationally recognized consulting group
- Encourage us to **learn while doing** and refine our ideas along the way
- Promote **collaborative learning** regionally and with two parallel efforts in Ohio and New York

Who is leading Poverty Outcomes & Improvement Network Team (POINT)?

There will be multiple levels of leadership for this regional initiative. A *regional council* will focus on building a structure and ensuring adequate resources are available to advance POINT's strategic direction, creating common measurements across communities, and facilitating regional sharing and learning. *Leadership action teams* in each of the three communities will facilitate the identification, finalization, and oversight of community priorities. And *improvement teams* will identify and apply specific changes that will improve poverty outcomes, sharing their results locally and regionally.

What's in it for me?

Under the guidance of an internationally-recognized consultant, participating organizations will employ process improvement methods:

- to more deeply understand the population they serve;
- improve upon existing services; and
- uncover and use strengths within the community to accelerate efforts.

Why is my involvement needed?

You should be involved because:

- **As an employer**, POINT's success is tied to the success of your workforce. We need you at the table to help build a pipeline of candidates for job openings and figure out how to address barriers that might be limiting your pool of potential candidates. We also need your continuous improvement process experience.
- **As a nonprofit worker, public sector employee or volunteer**, POINT is counting on you to provide "real-time" data for tracking progress on key indicators and drive the testing of incremental changes in programs and services designed to reduce poverty.
- **As an elected official**, you are important in helping POINT to organize the community in changing or introducing policies that will accelerate the reduction of poverty.
- **As a community member**, POINT needs your assistance connecting the improvement project pipeline with the change you seek in your neighborhood and community. We also need you to tap your networks (work, church, neighborhood, sports, etc.) to identify and engage individuals and families experiencing poverty in helping us create solutions.

Primary drivers of poverty include education, job and economic stability, affordable health care, psychological health (behavioral and mental health), addiction/substance abuse, and family support and social connectedness. These drivers not only impact poverty, but also the quality of life in our neighborhoods.

How long will POINT activities last?

This is a multi-year initiative that hopes to ultimately change the way we view poverty as a regional community. To quickly build momentum, the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI) will provide at least 18 months of support. Their goal will be to help our communities successfully build a robust infrastructure for measurement and improvement, define and advance key projects to the level of measurable project results, and attain measurable progress on some poverty-focused goals, at least for pilot populations.

Why the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI)?

IHI is a global not-for-profit organization that partners with organizations and communities to create health, including those sectors that have a significant impact on health, such as education, social services and economic development. POINT will draw upon and adapt programmatic activities included in IHI's Breakthrough Series (BTS) Collaborative Model, a widely accepted model for those seeking breakthrough improvements on complex issues. The model employs the science of improvement, an applied science that emphasizes innovation, rapid-cycle testing in the field, and spread in order to generate learning about what changes, in which contexts, produce improvements. It is characterized by the combination of expert subject knowledge with improvement methods and tools. It is multidisciplinary — drawing on clinical science, systems theory, psychology, statistics, and other fields. Throughout this process, IHI will be a partner, advisor, teacher and coach to improvement teams throughout the region.

What is the Oshkosh Area Community Foundation's role in POINT?

The Oshkosh Area Community Foundation (OACF) is committed to continuous process improvement and POINT. This effort takes Tackling Wicked Problems concepts like systems thinking, collaboration, and social innovation to the next level. Currently, OACF is part of the POINT regional council. OACF will also be supporting the addition of an *Improvement Advisor* as a community resource. This person will be trained in the art and science of improvement and work, instruct and consult with POINT teams on all aspects of improvement including approaches, methods and tools. In the coming months and years, OACF's commitment to POINT will evolve as the work of POINT evolves.

Will POINT affect Oshkosh Area Community Foundation or United Way grant programs?

No changes to existing, competitive grantmaking programs are planned for 2016. For example, the Basic Needs Giving Partnership grant program in spring 2016 will follow standard guidelines for collaborative planning and implementation grants (see OACF website for grant guidelines).