



Franklin County  
**BOARD OF  
COMMISSIONERS**



Franklin County  
**BOARD OF  
COMMISSIONERS**

## **Rise Together Blueprint**

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

**I want to attend a community meeting. When and where will they be and how do I sign up?**

Here is a list of the Community Meetings scheduled thus far. More are expected to be added:

- June 17 (Reynoldsburg) – Reynoldsburg Park & Recreation Center
- June 18 (Westerville) – Westerville Community Center
- June 19 (South Side) – Reeb Avenue Center
- June 26 (Near East Side) – Columbus Urban League

**How is this plan different from attempts to address poverty in other cities, such as Kalamazoo, Mich.?**

Franklin County officials are taking are far more concrete steps than what has historically been done. These clear immediate actions include a \$15 wage for county employees, new grants for target areas, a comprehensive housing plan for seniors, and the creation of Innovation Center, which can work in tandem with county agencies, local and state government, nonprofits, the business community and education. The county is also taking clear steps to enlighten, educate and hopefully achieve more racial equity.

**I want to hear more about the racial equity training. Can you tell me?**

Franklin County leaders will be the first to undergo the training, starting July 17. The training will be presented by Racial Equity Institute, which will focus on moving away from individual bigotry and bias, reframing problems with a racial

equity lens, and putting the analysis in practice. The county is then pledging to take a leadership role in have it replicated with the Leadership Council and other community partners.

### **Where can I see who is on the Leadership Committee?**

Trudy Bartley, the Associate Vice President for Community Relations at The Ohio State University, and Matt Habash, President and Chief Operating Officer of the Mid-Ohio Foodbank, will chair the committee. Franklin County Commissioners are in the process of appointing 17 members. Once the list is complete it will be listed here <https://commissioners.franklincountyohio.gov/poverty> ?

### **Where does this poverty initiative go from here?**

Addressing poverty in the community is going to be a long-term endeavor. The county and its partners will move on to Phase II which is expected to last up to 18 months. During this time, center staff will work to carry out short-term plans identified by the Blueprint and push for the development a long-term idea.

### **Why was this effort needed?**

Franklin County is at a crossroads. The county has one of its lowest unemployment rates at just below 3 percent, yet almost 17 percent of county residents live in poverty. The rates are even higher for African Americans (29.9%), Latinos and Latinas (29%) and children (26.2%).

### **If I have an idea for the Innovation Center, how can I get ahold of them?**

Once their center is up and running, we can provide a mailing address and phone number. Until there, we have a form [available here](#). All ideas will be shared with center staff.

### **How much will the county invest in this initiative?**

Franklin County is expected to contribute more than \$13 million towards the poverty initiative over the next five years. This includes \$3.1 million in funding for initiatives that were put in motion before the end of Phase 1 and those initiatives which will be formally proposed soon, such as increasing the county's minimum wage to \$15/hr.

This total also includes an estimated \$2.5 million from Franklin County starting in 2020 and beyond, which will allow the Innovation Center to gain traction and hire an executive director. Then starting once the Innovation Center is in full swing, it is anticipated that the Leadership Council will assist in raising additional matching contributions from businesses, the state and foundations.

### **What does success look like?**

Success for us would be having fewer families in poverty and more families gaining economic mobility. We know this cannot happen in one year, or several years, but we are committed to seeing equitable economic mobility grow. We are aware that such an over-arching goal does include exact metrics; this is in part because we have seen other cities and counties set grand hopes that fail because they were attached to unobtainable standards. However, we want to ensure progress without hurting momentum. For that reason, we are establishing targets on each goal instead. In the Blueprint, you will see some metrics have already established. The Innovation Center staff will be tasked with establishing goals on the rest.

### **Why is there emphasis on racial equality?**

We cannot move the needle on poverty by tip-toeing around the role of racism. Racism was repeatedly expressed as a significant part of the problem by our Steering Committee, Work Groups and those in our Focus Groups. We need to name it and own it.

Statistics repeatedly underscore how African Americans, Hispanics and other minorities face higher poverty rates, higher unemployment, and higher incarceration rates, while also having lower-performing schools and lower home ownership. These are all factors that contribute to the cycle of poverty.

The Board of Commissioners have begun conversations with local nonprofits and community organizations who can help us carry this out. They will work together to establish a countywide partnership for ongoing training, community conversations, and programming in the area of racial equity. To be clear, though, training is just a start. This collaboration of government, business and nonprofit leaders are committed to seeing change is made.

