Practitioner Roundtable: Sample Approaches to Working Limited-Resource Communities at the Grassroots Level

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Community Voices Program:  
*Leadership Development for Community Decision-Making*

- Two goals of this program include:
  - To establish new groups of leaders (existing and emerging leaders)
  - To develop a shared group leadership process

- All levels of the training are based on participatory approach

- The program has 15 sessions, which are divided into four units

- Implementation Requirements
  - Training: Approximately six months
  - Individuals are taught how to co-facilitate the training curriculum
  - Staff members are involved directly with the planning and implementation
Voices Reaching Visions
Creating Strong Organizations to Enhance Communities

Participatory Training Guides for Community Co-facilitators

Part 1: Assessing Your Organization’s Structure and Mission
Part 2: Refining Your Organization’s Visions and Goals
Part 3: Planning for Community and Economic Development
Part 4: Securing Funds for Your Organization
Part 5: Developing Working Relationships with Community Assets

Program sponsored by: Cooperative Extension Program, N. C. A&T State University
Builds on the philosophy that “effective organizations need the voices of leaders to be heard in order to build strong communities”

The training curriculum builds on the skills taught in *Community Voices*

The program assumes that participants know their communities well and that they have many of the skills to work together

The training curriculum contains five manuals. Time needed to implement the program will vary, depending on the needs of the group
Building Positive Outcomes for Community Involvement

Community Voices and Voices Reaching Visions

An appropriate organization
- Establishes an appropriate structure for developing new organizations, as well as leaders

Benefits to be Gained
- Non-traditional leaders become involved in community decision making process

Better Knowledge
- Community groups have access to powerful skills and information that can facilitate positive change

Comfortable in the Group
- Community groups are capable to respond to community issues and find solutions to address their needs
Turning the Tide on Poverty:
Creating Vibrant Communities Together
Living on the Margins series produced by NC Rural Economic Development Center

- Rural North Carolina in the Aftermath of the Great Recession (2011). This report highlights compelling data on the challenges for those living in poverty and near-poverty, including long-term trends and the effects of the recession.
- Asset-Building Strategies for Low-Income Families (2011) -- highlights more than 30 projects with potential for implementation in rural communities.
- Guidebook for Connecting Individuals to Opportunity (2011). This workbook guides community groups seeking to connect low-income individuals with economic development opportunities.

- Look under publications (under information tool at www.ncruralcenter.org)
Necessary Conditions for Community Involvement

- **An Appropriate Organization**
  - Is there a group for a citizen to join and become involved in the decision making process?
  - What organizational structures are in place for citizen participation?

- **Benefits to Be Gained**
  - What will people get by participating in the program?
  - People must view an activity, a proposed change, or an issue as beneficial

- **Obligation/Commitment**
  - Citizens frequently participate because they feel an obligation/commitment to respond to an issue
  - Example: Inviting people to serve on the specialized committees and strategic planning councils

- **Better Knowledge**
  - People are reluctant to participate in a community activity when they do not have enough to act responsibly

- **Comfortable in the Group**
  - What are some invisible blocks that make potential participants uncomfortable?
Questions?