

# CREATING PATHWAYS

## Collaboration & Communication IDENTIFY OPPORTUNITIES

*Through The Delta Strategy's initiative, opportunities for reducing poverty in Kent County are being identified. We call them 'pathways.'*

### CREATING PATHWAYS

*When barriers are removed, success follows.*

The Delta Strategy works with companies that are making a difference in the personal and financial lives of their employees. Through these employers' efforts, workers are experiencing success and beginning to take control of their lives. Successful employees stay on the job and move toward economic self-sufficiency. By making a difference in their employees' lives, these companies are also making a difference in ours.



### Impacting employees from day one

With each new hire, an on-site caseworker from Family Independence Agency (FIA) does a personal assessment to identify existing or potential barriers to success on the job. Is daycare a concern?

What about dependable transportation? Is depression a factor? Are there challenges or concerns with children? Removing these kinds of barriers helps position the employee for success.

### Solutions

FIA caseworker, Joyce Bosscher, who has been on-site for two years at Cascade Engineering, guides employees seeking success toward resources and support to remove barriers one by one. Helping secure reliable transportation to and from work. Placing an employee on a different shift so that children aren't left home alone in the evening. Recommending medical care, counseling, classes like English as a Second Language or instruction on household budgeting. The solution may be as simple as providing a caring and affirming presence and a listening ear.

### Key pathways to economic self-sufficiency

Through its community coalition and dialogue/action groups, The Delta Strategy has identified some of the critical pathways that enable individuals and families to move from poverty toward economic self-sufficiency. They are:

1. Job skills and access to supportive services
2. Education, literacy, and English proficiency
3. Affordable, accessible, quality child care
4. Accessing community resources
5. Managing household finances
6. Education
7. Transportation
8. Health care

### Success

She's been with Cascade Engineering for a year. That's a good track record. When she started she had no transportation. FIA paid for her to use a cab through GRATA services (now called ITP). With financial assistance through FIA programs, this single mom with three kids – ages 12 to 18 –

## Measures

Focus Area	1. JOB SKILLS AND ACCESS TO SUPPORTIVE SERVICES	2. EDUCATION, LITERACY AND ENGLISH PROFICIENCY	3. AFFORDABLE, ACCESSIBLE, QUALITY CHILDCARE	4. ACCESSING COMMUNITY RESOURCES	5. MANAGING HOUSEHOLD FINANCES																		
Team Description	Expand the knowledge and use of employee-supportive practices and linkages to resources by area employers.	Coordinate and market ESL programs to businesses requiring vocational English as a second language.	Determine the need for childcare in a southwest Grand Rapids industrial area; develop ways to align the need with existing resources.	Prepare relatives and aides who provide childcare to link the families they serve to community resources.	Develop a plan for financial skills education for community members in the Grandville Avenue Corridor.																		
Measure	<p><b>Percent of employers who have 5 or more programs in place for training and assisting new hires</b></p> <p>Source: Workforce Development Board/ Delta Strategy Employer Survey, 2001</p> <table border="1"> <tr><th>Category</th><th>Percentage</th></tr> <tr><td>Do</td><td>61%</td></tr> <tr><td>Do Not</td><td>39%</td></tr> </table>	Category	Percentage	Do	61%	Do Not	39%	<p><b>Percent of employers who have English as a Second Language Programs</b></p> <p>Source: Workforce Development Board/ Delta Strategy Employer Survey, 2001</p> <table border="1"> <tr><th>Category</th><th>Percentage</th></tr> <tr><td>Do Not</td><td>93%</td></tr> <tr><td>Do</td><td>7%</td></tr> </table>	Category	Percentage	Do Not	93%	Do	7%	<p><b>Percent of employers who provide childcare assistance or referral services</b></p> <p>Source: Workforce Development Board/ Delta Strategy Employer Survey, 2001</p> <table border="1"> <tr><th>Category</th><th>Percentage</th></tr> <tr><td>Do Not</td><td>89%</td></tr> <tr><td>Do</td><td>11%</td></tr> </table>	Category	Percentage	Do Not	89%	Do	11%	<p><b>The number of relatives and aides providing childcare who have the training and materials to link families to community resources.</b></p> <p>Source: Kent County 4C</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p>Today, there are no relatives and aides providing childcare who have the training and materials to link families to needed community resources.</p> </div>	<p><b>The number of organizations with formal programs teaching financial skills in the Grandville Avenue Corridor</b></p> <p>Source: Delta Dialogue/Action Group</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p>Currently there are 9 organizations in the Grandville Avenue Corridor providing financial literacy training for area residents.</p> </div>
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