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## Poverty Prevention in Rosamond, Ca

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SOCW 8785: Social Change in Action:  
Prevention, Consultation, and Advocacy

**Social Change Portfolio**

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## OVERVIEW

**Keywords:** Families, Females, Males, Wealth gap, Prevention, Unemployment, Underdevelopment, Inequality, Welfare, Rosamond, Ca

### Poverty Prevention in Rosamond, Ca

**Goal Statement:** The goal of this prevention project is to bring awareness to poverty issues.

Thus, developing a plan to improve the lack of employment opportunities, educational attainment, and transportation service to help those in need attain an adequate standard of living free from poverty.

**Significant Findings:** Poverty works in an active cycle, with its effects increasing the probability that it will transfer among generations. Poor communities are less likely than others to have economic wealth, education, and social capital (i.e. connections to people with specialized knowledge or in powerful positions). The problem that comes with the cycle of poverty can continue to entrap families in poverty for generations if preventive measures are not in place. Hence, low-quality education, limited employment, food shortage, and lack of infrastructure all effects poverty by forming barriers to individual economic advancement (Hudson, 2010). Moreover, recommendations should include input on how the community members and stakeholders plan to; better understand how poverty can be resolved. In addition, meetings should be held regularly, so general feedback can show how the planning and progress efforts are humanizing poverty concerns.

**Objectives/Strategies/Interventions/Next Steps:** Social workers, counselors, and human service professionals deliver services in the communities. Vulnerable populations need the

assistance of helping professionals to overcome adversities in their lives. Social workers can be utilized as consultants in different agencies (i.e. schools, child welfare/public assistance, and community advocates) to increase awareness of poverty. Also, the best way to measure poverty directly is to influence the design and implement poverty reduction programs to overcome poverty in the community of Rosamond, Ca.

Continuous outreach and collaborative efforts are needed moving forward. Further, the initiatives from the Kern Community Foundation on the Status of Women and Girls in Kern County Program pay attention to how educational attainment plays an essential role in reducing poverty and promoting a balanced safety net free from poverty in communities and society as a whole (Executive Summary 2020 Report).

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## INTRODUCTION

### Poverty Prevention in Rosamond, Ca

The social change project will include reasons for poverty in Kern County; specifically, Rosamond, Ca. There are numerous reasons why individuals or families fall into poverty. The issues I intend to explore are the lack of employment opportunities, educational attainment, and transportation services. Further, the prevention measures will utilize statistical data, the issues or problems that may occur with poverty, and possible solutions that may help in reducing poverty.

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## PART 1: SCOPE AND CONSEQUENCES

### Poverty Prevention in Rosamond, Ca

### **Target Problem/Prevention**

Poverty is the state or condition of having little or no money, goods, or means of support; condition of being poor (Karger & Stoesz, 2009). While poverty can be defined primarily in economic terms, others consider social and political factors essential.

In developed countries such as the United States, poverty is relatively high compared to globally. Sernau (2006) states that at “least 1.5 billion are poor by this standard, probably closer to 2 billion or more, with the poorest continent being Africa” (p. 261). This social problem affects not only adults but the children in their care as well. For most people living relatively comfortable lives in Western societies, it is difficult to truly grasp the idea of poverty (Wienclaw, 2021).

Social change is concerned with working on behalf of the state, and the society, to help maintain social order (Walden University, 2015). The priority should be on serving the vulnerable and disproportionate population in a supportive way. Prevention programs in the form of providing referrals such as community-based, strengthening outreach service programs are designed to support reducing poverty and bring out awareness to enhance safety, permanency, and well-being.

### **Scope of the problem/Trends**

Within Rosamond, Ca there continue to be several residents living in poverty? This condition is affecting the community harshly and making it difficult for residents to get ahead. Also, different underlying factors plague this community. For example, lack of employment opportunities, educational attainment, and lack of transportation services has been presenting issues over the years.

According to (Rosamond, California: poverty rate data-information), the poverty rate in Rosamond is 17.8%. “One out of every 5.6 residents of Rosamond lives in poverty. Moreover, the poverty rate across the state of California is 15.1%, meaning Rosamond has a moderately higher than average percentage of residents below the poverty line when compared to the rest of California” (Rosamond, California: poverty rate data-information). Additionally, Rosamond is currently declining at a rate of 0.00% annually and its population has increased by 14.88% since the most recent census, which recorded a population of 18,150 in 2010. Rosamond reached its highest population of 20,851 in 2019 (Rosamond, California Population 2021).

Also, Kern County continues to trend high in poverty rates and is ranked among the least healthy counties in California (Lowest 0%-25%). Kern County is also trending the same in terms of unemployment (no significant rise), and violent crime remains low (County Health Rankings & Roadmaps (2018)).

### **Consequences of the Problem/Goal statement**

The consequences of the data thus far reveal that low income and wealth levels undermine the ability of governments to levy taxes for public service provision, adding to the “vicious cycle” connecting to the cause and effect of poverty (Egendorf, 1999). Hence, in the Rosamond community, recent arrivals or long-term residents have become trapped in a cycle of being at a disadvantage which includes poverty.

Due to the lack of resources, many families are struggling to make ends meet. Hence, this will adversely continue to cause a domino effect if preventive measures are not put into place. Also, the consequences of not having reliable financial stability will further reduce the value of having a good life. The goal of this prevention assignment is to enhance awareness of poverty

issues as well as develop a plan to help the poor attain an adequate standard of living to become important and contributing members of society.

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## PART 2: SOCIAL-ECOLOGICAL MODEL

### Poverty Prevention in Rosamond, Ca

#### **Social-Ecological Model-Risk and Protective Factors**

The social-ecological mechanisms influence both protective and risk factors among poverty within the Rosamond community. Protective and risk factors affect individuals and the society in which they reside. Thus, reducing risk factors should be the focal point of prevention measures while increasing protective factors known within the community. Hence, the social-ecological model emphasizes developing programs, policies, and practices that prevent environmental-related health conditions and improve stability across different systems (Marquez, Dodge Francis, & Gerstenberger, 2019).

There are individual risk factors associated with poverty. Moreover, the stigma of children and families are the fastest-growing population groups that are experiencing poverty within the United States (Tobin et. al., 2013, p. 1). Poverty within this vulnerable population has seen its fair share of disappointment. Historically, women have relied on their husbands to be the main source of income. Hence, when the husband becomes unemployed, the woman may have to seek financial assistance through public assistance such as welfare to help maintain some of the necessities needed to survive daily.

Another interesting point worth mentioning is the lack of resources women have dealing with an absent father not being in the home. Women are continuing to have to deal with the rims of poverty because of limited skills. A prevention measure that includes various tips on risks would be helpful and impact the community.



Another stigma suggests that the weathering process occurs because of the following pathways: the resources within a given neighborhood, stresses in the physical and social environment, and neighborhood-based networks and norms (Marquez et. al., 2019). Families often must choose between living in substandard, unhealthy housing conditions versus being homeless. Housing conditions are a viable threat to unstable housing but only represent one pathway by which instability occurs (Marquez et. al., 2019). This social issue continues to pose a concern due to the lack of involvement from others within the community. For example, having input on the family dynamics will address preventive measures.

Protective factors are short-term emergency shelters and emergency food programs that are needed to alleviate some poverty. According to Wong, Park, & Nemon (2006), three distinct programmatic responses to address poverty and service needs are emergency shelter programs, transitional housing, and permanent supportive housing (p. 68). Moreover, emergency shelters can be considered a “catchall” program serving individuals with diverse needs (Wong et. al, 2006). These shelters are a preventive measure to start thinking and planning the necessary steps to get through this social problem.

Additionally, protective factors that lessen poverty are also important to assess when considering prevention measures in the community. Increasing social support networks within the community will decrease psychological distress. Also, evaluating economic resources and opportunities will provide information on an individual, family, or community level. These factors will help the poverty population in Rosamond preserve healthy and physical well-being; making for a better quality of life.

## PART 3: THEORIES OF PREVENTION

### Poverty Prevention in Rosamond, Ca

#### **Theory and Research Support**

The theory that resonates with preventing and improving poverty is the community organizing model. Community-level models explore how “social systems function and change and how to mobilize community members and organizations. They offer strategies that work in a variety of settings, such as health care institutions, schools, worksites, community groups, and government agencies” (National Cancer Institute, 2005). This model will provide further knowledge on “risk and protective factors, including the role that poverty, adversity, and discrimination play in understanding human behavior in the context of the environment” (Hudson, 2010, p. 1).

When measured, poverty may be absolute or relative. Absolute poverty refers to a set standard that is consistent over time and between countries. An example of absolute measurement is the percentage of the population eating less food than is required to sustain the human body. Relative poverty is a low standard of living compared with that of others in the community or society. Relative poverty views poverty as socially defined and dependent on social context. Thus, income inequality is a relative measure of poverty (Karger & Stoesz, 2009).

Additionally, the community organization model is an appropriate prevention model because it builds on the plan of empowerment, relevance, and critical consciousness. Hence, utilizing the concepts of poverty will identify common problems, mobilize resources, and develop and implement strategies to reach collective goals (National Cancer Institute, 2005).

Another theory that relates to poverty is conflict theory. Conflict theory focuses on class struggle, which accompanies a change in society. As society develops, conflict arises between those that own the means of production and those who work. The quality of care may differ due to factors such as socioeconomic status which is a common factor in poverty. Hence, there are members of the community who feel that the individual is not being personally responsible. This causes a classic cultural battle and class structure of the haves and have-nots as it relates to poverty (Hudson, 2010).

According to (Katrass, Zuiker, & Bauer, 2004) “who conducted a study on rural families receiving welfare assistance revealed that these families encountered numerous challenges including finding quality childcare and facing changes within the community” (p. 202). The study also found differences between childcare, healthcare, transportation, and employment resources available in rural areas. The research focuses on the importance of dependable childcare and what happens when funds are restricted or eliminated. Rural families experienced less access to quality childcare than urban families. The study emphasized the need for policies to develop more support and services for rural families. Hence, creating better educational/skills training, employment opportunities, transportation services, and child care resources would aid in preventing poverty.

Oriental theories also attempt to explain large-scale societal problems such as poverty, mental illness, crime, and racial discrimination. Power tends to be divided unequally in every society, and society perpetuates various forms of oppression and injustice through structural inequality (i.e. wealth gap) that can contribute to poverty. In short, groups and individuals advance their interests over the interests of others. For instance, theories explain why a problem

may be happening, while the practice models help address solutions and additional preventative measures.

### **Evidence-Based Program**

In Kern County, 23% of women and girls live in poverty. The poverty rate of Kern's children under the age of 18 years is overwhelming. Evidence shows that education is an extenuating factor to poverty: a higher level of educational attainment generally optimizes economic opportunity by maximizing income and minimizing poverty (Executive Summary of 2020 Report).

The 2020 Report from the Kern Community Foundation on the Status of Women and Girls in Kern County Program pays special attention to how educational attainment associates with various areas of the report from economic wellbeing to the health and safety of communities. Education—whether understood via literacy rates or post-secondary training—can have significant outcomes on the lives of women and girls. Educational attainment is tied to unemployment. As one might expect, women are less likely to be unemployed as their educational attainment increases (Executive Summary of 2020 Report). Further, evidence shows that education is a mitigating factor to poverty: a higher level of educational attainment generally optimizes economic opportunity by maximizing income and minimizing poverty (Executive Summary of 2020 Report).

Moreover, while education is no assurance of life above the poverty line, the poverty rate of single mothers and their families is greatest among those who have less than a high school diploma (Executive Summary of 2020 Report). The poverty rate decreases with the increasing educational attainment of the mother, dropping from roughly 7 or 8 in 10 for single mothers without a high school education to less than 1 in 10 for those with a four-year college degree or

higher (Executive Summary of 2020 Report). Also, providing referrals such as community-based, family strengthening outreach service programs are designed to support families to meet the basic needs so that the community of Rosamond can thrive from adversity and learn to overcome poverty.

## **PART 4: DIVERSITY AND ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

### **Poverty Prevention in Rosamond, Ca**

#### **Target Population, Public Health, and Subgroup**

Local public health and social service programs serve the needs of society, and how these needs are carried out. For instance, the Department of Public Social Services (DPSS) is a government agency funded through taxpayer dollars. The government, which includes federal, state, and county systems, is in large part responsible for the citizens and their welfare; however, there are also private and non-profit organizations, which have gone into enterprises to help individuals. Hence, these agencies all function to balance society by providing help to the most vulnerable populations.

As stated by (Weber, Duncan, & Whitener, 2002), “rural employers are less likely than urban and suburban employers to provide health insurance, and access to affordable health care is limited in rural locations” (p. 26). Rural welfare recipients who are making the transition from cash assistance to work rarely continue to make use of Medicaid benefits. Furthermore, rural agency staff sometimes finds it hard to identify families in need because the sociological and psychological restraints reliance on public assistance is more prevalent in rural communities (Weber et. al., 2002).

According to (Rosamond, California: poverty rate data-information) Kern County Percent under Poverty by Race showed that 24.2% of Black residents, 9.1% of White residents, and

28.2% of Hispanic residents residing in Rosamond, California live below the poverty line. Further, 9.6% of the total population of Rosamond, California are black, approximately 44.0% of the total population of Rosamond, California are white, and approximately 36.5% of the total population of Rosamond, California are Hispanic (Rosamond, California: poverty rate data-information).

Also, female residents of Rosamond, California are dramatically (60%) more likely to live in poverty than males of this number 1,466 of 10,568 males in Rosamond live below the poverty line, and 2,092 of 9,382 females in Rosamond live below the poverty line (Rosamond, California: poverty rate data-information). Thus, poverty is a problem that affects many, and the overwhelming impact of poverty can leave lasting issues on the community and society as a whole.

### **Cultural Relevance**

Cultural relevance “refers to the extent to which interventions are consistent with the values, beliefs, and desired outcomes of a particular community” (Reese & Vera, 2007, p. 766). Hence, prevention scholars argue that participants must have an active voice in the design, implementation, and evaluation of prevention efforts if these efforts are to be successful (Reese & Vera, 2007, p. 768).

Mechanisms that increase cultural relevance are outreach programs and partnerships with others. Also, motivation, independence, responsibility, problem-solving skills, creativity, and increased self-esteem will make a difference in cultural relevance. Moreover, community-based programs and adult partnerships address the issues of poverty to enhance the vision of continuous growth and positive outcomes.

The outreach program will provide preventive measures for the community as well as meet the needs of the marginal members. Hence, outreach efforts will help with barriers to prevent additional poverty in the community. These programs will combat change by providing empowerment in the form of educational training and employment opportunities. Also, by partnering with others in the community, this collaboration will help focus on tightening the strengths that exist in the community.

### **Ethical Considerations**

To promote my ethical principles and to protect the individuals involved in the prevention programs, I would make sure that all participants sign a consent form. According to the (NASW, 2021) informed consent social workers “should provide services to clients only in the context of a professional relationship based, when appropriate, on valid informed consent. social workers should use clear and understandable language to inform clients of the purpose of the services, risks related to the services (Code of Ethics).”

In the consent form, I would address what the program would be about, how it would affect and benefit the participant, and ensure that the information discussed and obtained will be confidential. Also, if there is a need to disclose certain information to others, I would need to let the participants know what would be shared.

If there is any reason a participant does not want to have the information disclosed, then I would have to respect their choice (NASW, 2021). One of the main goals is to make sure the information gained does not provide intentional harm to the participants in any way. Also, human interaction is influenced by cultural, social, and physical settings. It is a balance adapted by knowledge, empathy, and self-confidence. Social workers are in every aspect of the

community. Also, I feel reaching out to others in my community with the knowledge and beliefs I share will contribute to having a better society.

Moreover, prevention programs will build knowledge from other perspectives by allowing us access in their lives to reduce poverty. Hence, with any exploration that contains individuals, the need to minimize risks to keep safety, beneficence, and justice is a must. Also, stakeholders in this area are interested in providing the community with more resources to become more self-sufficient. In addition, the stakeholders will provide knowledge that will hopefully provide educational and skills building to prevent future poverty.

## **PART 5: ADVOCACY**

### **Poverty Prevention in Rosamond, Ca**

#### **Institutional, Community, and Public Policy**

Advocacy is “the act of taking action to produce environmental change on behalf of clients and is considered a framework to help clarify how counselors can practice social justice” (Steele, 2008, p. 75). Hence, advocacy interventions help support communities in need and educate them to provide awareness associated with poverty.

At the institutional level, the MSJCC guideline states “institutional: represents the social institutions in society such as schools, churches, community organizations” (Multicultural and Social Justice Counseling Competencies, 2015). One of the barriers is the growing income and wealth gap. The wealth gap is even more important than the income gap (Hartman, 2003).

Further, studies show the racial wealth gap is much larger than the income gap; but also it is of greater importance. Whites and Blacks at the same income level have different wealth positions. Additionally, family supports of all types, job training, and education resources continue to be barriers (Hartman, 2003, p. 57).



Moreover, the community level MSJCC states “privileged and marginalized address community norms, values, and regulations that impede on the development of individuals, groups, and communities.” (Multicultural and Social Justice Counseling Competencies, 2015). Housing is another significant area of concern. Those problems still exist to an undesirable degree, but the main housing problem is affordability (Hartman, 2003). And if one adds up the number of people paying more for housing than they should, plus those living in substandard and overcrowded quarters, roughly one-third of the nation still is ill-housed, over 60 years later (Hartman, 2003).

Public policy level MSJCC states “public policy reflects the local, state, and federal laws and policies that regulate or influence client human growth and development” (Multicultural and Social Justice Counseling Competencies, 2015). Policies are needed to address the barrier related to poverty. Such policies need to include problem areas such as laws that will help with funding, better employment opportunities in remote areas, and improved infrastructure. These efforts are amplified by the individual’s ability to build teams and networks of others who can collectively address problems at the group, organizational, community, and societal levels of application (Walden University, 2015; Walden 2020: A Vision for Social Change 2017 Report.). Advocacy is needed to challenge existing policies related to the laws and poverty.

### **Advocacy Action**

By improving the wealth gap will reduce poverty. Also, by having assets you can pass on things to your children; and weather adversity (Hartman, 2003). In essence, this advocacy action will be valuable because it will provide a safety net to this social issue.

Secondly, having adequate housing will provide security for those that have been in poverty for some time. Hence, building shelters in rural neighborhoods, and increasing the

opportunities of having public housing (Section 8 vouchers) when applicable. Moreover, what is needed are basic changes in how housing is financed, developed, owned and managed, to create a large nonprofit social sector for housing (Hartman, 2003, p. 59).

Lastly, the United States is a multicultural society. A policy that affects poverty needs to ensure that the marginalized populations are granted the same opportunities to secure housing. Advocacy efforts need to be continuous and ongoing from a local, state, and federal standpoint. As mentioned, having more shelters would be a positive change to serve the community. Also, rural communities need more zip codes in these areas with little to no resources to possibly create satellite offices. Further, joining the NASW associations to support lobbying efforts helps drive important public policy ideas that affect poverty both locally and globally.

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