

County adopts set of policies to reduce poverty, increase opportunity

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PIMA COUNTY, Dec. 5, 2023 – The Pima County Board of Supervisors voted 3-1 Dec. 5 to adopt the Prosperity Initiative, a wide-ranging set of policies designed to reduce generational poverty and increase individual and community wealth.

The policies are the result of more than a year of study and review by a task force that included representatives from several County and City of Tucson departments, all incorporated cities and towns and the Tucson Indian Center.

“This is a historic moment for Pima County,” said Adelita S. Grijalva, chair of the Pima County Board of Supervisors.

“The Prosperity Initiative Policy calls for collaboration with stakeholders and community to embrace a two-generation approach to reducing poverty. With it, we can create better opportunities and improved outcomes for working families. The Prosperity Initiative will help create a more thriving community for all.”

The group has held more than 180 small group meetings with different people in the community, ranging from nonprofit and business leaders to people with lived experience. Since the Prosperity Initiative was launched on Nov. 1, 2022, the group has met with or presented to more than 800 individuals.

The group also met regularly with two sociologists from the University of Arizona to review ideas and relevant research, and drew on input from the [Regional Affordable Housing Commission](#), the [Transportation Advisory Committee](#), and other County and City boards.

“Many communities have high rates of poverty, but the Prosperity Initiative gives us a roadmap based on evidence-based research on how to not just reduce poverty, but build community wealth for generations to come,” said Bonnie Bazata, the Ending Poverty Now program manager in [Pima County's Community & Workforce Development Department](#), who led the task force.

“It takes a regional approach that allows us to work together while each community determines their own priorities.”

The initiative recommends the adoption of 13 policies:

1. Increasing access to affordable high-quality early childcare and education for children from low-income families.

2. Increasing pathways to post-secondary education for children from low-income families.
3. Expanding the availability of broadband services to all Pima County residents and ensuring that they have access, equipment and skills for digital inclusion.
4. Increasing housing mobility and opportunity, especially for families in high-poverty areas.
5. Improving housing stability among low-income renters and homeowners.
6. Providing healthcare insurance enrollment assistance to reduce medical debt.
7. Reducing unintended pregnancies by increasing access to contraception and through education.
8. Prioritizing workforce development for low-income job seekers with practices such as apprenticeships, on-the-job training and supportive services.
9. Improving community financial capability for low-income families and small businesses.
10. Identifying and prioritizing safe, reliable and affordable transportation services to better connect disadvantaged communities with jobs and other resources.
11. Improving quality of life and opportunity in high-poverty areas by investing in both physical and social infrastructure.
12. Improving job quality for low-income workers and expanding the employment capacity of employers already offering quality jobs.
13. Supporting opportunities for small businesses, prioritizing entrepreneurs of color, women-owned businesses and businesses operating in high-poverty neighborhoods and rural areas.

The initiative also recommends that implementing these policies be informed by three cross-policy strategies: centering family voice and participating in the development of policies, programs and practices, building a more climate-resilient community while reducing environmental harm to low-income areas, and reducing and preventing crime in neighborhoods.

For more information about the Prosperity Initiative and its recommendations, read the County Administrator's [Dec. 5 memo](#), which includes the full Prosperity Report. More information also may be found on the [Prosperity Initiative Engage page](#).

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