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## **Millard County IGP Strategic Plan: A Report to the Intergenerational Welfare Reform Commission**

**Millard County Intergenerational Poverty Committee  
June 2, 2017**

At the invitation of the State Department of Workforce Services (DWS), the Millard County Intergenerational Poverty Committee was formed to address local solutions to intergenerational poverty (IGP) in the County. Millard County is one of twelve other counties to receive this invitation and work on a strategic plan to address IGP.

In behalf of the entire Millard County Intergenerational Poverty Committee (the Committee) and its partners, we, the co-chairs, thoughtfully submit this report. The Committee's hope is that the Utah Legislature, state agencies and community leaders interested in breaking the cycle of IGP in Millard County and throughout the state will hear its collective voice.

Sincerely,

Commissioner, Wayne Jackson  
IGP Chairman, Greg Chappell  
IGP Co-Chairman, Ron Draper

## Background and Summary

Approximately 350 children in Millard County live in intergenerational poverty, or .6 percent of all IGP children in Utah. The Millard County Intergenerational Poverty Committee met and collaborated with elected officials and community partners (see Appendix A) for nine meetings over the past 10 months. We developed a *Mission Statement* to provide a unified context and acting as a filter through which the Committee viewed and prioritized ideas and solutions:

*The Millard Intergenerational Poverty Committee exists and will continue to formally exist, under the direction of the Millard County Commission, to break the cycle of intergenerational poverty (IGP) in Millard County, through the coordination of direct and personal interventions in the unique lives of IGP children, by assuring basic needs, providing safe and secure environments, creating opportunities to build strong relationships with peers and adult mentors, helping them realize their personal worth and value, imparting a sense of hope for a successful future and the resilience to achieve it.*

The number of Millard County children at-risk of remaining in poverty as adults is approximately three times greater than the IGP child population in the county. Based on scope and scale, the Committee has chosen to focus its energy on the children identified by DWS as living in intergenerational poverty. By DWS definition, at-risk children are not technically living in IGP, though the Committee recognizes their circumstances are no less dire or important to the county. Per state law and administrative definitions set by DWS, the Committee sets its sight on IGP children first (ages (0-17) and then their families. The Committee recognizes the child-centric vision created by the Utah Legislature and seeks fidelity to that vision.

In establishing the Millard County IGP plan, the Committee necessarily created and applied certain assumptions giving context for our approach:

- Any effective plan rests on the foundation of shared data. The Committee will know the IGP children it serves.
- Successful execution of the plan requires collaboration between agencies, public and private.
- The plan takes a relational approach to assisting IGP children, rather than primarily materialistic or programmatic approaches.
- The plan utilizes mentors to establish personal relationships with IGP children and their families.
- The plan emphasizes non-cognitive, developmental and executive skill assessments and training of IGP children over traditional behavioral approaches.
- The plan acknowledges limited resources while looking ahead at what its impact could be with sufficient resources.

In prioritizing its plan, the Committee chose to address three concerns within three areas of well being set by the State. The Committee based its priorities on long-term goals provided by the State. The Committee chose to prioritize the following state goals:

- **Education:** *IGP children graduate from high school at the state rate (state 10-year goal)*
- **Early Childhood Education:** *IGP children are ready for kindergarten (state 5-year goal)*

- **Health:** *IGP children access quality health care* (state 5-year goal)

## The Plan

The Millard County IGP strategic plan was designed collaboratively to have the greatest impact in breaking the cycle of poverty among children living in intergenerational poverty in Millard County.

There are two parts to this plan, one part systemic and the other part programmatic – systemic aspects of the plan undergird its programmatic aspects. At its heart, this plan seeks to see the problem of IGP differently than how situational poverty has been viewed for the past six decades. Intergenerational poverty is different than situational poverty – IGP is a learned culture and if learned, it can be unlearned or prevented and its generational cycle broken. The Committee believes in this view deeply. This plan's success depends on acknowledging how human effort and initiative can overcome even the most difficult of life's circumstances.

Let's first address the systemic aspects of this plan. These are reforms required to execute this plan successfully.

*First*, this plan depends upon the Committee knowing its customer. It will be critically helpful and beneficial for the Committee to know the names and circumstances of the IGP children it is trying to assist. Without this actual information and the ability to share it with IGP partners, the Committee will be handicapped in its ability to achieve stated goals. No "workaround" can replace actual knowledge of these IGP children and no solution discussed in this plan will have full impact without that knowledge. Memorandums of understanding can be created locally, within limits, but a better and lasting solution is for federal, state and local governments to collaborate to mitigate systemic barriers to data sharing. This Committee will participate in any discussions designed to achieve this end.

*Second*, this plan depends upon the full collaboration of state and local agencies and private partnerships. As described in our *Mission Statement*, the Committee plans on formalizing its union among stakeholders by making it a permanent fixture in Millard County planning and policy making. Absolutely essential to collaboration within this plan is a common process among all agencies, public and private, assisting IGP children and their families. For instance, effective plan collaboration requires a common intake database and the ability to track transient families throughout the State and to administer clean and accountable transfers between agencies.

*Third*, this plan depends upon the use of mentors, or "navigators" and family resource facilitators (FRFs), assigned to IGP children and their families to create and maintain a healthy working relationship. These individuals, paid and volunteers, focus first on the personal relationship with the child and family, assess needs and facilitate assistance if needed. The mentor is the frontline of this plan – this plan will fail without direct involvement and intervention by a mentor. There could be more than one mentor depending on the circumstances but, regardless, the key to mentoring success is driven by the quality of the relationships created.

Our Committee recommends that the mentors receive training, not only in administrative mechanics but also in various forms of interpersonal skills, especially regarding the ability to accurately identify the symptoms of toxic stress in children. Furthermore, each mentor must be

permitted to be both effectual and actionable. There necessarily will be times when a mentor, along with and in behalf of the family, must be able to green-light administrative decisions or put a stop to them.

*Fourth*, in-home visits, by mentors, are highly recommended. Typically, IGP families stuck in a deep culture of dependency are not the families that reach out for cures. For example, a meeting held in public providing parenting classes for new mothers – to help parents provide critical cognitive learning prior to kindergarten – usually is attended by motivated parents. The unmotivated parent (i.e. the parents needing the training most) rarely attends through his or her own initiative. In these cases, mentors need to assist these families in their homes.

This plan strongly emphasizes the need to first assess non-cognitive issues for IGP children and to discuss and implement interventions to address identified concerns. It also emphasizes the importance providing training for mentors who will be working with students.

## **Needs Assessment**

### **Preschool:**

Enrollment into a quality preschool program has been identified as an area of focus and priority for IGP children in Millard County. We believe that it is critical for these children to have the opportunity to enroll and participate in preschool instruction and activities which will most likely provide them with the essential tools necessary to be ready for eventual enrollment into kindergarten. Students in preschool programs will be assisted in the development of cognitive, social, and emotional skills along with assistance with speech, language, fine, and gross motor skills. It is our belief that students who experience success in preschool are more likely to succeed in kindergarten and subsequent grades; thus developing positive attitudes toward school and the educational process.

Our goal and objective is to ensure that 100% of our preschool age IGP students have the opportunity to attend preschool at no cost.

### **Education:**

Successful completion of high school requirements and subsequent graduation has been identified as an essential benchmark in our effort to break the cycle of intergenerational poverty for individuals in Millard County. The 2016 graduation rate for the State of Utah was 85%. The graduation rate for Millard School District was 93%. Data provided by The Division of Workforce Services indicates that the graduation rate for students identified as IGP in Millard County is around 50%. We believe that successful, age appropriate, progression through school grade levels beginning with preschool and concluding with a high school diploma will significantly increase the likelihood of breaking the cycle of intergenerational poverty. Our goal for our IGP students in Millard County is to graduate from high school at or above the state average. It is our intent to identify IGP students early and to work with both students and parents to develop a sense of value in education and to ensure the likelihood of attending and succeeding in school.

### **Substance Abuse:**

The Millard County IGP Committee has chosen to focus on the risk factor of substance abuse. There is empirical evidence, as well as antidote evidence that our County has a higher rate of substance use in some areas. In 2015, data collected by Bauch Harrison Research Group, the

SHARPS (Student Health Risk Prevention Survey) revealed elevated levels of the following substances. Millard County has an elevated rate, compared to their state counterparts, of students from the sixth grade to the twelfth grade who have abused alcohol, marijuana, and inhalants. The sharpest increase has come to our County in the form of e-cigarettes. In 2013 we averaged about 7%-8% lifetime use of e-cigarettes from sixth graders to twelfth graders. Within a two year span, that increased to 20%. It will be paramount for our County and the IGP Committee to include this in one of the factors as we attempt to fight poverty in Millard County.

### Focus of the Plan's Program

- **Education:** *IGP children graduate from high school at the state rate or higher*
  - Building a culture that values education to increase school attendance
- **Health:** *IGP children have access to quality health care*
  - Substance Abuse
- **Early Childhood Development:** *IGP children are ready for kindergarten*
  - Pre-school (ages 3-5)

### Program Modeling

Each priority will be explained using a logic model format. For each priority, this format will describe the idea and its execution. This format uses the following structural definitions:

- *Long-term goal – 5-year or 10-year goals set by state*
- *Mid-term goal – a primary Millard County goal to achieve the long-term goal*
- *Short-term goal – a preliminary Millard County goal to achieve the primary goal*
- *Ownership – who owns (i.e. agency, public and/or private) and is accountable for execution, coordination and reporting?*
- *Activities – what has to be executed for goals to be achieved?*
- *Inputs – additional resources needed to meet goals (i.e. community partners and services)*
- *Measurements of success – quantitative and, more importantly, qualitative ways to measure success for achieving each goal*
- *Timeline – when does the execution for each goal roll out over the next year?*

### Millard County IGP Priorities:

*Building a culture that values education to increase school attendance:*

- State long-term goal – IGP children graduate from high school at least at the state rate
- Millard mid-term goal – Emphasis the value of education to increase school attendance
- Millard short-term goal - Monitor attendance of IGP students and determine appropriate actions through the IGP Committee discussions.
- Ownership – MAS & IGP Committee
- Activities – Identify IGP children with chronic attendance problems. Utilize the resources and expertise of the IGP Committee to formulate individualized action plans such as mentoring to address concerns.
- Inputs – Millard School District, IGP Committee
- Measurements of Success – Increased attendance and academic success.
- Timeline:

- Qtr 1 – Monitor attendance of IGP students
- Qtr 2 – Continue monitoring attendance. Identify specific students that would benefit from assistance. Begin formulation of plans such as mentoring through IGP Committee discussions.
- Qtr 3 – Continue monitoring attendance. Monthly review of progress and needs by IGP Committee
- Qtr 4 – Continue monitoring attendance. Monthly review of progress and needs by IGP Committee

*Substance abuse:*

- State long-term goal – IGP children have access to needed care
- Millard mid-term goal – Early intervention substance abuse programs (ages 8-12; grades 3-6)
- Millard short-term goal – Create an age and grade appropriate strategy
- Ownership – CUCC
- Activities – Identify IGP children most at risk, develop personal advocates, create standardized training for personal advocates, research successful evidence-based approaches, define an effective referral system
- Input – School District, after-school programs
- Measurements of Success – Decrease in rate of new cases of substance abuse; Increase in cases of successful treatment; Increase in school attendance; Increase in GPA; Decrease in juvenile justice referrals; Decrease in foster care placements
- Timeline:
  - QTR 1 – Gather partners, research successful evidence-based programs, identify/explain problem and settle on an appropriate mentors model
  - Qtr 2 – Develop age and grade appropriate strategy and determine how to evaluate progress
  - Qtr 3 – Pilot/test application of strategy
  - Qtr 4 – Implement strategy

*Pre-school (ages 3-5):*

- State long-term goal – IGP children are ready for kindergarten
- Millard mid-term goal – IGP children (ages 3-5) are enrolled in quality pre-school
- Millard short-term goal – Identify, communicate and enroll IGP children (ages 3-5) in pre-school
- Ownership – SUU Head Start, School District
- Activities – Review pre-school enrollment, identify IGP children not enrolled, create communication and recruitment plan
- Inputs – After-school programs
- Measurements of Success – 100 percent of IGP families communicated with
- Timeline:
  - Qtr 1 – Review pre-school enrollment and identify IGP children not enrolled in pre-school
  - Qtr 2 – Create communication and recruitment plan and determine how progress will be evaluated

- Qtr 3 – Communicate with families of IGP children not enrolled in pre-school to 1) communicate availability, 2) seek enrollment and 3) determine factors for lack of enrollment
- Qtr 4 – Evaluate progress and make any necessary adjustments

## Summary of Actionable Items

Four primary actions must occur for these plans to materialize:

1. Countywide collaborative partnerships and mentor pools – Millard County IGP Committee will be central to the development of these networks.
2. Building a culture that values education – *Develop a mentoring program.*
  - Gather partners to develop mentoring and peer support program and layout objectives; create consensus; create a “value of education” program and establish how to evaluate progress.
3. Substance abuse – *Early intervention substance abuse programs (ages 8-12; grades 3-6).*
  - Gather partners, research successful evidence-based programs, identify/explain problem and settle on an appropriate mentors model; develop age and grade appropriate strategy.
4. Pre-school (ages 3-5) – *IGP children (ages 3-5) are enrolled in quality pre-school.*
  - Review pre-school enrollment and identify IGP children not enrolled in pre-school; create communication and recruitment plan and determine how progress will be evaluated.



## Appendix A: Participants within Millard County IGP Committee

County Commissioner	Wayne Jackson	Millard County
IGP Chairman	Greg Chappell	Millard School District
IGP Co-Chairman	Ron Draper	Delta Inter – Faith Rep
IGP Facilitator	Paul Mero	
IGP Secretary	Marki Rowley	Millard County
	Chet Ludlow	Central Utah Counseling Center (CUCC)
	Darla Ewart	Community First
	Julie Gibson	Juvenile Justice Service
	Karen Banks	Utah State University (USU) Extension
	Pete Jacobsen	4 <sup>th</sup> District Juvenile Court
	Sandy Rivera	Southern Utah University (SUU) Headstart
	Scott Barney	Millard County Economic Development (MEDA)
	Shauna Nelson	Public Health Department
	Stacy Anderson	Department of Workforce Services (DWS)
	Taylor Petersen	Delta North Elementary School (DNES)
	Troy Gasser	Division of Child & Family Services (DCFS)
	Judy Kempter	SUU Headstart
	Deric Despain	Utah State University (USU) Extension
	Travis Keel	Millard County Sheriff's Office (MCSO)
	Tyrel Curtis	Millard County Sheriff's Office (MCSO)