

**STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**  
**PROGRAM WORK TEAM ON POVERTY AND ECONOMIC HARDSHIP**  
**CORNELL COOPERATIVE EXTENSION**  
August, 2008

The Program Work Team (PWT) on Poverty and Economic Hardship seeks to develop effective methods for reducing and ultimately eliminating poverty and economic hardship. With half the world's population living on less than \$2 a day and 10–15 percent of New Yorkers living below the federal poverty standard, this purpose is important and timely. The majority of the poor within the U.S. work, yet lack access to basic necessities such as health insurance. Poverty subjects millions of New Yorkers, and billions worldwide, to social insecurity, preventable disease, and premature death.

We have come together as educators, community leaders, and researchers with confidence that poverty and economic hardship can be, and probably will be, eliminated in our lifetime. It is well known that America has the resources to end poverty, but lacks the political will to do so. It is also well known that the technological means to feed, clothe, house, educate, and care for every person on the planet are available, yet the will required to achieve this end is lacking. We believe New Yorkers are capable of effecting change, but that they lack the awareness they need of the problems that exist. Therefore we dedicate ourselves to raising awareness about poverty and economic hardship and to finding ways to eradicate them for the long term. Accomplishing this will require significant policy change, and therefore we intend to work with policy makers at all levels of government as well as with the people in our own communities and neighborhoods across New York State's rural and urban places.

## **PWT Goals**

1. Raise awareness about the total number of poor and economically distressed, where they are located in the state, the characteristics of their communities, and the extent of their assets and deprivations. While we will focus our efforts primarily on New York State, we will actively situate our work in the context of the national and international dimensions of poverty and economic hardship.
2. Imagine methods for communities, states, and nations to reduce poverty and economic hardship in the short term and to begin to eliminate them entirely in the long term.
3. Evaluate methods already in use.

## **PWT Objectives**

Listing of achievable objectives to be completed at some future time, in relation to ongoing plans of work.

### **Present at First PWT Meeting on June 12, 2008**

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5. Nancy Potter. CCE Tompkins County. np20@cornell.edu
6. Laura Opelt. Director, Catholic Charities Steuben County. lopelt@dor.org
7. Paul Sawyer. CU Faculty and Director, Knight Writing Institute. pls12@cornell.edu
8. Rosemary Hartman. CCE Schuyler County. rhw5@cornell.edu
9. Kate Dickin. CU Faculty. kld12@cornell.edu
10. LeRoy Mast. Catholic Charities, Steuben County. LMast@dor.org
11. Nancy Welch. CCE Hamilton County. naw5@cornell.edu
12. Holly Gump. CCE Regional. hmg2@cornell.edu
13. Rod Howe. CCE Administration. rh13@cornell.edu
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15. Tom Hirschl. CU Faculty and PWT Chair. tah4@cornell.edu