

Circles Initiative offers its participants a hand up... not a hand out.

WHAT IS THE CIRCLES INITIATIVE?

Circles is a collaborative effort between the Carson City community and the human services system to help elevate people out of poverty and prevent homelessness. It is designed to build lasting relationships across socioeconomic and cultural lines, encouraging all Carson City residents to realize their full potential without prejudice or class distinction.

Through the Capital City Circles Initiative we can transform lives, build a stronger and healthier economy and cultivate a sense of pride and independence among those in need.



Capital City Circles Initiative

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These are a few of the people within the Circles Initiative program. It was their compelling stories that inspired this Initiative.

A young couple with no medical coverage faces mounting hospital bills when the husband is diagnosed with cancer.....

A husband and wife struggle to pay for childcare while fighting to secure custody of two young children from a mother suspected of child abuse and neglect.....

A single mom with a former drug addiction tries to rebuild her life and regain the trust of her family.....

THE WORKING POOR

Many low income families live in poverty even though they have full time jobs. A minimum wage worker working 40 hours per week earns a gross income of \$984 per month. The fair market rent in Carson City for a one bedroom residence is \$616 per month. The fair market rent in Carson City for a two bedroom residence is \$742. This leaves very little additional money for such things as child care, food, transportation, health care and other basic living expenses.

CREATING LEADERS

It is important to note that Circles is not a mentoring program. Members of the target group (also known as Circle Leaders) are encouraged to assume leadership and decision making roles. Meetings designed to foster a sense of community among the circle Leaders and their Allies (community volunteers) are held weekly. Free meals, childcare and homework assistance are provided for participants by members of the community. Participants work with their Allies to establish goals in pursuit of eventual self-sufficiency with the expectation that they will one day reciprocate by giving back what they themselves have received.

WHERE IT BEGAN

Circles is an outgrowth of a self-sufficiency program model initiated by Mid-Iowa Community Action. It is intended to bring community volunteers together to partner with families in pursuit of economic advancement.