

# The Situation

## It is a challenge to be financially stable in Larimer County.

For many, Larimer County is a great place to live, work and raise a family. However, Census Bureau statistics show that over 40,000 people in our community live in poverty making life a daily struggle (US Census Bureau, 2011).



### A picture of poverty

When you hear the word poverty, an image is likely to come to mind. Do you see a homeless person on the street? Do you see a family that lives in what you consider a run-down home? Or maybe you think all people living in poverty here are immigrants?



## These facts may present a different image in your mind:

- 9 out of 10 people in poverty in Larimer County were born and raised here. (US Census Bureau, 2011)
- 2 out of 3 people living in poverty in Larimer County are employed. (US Census Bureau, 2011)
- 1 in 4 children qualifies for free and reduced lunch at school. (COMPASS of Larimer County, 2011)

## Poverty is a federally defined term – a dollar amount is attached to the word.

Poverty in the United States is defined as a family of four living on less than \$22,050 a year (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2009). While our country and community has watched most aspects of our way of life change over the last 45 years, the federal poverty measure has not changed.

|                                                  | 1960     | 2009        |
|--------------------------------------------------|----------|-------------|
| poverty level - family of 4                      | \$3,022  | \$22,050    |
| flour                                            | \$0.56   | \$5.76      |
| eggs - 1 doz                                     | \$0.54   | \$1.66      |
| bread - 1lb                                      | \$0.21   | \$1.37      |
| Sugar - 5lbs                                     | \$0.64   | \$3.15      |
| median rent                                      | \$71     | \$842       |
| Median family income                             | \$6,600  | \$49,777    |
| Median home value                                | \$11,900 | \$185,200   |
| childcare and education (1 child under 18 years) | \$504.58 | \$37,801.20 |

One of the major changes we've seen since 1964 is an increase in the number of households in which all caretakers must leave the home to work. This has increased the number of expenses experienced by these families, including childcare and transportation costs, which were not accounted for in the original poverty measurement.