The Salvation Army is investing in a bold new initiative aimed at helping families leave poverty behind—for good.

The Salvation Army’s Pathway of Hope initiative is an innovative and long-term approach to providing targeted services to families with a desire to take action to break the cycle of crisis and enable a path out of inter-generational poverty.

Unlike other programs, Pathway of Hope is not about cookie-cutter outcomes; implementation will be phased and results will be realized in limited numbers. However, our numbers have the potential to represent sustainable change for families of lifelong instability.
For more than 150 years, The Salvation Army has stood firm in its commitment to come alongside families when times are at their darkest. However, we must become more intentional and focused with our resources to ensure that we are able to remain efficient and viable.

According to the Human Needs Index (HNI), a new and dynamic resource consumption evaluation tool created through a collaborative partnership between The Salvation Army and Indiana University's Lilly Family School of Philanthropy, the need for basic necessities amongst disadvantaged populations in Pennsylvania has increased during the past 10 years. Low-income individuals and families are in desperate need of help and hope.

Pathway of Hope model focuses on possibilities rather than problems, empowering clients to identify and develop strengths to reach their goals and dreams.

Families selected to participate in Pathway of Hope will undergo a careful review to ensure their strong commitment to improving their lives if given incentive, support, and opportunity. In return, Salvation Army social workers will provide intensive case management, linkage to resources, and tangible supports to help empower families to take their first steps out of poverty.

THE 5-STEP PLAN

1. Identify highly motivated families who express a sincere desire to work to change their circumstances. Only families with at least one child under 18 years of age are considered.

2. Pair families with a social worker to assess their situation, identify their strengths, and set measurable goals. From the very start, families know that they will be responsible for working to improve their own situation.

3. Connect families with community resources and opportunities to help them out of crisis to self-sufficiency.

4. Meet regularly with the families and hold them accountable to show progress. If families are not demonstrating progress toward their goals and self-sufficiency, they are asked to leave the program and their spot is given to another, more motivated family.

5. Monitor progress at predetermined steps along the way, and track outcomes.

A Shift From Serving To Solving

While we plan to continue to be a resource for emergency support, the rising tide of families falling victim to crisis tells us that this cannot be the sum total of our efforts.

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The Salvation Army can double its impact with existing resources, by:

1. Providing targeted services to families with a desire to take action, changing life trajectories and increasing hope

2. Bringing all The Salvation Army’s internal resources to bear, on the goals clients identify

3. Catalyzing community collaboration in service of shared clients

The Pathway of Hope initiative is based on extensive research and planning, and we are certain it can play a major role in reversing record levels of poverty in Pennsylvania. We’ve invested a lot to develop and refine the program in order to scale it nationally.

Our ultimate goal is to roll out this initiative across our nationwide network by 2020. On a national scale, Pathway of Hope is an enormous undertaking. However, implementing Pathway of Hope in Central Pennsylvania is surprisingly manageable.

Pathway of Hope was developed with today’s economic and social contexts in mind.

As poverty increases, families are increasingly vulnerable: In Pennsylvania, approximately 1 in 7 families live in poverty today.
To sustain Pathway of Hope programs at The Salvation Army Corps Community Centers in Berks, Cumberland, Dauphin, Lancaster and York Counties in Pennsylvania, The Salvation Army will need to raise approximately $235,000 per year in additional support.

This will allow us to place and/or train workers in our community centers to serve as dedicated case managers for families in the program. Funding will also help to offset the cost of additional tangible support to families during their journey.

Pathway of Hope is not for people looking for handouts, but rather for families who are committed to working hard to change their circumstances, and require a “hand-up” along the way. The Salvation Army is committed to going the distance to help these families achieve lasting change.

An initiative of this magnitude will require significant support, and The Salvation Army is purposefully positioned for the long engagement necessary to effectively combat deep poverty.

With this in mind, we have begun strategic approaches to local community foundations such as the Santander Bank Foundation, Wyomissing Foundation, and others to obtain both the funding and partnership needed to implement and sustain initiatives that are critical to the success of Pathway of Hope.

The Salvation Army has been helping the poor around the clock, seven days a week, 365 days a year, for 150 years. We have a presence in every ZIP code across the nation.

If you’re reading this, there is a good chance you have helped The Salvation Army become one of the most well-known, respected, and effective nonprofit organizations in the world—and for that, we thank you.

But we cannot rest on our past accomplishments. There is too much at stake. We need your help to lead the way in finding a better approach to helping people in Pennsylvania rise out of poverty.

For good.