

Network Development

Two projects are underway that will serve as a source of learning for our community and will ultimately provide a basis for a network of provider agencies.

1. **Poverty Services Provider Database.** A directory of major poverty services providers funded under new initiatives to provide services such as contingency cash transfer programs and financial literacy training. [Andrew Davis, Senior Researcher]
2. **Benefits Access Projects.** A directory of new programs designed to make sure that low-income families and individuals get access to the income-related benefits for which they are eligible, including tax-based benefits, food stamps and state-funded health insurance.

The proposed project will also encourage and assist appropriate service agencies in our network to further develop poverty-reduction projects.

White Papers

The School's research will provide a basis for several white papers which will be widely circulated to tri-state area social service organizations. Each of the papers will focus on a particular population or issue. Each of the papers will use an assets-oriented poverty framework, be informed by front-line service agency staff, and will identify gaps in the knowledge base on asset development and poverty eradication. [Andrew Davis, Senior Researcher]

curricular

Poverty-Related Course Modules

The project will develop course modules focusing on social policy, programs and practices in the areas of asset development and opportunity including but not limited to: promotion of financial literacy, psychosocial and environmental dynamics of money, spending and saving, and approaches to wealth creation such as entrepreneurship, micro-lending and Individual Development Accounts, or IDAs. This curriculum project would meet a critical need within the field of social work by preparing professionals who can provide community-based services to economically and socially disadvantaged populations and contribute to social policy development in the field. [Andrew Davis, Senior Researcher]

Better Use of Social Work Resources

Understanding that we need to better mobilize social work resources in higher education and in community agencies, the proposed project will bring

together leaders to develop a consensus on how social work education and research can best contribute to poverty solutions in different communities. Mobilizing faculty and students to think about poverty and its effects on social work practice in new ways, the project will ultimately introduce new practice strategies so that students can deliver poverty-reduction interventions as part of their field assignments in targeted agencies serving the poor.

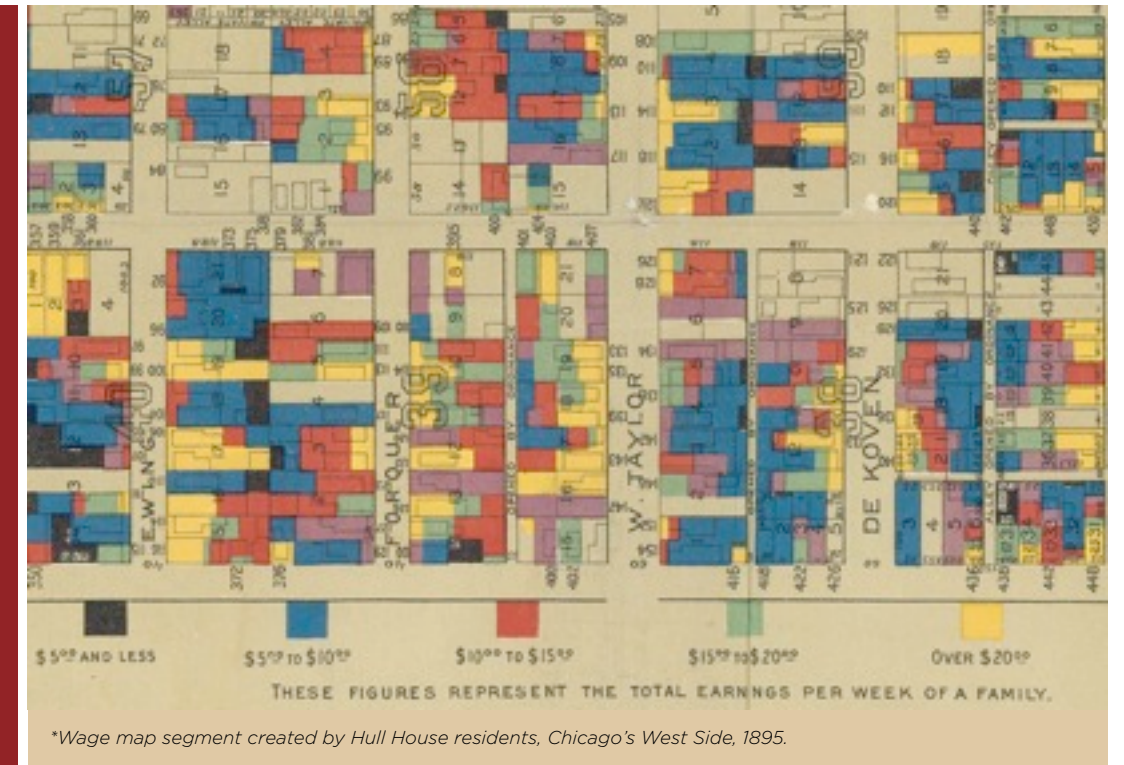
Ending Poverty: Best Models for Social Change and Social Action

This course examines the social, economic, and political dimensions of poverty and inequality in the United States, and explores pathways towards ending poverty. In the past, students' coursework culminated in a trip to Washington D.C. to present poverty-related briefs to the U.S. House of Representative's Congressional Out of Poverty Caucus. The course offers a critical analysis of poverty and inequality with an analytic and descriptive focus on competing theories examining the causes of poverty, the role of policy, and socioeconomic dimensions of stratification, including race, ethnicity, class, gender, immigration status, and other factors. Course material examines the existing and emerging policy issues related to ending poverty. [Robert L. Hawkins, McSilver Assistant Professor in Poverty Studies]

*Source: <http://homicide.northwestern.edu/pubs/hullhouse/Maps/>

POVERTY AGENDA

nyuSilver
Silver School of Social Work



the silver school report on poverty initiatives

Introduction

In 2007, Constance and Martin Silver made an extraordinary pledge of funding for the School of Social Work at NYU. Long supporters of the School, their new gift provides us with the opportunity to expand the scope of our work and coordinate a range of initiatives related to poverty. The gift launched the creation of the McSilver Institute for Poverty Policy and Research, a central hub for the School's poverty research activities. Concurrent with the founding of the Institute we present the first Silver School Poverty Agenda Report to communicate our progress and intentions, as we integrate ongoing and proposed poverty initiatives into their institutional "home" within McSilver. The Institute's

activities complement our long-time experience in working with the underserved, as well as our renowned leadership in direct practice education.

The School's approach to poverty research and curriculum development is to use a broad definition that includes not only those living in poverty but also the working poor and vulnerable working-class families, and a concept of poverty that includes attention to assets in addition to income. Poverty is complex, multi-dimensional and is structurally embedded in communities. Our approach to research is that front-line service providers have much to offer us based on their experience with people and communities in financial distress.

The Silver School's Poverty Agenda applies a common mission across a range of programs with national, regional, and curricular implications. Further information about each of the projects is available on request, in the form of expanded briefs, as well as via a related information site currently planned for the School's Web site.

The School has received its first foundation funding for poverty initiatives with a generous grant from the JPMorgan Chase Foundation. The grant will support the development of the "network" projects described below and a white paper on assets-oriented poverty initiatives in New York City.

mcsilver research and practice initiatives

McSilver Institute for Poverty Policy and Research

The Institute will serve as a resource for those working to address poverty and its effects through investigative research projects and the development and dissemination of poverty-related information relevant to local, state, and national organizations. Innovative initiatives in direct practice are also part of its purview. Housed at the Silver School of Social Work, the Institute will benefit greatly from its location within NYU, where faculty and students from across the University come together to conduct interdisciplinary research, establishing a broad range of resources and a depth of expertise related to poverty that are firmly rooted in NYU's academic strengths in law, medicine, the social sciences, education, and public policy.

McSilver Professorship in the Study of Poverty

A newly endowed position for junior faculty whose work is focused on poverty, and the first named professorship for a full-time faculty member at the School. A McSilver Research Fellow supports this professorship. Dr. Robert L. Hawkins, Assistant Professor of Social Work, was appointed to the McSilver professorship in Poverty Studies.

Economic Empowerment Assessment

The goal of this project is to develop and test an assessment tool designed to better understand the impacts of structural and individual poverty in the lives of low-income people. The model for this assessment of how poverty affects individuals and families will be developed in conjunction with a clinical practitioner and presented in a Silver School continuing education class entitled: "What Keeps Our Clients Poor?: Assessing Poverty in Practice." This assessment is drawn from a standard bio-psychosocial assessment, with an ecological multi-systems perspective. This assessment will be useful for research, in agencies, and in clinical settings with clients. [Robert L. Hawkins, McSilver Assistant Professor in Poverty Studies]

Financial Assessment Protocol for Social Workers

A multi-part protocol will be developed and tested for use by social workers to assess their clients'

financial standing and literacy and to serve as a basis for referral. [Andrew Davis, Senior Researcher]

Interventions for Women Experiencing Persistent Poverty

A proposed intervention and prevention-focused initiative that examines the life history of low-income women and their children to identify appropriate points of macro- and micro-intervention. The risk of mental distress related to domestic violence, poor health, lack of education, and intergenerational patterns are most often seen in those already living in poverty. The project will work with low-income individuals and families to better understand their negative life events and their history of risk, especially risk related to poverty. The Economic Empowerment Assessment will be used in the development of intervention and prevention models. [Robert L. Hawkins, McSilver Assistant Professor in Poverty Studies]

The Impact of Disasters on Poor Communities

In looking first at the effects of Katrina, McSilver Assistant Professor Robert L. Hawkins examines social capital development and cultural integration in the aftermath of the hurricane. The project examines social and support systems, environment, relationship with the city and its resources, the experiences of the displaced when relocating, and then, where possible, their return to New Orleans. Extensive, multiple interviews with forty displaced families, the majority of which are poor, working class African American families, are under way.

Financial Stress in the Lives of Returning Veterans

This proposed project will examine the role of poverty in the lives of returning veterans, looking at how poverty and financial stress affect reintegration into their communities, their access to critical services, and the ability of family care givers to provide support to returning veterans.

REGIONAL

New York Services Study

This NIH-funded project examines service utilization by homeless poor adults who suffer from the dual-diagnosed conditions of mental illness and substance abuse. The project is notable for examining service choices from the perspective of clients, following clients through repeated interviews over twelve months. The study has produced several publications examining clients' pursuit of a "recovering life" after enrolling in an innovative "housing first" program in New York City which has been the source of major policy shifts for homeless service delivery in the United States. [Professor Deborah Padgett]

Mental Health Recovery in Dual Diagnosed Homeless

A proposed five-year NIH study of mental health recovery among the dual-diagnosed homeless in NYC and Philadelphia, designed to identify barriers to recovery in "housing first" enrollees (provided housing without preconditions of abstinence and treatment compliance) and "treatment first" enrollees (required to comply with treatment in order to obtain housing), and to recommend organizational changes that facilitate implementation of mental health recovery for this most vulnerable population. [Professor Deborah Padgett]

Alzheimer's Caretaking in Community-Based Settings

This collaborative research with Riverstone Senior Life Services is evaluating clinical intervention strategies for Latino family caretakers, many of them underserved and low income, in the Washington Heights neighborhood of Manhattan. A second component of this research is to explore the character and role of "familism" in care-taking in Hispanic families. [Professor Caroline Gelman]

The Faces of Poverty in the New York Metro Area

The School's faculty and professional students will engage in research on the impact of poverty on different populations in the NYC metropolitan area (e.g., children, minorities, women, single parent families, abused women and families, the elderly, immigrants, the homeless). The research will capture the different manifestations of poverty among these populations and identify the key entry points for social work advocacy and intervention. The research will cover existing data on poverty, identify and distinguish a range of low-income populations and their communities, and assess the availability of different interventions designed to address poverty in low-income families. We will look at a broad range of poverty-related dimensions. [Andrew Davis, Senior Researcher]

Summit Conference

A funding request is under consideration by a prominent foundation to assist the School in developing an invitational summit conference for city and state leaders and service agency directors. In addition to presenting the latest research on poverty interventions, the conference will:

- a. develop consensus around how SSSW faculty and students can most usefully address various poverty



issues over the next decade

- b. identify poverty-oriented program initiatives that should be created or expanded.

resources

Poverty Literature Database

A poverty literature database focused on assets-based initiatives nationally and in the NYC metro area is being established. A library of over 100 sources (mainly research articles) has been reviewed and will be entered into an electronic clearinghouse that can be used by all faculty and staff of the Institute. When fully developed, this resource will become available to the community of poverty response agencies in the NYC metropolitan area. [Andrew Davis, Senior Researcher]

Information for Practice with the Poor

Building on Information for Practice (IP), Professor Gary Holden's award-winning, Web-based resource which serves social workers throughout the world, this project will increase the poverty-specific content of IP (news, new scholarship in journals and grey literature). The project will also facilitate access by community-based social workers to poverty-related news and research by increasing the number and range of Open Access sources, and developing a specialized search engine for poverty issues. [Professor Gary Holden]