

# HOW A COMMUNITY BENEFITS

By completing the entire Horizons program, a community can expect:

- A community-wide understanding of poverty and ways it can be solved;
- More people in leadership roles in the community;
- Community leaders who come from all ages, backgrounds and incomes;

- At least six people with better skills to help lead community discussions and move toward community action;
- Three people who can present ongoing leadership training in the community;
- At least 25 people with enhanced leadership abilities;
- A vision and a plan – created and carried out by at least 60 people;
- Up to \$10,000 to sustain community strategies for poverty reduction and leadership;

- Connections to many organizations and hundreds of other Horizons communities that can help for the long haul; and
- Changes from within the community that allow this work to continue long term.

## Community Success Stories

Is Horizons worth the effort? More than three dozen small rural communities – towns just like yours – say “yes!” Read about their experiences and accomplishments at [www.nwaf.org](http://www.nwaf.org). (Click on “Programs” and then “Horizons.”)

## Resources

- Iowa State University Extension
- Montana State University Extension Service
- North Dakota State University Extension Service
- Sitting Bull College
- South Dakota State University Cooperative Extension Service
- University of Idaho Extension
- University of Minnesota Extension Service
- Washington State University Extension

Study Circles Resource Center  
(study circles facilitator training and assistance to delivery organizations)  
[www.studycircles.org](http://www.studycircles.org)

Pew Partnership for Civic Change  
(training for LeadershipPlenty®, assistance to communities) [www.pew-partnership.org](http://www.pew-partnership.org)

Northwest Area Foundation  
(funding, technical assistance to delivery organizations, evaluation, sharing of learning)  
[www.nwaf.org](http://www.nwaf.org)

For more information contact:



## HORIZONS IS ABOUT MOVEMENT AND CHANGE:

From waiting to leading ... from talk to action ... from poverty to prosperity ... from a few to many ... from despair to hope ... from indifference to pride.

HORIZONS

COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP TO REDUCE POVERTY

Seem like big dreams for small rural communities? Not at all. These communities can – and are – thriving:

Communities where feuding families and neighbors could not sit together in the same room ... now plan collaboratively for their future.

Towns so isolated from technology that their economic development languished ... now boast of three wireless providers and the capacity to influence statewide communication policy.

A community held back by the past ... now sets its sights on a brighter, unburdened future after conducting a community “funeral” to bury negative attitudes and bad behavior.

Communities waiting in vain for federal grants ... now start their own community foundations and develop local support systems for low-income families.

Does Horizons accomplish all of this? No. People do – people who care deeply about their communities and want them to thrive. Horizons provides ideas, resources, support and inspiration – fertile ground where optimism can thrive.

## WHAT IS HORIZONS?

Horizons is a community leadership program aimed at reducing poverty in small rural and reservation communities (population less than 5,000) faced with economic decline and demographic change.

Horizons explores perceptions about and sources of **poverty**; it isn't always just about lack of money. Horizons builds stronger community **leadership**; leadership is as important as good roads, great schools and clean water. Horizons embraces the **entire community**; everyone is needed and everyone has something to give. For communities to thrive, everyone must thrive.

### Who funds it?

Horizons is funded by the Northwest Area Foundation, whose mission is to help communities reduce poverty in Minnesota, Iowa, North Dakota, South Dakota, Montana, Idaho, Washington and Oregon. The Foundation invests in – and relies upon – experienced regional institutions to provide training, consulting and technical support in each Horizons community. It also awards grants of up to \$10,000 to each community that successfully completes all components of the Horizons program.

### Who facilitates it?

Eight organizations, all of whom already work in small communities, deliver the Horizons program. These organizations helped design Horizons and tested it in 44 communities from 2003-2005 – with great success. They provide communities with coaching, training and connections through each step of the program.

### How long does it take?

Horizons is an 18-month program with five required segments. Communities must meet the thresholds for each segment within defined timeframes before they can move forward. Each threshold is connected to skills and achievement that help strengthen a community.

### What does it involve?

Communities get an initial foundation of resources and tools. The delivery organizations then select additional resources customized to address each community's unique needs. For one community, it might mean economic development training; for another, conflict resolution counseling or technical skill courses.

All Horizons communities take part in:

- Community conversation and action planning focused on poverty. This segment requires 12 hours during a two-month period and the involvement of at least 30 people. The goal is for the community to learn what poverty looks like and what they can do about it. Momentum grows as the community builds skills, involves more people and becomes increasingly strategic.
- Leadership building using LeadershipPlenty® training. At least 25 people give 30-40 hours of time. This is a popular segment because it's practical and assumes every community member can provide leadership.
- Community visioning and planning focused on leadership growth and poverty reduction. This involves the whole community. Some communities get competitive, seeing who can involve the most people!
- Idea implementation. The delivery organization and others provide the community with support, coaching and additional resources as they put their plans into action.

*The Horizons program is exciting and gratifying, yet challenging. The community must invest time if it is to achieve long-term results.*

