

Prosper Lincoln looking for ideas to improve Lincoln



3 hours ago • By [Nancy Hicks](#) | [Lincoln Journal Star](#)

More than a year ago a group of community leaders began talking about Lincoln's vital signs, from its low unemployment and low crime rates to the high number of children in poverty -- one in five.

Now a coalition of community groups and businesses is asking Lincolniters to take the next step - to create a road map for making Lincoln even better by working to improve its weakest areas.

"Lincoln has exceptional strengths," said Barbara Bartle, president of Lincoln Community Foundation.

"We must continue to nurture the strengths that draw people to our community, like low unemployment and high education rates," she said at a breakfast meeting of more than 900 people Tuesday at Pinnacle Bank Arena.

"At the same time, we must work together to address several trends identified in the report. For example household incomes have dropped and more than 12,000 children continue to live in poverty," Bartle said.

The coalition has started Prosper Lincoln and asked residents to join the discussion and provide ideas at prosperlincoln.org to improve Lincoln's weak vital signs.

Discussion will center on nurturing the success of youth from cradle to career, growing economic prosperity and enhancing quality of life.

Ideas gathered over the next few months will be analyzed by the University of Nebraska Public Policy Center, which also gathered the data for the vital signs report.

More than 50 representatives from businesses, nonprofit organizations, neighborhoods, government, faith communities, philanthropies and individuals are leading Prosper Lincoln.

The steering committee will use the information to create a community agenda and develop working groups to build action plans, Bartle said.

Several trends identified by the Public Policy Center include positives: The value of building permits for the city is rising dramatically, jobs are available, the low unemployment rate continues to drop, homelessness is dropping after the great recession and crime remains low.

Findings of concern include: The number of children in poverty remains high, household incomes have declined when adjusted for inflation, unemployment remains high for residents with lower levels of education and from minority populations; the number of children in foster care remains higher than the national average.

Founders of Lincoln Vital Signs and advisory council members are from a number of organizations, including the Abel Foundation, city of Lincoln, Community Health Endowment, Cooper Foundation, Educare of Lincoln, Foundation for Lincoln Public Schools, Lancaster County, Lincoln Partnership for Economic Development, Lincoln Community Foundation, Nebraska Children and Families Foundation, United Way of Lincoln and Lancaster County, University of Nebraska Foundation and Woods Charitable Fund.