



## Addressing Poverty in Fresno

Confronting poverty in Fresno is one of the major challenges our city faces. I am running for Mayor because I am deeply concerned about the daily impact that persistent poverty has on families, neighborhoods, and businesses in Fresno. I am committed to improving the quality life for Fresno residents of every race, religion, and economic level and in every part of our city.

Solutions to poverty require a comprehensive approach. Our entire community must come together if we are to unravel the many issues that have led to high concentrations of poverty for many decades in Fresno. I will seek out and work with all Fresno residents, including non-profit groups, the private sector, and public agencies. I will call on our regional, state, and federal partners to leverage their resources to assist our low-income communities. I will make fighting poverty a part of every policy our City considers, including economic development, housing, downtown revitalization, and public safety. As Mayor of Fresno, it will be my responsibility to lead a coordinated effort to eliminate poverty.

Fundamentally, I believe our City is responsible for creating opportunities for its residents. The City must remove the barriers. Private businesses must provide job opportunities and connect job-seekers with employment. The City and its schools must provide well supervised academic enrichment opportunities for our children, helping them stay safe outside school hours. The City must work with builders to bring better housing opportunities to our neighborhoods. Families need the opportunity to access appropriate banking services and live in safe, healthy neighborhoods.

The ten-point plan below highlights some specific ways I propose to improve opportunities for low-income families in Fresno.

### Ten-Point Plan to Address Poverty

- 1. Create Jobs: assist businesses in creating new jobs where they are needed most.** Residents of Fresno deserve better employment opportunities than we have now. I have spent the last decade of my career addressing the root causes of high unemployment and high concentrations of poverty in Fresno and in the San Joaquin Valley. The City must help business owners take advantage of state and federal incentives to locate and hire in economically challenged areas. For more information, please see my Job Creation and Economic Development plan at [www.ashley4mayor.com](http://www.ashley4mayor.com).
- 2. Remove barriers to employment: transportation and job training.** High gas prices are making life difficult for everyone, especially those with limited incomes. As Mayor, I will expand and improve bus service in Fresno, making sure buses run more frequently, with a focus on the core of our city. Beyond transportation, getting to a job means having the right job skills to qualify for available jobs. I will work with community colleges, adult schools, trade

unions, and the Fresno County Workforce Investment Board to expand and improve job training in the fields where jobs are currently available and in emerging fields such as “green collar jobs” and water technology.

3. **Ensure high-quality programs for kids and teens.** A child’s education is their key to a good-paying job. I will collaborate with local schools and community organizations to (1) ensure campus safety, (2) provide safe routes to school, (3) ensure supervised after-school activities, (4) combat excessive absences, and (5) help motivate high-risk youth to graduate. The City must find creative ways to provide youth activities during evenings, weekends, and summers when children are out of school. If a student is a gang member and drops out of school, the City must minimize the threat to public safety by helping to re-engage them in school or job training.

4. **Keep our community safe from crime.** Children at risk of being recruited into gangs must have other opportunities to lead proud, positive lives. I will support and expand the City’s efforts to provide after-school activities that help struggling kids get connected to positive activities and stay supported. I will work with businesses to create employment opportunities for ex-gang members who are ready to turn their lives around. I will also help maintain community trust in the Police Department by creating an Independent Police Auditor and supporting grass-roots crime prevention programs. I will work hard with regional partners to secure additional state and federal funding for early gang intervention and prevention programs.

5. **Work with banks and credit unions to better serve low-income neighborhoods.** Banking is a crucial step in breaking free from poverty, but many parts of our community are not adequately served by financial institutions. Low-income families need help to enter the financial mainstream. I will continue and expand the City’s support in applying for the Earned Income Tax Credit and will help make sure businesses in low-income communities get the help they need to grow and succeed.

6. **Provide more affordable housing opportunities.** The City must follow through on its current goal to develop 10,000 affordable housing units. I will ensure that the City and Redevelopment Agency work together to focus resources, including state and federal funds, on getting new affordable housing units built. To combat concentrated poverty, I will also direct City staff to help builders create market-rate housing in existing low-income neighborhoods and will support incentives that ensure a mix of incomes in new development.

7. **Support code enforcement, graffiti removal, and infrastructure improvements throughout our city.** Foreclosed homes too often become neighborhood eyesores and hotspots of crime. I will enforce a new state law that allows cities to fine banks if they fail to maintain foreclosed properties they own. My administration will not tolerate decaying infrastructure or slumlords who own dangerous, dilapidated housing in our city. Neighborhood pride and safety are invaluable community assets.

8. **Improve community health.** I will work to stop new liquor licenses in areas where there is already an overconcentration of liquor stores. I will insist that new developments be designed for walking and will support farmers markets, community gardens, and parks in new and existing neighborhoods that need them. I will support efforts to eliminate hunger among Fresno’s families and children.

9. **Work creatively with community organizations to ensure their success.** Community based organizations provide a wide variety of services — food and nutrition, mental health, crisis counseling, after-school programs, help with applying for tax credits, environmental

justice, and more. Under my administration the City of Fresno will be actively involved with faith- and community-based organizations that serve low-income communities. I will work to make grant funds available to support innovative, high-impact efforts to address poverty in our city.

10. **Seek out and listen to the concerns of the community.** I will regularly hold informal “office hours” where I encourage residents throughout our City to share their concerns and ideas with me. I will direct City staff to consult with community members when planning major shifts of City resources or policies. Just as the City must be a partner in community development, the community will also be my partner in making Fresno a better place to live.