

## **A high quality of life in a thriving community requires safe, satisfying jobs that offer wages that can provide adequate housing and a good standard of living.**

The COMPASS NOW Report identified these key income issues:

- Limited Economic Development
- Low Living Wages
- Unemployment

An emerging issue in the region is:

- Having Enough Food / Food Insecurity

### **Income Highlights**

- One-third of survey respondents indicated their ability to meet the basic needs of food, housing, and clothing was either fair or poor.
- Focus group participants stated that unemployment and poor wages have a negative impact on the health of our community. People are less able to afford healthy food and many have to choose between food and medical care.
- Several indicators show the limits to economic development in the Great Rivers Region such as losses of manufacturing jobs, unemployment, foreclosures, aging homes, and an unprepared workforce. 62% of survey respondents rated their community's efforts to plan for a strong economic future as fair or poor.
- Local unemployment is less than the national average yet unemployment and underemployment remain one of the most challenging issues facing the region. 75% of survey respondents rated the availability of jobs with wages that offer a good standard of living as either fair or poor.
- Although homelessness in our community remains largely hidden local data suggests it is on the rise. Local shelters and schools are seeing more families with young children becoming homeless.
- More children in the Great Rivers Region are living in poverty. In the past 5 years, the percentage of students receiving free and reduced lunches has risen in every county and increased by 30% overall. The percentage of the population using the Federal food stamp program doubled from 2006 to 2010.



income