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BOISE STATE RADIO WORKS WITH THE BOISE STATE PUBLIC POLICY CENTER TO MAKE POVERTY POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS.

In September of 2009 Boise State Public Radio produced a five part series examining poverty in Idaho. As a result of that series Poverty in Idaho is the topic of a public policy white paper put together by Boise State Universities Public Policy Center.

The recommendations are part of a Public Policy Center white paper titled “That Could Be Me: The New Voice of Poverty in Idaho” that summarizes a special investigation by Boise State Radio on the impacts of the changing economy for ordinary Idahoans. Boise State Radio contracted the Public Policy Center, which is housed in the College of Social Sciences and Public Affairs, to write the white paper and make policy recommendations.

The policy suggestions are related to three areas:

- Increasing education and awareness about poverty
- The need for continued and further collaboration across the governmental, non-profit and corporate sectors to fight poverty
- State funding of poverty initiatives

“It is critical for policy makers to see the faces and hear the stories of those living in poverty,” said Melissa Lavitt, dean of the College of Social Sciences and Public Affairs. “The recommendations are based on the lived experience of families and individuals affected by poverty. This represents an important contribution to our understanding of the current harsh economic realities.”

The Boise State Public Radio project, which was funded in part by the National Center for Media Engagement, also included a community roundtable held in September, where advocates and policy makers discussed the Boise State Radio series, the larger context of poverty in Idaho and made policy recommendations.

Public Policy Center recommendations in the white paper include:

- Convening a poverty summit, governor’s summit or legislative interim committee to increase awareness and address issues related to Idahoans living in poverty
- Ensuring that governmental partners have the technical assistance needed to assist non-profit partners in responding to grant-driven reporting and staffing requirements
- Funding Medicaid and expanding health care coverage, especially for Idaho’s children
- Increasing the Idaho share of seats in the WWAMI (Washington, Wyoming, Alaska, Montana, and Idaho) program, which provides medical education and training to students, residents, and practicing physicians, and pay for more residency slots

- Stabilizing and increasing funding for the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare's non-Medicaid operations (e.g. food stamps)
- Loosening restrictions on eligibility and duration of benefits to accommodate the duration and severity of the recession

To see the entire white paper, go to <http://sspa.boisestate.edu/publicpolicycenter/publications.shtml>.
or go to <http://radio.boisestate.edu> For more information, contact Stephanie Witt, director of the Public Policy Center,
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