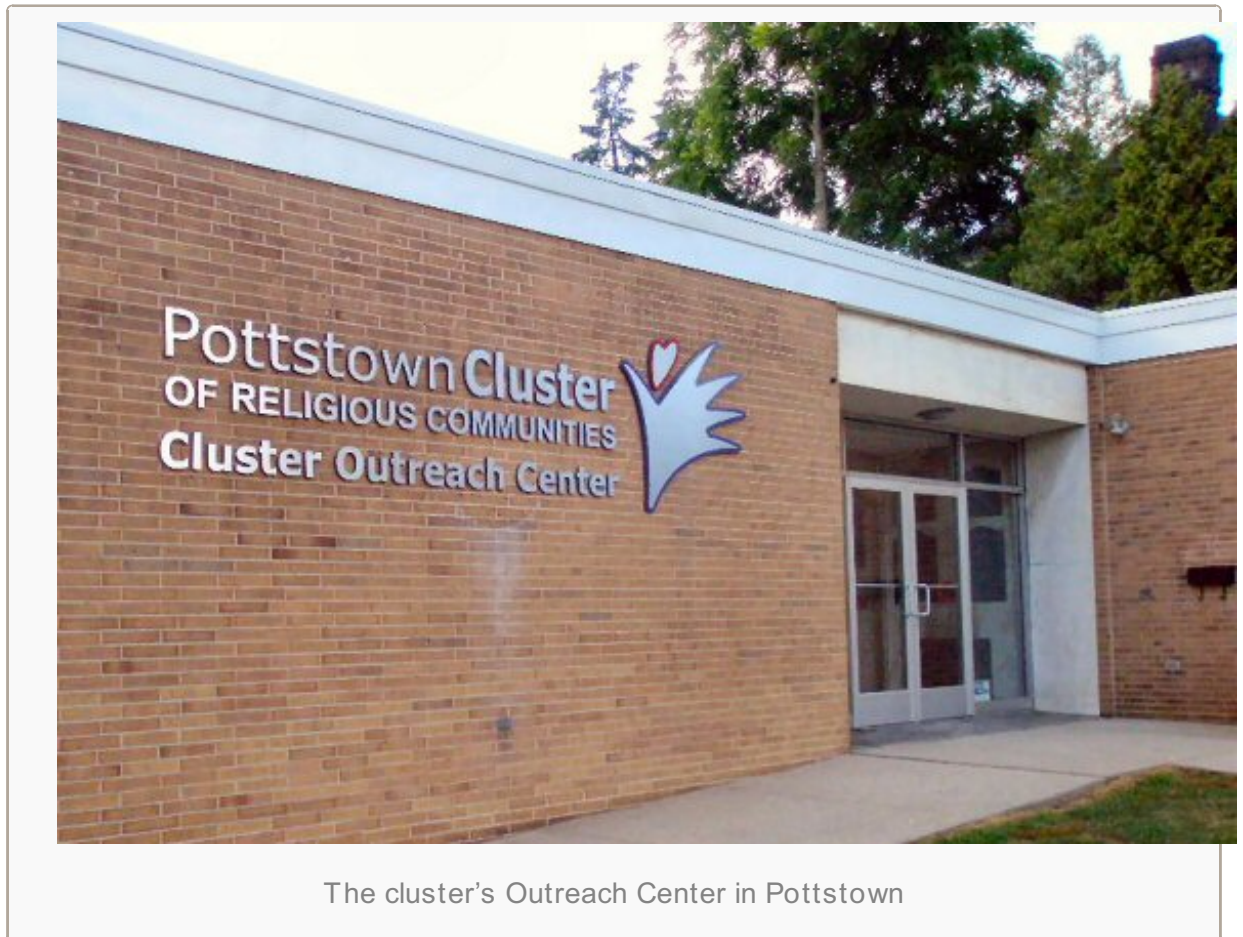


# Cluster, Stakeholders Work On Pottstown Poverty Issues

<http://www.pottstownpost.com/2013/02/18/cluster-stakeholders-work-on-poverty-issues-in-pottstown/>

May 24, 2013



The cluster's Outreach Center in Pottstown

POTTSTOWN PA – Collaborative training using a program titled “Bridges Out of Poverty” represents the first step in a new initiative by the [Pottstown Cluster of Religious Communities, 57 N. Franklin St.](#), to better understand poverty issues and help expand its work with stakeholders and the greater Pottstown community, cluster Executive Director Barbara Wilhelmy recently reported.

The cluster is a charitable organization that supplies food, clothing, community meals and emergency financial aid to hundreds of families in the greater Pottstown area. Its two-day training involved not only its own staff, Wilhelmy said, but also representatives of

- Family Services of Montgomery County,
- Aging and Adult Services of Montgomery County,
- the Pottstown Public Library,
- Creative Health Services,
- Educational Data Systems, Inc.,
- the Salvation Army,
- True to Life Ministries,

- The Hill School,
- TriCounty Community Network,
- Transformation Initiative,
- Public Health Management Corporation,
- Montgomery County Homeless Prevention Center, and
- the Pottstown Area Health and Wellness Foundation.

The program is intended to help both those who rely on the cluster's assistance, and also those who – with the cluster – offer assistance to individuals and families in need.

For aid recipients, one goal of the cluster's "Getting Ahead Initiative" is to provide "an accurate perception of how poverty impacts them, to help them choose behaviors and make plans to build resources, and climb (to) out of poverty ... People in poverty are problem solvers and, when provided with good information, they can begin to make their way out of poverty, if they choose," Wilhelmy recognized.

Among stakeholders, she added, ideas were shared on how to continue a collaborative dialog within Pottstown that would help residents who choose to move out of poverty. "We are pleased to have a great response from our community partners for this program," cluster Programs Manager Amy Rossman added.

The cluster is working with the Bucks County Opportunity Council to develop and implement the Getting Ahead Initiative. It is based on a national model and has been used by the council for many years, with over 250 successful graduates of their program.

*Photo from Google Images*