



ALL-AMERICA CITY FINALIST PITTSFIELD, MASS.

Community Snapshot

Incorporated in 1891, Pittsfield was known for corporate giant General Electric before the company left town in the mid-1980s. Today, Pittsfield still is the world headquarters for GE's plastics division, as well as several other major corporations, including KB Toys. The city is also the geographic and commercial hub of the Berkshires, a historic area and cultural destination that includes Tanglewood, the summer home of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, and The Mount, author Edith Wharton's estate. Downtown Pittsfield is home to the Colonial Theatre, the Berkshire Museum, the Barrington Stage Company, and the Berkshire Athenaeum, Pittsfield's public library. Through a decade-long private-public process, Pittsfield refurbished its downtown and brought arts and culture back to the community.

Community Solutions Action Plan

Pittsfield Promise's overarching strategy to reach their grade-level reading goals is to identify and connect with existing programs and work to provide language-rich, rigorous and engaging literacy programs. Pittsfield Promise also seeks to identify and recruit a network of trusted advisers and develop new and innovative programs. The plan will focus on the following areas:

- School readiness
- Student attendance
- Summer learning
- Grade-level reading

Partnerships

The Pittsfield Promise initiative is the brainchild of Berkshire Priorities, a well-established, committed group of the city's decision-makers, convened by the Berkshire United Way in late 2010. Although Berkshire Priorities serves the entire Berkshire County, they are focusing initially on Pittsfield Public Schools.

DEMOGRAPHICS

- 44,737 residents
- 5,981 students
- 55 percent of students live in poverty
- 60 percent of third-graders read at grade level (state test)
- 74 percent graduation rate
- 69 percent of kindergarteners are ready to learn
- 94.3 percent attendance rate
- School-sponsored summer learning programs available, but limited to three schools

GOALS

- Increase percentage of third graders reading at grade level to 90 percent
- Increase school preparedness to 90 percent
- Decrease the rate of summer loss, or enhance the rate of summer gain, by 5 percent every two years

"Together we must develop a culture of shared information, shared work and shared responsibility for our children's success."