

Community leaders to explore poverty

United Way meeting to look at County's anti-poverty efforts

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Hundreds of community leaders will gather Thursday to learn more about how they can develop solutions to growing poverty problems in Larimer County.

Lt. Gov. Barbara O'Brien will be the keynote speaker at the United Way of Larimer County's "State of the Community" event at The Ranch. Her topic is: "Addressing Poverty: Ensuring Colorado's Future Economic Health."

Bev Thurber, executive director of the Early Childhood Council of Larimer County, also will speak on the growing child-care crisis in the county.

Reservations have closed for the event, but those who can't attend can get highlights at Coloradoan.com Thursday afternoon and in Friday's *Coloradoan*.

The United Way gathering will offer a reminder of some of the important work already under way through the Pathways Past Poverty initiative. It also should be a rallying cry for the community to do more to address rising poverty in the county.

One indication of the growing need is the rising number of callers seeking financial assistance from United Way's 211 line. The service took almost 1,400 such calls in the first three months of the year, double the quarterly rate seen last year.

"The community needs to know that their neighbors and friends and families are hurting," said Ginny Riley, director of the Larimer County Department of Human Services.