

COMMUNITY ACTION CIRCLES FAQ

1. What is Circles?

Circles is a nation-wide initiative focused on helping individuals and families overcome poverty and become self-reliant. In an initial 12-week class, participants establish goals and future plans and learn new tools to secure and sustain better jobs. Participants (called Circle Leaders) are then matched with community volunteers (known as Allies) who meet with them weekly and support them in their personalized goals. Through this accountability process, Circle Leaders are able to decrease their debt, increase their income, and wean themselves from public assistance. We also empower our participants to influence positive changes in the community.

2. Why is it called Circles?

Success in nearly any endeavor is influenced by the people and resources that surround us—our circle of friends, our sphere of influence, the cyclical nature of habits, and even the sweeping hands of a clock. When we encircle ourselves with a positive “circle of support” composed of volunteers, staff and the community achieving self-reliance becomes much more possible.

3. What is a Circle Leader?

A Circle Leader is an individual or a family who is committed to moving out of poverty and reaching 200% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines, has completed Circle Leader Training, and is ready to share his or her story to support systemic changes within the community. They take a leadership role in their own lives and plan their path out of poverty. They are the leader of their Circle.

4. How do I become a Circle Leader?

Potential Circle Leaders should contact the Circles Coach over the site closest to you. Coaches will schedule your intake to determine your eligibility.

- Provo Circles Coach: Margie Fullmer mfullmer@communityactionuc.org
- American Fork Circles Coach: Kanani Carmack kcarmack@communityactionuc.org
- Salem Circles Coach: Jessica Awbrey jawbrey@communityactionuc.org

5. What is an Ally?

The critical key to the success of Circles is matching Allies to Circle Leaders for at least 12-18 months. Allies are community volunteers who offer coaching, job leads, problem-solving help, and the essential modeling required to secure and retain good jobs. They expand the social capital of Circle Leaders by giving them access to their own social networks, which are often wider, stronger, and more diverse.

6. How will I be matched with families?

New Allies will have an intake meeting with a Circles Coach where you will discuss your interests, strengths, etc. With this information, Coaches will use their best judgement to determine which match would be the most beneficial for both the Circle Leader and Ally

7. Where are you located and when do you meet?

We are an initiative housed within Community Action Services and Food Bank. Our offices are located at Community Action's building at 815 S. Freedom Blvd. Ste.100 Provo, UT 84601. Our weekly meetings are located at three different locations throughout the county each week (in Provo on Tuesdays, American Fork on Wednesdays and in Salem on Thursdays from 5:45-8:00pm (dinner included). Please contact us for specific directions and details.

8. Can my spouse and I split the weeks we attend the Circles' Meetings?

Working with the same volunteers each week provides Circle Leaders with more structure. Therefore, we discourage couples from splitting Ally responsibilities.

9. Can I bring my kids to the meetings?

Of course! A free Children's Program is provided at every weekly meeting. We have an excellent Children's Program with curriculum. Your kids will not simply be "babysat", but they will learn about meaningful topics each week including volunteerism, bullying, nutrition, building relationships, etc.

10. How successful is Circles?

As we have tracked our current Circle Leaders, we have found that, in the year 2016:

- 63% decreased their debt
- 26% decreased the amount of public assistance they receive
- 38% increased their savings
- 79% increased their income

11. How can I get involved?

We have several one-time and ongoing volunteer options for individuals, couples, and families.

- Ally- Befriend and assist a Circle Leader in achieving their goals. Attend at least two weekly meetings a month, where you will enjoy free dinner and childcare. 12 month commitment.
- Children's Program Volunteer- Supervise children at weekly meeting while parents meet with their Allies. Four month commitment. Enjoy a free dinner every week!
- Community Team Member- Help with setup and cleanup each week and assist with Family Fun Nights.
- Meal Donor- Donate a meal for a Circles weekly meeting one-time or regularly. This is a great opportunity for families, groups or businesses

12. What is the next step for volunteering?

To get started, [click here](#) and fill out the requested information. We will promptly contact you and discuss the needed paperwork, background checks and schedule an intake (if needed) Call us if you need guidance in choose the best volunteer position for you.