Why We Need a Mission Shift

You have heard, “Give a man a fish, feed him for a day; teach a man to fish, feed him for a lifetime.”
But what if the fishing pond is unhealthy?

90% of most church mission budgets are dedicated to “giving out fish” through projects like food pantries, clothes closets, and emergency relief. For churches that go beyond giving out fish, roughly 80% of those efforts focus on teaching people how to fish through programs like tutoring, ESL, or job training.

Embrace Richmond takes an innovative approach by seeking to “change the condition of the pond.”

We use an asset-based community development (ABCD) approach that builds on the gifts, talents, and passions of the neighbors themselves. This approach transforms neighborhoods from the inside out.

We believe the faith community can play a critical role in the neighborhood transformation story by shifting from relief (giving out fish) to community development (transforming the pond).

At the bottom of the page you’ll see the training tool we call the “Fishing Pond,” a visual display of the various methodologies for alleviating poverty.

Above the pond surface represents approaches that focus on the deficits found in a community or problems churches often try to fix. Below the surface are those approaches designed to strengthen the community from within. These approaches focus on growing the social capital, transferring ownership, and helping residents gain political voice. They build the capacity of the community and bring about lasting change.

Want to get involved?
Visit our website at www.embracerichmond.org to find out how your church could start making the shift.