



CLASP

policy solutions that work for low-income people

2009

ANNUAL REPORT



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FROM THE LEADERSHIP

We are pleased CLASP had another year of successful advocacy for policies that improve the lives of low-income people. We faced significant challenges due to a tough economic climate in which some policymakers had little appetite for needed investment in programs that provide opportunity. But we persevered in our advocacy on Capitol Hill, in the states and with the media and other audiences, and we continued to make a difference in the lives of low-income people.

Last year was particularly special because it marked CLASP's 40-year anniversary. This annual report highlights some of our successes in 2009 as well as reflects on our history.

When CLASP began in August 1969, it had an open-ended mission in mind: Its attorneys set out to be a voice in Washington for institutions and people not represented by special interests. The organization did this through legal and later legislative and regulatory channels. Its staff attorneys were involved in a broad array of issues from mining safety, the environment, and mental health, to women's rights, consumer protection and media access.

Today, our mission is more focused. We advocate for federal and state policies to improve the lives of low-income people. Whether it be high-quality child care and early education, improving child welfare, reengaging disconnected youth, expanding job training and postsecondary education opportunities, or advocating for strong legal services, our mission is to promote policies that equip people with the tools they need to move and stay out of poverty. Although we've changed our focus since we started 40 years ago, what's remained constant is our effective advocacy and ability to provide a credible, respected voice in Washington for disadvantaged populations.

Last year was an extraordinary year for the nation and for CLASP. A new administration took office as we were in the throes of an economic recession. The number of unemployed people increased to levels not seen in more than 20 years. Census numbers showed that poverty inched up and returned to its highest rate since the late 1990s. Early in the year, the environment was ripe for bold, needed policy solutions that considered the needs of low-income families hardest hit by the economic downturn.

CLASP was instrumental in securing provisions in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) that provided an infusion of funding for opportunity-promoting programs that had been inadequately funded for most of the decade. Once the measure passed, we didn't stop there. We engaged with states and advocates on what ARRA provisions—the TANF Emergency Fund, Head Start dollars, summer jobs money and other Workforce Investment Act funds, for example—meant for the

states. The ARRA's passage and its one-time needed infusion of funding was extraordinary and CLASP is proud to have played a role in securing provisions for low-income people. But a key part of our value was our role in providing technical assistance and other analyses to states on how to implement provisions once funding became available. We were able to provide this valuable assistance due to the depth of our staff's expertise and experience on these programs and policies.

Also in 2009, we began managing the Joyce Foundation's Shifting Gears initiative. This essential project focuses on six Midwest states whose workers and economies have been hard hit by the decline in industrial and manufacturing jobs. The initiative seeks to address the mismatch in the relatively low number of skilled workers versus the projected growth in jobs requiring a postsecondary credential. In managing this project, CLASP applied its previous lessons learned and worked to yield new lessons to continue to influence innovative policy solutions that can be used nationwide.

We continued to lead efforts to expand civil legal aid and remove unreasonable restrictions on civil legal aid advocacy. And we had another major success in influencing Race to the Top education guidance, a competitive grant program for states that encourages innovation and reform. These are just a few of the highlights of CLASP's work in 2009.

We are extremely proud to be connected to an organization that for 40 years has worked for the greater good. Throughout its history, CLASP has been a voice for the underrepresented and the disadvantaged. Over the years, we have evolved into a national voice for low-income people. CLASP always has and continues to believe that everyone benefits and society is a better place when all citizens have access to opportunity and are equipped with the tools they need to participate equally in what this nation has to offer.

We thank you for your support of our work, and we look forward to a future of being effective advocates for policy solutions that work for low-income people.

Sincerely,



Joseph Onek
BOARD CHAIR



Alan W. Houseman
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

1
FROM THE
LEADERSHIP

2
FROM 1969
TO TODAY:
A TIMELINE

4
CHANGING THE
LANDSCAPE FOR
40 YEARS:
A RETROSPECTIVE

8 STRENGTHENING CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES	10 PATHWAYS TO GOOD JOBS	14 OPPORTUNITY AND EQUAL JUSTICE
8 THE AMERICAN RECOVERY AND REINVESTMENT ACT: INVESTING IN THE NATION'S FAMILIES		

18
2009
CLASP STAFF

19
2009 BOARD
OF DIRECTORS

20
CLASP
SUPPORTERS

21
INDIVIDUAL
CONTRIBUTORS

23
STATEMENT
OF FINANCIAL
POSITION

24
STATEMENT
OF ACTIVITIES
AND CHANGE IN
NET ASSETS

FROM 1969 TO TODAY: A TIMELINE

1969:
Four attorneys, Bruce Terris, James Moorman, Geoffrey Cowan, and Charles Halpern, found the Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP) to provide a voice in Washington for those not represented by special interests. The organization begins legal work on environmental issues, media access, consumer protection and rights for mentally ill and disabled people.

1970:
Launches a clinical law program – the first of its kind in the nation – with 12 students from five law schools. The program soon grows to 55 students each year, and it spawns similar clinical law internships and helps expand clinical law programs.

1974:
Starts the health project, which pioneers efforts to ensure the health system increases access to health care for minorities and low-income people. Thousands of low-income people gain access to hospital care thanks in part to this project.

1975:
Launches the Mining Project, the first public interest legal effort to mitigate adverse safety, health and environmental effects of mining. The project successfully advocates for the Federal Mine Safety and Health Act and the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation acts.

1985:
Launches the Family Policy Program, which focuses on child support, child care, income support and education and training. This project aims to help families leave poverty and become economically secure and self sufficient.

1988:
Plays an instrumental role in ensuring the Family Support Act of 1988 includes JOBS (Job Opportunities and Basic Skills Training Program), a program to create access to work and learning opportunities for low-income people.



1997:
Co-establishes the Project for the Future of Equal Justice, which helps civil legal aid programs use advanced information technology; preserve the state and national support structure; develop state access to justice commissions; and create comprehensive statewide systems for providing civil legal assistance.



1999:
Launches the Child Care and Early Education Program, which promotes policies to support child development and to help address low-income, working parents' needs.

2005:
Secures provisions in TANF reauthorization such as substantial reforms in the federal child support program, improvements to the healthy marriage program, more funding for child care assistance, greater access to higher education and new funding for responsible fatherhood grants.

Staffs two major initiatives of the American Bar Association: the revision of the Standards for the Provision of Civil Legal Aid, and the creation of the Principles of a State System for the Delivery of Civil Legal Aid.

2009:
Provides a voice for low-income people and their families as Congress weighs the unprecedented American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, a bill that includes a significant and needed infusion of federal funding to provide opportunity for low-income children, individuals and families.

Begins managing Shifting Gears, an initiative funded by the Joyce Foundation to increase access and assure success for non-traditional students such as low-wage workers, disconnected youth and others by transforming policies and practices in the community college system in Midwest states.

1969 guidance support justice access training strength family justice policy advocacy children equality subsidies jobs alternative recovery education jobs policy funds support training better opportunity

1972:
Creates a mental health law program, an independent entity now known as the David L. Bazelon Center on Mental Health Law, which strives to improve the lives of people with mental illness through law.

Establishes the Women's Rights Project to ensure that federal civil rights agencies fulfill their legal obligation to adequately enforce anti-discrimination laws, particularly in the areas of education, employment, health issues and later child support and Social Security. In 1981, the Women's Rights Project becomes the National Women's Law Center.



1978:
Establishes the Employment Project to expand employment opportunities and improve working conditions for low-income people.

1982:
Begins representing National Legal Aid and Defender Association membership before Congress and the Legal Services Corporation and providing advice and assistance to civil legal aid programs on laws and regulations affecting them.

1995:
Establishes its workforce development initiative, which focuses on welfare-to-work and federal and state job training and education programs.

1996:
Executes a national campaign, ChildNet, to increase child support enforcement and create public awareness of the need for a child support assurance system.

Begins a major initiative to help states implement progressive welfare reform programs that provide essential work supports such as job training, as well as necessary cash assistance for those who cannot work.

1999:
Establishes a Couples and Marriage Policy Resource Center, which informs the emerging national debate on creating policies to strengthen marriage and two-parent families in low-income communities.

2000:
Establishes the Child Welfare Project, which focuses on reforming the child welfare system.

2003:
Begins the Youth Project, which focuses on disadvantaged and disconnected youth.

2007:
Begins managing Spotlight on Poverty and Opportunity, a foundation-led initiative to ensure addressing poverty and the needs of low-income people are part of the public discourse during the 2008 presidential election cycle.

2008:
Plays a leadership role in securing passage of Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008, a measure to help hundreds of thousands of children and youth in foster care by promoting permanent families for them through relative guardianship and adoption and improving education and health care.



AUGUST 2009:
CLASP marks 40 years of providing a voice in Washington for those not represented by special interests and of developing policy solutions that work for low-income people.

CHANGING THE LANDSCAPE FOR 40 YEARS: A RETROSPECTIVE

The Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP) has grown and changed tremendously since its inception 40 years ago, yet it has not wavered in its core mission to promote opportunity and justice for all people. With a history distinguished by innovation, effectiveness and talented, dedicated staff, CLASP remains a leading voice in Washington for people not represented by special interests.

A PERIOD OF MOMENTOUS CHANGE

In August 1969, CLASP began as four lawyers energized by the Civil Rights Movement's successes and deeply concerned that decision making in government and traditional legal practice failed to consider important issues and constituencies. At the time, public interest law was a concept but no legal organization entirely dedicated to the public interest existed. CLASP filled this void and quickly attracted legal professionals who strongly believed in serving the public and being effective advocates for underrepresented people. Former U.S. Supreme Court Justice Arthur Goldberg chaired the new organization's board of directors.

“THERE WAS A REAL SENSE THAT OLD ORGANIZATIONS WERE FAILING IN THEIR MISSIONS AND SOMETHING NEW WAS NEEDED.”

— CHARLES HALPERN, CLASP FOUNDER

CLASP's early years were, as founder Charles Halpern described, during a period of momentous change. The country was ending a decade defined by the Vietnam War, the oldest Baby Boomers' coming of age, the deaths of President John F. Kennedy and Martin Luther King Jr., the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and Lyndon B. Johnson's Great Society programs, including health care for poor and elderly people. But the spirit of the country determined that there was still room for and great need of more social change.

And there was recognition that the courts and government had a role to play in making society better for all citizens.

“There was a real sense that old organizations were failing in their missions and something new was needed. There was a kind of electricity,” Halpern said. “It was a very fertile time. We were a creative bunch of people, and the time was ripe for change.”



CLASP STAFF IN 1971, FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: SANDY HILLYER, JOSEPH ONEK, GEOFF COWAN, PAT WALD, CHARLES HALPERN, JIM MOORMAN, VICTOR KRAMER, ROGER FOSTER

CLASP stepped in to be a vehicle for change through legal, and soon after, legislative and regulatory channels. The small organization wielded significant impact with a staff of talented attorneys and students who participated in the organization's public interest legal clinic—the first of its kind in the nation—which eventually grew from 12 students a year to 55.

Although structured along the lines of well-respected civil rights legal organizations, CLASP focused on a variety of public interest issues: women's rights, mine health and safety, international affairs, including environmental issues and human rights, and employment. At the time, the advocacy community devoted little effort to these issues. Today, however, many voices represent these interests due in part to CLASP's pioneering work and its willingness

“POLICIES ARE EPHEMERAL BUT PEOPLE ARE NOT.”

— JODIE LEVIN-EPSTEIN

to take on projects for constituencies lacking a strong voice in Washington.

The organization's staff attorneys sought, primarily through litigation, to force the administrative process to take into account the views of citizens and consumers. Landmark court and regulatory decisions came about as a result of this practice, including The Alaskan Pipeline Case, creating a private right of action to enforce the National Environmental Policy Act; Environmental Defense Fund v. Hardin, which allowed consumers to challenge decisions affecting them; and an FCC decision requiring licensees to broadcast substantial information about environmental issues. CLASP also participated in efforts to create a corporate forum to consider employment discrimination, environmental pollution and other symptoms of corporate irresponsibility.

CLASP made a name for itself not only because of its broad scope, but also because its staff was willing and uniquely qualified to give voice to the unrepresented in any field.

The organization and its leadership were “open to people coming to us and saying ‘I have an idea,’” said



Joseph Onek, who was the second executive director of CLASP and currently chairs its board of directors.

In 1972, CLASP hired recent law school graduate, Marcia Greenberger, to work full-time on women's issues under its Women's Rights Project. The project worked to ensure federal civil rights agencies fulfilled their legal obligation to enforce anti-discrimination laws, particularly in the areas of education, employment and health. The project used the courts when necessary as well as other legal avenues to advance equality for women.

“It is amazing to think back on what little protections were in place on a wide range of issues,” Greenberger said.

In 1980, the Women's Rights Project became the National Women's Law Center. Other CLASP alumni have branched off and created successful ventures or headed organizations, including Public Representation at Georgetown Law School, the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund, the Women's Law Project of Philadelphia, the Media Access Project, the Mental Health Law Project (now the David L. Bazelon Center for Mental Health), the Citizens Communication Center, and the Council for Public Interest Law, to name a few.



“I don’t think any of us will ever be able to know what major crises were averted because CLASP existed,” Greenberger said. “[But] because of CLASP, we have better environmental safeguards, safer food, safer workplaces, a better safety net system for those most in need, more equality for women and those who suffer from mental illness, and we have more governmental systems in place that are more responsive to ordinary citizens.”



ADAPTING TO THE TIMES

During the 1980s, the landscape for public interest advocacy changed dramatically. Funding for public interest law became scarce and the federal government turned many programs over to the states. In 1982, under leadership of a new executive director, Alan W. Houseman, CLASP changed its focus from general public interest law to extensive anti-poverty policy, with particular emphasis on child and family poverty and civil legal assistance. This shift reflected a deliberate effort to target resources where they would have the greatest impact.

This transformation was important. Various legislation and legal and regulatory decisions had created an environment in which there was greater opportunity for many than there had been in the 1950s and 1960s. But the legacy of decades—centuries—of inequality required a shift in thinking about how to ensure more people, particularly disadvantaged people, access opportunity.

CLASP began work to strengthen civil legal assistance and preserve an effective Legal Services Corporation,

the federal program that funds local legal services offices throughout the country. CLASP also initiated its advocacy for more comprehensive systems to support families and children, including by improving child support systems, reforming the federal welfare program, expanding child care and early education and improving job training and education programs.

In the 1990s, CLASP continued this work. In addition, during the contentious welfare reform debates of the early to mid 1990s, CLASP was one of the leading voices educating policymakers and the public on why low-income parents need job training, access to work opportunities, child care and other supports to succeed in the workplace and provide for their families. CLASP also was a leading voice in making policy recommendations to improve the child support system. Today, more children receive the financial support they need, thanks in part to CLASP’s policy work.

At the dawn of the new century, CLASP yet again expanded the scope of its policy work. It established a Youth Policy Program to change the nature of the national conversation on disadvantaged youth. Many organizations focus on preventing young people from dropping out in the first place. CLASP’s approach is to inform and influence the policy debate regarding policies to reengage young people who have dropped out of school so that they grow up to be productive, healthy adults.

“...BECAUSE OF CLASP, WE HAVE BETTER ENVIRONMENTAL SAFEGUARDS, SAFER FOOD, SAFER WORKPLACES, A BETTER SAFETY NET SYSTEM FOR THOSE MOST IN NEED, MORE EQUALITY FOR WOMEN AND THOSE WHO SUFFER FROM MENTAL ILLNESS.”

— MARCIA GREENBERGER, CO-FOUNDER, NATIONAL WOMEN’S LAW CENTER

“A hallmark of CLASP is that it doesn’t look for something flashy or glitzy,” said Bob Greenstein, executive director of the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. “It looks for solid, thoughtful and creative policy ideas and solutions.”



CLASP has forged bipartisan relationships, worked with diverse coalitions across its issue areas, partnered with government agencies to create dialogue at the state and federal levels, and set research and outreach agendas for the advocacy community on many critical issues. A key characteristic of CLASP has always been its objective, practical solutions to some of the hardest challenges our nation faces. Policymakers and advocates at the local, state and federal levels respect CLASP’s work.

“It means something when you say you are ‘with CLASP,’” said Linda Perle, CLASP director of legal services.

ENDURANCE

This country has changed much since 1969. But one thing remains the same: the need continues for voices to advocate for communities not represented by special interests. To be sure, the nation has made substantial progress. More states have early childhood education programs, more children receive financial support from noncustodial parents, more low-income workers and youth have access to postsecondary education through community colleges, more people receive needed civil legal assistance, more disadvantaged children receive front-end assistance to prevent child abuse and neglect, and more states and communities are targeting poverty.

But despite many gains, “the lives of working people are not nearly as good as they should be,” said Steve Savner,

a former CLASP staff member who now works for the Center for Community Change.

Since the late 1960s, the gap between rich and poor has widened. The percent of people living in poverty has fluctuated but has never dipped below the low it reached in 1973, and the rate once again is rising. In fact, the current rate of 13.7 percent, the highest it’s been in 13 years, is unacceptably high for a rich nation.

As CLASP marks its 40-year anniversary, it remains steadfast in its mission to provide much-needed advocacy for millions of low-income people and their families by promoting policies and programs to strengthen families, create pathways to education and work, and improve the lives of low-income people.

“We will always need organizations that work closely enough with the poor to have a real sense of what matters and what doesn’t,” said Paula Roberts, a former CLASP staff member. “CLASP has that sense of what’s important, the tools to communicate those issues, and the respect to command results. The poor are still largely voiceless. And we know from working across many different administrations that it doesn’t matter the political persuasion of the leadership, they still need to hear what the issues are.”



CLASP would like to thank the following people for their help in remembering what it has meant to give voice to unrepresented interests and people over the past 40 years: Marcia Greenberger, Bob Greenstein, Charles Halpern, Jodie Levin-Epstein, Joseph Onek, Linda Perle, Paula Roberts and Steve Savner.

STRENGTHENING CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES

FAMILIES ARE THE BEDROCK OF COMMUNITIES BUT FAR TOO MANY LIVE IN POVERTY AND LACK THE SUPPORTS THEY NEED TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE ECONOMY AND ENSURE THEIR CHILDREN GROW UP HEALTHY, SECURE AND PREPARED TO SUCCEED. CLASP ADVOCATES FOR INVESTMENT IN PROGRAMS THAT HELP CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES THRIVE. **IN 2009, CLASP:**

- Advocated successfully for \$5 billion in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act for the TANF Emergency Fund and ensured states put those funds to use.
- Prepared for upcoming TANF reauthorization by presenting policy research on how to improve the program to congressional staff and administration representatives.
- Led coalition efforts to secure nearly \$5 billion for child care and early education programs in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, and provided extensive technical assistance to state and local policymakers and advocates on how to use the funds to expand and improve early childhood programs for low-income working families.
- Partnered with other advocates to identify needed policy changes to eliminate barriers to accessing Head Start, and provided technical assistance to states and local grantees on topics such as eligibility, successful outreach, and professional development.
- Educated advocates and policymakers on successfully implementing the landmark Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 by creating an extensive guide and other resources.
- Advised Washington state on how to create a birth-to-five plan and improve state child care subsidy policies for working families.
- Continued to work in collaboration with national advocates on home visitation models to build consensus around and promote federal investment in evidence-based early childhood home visitation.
- Provided national and state-by-state analysis of federal data on state expenditures and participation for TANF and child care subsidies.
- Worked aggressively as co-chair of the Campaign for Youth coalition to influence the RAISE UP Act, legislation introduced in the House and Senate to direct funding to high poverty communities to implement comprehensive strategies for building postsecondary pathways for out of school youth.
- Advocated for summer jobs for youth, which was included in ARRA, and provided guidance to communities through audio conferences and direct technical assistance on using the funds.
- Influenced the Race to the Top guidance by providing nine core recommendations (eight of which were in the final program) to the Department of Education.

RAISE UP ACT

PROMOTING OPPORTUNITY FOR YOUTH TO LIVE UP TO THEIR POTENTIAL

Most youth who drop out of high school essentially live in a permanent economic recession. They don't gain the skills and education they need to succeed in the workforce, and they have significantly higher unemployment rates than high school graduates. Even when they are employed, they earn significantly less than those with a high school diploma. In fact, more than one-third of people who drop out of high school live in poverty.

CLASP's policy recommendations for addressing the dropout crisis call for a broad approach, including policies that promote comprehensive programs to re-engage young people who have dropped out; education and training programs to ensure young people receive the skills and credentials necessary to lead productive adult lives and land good jobs; and economic and social supports to help young people be successful in education and training programs.

In August 2009, lawmakers introduced comprehensive legislation consistent with policies for which CLASP has

long advocated. Sens. Debbie Stabenow, Sherrod Brown, Al Franken and Kirsten Gillibrand co-sponsored the Reengaging Americans in Serious Education by Uniting Programs Act (RAISE UP). The bill would help communities build a cross-systems approach to reengage and support millions of youth who are being left behind, including young people who have left high school without a diploma and those at risk of dropping out. Reps. Dale Kildee and Vern Ehlers introduced a companion bill in the U.S. House.

RAISE UP would create and expand efforts to connect youth to a range of options within and outside of traditional school systems that lead to a high school diploma, industry recognized certificate or credential, or college degree. The legislation would provide a community-wide, systemic approach to integrate opportunities in workforce development, secondary education, and post-secondary education.

At the core of this effort is community partnerships, which would receive federal funds to integrate existing, often disparate services, into a comprehensive

dropout recovery approach. The partnerships would receive grants and be able to subgrant funds for services focusing on education, job training, and other supports. These partnerships would include representatives from local government, educational, juvenile justice, criminal justice, workforce, housing, mental health and child welfare agencies as well as post-secondary educational institutions, community-based organizations, parent groups, and young people.

In 2009, CLASP led efforts to gain support for this critical bill. As part of this push, CLASP built a coalition of organizations to work for its passage, and organized a national sign-on campaign to engage communities, advocates, workforce boards and service providers. Its staff spoke to advocates and policymakers about the legislation's merits, as well as wrote Congress to urge its passage.

At the end of 2009, RAISE UP had been referred to committee. CLASP continues to support the legislation and broader efforts to provide young people with access to opportunities to realize their full potential.



THE AMERICAN RECOVERY AND REINVESTMENT ACT

INVESTING IN THE NATION'S FAMILIES

On Feb. 17, 2009, President Obama signed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, critical legislation that provided a necessary infusion of funding for programs to aid low-income people, and, equally important, a measure that acknowledged the nation's current and future prosperity requires providing educational and economic opportunity for all. *(continued)*

EARLY LEARNING CHALLENGE FUND

BUILDING MOMENTUM TO ENSURE THE NATION DEDICATES ADEQUATE RESOURCES FOR EARLY LEARNING



In 2009, CLASP remained a leader in ensuring the federal and state governments address developmental and learning needs of children. With early education also a priority for the new Obama administration, CLASP helped develop and shape an historic piece of legislation, the Early Learning Challenge Fund. The legislation passed during the fall in the U.S. House of Representatives.

Introduced as part of the Student Aid and Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2009, the Early Learning Challenge Fund called for investments of \$1 billion a year for eight years in competitive grants to challenge states to work toward comprehensive, high-quality early education systems. This is based on the knowledge that high quality early education programs can improve outcomes for all children, particularly those in low-income families.

The program would challenge states to create early education systems that include early learning standards such as evidence-based program quality standards; enhanced program review and monitoring of program quality; comprehensive professional development systems; coordinated approaches for facilitating screenings for disability, health, and mental health needs; improved support to parents; process for assessing children's school readiness; and use of data to improve child outcomes.

HIGH QUALITY EARLY EDUCATION PROGRAMS CAN IMPROVE OUTCOMES FOR ALL CHILDREN, PARTICULARLY THOSE IN LOW-INCOME FAMILIES.

FROM BIRTH TO AGE FIVE

The legislation focused on children from birth to age 5, recognizing that children are in different early childhood settings that meet varying developmental needs. It

also charged states to establish a metric designed to increase the number of disadvantaged children in higher quality settings. This would help states prioritize programs that most need help to improve the teaching quality, improve equipment



and resources, and meet higher program standards such as reduced ratios and group size to improve the quality of the provider to child relationship.

In partnership with other organizations, CLASP took a number of steps to support the legislation including working to ensure that the legislative language promoted high quality education for the most vulnerable young children, presenting information to state advocates and policymakers about the legislation, and co-sponsoring an audioconference to explain the bill's goals and provisions. As part of the Child Care and Early Education Coalition, CLASP signed a letter to the House Committee on Education & Labor in support of the Early Learning Challenge Fund, highlighting the importance of the bill for children in low-income families and urging its passage.

Unfortunately, the Early Learning Challenge did not make it in the final comprehensive education bill, which passed in 2010. However, at the printing of this report, the Senate reintroduced the measure as part of its appropriations



package for 2011 and proposed funding it at \$300 million. CLASP remains committed to helping states improve the quality of services and supports available to low-income children birth to five and their families.



Last year was a remarkable year for the nation and for those of us who advocate for policy solutions to strengthen families and move people out of poverty. We cannot talk about 2009 without acknowledging the significant moment in our nation's history when Barack Obama was sworn in as the nation's 44th president.

But the nation's collective euphoria quickly waned due to the pressing issues of the day.

The economic meltdown showed no signs of slowing in early 2009 as the financial crisis lingered, the economy every month shed hundreds of thousands of jobs, the percent of unemployed Americans spiked, more and more families lost their homes to foreclosure, and an increasing number of individuals and families faced other financial distress.

The 111th Congress and the Administration immediately began working to address the faltering economy through the **American Recovery and Reinvestment Act**. This historic legislation intended to provide a jolt to the economy through its jobs creation provisions. But it also implicitly acknowledged that providing opportunity for all is a key to the nation's long-term prosperity. *(continued)*

PATHWAYS TO GOOD JOBS

CLASP WORKS TO IMPROVE THE LABOR MARKET SUCCESS OF LOW-INCOME INDIVIDUALS AND THEIR FAMILIES IN WAYS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO SOCIAL EQUITY, ECONOMIC GROWTH AND FAMILY WELL-BEING. WE WORK TO IMPROVE JOB QUALITY AND BUILD PATHWAYS THAT CONNECT LOW-INCOME INDIVIDUALS — INCLUDING HIGH SCHOOL DROPOUTS, EX-OFFENDERS, WELFARE RECIPIENTS, LOW-SKILLED IMMIGRANTS, AND OTHER VULNERABLE YOUTH AND ADULTS — TO THE EDUCATION, TRAINING, AND SUPPORTS THEY NEED TO ADVANCE. **IN 2009, CLASP:**

- Helped improve the WIA programs for low-income youth and adults by advocating for increased funding and renewed emphasis on expanding access to quality training and supports under the ARRA.
- Advocated successfully for \$7 billion in incentive payments to states to expand unemployment insurance, including incentives to encourage states to avert layoffs by adopting work sharing programs, which provide partial unemployment insurance benefits to workers whose hours have been reduced.
- Championed increased funding for the federal Work-Study program, an increase of \$500 in Pell Grants for eligible students, and resources to pay off the shortfall in Pell Grant funding.
- Advocated successfully for line-item funding for Transitional Jobs in the U.S. Department of Labor budget.
- Advocated for targeted job creation strategies in pending jobs bills, including summer youth employment, subsidized employment under the TANF Emergency Contingency Fund, On-the-Job Training (OJT) and other strategies that combine work and learning opportunities.
- Advocated for provisions in the Student Aid and Fiscal Responsibility Act (SAFRA) to provide incentive funds to support systemic reforms in community colleges

and other postsecondary institutions to improve the rate at which low-income people access and complete credentials.

- Led a team of technical assistance advisors under the Joyce Foundation's Shifting Gears initiative to support policy change in five Midwest states (Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio and Wisconsin) to help low-income working adults earn marketable postsecondary credentials.
- Continued to build support for federal paid sick days legislation among small businesses and used H1N1 pandemic public health recommendations to highlight why workers need paid sick days.



Throughout negotiations over the recovery act, CLASP staff worked closely with congressional and administration staff to provide a voice for low-income families by advocating for investments in programs to aid vulnerable populations.

The final \$787 billion measure provided much-needed infusion of funding for programs that ensure more children have the foundation they

need to become successful adults, and more youth and adults have opportunity to move out of poverty and access education and work opportunities. Specifically, the recovery act included investment in child care and early education, summer jobs for youth, workforce development, and other safety net programs suffering from nearly a decade of flat funding or inadequate investment. It also provided

THE SHIFTING GEARS INITIATIVE EDUCATING ADULT WORKERS IN THE MIDWEST

Communities in the Midwest are undergoing wrenching transitions from largely industrial- and manufacturing-driven economies to a more diverse job environment. Twenty or more years ago, workers without education or training beyond high school could find jobs paying family-sustaining wages. Today, however, workers increasingly need skills and credentials beyond high school to access jobs with living wages and benefits. Yet far too many adults lack the skills and credentials to compete.

Recognizing this disconnect, the Joyce Foundation launched Shifting Gears, an initiative to help states scale up and sustain innovation in adult education, workforce development and postsecondary education.

From the initiative's start three years ago, the Joyce Foundation selected CLASP to provide technical assistance to all five Shifting Gears states: Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin. In 2009, the foundation expanded CLASP's role, designating it the coordinator for all initiative-wide activities.

Shifting Gears aims to spark lasting policy reform that enables more



adults—particularly those who enter the workforce with lower basic skills or limited English proficiency—to earn postsecondary credentials that lead to good jobs.

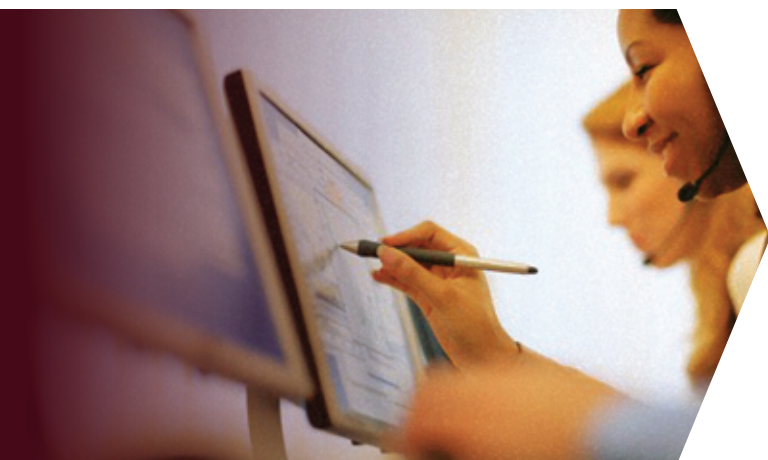
In 2009, CLASP worked with Shifting Gears state teams to craft broad state policy agendas, navigate technical policy issues, and build support for the initiative's work. Staff conducted regular site visits to the Midwest to observe policy and implementation challenges facing each state, and it communicated monthly with state teams to assess progress and provide assistance.

In its capacity as Shifting Gears manager, CLASP has partnered with other nonprofit organizations to coordinate peer learning opportunities for Shifting Gears states; administer the initiative's website; maintain an online resource center for state policymakers seeking to better connect low-skilled adults to education and training programs; and distribute a quarterly newsletter featuring announcements, helpful resources for policymakers, and updates on the Shifting Gears states.

Through the Shifting Gears initiative, CLASP has enhanced its advocacy for federal and state policies to improve postsecondary access and success for low-income people.

tax relief and direct supports to those hardest hit by the economic downturn. CLASP's recommendations figured prominently in the final bill.

After President Obama signed the bill into law, CLASP conducted a series of seven audio conferences to provide detailed analyses and direct technical assistance to states and communities around ARRA implementation. *(continued)*



SHORT- AND LONG-TERM SOLUTIONS FOR THE JOBS CRISIS



AN ALTERNATIVE TO LAYOFFS

Addressing the jobs crisis quickly became a national priority in 2009 as unemployment rose and the economy continued to shed millions of jobs. CLASP's advocacy focused on short- and long-term policy solutions to ensure the nation's workers have adequate supports to survive tough times and the necessary education and training to get and keep a job.

One of CLASP's key successes in this area was raising awareness of

work sharing, an unemployment insurance program. We released *Work Sharing: an Alternative to Layoffs in Tough Economic Times*, an analysis that outlines how the program works and recommends implementing state and federal policies to make work sharing a viable option for more employers.

When the economy slows, as it continued to do for most of 2009, and businesses lose revenue, they often lay off employees as a cost-saving measure. Under work sharing, employers can instead

reduce all full-time employees' hours. In turn, employees receive partial unemployment benefits to help compensate for their reduced hours. It's not a perfect solution, but it has broad benefits: workers keep their jobs and benefits such as health insurance and pension plans; employers reduce costs but retain skilled workers and save on recruitment and training following economic recovery; and communities maintain productive workers.

While it is difficult to quantify jobs saved due to work sharing, the program's use increased exponentially after the recession. For example, the number of companies using work sharing climbed by 60 percent in New York and by 119 percent in Rhode Island. In California, Arizona and Florida, unemployment insurance claims via the work sharing program significantly increased. In 2009, 17 states, including these, had work sharing programs.

CLASP in 2009 sought to raise general awareness, encourage more states to adopt work sharing programs, and advocate for favorable federal legislation to make the program easier to implement. We reached out to media and secured

favorable local and national news coverage of the program. We provided policy expertise to U.S. Sen. Jack Reed's staff as it drafted and ultimately introduced legislation to expand work sharing. Later in the year, U.S. Reps. Rosa DeLauro and Jim McDermott also introduced work sharing legislation in the House. In addition, a number of state policymakers became interested in the program as a way to address rising unemployment; at the end of 2009, several states were considering work sharing legislation.

ENSURING JOBS CREATION STRATEGIES CONSIDER LOW-INCOME, LOW-SKILL WORKERS' NEEDS

While addressing the nation's jobs crisis required immediate solutions such as work sharing or expanding unemployment insurance benefits, CLASP recognized the nation must also address long-term issues, such as ensuring the nation has a workforce equipped with skills necessary to land and succeed in jobs, particularly jobs created once the economy recovers.

As the nation focused on economic recovery in 2009, CLASP worked to

strengthen existing policies and to establish new policies to ensure an inclusive recovery. To this end, we continued our focus on postsecondary and adult education, as well as on basic skills and workforce training. We advocated for targeted jobs strategies to raise the skills of the nation's workforce and to provide earned income to low-income workers hard hit by the recession.

In 2009, policymakers proposed numerous jobs creation strategies

such as tax credits and public service employment. We supported these efforts, but also advocated for using the Workforce Investment Act and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families systems to create new work opportunities for low-income, unemployed workers. In *Job Creation: Creating Work and Learning Opportunities for Low-Income Populations*, we highlighted how these programs can be used to boost skills and create job prospects for low-income people.



As the year progressed and administrative agencies began funding recovery act programs, CLASP staff continued to present analyses and other recommendations to states and local governments to help ensure they took full advantage of available funding to boost programs and services for low-income people and their families. Some examples of CLASP's work include: making recommendations

for and tracking how each state accessed Child Care and Development Block Grant dollars made available through the recovery act; providing extensive technical assistance on ways states can draw dollars from the \$5 billion TANF Emergency Fund for innovative programs that serve low-income families; recommending how states could use recovery act funds to help disadvantaged

job seekers; and identifying provisions to support programs for youth.

When the economic recession deepened at the start of 2009, CLASP was well aware that it required a bold response. By swiftly passing the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, Congress and the Administration indicated that they, too, recognized the nation's families were struggling and *(continued)*

OPPORTUNITY AND EQUAL JUSTICE

CLASP ADVOCATES FOR POLICIES THAT SUPPORT ITS VISION OF AN AMERICA IN WHICH POVERTY IS RARE, THERE IS JUSTICE FOR ALL AND ALL PEOPLE CAN PARTICIPATE EQUALLY. **IN 2009, CLASP:**

- Raised awareness that the current poverty measure fails to adequately capture poverty in the United States and should be modernized with the report, *Measure by Measure: the Current Poverty Measure v. the National Academies of Sciences Measures*, which calculated alternative poverty rates for each state based on a U.S. Census tool.
- Built support for local and state solutions for reducing poverty by presenting to poverty commissions throughout the country on how establishing poverty targets – goals and deadlines – can help reduce poverty.
- Ensured that addressing poverty remained part of the public discourse by expanding *Spotlight on Poverty and Opportunity: The Source for News, Ideas and Action*, a leading non-partisan forum on poverty.
- Enabled 10 states to set targets for reducing poverty by developing a state tracking tool to provide links to poverty commission developments.
- Engaged with Congress in advocacy efforts that won increased funding for the Legal Services Corporation (LSC) and its grantees and increased resources by eliminating restrictions on LSC grantees' efforts to seek attorneys' fees in litigation.
- Worked to implement policies and regulatory interpretations— consistent with existing and new LSC statutory framework –to benefit LSC grantees.
- Ensured high-quality legal assistance to low-income clients by working with members of the legal aid community in ongoing program enhancement.



needed help. Ensuring that the nation's public policies work for low-income families is core to CLASP's mission, and we are pleased to have played a prominent role in getting key provisions in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act to aid vulnerable populations. While it is too soon to assess the long-term impact of recovery act dollars on low-income populations, there is no

doubt that the measure prevented a great deal of hardship.

Although we believe that the recovery act represents an immense step forward, we recognize it is not a cure-all. For the long-term health of our nation, we must ensure that our public policies are inclusive and that they enable shared prosperity. This means continuing to

MEASURING POVERTY

CLASP REPORT CALCULATES ALTERNATIVE POVERTY MEASURES FOR EACH STATE

The current federal poverty measure is bereft in many ways. The government developed the measure in the 1960s based on survey results from the 1950s on American families' food consumption. At the time, families spent one-third of their after-tax income on food. Although much has changed since the 1950s – families spend less on food, housing is more expensive, and tax credits and other poverty alleviating measures are in place, for example – the government has only updated the formula to adjust for inflation.

Experts have acknowledged for quite some time the need for a new federal poverty measure. In fact the National Academy of Sciences has developed an alternative poverty measure to more accurately reflect modern families' resources and needs. It captures median spending by a family of four on food, clothing, shelter and other needs. In addition, the NAS measure broadly defines income to include such non-cash resources as tax credits and Food Stamps while subtracting expenses such as child care and medical expenses.

While the NAS measure may not reflect exactly what a new measure



will look like, it can provide a glimpse of how poverty statistics might change under a revised measure. When the U.S. Census Bureau last year released a tool to calculate poverty rates based on National Academy of Sciences (NAS) formulas, CLASP used the tool to determine two alternative poverty measures for all 50 states and the District of Columbia. We published these calculations in the report, *Measure by Measure*:

The Current Poverty Measure v. National Academy of Sciences Measures.

Some of CLASP's key findings as published in the report:

- Virtually all states' poverty rates increased when calculated under the NAS measure, ranging from 0.4 percent in Connecticut to 4.2 percent in South Carolina
- When geographic differences in the cost of housing are considered, many states in the West and Northeast, where these costs are higher, have significantly higher rates of poverty than the current measure captures.

We published the report to provide a *hint* of what a future measure may result in. Any new measure, we're aware, will require technical decisions that may result in different numbers. At the same time, we believe adequately measuring poverty allows us to understand whether individuals and families are meeting their basic needs and can also guide decisions about which policies most effectively reduce poverty.

create sound public policies that provide opportunity. It means sustained investment in early childhood programs, child welfare, postsecondary education, job training and opportunities for youth. It also requires ensuring the nation has a sound safety net to help families get through difficult economic times and stay out of poverty. ♦



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STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2009

ASSETS

CURRENT ASSETS

Cash and cash equivalents.....	\$1,269,561
Investments.....	\$732,489
Receivables:	
<i>Grants receivable, current portion</i>	\$2,843,871
<i>Other</i>	\$26,378
Prepaid expenses.....	\$140,887
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	\$5,013,186

FURNITURE AND EQUIPMENT

Equipment	\$219,807
Less: Accumulated depreciation.....	(\$156,944)
Net furniture and equipment.....	\$62,863

NON-CURRENT ASSETS

Grants receivable, net of current maturities.....	\$700,000
Deposits	\$49,379
TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS	\$749,379

TOTAL ASSETS **\$5,825,428**

LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

CURRENT LIABILITIES

Capital lease obligation, current portion	\$16,663
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	\$57,721
Accrued salaries and related benefits	\$153,168
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	\$227,552

NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES

Capital lease obligation, long-term portion	\$30,313
TOTAL LIABILITIES	\$257,865

NET ASSETS

Unrestricted	\$944,603
Temporarily restricted.....	\$4,622,960
TOTAL NET ASSETS	\$5,567,563

TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS **\$5,825,428**

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES AND CHANGE IN NET ASSETS

AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2009

REVENUE

Foundation grants.....	\$5,707,601
Contributions.....	\$73,845
Investment income.....	\$48,804
Publications.....	\$0
Other revenue.....	\$19,385
Net assets released from donor restrictions.....	\$0
TOTAL REVENUE.....	\$5,849,635

EXPENSES

PROGRAM SERVICES:

Family Policy.....	\$4,457,171
Legal Services.....	\$269,164
TOTAL PROGRAM SERVICES.....	\$4,726,335

SUPPORTING SERVICES:

Management and General.....	\$34,704
Fundraising.....	\$199,788
TOTAL SUPPORTING SERVICES.....	\$234,492

TOTAL EXPENSES..... \$4,960,827

Changes in net assets.....	\$888,808
Net assets at beginning of year.....	\$4,678,755

NET ASSETS AT END OF YEAR..... \$5,567,563

benefits recovery education forty years funds guidance policy support access train
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benefits children **equality** subsidies alternatives youth strength data recovery educat
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