



State Poverty Task Force Recommendations

March 2011(revised)

Introduction

Around the nation, a growing number of state governments have established task forces or commissions to develop new strategies and recommendations for tackling poverty and providing opportunity. Since 2003, twenty-one states have initiated comprehensive reviews and recommendations to reduce poverty. More than half – eleven – of these states have concrete targets for reducing poverty by 2020 (e.g. cut poverty in half in a decade). Managed effectively, the high-level attention of a task force created by a governor or legislature is an important step toward building the political and public will that is essential for policy change.

These and other state efforts to raise the political profile of poverty and opportunity were first highlighted in *Seizing the Moment: State Governments and the New Commitment to Reduce Poverty in America*. Since its publication in 2008, Arkansas, Colorado, Delaware, Illinois, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Minnesota, New Mexico, North Carolina, Ohio, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Virginia have joined Alabama and Connecticut in releasing poverty task force recommendations. This document provides an overview of these sixteen states' recommendations for reducing poverty. The recommendations summarized are organized into six policy areas developed jointly by CLASP and Minnesota's Affirmative Options: adult education and employment; child education and child care; family structure; housing and health; income and assets; work supports and safety net; and a final section for miscellaneous policy recommendations.

The recommendations vary widely according to the specific needs of each state; therefore, it is difficult to make broad comparisons of recommendations among the sixteen states with reports. However, the following eight policy solutions are being advocated for in at least half of the state poverty task forces:

- Expanding and increasing access to federal and state tax credits (AL, CO, CT, DE, IL, KY, LA, NC, OH, RI, VA)
- Expanding access and increasing funding to individual development accounts (IDA's) to increase savings and asset building in low-income communities (AL, MI, MN, NC, NM, OH, RI, VA)
- Examining how to best address the "cliff" effect, whereby individuals in poverty find that even marginal increases in income result in abrupt reductions or eliminations of work supports (AR, CT, DE, LA, MI, MN, OH, VT)
- Increasing outreach and enrollment in the federal food stamps program (AR, CO, CT, DE, IL, MI, MN, NC, NM, RI)

- Increasing and expanding access to affordable, quality transportation systems (AL, DE, KY, MI, MN, NC, OH, VT)
- Linking education to workforce preparedness and employment (DE, IL, MI, NC, NM, OH, VT, VA)
- Expanding and improving access to childcare for low income families (AL, AR, IL, LA, MI, MN, OH, VT, VA)
- Increasing or securing funding for Housing Trust Funds (AL, AR, NM, NC, OH, VT, VA)

In addition, at least five states have made the following policy recommendations:

- Implement regulatory protections against predatory lending (AL, DE, MN, NC, NM, OH, VA)
- Incentivizing employers and collaborating with other state agencies to serve hard to employ populations such as youth and formerly incarcerated adults (CO, DE, IL, LA, MI, MN, OH)
- On the job training and skill building, such as through apprenticeships and transitional jobs programs (IL, MN, NC, NM, OH)
- Expanding eligibility requirements for Medicaid or other state child health insurance programs (AR, DE, IL, NC, OH, VT, VA)
- Review and develop alternative poverty measures that fully capture state poverty and the impact of poverty-reduction efforts (CO, CT, DE, MN, VT)

Many states' task forces are new; therefore, as recommendations are released, CLASP will update *Poverty and Opportunity: State Poverty Task Force Recommendations to Reduce Poverty*. It is also important to note that the absence of a recommendation does not necessarily mean the state is not moving forward on that issue; indeed, the task force may have consciously not considered an issue area if, for example, legislation had recently been enacted or a separate task force was tackling the issue. Therefore, the summary of policy recommendations is not meant to be an exhaustive list of state efforts but rather to serve as an informative guide to priorities sought by state opportunity and poverty task forces.

Adult Education and Employment Policy Recommendations

Alabama	Require workforce development programs funded by the state to have low-income population/area recruitment goals.
Arkansas	<p>Expand the Career Coaches (Arkansas Works!) program to every county in the state, and increase funding for the Aspiring Scholars Matching Grant Program.</p> <p>Increase retention and graduation rates at two-year and four-year higher education institutions in the state.</p> <p>Improve case management services for young mothers seeking assistance through Temporary Assistance for Needy Families to better place them in career paths and to help them link with resources.</p> <p>Form a study group to accrete and evaluate “best practices” of non-public educational institutions.</p>
Colorado	Clarify through legislative recommendation the particular situations in which information regarding an employee’s criminal history can be used against an employer in civil actions regarding negligent hiring practices. The legislation seeks to reduce fears of legal liability that may prevent employers from hiring those with prior criminal convictions.
Connecticut	<p>Expand access to state colleges for late teens and young adults, particularly community colleges, and expand programs intended to encourage high school students to pursue a college education.</p> <p>Enhance the existing GED program for working poor families receiving Temporary Family Assistance and literacy and examine how youths who drop out of high school can obtain a GED.</p> <p>Provide case management services to overcome barriers to employment.</p>
Delaware	<p>Support outreach, coordination and marketing of currently existing services including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • programs to assess and address inadequate individual reading and math skills that are barriers to employment training and employment • training programs that develop curricula to meet workforce shortages and foster employment in high-growth industries and employment areas • access to GED and vocational education and training for adolescents, young

	<p>adults and low-income parents</p> <p>Support off shoots of the Department of Labor “one-stops” closer to or in the local community.</p> <p>Pass legislation to implement automatic expunging of misdemeanor and felony charges for juveniles and adults.</p> <p>Provide incentives to employers who are hiring juveniles or adults with criminal records by building a Delaware version of the Federal Work Opportunity Act.</p> <p>Create a re-entry strategy and program that increases re-entry supports (substance abuse treatment, emotional, behavioral and mental health, housing, vocational training and employment, mentoring and case management) for adults and juveniles returning to communities from criminal and juvenile justice institutions and treatment programs.</p>
<p>Illinois</p>	<p>Adopt statewide Ban the Box legislation, which prohibits state job applications from asking if an individual has a criminal background, and use the state’s leadership to encourage and promote the hiring of individuals with criminal backgrounds</p> <p>Educate recipients of Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and SSI so they know that they can work and keep Medicaid benefits.</p> <p>Establish a statewide transitional jobs program that will engage 40,000 individuals each year when at full scale.</p> <p>Increase comprehensive scholarships to low-income community college students which combine “last-dollar” financial aid with student support services that include academic advising, mentoring and tutoring.</p> <p>Create at least two dedicated workforce development staff positions at each community college throughout Illinois to increase student opportunities to secure employment upon completion of certificate or degree.</p> <p>Direct the Illinois Community College Board and the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity to prioritize individuals living in poverty within their programs and work with stakeholders to assess and implement changes, policies and practices that lead to increased access.</p> <p>Community colleges, trade schools, and community-based organizations should assist low-skilled immigrants to create a practical career ladder by tying English instruction and vocational training to advancement within specific industries such as restaurants,</p>

	<p>hotels, tourism, and health care.</p> <p>Public and private funds should be increased to promote contextualized adult education and ESL classes for immigrants in order to both improve general English proficiency and acquire trade/skill relevant English as well.</p>
<p>Kentucky</p>	
<p>Louisiana</p>	<p>Successfully pilot, then implement, a statewide build-out of job training and placement referral programs currently under development by Louisiana’s Shared Youth Vision Team (an interagency partnership between the Louisiana Workforce Commission, the Department of Social Services Office of Community Service, Department of Social Services/Vocational Rehabilitation Services, and the Department of Juvenile Justice to better serve Louisiana’s state custody youth who are aging out of state care) for two specific populations: youth aging out of foster care and older incarcerated/court-supervised youth.</p>
<p>Michigan</p>	<p>Improve federal support systems by helping people work and learn:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shift the focus of federal support programs from immediate job placement to longer-term skills development and educational attainment for good jobs. • Revamp Temporary Assistance for Needy Families requirements to allow and support involvement in education and training (including basic skills development) activities, as well as barrier removal efforts. • Increase program flexibility and services to better accommodate the complex needs and schedules of families, and to provide more time for counseling and other supports. <p>Align workforce development efforts with human service investments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explicitly link DHS and Department of Energy, Labor and Economic Growth (DELEG) priorities and policies through collaborative planning and implementation. • Involve DHS on local Workforce Investment Boards. <p>Link education to career pathways and supportive services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explicitly focus education and training programs, such as No Worker Left Behind, on occupational skill building in specific career pathways in growth industries. Assess labor market data and employer needs for occupational skills to target. • Connect participants in educational and/or workforce programs, such as No Worker Left Behind, with every available local, state or community based wrap-around support service to ensure their achievement of a credential or degree. • Ensure all school districts offer or connect families with comprehensive support services.

Increase participation and prioritize funding for current education and training programs:

- Ensure that quality adult learning is available to all who need to improve skills, learn new technologies, or change careers.
- Develop outreach to people who are disconnected or otherwise unlikely to be engaged in education.

Improve basic skills immediately:

- Make assessing and providing services to improve basic skills a priority among all supports to low-income families.
- Expand basic skills and GED programs to prepare participants to take full advantage of – and succeed in - continuing educational opportunities (such as No Worker Left Behind).
- Help JET (Jobs, Education, and Training)/TANF participants improve their skills while still qualifying for supports and benefits.
- Offer financial literacy education to all recipients of public services and include this in public education curricula.

Incentivize employer investment:

- Support the development or replication of accelerated, employer-driven career pathways, transitional and job training programs. Expand these programs to include ex-offenders.
- Develop partnerships among employers, educational institutions and community based organizations to build career pathways and provide support services to help remove barriers.

Create opportunities for people with barriers to work.

- Prioritize all possible funding, and seek every opportunity to advocate for additional funds and to expand the reach of No Worker Left Behind.
- Create transitional jobs and on-the-job training opportunities in the public and private sectors, particularly for those lacking basic skills.
- Invest in creating summer jobs and internships for youth in areas with the highest rates of unemployment and poverty.

Create jobs through investments in expanding public transportation infrastructure in urban areas. Specifically allocate 10-20% of the labor to dislocated or hard-to-employ individuals, and 1-10% of the funds to training for these jobs.

Develop a systemic approach to disseminating information needed by traditional and adult learners, such as a statewide network of education/career advocates to help people access needed information about career pathways, educational options, available support services, etc.

<p>Minnesota</p>	<p>Provide employers with tools to safely hire otherwise qualified individuals who have criminal records.</p> <p>Create paid “stepping stone jobs”—structured short-term, government-subsidized jobs that allow someone unable to secure work to develop the skills and experience to win a job in the competitive labor market.</p> <p>Assist businesses that are trying to upgrade the skill level of their employees.</p> <p>Examine how taxes can be structured to incentivize businesses to hire more people.</p> <p>Guarantee two years of postsecondary education to every young adult who graduates from a Minnesota high school.</p> <p>Expand access to and availability of adult basic education, GED, and literacy programs to ensure that low-income adults receive needed training and skills, can achieve functional literacy, and can move seamlessly into higher education or technical programs.</p> <p>Implement with haste the promising initiatives of the Governor’s Workforce Development Council.</p>
<p>New Mexico</p>	<p>Expand access to higher education by committing state to low-tuition policy, increasing funding for work study, increasing allocations for need-based scholarships, and increasing the college affordability endowment.</p> <p>Implement a program to provide two years of college tuition and fees loan forgiveness at a public university or Tribal college in exchange for one year of public service in New Mexico.</p> <p>Expand training opportunities through pre-apprenticeships and apprenticeship programs.</p> <p>Create a new state income tax credit equal to a percentage of the federal Work Opportunity Tax Credit amount for eligible employees who are residents of New Mexico.</p> <p>Expand the Adult Basic Education Program.</p>
<p>North Carolina</p>	<p>Continue the Employment Security Commission’s work to promote the Work Opportunity Tax Credit and educate employers about it because the program is underutilized and that many employers mistakenly believe the process is difficult and not worth the effort.</p>

	<p>Continue to create opportunities for work experience through subsidized employment using American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds.</p> <p>The General Assembly, depending upon available resources, increase payment rate for Work First tied to meeting the work and personal responsibility requirements of the program.</p> <p>Restore funding for the Prisoner Education Program in the N.C. Community College System.</p> <p>Continue to enhance work skills through training opportunities such as the 12 and 6 Program through community colleges.</p> <p>The State should assist the National Guard in opening a second Tarheel Challenge Academy in Badin in the Piedmont.</p>
<p>Ohio</p>	<p>Utilize public works resources to build skills and experience of entry-level and low-income workers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give preference to public works projects that use a portion of public works resources to support on-the-job training of workers. • Target the use of workforce development resources to prepare low-income and unemployed adults to move into public works jobs that pay family-sustaining wages and lead to career advancement. • Provide participants in training with adequate work stipends and supportive services, such as child care. • Expand pre-apprenticeship skills enhancement programs for populations historically underrepresented in the building trades. <p>Encourage public works projects to hire low-income and entry-level workers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give preference to projects that establish community benefit agreements ensuring that low-income individuals are hired and complete a defined number of work hours on the project. • Give preference to projects that make use of apprentices. • Expand public works apprentice programs. • Support the use of transitional jobs for certain public works programs to provide short-term, subsidized work for low-income Ohioans facing multiple barriers to employment. <p>Expand Transitional Jobs programs through partnerships with state contractors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish incentives for state contractors to provide Transitional Jobs as an

	<p>employment and training option within all public contracts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Include Transitional Jobs as a strategy in new and existing employment and training efforts by providing bonus points for contractors/programs that include Transitional Jobs. ● Encourage and give preference to contractors that use the Federal Bonding Program, which encourages the use of existing tools for the employment of formerly incarcerated Ohioans. <p>Establish a Transitional Workers Initiative to encourage and increase use of the Transitional Jobs model. This initiative would:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Lead an interagency effort to better coordinate and align Transitional Jobs with all public workforce, training, and education efforts. ● Partner with the National Transitional Jobs Network to provide technical assistance and capacity building to regions in the implementation of various Transitional Jobs strategies. ● Develop and promote appropriate hiring incentives for local employers to participate in the Transitional Jobs program. ● Research and evaluate the effectiveness of Transitional Jobs program. ● Lead an effort to eliminate “collateral sanctions,” or Ohio laws that prevent formerly incarcerated Ohioans from obtaining unsubsidized, stable employment. ● Ensure that community voicemail initiatives are readily available across the state so that homeless persons can communicate with potential employers. ● Better promote the Work Opportunities Tax Credit, which provides Ohio employers with a tax credit against their federal tax liability for hiring individuals from target groups of disadvantaged job seekers. <p>Implement policies and strategies to assure that the workforce development system is targeting resources to the needs of low-income Ohioans.</p> <p>Assist local workforce boards to address administrative barriers to effective use of Workforce Investment Act funds and implement innovations and best practices.</p> <p>Significantly increase the Work Opportunity Tax Credit and make that tax credit refundable for employers who hire hard-to-employ individuals.</p>
<p>Rhode Island</p>	<p>Increase funding to adult education and non-traditional remedial classes.</p>
<p>Vermont</p>	<p>The Commissioner of the Department for Children and Families and the Commissioner of the Department of Labor will establish clearly defined connections between Reach Up (TANF) participants and Next Generation funding (funds programs targeted at expanding opportunities for students and enhancing the skills of Vermont’s workforce to obtain higher paying jobs).</p>

	<p>The General Assembly will explore expanding existing micro-business programs.</p> <p>The Commissioner of the Department of Labor and the Commissioner of the Department of Education will develop pilot programs for career pathways, possibly in the health care and construction trades sectors. The Commissioners will look to models in other states for guidance.</p>
Virginia	<p>Expand and increase the capacity of educational credentialing programs that boost worker skills, employability, and income potential by providing opportunities for individuals to attain high school diplomas, GED credentials, Career Readiness Certificates, occupational certification or license, and other post secondary credential (diplomas, certificates, or degrees).</p> <p>Allow more post-secondary education to satisfy VIEW (The Virginia Initiative for Employment not Welfare Program) work activity requirements for TANF recipients.</p> <p>Ensure that there is a continued focus on Virginia code provisions at §2.2-435.7 (Coordination of Workforce Development) and §23-215 (Role of Community College System).</p> <p>Expand English as a Second Language (ESL) services for new Americans to support their employability.</p>

Child Education and Child Care Policy Recommendations

Alabama	<p>Provide additional funds to Head Start until there is no waiting list.</p> <p>As funds are available, condition approvals of “First Class” pre-K with two recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funds should target low-income communities. • Monthly co-pay for low-income families should be reduced.
Arkansas	<p>Expand access to quality early childhood education for children age birth to 5 years, especially for at-risk children.</p> <p>Restructure the Arkansas developmental/remedial education system to improve student success.</p> <p>More official state emphasis on school board training, mentoring, and cross-fertilizing.</p>

	<p>Improve access to subsidized child care by using all available TANF funding for child care.</p>
Colorado	
Connecticut	<p>Review and support the Early Childhood Cabinet proposals targeting children aged birth to five.</p> <p>Enhance efforts to reduce the number of students who drop out of high school.</p>
Delaware	<p>Support a tiered reimbursement for Purchase of Care (state child care assistance) linked to an early childhood rating system and additional funding as the market rate increases to minimize increases in parent co-pay.</p> <p>Include students as an eligible category for receipt of Purchase of Care (state child care assistance).</p> <p>Develop an educational scholarship and revolving loan fund to allow child care providers who care for low-income children under Purchase of Care (state child care assistance) to gain additional training.</p> <p>Increase investments in professional development for early childcare providers with access to health benefits and incentives for childcare providers who provide health benefits.</p> <p>Stimulate the market to develop care during nontraditional hours.</p> <p>Invest in Early Childhood Education:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • tuition subsidies for more low-income 3- and 4- year-olds to attend high-quality educational programs • required participation in the Delaware Stars for Early Success Program, which sets high-quality program standards • annual license renewals for all early child care and education providers to ensure consistent high quality • additional professional development for providers • data systems to share information and follow the educational progress of students from prekindergarten through grade 12 • increased coordination across service agencies for children from birth to age 3 <p>Develop and support high-quality teachers.</p> <p>Empower principals to lead their schools.</p> <p>Encourage innovation and parent involvement; require accountability.</p>

	<p>Establish a simple and equitable funding system whereby resources follow individual students and are allocated based on their needs.</p>
Illinois	<p>Protect, restore and enhance investments in early childhood care and education to maintain and build on the successes of programs like Healthy Families, Early Intervention, Head Start, Preschool for All, and Child Care Assistance Programs.</p> <p>Increase the kids served in Preschool for All (about 35,000 in Head Start, and the remainder in state-supported Pre-K) to 198,000, from the FY2009 130,000 kids under Preschool for All.</p> <p>Increase access to affordable child care for all low-income working families, with a special emphasis on those in extreme poverty.</p> <p>Develop outreach strategies to target families in extreme poverty for the Child Care Assistance Program.</p> <p>Eliminate child care co-payments for families in extreme poverty.</p>
Kentucky	<p>Consider improving efforts to address educational needs, encourage the value of education, and increase access to vocational education.</p> <p>Consider the expansion of collaboration projects that combine child day care, preschool, and Headstart programs to address early childhood education and school readiness.</p>
Louisiana	<p>Expand income eligibility for Louisiana's Child Care Assistance Program from 200% of the poverty level (twice the poverty level) to 300% of the poverty level (three times the poverty level).</p> <p>Create a strong system of early education by integrating the successes of LA 4 pre-K and Louisiana's child care rating system.</p> <p>Successfully pilot then implement a statewide build-out of Louisiana's new EMPLoY (Educational Mission to Prepare Louisiana's Youth) Program.</p> <p>Expand Louisiana's Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG) Program to all local school districts statewide. Louisiana's JAG program is a successful affiliate of the nation's largest drop-out prevention and recovery program that delivers a unique set of services for at-risk students to help them earn a high school diploma and for out-of-school youth, to assist them in earning a GED.</p>

<p>Michigan</p>	<p>Expand Head Start and Early Head Start programs to bring more eligible children into these systems as early as possible.</p> <p>Increase the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) and extend coverage to working families and those involved in education and training.</p> <p>Reward high-quality schools that meet tough performance outcomes.</p> <p>Make successful transitions the norm by ensuring that every k-12 student has the support, opportunity and skills to succeed in postsecondary opportunities such as college, vocational education, or job training.</p>
<p>Minnesota</p>	<p>Guarantee child care for all low-income families by expanding the existing sliding fee assistance program. Increase assistance to include all families below 300 percent of the federal poverty guidelines and limit co-payments to no more than 10 percent of the household's income.</p> <p>Guarantee quality preschool or childcare experiences for children from low-income families.</p> <p>Educate the parents of children from birth to age three, with particular emphasis on low-income families, in the most effective methods for raising healthy, successful children.</p> <p>Expand the Community School model to create stronger integration between schools and the social service delivery system.</p> <p>Support research-based initiatives that improve high school graduation rates.</p> <p>Modernize and increase the quality of career and technical education and expand technical, career-oriented high schools.</p> <p>Ensure that funds intended to increase the academic achievement of low-income students, such as Compensatory Aid, accomplish that goal and expand such funds to meet the needs of all eligible students.</p> <p>Expand the use of proven interventions that improve educational outcomes for low-income students, particularly improved teacher quality, improved family and community support, expanding learning time in and out of the classroom, and reducing class sizes in kindergarten through second grade.</p>
<p>New Mexico</p>	
<p>North Carolina</p>	<p>The General Assembly invests in more child care, eliminating waiting lines.</p>

	<p>Continue to extend the current 30 to 60 day job search policy up to 6 months when child care subsidy recipients experience a loss of employment.</p> <p>Continue to provide child care subsidy applicants upfront job search up to 6 months that lost employment on or after October 1, 2008.</p> <p>Continue to provide job search child care subsidy benefits for recipients who completed school and are entering the job market.</p> <p>Continue to extend the 24-month post-secondary education time limit for child care subsidy to 36 months for recipients who lost employment since October 1, 2008, or otherwise need additional training to enhance marketable skills for job placement and who have depleted the 24-month allowable time for education.</p> <p>Maintain and support investments to increase and maintain high-quality, early learning programs.</p> <p>Lift the existing cap on charter schools with a specified minimum within the school for students eligible for free and reduced-price lunches.</p>
<p>Ohio</p>	<p>Establish tax incentives to attract and retain high-quality teachers and other school staff.</p> <p>Pursue legislation requiring schools to embrace positive behavior intervention strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amend zero tolerance laws to include a requirement that school districts promulgate policies to implement positive behavior interventions and supports in schools. • Work with local school districts in the appropriate use of police in schools. • Provide grants and incentives to schools to implement peace programs, community-based responses to violence, and other methods of addressing behavior and misconduct concerns in schools without involving the criminal justice system. <p>Increase funding for after school and summer programs to allow greater access for working families.</p> <p>Allow full-day kindergarten programs to be delivered in community-based child care settings.</p> <p>Increase flexibility in the use of childcare vouchers for out-of-school time programs to pay a standard weekly rate instead of the current hourly rate.</p> <p>Maximize receipt of flexible funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act</p>

	<p>eligible for early childhood programs</p> <p>Provide state incentives and guidelines for local communities to collaborate on coordinated use of ARRA, Title I, Head Start, Early Head Start and CCDBG funds at the local level.</p> <p>Support increased access to high-quality early care and education for all low-income Ohio families, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintaining current eligibility levels at 200% of the federal poverty level for child care, the Early Learning Initiative, and Early Childhood Education (Public Preschool) • Aligning, coordinating, and improving early childhood policies through the creation of a single administrative structure
<p>Rhode Island</p>	
<p>Vermont</p>	<p>The State of Vermont must recognize in its public policies that schools and educators are not solely responsible for the successful education of Vermont’s children. The effects of chronic poverty and other social problems will be addressed through strong partnerships among families, schools, communities, and state social service agencies.</p> <p>Eliminate both the disparities in test scores and high school graduation rates between low- income children and their peers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Commissioner of the Department of Education will identify best practices for closing the achievement gap and build on the successes of many Vermont schools that are working to meet the needs of low income students. • The Commissioner of the Department of Education and the Secretary of the Agency of Human Services will agree to a formal protocol to deploy teams to work with schools and their communities to develop action plans that address the disparities of test scores between students eligible for free and reduced lunches and students who are not. Top priority will be given to those schools identified as being “in need of improvement.” <p>The Commissioner of the Department for Children and Families and the Commissioner of the Department of Health will report to the Council and the General Assembly on whether existing programs targeted at school readiness are reaching all eligible families, especially those with children from birth to age three.</p> <p>The Commissioner of the Department of Education and the Secretary of the Agency of Human Services will develop models for the integration of family services into Vermont’s schools to provide the supports that children who are performing at lower levels need to catch up to their higher performing peers. The models will be promoted to school boards, superintendents, principals, teachers, and community groups.</p>

	<p>Expand capacity to assure access to high-quality pre-K services and Head Start and Early Head Start programs.</p> <p>Capacity in afterschool programs will be expanded to assure access.</p> <p>The General Assembly will invest in the child care subsidy program in these three ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase eligibility guidelines incrementally to match the current cost of living. • Increase subsidy rates incrementally so that they provide parents access to 75% of the child care offered in their area (as per federal standards). • Adjust eligibility guidelines and subsidy rates annually to keep pace with inflation. <p>The Department for Children and Families will make recommendations on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how to increase the availability of child care for parents working alternative hours and weekends • how to increase access to quality care for underserved populations such as infants and toddlers, afterschool children, and children with special needs • how to improve the quality of child care available to all children <p>The Commissioner of the Department of Education will assist eligible child care programs, especially those accepting child care subsidies from the Department for Children and Families, to participate in the Child Care Meals Program.</p>
<p>Virginia</p>	<p>Continue to expand early childhood education opportunities to bring these programs to scale so that every child in Virginia has ready access to early education.</p> <p>Increase state funding for programs serving students at-risk of educational failure, including the Virginia Preschool Initiative, and maintain strong Standards of Quality that will provide the inputs students need to pass Standards of Learning tests and a meaningful opportunity to earn a standard diploma.</p> <p>Expand Smart Beginnings into more communities. Smart Beginnings is the statewide effort to engage communities to bring their early childhood services together into effective local systems that provide leadership to improve the quality and access of early childhood environments. 2-1-1 Virginia, the state’s information and referral system, can also be used to promote enrollments in local systems.</p> <p>Communities experiencing particular challenges need expanded, multi-systemic resources designed to increase high school graduation rates (such as the Harlem Children’s Zone). This is a holistic system organized around a coordinated, interdisciplinary strategy to improve educational outcomes and strengthen the problem-</p>

	<p>solving capacity of communities.</p> <p>Increase support for subsidized child care to retire waiting lists.</p>
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Family Structure Policy Recommendations

Alabama	
Arkansas	
Connecticut	<p>Intensify efforts to reduce teen pregnancy.</p> <p>Support the fatherhood initiative for working poor families.</p>
Delaware	
Illinois	
Kentucky	
Louisiana	<p>Improve the quality of parenting education in Louisiana by enhancing training, resources, and technical assistance for parenting educators through strengthening the newly-formed Louisiana Parenting Education Network.</p>
Michigan	
Minnesota	<p>Ensure that marriage and family counseling is covered by public or private health insurance.</p> <p>Nurture young men and women who are parents so they can be successful in raising their children and accomplished in their own lives. Particular focus should be given to ensuring that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • support programs are available to allow young parents to stay in school and obtain a high school diploma and the additional education and training they need to succeed • young parents have access to child-rearing training
New Mexico	
North Carolina	<p>The Departments of Health and Human Services and Public Instruction should continue to include personal finance and parenthood training in North Carolina's public school curriculum, emphasizing fatherhood as well as motherhood. This should be made a specific requirement in the middle schools.</p>
Ohio	<p>Enact legislation to direct the Ohio Department of Education to establish state standards for a health education curriculum that includes abstinence-inclusive, medically accurate, comprehensive reproductive health education.</p>
Rhode Island	

Vermont	State government will support nonprofit community organizations working to strengthen families such as the community action programs, parent-child center network, the teen parent education programs, and others.
Virginia	

Housing and Health Policy Recommendations

Alabama	<p>Create Affordable Housing Trust Fund Task Force charged with developing comprehensive recommendation to legislature on a housing trust fund prior to its 2009 Session.</p> <p>Reduce the time municipalities have to wait to demolish or sell abandoned or destroyed houses.</p> <p>Develop a current study of housing needs and conduct an analysis on findings focusing on low-income individuals and families.</p> <p>Ensure that medical providers do not charge those without insurance more than Medicaid patients or other insured groups.</p>
Arkansas	<p>Expand school wellness centers/coordinated school health initiatives to provide preventative well-child services through the schools and reduce direct costs for medical treatment by improving services access.</p> <p>More emphasis on health issues, especially obesity (e.g., BMI indexing and recording) in schools.</p> <p>Implement the ARKids First (Medicaid for children program in Arkansas) expansion to 250 percent of the federal poverty level, as passed during the 2009 legislative session (currently on hold).</p> <p>Implement substance abuse treatment under Medicaid for pregnant women and teens, agreed upon during 2009 legislative session.</p> <p>Conduct health impact assessments on all new policies/initiatives at state and community levels to help ensure the health and wellness of citizens and community members is appropriately considered before state or local policy decisions are made.</p> <p>Ensure that the “navigator” required by health care reform is adequate to help consumers with the healthcare.</p>

	<p>Establish a Center for Health Literacy to coordinate and fund activities that improve health literacy of Arkansans. This could include, but is not limited to developing educational materials, coordinating public education and outreach efforts, and reaching out to underserved populations.</p> <p>Fund the Housing Trust Fund that was established in the 2009 legislative session.</p>
Colorado	<p>Promote affordable housing by clarifying that the rent control statute permits developers and local governments to enter into voluntary agreements regarding rent and developer fees.</p>
Connecticut	<p>Expand homeless diversion programs for working poor families, including expanding transitional housing to keep children out of homeless shelters.</p>
Delaware	<p>Identify new and reallocate existing resources to create a system of long-term housing with accompanying supportive services.</p> <p>Support children aging out of the foster care system or other state institutions with housing assistance to prevent homelessness.</p> <p>Develop more effective homelessness prevention programs and shorter term housing assistance for homeless families and children.</p> <p>Support funding allocated to the Housing Development Fund for the purposes of creating a long-term statewide preservation strategy.</p> <p>Develop and maintain additional sources of rental housing subsidy for low-income families with children.</p> <p>Combine flexible housing subsidies with other educational and employment supports.</p> <p>Fund and expand the Delaware Emergency Mortgage Assistance Program to help more families who are at risk of losing their home to foreclosure due to the loss of a job, illness or some other circumstance outside of their control.</p> <p>Work with mortgage lenders and servicers to make sure that reasonable loan modifications can be made for families who can reasonably afford to stay in the home.</p> <p>Build capacity of housing default counseling agencies so homeowners can get help early in the foreclosure process.</p> <p>Improve the delivery of services by linking programs together to reduce administrative duplication, shortening waiting lists, and allowing families to receive the most</p>

	<p>appropriate level of home rehabilitation assistance.</p> <p>Improve code enforcement in rental units affordable to low-income families.</p> <p>Fund the state’s Housing Development Fund with an additional dedicated revenue source to make more net housing units affordable to this population.</p> <p>Restructure existing programs, such as the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) in order to make a percentage of these units contribute to an annual net increase in housing units affordable to this population.</p> <p>Increase the use of shared equity home ownership models, such as the community land trust, to make home ownership and asset accumulation possible for some households at the top of this income range.</p> <p>Provide health care insurance for all children (“COVER ALL KIDS”):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support SCHIP (State Child Health Insurance Program) eligibility expansion in Delaware to the proposed 300% of Federal Poverty levels. • Intensify enrollment efforts, eliminate premiums and guarantee twelve month eligibility/enrollment. • Offer SCHIP buy-in options for children whose family incomes are above the eligibility threshold but do not have access to or can’t afford comprehensive private health insurance. <p>Fund and implement a health and wellness outreach program in minority communities to ensure that families have access to health care, fitness and nutrition programs.</p>
<p>Illinois</p>	<p>The State should become a 1634 State under the federal Medicaid statute which would allow people who are found eligible for SSI by the Social Security Administration to be automatically eligible for a Medicaid card.</p> <p>Protect, restore and enhance access to quality health care including mental health and social emotional well being.</p> <p>Increase the amount of rental subsidies available to those in extreme poverty, including seniors and people with disabilities through expansion of Illinois’ Rental Housing Support Program.</p> <p>Coordinate funding for supportive services, operating subsidies and capital for the development of permanent supportive housing so that all supportive housing that is developed has all the requisite funding. In addition, the State should require that rental subsidies for people who need supportive services have a source for services attached to the subsidy.</p>

	<p>Ensure the state meets or exceeds the goal of expending 10% of its affordable housing development resources on housing for the extremely low-income.</p>
Kentucky	<p>Consider maintaining funding for Kentucky Homeplace, a health care assistance program for the rural poor.</p> <p>Consider improving the dental reimbursement structure in Kentucky Children’s Health Insurance Program and Medicaid to encourage dental care provider participation, increasing training for pediatric dentistry, and increasing public education on the importance of oral health care.</p> <p>Consider increasing access to the Health Access Nurturing Development Services program by serving families with multiple children in addition to first-time, at-risk moms.</p> <p>Consider improvements to the current mental health system in order to better serve the needs of the poor and homeless population including increasing the array of services available.</p>
Louisiana	<p>As part of Louisiana’s proposed health care reform initiative (Louisiana Health First), include health coverage for high-risk women before their pregnancy.</p> <p>Expand the Nurse Family Partnership, a nationally recognized best practice program designed to serve first-time mothers who are below 200% of the poverty level, beginning in pregnancy and continuing until the baby reaches two years of age.</p> <p>Expand the Early Childhood Supports and Services program, a prevention and intervention program that serves children from birth to five years of age who have been identified as at risk for developing social, emotional, and/or developmental problems. Expansion into each region of the State will allow Medicaid reimbursement for covered services.</p>
Michigan	<p>Develop a list of housing that is available to and feasible for ex-offenders.</p> <p>Secure housing for the homeless.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote and support the Campaign to End Homelessness and the “Housing First” model. • Provide support services via dedicated case management staff. <p>Stop the foreclosure crisis.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deploy certified housing counselors, particularly in the most distressed

	<p>neighborhoods.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document this process and program outcomes, and use the data to advocate for and inform statewide programs. <p>Provide universal health care:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Given the very limited funding available for these services, focus existing resources (and advocate for additional funds) to ensure effective services are available to treat and prevent illness, including mental health counseling and treatment needs. • Advocate for and focus existing resources to expand intervention and long-term services for mental health crises and substance abuse to traditionally underserved populations, especially prisoners. <p>Connect parents to pre- and post-natal education and family strengthening services.</p> <p>Link every child to a primary care physician and dentist.</p> <p>Support and expand early education and health programs with proven outcomes, such as Head Start, the Great Start Readiness Program, MI Child, Healthy Kids, etc.</p> <p>Advocate for healthy lifestyle choices, such as nutritious diets and sufficient exercise.</p>
<p>Minnesota</p>	<p>Increase funding for emergency shelters.</p> <p>Increase the number of Housing Choice (“Section 8”) vouchers to a level that will lead to meaningful access by households in need.</p> <p>Provide tax incentives for private investment in affordable housing.</p> <p>Invest in the upkeep and rehabilitation of existing public housing by funding subsidies that accurately reflect ongoing maintenance and operating costs.</p> <p>Eliminate unnecessary zoning restrictions that inhibit the development of affordable housing.</p> <p>Require the development of comprehensive housing plans by all Minnesota municipalities over a certain size.</p> <p>Identify a dedicated funding source to ensure affordable rental housing, expansion of homeownership opportunities, foreclosure prevention, homeless assistance, downtown development and other activities.</p>

	<p>Develop a statewide partnership to access and implement use of the federal Neighborhood Stabilization Fund to protect or renovate recently foreclosed properties.</p> <p>Promote sustainable energy practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use environmentally sound (“green”) standards and conservation methods in all new construction, especially residential housing. • Retrofit existing construction and housing to maximize energy conservation. • Require utilities companies to provide energy efficiency programs and achieve minimum energy efficiency savings each year. <p>Direct the Department of Health to investigate best practices for reducing sexual and domestic violence to ensure that Minnesota takes a lead in implementing the most successful initiatives.</p> <p>Guarantee that all Minnesotans receive the health care they need to participate as fully as possible in our society.</p> <p>Foster initiatives that improve access to mental health and chemical dependency treatment.</p>
New Mexico	<p>Increase balance of Affordable Housing Trust Fund.</p> <p>Create new fund to help low income housing organizations get ready to apply to the Housing Trust Fund. These funds cover pre-developments costs and assist with the operating costs of housing units who serve low income families.</p> <p>Expand Rental Assistance to address general needs of low-income housing assistance.</p>
North Carolina	<p>Restore the cuts that have been made to Medicaid.</p> <p>Raise the enrollment cap for Health Choice to maximize the federal allotment, depending upon available resources.</p> <p>Explore federal incentives through the Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act (CHIPRA) to expand eligibility and ease administrative burdens for Health Choice, which may require raising the enrollment cap. The State should particularly target families of National Guard members.</p> <p>Explore the extent of medical debt in North Carolina, including debt caused by child illness and predatory lending practices conducted by credit card companies or other credit entities handling debt for hospitals or any other health providers in North Carolina, and consider policies to address the undesirable consequences for poverty</p>

	<p>reduction.</p> <p>Examine the existing healthcare system in North Carolina with the goal of continuing to provide the greatest number of people with the greatest amount of services.</p> <p>Establish three regional housing councils, one in the East, one in the Piedmont, and one in the West.</p> <p>Maintain the existing \$10 million in funding for the N.C. Housing Trust fund, and dependent on available resources, consider increasing funding for the N.C. Housing Trust Fund.</p> <p>Explore the possibility of extending new private home mortgage foreclosure protections to public (tax) foreclosures.</p> <p>Examine the feasibility of new policies to aid low-income utility consumers and to promote access to utility services (e.g. expanded shut-off protections and rate discounts for low-income customers).</p>
Ohio	<p>Lift the cap on the Housing Trust Fund, which is currently unable to meet demands.</p> <p>Implement the healthcare reform recommendations outlined in the State's Coverage Initiative so that every Ohioan has access to quality and affordable healthcare.</p> <p>Strengthen investments in mental health and addictive services.</p> <p>Establish presumptive eligibility, self-declaration, and administrative verification of income for Medicaid for children.</p> <p>Support behavioral health programs for young children.</p>
Rhode Island	<p>Pass the Tenant Protection Act, or legislation of a similar purpose. The proposed Tenant Protection Act would require mortgage holders to give tenants written notice at least three weeks before the apartment is to be sold at foreclosure sale. This notice would include referrals to services to help the renter find a new residence. Tenants would then have 60 days after sale to vacate the premises.</p>
Vermont	<p>State government will provide sufficient funding for the Emergency Shelter Grant Program, General Assistance/Emergency Assistance, and other safety net programs.</p> <p>State government will provide sufficient funding for supportive and transitional housing for low income families with special needs, including long-term commitments to fund</p>

	<p>the support services necessary for their success.</p> <p>The Council, the Governor, and the General Assembly will communicate with the Congressional delegation, the President, and other appropriate federal officials the necessity of ensuring that there is full funding for low income housing assistance programs and public housing.</p> <p>The General Assembly’s work on housing will continue to focus on increasing the supply of safe and affordable housing and improving the energy efficiency of low income homes and rental units.</p> <p>State government will restore full funding for the Housing and Conservation Board Trust Fund, a nationally recognized program that has made significant increases in the stock of affordable housing.</p> <p>State government will provide a fair and consistent housing code enforcement system to bring substandard housing up to code, enforce lead paint eradication, and ensure the existing housing supply does not become unsafe over time.</p> <p>The Office of Vermont Health Access and the Department of Health will prioritize children’s access to quality physical, dental, and mental health care with an emphasis on hard-to-access services.</p> <p>State government will determine why uninsured children remain uninsured and propose a plan to reach universal coverage of children and pregnant women.</p>
<p>Virginia</p>	<p>Develop a dedicated revenue stream for the Virginia Housing Trust Fund.</p> <p>Offer additional protections for homeowners. Potential policy changes could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requiring mediation as part of the foreclosure process • Imposing a moratorium on foreclosures • Requiring judicial process for all foreclosures • Restricting judicial sales of primary residences of low-income home owners to satisfy judgment liens <p>Increase Medicaid eligibility for low-income parents.</p> <p>Increase FAMIS, Virginia's health insurance program for children, eligibility to 300 percent of the federal poverty level.</p> <p>Eliminate Medicaid restrictions on legal immigrants who have already been in the United States for five years. (This change was a recommendation of the Governor’s</p>

	<p>Commission on Immigration.)</p> <p>Implement Children’s Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act (CHIPRA) option to provide coverage for legal immigrant children and pregnant women during the first five years they are in the United States. Implement this for both Medicaid and FAMIS eligible women and children.</p>
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Income and Assets Policy Recommendations

<p>Alabama</p>	<p>Require businesses that receive economic incentives pay a wage equal to the area median-income level.</p> <p>Encourage the promotion of the Earned Income Tax Credit for low-income workers.</p> <p>Raise the income-tax threshold to the poverty level.</p> <p>Eliminate sales tax on groceries/food.</p> <p>Exempt thrift stores on military bases from sales tax.</p> <p>Regulate the interest rate of payday- and title-loan companies.</p> <p>Enable and fund Individual Development Accounts to match savings for low-income families. The savings can be used to purchase a home, finance higher education, or start a business.</p>
<p>Arkansas</p>	<p>Fix the low-income tax threshold problem and provide comparable relief for single parents with two or more children.</p> <p>Create a refundable State Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) to economically support low and lower-middle income working families.</p> <p>Continue efforts to cut the state sales tax on groceries. Arkansas should gradually continue its efforts to mostly eliminate the remaining 1 and 7/8 cent state sales tax on groceries (the 1/8th cent sales conservation tax required under Amendment 75 cannot be eliminated).</p>
<p>Colorado</p>	<p>Reinstate the state Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) as a first priority tax credit to ensure that during times of budget surplus the state EITC is the first tax state credit provided.</p>

Connecticut	Increase usage of federal Earned Income Tax Credit with a target group of working poor families.
Delaware	<p>Enact a refundable Delaware Earned Income Tax Credit at 20% of the federal credit to supplement low-wage parents. Given the current economic climate, implement a phased-in increase over a four year period (2009-2012) at 5% each year unless economic circumstances allow for this phase-in to be accelerated.</p> <p>Expand and publicize the volunteer preparation of tax returns for low-income families to help low-income taxpayers save on preparation fees and avoid expensive Refund Anticipation Loans that are marketed through paid preparers.</p> <p>Make Delaware’s Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit refundable based on what the federal rate would be if it were refundable. (Delaware currently offers a non-refundable Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit.)</p> <p>Establish Delaware minimum wage standards that are above the federal minimum wage standard to assist families and individuals below Federal poverty levels in achieving self-sufficiency income levels. Provide automatic adjustments as the cost of living increases in the Delaware minimum wage standards.</p> <p>Increase state funding and involvement to advocate, provide incentives, publicize and expand financial services for unbanked and low-income families and residents.</p> <p>Develop of a Delaware “Office of Financial Empowerment” modeled after New York City.</p> <p>Establish kiosks in state service centers to distribute program information on existing programs currently available such as Delawareans Save, Technosave, Individual Development Accounts, Earned Income Tax Credit, etc.</p> <p>Set legislated caps on maximum fees for payday loans made by unregulated lenders, exempting any state or nationally chartered bank.</p> <p>Encourage and/or provide incentives for banks and other financial institutions to provide banking services for low-income or unbanked residents.</p> <p>Support entrepreneurial goals in low-income communities by supporting development of micro-enterprise.</p>
Illinois	Triple the state Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) amount.

	<p>Provide free tax preparation services for low-income families.</p> <p>Eliminate categories of low wage workers not covered by minimum wage, such as those receiving tips, race track handlers, and sub-age workers (below 18).</p> <p>Improve workplace compensation by increasing minimum/living wage and benefit standards.</p> <p>Authorize a program of general assistance for single adults that provides them with income support at the level of deep poverty.</p>
Kentucky	<p>Consider tax changes at the local and state level to improve the economic base.</p> <p>Consider the possibility of a state earned income tax credit (EITC) for low-income families.</p> <p>Consider efforts to facilitate affordable small dollar loan programs to replace high-cost financial products to help integrate underserved communities into the financial mainstream.</p> <p>Consider the integration of financial literacy education into school curriculums and the utilization of free resources for delivering financial education to adults.</p>
Louisiana	<p>Raise the state Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) from 3.5% of the federal (EITC) amount to 7% of the federal (EITC) amount.</p>
Michigan	<p>Encourage asset-building:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support and promote asset-building strategies, including: Individual Development Accounts (IDAs), Children’s Savings Accounts (CSAs) and portable retirement accounts. • Eliminate or significantly increase asset limits for public benefits. • Ensure the local availability of quality financial services, products and literacy training for under-banked and low income people. <p>Provide training and support services for entrepreneurs investing in small businesses or microenterprises.</p>
Minnesota	<p>Raise the state minimum wage.</p> <p>Expand and increase state income tax credits to reach more households and better supplement low wages.</p>

	<p>Make tax credits more equitably available to taxpayers at all income levels.</p> <p>Ban predatory practices, including payday loans and refund anticipation loans that are not subject to strict usury laws.</p> <p>Require that consumers be given adequate, easy-to-understand information before entering into certain financial transactions.</p> <p>Restrict use of personal consumer credit information in applications for housing or employment.</p> <p>Identify, develop and implement effective financial literacy training methods and programs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include participation from business and civic leaders, as well as community based nonprofits and financial institutions already providing consumer financial education to their clients. • Incorporate financial literacy education into the curricula of elementary and secondary schools. <p>Offer families obtaining public assistance no-fee, low-minimum-balance savings accounts with a direct deposit option.</p> <p>Expand funding and programs for individual development accounts (Individual Development Accounts) that provide financial literacy training and counseling. Encourage businesses to set up IDA accounts and financial literacy training for their employees, possibly with some employer matching funds or other incentives.</p> <p>Establish a child savings account, or “baby bond,” program.</p> <p>Provide an annual contribution from the state to the Individual Retirement Account or Individual Development Account of low-income renters to give them parity with homeowners.</p>
<p>New Mexico</p>	<p>Index the state minimum wage to changes in the consumer price index.</p> <p>Establish an advisory group to make recommendations on the sunseting or continuation of current exemptions to the minimum wage law.</p> <p>Develop and require a disclosure form for the use of Refund Anticipation Loans (RAL). Require RAL facilitators to be licensed by the Regulation and Licensing Department, and to be primarily engaged in tax preparation and to be authorized as an e-file provider with IRS.</p>

	<p>Expand the Individual Development Account (IDA) program and encourage individuals to deposit Earned Income Tax Credit Refunds into an IDA.</p>
<p>North Carolina</p>	<p>In years where there is fiscal availability, the General Assembly should expand the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC).</p> <p>The federal government, during the recent fiscal downturn, temporarily expanded certain tax benefits, including the federal EITC, the child tax credit, and the American opportunity tax credit. Congress, as a whole, and North Carolina's delegation of federal legislative representatives, specifically, should make these temporary enhancements permanent through legislative action.</p> <p>Explore adequate funding for Individual Development Accounts (IDAs) and continue to use Community Development Block Grants (CBDGs) and Temporary Aid for Needy Families (TANF) funds for IDAs.</p>
<p>Ohio</p>	<p>Explore the possibilities of how Community Development Bank and Community Development Credit Union models could be adopted and implemented in various communities and conduct research on successful models in order to guide interested parties on how to adopt and implement a CDB/CDCU model.</p> <p>Strengthen the savings ability of the working poor through collaboration with financial institutions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with city mayors and county commissioners on an effort to connect unbanked households to financial institutions. • Request that financial institutions open savings accounts regardless of CheckSystems violations. • Develop a pay check card product that would enable tax refunds and pay checks to be directly deposited. • Request that financial intuitions develop, market, or expand IDA programs for consumers. • Advocate for changes to federal IDA law to allow for limited withdrawals from IDA funds for emergencies, such as an eviction notices or car repairs. • Include financial literacy in all K-12 curricula in every school in Ohio. <p>Advocate for implementing a permanent increase in the federal monthly food assistance allotment</p> <p>Advocate for an increased federal Earned Income Tax Credit.</p> <p>Establish a state Earned Income Tax Credit.</p>

	<p>Increase support and awareness of free volunteer tax preparation services.</p> <p>Reform tax Refund Anticipation Loans (RAL) in Ohio:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Require all businesses engaging in tax preparation and selling tax refund loans to register with the state and require a database to keep track of loans made and terms of loans, including fees. • Mandate that only businesses where tax preparation is the primary business can sell RALs. • Limit the interest rate associated with RALs similar to recently passed “Payday Lending” legislation. • Connect tax preparation services to strategies that incentivize savings. <p>Establish a Social Entrepreneurship Initiative to serve as a clearinghouse for funding and central point of contact for technical support and training curriculum for the “hard-to-employ.” This initiative would:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide seed funds to support social entrepreneurship initiatives in the start-up phase of their development. • Develop new loan products, micro-lending and revolving loan efforts, tax credits, grant programs, and other incentives for socially-minded small businesses. • Offer training courses on starting and sustaining socially-minded small business venture and free comprehensive startup toolkits for new efforts. • Coordinate investment strategies at relevant state agencies around innovative and proven social entrepreneurship initiatives. • Provide funding for social impact studies on the benefit of social enterprise in Ohio. • Expand the state’s small business hotline to include information for socially-minded small business ventures. • Create an annual recognition for developing the most innovative, sustainable, and effective solution to addressing need. • Identify necessary and appropriate changes to the tax status of non-profit and for-profit entities pursuing socially minded ventures. • Highlight existing social entrepreneurship initiatives and disseminate best practice information. • Investigate the feasibility of a statewide collaborative of financial institutions willing to pool Community Reinvestment Act funds and resources to invest in socially minded small business ventures throughout Ohio • The Task Force recommends housing this effort in the Ohio Department of Development, Division of Small Business and Entrepreneurship.
<p>Rhode Island</p>	<p>Increase the refundable portion of the Rhode Island Earned Income Tax Credit from 3.75% to 5%.</p>

	Create public partnership Individual Development Accounts as an effective means to help families build asset wealth.
Vermont	
Virginia	<p>Make the Virginia Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) refundable to increase participation in the program and allow recipients to use the cash resources for necessities of life as a low-wage worker– clothing, housing, and car repairs/replacement.</p> <p>Conform Virginia’s exceptions to the definition of employee in the state’s Minimum Wage Act to the federal minimum wage exemptions.</p> <p>The Task Force recommends that the Secretary of Commerce and Trade be charged with developing a workplace financial education program in conjunction with voluntary organizations and other state agency partners.</p> <p>Improve Virginia’s Individual Development Account Program.</p> <p>Expand and enhance the Virginia CASH Campaign (Creating Assets, Savings and Hope). The Virginia CASH Campaign is the statewide effort to provide education and outreach for free income tax preparation services, with an emphasis on the EITC; provide financial education; and to link these programs with asset building opportunities, such as VIDA.</p> <p>Make the Dependent Care Tax Credit refundable.</p>

Work Supports and Safety Net Policy Recommendations

Alabama	Support a 211 comprehensive directory of services that would be available to all.
Arkansas	<p>Improve access to critical economic and work supports to help low-income working families meet basic needs and stay employed.</p> <p>Review and consider the recommendations of the Prison Reform Workgroup.</p> <p>Create a Consumer Advisory Council that includes clients receiving benefits from the Department of Human Services, the Department of Health, and the Department of Workforce Services. This council will be called upon to identify areas for improvement as well as to vet changes to policies and programs.</p>
Colorado	Expand outreach and access to federal food assistance benefits under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

<p>Connecticut</p>	<p>Increase access to food stamp and other similar federally funded programs for working poor families.</p> <p>Make case management services available to some young mothers on Temporary Family Assistance so that they and their children would have access to family support services, particularly during the twelve months after having a child.</p> <p>Examine how to soften the “cliffs” of welfare benefits.</p>
<p>Delaware</p>	<p>The State of Delaware will conduct an analysis of benefit programs and their interaction with federal benefit programs to identify the cliffs facing working Delaware families. Then the state will work to adjust programs to adjust cliffs and move to a “step-down” benefits program to eliminate economic disincentives for wage advancement.</p> <p>Improve and enhance delivery of the USDA Food Stamp Program. Specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase enrollment efforts so that all eligible participants are being served • Utilize additional federal options to assist people in qualifying for food stamps and • Encourage participation in program for working poor families
<p>Illinois</p>	<p>Simplify the application form and process for obtaining a medical card and/or LINK card.</p> <p>Implement an intensive flexible program for TANF recipients who are single women with children with multiple disadvantages to employment who are required to work. Additional funding may be necessary, unless current funding can be redirected to this area to provide intensive case management and to assist with keeping the family intact. Based on the redirection of resources, the cost could be reduced by that level of funding.</p> <p>Increase Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) grants by 15% each year until they reach 50% of the federal poverty line (FPL).</p> <p>Align eligibility requirements for social services, which would allow residents to sign up for all applicable services with one application.</p> <p>The State should support the SOAR Initiative in Illinois. SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access and Recovery (SOAR) is a strategy that helps states to increase access to SSI/SSDI for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.</p> <p>Network case managers in local areas so that they can refer, schedule appointments for clients and provide a collaborative case management tool to assist in addressing issues in a wholistic approach. Identify safety net/collaborative case management tools that are currently being used across the state, such as Service Point or Community Collaboration</p>

	<p>Inc., that identify in a virtual one stop shop all the agencies that are available as resources for clients.</p> <p>Identify rules, policies, practices and procedures that hinder the participation of eligible people in safety net programs and take effective action to remove these barriers.</p> <p>Undertake public education/awareness, outreach and enrollment campaigns.</p> <p>Standardize work support application process and make it available online in order to help working families that are struggling stay above the poverty threshold.</p> <p>Increase access to unionization through changes in labor law that would ensure that workers had the ability to organize without threat of retaliation from employers.</p> <p>Educate workers on their rights so that all workers will know what they are legally allowed to do and what employers are legally allowed to do (and not do).</p> <p>Increase enforcement of labor laws.</p> <p>Ensure that workers have protections against wage theft, including access to hearings and increased penalties for employers.</p> <p>Increase standards and regulations of staffing agencies, protecting domestic/temporary/migrant workers from abuses and exploitation.</p> <p>Adopt the Illinois Healthy Workplace Act that allows employees who traditionally do not have a right to paid sick leave (e.g. part-time employees) to accrue sick days.</p>
Kentucky	
Louisiana	<p>Reduce public benefits minimally or only gradually as poor citizens enter the workforce so that we do not penalize work with a dramatic decrease in public benefits.</p>
Michigan	<p>Improve federal support systems by focusing on client outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Streamline compliance, monitoring and eligibility requirements. • Link compliance activities to desired outcomes to ensure all required activities actually serve to progress recipients towards self-sufficiency. • Increase flexibility for use of TANF funds. • Coordinate eligibility rules and asset tests for SSI, food stamps, TANF, child care, Medicaid, etc. <p>Reform requirements and expand assistance provided by EITC, food stamps, TANF, and unemployment insurance to cover the basic needs of families in crisis.</p>

	<p>Don't financially penalize families for going to work or school. Provide transitional benefits for people leaving support programs, especially TANF.</p> <p>Deliver Great Customer Service:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make immediate customer satisfaction improvements in state agencies that deliver services directly to low income, disconnected and unemployed people in crisis. • Ensure agency leaders commit to the campaign with high visibility and urgency. • Require specific outcomes improvements and accountability measures. • Train all caseworkers and supervisors in customer service and sensitivity skills. The input of service recipients should directly inform the training process. • Deploy a network of customer advocates to help clients navigate through the services and requirements of each agency and program. • Regularly solicit feedback from clients and workers regarding their experiences and suggestions for improvements. <p>Expand the Low Income/Energy Efficiency Fund, with at least 50% of the funds spent on weatherization/energy efficiency improvements for low-income families.</p> <p>Revise PA 335 of 2004 to establish a minimum 10% of the Federal LIHEAP funds that must be spent on weatherization for low/ moderate income homeowners each year.</p>
<p>Minnesota</p>	<p>Revise eligibility criteria and seek federal waivers to eliminate or reduce financial “cliffs.” Cliffs occur when additional earnings by a family on public assistance actually result in the family incurring a net financial loss.</p> <p>Allow individuals receiving disability benefits to work without penalty.</p> <p>Develop a single, integrated and automated process for determining eligibility and applying for services across publicly funded, low-income support programs.</p> <p>Revise program criteria so that initial eligibility for needed services, across programs, is more uniform and allow for gradual growth in income and assets.</p> <p>Establish a county- or regionally-based network of telecounselors to provide social service and job search assistance in rural areas where long distances exist between program participants and workers.</p> <p>Integrate services available to those eligible for either the Minnesota Family Investment Program or the Minnesota Unemployment Insurance program to make them more responsive to the needs of all unemployed, low-wage workers.</p>

	Promote efforts to increase Food Support participation.
New Mexico	Increase participation in the federal supplemental nutrition assistance program to 80 percent of all eligible individuals participating.
North Carolina	Explore supporting efforts to maximize participation in federal programs, including Food and Nutrition Services, Supplemental Nutrition for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), weatherization programs, TANF, Medicaid, etc. through community outreach and utilization of efforts such as the NC Benefits Bank. Also enact or adopt the necessary policies or provisions to ensure that the public, policy makers, advocates and agency leaders understand and make explicit the interconnection of these funding programs in terms of the impact that maximizing participation in one program can have on automatically triggering eligible funds to the state for other programs.
Ohio	<p>Allow those eligible to utilize the full sixty months of Ohio Works First benefits by expanding uninterrupted services from three years to five years in accordance with federal Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF) regulations.</p> <p>Establish an interagency strategy for drawing down Food Stamp Employment and Training funds.</p> <p>Streamline and simplify the process for accessing work supports and other benefits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pursue a “technology-based” approach utilizing web/electronic submission and telephone interview options for work supports and benefits to homebound seniors, rural, and low-income Ohioans with transportation and child care constraints. • Create a single, simplified, and efficient process for low-income disabled Ohioans to access Medicaid and Social Security (SSI/SSDI) benefits. Eliminate duplicative steps, forms, and the number of entities currently involved in the process. <p>Coordinate outreach across relevant state agencies and establish data sharing policies to increase access to work supports and public benefits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enable the appropriate and legal exchange of client-specific and/or aggregate electronic data between state agencies to allow for the collaborative sharing of mutual client data for a more efficient and effective delivery of services to increase access to work supports and public benefits. • Establish a more integrated intake procedure such as a universal application and a bridging application connecting various state databases. <p>Establish a statewide 2-1-1 information and referral system.</p>

	<p>Utilize the Ohio Family Resource Simulator to better understand the way in which Ohio's eligibility policies affect working families as they experience incremental increased in earned income. Pursue strategies to minimize the "cliff effect," putting in its place a more gradual step down approach to work supports and benefits. Establish a refundable Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit in Ohio.</p> <p>Protect families in crisis and ensure they have access to basic utilities including gas, electric, water, and telephone service.</p>
<p>Rhode Island</p>	<p>Increase awareness of, and participation in, the food stamp program. Simplify the food stamp application and recertification process.</p> <p>Place a moratorium on expiring individuals to state assistance until unemployment levels have reached such a level that individuals have a reasonable chance to obtain employment.</p> <p>The General Assembly should provide more active oversight of the Department of Human Services to ensure that funds provided to assist low-income families is reaching these families and is being spent in the most efficient way possible.</p>
<p>Vermont</p>	<p>The Commissioner of the Department for Children and Families (DCF) will contract for an analysis of Vermont's benefit programs and their interaction with federal benefit programs to identify the cliffs facing working Vermont parents. Informed by the results of that analysis, the Commissioner of the DCF will develop a proposal to adjust Vermont's benefit programs to end benefit cliffs and move to benefit "step-downs" so as to eliminate economic disincentives for wage advancement.</p> <p>The Commissioner of the DCF will develop a proposal for presentation to the next federal administration to have Vermont serve as a demonstration project for adjustment of federal benefit programs to end benefit cliffs and move to benefit step-downs. The goal of the demonstration project will be to determine if, over time, step-downs are an effective alternative to cliffs to help move working parents out of poverty and keep them out of poverty.</p> <p>The Commissioner of DCF will collaborate with the Commissioner of the Department of Taxes to determine whether changes in tax incentives for low income families could be complementary with benefit programs.</p> <p>The Commissioner of the Department for Children and Families will work with the General Assembly to maximize state options and waivers available in the federal nutrition programs, such as Food Stamps, the child and adult care meals programs, and others to increase the number of families who are eligible to participate in the programs.</p>

	The Department will also work with the General Assembly to ensure that eligible families are aware of and enrolled in these nutrition programs.
Virginia	<p>Do not increase the minimum earnings requirement for unemployment insurance</p> <p>Provide unemployment insurance coverage to part-time workers.</p> <p>Provide unemployment insurance coverage to workers engaged in certain training and education activities. Unemployment compensation would be available only to people who could demonstrate satisfactory progress in the education/training program.</p> <p>Modify assets tests in basic public assistance programs such that a reasonable accumulation of assets is allowable for households receiving assistance.</p> <p>Increase TANF grant levels.</p> <p>Increase Public Awareness Of Assistance Program Availability By Promoting Virginia's 211 Information And Referral System: In times of economic crisis, many households are seeking public assistance for the first time. Their lack of knowledge of the public assistance systems makes it difficult to access services and adds to the stress of their difficult circumstances. Virginia can import program models from other states that require collaboration among public assistance agencies and expand the 211 system's capacity so it can accept SNAP applications and requests for other types of assistance.</p>

Other Policy Recommendations

Alabama	<p>Coordinate a study of needs assessments already compiled by various poverty-focused agencies and develop an overall assessment report for the legislature.</p> <p>Transportation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a dedicated funding stream for public transportation.
Arkansas	<p>Food and Nutrition:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate markets for locally produced goods and services. The rise in consumer interest in local foods has been accompanied by increased participation of state departments of agriculture in promoting locally grown foods. • Expand outreach and access to federal food assistance benefits under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. <p>Community/Civic Engagement:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop policies that foster interest and interaction among interest groups such as civic groups, PTAs, economic development committees, etc. (The “social capital” represented by school boards, administrators, PTAs, athletic/band/arts groups, and other civic groups could become a powerful constituency for change). <p>Develop a common client database. A common client database is a system improvement to the efficient and effective provision of both governmental and non-governmental organizational services. It eliminates repeated efforts by clients to establish eligibility and reduces duplications of services by the agencies.</p> <p>Form a permanent advisory council for poverty reduction and economic opportunity. The recommendations made by this Taskforce need to be part of an on-going effort to monitor accomplishments, make adjustments to plans when needed, assess new situations that need response, and evaluate research suggesting new solutions to existing problems.</p> <p>Alter tax incentive programs to better meet the needs of low-income communities. The state’s tax incentive programs disproportionately benefit the highest-income counties. The lowest-income counties, which need the jobs the most, benefit the least.</p> <p>Enact L3C legislation in Arkansas. L3C legislation would provide an incentive for foundations to invest in social enterprises, which may be good options for business development in low-income parts of the state.</p> <p>Invest more in programs for developing small businesses. Arkansas should expand efforts to provide assistance to rural and minority-owned businesses that would provide both working capital loans of up to \$50,000 and technical assistance to rural and minority small business entrepreneurs.</p> <p>Close corporate income tax loopholes by adopting a combined reporting law for state corporate income taxes.</p> <p>Reduce or eliminate the 30 percent exemption currently allowed for capital gains under Arkansas income taxes. This exemption heavily and disproportionately favors upper income taxpayers.</p> <p>Adopt the “Amazon Law” for collecting state taxes owed on internet purchases. Recently adopted in New York and Rhode Island, the law requires many internet retailers operating “affiliate programs” in the state to charge sales tax on the retailers’ sales to state residents</p>
Colorado	Make fee waivers available to low-income families seeking to secure necessary

	<p>documentation such as birth certificates and state identification.</p> <p>Authorize the Department of Human Services to use a portion of existing appropriations to conduct an independent evaluation of the Statewide Strategic Use Fund (SSUF) which is used to support state social services programs.</p> <p>Expands the list of agencies and entities with which county departments of social services may enter into formal collaborative agreements to promoted interagency collaboration for the provision of services.</p> <p>Poverty Measure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specify through legislation that the duties of the Economic Opportunity Poverty Reduction Task Force include developing a model for measuring state poverty and assessing progress toward reducing poverty and increasing economic opportunity.
Connecticut	<p>Poverty Measure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct a review of alternative measures of poverty using an Economic Modeling consultant and monitor how the federal government and other states address this issue.
Delaware	<p>Establish the Delaware Child Poverty and Economic Opportunity Consortium (DCPEOC) as successor to the current Delaware Child Poverty Task Force.</p> <p>Poverty Measure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a new poverty definition for Delaware that considers more than just pre-tax income, including the post-mid 20th century changes that have occurred impacting family resources such as out-of-pocket medical expenses. <p>Food and Nutrition:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a school breakfast mandate so that more low-income children are served. Initiate a USDA Senior Farmer’s Market program. Develop a USDA WIC Farmer’s Market Nutrition program. Support Delaware’s Food Banks to administer the USDA Temporary Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) as a cost effective and efficient delivery mechanism for getting food to people who need it. Expand availability of and participation in the summer food program. Support expansion of the Food Stamp Nutrition Education Program. <p>Child Welfare:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the Child Protection Accountability Commission’s proposed legislation

	<p>extending the jurisdiction of Family Court over foster youth until age 21.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the recommendations made by the Delaware Children’s Campaign in its 12/2008 white paper entitled “Our Children: Aging-out of Foster Care in Delaware.” • Support children aging out of the foster care system or other state institutions with housing assistance to prevent homelessness. <p>Transportation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State government will continue its efforts to increase the availability of public transportation, especially in our rural areas. • State government will work with localities to review existing public transportation systems and explore potential changes to public services in order to increase the access of low income parents to employment opportunities, child care, and other resources.
<p>Illinois</p>	<p>Food and Nutrition:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lengthen the redetermination period for SNAP beneficiaries and shorten the SNAP application. • Increasing participation in nutrition programs such as School Breakfast and the Summer Food Service Program – both of which are largely funded by federal dollars – could help bring resources into communities struggling with extreme poverty that would take pressure off of family budgets. • Increase availability of mobile food programs (e.g. mobile pantries) in high need areas in the state – this could be particularly useful in the far southern regions of Illinois that experience high rates of extreme poverty as community agencies with food programs may not be located near them or in their community. <p>Child Welfare:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build on and expand the work done by the Youth to Adult Partnership to allow emancipated and aged out youth served by Department of Children and Family Services to continue coverage of services as requested and needed. Recently enacted legislation provides this opportunity for emancipated youth but awareness and implementation procedures are under development and would benefit from increased support as a poverty reduction effort. One recommendation is to expand the current legislation beyond the age of 21. <p>Explore immigrant exploitation/discrimination, and put structures in place to prevent such exploitation and blatant discrimination.</p> <p>Support efforts for the creation of Community Resource Centers strategically placed to overcome transportation barriers. This work would not be provided by the State but State agencies would be required to offer needed services at least one day a week in that</p>

	<p>community. Creating both physical and virtual resource centers in key locations across the state which hold clients accountable to follow through with a plan that they create would directly affect poverty. Key resources would be identified that are pertinent in given service areas and encouraged to participate.</p>
<p>Louisiana</p>	
<p>Kentucky</p>	<p>Consider improving access to high speed telecommunication in rural areas to attract more sophisticated industries.</p> <p>Consider programs to encourage local endowment building to provide incentives for people to leave a legacy to their home communities.</p> <p>Consider efforts to reduce barriers to providing services and treatment to homeless veterans.</p> <p>Transportation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider efforts to continue improving access to public transportation for low-income populations and include transportation delivery plans in poverty programs.
<p>Michigan</p>	<p>Child Welfare:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase federal supports for child protective services and foster care programs, ensuring services are provided to help clients transitioning out of these systems. <p>Food and Nutrition:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase fresh food supplies among food stamp retailers and ensure bridge card use at farmers' markets. • Support and develop local groceries in neighborhoods lacking fresh food. • Expand the Commodity Supplemental Food Program and increase the administrative funds for operating the program. <p>Mobilize State Agencies and Statewide Assets around a Shared Anti-Poverty Agenda.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convene state agency directors to develop and commit to shared goals. • Create interagency work groups to ensure coordination and collaboration. • Develop and disseminate consistent messaging and expectations to staff regarding coordinated goals. • Ensure connections with a broad network of anti-poverty actors, including foundations and community-based organizations, etc. <p>Reform the Impacts of the Justice System.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revise sentencing guidelines and lower the incarceration rate. • Support and expand prisoner rehabilitative programs and the Michigan Prisoner Re-entry Initiative (MPRI).

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Design and implement a local prisoner re-entry initiative. Incorporate the successful aspects of the MPRI to assist individuals in obtaining necessary services and jobs. ● Provide rehabilitative services to people during incarceration, including education, counseling, and career readiness. ● Expand drug and mental health courts. ● Secure housing for those returning to the community after incarceration. <p>Conduct neighborhood programs and events to educate, empower and embolden individuals to meet their capacity and resolve local issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Explore locally-driven solutions, such as community-focused policing and community crime prevention. ● Develop diverse networks of reliable, positive mentors to connect young people with supportive role models. ● Ensure that support services and programs are widely available and responsive to language or cultural needs. Provide leaders and community members with access to appropriate training and advice on cultural diversity.
<p>Minnesota</p>	<p>Transportation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ensure state-supported access to transportation for low-income, senior and disabled residents. ● Create a state-level commission that has power and resources to mandate better planning, integration and coordination of the transportation needs of low-income, disabled and senior citizens. ● Align Minnesota’s economic development strategies, land use policies, and transportation investment planning. ● Explore innovations in cooperative ownership of automobiles (occasional access to a vehicle without having to pay full ownership), such as ZipCar and HourCar. ● Engage employers and the business community to support better public transportation, locate workplaces in proximity to housing and transit and other important community resources, provide special transportation to worksites where needed, support telecommuting or other programs to enable employees to work at home. ● Keep transit fares at an affordable level, with additional subsidies if needed. ● Eliminate service gaps and service overlaps, inefficient use of resources, and inferior or inconsistent quality of service. ● Expand nonprofit programs that sell cars to low-income households for minimal cost. Many of these programs also provide low-cost car repairs. ● Expand and coordinate human services transportation, fleets and dispatching, from both private and public agencies, to provide alternatives for rural residents. ● Establish regular-route transit service where sufficient population density makes

	<p>it feasible.</p> <p>Child Welfare:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review how family members are compensated with public funds for foster parenting, guardianship, and other care giving roles, and compensate care giving when necessary and appropriate. <p>Poverty Measure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By 2010, require that a poverty impact statement using a National Academy of Sciences recommended poverty measure be submitted for all proposed legislation • Adopt a more meaningful poverty measure. Minnesotans should support federal initiatives promoting the federal revision of the current poverty measure, such as recent legislation introduced by Jim McDermott (D-Wash.) and Jerry Weller (R-Ill.), the City of New York, and the U.S. Conference of Mayors. Minnesotans should not wait for federal action but should begin using the methodology developed by the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) to monitor state poverty levels. <p>Make services such as respite care and adult day care available for families and caregivers.</p> <p>Make small grants available to local agencies to develop community engagement programs and provide for initial training.</p> <p>Encourage the development and expansion of youth programs that identify and promote developmental assets.</p> <p>Urge the faith community to work with government and others to create and implement strategies that foster positive behaviors among youth.</p>
<p>New Mexico</p>	<p>Increase outreach to underserved, rural, Tribal, and minority communities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Require organizations signing a state contract to provide services to low-income families and to propose, as part of the contract, a plan for how the organization will do outreach. This would include but not be limited to the program/populations for which outreach will be done, how/when outreach will be done, what amount of the contract will be dedicated to outreach and what future outreach activities the organization envisions. On an annual basis, the organization would also be required to report on the process and outcomes of their outreach plan and provide quantitative measures for the population served. • State agencies administering poverty-reduction or income support programs should train additional private/community partners to educate their clientele

	<p>about available programs, screen individuals to determine potential eligibility and assist in the application process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Human Services Department should establish a Project Outreach Fund that would augment funds currently utilized or contracted for community outreach efforts. This fund would provide competitive grant funding for non-profit, Tribal, and community organizations to implement community-based outreach plans for state and local poverty reduction and related programs. Outreach plans would be designed to target low- income individuals and/or families for state scholarship programs, micro- lending programs, state tax credit or other programs. <p>Food and Nutrition:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enable food stamp recipients to purchase fresh New Mexico- grown products using their Electronic Benefit Transfer Program cards. • Provide seed money to promote community gardens. • Develop expanded Human Services Department food warehouse. • Expand groceries in low income communities using existing micro-credit, Community Development Loan funds, and other economic development loan funds. • Encourage more schools to partner with local farmers to provide food for the schools to help New Mexico’s economy and provide nutritious food items to local school districts.
<p>North Carolina</p>	<p>There is a need for systematic information about the efforts of the State, present and past, against poverty. The Program Evaluation Division of the General Assembly should be directed to do all of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an inventory of State programs that are aimed at reducing or alleviating the condition of poverty, • an evaluation of the outcomes and effectiveness of those programs, • and a history of State efforts to reduce poverty. <p>Transportation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The State explores improving transportation services in rural areas. <p>Food and Nutrition:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyze the impact of the lack of fresh food retail in underserved communities, with a focus on developing policies and recommendations that do the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Target State economic development programs and public incentives to the supermarket industry to maximize their impact on supermarket site location decisions. ○ Develop a business financing program to support local supermarket development, renovation, and expansion projects.

- Prioritize assembling land at the local level for supermarket and grocery store development.
- Reduce unnecessary regulatory barriers to supermarket and grocery store investment and streamline the development process.
- Increase/prioritize transportation services to supermarkets.
- Develop up-to-date and data-driven market information on unmet market demand for food in underserved areas.
- Promote green supermarket development and renovation through incentives for energy efficient equipment and systems and environmentally sustainable building materials.

The attempt to address the problems of poverty needs to be comprehensive and ongoing, and should include a target and timeline for reduction of poverty. The Commission recommends the following:

- That the House and Senate establish standing committees on poverty reduction and economic recovery.
- That the General Assembly establishes a permanent statutory commission on poverty reduction and economic recovery.
- That the permanent commission be given, among other things, the task of setting a reasonable target and timeline for poverty reduction, including alternative measures for poverty.
- That the permanent commission be given, among other things, the task of establishing regional commissions on poverty reduction and economic recovery in the high poverty regions of the State.

Under current law, the N.C. Department of Revenue is required to prepare and publish certain reports. Three states (Maine, Minnesota, and Texas) have enacted laws that examine (1) how the tax structure affects taxpayers and (2) how proposed tax changes would affect taxpayers, usually broken down by deciles or quintiles. The Commission recommends that the General Assembly add two reporting requirements for the Department of Revenue:

1. An incidence report. It would be due March 1 of each odd-numbered year. It would cover income tax, sales tax, excise tax, and property tax.
2. An impact analysis report for certain bills proposing changes to the State taxes if the fiscal impact of the proposed change would be greater than \$20 million and if a request for the report comes from a chair of a finance committee.

Continue to expand broadband internet access across the State as broadband access promotes entrepreneurship and business development, especially in traditionally underserved rural areas.

Programs to alleviate poverty should be pilot tested in Halifax and Robeson counties,

	<p>two of the State's poorest counties, to determine their efficacy and to find best practices that can then be applied to the rest of the State.</p> <p>The current municipal annexation practices are too often characterized by "underbounding," in which municipalities annex but leave gaps and donut holes for low-wealth areas, contributing to deterioration. The laws on annexation should be amended to do the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reduce the signature requirement for voluntary annexation for communities in which 50% or more of the residents live below the poverty threshold. ● Permit the involuntary annexation of "donut holes" without regard to the statutory use and density requirements. ● Give priority consideration to publicly funded Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) projects located in areas annexed by municipalities to provide water and sewer services to low-income residents.
<p>Ohio</p>	<p>Transportation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Establish a Health and Human Service Transportation Plan to ensure that health and human services options are coordinated and addressed. ● Consider establishing an Executive Office for Mobility Management (similar to Executive Medicaid Management Administration), for the coordination of transportation across systems, which would report to the Governor. ● Invest in Intelligent Transportation Systems to create a single point of access to transportation services. ● Creating reimbursement systems, including Medicaid, that encourage group trips and ride sharing (instead of one-at-a-time, taxi style service) whenever feasible. The goal would be a measurable increase in the number of passenger trips per vehicle mile, as well as increased access to services for consumers regardless of payer. <p>Community/Civic Engagement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Utilize federal Corporation for National and Community Services programs (e.g., VISTA, AmeriCorps, and Senior Corps) to increase the number of volunteers supporting human services transportation. ● Replicating Ohio's New Freedom initiative programs that have proven successful in developing a base of community volunteers (e.g., church groups) who could assist with transportation when needed. ● Expand the Circles™ Campaign in Ohio, a new initiative already working in forty communities in eighteen states that will engage communities to join with 1,000 low-income families to find paths out of poverty and address the systems and policies that keep poverty in place. ● Expand youth mentoring in Ohio.

	<p>Food and Nutrition:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lobby Congress and work with USDA to extend the Supper Pilot of the Child and Adult Care Food Program nationally and to increase reimbursement rates for all USDA Programs. • Provide incentives to any school districts offering summer programs to provide access to a USDA Child Nutrition Program. Current legislation directs schools in which 20% of the students are low-income to participate in USDA Child Nutrition Programs. • Review current policy at the Ohio Department of Education around child-care providers' participation in the USDA Child Nutrition Programs. • Advocate for changes in guidelines concerning where and at what time a child can eat food during the summer feeding program.
<p>Rhode Island</p>	
<p>Vermont</p>	<p>Energy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State government will prioritize energy affordability issues and continue to strive to find long-term affordable energy strategies. • The Council, the Governor, and the General Assembly will communicate with the Congressional delegation, the President, and other appropriate federal officials the necessity of ensuring that there is sufficient funding for energy affordability programs, especially the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). • The General Assembly will examine the state's eligibility standards for LIHEAP due to the growing number of families who are unable to afford heat. <p>Food and Nutrition:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Commissioner of the Department of Education will continue its efforts to ensure that every school has a free and reduced-price breakfast and lunch program available to low income children. • State government will assist efforts by schools and communities to embrace the challenge of continuing meals programs through summers and school vacations. <p>Transportation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State government will continue its efforts to increase the availability of public transportation, especially in rural areas. • State government will work with localities to review existing public transportation systems and explore potential changes to public services in order to increase the access of low income parents to employment opportunities, child care, and other resources. • State government will expand (and renew funding for) existing individual development account programs to allow for savings related to car purchases, as well as evaluate current programs that provide transportation-related assistance to low income Vermonters.

	<p>Poverty Measure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council will seek the input of experts for guidance in developing a definition of family poverty that reflects the complexities of the measurement as well as a more accurate description of family well-being. <p>State government will improve and expand existing economic development programs specifically designed to meet the unique needs of rural Vermont.</p>
<p>Virginia</p>	<p>Enhance prisoner re-entry programs. The volume of prisoner re-entries require implementing programs that conform to evidence based best practices to increase the potential for successful reintegration into the community and mitigating the social and economic costs of recidivism. Successful models are characterized by inter-agency planning and oversight bodies that are able to connect facility-based programming to post-incarceration, community-based programming. Program designs include education, workforce readiness, housing, substance abuse treatment, and mental and physical health components.</p> <p>Food and Nutrition:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand access to nutrition programs. Changing the eligibility requirements to allow more families to enroll does not increase state administrative costs because the same families have already requested assistance but were denied. The additional cost of benefits is assumed by the federal government <p>Continue to improve personal loan practices by reinstating usury interest rate caps and fees on any loan or credit product, including small loans to 36 Percent APR. Also identify and promote the development of lower- cost alternatives for small-scale cash loans. Low-interest pay advances from employer-based credit unions and/ or micro-loans through community development financial institutions offer beneficial alternatives to consumers.</p> <p>Evaluate the availability and affordability of quality insurance products to buffer low income households from financial emergencies. Virginia can examine best practices for publicly accessible low-cost, but good quality, insurance products for a variety of circumstances including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seemingly small events that get low-income families derailed such as car repair or home repair Major life events like illness, injury, death of a loved one, theft, fire, flood; and Catastrophic events such as tornadoes, hurricanes, wildfires, etc. from which even people of means struggle to recover