



POVERTY and OPPORTUNITY: STATE GOVERNMENT TASK FORCES

Around the nation, state governments have established task forces or commissions to develop new strategies and recommendations for tackling poverty and providing opportunity. 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.

Since 2003, 19 states, the District of Columbia, and the U.S Virgin Islands have initiated comprehensive reviews and recommendations to reduce poverty. More than half – eleven – of these states have concrete targets for reducing poverty (e.g. cut poverty in half in a decade). Some of the task forces were created with a short term purpose such as developing a plan to meet a target and others were established in a long term or permanent capacity to track its state’s progress. One state, Alabama, [issued a report at the conclusion of a short-term task force](#) and passed a [bill](#) making it a permanent commission during the 2009 legislative session. (Also, some other short term state task forces issued final recommendations that included making task forces permanent.)

Additionally, a number of states are taking steps that address poverty in different contexts. For example, the [Massachusetts Asset Development Commission](#) issued a report motivated by the “aspiration [of] ending intergenerational poverty and facilitating movement up the economic ladder” by eliminating barriers to asset building such as saving, purchasing homes, and acquiring higher education. [Oregon,](#)

[has instituted performance measures](#) for a wide array of issues, including one that sets a timeline and a goal for poverty reduction. In addition, the recent resurgence of attention to poverty and opportunity has brought about [city-level initiatives](#) similar to the state government task forces and poverty reduction targets.

Advocacy groups and state legislatures are continuing to work to get poverty task forces established in their states. In 2010 legislation was introduced in Georgia [to build](#) on the local level task forces and lessons learned from neighboring states to create a Georgia Economic Security Task Force. [California also](#) had a bill in the State Assembly to create a task force and state-wide poverty reduction target in 2010. In Massachusetts at the beginning of the 2011 session, [HB88](#) was introduced to create a commission for creating and expanding access to opportunity in low-opportunity communities with a goal of a 50 percent reduction in poverty in the state by June 30, 2021.

On the chart below, please click on a state name to link to the task force website (if available). Additionally, hyperlinks are provided for available authorizing legislation/executive orders and key task force reports. The chart is continuously being updated and CLASP welcomes your news. Please email jodie@clasp.org.

The chart is available at:

<http://www.clasp.org/admin/site/publications/files/StatewithPovertyCommissions-1.pdf>

STATE	AUTHORITY	DATES	REPORTS	POVERTY TARGET		
				Group	Goal	Years
AL	Legislated	2007 –	Final Report 2008			
AR	Legislated	2009 – 2010	Final Report 2010	Overall	targets to be set	5 – 10 – 20 yrs.
CO	Legislated	2009 – 2014	Annual Report to Legislative Counsel 2009 Community Report 2009	Overall	cut 50%	2009 – 2019
CT	Legislated	2004 – 2014	Annual Progress Report 2010 <i>Annual reports required</i> Expert Panel 2007 Initial Plan 2005	Children	cut 50%	2004 – 2014
DC	Legislated	2006 – 2008				
DE	Executive Order	2007 – 2009	Final Report 2009	Children	cut 50%	2007 – 2017
IL	Legislated	2008 –	Strategy Blueprint 2010 <i>Annual reports required</i>	Extreme	cut 50%	2008 – 2015
IN	Legislated	2009 – 2012	Interim Report 2010 Final Report Due: Dec. 2011	Children	cut 50%	2020
KY	Legislated	2009 –	Final Report 2009 Recommendations for Final Report of Poverty Task Force			
LA	Legislated	2008 –	Final Implementation Plan	Children	cut 50%	2008 – 2018
ME	Legislated	2007 –	<i>Annual reports required</i>	Overall	targets to be set	5 – 10 – 20 yrs.
MI	Legislated	2003 –	Final Report 2009			
MN	Legislated	2006 – 2008	Final Report 2009 Interim Report 2008	Overall	cut 100%	2020
MT	Executive Order	2007 – 2009	Plan Due: July 2008 <i>Not available</i>			
NC	Legislated	2008 – 2010	Final Report 2010			
NM	Executive Order	2008 –	Final Report 2008			
OH	Executive Order	2008 – 2009	Long-term Recommendations 2009 Short-term Recommendations 2008			
RI	Legislated	2007 – 2008	Findings and Recommendations June 2009			
VA	Executive Action	2009 – 2010	Recommendations 2009			
VT	Legislated	2007 – 2018	Final Report 2009	Children	cut 50%	2018
VI	Executive Order	2008 –		Overall	cut 50%	2020
TOTAL – 21 states	Legislated (15) Executive Order (6)			11 Commission States have targets; a 12 th state, Oregon, employs benchmarks for a range of issues, including poverty		