

CLASP

CENTER FOR LAW AND SOCIAL POLICY

*Policy Solutions That Work
for Low-Income People*

2007 ANNUAL REPORT





CLASP is a national treasure. From welfare reform to child support enforcement, when I want up-to-the-minute, accurate and fair information on what the law actually allows or what is happening in the field, CLASP is the first place I turn. They are an irreplaceable and irreplaceable source of ideas about ways in which we can build a more humane society.

—David Ellwood, Dean
John F. Kennedy School of Government
Harvard University

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From the Director

Even in a year when there was little possibility of far-reaching federal policy changes, CLASP had much to be proud of. In 2007, we were responsible for significant changes in the Head Start Program and Higher Education Pell Grants. We continued to be the “go to” place for information and help on many key federal policy issues. And we had a variety of accomplishments in our extensive state and local policy work. Highlights of these achievements can be found in the pages that follow. But 2007 was also a year during which we began to take a serious look inward.

CLASP is a highly-respected organization with an impressive record of accomplishment over its four-decade history, but the environment in which we work has changed in recent years—the exponential increase in the volume of information bombarding us, for example; and shifts in funding. These changes had started to challenge some of our long-standing assumptions and strategies. We decided it was time to undertake a comprehensive capacity-building process to ensure that CLASP remains a strong, relevant, and effective advocate for policies that improve the lives of low-income people.

Our first step was to engage an outside consultant to conduct an objective, external organizational review and provide an evaluation report. The review found that CLASP is considered a very effective national and state advocacy and policy organization, with a strong reputation for accuracy in analysis and important connections with state and local governments and advocacy organizations. We are also respected for our insider-player role on Capitol Hill and at the state level, and the technical assistance we provide is highly valued.

The evaluation concluded, however, that we could be even more effective if we made certain improvements. Among the most critical were clarifying CLASP's identity, raising the organization's profile, and updating our communications strategies to better meet our policy goals. The evaluators did not indicate any need to change the issues we work on or to eliminate any areas of work, but they did set

out several key challenges. Chief among these challenges was the need to strengthen the CLASP brand and build a communications capacity that matches our policy advocacy capacity, but to do so without compromising our signature commitment to excellence.

Since receiving the evaluation report, CLASP's board of directors and staff have been working to implement the consultants' recommendations. We began by examining how we saw CLASP's identity. This proved to be an enlightening exercise. For much of CLASP's history, the organization functioned largely as a home for semi-autonomous policy experts and advocates. Although we have moved away from this model in recent years, we discovered board and staff members still held many different conceptions of CLASP's purpose and role. Working with a professional facilitator, we were able to develop a single, easily articulated understanding of who we are and what we do. We are now in the process of translating this new clarity into a recognizable brand image, through the development of a new visual identity system, common messages, and outreach strategies.

The effort to strengthen our broader communications capacity is also underway. We are hiring a senior-level Director of Communications and hope to bring on additional communications staff as we move forward. We are redesigning our website to make it a more useful resource for our target audiences and a more effective vehicle for stimulating policy debate.

We will also be creating new vehicles for delivering information and promoting our policy positions, and more attention will be focused on reaching out to the media.

In addition, we are taking steps to address operational and organizational issues, some of which were identified by the evaluation consultants, others of which emerged through our subsequent conversations among board and staff. These steps include making better use of the talent on our board and improving our internal planning processes.

As one result, we have embarked on a major, organization-wide project: creating a clear, unified federal policy agenda that we will pursue with the next Administration and Congress. This agenda spans CLASP's issue areas and offers recommendations to all components of the next Administration and

Congress, including the President, the White House staff, departments and agencies. The recommendations target appropriations, the budget process, program reauthorizations, and other legislation and initiatives.

We hope to complete the capacity building process by the end of 2008 and unveil the new CLASP in early 2009. That will also be the 40th Anniversary Year for CLASP, and we plan to take advantage of that milestone to highlight our new future and directions.



Alan W. Houseman
Executive Director

As a funder, we like to see results from our investments—in the form of impact, influence, and leverage. Few grantees consistently produce results comparable to those of CLASP. Policymakers in Washington and in state capitals around the country listen to and respect CLASP's expertise, solid judgment, and careful conclusions. Consequently, CLASP's analyses and reports influence their decisions, resulting in better public policy in every domain CLASP deals with.

— Douglas W. Nelson, President
Annie E. Casey Foundation

About CLASP

For 40 years, CLASP has been a trusted resource, a creative architect for systems change, and one of the country's most effective voices for low-income people.

WHO WE ARE

CLASP develops and advocates for policies at the federal, state, and local levels that improve the lives of low-income people.

Our vision is an America where children grow up safe, healthy, nurtured, and prepared to succeed; where young people and adults have the skills and supports they need to fulfill their potential and to contribute to society and the economy; where jobs provide decent wages and family friendly policies; where poverty is rare; and where all people can participate equally and their communities can prosper.

We focus on policies that strengthen families and create pathways to education and work. Through careful research and analysis and effective advocacy, we develop and promote new ideas, mobilize others, and directly assist governments and advocates to put in place successful strategies that deliver results that matter to people across America.

WHAT WE DO

CLASP provides nonpartisan research, policy analysis, and targeted technical assistance to advocates, policymakers, and government administrators at the federal, state, and local levels. We also conduct policy advocacy within both the legislative and administrative branches of government.

While we are well-known for our federal work, CLASP also works extensively in states and local communities helping officials and practitioners make the translation from policy to practice. Our activities at the state and local level give us unique insight into emerging issues and innovations, which in turn feed back into our national policy recommendations.

CLASP produces numerous reports, policy briefs, fact sheets, audio conferences, and other informational and educational resources, and our staff speak widely around the country. The technical assistance we provide ranges from answering questions to advising on policy options, reviewing proposed legislation, and suggesting regulatory changes.

WHAT WE WORK ON

During 2007, CLASP pursued policies, laws, regulations, and public programs that improve the lives of low-income individuals in the following areas of expertise:

- Child care and early education
- Child support
- Child welfare
- Workforce development
- Post-secondary education
- Civil legal assistance
- Couples and marriage
- Disconnected and disadvantaged youth
- Low-Income Fathers
- Work supports
- Job quality and work-life
- Poverty
- Welfare reform
- Prisoner re-entry

As a state administrator, first in Kentucky and now in Tennessee, I am in the business of fixing what's broken and making policy work. CLASP is my go-to resource for translating policy into good practice. CLASP experts have the know-how to help us help low-income families succeed.

— Viola Miller, Commissioner
Tennessee Department of Children's Services



Year in Review

In a challenging political and economic context—marked by retrenchment in federal funding and growing inequality—and within a changing global economy, CLASP remained a critical voice for low-income people. The following are highlights of our accomplishments during the year.

Child Care and Early Education

- Successfully influenced newly reauthorized Head Start legislation in several areas, including teacher degree requirements and alignment with early learning standards.
- Released a groundbreaking report on the barriers that keep young children from immigrant families out of high-quality early education programs.
- Co-developed with ZERO TO THREE and began promoting a major new policy framework to help states expand and improve child care for children ages birth to three.
- Helped states and localities design strategies to ensure that low-income families continue getting the child care help they need within the context of new federal welfare rules.

Child Support

- Built and mobilized an unprecedented coalition of state and local officials, governors, employers, and national advocates calling for restoration of a 20 percent cut to the federal Child Support Program.
- Played a central part in designing proposed federal legislation to require all states to distribute all child support to families, rather than allowing states to keep payments to recover welfare benefit costs. Also encouraged states to adopt existing federal distribution options.

Fatherhood and Prisoner Re-entry:

- Prompted at least five states to change their child support policies in 2007 to help prevent unrealistic and crushing debt from driving marginally employed parents into the underground economy and away from their families.
- Helped develop the Healthy Families and Responsible Fatherhood Act, a bill pending in Congress to better address the needs of low-skilled men and fathers.

Child Welfare:

- As a key member of a national coalition, the Partnership to Protect Children and Strengthen Families, CLASP played a leadership role in articulating an important new set of recommendations for reforming the national child welfare financing system.
- Provided extensive technical assistance to members of Congress in the development and introduction of the Kinship Caregiver Support Act of 2007.

Equal Justice:

- Successfully advocated before Congress to increase funding for the Legal Services Corporation (LSC) and its grantees, to reduce LSC regulations and policies that are burdensome to legal aid programs, and to ensure high-quality and effective legal assistance.
- Spearheaded efforts to implement the American Bar Association's new standards for civil legal aid and "Ten Principles of a State System for the Delivery of Civil Legal Aid."

Jobs and Workforce:

- Secured several landmark provisions in the College Access and Opportunity Act, enacted in September 2007, that make it easier for working adults and older youth to get federal grant aid.
- Had substantial impact on the Higher Education Act (HEA) reauthorization bills passed by the House and Senate that will make postsecondary education more affordable and more accessible to low-income and nontraditional students.
- Played a pivotal role in the development and first-year implementation of a five-state initiative to improve and better align adult education, workforce, and postsecondary education policies.
- Released a major paper that describes the state of job quality today and makes a strong case for improvement.
- Contributed to the successful advocacy campaign to establish a law in the District of Columbia requiring employers to offer paid sick days to their employees.

Poverty:

- Managed the start-up and operation of *Spotlight on Poverty and Opportunity: Foundations Ask Presidential Candidates What They'll Do for America*, a new, nonpartisan initiative led by foundations to build public and political will to address poverty and opportunity.
- Provided extensive technical assistance to states and cities that have set specific goals and created new government entities to reduce poverty.

Disadvantaged and Disconnected Youth:

- As co-chair of the Campaign for Youth (CFY) coalition, promoted national policy improvements for youth who are out of school and out of work. Several of the presidential primary candidates adopted positions promoted by CFY.
- Worked with members of Communities Collaborating to Reconnect Youth Network (CCRY) to develop a model for employer involvement in preparing and employing disconnected youth. CCRY is a CLASP-managed peer-exchange network of communities trying to improve their youth-serving systems.

Welfare Reform:

- Successfully advocated for several improvements to the regulations governing the reauthorized Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program, giving states more flexibility to help low-income families.
- Guided several states in designing ways to allow welfare recipients to participate in education and training activities that otherwise might have been closed off to them.
- Helped states establish programs to provide supplemental payments to working families after they leave the TANF program.

CLASP is an invaluable partner for Community Legal Services. Inevitably, when we need research on best practices, we find that CLASP has already done it. Over the course of the implementation of welfare reform, we have constantly looked to CLASP for fresh ideas and technical assistance, which have resulted in better policies and practices for welfare recipients throughout Pennsylvania. Our colleagues at CLASP are among our most valued anywhere.

— Sharon M. Dietrich
Managing Attorney, Employment and Public Benefits Community Legal Services, Inc.

Work and Family Policy Work

CLASP believes that social equity, economic growth, and family welfare are inextricably linked. To reduce poverty and promote family well-being, low-income people must be able to get and keep good jobs. Children must be well-cared for and families must have the supports they need to succeed. CLASP is a leader in promoting policies and programs that recognize these links.

BUILDING PATHWAYS TO GOOD JOBS

CLASP promotes progressive workforce policies and practices that help low-income individuals acquire needed skills and credentials, overcome other barriers to employment, advance in the labor force, and keep our economy competitive. We also seek to improve the quality of jobs available to low-income workers.

Increasing Access to Post-secondary and Adult Education

The College Cost Reduction and Access Act, passed in September 2007, was called the largest single investment in higher education since the G.I. Bill. CLASP helped shape and promote many of its most important provisions, such as expanding the definition of "independent student" to make it easier for youth who are homeless or who have been in the foster care system to get financial aid. Other significant successes included the exclusion of the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) from financial aid calculations and a large increase in the amount of income an independent student can keep for living expenses before that income reduces the amount of financial aid the student receives.

A number of CLASP's recommendations were also incorporated into the different versions of the Higher Education Act reauthorization bills that passed the House and Senate in 2007 and enacted into law in 2008. One of the most important improvements is that year-round students can now earn two Pell grants in one year. Three new programs CLASP conceived are also worth highlighting. The first provides pilot Student Success Grants to help colleges offset the costs of intensive student services and other supports to help nontraditional students succeed. The other

two give grants to partnerships of colleges, employers, and others to expand or create programs serving nontraditional students and to colleges for innovations in remedial education to make occupational programs more accessible to lower skilled workers.

At the state level, CLASP served as a key partner in Shifting Gears, a Joyce Foundation initiative aimed at improving adult education, workforce, and postsecondary policies in five Midwestern states. We advised the Foundation broadly on the development and implementation of the initiative and worked with individual states to better align their policies so that low-income adults could more easily earn marketable postsecondary credentials. CLASP also played important roles in other large, multi-funder initiatives, including Breaking Through and the Working Poor Families Project.

Promoting Transitional Jobs

Transitional jobs programs are another path to employment, combining time-limited, subsidized employment with a comprehensive set of services to help participants build a record of work experience and overcome other barriers to employment. Over the past several years, interest in transitional jobs programs has grown among public officials, due in part to the work done by CLASP and the National Transitional Jobs Network. In addition, our federal advocacy efforts in 2007 were instrumental in ensuring that the Second Chance Act, which Congress passed in 2008, recognized the value of transitional job programs to ex-offenders re-entering the community.

Reforming the Workforce Development System

Although reauthorization of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) made little progress in Congress, CLASP continued to contribute to the national policy dialogue on the workforce investment system—particularly the ongoing decline in training and other services for low-income populations. One way we did this was by convening a meeting of national and state workforce experts to identify key constraints in the current WIA system and develop a new vision of workforce policy. We also published recommendations on specific titles of the Act.

At the state level, CLASP collaborated with Regional Technology Strategies and the Rapides Foundation in assessing existing workforce development capacity in central Louisiana and making recommendations for changes needed to expand opportunity and support economic growth in the region. We also conducted research into ways Food Stamp Employment and Training funds could be used by states for workforce training programs. These funds could infuse much-needed money into programs struggling to cover costs.

Improving Job Quality and Work-Life

CLASP continued to be a leading voice in the movement to ensure all workers are given paid sick days.

On the national front, we were part of a team of policy analysts helping congressional staff assess the implications of proposed language for federal legislation to extend paid sick days protections nationwide. A CLASP paper, *Opportunity at Work: Improving Job Quality*, received significant attention for outlining a broad, new definition of job quality that includes wages, benefits, job security, advancement opportunities, work schedule, health and safety, fairness, and worker voice. The paper made a strong case for improving the state of job quality today. We also convened a series of six national audio conferences featuring prominent policymakers, researchers, and program administrators.

As part of a coalition effort, we advocated for a paid sick days law in the District of Columbia. The effort resulted in the passage of a law in March 2008, making Washington only the second major city in the country to pass such a bill.

2007 Pathways to Good Jobs Publications

Congress Expands Access to Postsecondary Education and Training for Low-income Adults

by Amy-Ellen Duke and Julie Strawn.

Workforce Investment Act: Recommendations to Improve the Effectiveness of Job Training

by Evelyn Ganzglass.

Making HEA an Engine of Economic Productivity and Worker Prosperity

by Amy-Ellen Duke and Julie Strawn.

Update WIA Title II to Help More Adult Education Students Gain Postsecondary Credentials and Move Up to Better Jobs

by Amy-Ellen Duke and Julie Strawn.

Recommendations to the House Committee on Education and Labor Regarding Reauthorization of the Higher Education Act

by Julie Strawn and Amy-Ellen Duke.

Where the Funds Are: The Use of FSET Funds for Workforce Training Programs

by Abbey Frank, Elizabeth Lower-Basch, and Annette Case.

Working Together: Aligning State Systems and Policies for Individual and Regional Prosperity

by Christopher Mazzeo, Brandon Roberts, Christopher Spence, and Julie Strawn. A publication of the Workforce Strategy Center, coauthored by CLASP staff.

“Responsive Workplaces: The business case for employment that values fairness and families.”

by Jodie Levin-Epstein. Article originally appeared in *Mother Load*, a special report from *The American Prospect*.

Here's a Tip: When Restaurant and Hotel Workers Don't Have Paid Sick Days, It Hurts Us All

by Jodie Levin-Epstein.

Family and Medical Leave Act: Response to Request for Information

by Elizabeth Lower-Basch.

Strengthening State Adult Education Policies for Low-Skilled Workers

by Amy-Ellen Duke and Evelyn Ganzglass.

Statement Prepared for the Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance

by Amy-Ellen Duke.

Opportunity at Work: Improving Job Quality

by Elizabeth Lower-Basch.

Recommendations to Strengthen Title I of the Senate WIA Reauthorization Bill Passed by the 109th Congress

by Allegra Baider, Abbey Frank, and Evelyn Ganzglass.

MEETING FAMILIES' BASIC NEEDS

Improving Welfare

Congress passed legislation in early 2006 reauthorizing the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program. The bill contained some welcome changes to the program, but much of the new law remains troubling. CLASP has continued to call for improvements to TANF policies at both the federal and state levels.

Much of our federal focus in 2007 was on the regulations being written to implement changes that Congress made to the program. Our central objective was ensuring that the regulations give states sufficient flexibility to meet families' needs and help low-income households escape poverty.

When the final rule was published in early 2008, it was clear CLASP's advocacy had made an impact. Although still highly restrictive, the new regulations include a number of improvements over the interim regulations. Several of our successes centered on the circumstances under which certain activities can be counted towards fulfilling work requirements, including job search and readiness, education, and care of disabled family members.

At the state level, we continued to help policymakers make their TANF programs more responsive to low-income families. This included working with several states that were establishing programs to provide supplemental payments to working families after the families leave TANF. We also continued to analyze federal data on TANF spending by the states, which not only informs our own work but is used by other advocates and state and local administrators.

In January, we issued a revised edition of our highly popular 2006 guide, *Implementing the TANF Changes in the Deficit Reduction Act: "Win-Win" Solutions for Families and States*, published jointly with the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. Two years after its original release, this comprehensive, 128-page guide remains one of the most downloaded publications on our website.

Supporting Working Families

A key component of expanding economic opportunity and security for low-income workers is ensuring that families have the supports they need to reduce their poverty and weather the uncertainties of the labor market. Unfortunately, many families do not receive the public supports for which they are eligible, such as the EITC, Medicaid, and Food Stamps, often because they do not know about the programs or how to access them. To address the problem, CLASP conducted research on strategies for encouraging employers to promote work supports to their low-wage workers. In addition, we began to explore broader questions about federal programs supporting working families, such as the tradeoffs between providing assistance in the form of public benefits versus tax credits.

2007 Basic Needs Publications

Analysis of Fiscal Year 2006 TANF and MOE Spending by States
by Marcie Weadon-Moreno and Elizabeth Lower-Basch.

Improving Access to Education and Training for TANF Participants
by Elizabeth Lower-Basch.

Congress Should Take Action to Restore Flexibility and Funding Lost in 2006 Welfare Reauthorization and HHS Regulations
by Danielle Ewen, Elizabeth Lower-Basch, Julie Strawn, and Vicki Turetsky.

Implementing the TANF Changes in the DRA: "Win-Win" Solutions for Families and States, Second Edition
by CLASP and the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities.

When I want to know what's currently happening in welfare and social policy, CLASP is always the best source for up-to-the-minute details as well as thoughtful analysis of policy changes. CLASP's staff knows how to talk with policy analysts, decision makers, or scholars. Because of their clear expertise and analysis, this is an organization that regularly influences the course of U.S. policy.

— Rebecca Blank, Robert S. Kerr Senior Fellow
Brookings Institution

EDUCATING AND CARING FOR YOUNG CHILDREN

CLASP promotes a seamless and integrated child care and early education system that addresses the needs of low-income working parents and the developmental needs of their children. Our work focuses on increasing federal child care funding and expanding state child care subsidy programs, creating universal opportunities for children to participate in high-quality programs, and expanding and improving Head Start and Early Head Start.

Improving Head Start

The long-awaited Head Start reauthorization was finally enacted in December 2007. The legislation expands access to Head Start and Early Head Start, improves the quality of the programs, and increases coordination across early childhood programs at the state and local levels. During the five years the reauthorization was pending, CLASP closely tracked and informed congressional debate and aggressively advocated for improved policies. Our priorities included increasing teacher degree requirements, ensuring that any effort to change Head Start eligibility took into account the large number of eligible children who are currently unserved, and giving existing Head Start programs the flexibility to convert programs currently serving preschoolers to those for infants and toddlers.

Many of our recommendations were incorporated into the bill, and much of the final language reflected our wording. One of our accomplishments was helping to design the reauthorization so as to increase access to Head Start while helping programs improve the quality of services they provide. Another was shaping the design and funding of State Advisory Councils for Early Care and Education, which are charged with coordinating data collection, professional development, and other components of state policy.

Funding Early Care and Education Through the No Child Left Behind Act

Another piece of the funding puzzle for early care and education programs is the use of nontraditional sources of money. One such source is Title I of the No

CLASP created a new section of its website devoted specifically to child care and early education (<http://childcareandearlyed.clasp.org/>).

Visitors to this popular new resource can find updates on federal legislation, state-by-state data, technical assistance tools, information about key issue areas, a special area devoted to state policy developments, items on recent research, and other news.

Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), which is currently up for reauthorization. CLASP analyzed and advocated for reauthorization proposals that would allow community-based child care and early education providers to continue to participate in Title I-funded programs and that would expand pre-kindergarten through new titles of the Act. Our case was bolstered by our continued research into ways states and localities are currently using Title I to provide high-quality early learning programs.

Breaking Down Barriers for Immigrant Families

Overall, children of immigrants are less likely than other children to participate in formal early education, although formal programs have the potential to increase school readiness. As part of our Breaking Down Barriers Project, CLASP released a groundbreaking report on the obstacles that may prevent young children in immigrant families from attending high-quality early education programs, such as onerous application procedures and a lack of bilingual intake workers. The report also offers steps that states and local communities can take to address those barriers.

Charting Progress for Babies

CLASP's Charting Progress for Babies in Child Care Project is aimed at helping states identify policies that can increase access and build quality in child care settings for the youngest children, ages birth to three. A significant accomplishment in 2007 was CLASP's co-development, with ZERO TO THREE, of the Charting Progress for Babies policy framework. Based on extensive research, the framework articulates four key principles of what babies and families need in child care.

It then identifies 15 critical recommendations for state child care policy in the areas of licensing, quality enhancement, and subsidized child care for low-income children. Each recommendation is supported by a menu of state policy options.

Providing State-by-State Data

CLASP collects information on the child care choices states are making and analyzes federal data on Child

Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) expenditures, program participation, and other key statistics. In 2007, we again published this information on a state-by-state basis to help advocates and state policy-makers compare their states to others and to make the case for policy improvements. In a similar analysis of Head Start and Early Head Start data, we looked at items such as teacher qualifications and the need for child care outside of Early Head Start hours.

2007 Child Care and Early Education Publications

Improving Access to Child Care and Early Education for Immigrant Families: A State Policy Checklist
by Hannah Matthews.

Selected State and Local Policies to Support Immigrant and Limited English Proficient (LEP) Early Care and Education Providers
by Danielle Ewen and Hannah Matthews.

Child Care and Development Block Grant Participation in 2006
by Hannah Matthews.

Title I and Early Childhood Programs: A Look at Investments in the NCLB Era
by Danielle Ewen and Hannah Matthews.

Making Pre-kindergarten Work for Low-income Working Families
by Rachel Schumacher, Katie Hamm, and Danielle Ewen.

Supporting Growth and Development of Babies in Child Care: What Does the Research Say?
by Anne Goldstein (on behalf of ZERO TO THREE), Katie Hamm, and Rachel Schumacher.

The Challenges of Change: Learning from the Child Care and Early Education Experiences of Immigrant Families
by Hannah Matthews and Deana Jang.

Recommendations to Support High-quality Early Education Programs Through Reauthorization of the No Child Left Behind Act
by Danielle Ewen and Hannah Matthews.

Early Head Start and Teen Parent Families: Partnerships for Success.

Families Forgotten: Administration's Priorities Put Child Care Low on List
by Danielle Ewen and Hannah Matthews.

Better Outcomes for All: Promoting Partnerships between Head Start and State Pre-K
by Helene Stebbins and L. Carol Scott.
(A collaboration between CLASP and Pre-K Now.)



MAKING CHILD SUPPORT WORK FOR CHILDREN—AND PARENTS

Child support has emerged in recent years as one of the most important and effective income supports for low-income children. The federal child support program is among the largest programs serving low-income families and substantially reduces the poverty rate of single-mother families.

Ensuring All Child Support Goes to Families

CLASP continued its work to expand the number of states adopting the federal child support pass-through provisions enacted by Congress in 2006. The options allow states to pass child support funds for TANF families directly through to those families. Previously states were required to keep money to repay state welfare costs. State legislation to adopt or increase the options was passed in at least five states in 2007. CLASP has been credited with playing a major role in expanding state implementation.

Even while we encouraged states to adopt the pass-through provisions voluntarily, we also pressed Congress to enact this “full-family distribution” into federal law. CLASP significantly influenced the development and introduction of three bills requiring, rather than just allowing, state TANF agencies to pass through all collected child support funds to families.

Restoring Federal Funding

CLASP kept up the push for restoration of a 2006 funding cut to the federal Child Support Program. This 20 percent funding cut is estimated to reduce child support collections by \$11 billion over the next ten years. It has already caused program curtailments in several states. Advocating for restoration of this funding was a top CLASP priority in 2007.

As a key part of its advocacy, CLASP organized a diverse coalition of state child support directors, legislators, county executives, judges, employers, unions, child advocates, and others to press Congress on the issue. CLASP and the coalition worked hand-in-hand with two prominent governors to develop a letter to Congress calling for the restoration of the funds. The letter was signed by 24 governors. In addition, we helped collect well over 500 signatories to a similar letter by national and state organizations. Two congressional briefings we sponsored on the need for restoration were standing-room only. Due to CLASP's efforts, legislation to restore the funds was introduced in both houses during 2007.

Reducing Debt for Previously Incarcerated Parents

Incarcerated parents with child support obligations typically owe, on average, more than \$20,000 by the time they are released from prison. Crushing child support debt can push those with criminal records back into the underground economy and prison, as well as affect their relationships with their children. About half of states have recently changed their policies or have begun to reach out to incarcerated parents to adjust unrealistic debt obligations. A number of these states have credited CLASP with raising public awareness about the unintended consequences of unrealistic child support policies and with helping state officials develop policy alternatives.

2007 Child Support and Re-entry Publications

Staying in Jobs and Out of the Underground: Child Support Policies that Encourage Legitimate Work

by Vicki Turetsky.

State Policy Regarding Pass-Through and Disregard of Current Month's Child Support Collected for Families Receiving TANF-funded Cash Assistance

by Jan Justice. (Chart)

Child Support Distribution Calculator.

This calculator was jointly prepared by the Policy Studies Inc. (PSI) and CLASP.

RECONNECTING YOUTH

In the face of a growing “drop-out crisis”—where an estimated one-third of public school ninth-graders fail to graduate in four years and five million young people are already disconnected from school and work—CLASP supports the creation of a more comprehensive, systemic youth policy that focuses on reconnecting young people to the education and employment mainstream. CLASP also works to raise awareness of the magnitude of the disconnected-youth problem and to foster state and local innovation to help all young people enter adulthood prepared for work, family, and civic life.

Advocating on Behalf of Disadvantaged and Disconnected Youth

CLASP co-chairs the Campaign for Youth, an alliance of advocacy and service organizations concerned about the challenges confronting disconnected youth. In September, the coalition released a major policy document outlining a federal investment strategy containing six major recommendations. They include creating a White House Office of Youth Policy to coordinate federal efforts on behalf of the nation's youth; investing in the delivery capacity in communities of high youth distress; engaging business and industry in building “on ramps” for youth to high-skill, high wage opportunities; and greatly expanding opportunities for work experience, community service, internships, and apprenticeships.

CLASP also promoted federal policy improvements in its own right, offering detailed recommendations on ways to improve the No Child Left Behind Act and the youth provisions of WIA.

The Campaign for Youth's *Our Youth, Our Economy, Our Future: A National Investment Strategy For Reconnecting America's Youth*, has been endorsed by 250 organizations around the country, including 26 national youth organizations. It represents the first national policy agenda related to disconnected youth with such broad-based and unified support from the youth-serving community.

Helping Communities Collaborate

Communities Collaborating to Reconnect Youth, which CLASP helped launch in 2006, is a formal peer-support network comprising representatives from some 15 communities around the country committed to improving their youth-serving systems. Participants come from a wide range of systems and agencies, including mayors' offices, school districts, private industry councils, social service agencies, and community colleges. CLASP continues to play an active role in the network, including coordinating its semi-annual conferences and maintaining the CCRY website. Through CCRY, participants share ideas, information, and innovative practice with each other.

In other work on youth issues at the local level, CLASP began collecting data in 2008 on key indicators of youth distress in a number of different communities across the country. CLASP staff also assumed leadership of the policy working group of the 21st Century Foundation's 2025 Campaign on Black Men and Boys, which is focused on improving outcomes for black boys by the year 2025.

2007 Disconnected Youth Publications

Our Youth, Our Economy, Our Future: A National Investment Strategy for Reconnecting America's Youth
by Campaign for Youth.

Recommendations to Improve No Child Left Behind for Struggling Students and Disconnected Youth
by Rhonda Tsoi-A-Fatt, Linda Harris, Mala Thakur, and Jonathan Larsen.

Testimony Submitted for the Record to the House Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Income Security and Family Support Hearing on Disconnected and Disadvantaged Youth
by Linda Harris and Sally Prouty.

The Tragic Loss of the Summer Jobs Program: Why it is Time to Reinstate!
by Linda Harris. (Article originally appeared in *Focus Magazine*, a publication of the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies.)

Recommended Changes to the No Child Left Behind Act to Address Workforce Issues
by Linda Harris and Rhonda Tsoi-A-Fatt.

Recommendations for WIA Reauthorization Legislation: Title I Youth Provisions
by Linda Harris.

Recommendations for Reauthorization of Title I of the Workforce Investment Act Adult and Youth Programs.

KEEPING KIDS SAFE

Our nation is failing its most vulnerable children. Close to a million American children are found to be abused or neglected each year, yet federal data show that nearly 40 percent of these children receive no counseling, no family supports, and no foster care—in fact, no services of any kind. And the 60 percent who do get services often do not receive the right kind.

Reforming Child Welfare Financing

Reforming, rationalizing, and adequately funding the federal child welfare system is key to preventing child maltreatment and, when abuse and neglect cannot be prevented, to ensuring the children get the assistance they need.

One of CLASP's most significant accomplishments during 2007 was the role we played in the development and promotion of a comprehensive set of recommendations by The Partnership to Protect Children and Strengthen Families, unveiled in congressional testimony in May 2007, focusing on reforming the child welfare system's financing and calling on Congress to make a renewed commitment to protect the nation's children. CLASP was a founding member of The Partnership, which includes public agencies, private providers, and advocates.



The Partnership to Protect Children and Strengthen Families' key recommendations include: increasing access to services and supports for children and families, before, during and after involvement with the child welfare system; enhancing the child welfare workforce; and improving accountability within the child welfare system.

Supporting Kinship Care

To address questions raised by many policymakers and advocates, CLASP reviewed available research about the value of keeping children with grandparents or other relatives rather than placing the children in traditional foster care. We then prepared a fact sheet highlighting the benefits that children in kinship care experience. The fact sheet was widely posted on other organizations' websites, circulated in electronic newsletters, and cited in congressional testimony.

CLASP also advised members of the House and Senate as they developed the Kinship Caregiver Support Act of 2007, which was introduced into both houses of Congress. The bill includes a provision we successfully advocated allowing states to provide federal support to children who leave foster care to live permanently with grandparents and other relatives, if the relatives become legal guardians.

Coordinating Service Delivery

Another piece of federal legislation in which we played a role was the Education Begins at Home Act of 2007 (which was introduced in both the House and Senate.) If enacted, the bill would promote more integrated and coordinated service delivery to vulnerable families and children by promoting home visiting and by better coordinating state policies and programs for families with young children. We assisted the congressional sponsors as they developed and refined this bill.

2007 Child Welfare Publications

Submission in Response to Senator Gordon Smith's July 26, 2007 Call For Papers to Examine the Needs of Grandparent and Other Relative Caregivers

by Tiffany Conway and Rutledge Q. Hutson.

Partnership to Protect Children and Strengthen Families: Changes Needed in Federal Child Welfare Law to Better Protect Children and Ensure Them Nurturing Families

By The Partnership to Protect Children and Strengthen Families (including CLASP, AFSCME, American Public Human Services Association, Catholic Charities USA, Children's Defense Fund, Child Welfare League of America, National Child Abuse Coalition, and Voices for America's Children).

Recommendations for Improving Education Outcomes for Children and Youth in Foster Care Through Amendments to the McKinney-Vento Act/Education Reauthorization in the No Child Left Behind Act

A joint publication by CLASP, the Child Welfare League of America, the Children's Defense Fund, Lutheran Services in America, and Voices for America's Children.

Is Kinship Care Good for Kids?

by Tiffany Conway and Rutledge Q. Hutson.

The Promise of New Funding for Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment to Promote Safety, Permanence, and Well-Being for Children: Questions & Answers About New Grants under the Child and Family Services Improvement Act of 2006 P.L. 109-288.

Prepared by an informal coalition, including CLASP, American Public Human Services Association, Child Welfare League of America, Children's Defense Fund, Legal Action Center, National Association of State Alcohol and Drug Abuse Directors, and Rebecca Project for Human Rights.

Bush Administration's "Child Welfare Program Option" Puts Children Who Have Been Abused or Neglected at Greater Risk

by Rutledge Q. Hutson.

In-Depth Summary of Child and Family Services Improvement Act of 2006

by Tiffany Conway & Rutledge Q. Hutson.

Partnering to Promote Guardianship: The Federal Outlook

by Rutledge Q. Hutson.

CALLING ATTENTION TO POVERTY

Shining a Spotlight on Poverty and Opportunity

In the summer of 2007, CLASP was asked to manage a new, funder-led initiative called *Spotlight on Poverty and Opportunity: Foundations Ask Presidential Candidates What They'll Do for America*. This nonpartisan project was created by a group of foundations to call attention to the issue of poverty during the 2008 presidential campaign and beyond, with the long-term goal of stimulating national dialogue and building the public will to reduce poverty and expand opportunity for all Americans.

A dynamic website provides a forum for political debate on the issues. It offers recent press coverage, timely commentary, links, and ideas about a range of policy options. The site also features written and video comments by the presidential primary candidates of both parties that express their positions on issues related to poverty and opportunity. Videos of several forums on the topic are also posted, as well as statements by other prominent politicians. Although the site was not unveiled until the end of October it received nearly 60,000 page views by the end of 2007.

The project was launched with a high profile event in October featuring a number of politically diverse figures, including former Democratic Leadership Council Chair Harold Ford and former Republican presidential candidate and housing secretary Jack Kemp. The project Advisory Council includes former members of Congress from both parties, as well as notable mayors, academics, and the founder of a prestigious community-based program.

Promoting Poverty Targets

The movement to address poverty through special commissions and initiatives continues in states and cities around the country. In a number of cases, governments are setting numerical goals and timelines to reduce or eliminate poverty in their geographic areas. CLASP has been a leader in promoting this idea in the United States.

During 2007, CLASP staff spoke widely on the topic and provided direct assistance to advocates and public officials. Issues ranged from the design and roll-out of local poverty commissions to implementation of new state poverty targets.

Advancing a “Marriage-Plus” Approach

Since 2002, more than 300 “healthy” marriage programs have been funded by the federal Administration for Children and Families (ACF). CLASP seeks to make federal healthy marriage policies more flexible, comprehensive, inclusive, and sensitive to domestic violence considerations. CLASP remained influential on this issue in 2007, with our analyses and recommendations receiving significant attention from government agencies, academics, and program providers.

CLASP published two new briefs during 2007. One explored the public policy implications of research into the attitudinal, experiential, economic, and social contexts in which disadvantaged parents have children and decide whether or not to marry. The other looked at the question of whether healthy marriage programs can be effective with populations more diverse than those traditionally served.

We continued to provide technical assistance at the state and local level on healthy marriage issues as well. In several states, responsible fatherhood programs funded with child support funds have begun to incorporate a healthy marriage component into a comprehensive service strategy.

In addition, CLASP staff members were quoted on marriage and responsible fatherhood issues by such prominent media outlets as *The Economist*, *Time Magazine*, and CNN.com.

2007 Healthy Marriage Publications

Out of Order? Factors Influencing the Sequence of Marriage and Childbirth Among Disadvantaged Americans
by Paula Roberts.

Adapting Healthy Marriage Programs for Disadvantaged and Culturally Diverse Populations: What are the issues?
by Theodora Ooms.



Civil Legal Assistance Work

CLASP works to expand our nation's commitment to providing high-quality civil legal aid for low-income and marginalized communities. Specifically, CLASP strives to strengthen the Legal Services Corporation (LSC) and its grantees and to improve the quality and performance of civil legal aid programs.

SECURING EQUAL JUSTICE FOR ALL

Ensuring Access to Civil Legal Justice

CLASP effectively serves as the “General Counsel” to the legal aid community through our role representing the civil membership of the National Legal Aid and Defender Association (NLADA) before LSC. We work to ensure the program's preservation, viability, and continued improvement by working closely with the LSC board and staff, NLADA, the American Bar Association (ABA), and other organizations involved in the delivery of legal services.

CLASP has been involved for many years in efforts to clarify congressionally imposed requirements on legal aid programs and lessen the administrative burdens that have interfered with the ability of programs to provide high-quality services. In 2007, this included representing NLADA and its members in an LSC process to revise the rules governing client grievance procedures. It also included submitting comments on behalf of NLADA on LSC's regulatory agenda for 2007 and opposing an LSC staff proposal to create new rules for sanctioning grantees who are out of compliance with LSC regulations. In addition, CLASP supported a successful petition to permit citizens of Micronesia, who are presently only eligible for assistance inside Micronesia, to receive help from programs anywhere in the U.S. We also worked closely with LSC staff in an effort to completely revise the grant conditions for 2008 awards.

At the same time, CLASP began working as part of coalition to secure a major change in the ways LSC grantees are allowed to use their non-LSC funding. Grantees are currently restricted from spending any money on expenses such as lobbying, attorney's fees,

or class-action litigation. The coalition is calling for lifting these restrictions on all funds, but at a minimum, on resources that come from private donors and other non-LSC sources. Coalition members include the NLADA, Brennan Center for Justice, United Auto Workers (which represents legal services workers), and the American Civil Liberties Union.

CLASP plays two other important roles. In one, we provide direct assistance to legal aid providers in their dealings with LSC and the Office of Inspector General. In the other, we act as a clearinghouse of information about recipients' experiences with the LSC Office of Compliance and Enforcement. In 2007, we helped numerous providers with their plans to develop non-LSC funded affiliates and to collaborate with existing non-LSC funded organizations in order to ensure that clients receive the full range of legal assistance—including those services LSC-funded programs are restricted from providing. And we continued to work with state planners to make sure that the LSC-driven state planning process is effective in improving the delivery of legal services.

As has been true for decades, CLASP continues to fill a unique role as “general counsel” for the civil legal aid community, providing invaluable assistance to and advocacy on behalf of those programs dedicated to equal justice under law. CLASP is the legal aid's insightful advisor, its institutional memory, its effective representative, and its steadfast companion. CLASP is an essential and priceless resource for the legal aid community and for the low-income population that it strives to serve.

— Mike Greco, Past President
American Bar Association

In other work, CLASP prepared a series of regulatory and policy memoranda providing analysis and advice to NLADA subscribers, made numerous presentations at conferences and other events, and wrote regular articles for NLADA's bi-monthly newsletter. We also completed revisions to our publication *Securing Equal Justice for All: A Brief History of Civil Legal Assistance in the United States*.

Improving the Quality and Performance of Civil Legal Aid Programs

CLASP staff have been deeply involved in the implementation of the ABA's "Standards for the Provision of Civil Legal Aid," the "LSC Performance Criteria," and the "Principles of a State System for the Delivery of Civil Legal Aid," all of which CLASP had earlier played an important role in drafting or revising. CLASP chaired a working group that developed an extensive agenda of materials and activities needed to ensure effective implementation of these three documents. Finally, CLASP served as staff for the NLADA Civil Policy Group's Program Enhancement Committee, which focuses on improving the quality of civil legal aid programs.

Furthering International Legal Aid

For more than 12 years, CLASP has participated in the International Legal Aid Group (ILAG), which includes academics, administrators, CEOs, and policymakers from eight countries, ranging from New Zealand to Northern Ireland. In 2007, CLASP prepared an update

on civil legal aid in the United States for the ILAG Conference in Belgium.

CLASP also continues to participate in efforts to establish civil legal aid programs in Russia and Ukraine through the Russian American Rule of Law Consortium. During 2007, CLASP developed and keynoted a seminar in civil legal aid in Petrozavodsk, Russia and prepared a background paper on the U.S. civil legal aid system for a national conference in Moscow.

2007 Legal Services Publications

Securing Equal Justice for All: A Brief History of Civil Legal Assistance in the United States

by Alan W. Houseman and Linda E. Perle.

Civil Legal Aid In The United States: An Update For 2007

by Alan W. Houseman.

CLASP Regulatory-Policy Memorandum 2007-1, Final Part 1621-Client Grievance Procedures

by Linda E. Perle.

CLASP Regulatory-Policy Memorandum 2007-2, Final Part 1626-Micronesia Eligibility

by Linda E. Perle.

CLASP Regulatory-Policy Memorandum 2007-3, New Grant Assurances for 2008 Grants

by Linda E. Perle.

CLASP Regulatory-Policy Memorandum 2007-4, New Case Service Report Handbook-2008 Edition

by Linda E. Perle.



2007 Audio Conferences

Transitional Jobs for Hard to Serve TANF Recipients

January 18, 2007

Guests: **Sharon Parrott**, Director of Welfare Reform and Income Support, Center for Budget and Policy Priorities
Diane Klontz, Community Jobs Program Manager, Community Trade and Economic Development, Washington State

Connecticut's Commitment to End Child Poverty: An Interview with Pat Wilson-Coker

February 6, 2007

Guests: **Pat Wilson-Coker**, Former Commissioner, Connecticut Department of Social Services

Opportunity At Work Series: Getting the Job Quality Picture Right: What's the Problem? What's the Solution?

February 8, 2007

Guests: **Jared Bernstein**, Director of Living Standards Program, Economic Policy Institute
Anthony Carnevale, Research Professor and Director of the Global Institute on Education and the Workforce, Georgetown University
Laura Dresser, Associate Director, Center on Wisconsin Strategy

Making Low-Wage Jobs Family Friendly: An Oxymoron or Cutting Edge? (Part 1)

March 9, 2007

Guests: **Susan Lambert**, Associate Professor, University of Chicago
Leslie Hammer, Professor and Director of the Occupational Health Psychology Program, Portland State University
Steve Bigari, CEO, Bigari Foods & America's Family

Paid Sick Days: Why it Matters to Families and the Latest Developments

March 15, 2007

Guests: **Portia Wu**, Chief Labor Counsel, Office of Senator Edward Kennedy, Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions
Vicky Lovell, Director of Employment and Work/Life Programs, Institute for Women's Policy Research
Kate Kahan, Director of Work and Family Programs, National Partnership for Women & Families

Making Low-wage Jobs Family Friendly: An Oxymoron or Cutting Edge? (Part 2)

April 6, 2007

Guests: **Kristin Seefeldt**, Assistant Director, National Poverty Center, University of Michigan
Jennifer Swanberg, Associate Professor and Executive Director, Institute for Workplace Innovation, University of Kentucky
Jim Johnson, Owner, Johnson Moving and Storage Company

Gaining Leverage to Improve Job Quality: Lessons from Union Organizing in the New Economy

May 22, 2007

Guests: **Nancy Mills**, Executive Director, AFL-CIO Working for America Institute, and Deputy Chief of Staff, AFL-CIO
Neal Kwatra, Deputy Director, Strategic Affairs Department, UNITE HERE!
Ken Allen, Executive Director, Oregon AFSCME Council 75
Fred Azcarate, Director, AFL-CIO Voice@Work

Poverty and Opportunity: Developments Around the Nation

August 1, 2007

Guests: **Douglas A. Racine**, Vermont State Senator
Jodie Levin-Epstein, Deputy Director, CLASP
Michael Ettlinger, Director, Economic Analysis and Research Network, Economic Policy Institute

More Than a Paycheck: A Conversation On Why Job Quality Matters and What We Can Do About It

September 11, 2007

Guests: **Liz Krueger**, New York State Senator
Elizabeth Lower-Basch, Senior Policy Analyst, CLASP
Joan A. Kuriansky, Executive Director, Wider Opportunities for Women

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Statement of Financial Position

As of December 31, 2007

ASSETS

CURRENT ASSETS

Cash and cash equivalents	1,424,690
Investments	653,868
Receivables:	
Grants	2,192,615
Other	1,670
Prepaid expenses	93,577
Total current assets	<u>\$4,366,420</u>

FURNITURE AND EQUIPMENT

Equipment	295,007
Less: Accumulated depreciation	(175,305)
Net furniture and equipment	<u>\$119,702</u>

NON-CURRENT ASSETS

Grants receivable, net of current maturities	<u>.0</u>
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TOTAL ASSETS	<u>\$4,486,122</u>
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LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

CURRENT LIABILITIES

Current portion of capital leases	14,538
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	76,952
Accrued salaries and related benefits	213,366
Total current liabilities	<u>\$304,856</u>

NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES

Long-term portion of capital leases	62,537
Total liabilities	<u>\$367,393</u>

NET ASSETS

Unrestricted	893,147
Temporarily restricted	3,225,582
Total net assets	<u>\$4,118,729</u>

TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	<u>\$4,486,122</u>
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Statement of Activities and Change in Net Assets

As of December 31, 2007

REVENUE

Foundation grants	\$3,086,074
Contributions	40,159
Investment income	95,949
Publications	14
Other revenue	32,420
Net assets released from donor restrictions	<u>.0</u>
Total revenue	\$3,254,616

EXPENSES

Program Services:	
Family Policy	4,175,229
Legal Services	<u>261,299</u>
Total program services	\$4,436,528
Supporting services:	
Management and General	36,349
Fundraising	<u>210,215</u>
Total supporting services	\$246,564
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$4,683,092
Change in net assets	(1,428,476)
Net assets at beginning of year	\$5,547,205
NET ASSETS AT END OF YEAR	\$4,118,729

*Policy Solutions That Work
for Low-Income People*



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