

January 2014 RESULTS U.S. Poverty Conference Call Summary

The slides, recording, and summary will be posted at:
https://www.results.org/skills_center/results_national_conference_calls/.

Welcome and Agenda Review: Joanne Carter, Executive Director of RESULTS

I want to welcome everyone to the call and wish you all a very Happy New Year. I hope you found some time to rest and celebrate.

Just a reminder or for folks who are new to the call: The [Conference Call slides](#) are available in the Take Action section of the RESULTS Home Page

You did a remarkable job this past year:

- 83 FACE-TO-FACE meetings with members of Congress more than any other year in the last decade
- Over 140 media pieces triple 2012
- And that doesn't count hundreds of meetings with Congressional aides and thousands of letters, emails and calls.
- We also raised over \$56K in our year –end annual appeal-which is and more than met our matching gift opportunity. We had donors this year from 46 states and DC! Key for our us poverty campaigns and expansion!

Your action played a key role in holding off the deepest cuts to SNAP and also some very bad policies. It's not right that we have to fight a defensive fight to protect these programs—we should be expanding effective anti-poverty, anti-hunger efforts-- but that is the situation we faced and you played a key role in preventing much worse cuts and policies. And you made public the consequences of those cuts and the role played by these programs in the aftermath of the great recession. And that all has long term impact as well as short-term—And as you'll hear later in the call, we still have the opportunity to weigh in once more before final decisions on SNAP in the Farm Bill.

The two most important things you can do right now to build on that powerful Congressional and media work you did in 2013, the two most effective ways to increase your impact and our collective impact on the issues we care about in 2014 are:

1. Creating a group plan for 2014.
2. And, as one key part of that,-requesting face to face meeting with your members of Congress in January or February.

By planning together, you can identify priority actions—like those FACE-TO-FACE meetings and media and also assign folks so that everyone's skills and energies can be captured and so that staff can also directly support and work with different folks who are taking on different leadership. It's a chance to make a plan on taking your member of Congress to the next level—that could be asking them to take a champion action yourselves or with a bigger coalition of folks. Or it could mean bringing them to see a local Food Bank and understand the situation in your community. Or finding other ways to make these issues real and show constituent support for effective programs and ambitious action.

So thank you for doing the planning.

And as I said last month, [data from surveys of Congressional staff](#) have confirmed that the single most powerful action you can take to influence your MoC is a FACE-TO-FACE meeting. So please request those meetings or follow-up now.

Finally I also want to personally invite you to come to the 2014 International Conference, June 21-24, in Washington DC. It will be our largest conference ever—with even more opportunities for new people, even bigger than last year and we will have an amazing array of speakers and we will need your collective presence in DC to push for positive action on the issues we are fighting for.

We are at the fiftieth anniversary of President Johnson declaring an unconditional war on poverty in America —

when we saw major positive impact against poverty cutting poverty in half in just the first ten years of that effort. While we're facing what feels too often like a war on the poor and a war on anti-poverty programs that work, what it will take to turn this around is our collective action and the very strategy and planning that you'll be doing in the next hour.

We're very fortunate to have Debbie Weinstein from the Coalition for Human Needs with us today.

Guest Speaker – Debbie Weinstein, Coalition on Human Needs

Introduction by Meredith Dodson, RESULTS Director of US Poverty Campaigns: While I could spend several minutes introducing Debbie and detailing all her great work, I want to make the most of our time with her so instead let me just say that Debbie has been a critical ally and mentor for RESULTS since she started at the [Coalition on Human Needs](#) in 2003, and we are so grateful for your vision, your passion, and your relentless drive for a more just society. Debbie, thank you for joining us today.

Thank you – such a pleasure to be a part of this because RESULTS is doing such great work. You've built so strongly on previous work and doing exactly the right things.

Why this is such an important time for you to do what you do best:

- War on Poverty: often feels like on the poor
- 50th anniversary plays into heightened consciousness of public's concern about inequality and recognition so many stagnating or falling behind... while other making out like bandits

Highlights from [Half in Ten's poll: 50 Years After LBJ's War on Poverty](#)

- CHN is one of the partner groups managing Half in Ten
- 2 parts: asking people how they are doing, and their attitudes
- Sobering that so many not feeling like they are doing well, 61% feel like incomes falling vs. cost of living
- ¼-1/3 say having serious problems meeting basic needs, and keeping up (food, rent, credit cards) – awful lot hurting, feel like systemic
- Reassuringly: 2/3 agree that poverty b/c of structural issues, not personal flaws of those in poverty
- Use that information to encourage champions amongst elected officials
- [be sure to check out [Half in Ten's national toolkit](#)]

What we can do:

- But not everyone agrees re: why not enough good jobs – so we need to explain that
- How RESULTS comes in: direct communication, stories in press (op-eds, LTEs) that tell Congress people are aware of this.
- Show through narratives: individuals out of work or benefitting from program, and stories how programs and services helping a lot of people – stories of how they work and statistics
- In time during Ryan and Rubio making speeches, hold policymakers accountable for proposals they make: the [Coalition on Human Needs's poverty website](#) has resources to help you.

Additional resources included in the conference call PowerPoint:

- **The Shriver Report's** [A Woman's Nation Pushes Back from the Brink](#) goes live Sunday, January 12th. [ShriverReport.org](#) will feature excerpts from the published report and offer a [free download](#) of the full report for 4 days, ending January 15th.
- Use our [online letter to the editor tool](#) to highlight the Anniversary and call on policymakers to protect anti-poverty programs, including SNAP.

2014 Group Planning, Part 1 – Jos Linn, Grassroots Manager for U.S. Poverty Campaigns

- Group Planning is about success. As the old adage goes: a goal without a plan is only a wish. All of you did a wonderful job in your RESULTS work last year. We had a record year on media; we had more face-to-

face meetings than we've had in the last 10 years, and those don't count the thousands of e-mails, letters, phone calls and other contacts you made. As a result, SNAP has been spared from deep cuts in the Farm Bill and both Congress and the President are talking more about poverty. Group Planning played a big role in making that happen, even though a number of groups did not do one last year. Just think what we can accomplish when every group has a plan.

- On today's call, we're going to go through the group planning process. We know that this may be faster than you normally do it and that's fine. Our goal is to get something on paper today and sent to us after the call. If your group wants to fill in more details at your second meeting this month, please do. You are more than welcomed to resubmit your updated plan at any time. These plans are meant to be living documents that evolve during the year. But to ensure that we can begin supporting your right away in reaching your goals, we want you to send us what you create today right after the call.
- So here's what you'll need for today.
 1. Your completed **Individual Planning Form**. Hopefully, each person in your group completed this before the call and has it with them. You'll refer to it during planning.
 2. A copy of the **Group Planning Summary**. This is what you will fill out on the call today. You can fill it out by hand or pull it up on your computer and type in the information.
 3. You can find these forms linked to on slide 6 of the PowerPoint and also linked to on the RESULTS Homepage in the Green Box on the right hand side.
- How this will work is that Meredith and I will go through each section on the Group Planning Summary. After a brief explanation, we'll give you a few minutes to fill out that section. During that time, the phone will be silent so don't be alarmed if you don't hear anything. We are still here and will let you know when to move on to the next section. So without further ado, let's get started.

Section A

- **First thing is to list who is in your group.** Please be sure to fill in the contact information for everyone in your group (and include those who could not make it to the call today). Keeping in touch with one another is an important part of being a successful group so make sure your contact info is current.
- Part of this section also includes leadership roles. We encourage everyone in the group to take a leadership role. It not only takes the pressure off your group leaders, it also lets each person take ownership of the group. You can see a partial list of roles listed there on the form. You don't have to fill in all of them listed there but it is important that the at least group assign a group leader or leaders, point persons for your members of Congress (and please list the legislator's name), a media point person, and an outreach/fundraising coordinator. Hopefully, some of you already indicated roles you'd like to take on on your Individual Planning Form.
- **OK, let's take 5 minutes to fill out Section A of the Group Plan Summary.** To make this process run quickly, start discussing the leadership roles now as you pass the Group Planning Summary around the table and let each person fill in their contact info.

Section B

- **Section B is designed to strengthen the health of your group.** First and foremost, when you're meeting? We encourage all groups to meet twice per month, once for the conference call and once to plan and take action. We've found that connecting with each other more than once per month makes your advocacy more effective and your group stronger.
- **You also want to look at the size of your group right now and where you want to be at year's end.** Groups that grow are groups that last and we urge you to think about ways you can grow your groups.
 - For example: Bruce Davidson in Buffalo will be helping host a Faith and Hunger event in Buffalo this year, designed to educate members of his church and others in the community about poverty, as well as recruit new members for his group
 - Or there's Ginnie Vogts in Columbus who has been doing letter writing meetings with groups in her area almost every month, getting them into action and working to grow her group
- Finally, we are excited about the **2014 RESULTS International Conference**, which is June 21-24 in Washington, DC. We already have Jim Kim, President of the World Bank, lined up as a speaker and we are working on getting more exciting speakers for the conference. This truly is the biggest event of the year for RESULTS. It not only gives you the chance to lobby members of Congress in DC itself, it also gives you the

opportunity to connect with other advocates from around the world. It is as much a bonding experience as an advocacy one. So please list the people in your group who plan to attend this year's conference. Even if you're not sure if you can come right now, put your name down. That lets us know to support you and your group in making it happen.

- **Now take 8 minutes to fill out the Group Health Section (Section B) of the form.**

2014 Group Planning, Part 2 – Meredith Dodson, Director of U.S. Poverty Campaigns

- Continue on and look at your legislative, outreach, and media goals
- First let's look at your members of Congress. Your group should have at least 3 – two senators and a representative, although some groups cover more than one Rep. In the top part of the chart under Section C, you'll see room to identify where your members of Congress are on the Champion Scale (you can see the scale right above the grid). Now, because we haven't finalized our specific issues for 2014 (which we will do later this month), just rate them based on their position on U.S. poverty issues in general.
- Also, we all know the importance of face-to-face meetings in this work. We also know that sometimes they are hard to get. That's why it is important to get them in early and follow up about them regularly. To get you started, there is a place for you to write down the date by when you'll put in your face-to-face request for each of your members of Congress and any local advocates or coalition partners you'd like to include in a face-to-face meeting, e.g. the Food Bank, a Head Start parent, a clergyperson. Planning and requesting these meetings in the next two weeks is the focus of our [January Action Sheet](#), so as you plan keep these key steps in mind:
 1. **Decide who will contact the scheduler for each member of Congress this month** – you can find contact details on the [RESULTS website](#).
 2. **Use our [online template](#) to create a request letter** – most offices will ask for details in writing.
 3. If the member of Congress has no time to meet this month, **ask to schedule a meeting the next time he/she is back home and if he/she is holding any upcoming town hall meetings.**
 4. Once you confirm a meeting, **please contact RESULTS Director of US Poverty Campaigns Meredith Dodson (dodson@results.org)** for coaching, materials and tailored requests for your meeting.
- Finally, let's talk about the strategies you will use to move your members of Congress up the [Champion Scale](#). If your senator is a strong advocate on our issues, how can you make him a champion? If your representative is an opponent, how do you educate her to perhaps get her to temper her opposition?
 - For example: As our groups in Texas and elsewhere can probably attest, sometimes your senator or representative can be a roadblock, actively disrupting legislation from moving. For example, our groups in Kansas made sure they clearly communicated their opposition to a [bill Sen. Pat Roberts introduced that included deep cuts to SNAP](#). Even though Sen. Roberts is a key figure on the Senate Agriculture Committee, the cuts he proposed were not included in Senate's Farm Bill or the tentative Farm Bill deal. The work they do to neutralize an opponent was important .
 - Meanwhile, the Santa Fe group has been working with their representative to engage him at a deeper level, including working with his office to organize an anti-poverty event. Some of you might have those members of Congress that "always vote the right way"; use this time to think about how they can champion a cause like we've seen Representatives McGovern and DeLauro fight against SNAP cuts.
- **So let's take 8 minutes to fill out the Members of Congress Section.**
- Now let's turn to Outreach, Fundraising, and Local Partnerships under Section D of the Group Planning Form. Earlier, we looked at ways to grow your own group. Now let's think about raising the resources to support your excellent grassroots work and expanding into nearby districts or states. Some of the strategies you wrote down before might work, new ones might be better.
 - For example, Jos Linn in Iowa attended a local poverty conference last spring being held at a university. He did an advocacy training and asked people to sign up for RESULTS e-mails. Out of that experience, one person got interested in starting a new group. Jos worked with her to enlist more people and we now have a new group in Waterloo, IA and added a new congressional district to our coverage.
- Also in this section, we want you to think about fundraising. Non-profits like RESULTS are dependent on fundraising. Donations to RESULTS pay for the conference call line you listening to now, the staff who

support you in this work, the materials and website you use to take action and do outreach, the International Conference, and a host of other things to make our work possible. We know fundraising can be intimidating sometimes and we don't want you to bite off more than you can chew. Whether you're hosting a house party, asking for online donations through our Friends and Family Campaign, or organizing a big event, every little bit helps. So we ask you to consider helping fundraise for RESULTS and articulate what you want to do in the form. The more details you provide on your plans, the better we can support you achieving them.

- For example, The St Louis group held their first fundraiser ever by joining in our Virtual Thanksgiving Feast this fall using our fundraising website, which highlighted our hunger work with a Thanksgiving theme. They raised \$430 within a week with very little effort. We will be doing the Virtual Thanksgiving Feast again this November as well as a RESULTS Valentine's Date-Night In as a February online campaign.
- Finally, if you're looking to expand your local Action Network – these are people who are not necessarily a part of your group but are willing to take action from a key times – write down how big you want to grow your network and how you might accomplish that.
- **Let's take 7 minutes to complete Outreach and Fundraising Section of the form.**
- Finally, let's look at media. Last year, you blew the roof off our media goals, getting over 140 media pieces published on U.S. poverty issues. We want to keep up that success this year. So look at Section E of the form and write out your media goals this year. Remember, we have an organizational goal to get at least one op-ed or editorial published in each state where we have volunteers. What can you do and whom can you work with to make that happen?
 - For example: as you know, our new Baltimore group had a [moving op-ed](#) published – Jami-Lin shared her firsthand experience of poverty. But she took her media work a step further and also reached out to editorial writers at her paper, helping shape an [editorial](#) that appeared last fall. It won't happen unless you try!
- **Let's take 5 minutes to complete the Media Section of the form.**

Thank you for going through this process. Again, we know that this was fast and if you want to take time after the call today to finish things up, please do. However, once you're done today, please send a copy of your plan to Jos Linn as soon as possible. Jos is hoping to see his Inbox full of plans on Monday morning. You can e-mail them to Jos at jlinn@results.org. If you wrote it out by hand, just scan it and send it as an e-mail attachment. If you're not sure how to get it to Jos, e-mail him with your question and he'll work with you.

Quick SNAP Update – Meredith Dodson, Director of U.S. Poverty Campaigns

As we discussed on last month's conference call, Congress is close to finishing a Farm Bill, which includes reauthorization of [SNAP](#) (Food Stamps). The tentative deal cuts [\\$8.6 billion from over the next ten years](#). The good news is that the deeper cuts to SNAP passed by the House are not in this deal. But, it would reduce SNAP benefits by an average of \$90 per month for 850,000 households.

We strongly oppose further cuts to SNAP and urge policymakers to reconsider the \$8.6 billion cut to SNAP. Negotiations are held up due to disagreements about other parts of the Farm Bill, and now I think we'll see the Farm Bill Conference Committee consider the legislation at the end of the month after Congress takes a recess for Martin Luther King Jr. Day, with final votes right after that. This gives us more time.

TAKE ACTION: Reconnect with agriculture aides in Democratic Senate and House offices, and ask them to urge their bosses to talk to House and Senate leaders (rather than the Farm Bill negotiators) to voice their opposition to the \$8.6 billion in SNAP cuts being proposed in the Farm Bill, and urge them to reconsider. While we might not be able to stop the final Farm Bill from including cuts to SNAP, the more noise we make now, the less likely Congress will attack anti-hunger and anti-poverty programs in the future.

Announcements – Carly Pildis, Outreach and Advocacy Associate, Global Poverty Campaigns

- Want to be part of the on-going support that's available to help you reach your media goals? Join our [monthly Media Support call](#) for inspiration and ideas to keep you going. The next call is **Tuesday**,

January 21 at 8:00 pm ET. The call-in number is (267) 507-0370, passcode 4471061#. If you have questions, please contact Ginnie Vogts at vmvogts@yahoo.com.

- RESULTS has a goal of expanding into new congressional districts, including starting 10 new U.S. poverty groups. On **Monday, January 27 at 8:00 pm ET**, volunteer leaders and staff will host an [introductory webinar](http://fuze.me/22423683) to discuss some of the best practices for starting new RESULTS groups and recruiting new activists. To join from your computer or mobile device, copy this link into your browser: <http://fuze.me/22423683>. To join the audio, call (201) 479-4595 or (855) 346-3893. If prompted, enter the meeting number 22423683#.
- **REAL Change Announcement:** RESULTS is excited to announce that our REAL Change is transforming into a year-long program focused on organizing advocacy and building new groups. Materials will be available on the website in the coming days and the program is open to young leaders, ages 18-28. Contact me, Carly Pildis, RESULTS Global Outreach and Advocacy Associate, for details: cpildis@results.org.
- The next RESULTS U.S. Poverty Free Agents Calls will be **Tuesday, January 21 at 1 pm ET and 9 pm ET** (we're doing them the same day because of the MLK holiday). The call-in number is (443) 453-0034, passcode 703096.
- Mark your calendars! **The 2014 RESULTS International Conference will be June 21-24, 2014 in Washington, DC.**
- You can find a full list of upcoming events, along with call-in numbers on the [RESULTS Events Calendar](#).
- The next RESULTS U.S. Poverty National Conference Call is **Saturday, February 8, at 12:30pm ET.**
- Operator, please open up the phone lines and let's wish each other a very Happy New Year!

There were 33 sites with 94 participants on – Happy Planning!