

September 2014 RESULTS U.S. Poverty Conference Call Agenda

Call-in number: (888) 409-6709. The slides, recording, and summary will be posted at:
https://www.results.org/skills_center/results_national_conference_calls/.

Introduction – Joanne Carter, RESULTS Executive Director (Washington, DC)

Welcome everyone to our RESULTS national conference call for September 2014 focused on domestic poverty issues.

Just a reminder that you can download PPT slides for today's call by going to the RESULTS website and clicking on the Take Action box in the top right-hand corner of the RESULTS Homepage

I first want to thank you for the amazing work you've done in getting face-to-face meetings during the August Congressional recess. You have had 20 face-to-face meetings just since the RESULTS Conference in late July-- 16 House meetings and 4 face-to-face Senate meetings. We know from surveys of Congressional staff that FTF meetings with constituents are the single most important way to impact a member of Congress. Congress will be going back to the districts the week after next and will be there until the November election, so if you haven't gotten a meeting then keep asking till you get a meeting, and also keep tracking those town hall meetings—which are a powerful place to raise poverty issues and also a great place to ask directly for a follow-up meeting with your members of Congress.

The other hugely important action we're focusing on this month is generating editorials in our local newspapers on the issue of poverty in America and specifically why the Earned Income Tax Credit and the Child Tax Credit are so critical to reducing poverty. The release this coming Tuesday of US Census Data on Poverty is one key hook you can use to encourage editorial writers to cover these issues—but it's by no means the only one. Media coverage this month and over the next month will help raise the issue of poverty in an election year—when all politicians are paying more attention to newspaper opinions and issues. And getting media now will be key to influencing what Congress does after the election with regard to the EITC and CTC—whether these key programs are extended and expanded or not.

Today's call is set-up to support you in building relationships with your local editorial writers and generating powerful editorials. So we have a legislative update on our key issues, and then we are extremely fortunate to have a fantastic conference call guest--editorial page editor from the Santa Fe New Mexican and Cameron Duncan media award winner Inez Russell Gomez. Reading Inez's editorials and having had the chance to meet her and hear her speak in NM and at the RESULTS IC, I have developed enormous respect for her commitment, her insight and the power of her writing. We're very lucky to be able to get her advice on how we can be most effective in our media work. Today's call will also include further tips and training on reaching out to your editorial writers, and some powerful stories from a number of you on recent meetings with members of Congress.

The combination of editorials and face to face meetings with members of Congress are the most highly leveraged actions you can take right now. So keep up your important work and thank you for your courage and persistence.

Legislative Update – Meredith Dodson, Director of U.S. Poverty Campaigns (Washington, DC)

OUR OPPORTUNITY

- Census Bureau releases poverty data 9/16 (<http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty/>) – our chance to help the media and the public connect the dots
- Likely to show that one in seven Americans still lives below the poverty line, similar to 2012
- Meanwhile, important provisions of the [Earned Income Tax Credit](#) (EITC) and [Child Tax Credit](#) (CTC) are set to expire if Congress doesn't act.
 - EITC lifts more Americans out of poverty ([6.5 million people in 2012](#)) than any other program except Social Security
 - Child Tax Credit protected approximately [3 million people from poverty](#) in 2012, including about 1.6 million children

- Together EITC and CTC lifted [10.1 million Americans](#) out of poverty in 2012
- Improvements in EITC and CTC enacted in 2009 have helped a great deal
- [According to CBPP](#), because of the 2009 improvements, 25,716,000 children benefited from the 2009 improvements in 2013.
- Improvements expire in 2017
- The EITC and CTC [work](#):
 - Generate substantial increases in employment
 - Decrease the number of single parents receiving cash welfare
 - Boost children's test scores and college enrollment rates
 - Increase earnings later in life

WHY IT MATTERS NOW

- Congress will act on major tax legislation during the “lame duck” session and in 2015
- House passed [H.R. 4935](#) on July 25, [237-173](#).
 - Does nothing about the 2009 EITC and CTC improvements; if they expire, [12 million people, including 7 million children](#), will fall into poverty or deeper into poverty.
 - Denies CTC to [5.5 million children](#) of immigrant parents – 4.5 million of which are U.S. citizens.
 - Expands the CTC so that upper-income taxpayers can claim it
- Will return after election and negotiate final tax legislation; sets stage for possible tax reform in 2015
- Candidates pay attention to what editorial writers say now – seek them out for endorsements

Guest Speaker: Inez Russell Gomez, Editorial Page Editor for the *Santa Fe New Mexican* (Santa Fe, NM)

Introduction

Inez Russell Gomez has been the editorial page editor at The Santa Fe New Mexican since 2012. Before, she served as editor of the award-winning special sections for six years. As a freelancer writer, her work appeared in People magazine, the Dallas Morning News and New Mexico Magazine. She also served as editor of The Taos News, as editor and reporter at papers in Texas, Florida, New Mexico and as an intern at the Washington Bureau of The Dallas Morning News.

She is a 16th-generation New Mexican on her mother's side, with roots in the Las Vegas, N.M., area, where she attended elementary school. She has a bachelor's degree from Texas Tech University and a master's degree from The American University in Washington, D.C. Married for 19 years, she and her husband, David, have a 17-year-old son who recently graduated from the New Mexico School for the Arts, a statewide public arts charter school.

RESULTS volunteers in New Mexico have been working with Inez for years. Her partnership with them and her commitment to writing about issues of poverty earned this year's RESULTS Cameron Duncan Media award at our International Conference in June.

1. What do editorial writers look for when writing about issues like poverty?

New numbers, close to real stories of real people. Editorial writers are middle class people, might not know (or realize) people are going to Food Bank, needing assistance, etc. – seems like someone else. The more real you make it, and make it local, the better. Go beyond the Census data: I visited the local Food Banks which flagged that food bank opened on community college campus. Showed that hunger is in many more places than you think.

2. What can our volunteers do to make the strongest case possible for an editorial connecting the new poverty data to our work on protecting and expanding anti-poverty tax credits such as the EITC and Child Tax Credit?

Build relationship with editorial board – don't go in cold, hope part of relationship. I often reach out to

agencies or city editor, so if you know people at local paper, start there. When starting:

- Realize everyone busy
 - o This is endorsement season: I have 10 extra interviews right now
- When sending information, be concise as possible
- Know what they've written about before – do your homework
- Show inequity: use CTC example (how recent bill helps the wealthy at the expense of low-income families); that's very compelling

Just because you see the facts the certain way, know that writers have different vantage point; some might believe in the "pull yourself up from your bootstraps" ideal

3. What objections might people hear when talking to an editorial writer and how can we overcome them?

- Too busy:
 - o If you have done research ahead of time you can send them, that makes it easier
- Don't do national
 - o I have more impact on city council, so local statistics are so important
- History
 - o Bipartisan will catch eye
- Timeliness
 - o Note that this issue could be in play during lame duck session of Congress
- Have people write letters and show national coverage of the issue to the writer
 - o Shows that this is not just something RESULTS cares about
 - o If see in other papers (ex. Washington Post), let them know
 - o Include links that aren't from you (RESULTS)

4. Dee Ivy: Albuquerque. We have already gotten 1 oped, 1 article, 3 LTEs published this year. Do they have time for a meeting, especially if this is a busy time as you say?

- Keep doing op-eds and LTEs: use your own voices
- But if want institutional voice of paper and not your own, you need editorials
- Maybe start slow – send info too, maybe you won't get meeting right away with them during endorsement season
- Get these issues into columnists – especially if paper is conservative. Ex. Jolene and business columnist (interested in tax) at Albuquerque Journal

5. Paul Hoffinger, Twin Cities. Tough to get stories because tough to find people comfortable with sharing stories. How do you find them?

- Can go through service providers -- local food banks, those working with homeless children in schools, faith communities.

6. Ann Boer, Columbus: thank you for being on the call. Are you more likely to write and editorial on an issue if you've gotten LTEs and op-eds about it too?

- If the paper saturated with pieces about that issue, then I don't want to go overboard and won't write something
- But these can also let me know that readers are interested and I will write about it

7. Ann Boer, Columbus: How else do you know readers are interested in an issue?

- I get that feedback at community meetings
- The "comments" section of the online version of paper

8. Laura Lage, Iowa City: How do you know who "power people" are for local newspaper?

- *Staff /About section of the newspaper website*
- *On the editorial page look at masthead: owner, publisher, editorial page editor usually listed*
- *Send note to paper asking about process for developing editorials. At some smaller papers, the managing editor does everything. I do a lot of the writing, or with our owner.*
- *Go to editor first, rather than editorial writer. But if larger paper (ex. Dallas Morning News), it will sometimes have bios of writers with their focus and you can go to them directly*

9. What is a mistake/what are common mistakes that people have made when approaching you?

- *Too pushy*
- *Rude*
- *Might not understand focus (I write about Santa Fe, not issues not across the state)*
- *Your issues might not be their focus*

10. When is the best time to communicate with you? How?

- *I like email since it doesn't interrupt me while writing*
- *Leave message before the writer gets to work or over the lunch hour (so you won't interrupt writing)*
- *But if trying to catch me, late morning (pre-lunch)*
- *I really don't like cold calls – start with emails; other people may be different*

September Action Overview – Jos Linn, Grassroots Manager for U.S. Poverty Campaigns (Des Moines, IA)

Now lets' take this very helpful advice from Inez and put it into practice. This month, we want you to work on getting editorials published in your local paper, talking about the new Census poverty data and the EITC and Child Tax Credit. Remember, getting an editorial in many ways is easier than doing a letter to the editor or op-ed, in that you don't have to write anything. Just like asking a member of Congress to sign onto a piece of legislation, you are lobbying a writer or editor to write an editorial on your topic. For seasoned advocates like you, that's a piece of cake.

So here's what we recommend you do this week, if you haven't started already.

- 1. This weekend or on Monday, research your local paper for stories about poverty**, taxes or anything else you can relate to the issues we're talking about. You can also research how you members of Congress and political candidates have talked or voted about poverty. That might be helpful when talking with the local editor or editorial writer.
 - a. Search your local paper's website with words like poverty, EITC, tax credits, low-income (you can also search at www.news.google.com)
 - b. Find voting records and legislative co-sponsorships for members of Congress at: <http://capwiz.com/results/dbq/officials/>. Find candidate info at: <http://results.capwiz.com/election/home/>.
 - c. Find state fact sheets on the EITC and CTC at: <http://www.cbpp.org/cms/index.cfm?fa=view&id=4097>
- 2. On Monday, send an e-mail to the writer or editor at the paper.** Be sure to attach the [Editorial Memo](#) to your e-mail. We have provided you language for your e-mail, which is in the slides, in the [PPT from last Monday's editorial training](#), and in [last Tuesday's Weekly Update](#). Copy, paste and personalize it and you're good to go. Be sure to tell the writer that you plan to follow up with him/her with a phone call later this week.
- 3. On Tuesday, join the RESULTS U.S. Poverty Census Data webinar** at 8:00pm ET. We will provide you an overview of what the Census data says and how to best use it with your local editorial writers. Register for the webinar TODAY at: <https://www.fuzemeeting.com/webinar/register/1028550>. For audio, dial 201-479-4595, meeting code 25845194.
- 4. On Wednesday, follow up with the editorial writer.** Ask if he/she received your e-mail and if they have time to talk. Run through your editorial "pitch" (which is role played below) and be sure to include

information about the new Census data that you learned on Tuesday's webinar. Ask if based on the information you've sent, if they will write an editorial on poverty and tax credits for working families. If they cannot give you an answer right then, schedule a time to follow-up again.

5. **Follow up again** until you get a firm yes or no.

Remember that the [September Action](#) has helpful information for your media outreach and if you didn't get a chance to be on last Monday's media training webinar, you can [listen to the recording](#) and [view the slides](#) on the RESULTS website. And as always, if you have questions or need coaching, please contact Jos Linn (jlinn@results.org) or Meredith Dodson (dodson@results.org) for help.

September Training: Role Play Call to Editorial Writer – Ginnie Vogts, RESULTS Regional Coordinator and RESULTS Columbus volunteer (Columbus, OH)

Now I'm happy to enlist one of our volunteer Media Support Team members Ginnie Vogts, to help us with our training this month. We're going to role play a conversation with an editorial writer asking him or her to write an editorial on poverty and the tax credits. I will play a writer at Ginnie's local paper, the Columbus Dispatch, and she will be calling me to ask me to write an editorial.

ROLE PLAY

Volunteer: Hello. Is this Mr. Miller?

Editorial Writer: *Yes it is.*

Volunteer: Hi Mr. Miller. My name is Ginnie Vogts. I'm calling to see if you received my email last Tuesday concerning an editorial on the new U.S. Census poverty data and the Earned Income Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit?

Editorial Writer: *Uh, wait a minute, let me check. When did you send it?*

Volunteer: Last Tuesday morning. It had an attachment with facts on poverty and refundable tax credits.

Editorial Writer: *What's your name again?*

Volunteer: Ginnie Vogts. I'm a volunteer with RESULTS here in Columbus.

Editorial Writer: *Oh yes. I did get it but I haven't had time to read it yet. Let's see, you want me to write an editorial?*

Volunteer: Yes. First, I want to acknowledge all the articles the *Dispatch* has written on poverty in Ohio recently. You have really done a great job showing the lingering effects of the recession and how the existing programs are not keeping up with the needs of the people living in poverty. It's a big problem.

Editorial Writer: *Well thank you. What is RESULTS?*

Volunteer: RESULTS is a grassroots advocacy group that works to create the public and political will to end poverty. We do this by empowering individuals to exercise their personal and political power for change. Our group in Columbus works on U.S. poverty issues. We write letters, make calls, work with congressional aides, meet with members of Congress, have public events, all designed to raise awareness of U.S. poverty and enact federal policies to end it. Another way we impact legislators is through the media by getting letters, op/eds, and most importantly editorials published. As you know, editorials can be a powerful way to get lawmakers to take action. It shows them that the community is paying attention.

Editorial Writer: *Well, I don't know about writing an editorial on poverty.*

Volunteer: I think this would be a perfect time for an editorial. The *Dispatch* has had such good writing about the extent of poverty – how it's being felt in suburbs, the inner city, and Ohio's Appalachian regions as well as how existing programs are not meeting the need. To build on that, I think an editorial on well-known poverty relievers like the Earned Income Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit, which help millions of poor working families, would be very timely. Next week, the U.S. Census is going to release its poverty data for 2013. It's likely to show little change from 2012, when over 46 million Americans, including 1.8 million Ohioans, were living in poverty. It's a problem that needs greater attention and we know programs like the EITC and CTC can make a difference. Are you familiar with the EITC and CTC?

Editorial Writer: *I know what they are but I'm not an expert.*

Volunteer: As you will see in my email and in more detail in the attached editorial packet, in 2012, these credits

lifted 10 million people, half of them children, out of poverty. Part of this success comes from some important improvements to the EITC and CTC that were enacted in 2009. Here in Ohio, between 2009 and 2013, an average of 361,000 Ohioans were lifted out of poverty or made less poor by these improvements alone. But Congress refuses to make them permanent; they're set to expire in 2017, which will have a big impact on millions of low-income working families.

Editorial Writer: *So you're saying Congress has not taken this up?*

Volunteer: No, they have not... and it gets worse. Not only have they ignored these expiring improvements, but the House just passed legislation in July that expanded the Child Tax Credit for wealthier families while cutting it for 5.5 children of immigrant parents, 4.5 million of which are U.S. citizens. It's like they're digging families deeper into poverty.

Editorial Writer: *Can you get me information on this legislation?*

Volunteer: It's in the packet I sent. I think it highlights the disconnect Congress seems to have with working families. When Congress has policies that reduce poverty already in place, they ignore them or worse, try to cut them. No wonder people are so cynical about politics these days. That's why an editorial can be so effective. It's a wake-up call, especially as the new poverty data is coming out. I will send you info on what that data says as soon as I have it.

Editorial Writer: *OK, I'll take a look at the information you sent me. However, we don't write editorials upon request. I'm not promising anything.*

Volunteer: I understand. I just want to offer some valuable information at a time when everybody's eyes are going to be on poverty because of the Census data release. Taking a stand on programs that encourage work, have a proven broad effect on poverty, and have bipartisan support seems like a logical step given how thoroughly your paper has investigated the poverty problem.

Editorial Writer: *I'll take a look at it.*

Volunteer: Thank you very much. I'll be sure to send the Census data after it comes out on Tuesday. If I contact you on Wednesday morning, would that work with your schedule?

Editorial Writer: *That should work.*

Volunteer: Thanks for considering my request. I'll talk to you next week.

Thank you, Ginnie. Notice that Ginnie referenced the e-mail she had already sent to the writer. She researched the newspaper and referenced previous articles in the paper. She included statistics that made the issue local to Ohio, not just nationally. And she set a time to follow up with him. All those things increase her chances of getting editorial published. You can find this role play in the Laser Talks box on our [U.S. Poverty Actions and News page](#) of our website.

So please use the resources we've given you and reach out to writers this week, if you haven't already. Make a strong and powerful request for them to write an editorial. Follow up with them after the Census data release. Keep pushing until you get a firm yes or no. And if they do say no despite all your efforts, consider trying another paper in your area or state. Or ask they'd be willing to publish an op-ed instead. Contact me (jlinn@results.org) or Meredith (Dodson@results.org) and we can coach you on your media outreach and follow-up. Good luck!

Shares – Myrdin Thompson, RESULTS U.S. Poverty Organizer (Louisville, KY)

Paige Bailey (Storrs, CT): Share about her recent meeting with Rep. Joe Courtney (confirmed)

Hi my name is Paige and I'm from Storrs Connecticut. The first time I heard of RESULTS was actually at a civic engagement/ community service conference in Valparaiso, Indiana when Lisa Marchal gave a really interesting workshop. Later that year, I was offered a position through my school, the University of Connecticut, involving overseeing all Democracy and Political Engagement initiatives. Having limited knowledge around advocacy and political engagement, I decided to attend the RESULTS conference in June in order to prepare for my upcoming role. I was fortunate to connect with other RESULTS constituents from CT who invited me to their meeting with aides from 4 districts of the state and one meeting with State Rep. Jim Himes. This was an incredible experience, even though I spoke very little, the observation piece of it was huge. For the first time, I was able to truly experience what it's like to lobby for something I care about as just an ordinary citizen. The same group of constituents were able to help me to organize a meeting with my own State Rep, Joe Courtney, at the end of the summer recess. As I have been interested in starting my own results group, and as I have been interested in taking on more of a leadership role for future meetings, I decided to deliver the ask for domestic poverty. I asked

Joe Courtney to co-sponsor the Financial Security Credit Act, as Congressman Courtney already sponsored the EITC and CTC. Congressman Courtney also agreed to allow me to film a short video on my phone of why college students should get involved in local politics, which I plan on showing to my fellow classmates. I was so excruciatingly nervous before this meeting, I got there way to early and my hands were shaking the whole time. However, afterwards, when I couldn't believe it was over, I felt exhilarated. I realized that if I can go into a meeting and talk about something I truly care about with a congressman, any one can. Although I was so incredibly fortunate to have this experience, and saddened that so few US citizen are involved in advocacy work and I am determined to involve more people throughout the course of my life.

Kathleen Duncan (Houston, TX but calling in from Salina, KS): Share about face-to-face with Rep. Steve Daines at Montana air show (confirmed)

This is a share about being prepared to give an EPIC talk anywhere you happen to be: I spent the summer in Montana and was able to reconnect with the US Poverty RESULTS group in the Flathead Valley. I had never been to an airshow and went with family to Montana Madness (I'll look up whether the elite group of F16s was Blue Angels or what) and there parked out by the highway at the airshow was a bus with a campaign logo on it for Montana's lone House Rep who is running for Senate. After we got set up with our camp chairs, I thought about what to say, left my group and walked and walked until I found a tent with the candidate's staff inside; I asked if the Rep was around and they pointed to where he was in the crowd. I stood in line, Rep Steve Daines was there with his wife; there was no one behind me so I told him I had been in his office in Wash DC, Tues, June 24, and had spoken with his Tax Aide I asked the Rep to NOT FORGOT LOW-INCOME working families when Congress takes up tax reform after the election. The Rep seems an earnest person. I spoke with him about 1) making permanent the extensions from 2009 on EITC and CTC and how beneficial these extensions would be to low-income working families of which there are many in the beautiful Flathead Valley and I gestured toward the Rocky Mountains. BEFORE I COULD FINISH, the Rep politely interjected that he knows Dave Camp (MI-R) Chair, House Ways & Means. This whole time aircraft of all kinds are buzzing overhead.

I went on to say RESULTS is looking for co-sponsors of HR 2917 Financial Security Credit Act = while explaining FSCA, the Rep again politely asked if a withdrawal happens does the up-to-\$500 government match go with the withdrawal - I said no. He then took out his phone, typed in 2917, turned the phone around to show me that he had sent 2917 to his Tax Aide, I could see in the phone the TA's name. Notice there was no commitment on the Rep's part that he would or would not speak with Rep Dave Camp about EITC/CTC. However, I walked away feeling "Score One" and that everyone of you on this phone call had backed me, it was a great feeling.

Announcements – Anita Lee, RESULTS San Fernando Valley volunteer (San Fernando Valley, CA)

Hi, this is Anita Lee from the RESULTS San Fernando Valley group. I'm going to close out today's call with information about some exciting trainings and support calls this month.

- **Please remember to join the [RESULTS Poverty Data Webinar](https://www.fuzemeeting.com/webinar/register/1028550)**, this Tuesday, September 16 at 8:00 pm ET. This webinar will review the data from the U.S. Census on poverty in 2013. Register for the webinar here: <https://www.fuzemeeting.com/webinar/register/1028550>. For audio, dial 201-479-4595, meeting code 25845194. Note, if you have trouble accessing the webinar, the [RESULTS calendar event](#) for the webinar and next week's Weekly Update include instructions on how to get connected.
- The next **RESULTS U.S. Poverty Free Agents Calls** will be Tuesday, September 16 at 1:00 pm ET. Because of the Poverty Data webinar the same night, we won't have an evening Free Agents call this month.
- Join us on Thursday, September 18 at 1:00pm ET for a [Training Call to help you build and maintain your local Action Networks](#). If you want to learn how to engage more people in action in your community, join this informative call. (712) 432-3100, passcode 761262.
- On Wednesday, September 24 at 9:00pm ET, the RESULTS Expansion Team will hold a [support call on growing RESULTS](#). If you can help us engage new people in new areas in the work of RESULTS, please join this call. (712) 432-3100, passcode 761262.
- On Wednesday, October 1 at 9:00 pm ET, we will hold a training on [Pre-Election Bird-Dogging: Getting Poverty Issues on the Radar](#). Learn how you can use town halls to raise public awareness of poverty by joining this training. Webinar info: <https://www.fuzemeeting.com/webinar/register/1029466>. To join via conference call, dial (201) 479-4535, passcode 25949862.

- Remember that Congress will be on recess for most of October so **please [put in your requests for face-to-face meetings](#) now**. And don't forget to fill out the [RESULTS Lobby Report Form](#) for any meetings you do have, with face-to-face or with aides.
- The next **RESULTS Introductory Call** is Friday, September 26 at 1:00 pm ET. Introduce RESULTS to someone you know by inviting them to join the call. People can register at the "[Become a RESULTS Activist](#)" page under the Take Action tab on the RESULTS website.
- Note also that we have **new fundraising resources available**, including new and improved online fundraising tools for your Friends and Family fundraisers this fall. Go to these links to learn more:
 - Friends and Family Campaign site: www.tinyurl.com/RESULTSFFC,
 - Virtual Thanksgiving site: www.tinyurl.com/RESULTSFEAST,
 - Friends and Family Celebrations site: www.tinyurl.com/RESULTSCELEBRATE,
 - Friends and Family Run site: www.tinyurl.com/RESULTSRUN.
- The Nuns are back on the bus! Support our friends at NETWORK by attending events with the Nuns on the Bus during their ten-state tour this fall, urging people to register to vote to counter the influence of money in politics. You can find their event schedule at <http://www.networklobby.org/bus2014/events>.
- You can find these and other upcoming events, along with conference call numbers, on the [RESULTS Events Calendar](#).
- Thank you for being on the call today. The next RESULTS U.S. Poverty National Conference Call is **Saturday, October 11 at 12:30pm ET**.